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The text as an element of communication system: the status issue

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Abstract. The article discusses different approaches to the definition of the text as an important element of the communication system both in general and - in particular - in verbal communications. First of all, this study focuses on the status of the text. It is noted that, considering this question, the researchers distinguish types of written and oral text. However, many scientists believe that the text can function only in written form. Upon analyzing the different approaches, the author emphasizes that within a considered problem, it is necessary to distinguish between broad and narrow meaning of the text. As a result, she makes a conclusion that the determination of the text status depends on the task to be resolved, and further researches in this area are to have promising developments.

Keywords: communication, verbal communication, text, status of a text, text linguistic

Communication (from Latin *communicatio* – to make joined) is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. Its main function is to transfer information by means of symbols. The primary feature of communication is multidisciplinary. This can be a reason of different aspect within various science disciplines with main role of linguistics, culture science, and social psychology. Mankind devotes leading place to communication. We can name leading scientists – W. Humboldt, C.-G. Jung, R. Jakobson, C. Shannon, A. Potebnja, G. Pocheptsov – who researched these problems. Great attention of Ukrainian scientists to communication problem is stimulated by social changes which took place in post-Soviet environment after totalitarian regime was cancelled. The main feature of the changes is that “the system of hierarchical communication where the primary component was the order has become to change for democratic system of communication with the conviction as a basis» [11]. It is hard to disagree the statement of Ukrainian scientist G. Pocheptsov. Establishment of “democratic communication system” is an important task for Ukraine which has selected European civilization way of development. This issue is of special importance if to take into account that the main task of communication is to influence the recipient’s behaviour [4].

Communication is one of the most important components of human life which enables to obtain new information, to share opinions, to gain mutual understanding. All these tasks can be resolved by means of language. The language is universal human communication instrument to maintain mutual understanding. Universal nature of the language as a communication unit is confirmed by the fact that it can be used to transfer meaning of other signs, facial expressions, gestures, and symbols. One more task of the language as a communication instrument is to provide information processes in different areas of contemporary life – scientific, technical, political, business, educational, and cultural. Facilitating society demands for information processes the language establishes its influence too. As far as the language without communication practice has to become dead. Thus, the language and the communication are interlinked variables.

The analysis of papers devoted to professional, social and interpreter (multilinguistic) communication can help to make a conclusion that these issues are important for modern world. The broad spectrum of similar problems is to be investigated and reasoned. Therefore, the necessity of further researches is rather obvious.

The scientists speak unanimously about multidimensional character of the term “communication”. They emphasize the language as its main component. For example,

G. Pocheptsov stresses out two main channels of the human communication: verbal and visual, but W. Manakin distinguished broad and narrow meanings of the phenomenon and proposed within its broad interpretation approach to emphasize as a separate components verbal and non-verbal communication [8, p. 8]. I. Shevchenko has put a name for linguistic communication as a part of whole communication which is implemented in two forms – oral (verbal) and written [15, p. 12]. The article we also consider verbal communication as a main, and non-verbal communication – as a secondary (derived), as it was mentioned above all possible signs and signals could be transferred by means of the language. No any signage system can be similarly universal. Considering the communication as a basic element in the human civilization structure G. Pocheptsov gives special meaning to the artistic communication.

Within this study of communication system of the language we will focus on the text concept. In particular, the purpose of the research is the analyze different approaches to define the text from the its status point of view. By differentiating written and oral (plural) types of the text we expect to trace evolution of viewpoints on the problem outlined as well as actuality of its main principles understanding upon today’s/modern stage of linguistics development.

By acknowledging the text as a output of mental-linguistic human activity we consider it as linguistic phenomenon. Therefore, upon our opinion, problems of the text are considered within the framework of text linguistics. It is a young scientific branch which is to attain a position of separate chapter of modern linguistics. Moreover, the text as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon is a subject of research of other sciences – psychology, literary criticism, semiotics, and cultural science. Thus, we are not surprised that there are a lot of approaches to interpret typical features of the text, categories, ontological essence, creation mechanisms, and the very definition is not well established. Meantime, earlier studies performed by both international and domestic scientists contain important achievements which are helpful for deep understanding of text nature. On top of that, they can serve as a basis for further detailed analysis. The text topic was and is located in the point of interest of many wellknown researchers. They are, in particular, A.J. Greimas, W. Dressler, L. Bulakhovsky, V. Vynohradov, R. Halperin, G. Kolshanskiy, J. Lotman, A. Losev, L. Shcherba, O. Selivanova, T. Radzievska et al. The modern study of the text features systemic approach, the main emphasis is made by linguists on analyzing integral features of the text, on solving its structure.

Scientists use various approaches to study a linguistic of the text. To explore a problem of text status we consider structural-grammatical, structural-semantic and communication-oriented approaches to the text's study. Within a framework of the first (structural-grammatical) one the linguists (R. Halperin, L. Loseva, A. Kostyrykina et al.) analyze primarily means and types of the text coherence, as well as how to maintain it. The text is perceived here as language unit, and scientific research is focused on establishment of text creation rules. Thus, the scientists of this approach define text as hierarchically structured unit which consists of series of separate expressions (phrases) linked structurally and intonation within more complex unit [16, p. 23].

Supporters of the second approach study the texts as isolated separate linguistic object. The main attention paid by the scientists is devoted to the text semantics which is considered as a unit of speech. Scientific works of this approach are associated with text study as a consistent speaking (language) composition (A. Leontiev, L. Novikov, M. Kozhina et al). The text is explained here as a fixed series of sentences which are linked each other as semantically using different linguistic means [1, p. 27]

The third mentioned approach (communication-oriented) is focused on communication features of the text, on its pragmatic orientation (J. Lotman, L. Murzin, G. Kolshankyi et al). The text upon these scientists is a unit of culture. Thus, it is considered here as an outcome of speaking (linguistic) activity which performs specific tasks aimed by the speaker (i.e. creator of the text) [5]. This understanding enables us to dedicate the text to semiotic system in broad meaning of this conception. Later below we will return to the issue of semiotic explanation of the text.

These approaches to text study are different, but they do not argue each other, thus we can assume their mutual amendment. We will analyze the issue of text status in accordance to the described approaches. Thus, supporters of structural-grammatical and structural-semantic approaches consider text as a "hierarchical structured unit" and as "fixed series of sentences". It means that they underline systemic nature of the text. To understand why only systemic form of the text implementation is acknowledged by most of scientists we need to know their explanations and arguments.

An approach to the text as an objective reality is used by many scientists. For example, upon conclusion made by R. Halperin: "Text is an outcome of speech creating process that has completeness and is formed (objected) as a written document, that is processed in literature mode upon the type of the document, it is named (titled) and organized as a set of specific units (extra phase units) united by different types of lexical, grammar, logical, stylish links for certain purpose and pragmatic attitude» [3, p. 71]. As we can see this definition the scientist emphasizes on completeness (integrity), maturity and exclusively on the written form of the text. To develop this topic he acknowledges oppositeness of the text to the oral expression (speech). In accordance to the scientists all features of speech (spoken language) are opposite to the text characteristics. By developing the text conception the researcher separate also its following parameters as purposefulness, predicativity, modality, openness, , moreover

he forecasts development of new objective methods for text analysis as a "graphically implemented specific spoken composition» [3, p. 77]. Therefore, the text is considered as a fixed graphically, properly ordered form of communication that is missing any spontaneous features.

Besides, L. Loseva is keen on the idea that the text has a graphics layout. «The text – upon the researcher's opinion, – is a message in written form, that is featured by meaningful and structural finiteness and by proper attitude of the author to it» [7, p. 17].

Contrary to that, some scientists do not agree with written only status of the text. In particular, upon the communication-oriented approach to the text study any communication creation can serve as a meaning for transfer and reception of the information. Basing on this idea some scientists have different approaches to the issue of text status. They distinguish its written and oral types and do not give any preferences to any of them. So, in particular, G. Kolshankyi [5] do not agree on opposition of the text and oral forms. The scientist doubts the thesis that texts are only graphical layout of novels of speaking-mental activity of humans. He reminds that the written form emerged much later comparing to oral communication and it is in fact serves as its fixing. The linguist emphasizes also on limited possibility to prove that eventually the written form has created any new specific linguistic forms that are usable only within this form, so that the text could be considered as a unit. We should point out that eventually the scientist agrees that the written form of the text contrary to the oral one is more ordered, accurate, normed (regulated). But these features are considered by the author as external manifestation only that do not influence main characteristics of the text. The essence of the language emerges in oral form that is primary. Upon the author's conclusion it does not enable dedicate the text to the written form only. The scientist proposes own definition of the text: "Text is a speaking complex that is created upon grammar rules and that creates contextually completed finished integrated ordered set of sentences that provide linear rollout (development) of the topic» [5, p. 5]. Upon this definition we can conclude that the text can be considered as a speaking creature that has finished linear rollout of the topic and that is developed in accordance to the grammar norms of certain language. Meantime, the author do not put emphasize any text status issue. Thus, we can conclude that both written and oral forms are equally acceptable for the author.

It is interesting upon our opinion that the scientist contradicts opportunity of spontaneous unregulated by the author emergence of the text independently of the implementation form – written or oral. We conclude that any sense for one of the main arguments in favor of the text as written creature if to neglect any opportunity for spontaneous creation of the text with communication purpose (no matter of the form).

By analyzing papers of communication-pragmatic topic we could notice certain discrepancy among researchers on the issue of text status. From one hand, as we already saw, there are scientists who identify communication process with the text considering it as an implementation of the very communication that is demands pragmatic interpretation. Thus, they consider the text both as a result (product), and as a communication instrument [14, p. 17]

meantime this opinion is not supported universally. Some researchers consider the text only as a result of communication where “live” exchange is implemented upon its finish [2, p. 147]. Thoughts of the modern Ukrainian researcher T. Radzievska seem interesting in this domain. The scientist defines the texts as «written communication creatures», and the communication process based on the text as text communication [12, p. 4]. To specify, the main attention of the linguist is addressed to social function of the text. Upon the researcher’s opinion «Socialization is the main feature of the text contrary to the expression» [12, p. 4]. We should point out that the expression as an element of interpersonal communication is interpreted by the author as an direct, i.e. oral, communication. By comparing these two types of verbal communication the main difference is seen by the researcher within duration of existence. For spoken (oral) phrase upon the researcher’s opinion it is restricted, i.e. it encompasses the period when the recipient(s) is(are) available for its perception. The existence of written text is infinite in time domain as far as it is created eventually in order to “function in society, to put influence, to be included into cultural and historical memory»[12, p. 4]. The other important stimulus that provides more preferable position of graphically layout text comparing to oral communication, upon the researcher’s opinion, is that the written word is specified as authority in society, and thus, it can influence on various different processes. Thus, we can assume that T. Radzievska has higher propensity to contrast (contraposition) the text and spoken language. Naturally, it is hard not to agree with the author’s argumentation. Meantime, we should not forget that the cited paper the researcher considers only one aspect in analysis of the “text” as a multidimensional conception. She considers social only function of the text that is not sole. For more complete resume it is worth to consider the text as multifunctional phenomenon taking into account its communication typology.

As mentioned above the semiotic approach in the text linguistics has a communication-pragmatic orientation too. It studies signage models of the text relying on the text interaction of communication participants. The researches point out that the text is characterized by certain semiotic content that reflects and causes human’s cognitive activity during both text creation (by author) and its perceptions (recipient). For example, Kubrjakova separating semiotic, linguistic and philological interpretation (explication) of the text considers it within semiotic approach as a complex sign or set of signs. The text as a signage creation upon the author’s opinion is always emerged instead of some triune phenomenon that includes the “body” of the sign, the reference and the value so that syntax, semantics and pragmatics are united together as a complete unit [6, p. 139].

Understanding the text from semiotics point of view is addressed also by Myshkina who tries to develop links among the sign components. The scientist considers that the text as a signage creation is attributed by some effu-

siveness (fluctuation). It causes its creative features. The researcher is confident that the “body” of the sign performs cultural-informational and suggestive-energetic functions, and then certain content is underpinned: the meaning of the sign as well as pointing to something apart of the sign, meantime the border (interface) between these components is rather conventional upon the author [9, p. 182].

Tarasov and Sosnova [13, p. 226] propose to understand the text as a certain ordering signage creation that exist just in the process of its meaningful perception and of its creation. The scientists pay special attention to linguistic signs. They support the thought the linguistic signs is derivative from the social experience that is unique for every human. Thus, each man has own personalized perception of the readymade text. Variability of meaningful perception of the text leads to changing forms of existence upon the scientists’ thought [13, p. 226].

Given the provided above thesis are resumed we can conclude that in the generic semiotic understanding the text is “conceived series of some signs» [2, p. 162.]. Thus, all signage creations that correspond to some logical rules can be considered as the text. The main purpose of the creation is communication independently of the form. It can be linguistic communication with both oral and written types or non-verbal e.g. ritual/habit/dance etc..

Thus, upon analyzing different approaches to the text definition as important unit of verbal communication we can conclude that there is no certain solution to the problem. In particular, by considering the issue of the text status scientists distinguish its written and oral types. Many scientists prefer the text could exist in written form only. Meantime, we consider that the issue is not so strictly and straightforwardly defined. As far as it presents the author’s experience, skills and competence with no relation to the form – written or oral. Thus, we can assume that oral text developed e.g. by the linguist (or by other man with good speaking skills) by its characteristics will not differ from graphically fixed form. At the same time, going back to the social function that upon the T. Radzievska opinion is primarily performed by the text we also prefer to consider that the text fixed by means of some document has much stronger social potential comparing to the oral text due to lower time dependence.

Summarizing the above considerations we support the opinion that has been declared by many scientists that is it worth to distinguish wide and narrow meaning (understanding) of the text. To define the wide meaning understands as a general tendency of culture interpretation as a complex semiotic creation, meantime the narrow one considers the text as any speaking expression that do not depend on the volume but it is always specified by finiteness and communication meaning [10, p. 123–124]. Consequently, all mentioned above approached are accompanied with some logic, and they support a conclusion that the definition of text status is derived from the researcher’s task. The striving of scientists for deeper study into the multifarious (multidisciplinary) phenomenon of the text could provide further promising developments in this area.

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Гайович Г.В. Текст как элемент коммуникативной системы: к вопросу статуса

Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются различные подходы к определению понятия текста как важного элемента коммуникативной системы в целом и вербальной коммуникации в частности. Прежде всего, в этом исследовании внимание сосредоточено на вопросе статуса текста. Отмечается, что, рассматривая этот вопрос, ученые различают письменный и устный разновидности текста. Однако многие ученые считают, что текст может функционировать только в письменном варианте. Проанализировав различные подходы, автор подчеркивает, что в рамках поставленной проблемы, следует различать широкое и узкое понимание текста. В результате заключает, что определение статуса текста зависит от задачи, которую ставит исследователь, и отмечает перспективность дальнейших исследований в этом направлении.

Ключевые слова: коммуникация, вербальная коммуникация, текст, статус текста, лингвистика текста