

Semantic aspects of the concept of the Ukrainian book in the conditions of modern reading culture

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Abstract. The article considers the state of the readership culture in Ukraine and the problem of the determinism of book concepts by the readership culture; on the basis of empirical data, conceptual interpretations of the book among Ukrainian readers have been established. The reading concept of the modern Ukrainian book is multidimensional and generated from such semantic aspects: 1) the book is the representative of knowledge; 2) the book is the source of emotions and moods; 3) the book is an instrument of power struggle; 4) the book is a cause of the formation of values.

Keywords: *book, concept, reading, book reading concept, readership culture.*

Introduction. The study is relevant due to a number of unresolved theoretical and applied issues in Ukrainian society concerning the place and role of the book in modern reading culture, cultural development of the individual in the general cultural process.

The evolution of the book during the national formation and revival of Ukrainian spirituality, the current state of society and the level of development of reading culture allow us to clarify the reading concept of modern Ukrainian books, its place in Ukrainian culture and Ukrainian cultural development.

The availability of a significant number of scientific theoretical works indicates the diverse interest of scientists in the problem of books, but at the same time there are insufficient development of reading culture as determinants of new book concepts, uncertainty of current concepts of modern books, which led to a special study.

The purpose of the study is identifying the current concept of the Ukrainian book, formed in the conditions of dynamic and contradictory reading culture.

The realization of this goal involves solving such tasks as clarifying the state of reading culture in Ukraine; establishment of conceptual interpretations of the book among Ukrainian readers on the basis of empirical data and definition of the basic semantic aspects of the reader's concept.

Materials and methods. In the process of solving research problems, such general scientific methods as analysis and synthesis were used; structural-functional, axiological methods. Secondary analysis of sociological data was also used.

The definitions of concept and conceptualization are also actively included in the conceptual and categorical apparatus of the theory of publishing and editing, bibliography. They are used in the works of S. Antonov, V. Ivanov, T. Krainikova, D. Myronyuk, V. Shevchenko, N. Zelinska, I. Zharkov and others, although they use it in their works on the concepts of publishing products. Instead, we are interested in the formation of readers' knowledge and ideas about the book, its interpretations and consumer assessments that appear in the national audience.

In a significant array of bibliographic literature (S. Antonova, N. Chernysh, N. Howard, G. Jenkins, V. Markova, A. Milchin, M. Nizovy, E. Ogar, G. Shevtsova-Vodka, M. Timoshik, S. Vodolazka, N. Zelinska and etc.) there

are various estimations and forecasts concerning the forms, status and prospects of the book in the information society.

Researchers of reading culture (O. Afonin, N. Carr, O. Fedorov, O. Havel, T. Krainikova, Y. Meyer, D. Novatsky, G. Pocheptsov, O. Sharikov, J. Stein) came to the conclusion that the book is a complex mental problem for the modern reader. It remains an authoritative source of information, while being pushed out of the minds by other, more mobile and high-tech sources.

Results and discussions. The concept is an interdisciplinary concept, which is studied within various branches of human science: logic, philosophy, linguistics, culturology, pedagogy. There are currently discussions about the possibility of knowing and verbalizing a concept, and thus giving it a definition (so the definition given by us is not considered axiomatic). Opinions of scientists are divided: some allow the possibility of full verbalization of the concept (A. Babushkin); others defend its nonverbal nature: the concept is a pure meaning that has not acquired linguistic forms as the first meaning (V. Kolesov); others (they won the most supporters) see the concept as a partially verbalized phenomenon [8, p. 310–311]. We adhere to the latter point of view, according to which concepts are given to cognition and verbalization in part; this gives us the opportunity to conduct his research on the material of reading practices.

After reviewing the scientific literature, we believe that the reader's concept of the book is a media culture-determined perception of the book product as a publishing phenomenon, which arises as a result of understanding a set of content, design and other parameters of various genres of books, which is integrated into a certain image of the book and determines consumer interest in it. As a mental education, it synthesizes memories, experiences, individual experiences, associations about what is read and what is the basis for the formation of basic concepts that determine the competence of reader's behaviour.

Reading the book contributes to the development of a universal and fundamental picture of the world, the deep convictions of a human being, stimulates him to take an active part in society.

The individual culture of media consumption of more than half (about 55-60%) of Ukrainian media consumers should now be defined as media consumerism (consumption in the media). It is a type of media consumption in

which the subject is characterized by passivity in contacts with the media, inability to resist them as a system of signs, codes, myths, inability to decode their messages, influence them, produce their own [4, p. 332]. The stratum of competent media consumers in Ukraine is no more than 20-25%. The third type of media consumption culture in Ukraine is transitional; it includes 15-25% of media consumers [4, p. 333].

Summarizing the multilevel reading practices, we confirm the statement of librarians: despite the fact that most domestic studies state the reduction of the space of book communication, today it is obvious that “the high status of the book is still maintained” [3].

Now it is easier to purchase a book than it was decades ago, but the question which has become more complicated is the following: tell me what information product and why you consume — and I will tell you who you are. Today, the once actively reading society is divided into those who are indifferent to reading and those who read on a regular basis, so the latter are divided into segments “by interest” [11].

In general, the leadership of educational, methodical, scientific, to a lesser extent, popular science literature, according to the Knyzhkova Palata of Ukraine named after Ivan Fedorov, can be traced not only in 2021 but also from 2010 to 2016. On the second cup of the scales of informational interests of the domestic reader is reading “for the soul” — mostly fiction, both classics and modern fiction. Our observation agrees with the opinion of librarians: “... In the structure of reading, both our and foreign readers, we can distinguish “free” and “business” reading. Depending on the age and life situation of the reader in his reading is dominated by one or another type of reading” [3].

The reader's concept of a modern Ukrainian book is multidimensional. Based on the secondary analysis of statistical and sociological data and survey of the reading audience, the main four semantic aspects of the reader's concept of the book were pointed out.

Further, we will reflect on these aspects in details.

1. *A book is a representative of knowledge, a “tool for planting wisdom” (accumulation of assimilated information and stimulation of information needs).* Book culture turns a person into a subject of knowledge and reflection: it offers knowledge to an individual and activates curiosity. The epistemological significance of book culture appears in two aspects: first, in the accumulation of assimilated information on various issues, and secondly, in the stimulation of information needs arising from the assimilated information.

A huge array of knowledge, ideas about the world, events, and public figures is concentrated in book culture. In individual and collective patterns (mental schemes) there is a huge stock of information of both theoretical and practical nature about technology, art, philosophy, law, economics, etc. However, the reader's culture is a sphere not only of what is already known from media sources, but also of what can be known in the case of the efforts of the interested media consumer. It is intentional, because it gives a person the development of his “horizon of hopes”, is the enzyme of the development of spiritual needs.

From simple forms of reading culture to complex —

this statement is similarly interpreted regarding the structure of society by J. Ortega y Gasset in the work “The Revolt of the Masses”. The author clarifies: “The division of society into masses and an elected minority is not a division into social classes, but into types of people; it is not at all that the hierarchical difference between “higher” and “lower” [5]. In book culture, depending on the nature and distribution of its phenomena, we distinguish:

- mass culture of media consumption (culture of the social majority);
- elite culture of media consumption (culture of social minority).

As J. Ortega y Gasset points out, an extremely important circumstance in public life is that, for better or worse, power in society has passed to the masses [5].

The statement refers to P. Bourdieu's conclusion that the dominant culture produces a certain ideological effect — it masks the function of distribution under the function of communication: “Cultures (medium of communication) are determined depending on their distance from the dominant culture” [1, p. 91].

Within our topic, all this means that society is dominated by a mass reading culture, which accumulates and retransmits relevant information requests, interests and media preferences, “legitimizes” models of media behavior in which the value of knowledge is not fundamental.

2. *A book is a source of emotions and moods (involvement through sensory individuals and social groups in certain contexts, providing opportunities to empathise with a variety of emotional states).* G. Pocheptsov rightly states: “In reality, in many areas today we are facing a struggle for the development of a new space — the space of feelings and emotions. If earlier it was possible to master the pole of the ratio, today all efforts in many areas are aimed at mastering the sphere of emotion, because it is more influential in terms of human decision-making” [6, p. 114].

The affectivity of modern media culture is caused by the conditions of information oversaturation and distracted attention of the media consumer: texts are forced to be emotionally saturated, otherwise their chances of being noticed are sharply reduced. Thus, the emotional function of the culture of media consumption is to manipulatively influence the attention of the media consumer: shaking his mental state, the culture of media consumption, as a special reality, attracts him —and keeps him in his force. This is often done through viral messaging. The author of the mediavirus concept, D. Rushkoff, explains the mechanism of this emotional attraction: “Like true genetic material, these memes affect how we build business, learn, interact with each other — even how we perceive reality. Mediaviruses are spread as fast, as more they arouse our interest ... The more provocative the “picture” or sign is — whether it is a video of police misbehaviour or a new text by a famous rapper — the further and faster it travels through the infosphere” [7].

Polish critic Dariusz Nowacki describes the current cultural situation pessimistically: “The humanities have disappeared, no one writes books and articles, and what for — all the knowledge is on the Internet. Art and culture have entered the museum. [...] Museology is one of the key concepts in this story. In fact, everything we identify

today with artistic practice and high culture has become the property of the museum, otherwise the reservation. [...] So the next key concept is vintage — something more than style or fashion” [10].

But reading in the style of “retro” remains a need of modern Ukrainians. And there are many reasons for this: traditions and habits, trust in the book as a source of quality information (unlike other media focused on fleeting news), the motivating force of objectivity, which is possessed by a book as a design work, slow manner of linear reading and more. The online reviews we have collected say that readers love the smell of a new book, the texture of paper and binding; they like gift editions with elegant illustrations, which they look at for a long time and carefully, as in childhood.

Vintage reading has the meaning of a kind of book therapy: it calms, balances the psyche, relieves depression.

The British writer N. Gaiman believes: “Fiction ... generates empathy. When you watch a TV show or a movie, you are looking at things that are happening to other people. Fiction is something that you create yourself from 33 letters and a handful of punctuation marks, and you, only you, using your imagination, create the world, inhabit it and look around with other people's eyes. You begin to feel things, to visit places and worlds you would never know about. You will learn that the outside world is you too. You become someone else, and when you return to your world, something inside you will change a little” [2].

3. *A book is a tool for the struggle for power (formation of certain strategies in book production)*. The book is a tool of social engineering, a means of fighting for power. This has always been the case, so here are just a few examples.

General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU L. Brezhnev was the author (do not dwell on the problems of authorship) of the trilogy “Little Land”, “Rebirth”, “The Virgin Lands”, for which he received the Lenin Prize (1980).

H. Clinton began her election campaign by publishing the book “Hard Choices” (2016); the US presidential candidate has positioned herself as the author of a book, which looks eloquent.

Long before that (since 1529) the Roman Catholic Church began to organize the “Index of Prohibited Books” (Latin Index Librorum Prohibitorum) — a list of publications that forbade reading under threat of excommunication; its last edition was published in 1948.

On May 10, 1933, the German Nazis publicly burned 12,400 books by 149 authors on Bebelplatz (Berlin). Among them are the works of Schiller, Kant, Luther, Goethe, Hesse, and others. A similar practice has already been applied in the occupied Crimea.

All these stories have in common the logic of the struggle for power in the broadest sense of the word — as the domination of minds, the impact on people at the individual and societal levels. Therefore, the book is a strategic product, which, on the one hand, is used as a tool of coercion (through it “necessary” stereotypes, beliefs are implanted), on the other hand, it is thought of as a carrier of dissent, and therefore becomes the object of aggression.

4. *A book is a factor in the values formation (inculturation of individuals through the development of values, cultural codes and norms proposed by the book)*. Book business is an indicator and driver of the development of Ukrainian society, its language, science, and literature. The essence of book culture is not so much in the material artifacts (what exactly media products are, when and how the audience consumes), but how media consumers perceive, interpret and use them. It is about pointing out values, interpretations from the consumed media information, mental development of the “picture of the world” in its personal and social dimensions. And this is how — through the comprehension of values, cultural codes and norms — a person is incultured, that is, grows into a book culture and culture in general.

A. Grau describes how values become the basis of culture and how they determine its level: “Norms, values and rules replace evolutionary instincts. ... Rules, norms and values provide the opportunity to make decisions. They are encoded in what we call “culture”. From a scientific point of view, culture is an extrasomatic information memory. Each of the individuals is required to include the received information in their own resources through training or experience” [9, p. 38–39]. The individual “grows” into the book culture through the mechanisms of reflection, stereotyping and identification.

Book culture contains a huge array, which equips the reader with understanding, a broad knowledge of the world, emotions and experiences. Reading culture is intentional, it expands a person's “horizon of expectations”, is the driving force behind the activation of spiritual needs.

Conclusions. Reading culture in Ukraine is multilevel. The latest characteristics of reading culture determine modern book concepts, and they determine the main aspects of the generalized concept of the modern Ukrainian book: 1) a book is a representative of knowledge; 2) a book is a source of emotions and moods; 3) a book is a tool for the struggle for power; 4) a book is a factor in the values formation.

The functional significance of the reader's concept of the book is that it represents how readers perceive, interpret and use the book. Since the effect of book reading is that the recipient selects particular knowledge, worldview, moral standards from the consumed data. Based on this, the reader builds his individual “picture of the world”, accumulates different social roles and belongs to different social groups.

The reader's concept as a mental education, the final idea of the book, its essence, meaning, mission synthesizes its rational, emotional, axiological, manipulative and other dimensions. Covering various frames of memories, experiences, associations, etc., the reader's concept is further transformed into a mature concept of the book and reading, defining models of reader behavior. Therefore, in programs for the development of reading culture at the level of the family, educational institutions, the state, it is important to form these primary reading concepts of the book as its primary meaning.

Further research on the topic of book conceptualization, the functioning of the reader's concept of the book involves the development of the following problems: reading concept and development of publishing ideas

(publishing concept), correlations between individual reading concept of the book and model of media beha-

viour, contributing to development of reading program in Ukraine etc.

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