

Discoursology as the Teaching of Text in Its Formation and Development

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ABSTRACT

Presented is the newly advanced linguistic teaching of text based upon the analysis of its structural and semantic unit. This unit was discovered and described by the author of the article in the year 1984, and was introduced under the name “Dicteme” (from Lat. ‘dico-dixi-dictum-dicere’ - ‘to speak’). The Dicteme forms its own level in language. Thereby, a new part of Grammar is created in addition to the traditional two that were developed in the ancient Greek antiquity and have come to modern times in the duly perfected embodiment. The first part is the Grammar of the Word, or Morphology; the second part is the Grammar of the Sentence, or Syntax. The newly created third part is the Grammar of the Dicteme, which has received the name accentuating its dynamic status - “Discoursology”.

Keywords: dicteme, discourse, discoursology, unit of language, segmental unit, super-segmental unit, corteme, signeme, hierarchy, reverse law

I. INTRODUCTION

Discoursology is the teaching of text as a topically determined speech. It has been worked out by the author on the present article and advanced together with the term “Discoursology”. The basis of the teaching is shown in the author’s monograph “Man and the World through the Prism of Language. Philosophical Meditations”. [1]

For the purpose of the article, it is essential to consider the definitions of three fundamental notions: **speech, text, and discourse.**

Definition: **Speech is a sequence of thoughts expressed by language.**

Definition: **Text is a topically determined speech.**

Definition: **Discourse is a text in the process of creation (Lat. In statu nascendi).**

II. CREATION OF THE TWO-PART GRAMMAR

According to the philosopher Plato (the 4th century BC), rhetorical texts together with other texts were related to the category of “Great Speech”, which was formed by “Small Speeches”. When in the 2nd century AD syntax was developed in the Scholarly Centre in Alexandria, the above-mentioned Small Speeches turned into the categorial syntactic units, later called sentences. Thereby, they constituted the upper part of Grammar.

As to the lower part of Grammar that developed in the same Alexandria in the 2nd century BC, it became the Grammar of the word, later called Etymology and, later still, Morphology.

Thus, the description of Grammar as the immediate speech-forming subsystem of language was divided into two constituent parts. In this two-part embodiment, gradually enriching its content expanding among different languages, Grammar has come through centuries to the present time.

III. THE CONCLUSION OF THE TWO-PART GRAMMAR

The conclusion of the developing principles of the two-part Grammar in modern linguistics should be ascribed to the grammatical teaching of the great Russian (Soviet) scholar, linguist and philosopher A.I. Smirnitsky. [10; 11] The scholar clearly made this conclusion in his theory of oppositional grammatical categories.

The conclusion can also be traced in the fact that A.I. Smirnitsky approved and developed the concept of Ferdinand de Saussure [12] and Leonard Bloomfield [5] about the nature of the sentence as a purely syntagmatic element beyond which any grammatical relations are absolutely excluded. This exclusion of Grammar from the super-sentential relations allowed the scholar to figuratively call the sentence “The Speaking Composition”.

IV. THE PARADIGMATIC ASPECT OF SYNTAX

By the middle of the 19th century, the classical grammatical teaching was quite unexpectedly displaced by Generative Grammar [13]. This algebra-like Grammar became a source for working out the Paradigmatic Syntax. The Paradigmatic Syntax demonstrated that the sentence, as well as the word, distinguishes both aspects of the structure of language - not only the syntagmatic but, first and foremost, the paradigmatic aspect. Syntagmatic relations are on the surface of the structure, whereas the paradigmatic relations lay its strong foundation.

This fact allowed presenting language as a synchronic paradigmatic system at any moment of its existence. The functional outcome of the system, as mentioned above, is the text as topically determined speech.

V. EARLY DESCRIPTIONS OF TEXT IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Having accepted the thesis of the paradigmatic aspect of the sentence as the strong foundation of its structure, the linguists and philosophers of the 60s - 70s of the last century plunged into describing text. The text itself was declared "the sign in its entirety" and its description was conducted under the title "Grammar of Text" [7], [8]. However, the question arises: was this description really Grammar in the same sense as the classical two parts of grammar, i.e. morphology, the grammar of the word, and syntax, the grammar of the sentence?

The answer is certainly negative, because the description operated the same unit, as did the classical syntax, i.e. the sentence that, in fact, was the functional outcome of the grammatical forms of the word.

VI. THE TASK TO FIND AND IDENTIFY THE ELEMENTARY UNIT OF TEXT

The given negative answer poses a challenge of finding an element of text that serves as its centrepiece and generator. As such, it should transform the description of text into the next gradation of Grammar that will be naturally associated with the two primary gradations - Morphology (word) and Syntax (sentence). In order to search for the element in question, the theory of the segmental levels of language should be addressed.

VII. THE IDEA OF THE LEVEL OF LANGUAGE

The idea of the level of language was put forward by Descriptive Linguistics in the course of observing the American Indian languages. Those languages were unknown to the scholars who decided to describe them by means of informant (native speakers) tests. The

scholars distinguished phonemes and morphemes and presented their lists in two levels - the lower (phonemic) and the upper (morphemic). The upper level, morphemic, turned out to be formed by the units of the lower, phonemic, level. Hence, the "reverse rule" is derived, which states that one or several units of the lower level form one unit of the upper level (in the multiple hierarchy - the immediate upper level). Directing the relation downwards, the rule is that one unit of the upper level is formed by one or several units of the lower level (immediate lower level). These two levels were later complemented by the third level - the level of constructions. However, it was not clearly identified and, which is more important, it was not subject to the reverse rule.

VIII. THE THEORY OF THE SEGMENTAL LEVELS OF LANGUAGE

The advanced theory of the levels of language was actively developed in various academic institutions. As a result, there are five generally recognized segmental levels that comprise a universal hierarchy [13]. These levels are organically connected with the notion of the unit of language that was comprehensively explained by A.I. Smirnitsky (without appealing to the idea of the level of language). The hierarchy is as follows: the first, lower level is the level of phonemes; the second level is the level of morphemes; the third level is the level of words; the fourth level is the level of word groups (phrases); and the fifth level is the level of sentences. Each level is identified by its own type of unit forms and, accordingly, by its own type of unit functions. The types of the forms of units distinguish the units created by phonemes (segmental units), and the units created by tones and word arrangements (super-segmental units). The types of the functions of units distinguish the units having semantic content and units with no semantic content. Semantically charged units are called "signemes" (sign-referred), while semantically non-charged units are called "cortemes" (Lat. 'cortex - corticis': 'cover'). Each level has its sublevels.

IX. SPECIFICATION OF THE HIERARCHY OF LANGUAGE LEVELS

The first three levels of the considered hierarchy strictly follow the reverse law of the level formation as such: one or several units of each level form one unit of the upper level. Thus, one or several phonemes form one morpheme; one or several morphemes form one word.

However, the fourth identified level, the level of word groups (phrases) is not subject to the reverse rule. Indeed, the word group is not one word but a word combination. It means that the level of word groups has been identified inadequately.

The author of the article suggests that the status of this level should be transformed. Namely, the level of word groups should be lowered in rank being included into the level of words as the upper sublevel. This change is vindicated as a timely correction.

In order to fill the gap another level-forming unit is to be found for the fourth level of language. Taking into consideration the fact that at this level and higher all units are presented as models or schemes, the author has chosen the sentence-part, i.e. an element called denoteme, as the unit in question. This unit perfectly fits the received status and follows the reverse law - "one or several units of the lower level form one unit of the immediate upper level".

X. THE DISCOVERY OF DICTEME

At the top of the scheme, there is the last, fifth level of the accepted hierarchy - the level of the sentence. This is where the question arises: what should be done with the whole text? Should it be developed from the sentence or not? At this point the notions of "super-phrasal unity" (by L.A. Bulakhovsky in Kiev [6]) and "complex syntactic whole" (by N.S. Pospelov in Moscow [9]) are addressed. They were put forward in the Russian linguistics and were considered synonyms - the linguistic scholars presented them as different names for the central element of text. However, this unit cannot be accepted because it does not observe the rule "one or several units of the lower level..." It is defined as two or more sentences expressing an integrated semantics and is not included into any hierarchy of levels. Nevertheless, the looked for notion required to form the Grammar of Text has been found. This discovery has been made by the author of the present work and has received the name "Dicteme" (from Latin 'dico - dixi - dictum - dicere' - 'to speak'). The task of completing the hierarchy of levels with the entry into text has been fulfilled [4], and the text itself has received a mighty means for its further study and comprehension of its place and role in the developing Theory of Grammar.

XI. THE LEVEL-DETERMINED PROPERTIES OF THE DICTEME

At last, the whole hierarchy of segmental levels of language can be presented, corrected and supplemented, with its Crown being the dicteme, the elementary unit of text formed by sentences. The main functions of the dicteme are nomination, predication, topicalization, and stylization. Nomination gives names of objects (i.e. things, phenomena, actions, etc.); predication points out the relation of the objects of nomination to reality; topicalization renders the theme of the message; and stylization forms the genre and impressive force of the message.

Segmental levels include the phonemic, morphemic, lexemic, denotemic (parts of the sentence), propositemic (sentences expressing propositions), and dictemic ones. [3] The hierarchy of the levels includes six elements. The seventh one can be added to the regular six; however, being the level of realized text as such, this level transgresses the borders of the six-level hierarchy, because it is liberated from the reverse law "one or several units of the lower level..." According to terminological analogy, as a real, actually developed text-discourse affecting human communication, this type of text can be conventionally referred to the "discoursemic level". Keeping this in mind, one should always be aware that the very existence of the level in question, by right without being included in the hierarchy, is the product of the hierarchy functions armed with the tireless speech-generation motor called "Dicteme".

XII. CONCLUSION

As can be seen, the dicteme that forms the sixth segmental level of language and appears to be the centrepiece in the foundation, as well as in the overall textual edifice is what promotes the Grammar of Text to the third part of the Grammar of Language. Grammar receives a new part; thus, in logically strict gradation of the main divisions-parts of Grammar we distinguish: the first part - the Grammar of the Word, or Morphology; the second part - the Grammar of the Sentence, or Syntax; and the third part - the Grammar of the Dicteme, or Discoursology. The author sticks to the term "Discoursology", not "Textology" in order to accentuate the dynamics of speech generation when forming and exchanging thoughts in the life and activity of human beings.

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