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До проблеми контексту

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Стаття присвячена аналізу існуючих точок зору на поняття контексту. В роботі контекст розглядається на мікро- та макрорівнях, подаються його типологічні характеристики. У фокусі нашого дослідження, як і всієї сучасної комунікативної лінгвістики, - передусім контекст, який являє собою глобальні умови здійснення комунікації, що вміщують в собі соціокультурні, когнітивні, етнопсихологічні та інші параметри.

Ключові слова: контекст, типологія контексту, мікро- та макрорівень, експліцитний та імпліцитний контекст, внутрішній та зовнішній контекст, комунікативна ситуація.

L.V. Babula. To the Problem of Context.

The article deals with the analysis of existing points of view on the notion of context. In this work we characterize context at micro- and macrolevels, we outline its typological characteristics. In the focus of our research, like of the contemporary communicative linguistics, is, first of all, the context which is equated with global conditions of communication which include sociocultural, cognitive, ethnopsychological and other parametres.

Key words: context, context typology, micro- and macrolevel, explicit and implicit context, inner and outer context, communicative situation.

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Nowadays we can observe a fundamental rethinking of the concept of context which has long been a key notion of language study. The absence of a single, precise definition of context, the lack of general agreement about what is meant by context and the multiciplicity of approaches to context understanding prove that this concept really provides a productive focus for linguistic research.

Generally, context (Lat. contextus – "a joining together") can be defined as a semantico-grammatical and communicative unity of a definite text element (word, utterance) with textual and situational environment as an indicator of the meaning and the function of this element [8, 251-252].

In contemporary linguistics there exist three basic approaches to the notion of context according to which context is generally analyzed at two levels: microlevel and macrolevel.

The *first* approach narrows its meaning to the level of textual fragment, sentence, word-combination, which define semantics of a definite language unit.

The *second* approach equates context with the whole text which means that it is the integral text that provides interpretation of the content of its units.

According to the *third* approach, context is analyzed as a communicative situation, as a phenomenon which reflects conditions of communication realization.

At the microlevel context is a surrounding text called co-text which is necessary for the complete sense of the text. It is taken into consideration during contextual analysis in linguistic semantics, which is based on the procedures of distributional analysis developed by the American linguist Z. Harris. Microcontext can be of 2 types: semantic and syntactic. The semantic context differentiates different word meanings due to lexical properties of their environment. In the syntactic context word meanings are differentiated due to their different ties with lexical environment.

Accordingly, the following subtypes of context are differentiated:

1) context of permission (as an indicator of polysemy);

2) context of support (explanation of terms);

3) context of suppression (when a word gets new semantics);

4) context of compensation (ellipsis);

5) context of identification (appearance of new meanings);

6) context of unification (actualization of two meanings) [6, 238].

We shall focus on the the third approach which characterizes context at the macrolevel as a communicative situation. In this aspect the research of context is reflected in the works of the founder of the London Linguistic School J. Firth. Such context needs taking into account not only the text, but also global conditions necessary for communication: the purpose, the role nature of speaker and listener, their thesaurus, social and cultural environment of communication. This context is classified as global, communicative, situational and it is sometimes called consituation. Co-empirism is a constituent part of consituation which includes the combination of background and encyclopedic knowledge of communicators which mediate the process of text perception and understanding [7, 118]. Co-empirism is especially relevant in contemporary cognitively oriented text and discourse explorations. For the first time the triad "context – consituation - coempirism" was introduced by the Czech linguist P. Adamets.

As it was already mentioned, macrocontext is a complex notion, because it may include a great number of text-external features, which influence its interpretation, such as:

1) type or genre of the text (e.g. a novel, an election poster, a recipe, a sermon);

2) topic, purpose and function of the text;

3) immediate temporary and physical setting of the text;

4) social, cultural and historical setting of the text;

5) knowledge, emotions, abilities, beliefs and assumptions of the speaker (writer) and hearer (reader);

6) relationships between the speaker (writer) and hearer (reader);

7) associations with other similar or related text types (intertextuality), etc.

A Chinese linguist Shi-xu suggested that context can be generally analyzed into 4 interrelated components: inter-subjective, inter-personal, situational and semiotic.

Inter-subjective context is the knowledge that participants bring into the linguistic interaction – "what I know" and "what I know that you know". Such context also includes social and cultural knowledge that shapes people's thinking and speaking. Let us consider the following example:

Flaherty is in the bar. O'Reilly says to him,"Pat, your glass is empty. Would you like another?"

Flaherty replies: "And why would I need two empty glasses?" [9].

The above-mentioned joke is based on the idea of misunderstanding and Flaherty's failure to infer the obvious meaning of her friend's question: whether he would like another drink – another glass, not another empty glass. Out of context O'Reilly's utterance can be interpreted in the way Flaherty takes it, but applying our knowledge about behavior in bars, Flaherty's interpretation is ridiculous. When someone in the bar says, *"Would you like another?",* we do not mean another chair, waiter/waitress, overcoat, etc., even though all these things are present, but we normally imply an offer of a drink. This is how people communicate. Making sense of an utterance, we do not rely exclusively on our knowledge of the words and grammar of the language. We also have to use what we know of the situation, world, things, people and the way they function.

Interpersonal context refers to the particular persons involved, including their "biography", personality, personal style, social roles and interpersonal relations. People become environments for each other. For example, at an international press conference, Bill Clinton declared that *"Indonesia must invite international troops to restore order"*. In this particular situation, it is the position of presidency of the United States that enables and empowers Clinton's language. Thus, the discourse of a person in power may carry more "force" in effect than that of people who are less privileged.

Situational context is the circumstances in which discourse takes place. It includes the time, the place, the purpose of the interaction (buying post stamps, making political decisions) and the mode of communication (spoken or written).

Semiotic context refers to simultaneous, prior and subsequent symbolic material (e.g. pictures alongside a news article). What is said before, what is said after and the supra-segmental features (pitch, pause, laughter, etc.) are all related to the discourse that is the focus of attention. Such context is important, because each additional move within the interaction modifies the existing context while creating a new arena for subsequent interaction.

Context determines utterance meaning at 3 distinguishable levels. First, it makes clear what sentence has been uttered. Second, it shows what proposition has been expressed. Third, it makes clear with what kind of illocutionary force the proposition has been expressed. In all respects context is relevant to determination of what is said.

We should take into consideration that utterance may go beyond what is actually said and what we say does not always coincide with what we really mean. It also includes what is implied. And context is highly relevant to this part of the utterance meaning [3, 265-266]. Thus, context may be either explicit or implicit. Explicit context is expressed by verbal and non-verbal means, while implicit context includes presuppositions and inferences based on background knowledge or knowledge of the previous text.

Let us consider the following example:

Son: I want to watch TV now.

Mother: You have not put your toys away [2, 285].

Each of interlocutors has uttered a declarative sentence, making a true statement. What matters is that the utterance expressed by the son is interpreted by his mother in the context in which it is uttered as a request for permission to watch TV. Let us now assume that it is one of the rules of the household that the boy is not allowed to watch television until he has put his toys away. Being reminded of the rule, the son may

correctly interpret his mother's utterance which implicates a refusal to satisfy his request, though it is not expressed directly, but in the form of an indirect speech act.

However, in some cases it is not clear whether the speaker intends the addressee to draw a particular inference or not. This opens the way for misunderstanding and misrepresentation, on the one hand, and for the manipulation of the addressee's opinion, on the other.

H.P. Grice was the first to systematically study cases in which speaker meaning differs from utterance meaning. He introduced the term "implicature" denoting "the act of meaning or implying something by saying something else" [4, 5]. Implicatures and their division into conventional and conversational will be in the focus of our further research.

There exists also division of context into *outer* and *inner.* Outer context is considered to be a product of activities of all members of the society, its different institutions. It includes social, geographical, economic and ethic conditions of the society developed by the whole community. Outer context is a stable notion which is relevant not even being actualized. Inner context is context of the current situation of communication which is exhibited by means of verbalization the mental states of individuals, and not by the whole community. It is more dynamic than the outer context. Both outer and inner contexts are not autonomous. They assist effective communication only in their natural coordination [5, 60].

E. Goffman defines context as a frame that surrounds the focal event being analyzed and provides recourses for its appropriate interpretations. The notion of context thus involves a fundamental juxtaposition of two entities: 1) a focal event; and 2) a field of action within which that event is embedded [1, 3]. It shows that focal event can not be properly understood, appropriately interpreted or described in a relevant way unless one looks beyond the event itself to other phenomena, for example cultural setting, speech situation, shared background assumptions within which limits the event takes place, and alternatively features of the talk itself invoke particular background

assumptions relevant to the organization of subsequent interaction. Focal event and context thus seem to stand in a fundamental figure-ground relationship to each other.

Interesting enough is a *philosophic* approach to context. J. Austin is a philosopher who has had a great influence on the analysis of language as a mode of action. In order to describe how people use words to accomplish actions, he turned to the cultural and social conventions. Thus a statement such as *"I now pronounce you man and a wife"* (when spoken in an appropriate civil or religious ceremony) is able to change the marital status of addressees because of a surrounding framework of social conventions. The context in the sense of recognizable conventions facilitates the utterance to gain its force as a particular type of action. It was Austin who introduced the concept of "felicity conditions" in linguistics thus emphasizing interactive aspects of speech acts and context that encompasses them.

Within the framework of conversational analysis we may come to the conclusion that the speaker's action is context-shaped and it cannot be adequately understood except by reference to the context, including especially the immediately preceding configuration of actions. Contextualization is a major and unavoidable procedure which the hearer relies on to interpret the utterance. Moreover, the production of talk is doubly contextualized. A subsequent utterance not only depends upon existing context for its production and interpretation, but that utterance is an event that shapes a new context for the action that will follow it [1, 29]. For example, a question requires an answer to that question. As a mode of action an utterance invokes for its interpretation the social field from which it emerges while simultaneously creating a new arena for subsequent action.

A key focus of conversational analysis is a sequential organization – large sequence of talk within which utterances and speech acts emerge and are interpreted. Heritage and Atkinson state that "… whatever is said will be said in some sequential context and its illocutionary force will be determined by reference to what it accomplishes in relation to some sequentially prior utterance or set of utterances. As

long as a state of talk prevails there will be no escape or timeout from these considerations" [1, 29].

In brief, conversational analysis provides the analysis of language as a mode of interaction which relies upon the context for the interpretation of action that at the very same time shapes, expands and changes the context.

Text and context are complementary: each presupposes the other. Text is a constituent of the context in which it is produced and context is created, transformed and refashioned by the text that the speaker and the writer produce in a particular situation. It is clear that even sentence-sized utterance is interpreted on the basis of contextual information [3, 258].

So in contemporary linguistics language is no longer analyzed as an encapsulated formal system that can be isolated from society's culture and social organization. Accordingly, in this new perspective context is characterized as not only a predefined set of forms and contents but as an interactively achieved phenomenon which is equated with global conditions of communication realization which include sociocultural, cognitive, ethnopsychological and other parametres.

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