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COMMUNICATIVE ASPECTS OF KNOWLEDGE

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Abstract

The paper considers the nature of knowledge in communicative action. The main approaches to the understanding of knowledge as they are treated by Karl Popper in his main epistemological works are analysed. It is emphasized that knowledge is not a hypostatized sphere. Objective meaning is an element of the discourse space, which may be defined as an interaction between speech acts, extra-linguistic reality and texts. The authors show that discourse is a purview of social schemes and standards, and its impact on communicative community is connected with the fact that the speech act has a perlocutionary effect. It is argued that the potential discursive rule as the subjective knowledge of the context becomes invariant in action at the moment of speech. Knowledge is a part of the system, as well as the scientific theory is the result of an interaction between scientists, and not just the result of experience. At the same time, it implies that in the continuum of knowledge one hypothesis is merely a point that fits into the linguistic picture and is associated with an existing system of theories. The objective meaning can be articulated only in the communication process. The formation of these common semantic nodes occurs in the intersubjective sphere.

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1. Introduction

Some theories of knowledge, inter alia Karl Popper's rationalist conception of objective knowledge, social constructivist theories of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman, Karl Mannheim's and Alfred Schutz's sociology and Pierre Bourdieu's conception of the habitus, explain the objectivity of knowledge by the fact that, first, knowledge is a social product (a result of society's past experience), and second, as concentrated on social-cognitive practices, it becomes an autonomous object governing human actions. Bourdieu (1998), who had outlined the psychological aspects of the competence of knowledge by means of the concept of habitus, argues:

> That it provides the active presence of past experience, which guarantees the identity and continuity of practice during the time, existing in each organism in the form of perception schemes, thinking and action, in more accurate way than all formal rules and all explicitly formulated standards. (p. 105).

1.1. Popper's thesis on the objectivity

Popper's thesis on the objectivity of the third world, close to Gottlob Frege's idea of objectivity of thought, is based on the fact that language is isolated from consciousness and speech activity. Frege's meaning of the sign is a memory of mankind. Frege and Popper abandon the idea that knowledge is objective because it is transmitted in the ongoing process of intersubjective communicative interaction (he avoids the terms "expression" and "communication. The concept of Popper's objective knowledge (Diaconu, 2014; Karimov et al., 2019) is based on the idea that the meaning is fixed in language (otherwise where else can it be fixed), but outside any particular speech act.

1.2. Procedural aspects of knowledge

The very procedural aspects of knowledge remain understudied. This essay shows that objective knowledge is related to a context, expressed in action and repeated in discourse schemes, for example mathematics as a specific kind of discourse (Mickunas, 2020, p. 17).

2. Problem Statement

2.1. Separation of speech from thinking

The available evidence seems to suggest that the objective knowledge which exists in a communicative community, has been formed as a part of discourse and interdiscourse. Thus, there is no meaning unity in language before its use.

On the basis of the evidence currently available, it seems apt to suggest that the excluding the discursive component from the procedure of the meaning formation brings one the separation of speech from thinking.

2.2. Is knowledge objective?

The unified knowledge of the context, represented as a text, is a necessary element of discourse, which – when being articulated in a speech act – is objective. However, because it exists in the mind of the individual, it is subjective. The objective result of action is a perlocutionary effect of the context knowledge, included in discourse.

3. Research Questions

The main research questions are based on the above suggested exposition of the key Popper's concepts of objective knowledge and speech act theory.

3.1. Objectivity in communication

We argue that the problem of the status of the meaning sphere may be solved by considering the issue of the influence of the pragmatic speech act characteristics (a situation, an action, background knowledge and other context factors) on the objective meaning. Russian linguist and philosopher Bakhtin "used the concept of "eventness" to indicate that the meaning of a given event are open, and are created and re-created trough dialogue" (Weine, 2006, p. 135).

3.2. Knowledge and meaning crystallization process

Knowledge is represented communicatively; its discourse is being articulated in speech acts, therefore the meaning is constituted in the same way, although the meaning is potentially in the context that brings together individuals included in the discourse. There is a continuous meaning crystallization process in numerous discourses and interdiscourse interactions. The more often the speech check of the meaning is the greater objectivity it has. These processes are being accelerated in the context of the information society.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to determine the status of knowledge in communication process as an element of the discourse space, to study interaction between speech acts, extra-linguistic reality and texts. It is to sharpen the focus on the concept of the third world, systematize the views on the objective meaning in the communication process.

5. Research Methods

During the work we made use of a linguistic philosophy apparatus to identify the rules matrix that is used by the native competent speaker in the everyday language practice; Popper's epistemology and the speech acts theory which enables to define the content of the key object of the study such as correlation between the speech act, the situation and the context. The study associates with the "ontological turn" in social anthropology (Holbraad & Pedersen, 2017).

6. Findings

6.1. To the question of objective knowledge

In the *Objective Knowledge* Karl Popper speaks about changing the objective sphere of knowledge by means of notions of falsifiability and criticism (Popper, 1979, p. 127). He argues that the influence of the problem situation on the sphere of meaning occurs through language. Furthermore, he claims that the third world is actualized due to "highest functions of language" (Popper, 1979, p. 231), and he hypostatizes this area. Hence, he believes that criticism changes the world, and at the same time he separates it from this world, taking language as an abstract timeless structure. In other words, the meanings' purview (as a result of criticism) is isolated from speech (which can be taken as the very critique and the process of identifying and presenting the evidence of contradictions). But criticism is also a speech act.

The concept of the third world is derived from the epistemology without the subject. It relates to Plato's system; Popper initially stipulates: "Everyone knows that Plato was a pioneer of the Third World." There are, however, fundamental differences between hyperuranium and the sphere of Popper's knowledge. The first consists in: 1) analogues of things (concepts); 2) unchanging essence; 3) concepts, having a definitive explanation. The second consists in: 1) judgments; 2) which are changing; 3) which have no definitive explanation as the third world includes erroneous judgments and "open-ended problems, suggestions and denials" (Popper, 1979, p. 124).

Popper gives two examples which in his opinion confirm the objectivity of the world of meaning. The first hypothetical case: the subjective knowledge of mankind has been lost, but people were able to save libraries and to return knowledge. In the second case the theoretical base was lost, and this fact made the return of civilization impossible. The library of the Third World allows to recover the lost knowledge, and knowledge exists objectively, not just as a text, but as something that can exist without the subject: "Knowledge in the objective sense is knowledge without a knowing subject" (Popper, 1979, p. 109).

By following Popper's mode of thinking we offer the third example. Let us suppose that representatives of other planets who do not have symbolic systems, pass on their knowledge by electronic impulses. Let us assume that they addressed to those libraries. Even if these creatures were aware of other knowledge and even if they discovered the existence of languages, it would be impossible for them to correlate the first world to the third one, because our first world with our context has no connection with their third world.

The most important point of Popper's (1979) conception of objective knowledge is the relationship between the objectivity of knowledge and its impact on humanity.

> Of course, we must recognize that the third world [...] is created by man. However, it should be emphasized that this third world exists largely autonomously [...] and that its impact on any of us, even the most original creative thinkers, is vastly superior to the impact that any of us might have on it (p. 115).

Thus, the main feature of objective knowledge is the impact it has on humans. Popper claims that "the relation between us and the result" is the most important component of cognition. In such a case, firstly, Popper's objective knowledge includes us (so, it is not without a knowing subject); secondly, the establishing of this relation is a discursively mediated action.

6.2. The perlocutionary impact of speech

The perlocutionary impact of speech is expressed directly in the verbs "to order," "to demand," "to insist," testifying to the fact of influence. However, there can be nonverbal perlocutionary markers in speech, such as intonation, gestures, etc. A number of grammatical categories in the Russian language can have a perlocutionary effect besides the imperative one. For example, the verb in the indicative mood in the form of the past tense (verbatim: "You went and did it!") can have a meaning of an order and replaces the imperative form "Go and do it!" A constative utterance may perform the function of a perlocutionary act: "There is a precipice there!" (do not go there!), "There is a tree" (let us build a house elsewhere). The speech action changes the functions of a sentence. According to the rules of the grammar, the utterance "Would you mind passing me salt?" is a perlocutionary act, but not a request for information. Thereafter, one can give a wrong answer "yes, I would" (the communicator being without speech competence and without knowing the context), which is correct grammatically, but wrong according to the communication rules. On the one hand, the objective meaning is inserted in the context, but, on the other hand, it is included in the speech act. Thus, the discourse is the trinity of a context, context knowledge and a speech act.

Another example of the function of speech act in knowledge may be illustrated by an example of an absurdist play Elizaveta Bam by Daniil Kharms. One of the characters of the play pronounces the following words, when answering the question of Elizaveta: "Why am I a criminal?": "because you are deprived of any voice." This phrase sounds absurd and is perceived as a paradox of communication in the context of this sequence. To implement communication it is necessary that collocutors have a similar concept of reality and the word's choice of one of collocutor prompt the same ideas to another one. But if we move the content of the dialogue in an unfair situation at a judicial sitting, where the innocent becomes guilty and the criminal is acquitted because he/she has power and money to justify himself/herself, the phrase ceases to be absurd and becomes tragic. While the statement in the context of Elizaveta's dialogue is meaningless, the case at the court is an example of a communicative situation of social injustice with its perlocutionary effect.

6.3. Knowledge as a part of the system

If the notions "the morning star" and "the evening star" have different meanings, why cannot "the morning star," described by different people in different times in different countries, have different meanings? This idea has been brought to the extreme in the theory of linguistic relativity, and in *The Relations of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language* Benjamin Whorf (1956) quoted Edward Sapir's statement: "the real world is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group" (p. 134). Therefore it is impossible to relate knowledge states of dissimilar languages speakers. The third

world in the system of absolutely different pictures of the world is useless: the theories library cannot help to restore the lost knowledge.

Moreover, judgments cannot exist piecemeal: it is impossible to convey the meaning separately, without "counterforce" elements, which are communicated together with this sense. For instance, the individual knowledge being expressed in the judgment "0 degrees is the freezing point of water," is connected with the knowledge of the international system of measurement by Celsius, the fact that when water freezes, it turns from a liquid into a solid substance, etc. Popper rightly argues that the objectively existing world includes not so much an ideas as judgments, both correct and incorrect. Of course, we cannot deny the fact that knowledge passes from generation to generation. However, Thomas S. Kuhn, calling such complexes of knowledge "paradigms," convincingly pointed out that they exist in particular communities. A few decades ago Daniel L. Everett discovered the language of the Piraha tribe for linguistics, and realized that there were people who had no concepts of time, number, guilt and resentment.

The underlying argument in favor of this point is that knowledge is a part of the system, as well as the scientific theory is the result of an interaction between scientists, and not just the result of experience. The foregoing discussion implies that in the continuum of knowledge one hypothesis is merely a point that fits into the linguistic picture and is associated with an existing system of theories. Furthermore, even in the context of fallibilism we cannot just throw away a hypothesis if it contradicts a new fact; the system of related hypotheses does not allow it, if there are not enough contradicting data. A Russian expert in logic and methodology of science Zinaida Sokuler (2014), talking about Ludwig Wittgenstein's concept of theories contiguity and their ability to serve as counterforts to each other, quotes the following passage from his *Philosophical Remarks*:

The probability of the hypothesis is measured by how much data is required in order to make it preferable to discard it. And only in this sense we can say that the repeated past uniform experience makes the continuation of this uniformity in the future more probable. (para. 5)

For Wittgenstein the very hypothesis begins with justifying uniformity to the extent that it becomes the rule for formulating scientific knowledge. The hypothesis acts as a factor which constrains discursive frames, regulates and directs researches and actions.

To what extent can we think about the relation of our idea of uniformity and of the principle of the uniformity of nature? Wittgenstein claims that the uniformity of nature does not exist outside human action. However, it is possible to go beyond the boundaries of his pragmatism and conclude that the discursive system of knowledge (with strong, semantic connections) is a unified discursive cognitive and activity-related complex. Thereby the principle of the uniformity of nature is not justified not because it is impossible, but because its disclosure is a process of a gradual comprehension of the world in communicative interactions.

Wittgenstein introduces this reliability into the language game as a regulative principle; the principle becomes a criterion for checking statements, or even a kind of measurement system; outside it all other statements are meaningless. We would like to argue that it is important how the word, say the

numeral five, is used and not to what the very word refers. The truth of propositions is grounded in these predefined rules of use. However, the consideration of the truth of the very statement rules becomes meaningless. The language games (the logic or the measurement system, as well as any conclusive statement might act in this capacity) are the foundation of Wittgenstein's system which cannot be measured by its own means. Credible allegations become rules not because they reflect reality, but because they have been tested during communication interaction. Moreover, the world view that we describe using language games, may vary. These results provide the confirmatory evidence that the idea of objective knowledge in discourse practice is consonant with the idea of the transcendental and universal pragmatics.

The role of a linguistic philosophy project is to identify in the everyday language practice the rules matrix that is used by the native competent speaker. Structural linguistics distracted from speech options and designed a pure language, but in fact transcendental pragmatics also builds the pure communicative shell of communication rules that are the basis of discourse. As a rebuttal to this point, it might be argued that the potential discursive rule as the subjective knowledge of the context becomes invariant in action at the moment of speech. If Wittgenstein's criterion for determining the meaning of the formula is "the kind of way we always use it, the way we are taught to use it", in our case meaning is a correlation between the speech act, the situation and the context.

Paul Ricoeur (2005) used an exact expression to refer to the idea of the finite order of discrete units: *The idea of the organism*. He said that the basic premise of structural linguistics (and logical positivism) is bracketing speaking away: the speech had not been taken into consideration neither as an external "act of sayings" nor as "an individual performance" and "a free combination, the implementation of the statements not yet spoken out" (p. 87). The pragmatic arguments against this premise rest on the following assumption: the language loses its timeless nature, connecting and stabilizing the level of meanings. To portray the issue in Ricoeur's terms, this tension between the structure and speaking represents the antinomian essence of language. The enforcement of the norms and discursive free choice appears at the same time (according to Ricoeur, discourse is subjective speaking, a way "to say something about something," converting blank characters into an individually expressed sense). Ricoeur tells about the mid-twentieth century linguistics. Today the science of language takes another position (i.e. inspired by the hermeneutic tradition) and is applied to the study of speech. Thus, social linguistics aims at learning precisely speech variation, "Saussurean distinction between signifier and signified is inverted: different signifieds are referred to by the same signifier depending on the perspective of who makes the enunciation" (Hauck & Heuri, 2018, p. 6).

6.4. The perlocutionary impact of speech

On these grounds, we can argue that the methodological challenge resides in an important premise: not to separate the process and the structure. The antinomies language theory is an attempt to address the issue of language changes, such as the pulsation of "the system and the norms" or "the code and the text," the domination of "the speaker and the hearer" (Panov, 2004, p. 255). Briefly the sense of the conception could be explained by activating one of the trends on a certain stage of development of language. For example, the contradiction of the speaker and the hearer expresses the desire to use simplified and

abbreviated forms (prevalence and preferences of the speaker), or full forms that are easier to recognize and understand (hearer's preference). The contradiction of "the code and the text" consists in language economy: the more words in the text, the fewer words in the language. The Russian word "*брат мужа*" (the brother-in-law, or literally the husband's brother*)* has replaced the obsolete word "*деверь,*" which is a linguistic lacuna in English and cannot be translated.

Thus, the basis of the universalism of one of the most influential intellectuals of our time Noam Chomsky is the Kantian synthesis of the deep forms of consciousness. The American linguist claims that the language knowledge in the mind of a speaker does not conform to the scanty data that the speaker had in his/her possession when he/she began to learn his/her native language. Chomsky argues that language learning takes place in limited circumstances, which are insufficient for a person to understand correctly the question, but despite this he masters the complex grammatical system. This incoherence of practice and the system makes Chomsky to suggest that there is an innate grammatical scheme, which, however, can generate transformations due to new structures. The knowledge of language includes the ability to attribute the deep structures to an infinite number of sentences, to relate these structures as appropriate, and to ascribe a semantic interpretation to the pairs of deep and surface structures.

One of the most important concepts in Chomsky's theory is that of the deep structure of sentences, which gives rise to transformation. The sentence "Peter performs a minuet" has the same deep structure as "Minuet is performed by Peter." Schematically, the parentheses presenting both proposals look the same: S[[[Peter]N]NP[[performs]V[[Minuet]N]NP] VP], where S is the subject, P is the predicate and N and V is the name and the verb respectively. S as the subject is decomposed on NP (the noun phrase) and VP (the verb phrase). Therefore, the proposition formation occurs upon application of the structure surface on the abstract deep structure. However, the meaning of a proposition is defined by the deep structure. In defining grammar Chomsky (2009) refers to the idea of John Stuart Mill:

> Grammar […] is the beginning of the analysis of the thinking process. The principles and rules of grammar are the means by which the forms of language are made to correspond with the universal forms of thought. The distinctions between the various parts of speech, between the cases of nouns, the moods and tenses of verbs, the functions of particles, are distinctions in thought, not merely in words […] The structure of every sentence is a lesson in logic (p. 115).

7. Conclusion

In our view, the idea of universal language contradicts the concept of speech generation, because this result contains a taxonomically limited number of units (categories of thought, for example). Therefore, excluding the idea of language eventness means excluding the "production" of culture and the human, which is carried out during the "production" of language. Moreover, Popper himself says that the crucial feature of objectivity is an impact (action) on the human. But it means that there is an interconnection, of communicative nature, between the person and the object. The process of activity (in Wilhelm von Humboldt's terms it is the life of language) contrasted to the result is not a transition of the system (or not only a transition) from one state to another, but the product of speech activity in the community and communicative personality.

To sum up, objective knowledge exists in 1) the complexes of interconnected meanings; 2) in the speech action; 3) within a communicative community. The objective meaning can be articulated only in the communication process. The formation of these common semantic nodes occurs in the intersubjective sphere. An individual gets the total meaning in an act of speech, not in the language itself. The very codified language system is abstract, and it cannot be isolated from the speaking process. These results provide an evidence that the motivation of speakers to use a language system is a condition of preserving the scope of meaning. Thus, the articulation of knowledge, its implementation in a speech act is an evidence of knowledge objectivity.

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