L. D. Khvashevskaia

LINGUISTIC AND NON-LINGUISTIC FACTORS AFFECTING COMMUNICATION

Usually communication involves much more than simple utterances and actions. Language is realized first and foremost as text. Not as isolated sounds or words or sentences, but as whole texts. And users of language have to cope with texts. They have to make sense of them and they have to produce them. Going “beyond the sentences” in order to explore the structure and the purposes of whole texts falls within the orbit of what is called discourse analysis.

Put simply, discourse is the way that language – either spoken or written – is used for communicative effect in a real world situation. Some theories look at discourse as how single messages are structured to make a coherent statement. Discourse is very often viewed as action, it is a way of doing things, usually with words. Language users must know not only the rules of sentence grammar, but also the rules for using larger units to accomplish pragmatic goals in social situations.

Language is used strategically to achieve desired ends such as making a request, taking turns, being polite or eliciting (establishing) cooperation. In order to make communication a success we must analyze the discourse and find out how speakers actually organize their messages to accomplish such things. While analyzing discourse we do not treat organization of a structure as an end in itself, but aim at uncovering its function. Being aware of the language functions we can communicate more successfully.

Another aim of discourse analysis is a search for principles used by actual communicators from their perspective. We use sentences to make coherent statements that others can understand, and we respond to the messages of others in ways that seem logical or natural and are not disruptive to the slow of talk. Just as linguistics is concerned with rules of language, discourse analysis is interested in the rules of message transactions. The rule tradition has had a major impact on the field of communication. The point can be summarized like this: in order for communication to exist, or continue, two or more interacting individuals must share rules for using symbols. Not only must they have rules for individual symbols, but they must also agree on such matters as how to take turns at speaking, how to be polite or how to insult, to greet and so forth. If every symbol user manipulated symbols at random, the result would be chaos rather than communication. We cannot really choose to violate semantic and syntactic rules of language because, as some linguists put it, to speak the language is to follow its rules.

Speaking about social behaviour we say that it is structured and organized. Certain behaviours recur in similar situations, although social interaction patterns vary from one another. Likewise, discourse patterns are organized, but their organization is highly situational. So, we can emphasize the relationship between the way people act and the situation wherein the action occurs. For example, if you want to join in a conversation at a party, you would approach the group but not speak until recognized nonverbally. Because people use speech in a variety of
ways to achieve certain objectives they must know how to do effectively and appropriately. You are free to choose your goals, but once having done so, you must employ certain rules to achieve them.

When we make a statement we are concerned what is required for that statement to be clear. Obviously, the words and grammar you choose to construct a sentence are important but so is the organization of the whole message. Here it is worth looking at the theory of T. van Dijk, which deals with how people create coherent messages.

According to this theory a whole text has at least one thesis or general proposition which is supported or elaborated by other statements in the message. This overall proposition is called the macrostructure of the discourse. The organization of the text is built up by a hierarchy of propositions, such that each lower-level statement enters into a higher one until the general proposition – the macrostructure of the text is reached. For example, “the statement”, “ready to go” can be supported by the propositions “I have put on my coat and hat on”.

Thus, with knowledge of macrorules individuals can construct coherent discourse. If an utterance seems incoherent to a listener, either the speaker did not make proper use of macrorules, or the listener cannot find the necessary rules to make sense of it. The structure of discourse is a set of inherent rules that determines the form and substance of discourse practice. Rules of making a discourse are not merely ones for how to talk but rules that determine the very nature of our knowledge, power and ethics. These rules control what can be talked or written about and who may talk or write. Such rules also prescribe the form that discourse must take. When a person talks to somebody he must have a clear idea about the social status, position, sex, age, function of his interlocutor. Should he fails to make the right conclusion about the social environment in which communication occurs and apply the wrong conversational maxims the conversation would break down. Indeed, communication behaviour is very much affected by external factors, especially your perception of the situation. A communication situation is the entire communication event, including the participants (who), the setting (where), and the activities being done (what). Obviously, when you communicate in a situation, you take much of this overall situation into account, and your behaviour is affected by it.

Individuals use their knowledge about the situation in a number of ways, one of which is to evaluate other people. For example, in the classroom you will probably give a professor a certain amount of difference just because of his or her role. In another situation such as church or a sporting event, you might perceive the same individual very differently.

People also use situational knowledge to establish their communication goals. Situational knowledge helps us to decide why we are there and what we want to accomplish. Obviously, the way people communicate depends at least partially on their goals as defined in the situation. One’s manner and behaviour are often affected by situational knowledge. How you see yourself within the situation affects how you define the situation, whether you choose to be part of it, and what kind of changes you might want to try to achieve within the situation.
Finally, and perhaps most important, people use their knowledge of the situation to guide their behaviour. Will I try to persuade other people to change? How will I do so? Will I speak up? Will I remain quiet? Will I be witty and charming or strict and formal? You answer questions like these on the basis of your definition of the situation. Of course, answers to questions such as these will vary from person to person. A person will not behave the same way at all times because of situational constraints, but on the other hand, different people will define those situational constraints somewhat differently because of their own individual differences.

Two general principles seem to govern communication behaviour. First, how one chooses to communicate depends on how effective various strategies are believed to be within a particular situation. The same strategy, making an excuse, say, might work well in one situation, with someone you do not know but not at all in another such as communicating with a good friend.

Second, strategies are also chosen in terms of their cost. Within any situation one will choose messages believed to maximize gains and minimize losses. In any given situation, you will adopt those communication strategies that you think will lead to the most beneficial outcomes with the least cost. So, for example, making an excuse might help you save face, but explaining it to the other person could require more effort than you are willing to put forth or lead to other undesirable consequences.

So, while communicating, language users must follow certain rules to make coherent statements that others can understand. However, organization of discourse patterns is highly situational. People use their knowledge about the situation to guide their behaviour and to establish communication goals.

**Литература**

3. *Поченцов Г. Г.* Теория коммуникации. Гефл-бук Ваклер.