Cognitive Context in a Work of Art


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Abstract

The article discusses issues related to the explication of the cognitive context in the analysis of a work of art. Considering that a literary text is a single conceptual space, it was found that in addition to extralinguistic factors (for example, sociocultural information), one of the most important components of the cognitive integrity of a text is intertextuality, which represents additional conceptually significant information. Such an approach to the interpretation of a work, first of all, is necessary at the stage of pre-translation analysis of the text in the process of literary translation.

Keywords: Literary Text, Cognitive Context, Conceptual Space, Intertextuality, Intext, Precedent Text, Ethnic and Cultural Specifics.

Introduction

Research in the field of interpretation of a literary text has recently been closely connected with actively developing research in the field of cognitive linguistics, which arose "... on the basis of cognitivism within the framework of the modern anthropocentric paradigm, which significantly expands the horizons of linguistic research" (Maslova V.A., 2005). Undoubtedly, the interpretation of the author's text is impossible without the so-called cognitive baggage, which includes the knowledge and experience of not only the writer, but also the reader, acting as an interpreter of the author's intention. Moreover, "the literary text explicates the conceptual picture of the human world, which, through linguistic means, enters the language, introducing into it the features of a person and his culture" (Ashurova D.U, 2020). There is no doubt that a work of art cannot be analyzed outside the context of the author's artistic picture, which is "viewed not as something separate, but in its relationship with the linguistic picture of the world, since any literary text is an individual author's interpretation of extra-linguistic reality, a special view of the world, conditioned by a number of extra-linguistic factors: experience (personal, universal), cultural specificity, era, etc. (Demidova T.A., 2019).

The Main Findings and Results

Analyzing the features of a work of art, Yu. P. Solodub noted that "a literary text is a super-phrasal unity, characterized by a common ideological and thematic content and aesthetic impact on the reader - its main function" (Solodub Yu. P., 2005). In other words, the literary text is "complicated" not only by the semantic load, but also by a certain set of factors that appeal to the individual experience of the reader through linguistic units and extralinguistic knowledge, including socio-cultural information. Continuing this idea, researcher T.A. Suminova writes that "... artistic reality fixes the world, reality, everyday life in integrity as a special property of the artistic / informational world. we believe that artistic reality as a cultural text / infotext and a "mirror" of the context is an aggregate, holistic information-semiotic, or, more precisely, an information system of texts of works, artistic images reflecting the artistic concept of the surrounding reality and the personality of the author / artist" (Suminova T.N., 2014). In support of his words, the scientist deduces three important components of artistic culture, as an integral sign, information-semiotic system: 1) The system of the world of texts of works, cultural forms, artifacts; 2) The system of...
the world of meanings; 3) The system of the world of signs / codes (Suminova T.N., 2014). According to A.A. Tadjibaeva, “...a literary text is a representative of the author’s knowledge structures, which, undergoing cognitive processes of conceptualization, lead him to search for adequate linguistic (or extra-linguistic) means for expressing the meaning of an artistic text and reflect the specifics of its style (Tadjibaeva A.A., 2016). According to L.A. Novikov, “the study of the aesthetic function of language as the primary element of literature, as well as consideration of the compositional structure of works of art” is attributed to the competence of linguistics (Novikov L.A., 2003), so it becomes more and more obvious that there can be no one-sided analysis of the text. The attitude towards a creative approach to the analysis of a literary text is also recognized as important, since even if the recipient has knowledge of the literary direction and the author, but does not have an attitude towards a creative approach, the search for the hidden meaning of the literary text becomes irrelevant for him (Lunkova L.N., 2011). All of the above opinions boil down to the main thing: how to analyze a literary text and what factors to take into account.

Studying the ideas of G.G. Molchanova, who proposed to analyze a literary text in several stages (initially: 1) identification of details and words, 2) coding words, referring to vocabulary, 3) highlighting the meaning and inference about the author’s intentions, which are derived as directly from the contextual information, and from the extensive knowledge of the reader about the world (Molchanova G.G., 1998); and later: a) a continuous sample of units of analysis from modern English-language works of fiction; b) consideration of the system of characteristics of these units; c) the correspondence of these units to the communicative situation in order to identify the main pragmatic meanings; d) identifying cognitive functional attitudes that are relevant for a given integral linguistic personality and integral text (Molchanova G.G., 2004), it can be noted that the stages of the analysis of a literary text were transformed under the influence of cognitive research and the author includes consideration of the cognitive-value characteristics of a literary text as an integral element of any work belonging to the artistic style.

The cognitive context of a work of art is much broader than the context of functional-style varieties of texts, since the reader finds in the work not only information, but also sensations, feelings that the author conveys through his work (Melnichuk I.M., 2016). The cognitive context can also be defined as “latent deverbalized knowledge, which is formed in the process of perceiving information of successive segments of speech” (Lederer M., 1994). In this interpretation, the concept of a cognitive context, although it echoes the concept of a linguistic context as “a semantic segment of written speech, which makes it possible to establish the meaning of a word or phrase included in it” (Akhanova O.S., 1966), differs from it in a number of parameters, one of which, according to many scientists, can be considered the relationship between the cognitive context and the general meaning of the utterance as a whole, regardless of the independent meanings of the words that make up the given utterance out of context. The latter can be viewed as the corresponding rational or emotional elements not only of the cognitive context in general, but also of the individual cognitive baggage. It should be noted that many studies focus special attention on the cognitive activity of an individual, characterizing it as mental processes that ensure the processing of information and as a result of which special structures of consciousness are formed. In this regard, language as a type of cognitive and communicative activity is considered by cognitologists in the form of a system of signs that take part in coding and transmitting information about the environment, that is, language is a means of representing the structure of knowledge that is formed in human consciousness. In other words, information about the world is first constructed (or conceptualized) and only then verbalized. Such an interpretation of the language predetermines the need to take into account the interaction of linguistic structures with other cognitive components of information, in particular, with conceptual structures. The cognitive activity of an individual as an integral part of his consciousness occurs in a specific cultural context. In particular, ethical norms, political and religious orientations, various components of culture significantly affect the process of cognitive activity (Savitskaya L.V., 2013).

Taking into account the relationship between the cognitive context and its objectification through the linguistic context, it is necessary to take into account the linguistic means of verbalization, which can play the role of markers directly in the literary text, signaling or appealing to a certain situation: “A cognitive cast” of a subject-reference situation is more fully reflected in the semantics of discourse as a whole speech event. The scheme is not always fully explicated, on the contrary, only individual components are verbalized: the objects themselves or their relationships and signs. Linguistically, this is expressed in the use of lexicon corresponding to the given scheme, relational structures, indexes of the possible world.” (Makarov M., 2003) In particular, in a literary text, such a role can be played, for
example, by realities that demonstrate the national-cultural specifics of the analyzed text. 

I mean that's all I told D.B. about, and he's my brother and all. He's in Hollywood. That isn't too far from this crumby place, and he comes over and visits me practically every week end. He's going to drive me home when I go home next month maybe. He just got a Jaguar. One of those little English jobs that can do around two hundred miles an hour. It cost him damn near four thousand bucks. He's got a lot of dough, now. (Salinger J.D., 2010)

In this excerpt from D. Salinger's novel “The Catcher in the Rye” (in other versions of the translation “A Cliff at the Edge of a Rye Field of Childhood” and “A Catcher in a Grain Field”), we can single out several conceptually significant semes that signal the connotation of “luxury”, “Luxury life”: Hollywood, Jaguar, four thousand bucks, dough (money). However, it should be noted that these lexemes are used along with the clearly expressed negative attitude of the author: little English jobs, damn, bucks / dough (slang). Thus, it can be noted that words that, upon individual perception, as a rule, have a positive assessment, in this particular context are objectified with a negative connotation.

The deep textual meaning of the author is undoubtedly actualized in the mind of the reader and verbalized in the interpretation of the text. Despite its secondary nature, interpretation, as well as the creation of a text, is a priori unique, since it is based on the individual-personal experience of mastering the world by a subject interpreting the text as its (world) artistic model. Finally, the fictional subject - the artistic analogue of the real subject - is also endowed with consciousness. In the texts of intensional (psychological, memoir, etc.) literature, this consciousness, according to the fundamental author's intention, becomes the subject of the image. It is modeled as interiorizing (assimilating) the world or exteriorizing the assimilated world through speech, actions, relationships and other “traces” of the picture of the world (Shchirova I.A., 2013).

The key points in the interpretation of the cognitive context are intertextuality and precedent text, the definition of which is no less ambiguous. According to I.V. Arnold, intertextuality is "the inclusion in the text of whole other texts with a different subject of speech, or their fragments in the form of quotations, reminiscences and allusions" (Arnold I.V., 1999). N.A. Kuzmina defines intertextuality as "it is marked by certain linguistic signals" roll call “of texts, their dialogue” (Kuzmina N.A., 1999). Interesting ideas of R. Barthes, emphasizing the important role of intertextuality: "Every text is an intertext; other texts are present in it at different levels in more or less recognizable forms: the texts of the previous culture and the texts of the surrounding culture. Each text is a new fabric woven from old quotes" (Bart R., 1989). Moreover, according to him, the text "exists only due to intertextual relations, due to intertextuality" (Bart R., 1989). However, D. Miller indirectly disputes the words of R. Barthes, arguing that even an exact repetition will never be an exact copy, only because it is the second (text), and not the first (Miller J.H., 1978). In other words, even if the author includes a direct reference in the work, referring the reader to an already existing image / symbol / situation / work / character, the cognitive context will give it a new color and its role, in addition to the aesthetic itself, will be to create associative links with the precedent text and a deeper semantic context, which in this situation will be considered implicit. Thus, the researchers confirm the relevance of the problem of intertextuality in relation to the cognitive interpretation of a literary text.

The implementation of intertextuality occurs through the use of quotations, allusions, reminiscences or linguistic inclusions in the receiving texts, the source of which is the previous texts (Vanhala-Anishhevski M., 1996). Thus, decoding such inclusions engages the reader in the creative process. In this connection, it is necessary to consider the reader as a co-author of the cognitive context of a work of art, since the amount of extracted information increases if the reader is able to decipher textual inclusions and correlate them with a new contextual environment (Lakoff G., 1980).

The texts themselves that precede this one and are the source of the inclusions used in it are usually called precedent. One of the first to describe the concept of “precedent text" was Yu.N. Karaulov in his work “The Russian Language and the Linguistic Personality", who defined this phenomenon as "texts familiar to this or that person in the cognitive and emotional planes, such texts are transpersonal, i.e. are well known to the general environment of this person, including predecessors and contemporaries; the appeal to them is resumed repeatedly in the discourse of the given linguistic personality " (Karaulov Yu. N., 1987). In other words, the scientist emphasizes the main characteristics that a precedent text should have in order to evoke emotional connection and reflection in the reader, as well as to be a source of interpretation of implicit information that the author deliberately introduces into the text.

In turn, the result of the intertextuality process is a specific intertext that contains certain cognitive information. Intertext as a product of intertextuality was named by I.V. Tolochin "with a compact semantic structure, a convoluted paraphrase of the information contained in the reader's thesaurus" (Tolochin I.V., 1996). According to the scientist, a literary text is not only a linguistic phenomenon, but also
a cultural phenomenon, which is reflected in one way or another in an artistic text. However, according to G.V. Kolshansky, “the context, conditioned by one’s own linguistic means, is somehow fixed in the speech usage and, in principle, can be fixed in the lexical and grammatical thesaurus” (Kolshansky G.V., 1980). One of the types of such fixation, the scientist considers stylistic marks in dictionary entries, which can help to reveal “the implications associated with cultural and social norms, characteristic not only of the collective, but also of individual groups and therefore having a large number of different options” (Kolshansky G.V., 1980). Consequently, such textual elements re-represent not only the information presented in the precedent text, but are also certain triggers that evoke individual associations in the reader, based on his own cognitive experience. Moreover, they play an important role in preserving the integrity of the national picture of the world presented by the author in a work of art (Shirinova R., 2020).

Thus, the intext can be considered as one of the elements of the cognitive context of a work of art, characterized by the presence of political, cultural, historical, mythological or religious reference. Intertexts, on the one hand, are subject to rethinking in a new context, and on the other hand, they enrich the receiving text with time-tested information, connecting it with the “foreign word”.

Special attention is paid by scientists directly to the language of the literary text, which, according to Z.Ya. Turaeva, is “a special sign system, common for different languages... For a literary text, natural language is only a building material... In a literary text, special relationships are formed between three main values - the world of reality, the world of concepts and the world of meanings” (Turaeva Z. Ya., 1986). Developing this idea, it can be noted that the linguistic context is the author’s toolkit that verbalizes extra-linguistic information and with which the conceptual integrity of the work is built. Conceptual integrity is considered to be the cognitive-constructive category of discourse, generalizing the result of the recognition by communicants of key concepts of the conceptual space of the text and the organization of macrostructures associated with the features of such concepts, based on the “summing up” of textual information under the situational models of the author / addressee, correlating text fragments with the concept of the class such situations in the minds of the participants in the discourse. The cognitive basis of the category is a certain isomorphism of the situational models of communicants and, more broadly, the intersection of their models of the world, the pragmatic basis is the desire of the author / speaker to be understandable and to influence the situational model of the reader / listener; the addressee’s desire to understand the meaning of the text through a search in memory for a familiar situation that is most similar to the new one presented by the text (Kravchenko N.K.). In addition, it should also be noted that the process of conceptualization, according to researchers D.U. Ashurova and M.R. Galieva, is based on the assumption that the meaning (of a word) is multilateral in nature and depends on encyclopedic knowledge. In turn, encyclopedic knowledge is a structured system... An encyclopedic approach to meanings implies that linguistic units are correlated with thoughts, ideas, knowledge about the world... which are correlated with assumptions, inferences and decoding of hidden information (Ashurova D.U., 2018). In other words, linguistic units, although they imply a fixed definition that calls real-life objects and phenomena, are unthinkable without their interpretation within the framework of the cognitive experience of each person and the associative connections that the individual endows them with in the process of his relationship with the surrounding reality.

Based on the above considerations regarding the relationship between cognitive context and intertextuality, let us consider several examples of allusive inclusions (which, as already noted, are one of the most significant elements of intertextuality that carry a hidden meaning in a work) and their role in the interpretation of deep semantic information. B.M. Gasparov, noting the role of intertextual connections, also focuses on the personal experience of the recipient, emphasizing “the scale of the past experience, to which these allusions refer us” (Gasparov B.M., 1996).

Let’s try to consider intertextual links with specific examples. One of the works of the famous American writer K. Vonnegut is called “Bluebeard”. The allusion in the title undoubtedly refers the reader to the famous fairy tale of the same name by Charles Perrault. The cognitive context of the novel partially overlaps with the precedent text - the main character of the novel is also a man, wealthy and married more than once, there is a similar element - a secret room (which we will turn to later). However, here it is necessary to understand the author’s idea to tune the reader in a certain way (fairy tale, mystery, tragic ending) in order to pleasantly disappoint him, since the novel is more about art, war, the philosophy of being - anything you like, but not a repetition of the plot of a famous fairy tale. Nevertheless, this title supports the conceptual integrity of the work not only by allusive reference. Blue is the key color in the novel - canvases painted in blue, special shades of paint that ultimately ruined his career.

Another allusion in this novel is the name of the main character: Circe, which in a
knowledgeable reader can cause a direct association with the famous mythological story about the wanderings of Odyssey, in which Circe, an evil and insidious sorceress, turned Odyssey’s companions into pigs. However, Odyssey himself was able to resist her spell. In our opinion, the author did not accidentally choose this name for the heroine of the novel, who, according to the plot, is trying not only to put her own order in the house of a lonely elderly person, but also to change the life of the protagonist, an expressionist artist, imposing on him to write memoirs, instead of writing paintings, which is possible, according to the author’s intention, is equated with the magical transformation described in the “Odyssey”. As in the mentioned myth, the main character of this work opposes Circe and does not give in to her persuasion. It is noteworthy that the translator drew attention to this proper name and did not use the methods of transcription or transliteration, which are usually recommended for translating proper names. Nevertheless, I would like to once again mention the factor of individual perception, based on personal experience and previous knowledge. In order to verify this opinion, we conducted a small experiment with the participation of 53 4th year students of the National University of Uzbekistan, Faculty of Foreign Philology. At the first stage of the experiment, the participants were asked to independently establish the intertextual connections of this novel with precedent texts. The overwhelming majority (91%) named the tale of Charles Perrault “Bluebeard” as an “instant” association when reading the title of the work, but only 12% of respondents saw the “roll call” of the novel with the heroes of the Odyssey and, accordingly, were able to identify the implicit information laid down by the author text. Thus, it is necessary to emphasize once again that the understanding of intertextual connections and their influence on the formation of a cognitive context that reveals a full-fledged author’s intention depends on the individual experience of the reader, his general erudition and background knowledge.

The following example is indicative of the skillful use of linguistic means in the introduction of allusion:

“I said to her the last time she asked, which was five minutes ago: “Look, think about something else, anything else. I am Bluebeard, and my studio is my forbidden chamber as far as you’re concerned”” (Vonnegut K., 2019).

In this passage, attention is drawn to the phrase “forbidden chamber”, which is also italicized by the author. As we have already mentioned, the allusion in the title of the novel refers the reader to a fairly well-known work in which the “forbidden room” is also one of the key symbols. However, unlike the precedent text “…there are no bodies in the barn” and in general, this is not a room, but a shed for storing potatoes, which eventually became a place for storing spoiled paintings of the protagonist. From a linguistic point of view, we were interested in the use of the word “chamber” instead of “room”. After analyzing the lexical layer of the work, we come to the conclusion that chamber is used only in two cases - when describing the “secret room”, as well as when mentioning the luxurious apartments in which the hero was locked for six hours:

“The chamber was a guest room … Imprisoning me there for six hours was subtle sadism of a high order indeed.

Thus, we can conclude that the use of the word “chamber” in this context is by no means accidental - after analyzing the dictionary definitions, it can be noted that this word is endowed with the stylistic mark “obsolete”, and also carries some negative connotation associated with the association “conclusion”, which justifies its use in the second example. In other words, we can conclude that the word “chamber” in this work carries a deep cognitive load, complicated, on the one hand, by the precedent text and, on the other hand, by the very vocabulary definition and stylistic markings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it should be noted once again that the cognitive context plays an important meaning-forming role in a work of art. The cognitive context, verbalized by means of linguistic units, is always correlated with extralinguistic information, which requires a wide outlook, erudition and, undoubtedly, cultural and historical knowledge from the reader. Moreover, the cognitive context can objectify the positive or negative connotations of certain lexemes, based on the individual experience of both the writer and the reader. In this connection, the interaction “author – reader” enters a new level of relations in which the interpreter (reader) can also bring additional meanings into the work, using his own experience and associative connections, through the prism of his own consciousness and perception. The interpretation of intertextual connections affects the understanding of deep implicit information, which can reveal the author’s idea and fully realize his ideas when reading the text. Thus, we can assume that the phenomenon of intertextuality can be considered one of the constituent elements of the cognitive context. Despite the fact that attention has been paid to the problem of intertextuality in many studies, this phenomenon is so complex and diverse that its definition is still under development and many scientists are controversial within the framework of the relationship between the “matter of language”,

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correlated with the text, and “material” attributed to the intertext. In the future, the role of intertextuality in the formation and disclosure of the cognitive context of a work of art should be studied in more detail.

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