Discourse Analysis: Where Cognition Meets Communication

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Abstract : The interdisciplinary approach to modern linguistic studies is exemplified by the merge of various research methods, which sometimes causes complications related to the verification of the research results. This methodological confusion can be resolved by means of creating new techniques of linguistic analysis combining several scientific paradigms. Modern linguistics has developed really productive and efficient methods for the investigation of cognitive and communicative phenomena of which language is the central issue. In the field of discourse studies, one of the best examples of research methods is the method of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA can be viewed both as a method of investigation, as well as a critical multidisciplinary perspective. In CDA the position of the scholar is crucial from the point of view exemplifying his or her social and political convictions. The generally accepted approach to obtaining scientifically reliable results is to use a special well-defined scientific method for researching special types of language phenomena: cognitive methods applied to the exploration of cognitive aspects of language, whereas communicative methods are thought to be relevant only for the investigation of communicative nature of language. In the recent decades discourse as a sociocultural phenomenon has been the focus of careful linguistic research. The very concept of discourse represents an integral unity of cognitive and communicative aspects of human verbal activity. Since a human being is never able to discriminate between cognitive and communicative planes of discourse communication, it doesn't make much sense to apply cognitive and communicative methods of research taken in isolation. It is possible to modify the classical CDA procedure by means of mapping human cognitive procedures onto the strategic communicative planning of discourse communication. The analysis of the electronic petition 'Block Donald J Trump from UK entry. The signatories believe Donald J Trump should be banned from UK entry' (584, 459 signatures) and the parliamentary debates on it has demonstrated the ability to map cognitive and communicative levels in the following way: the strategy of discourse modeling (communicative level) overlaps with the extraction of semantic macrostructures (cognitive level); the strategy of discourse management overlaps with the analysis of local meanings in discourse communication; the strategy of cognitive monitoring of the discourse overlaps with the formation of attitudes and ideologies at the cognitive level. Thus, the experimental data have shown that it is possible to develop a new complex methodology of discourse analysis, where cognition would meet communication, both metaphorically and literally. The same approach may appear to be productive for the creation of computational models of human-computer interaction, where the automatic generation of a particular type of a discourse could be based on the rules of strategic planning involving cognitive models of CDA.

Keywords : cognition, communication, discourse, strategy