

SYNERGETICS ASPECTS: LANGUAGE, CULTURE, MULTILINGUALISM

Gural S.K., Smokotin V.M.

Tomsk State University, Tomsk, Russia

The paper raises the question of the three aspects of synergetics: language, culture and multilingualism. Synergetics can throw light upon mechanisms of sense forming. Synergetics treats the text as a non-linear informative medium in which language communication is realized. The mechanism of sense forming is understood not only from the point of view of linguistics but also as an independent reality.

The conditionality of thinking by socio-cultural factors and, in the first place, by the language has been quite thoroughly investigated by philosophers and cultural scholars. The analysis of the connections of consciousness, being and language, has been paid particularly great attention since the so-called linguistic "revolution" in philosophy ushered in by existentialism and phenomenology. It was Heidegger who initiated treating language as a medium of being and language as the home of being. Gadamer thought language to be not the only instrument of expression, but also a process of a dialogue between being and thinking, between things by themselves and the humanities knowledge of them. Thus language is the whole, the socium through which an individual human being is manifesting himself. Hermeneutics suggests other than instrumental approach to the language. In Gadamer's opinion, it would be more correct to consider that a language speaks to us more than we speak it. Languages have existed throughout civilization and the way to implement this is the "speculative game of the language". It is not the subject who is playing, but the game itself is becoming the subject of the playing movement.

A more systematic investigation of the language has been carried out in post-structuralism, which is the philosophy of the language. According to M. Foucault, J. Derrida and J. Deleuze, the language is a way of interpreting the world preceding any act of reflection. The language is never a language of a speaking person, but the language of conversation things are having with us. M. Foucault conceives the language as a modi-

fied nature, as an image of the world. To build the foundation to this thesis, he generalized different national forms of writing: Hebrew, Syrian, Egyptian, Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Mawr and Tatar. All these languages are written from the right to the left following the daily movement of the first heaven. The Greeks, Georgians, Romans and all the Europeans write from the left to the right, following the way and daily movement of the second heaven and the aggregate of the seven planets. The Hindus, Chinese and Japanese write from top to bottom which correlates with the establishment of the nature according to which people have their heads above and feet below. The Mexicans write either from bottom to top, or in a spiral being drawn by the sun during its annual movement through the Zodiac.

On the whole, the philosophic analysis of language is associated in various ways to an analysis of the way of being, which is reflected and fixed in the tongue. It is of interest that the treatment of being differs in different countries and in different ethnoses. "Бытие" (being) in Russian is not equivalent to "Seinschaft" in German. If one renders the word "being" into Ancient Russian it would be "Here I am", which sounds close to "авось" (avos) meaning "may be, somehow, let it be" and nowadays is understood like "we'll get out of it, somehow".

In modern philosophic discourse, new aspects of discussing the intricacies of "language and thinking" have appeared. What deserves the closest consideration is the synergetic approach to the analysis of the language. Synergetics (from the Greek *synergia* = collaboration, co-operation) has been ac-

tively used for more than 30 years in different fields of knowledge, denoting the methodology of investigating the processes of self-organization in complex systems of various origin. Language is one of the most complicated, dynamic and self-organizing systems. This can serve as a basis for extrapolating the laws of nature, which is exposed in the theory of self organization (synergetics) and then applied to the sphere of language and communication.

We are of the opinion that the synergetic analysis of the language makes it possible to acquire a new knowledge of semantics (i.e. sense forming) and organizing communicative processes as well as of the methodology of teaching a language. Let us make a sequential analysis of the above-mentioned directions of synergetic developments in the language.

Sense forming has traditionally been considered as connected exclusively with the activity of thinking man. Consciousness and intellectual activity are the cradles where sense is born. The activity of a human being becomes expedient only through its initial purport. However, this seemingly evident idea was revised by "pre-synergetic" authors, who were dedicated to investigating the problems of the text interpretation.

Classical philosophy looks upon language as a form of thought expression. Non-classical philosophy has come to the conclusion that the meaning of words does not precede the words themselves, but is defined in the context through the development of meaning. Many literary scholars have pointed out that the text organizes the plot itself. A piece of literature is first written and only then, as Borges used to say, if God permits do we find out what we have managed to express. Meaning and senses are being amalgamated in the space of development.

In the framework of a synergetic approach, one can assert that sense is not preset and does not belong to anybody: sense is born continuously in the process of a communicative intercourse. This theory underlies

polysemantics and the diversity in interpreting texts.

Sense is not predetermined but appears at the intersection of a number of simultaneously progressing processes as the correlation of separate acts of understanding and as a dynamic phenomenon. The synergetic analysis in general, and in the language in particular, steps forward as a play of evolution in which nothing has been predetermined but the rules of the play itself, whose rules are evolutionary interdictions. The non-linear character of interactions in the language and in the communication process perceived as a dissipative system reveals the process of sense forming. Within a sense of possible space, potent versions are predetermined and formed like events in natural reality, but the senses are actualized and revealed in a dialogue. As it has been pointed out in Hermeneutics, this sense suggests the presence of Another, i.e. another participant of communication.

Let us consider communicativeness, another aspect of the problems of "Synergetics and Language". The communicativeness of synergetics is preconditioned by the fact of its being directed to the cognition of dynamic integrity. The synergetic vision of the world includes recognition of self-activity of being, as well as of the unity of all the ongoing processes including social, thinking and ethical ones. Inside synergetics there is a certain nucleus which is being unseen and in fact is undepictable, nevertheless secures the possibility of synergetic discourse. This is the metaphysic order in the process of making. For conceiving this undisplayed order a new epistemology is required.

While characterizing the parameters of the cognitive situation in synergetics, some authors (V.I. Arshinov, J.P. Svirsky et al.) point out the following peculiarities of it. First of all, in synergetics the dialogue serves as a means of conceptual being and making. The leading cognitive connection in synergetics is the relationship of "I and Another". Synergetic discourse is not directed to expos-

ing laws, but to the dialogue and to creating interpretations.

In the framework of synergetics something deeper and greater than communicative reasoning is admitted. Synergetics suggests an open, communicatively oriented personality. A personal position, as V.I. Arshinov points out, is highly motivated and dynamic. It is "characterized by deviation from binary oppositions: the subjective - objective, the absolute - relative, as well as the artificial - natural and the discovered - created" [1]

The personal position is not equal to subjectivism, it is a highly motivated position of a scholar including the world outlook and moral standards. In the synergetic approach to the process of cognition, the question "What is the object of cognition?" is devoid of sense. There is neither object, nor observer, and the observers position is nowhere. "To know" in the synergetic aspect means "to be able to behave" adequately in situations connected with individual acts or cooperative interactions. [2]

The third aspect of the problem of "synergetics and language" with which we are dealing is the methodological character and is connected with analyzing the synergetic approach to investigating the language. In the system of knowledge, synergetics is referred to the category of interdisciplinary knowledge, that is why synergetics suggests a methodology differing from that of disciplinary organized knowledge.

The process of teaching a language is composed of many components: learning a sum of knowledge (informational aspects); putting senses together (hermeneutic aspect); interpersonal communication (communicative aspect); learning lexical and syntactical rules (cognitive aspect); mastering sociocultural skills of the language communication (moral-ethic aspect) and so on. The question arises if it is possible to organize the process of teaching in such a way that all the aspects of it should interact according to the synergetic principle.

The term "synergetics" suggested by G.Hacken for denoting the theory of self-

organization accentuates co-ordinating interaction of parts while organizing the structure as a whole. Synergetic processes are determined by the integrity, configuration of interaction and the place in the structure.

The synergetics concept of self-organization is central not only to the sphere of language and communication (3), but to the description of the world system of languages from separate languages to the linguistic ecosystem level. Revolutionary transformations in the political, economic, scientific and cultural life of the peoples of the world in the 20th century brought about changes in the way the academic community views multilingualism. The negative attitude towards multilingualism that can be traced to the Old Testament's notions of the babel of languages is gradually giving way to the realization of the fact that multilinguality has been a natural human condition throughout the history, rather than abnormality (4). The world system of languages, despite its seeming multilingual chaos and uncontrollable nature of some ten thousand languages, is an open, dynamic, self-organized system which exhibits distinctive synergistic behavior through the combination of the behaviors of individual languages in the network. The vastly complicated network of world languages, according to a detailed study by the Dutch sociologist Abram de Swaan, constitutes an efficient, strongly ordered hierarchical pattern he calls the global language system (5).

The world system of languages maintains its balance through the process of self-organization, relying on the basic ingredients of any synergetic process, notably multiple interactions, without being guided or managed by an outside source.

At present multilingualism has attracted a great deal of attention, and not only in academic circles, in connection with what is perceived as a threat to the plurilinguistic diversity as a result of emergence of the English language as a language of global communication. English, as a global language, is a new phenomenon, without precedent in his-

tory. Thus, the domain of Latin, or any other lingua franca, was limited to the European region, and couldn't be regarded as a language with a global status.

Before a need for a language of global communication arose, the world system of languages was in a stable state, organized on synergistic principles, with different languages taking over some important functions in international communications; thus French was used for diplomatic relations, English was the language of commerce and navigation, German controlled some important branches of science, particularly philosophy, and so on.

A need for a means of global communication brought about some radical changes in the hierarchy of languages. English has spread into all spheres of activities, including world diplomacy, science, cultural and tourist exchanges, information technologies and mass media, and the system of world languages has to readjust itself to new realities so as to maintain its sustainability and prevent a massive loss of linguistic and cultural heritage.

The new stage of synergetic action between the languages of the world is characterized by the recognition of the necessity for a language of global communication, on the one hand, and the need for protecting linguistic diversity. In this respect, Europe's strug-

gles to support multilingualism through incorporating multilingual principles in the EU's legislative acts, is a recognition of one of the characteristics of a self-organized system – its adaptivity to the dangers in the environment without endangering its essential organization. The Vienna Manifesto ("The Cost of Multilingualism"), issued by scholars from all European countries in 2001, put forward some principles and recommendations for the language policies at the new stage of synergetic action between languages. The linguistic future of Europe is envisaged as multilingual, which is seen as a solution to the uncontrollable spread of English and the prospects of English becoming the de facto language of the European Union (6).

References:

1. Arshinov, V.I. Synergetics as a phenomenon of the post-nonclassic science. Moscow, 1999, p.38.
2. The same, p. 157.
3. Formation of foreign intercultural competence of students in modern educational process' conditions. / Under Gural S.K. editing. Tomsk: TSU publishing house, 2008, p.26.
4. Smokotin V.M. Multilingualism and society. TSU bulletin, №302, September 2007, p.28.
5. Abram de Swaan. Words of the World: The Global Language System. Cambridge: Polity, 2001.
6. Vienna Manifesto "The Cost of Multilingualism". // Proceedings of the conference "The Cost of Multilingualism—Globalization and Linguistic Diversity", the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, 2001.