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SEMIOTIC CARE FOR SYMBOLIC RESEARCH AND SIGNS

Introduction

The importance of the topic consists in the presentation and interpretation of a new discipline – Didactic Semiotics, related to the analysis of the artistic text, namely, the linguistic-stylistic field, also seen from the perspective of several updated teaching strategies. In order to be able to compare artistic messages, sign systems and linguistic codes (poetic, chronological, territorial, popular, individual), as well as the semantic-logical expression of the poetic title, we will propose new algorithms for detecting signs and linguistic sign systems analyzed by various models and new teaching algorithms. The research topic can be interpreted as a mixed discipline, with several directions of concern.

Semiotics as the science of signs is concerned with deciphering and explaining a language. Sign-centered, semiotic investigation takes into account meaning and significance. As a tool for valorization, it presupposes the research perspective of communication, which contains the true meaning, in accordance with the phenomenological hermeneutics. The semiotic analysis of the artistic text presupposes the decipherment of the signs from the described culture. The reader identifies the sign-clothing object, gesture, object of material culture, sound signal-and gives it an appropriate interpretation. Didactics is a part of pedagogy that deals with the principles and methods of teaching. These make Didactic Semiotics to be considered as a whole and a science about signs with methodological orientation that studies the meanings of all signs, sign systems, messages, codes.

Theoretical assumptions and discussions

Semiotics has very old roots, but as a southern object it is a new discipline, from the beginning of the twentieth century and, like other new theoretical fields, it still bears the effect of models and disputes. It appears at the interference between philology (linguistics) and philosophy (logic) and provides the example of a very complex branch.

The methodological and theoretical-scientific support of the paper consists of older and newer investigations whose scientific contributions are recognized and appreciated. The most important contribution to the development of Semiology/Semiotics is made by the researchers who founded this theory: the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, in Europe, and the scientist Charles Sanders Peirce, in the United States. It is enough to analyze the definitions of this term to convince ourselves of the obvious veracity. Semiotics is the science that studies the existence of signs in social life (F. Saussure); formal doctrine of signs (Peirce); the way of moving from the initial to the enigma, a process of exchanging messages of any kind, together with the system of signs or codes that underlie these messages (Th. Sebeok); semiotics is a scientific metadiscourse, “a matrix of all sciences”, respectively “of any cognitive approach” (Ernst Cassirer). Umberto Eco argues that any semiotic theory includes a theory of codes and a theory of sign production. Semiotics is only a way of approaching the world from the perspective of the sign (Ch. Morris); the field of research of signs, of sign systems and the examination of the possibilities of knowledge mediated by various sign systems (V. Carmen); Daniela Roventă-Frumușani characterizes the semiotic approach through the functioning of two distinct ways of understanding it, an expressiveness intrinsic to the normal use of language and one characteristic of its deviated use. A. Boucourechliev argues that the study of art is indispensable in connection with the study of language. The implicit recognition of the benefits of some studies from a semiotic perspective is supported by the numerous works, made in the contemporary era under the *species semioticae*. Texts/discourses with legal, journalistic, didactic, scientific, political, journalistic or advertising content were treated, as demonstrated by the titles we record below: Daniela Roventă-Frumușani, *Semiotics of scientific discourse*; Vasile Dospinescu, *Semiotics and didactic discourse*; Dan Dobre, *Preliminaries has a semiotics of the press*; Dumitru Borțun, Teodor Borșa, *Photo-video and computer image processing. The semiotics of the visual*; Mirela Arsith, *Semiotics of Political Discourse*; Gheorghe-Ilie Fârte, *A logical-semiotic analysis of journalistic discourse, Argumentum*. The seminar

notebooks of discursive logic, argumentation theory and rhetoric. Aspects of semiotics are addressed in the works of researchers: Claude Lévi-Strauss, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, CK Ogden, IA Richards, R. Jakobson, L. Hjelmslev, AJ Greimas, E. Benveniste, T. Todorov, Max Bense, JJ Nattiez, L. Prieta, Rh. A. Sebeok.

The humanist psychologist Abraham Maslow, one of the most important theorists on human needs and motivation, proposed in his work “Theory of Human Needs” five types of needs: physiological needs, personal safety, belonging to a social group, recognition and development. Advancing on this pyramid man does not get stuck. The last step is harder to reach. Hence comes another fundamental human need which is the need for communication. According to information theory, communication is a process of transmitting a message to communicate to a destination, using a certain code and a certain channel. Communicating means the primary fact by which people, as rational beings, exchange intelligible messages and interact in a complex way in the social space, making transfers from one mind to another. Communication is vital for the existence of man and for the development of all activities that produce and reproduce the life of societies. Society does not exist outside of communication. Communication is the negotiation of meanings. But, to communicate also means to be silent, to wait for the answer, the reaction of the one to whom you wanted to let him/her know that you exist and you really want to say something to him/her.

Mankind creates and recreates new signs and symbols, depending on the needs of communication. Semiotics is the discipline that investigates how communication works, it is the science that studies signs and symbols. Both the sign and the symbol end up holding the place for a certain object. They take the place of this object not in all respects, but with reference to some kind of idea. The poorer the communication content, the lower the use of the symbols by the participants in the communication situation is. The more appeals are made to a symbol, the more the meanings of the symbol come to develop qualitatively, to know new and new dimensions, so that the communication through the symbols becomes richer.

The semiotic fundamental unit is the sign that shows, that indicates something. “A sign is something that, apart from the species encompassed by the senses, evokes something else in the plane of thought” [9, p. 131]. Signs contribute to the structuring and construction of a text. Synonyms for the term sign would be: stain, trace, scar, symbol, indicator, emblem, gesture, note. The sign represents the object or set of objects it represents: “there is absolutely no element of a man’s

consciousness that does not have something that corresponds to it in the word, and the reason is obvious: the word or sign that the man uses, he is the man himself” [8, p. 106]. Therefore, the concept of sign (from the Greek *semeion* - sign) is very old. It designates something that can be perceived and interpreted: colours, heat, shapes, objects, sounds, everything that can be perceived with the help of the senses. A sign is an object or event associated with a meaning based on a comparison, association. According to Ch. Morris’s definition, “semiotics is only a way of approaching the world from the perspective of the sign” [6, p. 171]. The sign has a primordial character and determines a “universe” that exists only in so far as the language exists, the world being given through communication.

The idea is that the human universe exists only through language. As a “transversal science, whose purpose is the detection of sign relationships in the most varied types of social practices, semiotics will have different meanings in specialized works, generally being accredited as the field of research of signs, systems of signs and examining the possibilities of knowledge mediated by various sign systems” [10]. In the semiotic horizon, the relationships between the elements of the structure are essential for the configuration of the semiotic object, so that the text is perceived not only as a textual verbal product, but also by the conditions of production/reception, along with the reception-production processes of this product.

Umberto Eco tries to build a general theory of semiotics based on code theory, to which is added an investigation into the production of signs. Two axioms are known that make the sign a unique object in its own way. *Pausemia* = everything is a sign and everything has meaning or it can have polysemy = any sign can have several meanings. Charles Sanders Peirce believed that signs are found everywhere in the universe, and words and symbols are only particular cases of signs.

Interpretation is an initiation into reading signs. To decipher the signs means to orient yourself both at the level of the inner universe and at the level of the outer universe. Man cannot live without signs, he needs orientation, to fix a centre, a point from which to start. The man who has the gift of following signs, lives in an enriched universe. For him, the world has a meaning. Signs are important, first and foremost, for us. By knowing the signs, we can better orient ourselves in our world. “Philosophers and linguists have always recognized that without the help of signs we would be unable to distinguish two ideas in a clear and constant way. Considered in itself, thinking is like a nebula in which nothing is necessarily delimited. There are no pre-established ideas and nothing is distinct before the

appearance of language” [7]. The idea is a sign of things and the image is a sign of the idea, the sign of a sign. The signs can be differentiated according to how symbolic they are. They can be denotative and connotative.

Denotative signs describe something and can be more easily decoded, as Barthes pointed out in his 1977 work, “Image-Music-Text”, a term introduced by Barthes is diegesis — the sum of the denotative meanings of an image. Even though denotative signs can be easily understood on a certain level, they can have many potential meanings that the viewer can be confused. Anchoring, another term introduced by Barthes, refers to what can help the reader/viewer to choose between the different meanings of a denotative sign. In commercials, texts often function as anchors. In television, text has a complementary function and is a much more important element in relation to the image.

The connotative signs carry a greater load of meanings. These can be divided into:

- Signs of the metonymy type, which are associated with something other than they represent. Metonymy is a lexical-semantic style figure by which a term is replaced by another term with which it is in some relationship. By metonymy can be replaced the effect with the cause, the cause with the effect, the work with the author, the content with the one containing, the product with the producer, the instrument with the edge, the symbol with the meaning, the author with the work: e.g. “will make statements tonight” (the United States government will make statements tonight).
- Signs of the synecdoche type, substitution figure, by which an object is named with the name of another, respectively those signs that represent a part of a whole and take the place of that whole. The synecdoche expresses the plural by the singular, the genus by species and the part through the whole, the species through the genus, the object through the material from which it is made, the object through its appropriation, the person through the instrument used: e.g. “give us our daily bread today...” (Prayer/substitution of the genus by species).

Gillian Rose stated that there are two types of signs: [5, p. 169–189]

- Syntagmatic signs take their meaning from the signs that surround it in a static image or follow one another in sequences in moving images, studied in semiological film analyses;
- Paradigmatic signs acquire their meaning by contrast with other signs.

“The general study of signs comprises three parts: pragmatics (the human-sign relationship), semantics (the sign-meaning relationship) and syntactic (the relationship between signs)” [4]. Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that analyses the relationship between signs and their interpretation. A branch of linguistics is also semantics, which studies the meaning of words and sentences. It aims to clarify to what extent the meaning and significance of complex notions can be derived from the simplest symbols of language, relying on the rules of syntax, but without identifying with it. In turn, syntactic-linguistic discipline, a branch of grammar, studies and describes the rules of organizing syntactic entities. Syntax, as a discipline, deals with the functions of parts of speech in statements and statements in sentences, establishing the rules for combining words into statements and statements into sentences. Syntax is also related to pragmatics, for example by highlighting one or another of the parts of a statement by syntactic procedures, such as changing the usual topic. Syntax as a discipline is also related to semantics, one of its branches being syntactic semantics.

In “A Theory of Semiotics”, Umberto Eco attempted to construct the general theory of semiotics based on code theory by adding an investigation into the production of signs. In the novel “The Name of the Rose” the reader is asked to interpret signs and messages from his own perspective. “The novel is a semiotic, narrative, figurative fresco in which everything is a quote and involvement of the reader” [1]. People’s social life is based on the production, use and exchange of signs. However, we do not know the meaning of many of the signs we encounter. As with words, the meaning of some signs always changes.

The meaning of a word is the way it is used in language, but its use stems from a certain form of life. “Reading means the encounter with the text, that is, with a group of signs organized in a certain way in order to produce a meaning. Or, the meaning of the text is never finite, it occurs at every meeting with the reader/receiver and depends on the experience and culture of the individual” [2, p. 262].

Any object, sound, gesture, figure can be used in verbal, paraverbal and nonverbal communication as a symbol. A symbol is a sign. The infinite number of symbols that has been created by humans since they lived in caves and until today is represented by a number of fields, such as science and technology, medicine, psychology, politics, mythology, religion, art, geography. The use of symbols allows communication and exploration of the relationships between things, concepts and features. Symbolic thinking is valid not only for creative people, but also for the ordinary man. With the help of symbols, the finest and deepest ways of the human being are revealed. The study of symbolic communication allows

us to know man better. Symbols carry meanings, which depend on one's cultural environment, the waiting horizon, the lived experience. They are a complex means of communication, which can often have several levels of significance. In other words, the statement would be valid - give me the context in which you encountered the word and I will tell its meaning to you.

Symbols make it easier to understand the world we live in and, thus, serve as the basis for judgments. People use symbols not only to make sense of the world around them, but also to identify and communicate. The meaning of a symbol can be changed depending on the context. The interest in the world of symbols has its origins in searches that date back a long time. These searches focus on discovering a personal way of expressing one's sensitivity. The conception related to the world of symbols is in continuous relational transformation. Knowing the meaning of symbols involves going through a considerable amount of information from various sources. This information in some cases confirms each other and in other cases contradicts. The interpretation of symbols is more often subjective than objective, it depends on the degree of human culture, religion, education, knowledge, field and geographical area. An image can become a symbol only insofar as the one who contemplates it is willing to make a psychological and emotional transfer of meanings. The symbol is the bearer of a message, it has a multitude of intellectual meanings and affective connotations. The expressiveness of the symbols is unlimited. Communication with the help of symbols is often easier, overcomes any cultural or linguistic barrier.

Now, we must not subject the symbol to excessive attempts at interpretation or simplification. Sometimes we can speak of a beneficial evolution of the symbol, other times of an involution. Depends on the context. If a word or image is too often used, too widely circulated for commercial purposes, it loses its importance, strongly detaches from the original meaning, the effect of supersaturation occurs. Thus, the meaning of some symbols undergoes conceptual, semantic and ideological changes. Symbols allow the human brain to continuously create understandings using decoding by both denotation and connotation.

Denotation is the direct literary meaning we can obtain. „Denotation is the abstract, conceptual or cognitive part, fundamental, stable, non-subjective and analysable outside speech, of the meaning of a lexical unit, being the object of a consensus of the linguistic community.” [3] The connotation is the meaning invoked by the object and shows what exactly the object symbolizes at the individual level, it is the subjective part, variable depending on the context, the communication situation, the meaning of a lexical unit. The connotative universe

of communication develops especially from the use of symbols that have a very high degree of complexity.

Everything, product or phenomenon has an objective value and a symbolic value. Each of us observes every day at least one symbol, a portrait, a photograph, a luxury car, whether we see a flag, whether we hear the siren of an ambulance, whether we listen to the anthem of a country at a sports competition, or whether we use a certain currency. However, the first meaning of these symbols remains to be seen. Even more interesting is the search for symbols where they do not exist. Or the invention of some. Often a valuable symbol with deep meanings can turn into a flat sign. Basically, the symbol represents both a sign and, especially, its meaning. Semiotologists, thus, study not only what a symbol implies, but also how it came to its meaning and how it works to make sense in society.

We live surrounded by symbols. Most of the signs used in communication are symbols, their character is usually mixed, they contain iconic and index elements. However, the semiotic series is evolving. Symbols derive from symbols and in turn give birth to symbols, i.e. arbitrary signs. Symbols take the form of words, sounds, gestures, ideas or visual images, and are used to convey other ideas. There is a tendency of people to see something much deeper outside of things, and this tendency has translated into a productive cultural activity responsible for the emergence of symbols, myths and elements of popular culture. At present, we cannot imagine life, communication without using different symbols. In our age, text is replaced by symbols so that information circulates as quickly as possible. This new type of language is used especially by young people and teenagers around the world.

Symbols are a complex means of communication with many levels of meaning. This separates the symbols from the signs, as the signs have only one meaning. When we talk about the difference between a sign and a symbol, we find that the symbol cannot be conceived as totally arbitrary, the symbol has several meanings. This separates the symbols from the signs, as the signs have only one meaning.

Our lives are overloaded with symbols. Communicating through symbols and signs we add a new value to objects without damaging their own values, those that are manifested in a direct form. Symbolic communication improves relationships between people and ensures a constantly open character. But a sent message will correspond to the one received if there will be all the elements of communication.

Conclusion

Semiotics accompanies didactics giving meaning and explaining the development of the instructive didactic process in the nature of knowledge itself and in its interpretation through the dialogic interaction subjects-teacher, producer-interpreter. A semiotic model of didactic communication is needed in the treatment of production-circulation-pragmatic recognition and its interaction relations with the semiotic/didactic foundations. The model will be used in studying the meanings of all signs, sign systems, messages, codes, for detecting needs, formulating and solving problems and developing teaching projects.

Abstract: The process of communication is vital to human existence. Mankind creates and recreates new signs and symbols, depending on the needs of communication. Semiotics is the discipline that investigates how communication works, the science that studies signs and symbols. The fundamental semiotic unit is the sign. To decipher the signs means to orient yourself both at the level of the inner universe and at the level of the outer universe. Signs can be denotative and connotative. The denotative ones are easier to decipher, the connotative ones carry a greater load of meanings and can be divided into metonymy and synecdoche type signs. The general study of signs comprises three parts: pragmatics (human-sign relationship), semantics (sign-meaning relationship) and syntactic (relationship between signs). Any object, sound, gesture, figure is used in communication as a symbol. A symbol is a sign. It is also the bearer of a message; it facilitates the understanding of the world. The meaning of a symbol changes depending on the context used. The interest in the world of symbols has its origins in searches that date back a long time. The concept of the world of symbols is constantly changing. Knowing the meaning of symbols involves going through a considerable amount of information. The interpretation of symbols is more often subjective than objective. It depends on the degree of human culture, religion, education, knowledge, field, geographical area. Symbols can be understood using decoding by both denotation and connotation. The symbol represents both a sign and, especially, its meaning. The difference between a sign and a symbol is that the symbol cannot be conceived as totally arbitrary, it has several meanings, and the signs have only one meaning. By communicating through symbols and signs we add new value to objects, we improve our relationships between people.

Keywords: communication, semiotics, symbol, sign, language

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