

COMMUNICATION VS INTERACTION: REVISITING CORRELATION OF CONCEPTS

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Abstract. The term "communication" is commonly used in Russian science. It has become engrained in the conceptual framework of social and humanitarian knowledge. Consistently, experts from various scientific fields have focused their attention on the issue of the correlation between the concepts of "communication" and "interaction" that was caused by the emergence of the new term. The studied phenomena are in the center of attention of a large number of integrative linguistic paradigms (communicative-pragmatic, discursive-cognitive, psycholinguistic ones, etc.), which are frequently used by representatives of different linguistic branches. The paper describes three approaches to the definition of the terms in question based on a narrower or wider interpretation of their semantics. Representatives of the first approach believe that the concept communication is broader than the concept interaction; the latter is a component of communication. Supporters of the second approach are convinced that the concept communication is narrower than the concept interaction. The third group followers reckon the terms communication and interaction to be synonyms. Analyzing all opinions, the author emphasizes validity of the third point of view, since the concepts communication and interaction can be considered synonymous within the framework of linguistic research..

Keywords: communication, interaction, linguistics, scientific approaches, linguistic paradigms.

1. Introduction

Studies of language reality in the communicative paradigm reflect the current trends in the development of linguistics. It is of great importance for understanding the mechanisms of speech interaction. At present, linguists heighten their interest in issues of live communication.

Communication is a complex process, and it is difficult to determine where or with whom a communication encounter starts and ends. Even though all animals communicate, as human beings we have a special capacity to use symbols to communicate about things outside our immediate temporal and spatial reality. The spread of the Internet in the digital age has contributed to the emergence of new types of communication. This invention keeps progressing and changes the society consistently making people changing their lifestyle and communication. In fact, internet has opened unparalleled opportunities for the development of communication between people changing the essence of communication and shifting direct face-to-face communication into the virtual world. Naturally, the changes in communication could not fail to attract the attention of specialists, because awareness of how communication functions gives the possibility to better prepare for future communication and learn from previous communication.

It should be noted that in recent years a large amount of academic papers has presented the studies of the communication process within the framework of various discursive practices: political discourse, law discourse, medical discourse, educational and pedagogical discourse, advertising discourse, literary discourse, tourism discourse, sports discourse, marriage discourse, religious discourse, academic discourse, mass media discourse, as well as informal interpersonal discussion, conflict communication situations and etc [1-4].

However, modern Russian researchers of different aspects of interpersonal interaction invariably face the challenge of defining such concepts as *communication* and *interaction*. This paper presents the main approaches to the correlation of these concepts.

2. Methods

The research methodology includes the following general scientific methods: induction and deduction, analysis and synthesis. The implemented linguistic methods encompass an analysis of definitions, component and contextual analysis, linguistic analysis of discourse, mental logical analysis.

3. Results And Discussion

Categories *communication* and *interaction* are especially significant for representatives of the humanities: philosophers, psychologists, sociologists and, undoubtedly, linguists. The studied phenomena are in the focus of a large number of "integrative by their nature independent linguistic paradigms (communicative-pragmatic, discursive-cognitive, psycholinguistic, etc.)" [5: 167] which makes the exponents of different linguistic branches frequently apply them "through the prism of their methodological guidelines".

Academic literature presents at least three approaches to the definition of the terms at hand based on a narrower or wider interpretation of their semantics. Disciples of the first and second approaches consider categories *communication* and *interaction* to be different and not equivalent. The **first** theory followers consider the **concept communication to be broader than the concept interaction** which is a part of the communication. A similar opinion is

shared by some humanities scholars who admit straightforwardly that "communication is a broad concept that reveals the nature of the interaction between two or more systems in the process of information exchange. Communication is both a tool and a condition for the existence of these objects; it is an implemented potential of the systems to self-development". Communication is "a narrower concept. It is not a condition and a mode of existence of the subject; it is only an instrument for the exchange of information - an instrument for the realization of communication relations" [6: 79]. An author of the "Dictionary of the Practitioner Psychologist", who holds this view, makes the comment in the dictionary article "Communication" before the first definition: "1) A concept close to the concept of communication, however, an **expanded** one" [7: 278]. In the linguistic paper on correlation of these concepts from the position of modern poly-paradigmatic linguistics, A.V. Prokopets defines *communication* as "an integral component of the communication flow" which is a more universal phenomenon. Following the idea of V.V. Krasnykh that "communication ... is not only an instantaneous act of communication when the processes of speech production and perception are almost simultaneous; communication is also interaction when perception is distanced from speech production in time and space" (Krasnykh 2003, quoted in 5: 169), he singles out a local temporal dynamic organization as the main distinguishing feature of the categories considered [ibid.].

Supporters of the **second** approach believe that the **concept interaction is broader than the concept communication**. Attitude to *interaction* as a phenomenon occupying an important place "in the whole complex system of human-world relations" is expressed by a highly reputed social psychologist G.M. Andreeva. By mentioning that "the roots of communication are in the material life of individuals" she proposed an idea (which was widely recognized) to define three interrelated components in the *interaction* structure: communicative, reciprocal and perceptual aspects. Thereby, a supporting function of communication is explicated in a global process of interaction. As exemplified by a farmer who sells goods on the market, the scientist claims that the money received for the goods will be "the most important interaction means". Bargaining includes personal interaction with a buyer; therefore, the farmer has to use a means of personal interaction – a human speech. Consequently, according to the psychologist, the communication as a form of face-to-face interaction in this case accompanies a more global interaction plan "forced by the very system of social relations" [8]. Some linguists also share the views of the second approach representatives. For example, the Ukrainian researcher F. Batsevich regards *communication* as an integral part of *interaction* (along with perception and reciprocal actions), "as a type of an interconnection process" within interaction - the complex of engagement and relationships of people, society, subjects who share experience, skills, habits and performance results (Batsevich 2004, quoted in [9: 29]).

A well-known follower of the communicative ideas, V.I. Karasik in a monograph on cultural linguistics and a discourse theory also points to a "narrow understanding of the phenomenon under consideration (*communication – the author's note*) as a system of modes and channels of communication". In his turn, he suggests that "communication should be broadly defined as interaction" which main goal is to maintain the unity of man and society, dialectical overcoming and confirmation of the individuality" [10: 285]. However, communication and interaction are most often used as equivalent categories in a narrow sense in reference to verbal communication.

Researchers from the **third** group consider the terms *communication* and *interaction* to be synonyms. Russian philosophers and psychologists, in particular, L.S. Vygotsky, V.N. Kurbatov, S.L. Rubinstein, are among those experts who use the studied phenomena in academic papers as equal terms. Similar views are held by such competent foreign scientists as T. Parsons and K. Cherry. Let us consider an opinion of A.A. Leontyev, a highly authoritative linguist and psychologist, who placed an utmost importance on the psychology of communication in his research. In the book on the topic, published back in 1974 and having survived several reprints, he notes that in most such cases "we are dealing with understanding communication more as a message (Mitteilung) than as actual interaction (Verkehr). However, a deeper understanding of the communication as an interaction in sensu stricto is possible. First of all, this approach requires clear awareness of the fact that communication (interaction) is not so much a process of external cooperation of isolated individuals as a way of internal organization and evolution of society in its integrity, an only process for the development of society because this development assumes constant dynamic interaction between the society and the individual" [11].

A linguistic view on similarities of these concepts is represented by S.G. Ter-Minasova in her famous academic paper - the first fundamental textbook on intercultural communication [12]. In the *Introduction* to the book she points to the value of words as the main means of communication and uses the both terms as synonyms: "in them (*words – author's note*) - luxury, freedom of **communication**, or **interaction**." Calling a person "a social being" who "lives in society and, therefore, can and should communicate with other members of this society", S.G. Ter-Minasova draws attention to the common roots of the words *Society*, *Interaction* and *Communication* in the Russian language ("the word *communication* has evolved from the same Latin root: *communis* - *common*"). In setting a goal of her paper she makes a conclusion in which the studied concepts are equaled: "any attempt to conceptualize **communication** between people, to understand communication barriers and communication aids is important and justified, since **interaction** is the pillar, the core, the basis of human existence".

An interesting conclusion is made by authors of the article "The Definition of the Concept of Communication in Modern Linguistics". They justify interchangeability of the terms *communication* and *interaction* in the context of

linguistic research when "scientists consider communication only as a phenomenon of human discursive activity for the purpose of exchanging information through the language as a sign system". One has to agree with its reason: the communication "is indeed a part of an active cognitive communicative environment and represents a merely human activity" [13: 209-210,14].

4. Summary

Undoubtedly, the processes of interpersonal cooperation play a crucial role in human life. Therefore, the processes of interaction and / or communication receive the attention of experts from various knowledge areas: philosophers, psychologists, teachers, sociologists, culture studies experts and, of course, linguists. The term *communication* for studying the communication processes was coined by foreign researchers a long time ago. The term was later adopted by Russian scientists, who can be divided into at least three main "camps" in accordance with their understanding of the term. The representatives of the first "camp" believe that the concept *communication* is broader than the concept *interaction*; the latter is an integral component of the *communication*. Supporters of the second approach insist on the concept *communication* being narrower than the concept *interaction*. Followers of the third group consider the terms communication and interaction to be equal.

In Russian science the concepts *communication* and *interaction* are not always used as synonyms. However, if being carefully considered, no significant differences are found between them.

5. Conclusions

It seems obvious that each of the above opinions has a right to exist. Taking into account and summarizing all mentioned above, we consider the following understanding as the most optimal one: *Communication = Interaction*; **Communication** or **Interaction** is a specific form of human cooperation in the process of cognitive and professional activities which is mainly characterized by language functioning as "the most important means of human contacts".

6. Acknowledgements

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

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