

THE MODELS OF SIGNS AND THE PROCESS OF SEMIOSIS

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the study of various terms, concepts, theories and models of signs proposed by various scientists. These models have a characteristic and distinctive feature, but at the same time, each of them contains one or another element of the other. The article tells about the process of formation of a sign as an object of Semiotics, and about the process of Semiosis, in which the sign is endowed with meaning and content.

Key words: Semiosis, sign, referent, interpretant, Frege's triangles, object, denotation, designator, designat.

Аннотация

Данная статья посвящена изучению различных терминов, понятий, теорий и моделей знаков, предложенными теми или иными научными деятелями. Эти модели имеют характерную, отличительную черту, но при этом каждый из них содержит тот или иной элемент другого. Статья рассказывает о процессе становления знака как объекта Семиотики, и о процессе Семиозиса, в котором знак наделяется значением и смыслом.

Ключевые слова: Семиозис, знак, референт, интерпретанта, треугольника Фреге, объект ,денотат, десигнатор , десигнат.

In the process of intentional and unintentional communication, we encounter and interpret various signs and symbols. In semiotics (the science of signs), the following term is distinguished, as Semiosis (from the ancient Greek (sēmeiōsis. (sēmeiō) "to designate"), or a sign process, the term denotes the process of generating meaning, in other words, the process of interpreting a sign.

A process can be any form of activity, process or behavior that involves signs, including the production of meaning.

Sign communicates a value that is not the sign itself to the sign interpreter. Semiosis is understood in a broader sense - not only as sign formation and interpretation of signs, but also as the processes of searching, storing, processing, transforming, disseminating information and using it in various fields of human

activity. The process of semiosis is the generation of signs, or the choice of a “body of a sign” for one or another mental content.

The term "Semiosis" was first used, apparently, by the Greek physician Galen of Pergamum (139-199), who called the term semiosis the interpretation of the symptoms of the disease. The concept of "semiosis" became in demand in the 20th century due to the growing interest in signs and sign systems. Modern ideas about semiosis have developed on the basis of various approaches to understanding the nature of the sign and its functioning, as well as the development of appropriate models of semiosis.

In the process of Semiosis, the sign is interpreted, endowed with meaning. Semiosis is a dynamic situation in which signs are interpreted, which occurs when the addresser intends to convey information to the addressee of the message. In this case, the addresser can use the medium-communication channel, which is available to the addressee, and the code-relationship between signifiers and signifieds, which is known to the addressee.

The process of Semiosis - the generation of signs, or the choice of a “body of a sign” for one or another mental content, can also be described using the theory of symbolic (or transformed) forms (E. Cassirer, M. K. Mamardashvili, E. F. Tarasov).

Symbolic forms are individual "cultural objects" or entire material structures filled with a "spirit function" - intellectual content. Such forms are found in different "modes": in language, myth, art, religion, scientific knowledge. The symbols, in which individual disciplines consider and describe reality, represent different expressions of the same "fundamental spiritual function", this is each individual energy of the spirit, through which a certain "meaning" is given to existing being - a kind of ideal content.

As E. F. Tarasov argues, one or another sign shell (in the case of material signs and symbols, a “cultural object”), in fact, is a transformed form of a fragment of the consciousness of its producers. This form is assigned the meaning accepted in a particular culture. It is also important that the sign shell is in unity with the meaning "stored in the body of a person communicating"

Therefore, the conclusion is inevitable that the sign shell (cultural object) becomes a sign only in communication, where there are interpreters-carriers of meanings[1]

The ancient Greeks included in Semiosis:

1. That (object) that acts as a sign;
2. What the sign points to or what it refers to (designatum);
3. The influence by virtue of which the given object turns out to be the sign of the interpreter for the interpreter

Semiosis is the process of generation and functioning of signs - abstract or material objects used to designate, represent, replace other objects, called the meanings

of these signs. Objects of various types can act as a sign: abstractions, objects, phenomena, properties, relationships, actions, and so on. Signs are created and used for the acquisition, storage, processing and transmission of information. At the same time, this or that object can act as a sign, becoming it only in a special process or sign situation - semiosis.

Semiosis is the subject of study in a special science of signs and sign systems - Semiotics.

The first approach to the definition of semiosis goes back to F. de Saussure and is based on the understanding of the sign as a dual entity, which is the unity of the signifier and the signified.

In Saussure, the signifier appears as a mental (i.e., ideal) phenomenon - it is "an acoustic image, a mental imprint of sound"[2] For Saussure, both the signifier (the 'sound pattern') and the signified (the concept) were purely 'psychological.

Both were non-material form rather than substance. A sign must have both a signifier and a signified [3]

F. de Saussure's sign model looks like a two-component structure, where the signified (the subject of signification) is determined through the signifier (that through which signification occurs). Saussure defines the linguistic sign as an inseparable unity of the signifier and the signified (binome), comparing their relationship with the two sides of a sheet of paper: there is no signified without a signifier, just as the existence of the bottom side of the sheet is impossible without the top. [4]

Therefore, in the semiotic tradition, dating back to Saussure (and developed primarily within the framework of structuralism), semiosis is defined as "an operation that, by establishing a relationship of mutual presupposition between the form of expression and the form of content - or between the signifier and the signified - produces signs." This definition is connected with the general approach to the concept of a sign, which in one way or another goes back to Saussurean linguistics. For it, first of all, the postulate about the arbitrariness of the sign is essential, due to which the connection between the signifier and the signified is not due to any of the proper properties of these components of the sign. It arises only within the framework of an integral system that unites signs. Semiosis, as a procedure for generating a sign, is, in turn, the process of the functioning of the system. It takes place as a result of the exchange between different parts of the system. It is the process of exchange that turns the elements involved into signs or messages. A classic example of semiosis is the functioning of money in an economic system. Money becomes a sign at the moment of its use, for example, when buying a product. It is then that they are endowed with meaning, that is, the signifier (banknote) is combined with the signified (its commodity equivalent or value).

The second approach to the definition of Semiosis goes back to the work of C. S. Peirce, who considers the sign as an object that represents or replaces something else in human activity. Peirce himself, when describing Semiosis, relies on the ancient definition, using the triadic scheme "object - sign - interpretant". By the term "interpretant" he denotes the way in which a sign is used by a person, or the effect that a sign produces on a person.

For Peirce, it was the concept of Semiosis that was the central concept of his semiotic theory. According to Peirce, no object functions as a sign until it is understood as such. In other words, something must be interpreted in order to be a sign.

According to Peirce, any sign has three main characteristics: 1) the material shell, 2) the designated object, 3) the rules of interpretation established by man.[5] According to Peirce, this knowledge is realized thanks to the interpretant.

An interpretant is a translation, interpretation, conceptualization of the sign/object relationship in a subsequent sign (for example, a certain human reaction to a perceived sign; explaining the meaning of a given word with the help of other words, etc.). Each sign is capable of generating an interpretant, and this process is virtually endless. Peirce postulates the need for the infinity of this process as follows. If we assume the hypothetical existence of the latest, most complex, exhaustive and final interpretant of a given object, then this interpretant can be nothing but the object itself, wholly revealed to our consciousness. But such an object, as well as such a sign (as physically identical to each other) are not possible and do not exist. Therefore, the process of interpretation is unlimited. Peirce's idea of unlimited Semiosis is based on this postulate. Within the framework of this approach, Semiosis is a dynamic process of sign interpretation, the only possible way of its functioning. Semiosis is the activity of a sign in the production of its interpretant. The idea of semiosis expresses the very essence of the relationship between the sign and the outside world - the object of representation exists, but it is remote and inaccessible, being as if "hidden" in a series of semiotic mediations. However, knowledge of this object is possible only through the study of the signs generated by it.

The description of the process of semiosis requires the following clarifications. First, the three indicated components of semiosis must be supplemented with one more - an interpreter, that is, a subject that produces and interprets signs. Secondly, semiosis is feasible only in a community of interpreters among whom there is agreement on the rules of interpretation.

The activity of the community consists in an uninterrupted Semiosis. A sign produced by one subject is interpreted by others, that is, it generates an interpretant. The latter, in turn, acts as another sign, also subject to interpretation. Thus, the object (i.e. "reality itself") about which communication takes place is never directly represented. For members of the community, it is always hidden behind a set of sign

mediations, that is, it is presented for understanding only within the framework of semiosis.

Developing Pierce's ideas, the German mathematician and logician Gottlob Frege (1848-1925) proposed his own triangular logical model of the functioning of the sign. Frege wrote: “When we use a sign, we do not want to say something about the sign, but the main thing, as a rule, is its meaning.”[6]

This model, which also has a triangular shape, like Pierce's model, presents the relationship between three other phenomena: a sign, an objectively existing element of reality that it reflects, and the idea of this element (the entire class of elements) functioning in the mind of the subject of sign activity.

This triangle models several processes at once - the emergence, functioning and transformation of signs in communicative interactions, as well as the use of the sign by the subject in various situations of communication.

At one of the vertices there is a sign, or, if we are talking about verbal communication, a word.

At the other vertex there is an object that is denoted by the given sign, or is called by the given word. An object is some element of an objective, objectively existing world. In logical-semiotic models, and Frege, we recall, was a logician by scientific specialization, an object that enters into semiotic relations with the sign denoting it, i.e. represented by a sign receives a special name - a denotation. “Denotation is an object, as an object of designation with the help of signs.”[7] In linguistics, instead of the term denotation, the term "referent" is used.

“A referent is a specific object to which a linguistic sign refers as part of an utterance.”[8]

Finally, at the third vertex of the triangle there is a subjective representation of the entire class of denotations of a given sign, represented in the mind of the subject of sign activity. In logic, this representation is called a concept, and in linguistics, a concept. The category "concept" in relation to such signs as language constructions is directly linked to the category "meaning".

In his logical theory of signs, Frege separated the concepts of meaning and meaning of a sign (name, term). He connected the category of meaning with the category of concept, the category of objective meaning with the category of denotation, and the category of sign with the category of name.

Frege's triangle demonstrates the dependence of the sign both on objectively existing reality (denotation) and on subjective ideas about this reality (concept). The Frege model allows you to make a semiotic analysis of communicative interaction and show the nature of the functioning of subjects in this process.

Charles William Morris defined Semiosis as "the process in which something functions as a sign."

Charles William Morris explored signs on a behavioral basis. Behaviorism argued that consciousness, thinking and human behavior are determined by reactions to external stimuli and are described by the formula "stimulus - reaction" ($S \rightarrow R$). In the same vein, C.U. Morris considered language, as well as the human psyche as a whole, to be purposeful behavior, a complex of reactions to certain stimuli - "sign situations". The sign situation correlates with the process of communication, although it is not identical to it. [9]

Ch. Morris, developing Peirce's approach, singled out three dimensions of semiosis, that is, three aspects of the activity associated with the generation and functioning of signs:

1. That which acts as a sign (relations of various signs within the framework of sign messages).
2. What the sign points to (relationships between signs and designated objects).
3. Influence by virtue of which the corresponding thing turns out to be a sign for the interpreter (the production and interpretation of signs, that is, the relationship of signs to interpreters and their relationship to each other mediated by sign activity).

The process of communication presupposes the presence of a speaker, a listener, an object in question (designata), linguistic signs (names, designators) and a sign situation. A sign situation arises in the process of communication between people, when a certain word is assigned the property of being a sign of some object, attribute or relationship. In this case, an important role is played by the interpretant - "generalized consideration", the possibility of interpreting a sign with the help of subsequent signs.

The very concept of a sign is interpreted by C.U. Morris as the sum of conditions sufficient for its formation. Morris distinguished:

- denotation (subject),
- designat (properties, signs)
- designator (name, symbol).

Denotations are members of a class, real objects conceived under one designation or another. A designatum is a set of features and properties characteristic of a particular class of objects. Each sign has a designatum, but not every sign corresponds to something that really exists (with a real denotation). In those cases where the object of reference really exists, this object is a denotation. Thus, it becomes clear that if every sign has a designatum, then not every sign has a denotation.

According to the method of signification (meaning), Morris divided the signs into the following groups: 1) characterizing (designators) - they mean the observable properties of the surrounding world or an actor, 2) evaluative (appraisors) - they mean

qualitative assessments of a particular object and situation: 3) prescriptive (prescriptors); 4) identifying (identifiers); 5) formats (formators):

Morris identified three semiotic areas within which signs should be considered: semantics (the study of the meaning or relationship of a sign to an object), syntactics (the study of inter-sign relationships and the meaning resulting from the combination of a sign with other signs) and pragmatics (the study of the relationship to the signs of speakers)

In this way, different approaches can be used to define Semiosis and the signs models. Semiosis is a process in which something functions as a sign. Semiosis is the process of comprehending a sign and giving it a specific meaning. Ch. Pierce's theories, which have a triadic form of a sign, meanwhile Saussure's dyadic model of the sign gave rise to the development of various theories and approaches of sign models and their classifications.

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