DISCOURSE STUDIES

A SEMIOSIS-BASED APPROACH
TO DISCOURSE INTERPRETATION

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Abstract
The article seeks to examine the largely unexplored potential of the dimensions of semiosis for discourse studies. The proposed argumentation refers to the process by which semiosic theoretical principles were selected and refined into a model of discourse analysis. The propounded methodology is exemplified by the genre of epitaphs and provides the platform for examining interactions among code, informational and cultural components of semiotic entity.
Key words: semiotics, semiosis, interpretant, discourse, semiosic approach, epitaph.

> *The sign defines its spread and signifying extension in and through the interpretant*
> *toward which it looks for its essential clarification and for its ultimate grounding*
> *as a significant utterance within human discourse* (Garth Gillan)

1. Introduction

Semiotics today is quite a broad field with much variety in it. A lot of existing definitions of semiotics only complement one another, and commonly, the shortest version – the science of signs – is considered to be sufficient (Seif, 2019a; Seif, 2019b, p. 94). This laconism, on the one hand, speaks of the methodological clarity of semiotics, and on the other hand, the complexity of the object has transformed semiotics into the "science of sciences". Umberto Eco states that the study of the limits and laws of semiotics must begin by determining whether (a) one means by the term 'semiotics' a specific discipline with its own method and precise object; or whether (b) semiotics is a field of studies and thus a repertoire of interests that is not as yet completely unified. In the first case, the researcher ought to propose a semiotic model deductively which would serve as a parameter on which to base the inclusion or exclusion of the various studies from the field of semiotics. If semiotics is a field, then various semiotic studies would be justified by their very existence: it should be possible to define semiotics inductively by extrapolating from the field of studies a series of constant tendencies and therefore a unified model (Eco, 1979, p. 7).

According to Roman Jacobson semiotics is called "to study the diverse systems of signs and to bring out the problems which result from a methodical comparison of these varied systems, that is to say, the general problem of the SIGN: sign as a generic notion with respect to the particular classes of signs" (Jacobson,1980, p. 1). In the opinion of Borys Uspenskii the situation in semiotics is alarming because there is no progress: basic concepts have not been defined and there is no unity

of methods (cit. from Kull and Velmezova, 2014, p. 532). Thus, semioticians need the patience and dedication necessary for working on foundational aspects, starting with defining the specific domain of knowledge and the appropriate methodology.

In this paper semiotics is defined as the doctrine of semiosis, that is, of all the processes which something functions as a sign. Interpretation of semiotics as a semiosic doctrine implies that the latter provides theoretical foundations and conceptual instruments to integrate different approaches to understanding 'the action of sign' regardless of the nature of the latter. So, this doctrine puts together a wide range of research in the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities and provides insights into the solution of various problems.

The major part of semiotic research encompasses all means of signification that are used for the communication of people, animals and machines. Still there are other conceptualizations of its limits: (a) semiotics concerns informational systems and informational structures that represent knowledge, including relationships between language and other data processing means; (b) semiotic studies are downsized to the consideration of interpretational and communicational processes through logical deductions; (c) semiotics should explore exclusively those objects that make up systems of interpersonal communication; (d) only arbitrary conventional system of signification, which are consciously and intentionally used by people for cognitive and communicative purposes are recognized as semiotic objects of examination, and others. Even this very short account demonstrates that the variety of interests of semioticians can generate a long list of research objects. The suggested definition of semiotics as the doctrine of semiosis leads to the idea that the subject of semiotics is not the content of the processes of communication, but 'the action of signs' in all the realms of natural and social life, where informational processes take place. Thus, the list of its primary tasks includes the following: 1) to study the nature of codes governing information transition; 2) to suggest a consolidated semiotic approach to the description of informational processes, both in nature and society, and to demonstrate the ontological unity of these processes induced by the use of codes; 3) to make judgements concerning the laws of semiosis governing the action of signs in each particular domain; 4) to develop methodological foundations of research taking into consideration dimensions of semiosis. The present work aims to be considered as a modest attempt to overcome the aforementioned theoretical lacuna and to suggest a semiosis-based approach to discourse analysis.

2. Material and methods
2.1. The Notion of Semiosis: Levels and Dimensions
The idea that semiotic study actually consists in analyzing the sign's action belongs to Charles Sanders Peirce who called this action 'semiosis' or 'semeiosy'. He uses both forms of the term:

> It is important to understand what I mean by semiosis. All dynamical action, or action of brute force, physical or psychical, either takes place between two subjects [whether they react equally upon each other, or one is agent and the other patient, entirely or partially] or at any rate is a resultant of such actions between pairs. But by 'semiosis' I mean, on the contrary, an action, or influence, which is, or involves, a cooperation of *three* subjects, such as a sign, its object, and its interpretant, this tri-relative influence not being in any way resolvable into actions between pairs (URL: http://www.commens.org/ dictionary/term/semiosis).

Peirce also introduces the term 'semeiosy' to speak about the 'action of sign' having a 'triadic character'. Defining semiosis as the action of the three relata, Peirce emphasizes that signs acquire more meaning through their own activity and that dynamicity of semiosis is a crucial feature of this semiotic activity. The sign as a triadic relation is defined as something that stands for something else (its *object*) for something third (its *interpretant*), or alternatively as something that mediates between its object and its interpretant. Nöth believes that Peirce adopted the term 'object' from the XIII century scholastic terminology, where 'objectum' meant a creation of the mind in its reaction with a more or less real something upon which cognition is directed (2011, p. 29-30). Peirce differentiates between sign-action (semiosis) and sign-representamen which is the point of departure of semiotic inference. This led him to use 'sign' when speaking of the sign in action and 'representamen' when analysing

the constituent elements of semiosis. These constituents are the representamen, the interpretant and the object, which he calls the 'Immediate Object' within semiosis in order to discriminate the object outside semiosis which he calls the 'Dynamical Object': "…every sign has *two* objects. It has that object which it represents itself to have, its Immediate Object, which has no other being than that of being represented to be, a mere Representative Being, or as the Kantian logicians used to say a merely Objective Being; and on the other hand there is the Real Object which has really determined the sign [,] I usually call the Dynamical Object, which alone strictly conforms to the definition of the Object" (URL: http://www.commens.org/dictionary /term/immediate-object). Peircean logic assumes that all knowledge is obtained from triadic sign action of pointing to an external world – however, not to real objects but to semiotic objects as they are represented by signs which point to our phenomenal world. The followers of Peirce's ideas believe that "semiotic logic leads us to a new methodology, an integrated methodology for inquiry involving the unification of science and phenomenology" (Pearson, URL: https://www.academia.edu/ 13674256, p. 4).

Following Peirce's ideas, Charles Morris foresaw the universal possibility and potential of semiosis for the science of semiotics. He defines semiosis as "the process in which something functions as a sign" and explains that it involves three (or four) factors: that which acts as a sign, that which the sign refers to, and that effect on some interpreter in virtue of which the thing in question is a sign to that interpreter. These three components in semiosis he calls, respectively, the 'sign vehicle', the 'designatum' and the 'interpretant'; and mentions that the interpreter may be included as the fourth factor (Morris, 1938, p. 3).

To describe the process of semiosis, Morris uses a rather vague term 'mediated-taking-account-of' (ibid., p. 4). An interpreter mediately takes account of something and interpretant which is evoked by something functioning as a sign is explained as 'taking-account-of-something'. As the notion of interpretant is the key one for this research, it should be mentioned that Morris treats this notion differently in different parts of his work: a) "the effect on some interpreter in virtue of which the thing in question is a sign to that interpreter" (ibid., p. 3); b) "a-taking-account-of-something in so far as it is evoked by something functioning as a sign" (ibid., p. 4); c) "the habit in virtue of which sign vehicle can be said to designate certain kinds of objects or situations; as the method of determining the set of objects the sign in question designates, it is not itself a member of that set" (ibid., p. 34); d) "part of the conduct of the individual" (ibid., p. 39). One cannot but agree that the interpretation of the phrase 'taking account of' is behavioristic and not sufficient for a complete study of semiosis.

What made Morris's theory so famous was the description of the dimensions of semiosis. He uses the term not in its primary meaning of a measurable extent of a particular kind, such as length, breadth, depth, or height, but as a synonym of 'coordinate' or 'parameter'. In this paper it is defined as a certain amount of significant parameters, which are crucial for the existence of an object and can provide its comprehensive description. Morris describes dyadic relations between the three correlates: 1) the formal relation of signs to other signs (syntactic dimension); 2) relation of signs to objects that is to what they denote (semantic dimension); 3) the relation of signs to interpreters (pragmatic dimension) (Morris, 1938, p. 6). These dimensions may be viewed with certain reservation: the detailed revision of Morris's dimensions of semiosis was presented elsewhere (Andreichuk, 2019). The pertinent goal of this research is to substantiate the conviction that dimensions of semiosis (defined as the action of sign) should be based primarily on the interpretant which is triadic and presents an inseparable unity of primary, notional and cultural interpretants (Fig.1). This substantiation is based on the following convictions: (a) semiosis generates the interpretant; (b) it is the agency of the sign itself rather than the agency of an interpreter. The interpretation of the latter can be regarded as the perception of the meaning exhibited by the sign itself through the interpretants it generates. Ransdell (1997) argues that meaning creation and change "is never due solely or primarily to what *we* do: man proposes but the sign disposes" (URL: https://arisbe.sitehost.iu.edu/menu/library/aboutcsp/ransdell/ AUTONOMY.HTM). Thus, the process of semiosis is self-governing: the sign has a power of generating interpretants.

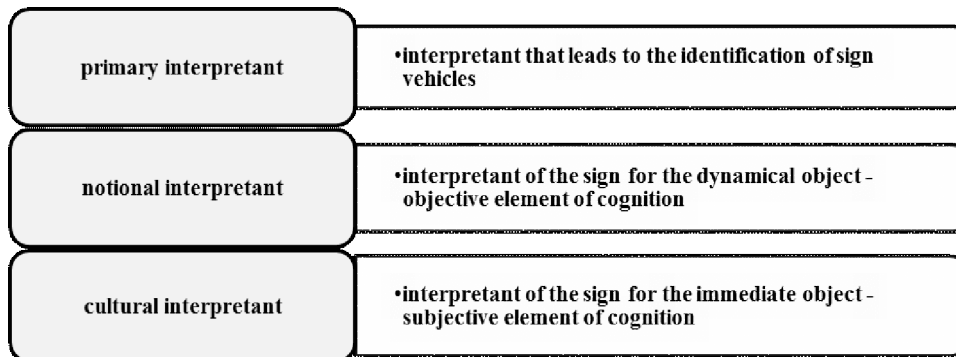| primary interpretant	• interpretant that leads to the identification of sign vehicles
notional interpretant	• interpretant of the sign for the dynamical object – objective element of cognition
cultural interpretant	• interpretant of the sign for the immediate object – subjective element of cognition

Fig.1. The triadic nature of interpretant.

The first dimension of the relation of the interpretant and sign vehicle is the code dimension of semiosis, since primarily the interpreter perceives the sign vehicle as a unit of code. Semioticians state that all the intelligibility depends upon codes, and code in this context is used to designate a set of systemically organized signs and rules of their combining. Code dimension, as suggested in this paper, refers to the study of the nature of sign vehicles and codes which they belong to.

The second dimension of semiosis is shaped through the relation of sign vehicle and notional interpretant. The sign vehicle determines notional interpretant and represents designatum. Terms 'determination' and 'representation' are used as advanced by Parmentier who, commenting on Peirce's ideas on the nature of sign, writes that vector of representation is directed from the sign and interpretant to the object and vector of determination – from the object to sign and interpretant, and these are "two opposed yet interlocking vectors involved in semiosis" (1994, p. 4).

The notional interpretant provides the reference of the identified object to the dynamical object. It possesses two basic characteristics: 1) mental nature (is localized in the consciousness and is a mental projection of an object); 2) affiliation to knowledge as a set of relatively stable, objective and collective notional interpretants. Since knowledge turns into information in the process of transference, it is suggested to call the second dimension of the action of sign the informational dimension of semiosis.

The third dimension of semiosis is associated with the cultural interpretant reflecting 'the evaluative ideas' of interpreters. This dimension correlates with Morris's pragmatic rules, but is interpreted in the broader context: the context of culture. The latter is a very broad term but recently externally focused definitions of culture have taken a semiotic turn. According to Geertz, culture is "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols" (1973, p. 89). This pattern shapes the system of evaluations and values in the mind of the interpreter. Thus, the triadic nature of the interpretant forms the basis for singling out three dimensions of semiosis (Fig.2):

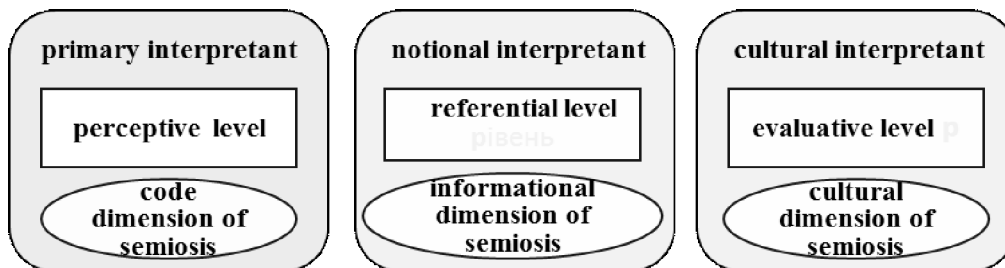| primary interpretant	notional interpretant	cultural interpretant
perceptive level	referential level	evaluative level
code dimension of semiosis	informational dimension of semiosis	cultural dimension of semiosis

Fig.2. The potential of interpretant for defining dimensions of semiosis

Semiosis being any process involving a particular relation between a sign-vehicle, an object, and an interpretant possesses code, informational and cultural dimensions and can be researched at perceptive, referential and evaluative levels.

2.2. Suggested approaches in semiosis-oriented discourse studies
It was three centuries ago that the philosopher John Locke proposed to recognize semiotics as "the business whereof is to consider the nature of signs the mind makes use of for the understanding of things or conveying the knowledge to others" (Locke, 1979, p. 720). However, only in 1962 the anthropologist Margaret Mead at the important conference conducted at Indiana University (1964, p. 277-288) stated that 'semiotics' triumphed over 'communication'. In words that interestingly complement those of Locke, Mead described the object of semiotics as 'patterned communication in all modalities' (ibid., p. 275-276). It seems that this description comes very close to the definition of discourse suggested in modern communication studies. Discourse as the category of communication (together with speech genre and communicative act) has become an interdisciplinary object. It is explored differently depending on vectors of research. According to Martyniuk the vector connected with semiotics is represented by two groups of scholars (2011, p. 19-20): a) those who treat discourse within social-ideological dimension and concentrate on 'discourse practices' as patterned means of rendering ideological sense and b) those who associate discourse with idiostyle, that is the representation of the systems of values through the systems of signs. Kravchenko singles out three vectors of semiotics-oriented discourse studies (2006, p. 36-45): 1) discourse is identified with the semiotic process and the semiosic correlation of different components of communication is studied; 2) text is defined as a signal in the space of culture; 3) the internal sense-forming elements and principles that enable the identification of text/discourse as a sign are considered. The above mentioned approaches can be integrated in the semiosic theory within which discourse is viewed as semiosis, that is the action of the functional unities of signs (texts) in repeated communicative situations brought to life by different social needs. Thus discourse analysis should concentrate on the integral study of the perceptive, referential and evaluative aspects of texts immersed in different cultural contexts. 'Perceptive' vector presupposes that the text is qualified as a semiotic integrity, a macro-sign commonly involving different codes in the process of semiotization, that is the modelling of speech activity in communication, specific rules of its organization by which individual and social experience is structured. The in-depth mechanism of signification is objectivized in texts of different speech genres. The approach providing a methodology for studying the types of sign systems and the processes in which signs are handled as well as the contexts in which signs and sign processes are embedded is suggested to be called codosemiosic approach (Fig.3). Two aspects are relevant for this approach: (1) the expression material, i.e., the stock of perceivable items from which expressions are selected; (2) sets of rules which govern the selection of expressions and their assignment to contents.

'Referential' vector deals with the second dimension of semiosis shaped by the relation of sign vehicle and notional interpretant. The action of text on the referential level is inseparable from information processing. McCreadie and Rice reviewed concepts of information proposed in the second half of the twentieth century and the summary of the concepts they considered allows to indicate that information is defined as (1999, p. 45-76): (1) a stored knowledge; (2) data in the environment; (3) information as part of the communication process; (4) information as a resource or commodity. In the context of discourse analysis, we can define information as the result of semiosis.

Actually, the action of sign 'becoming informative' is the core of semiosis. Thus, the informational dimension of discourse semiosis brings to light another approach in semiosis-oriented discourse studies: an infosemiosic approach (Fig.3). One of the challenges of this approach is to make an attempt to establish correspondences between propositions and 'objective elements of cognition' (Fig.1) and further develop the theory of discourse interpretation.
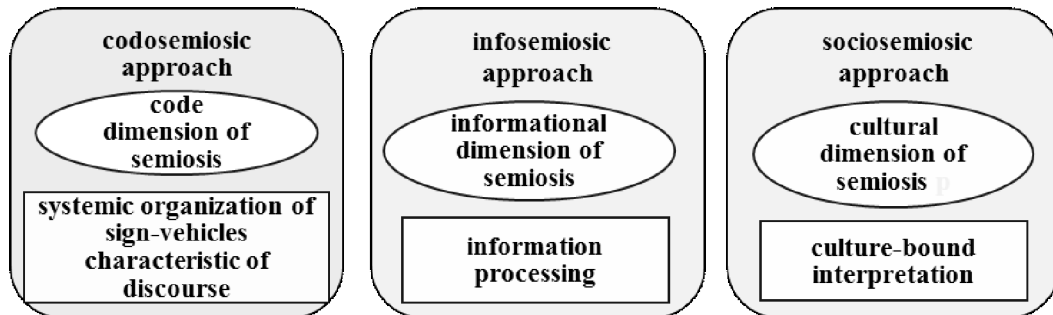
Fig. 3. Semiosis-based approaches to the discourse studies.

'Evaluative vector' in semiosis-oriented studies of discourse opens up a new orientation of research related to the cultural dimension of semiosis: a sociosemiosic approach (Fig.3). In this paper it is viewed as a more general notion than social semiotic as suggested by Michael Halliday (1978). He discusses only lingual codes and treats them as social semiotic resource used to achieve goals expressing meaning in context. The suggested approach is actually based on Peirce's conviction that "every cognition involves something represented, or that of which we are conscious, and some action or passion of the self whereby it becomes represented. The former shall be termed the objective, the latter – the subjective element of cognition" (URL: http:www.commens.org/dictionary/term/immediate-object). The cultural interpretant as treated in this article provides the connection of sign-vehicles with the systems of evaluations and values in the mind of interpreter and thus correlates with the subjective element of cognition (Fig.1) shaped by the cultural context of semiosis.

3. Results and discussion

The suggested ideas are illustrated by the analysis of the epitaph viewed as a separate speech genre of funeral discourse. The verbal part of the epitaph is a short phrase that honours a deceased person, usually inscribed on a tombstone (the English word *epitaph* is derived from the Greek ἐπιτάφιος, which translates literally as on or at (ἐπί) the tomb (τάφοτ)). In ancient Greece, an upright stone slab (stele) marked the location of a burial. An inscription on it communicated the identification of the deceased. This custom of identifying of the deceased originated in Egypt and among Minoan-Mycenaean civilizations, even though the location of a burial had also been communicated earlier, whether through a mound or a pile of stones (Bryant and Peck, 2009, p. 413). Initially only non-verbal signs were used to indicate the place of burial. When the first sepulchral inscriptions appeared, they were generally brief and contained short information about the deceased and some common-place topics reflecting religion, philosophy, belief in immorality of people etc. For the purpose of our research we have chosen the Roman epitaph *Sit tibi terra levis* and its Ukrainian equivalent *Хай земля буде тобі пухом*. Judson Tolman based his doctoral research on 1858 sepulchral inscriptions collected in Beucheler's "Carmina Epigraphica Latina" (in two volumes) published in Leipzig in 1895 and 1897. Tolman refers this epitaph to "the common places per se" which we would ordinarily expect to find in sepulchral inscription (1910, p. 18-19). He indicates that those met most frequently are the following: the age of the deceased, that his bones are in the tomb, that he lies here, that he rests in peace, expressions of regret because he was taken prematurely, an account of the life he lived etc. Among more figurative ones this author mentions the desire that the earth rest lightly upon the one buried (ibid). Tolman states that a large proportion of inscriptions contain this sentiment. It occurs most commonly in the stereotyped form "Sit tibi terra levis" or "Sit terra levis", though sometimes this epitaph is modified. The reader or traveler is generally asked to request that the earth rest lightly upon the body of the deceased or that he rest in peace:

65

• *Quisque praeteriens titulum scriptum legeris, / Tactus pietate hoc precor ut dicas; Ianuaria, / sit tibi terra levis* – I ask every passerby feeling piety to read the inscription and to say; Yanuarii, let earth be light for you[i];

• *Tu qui legesti, ne sit grave dicere, / quaeso, Crispinae ut nullum terrae sit pondus gravatum* – I ask that for anyone who has read, it won't be difficult to say: Let the earth be not heavy for Crispina/

Sometimes the researched text is tacked on as though it were an afterthought:

• *Hic situs est, sit tibi terra levis* – Here he lies, let the earth be light for you.

• *Sit tibi terra levis, / cineres quoque flore tegantur.* – Let the earth be light for you and flowers cover the ashes.

Tolman (1910) also illustrates some noteworthy instances where the writers manifested considerable ingenuity in their attempts to avoid a stereotyped form of expression:

• *Ita levis incumbat terra defuncto tibi / Vel assint quieti cineribus Manes tuis. / Rogo ne sepulcri umbras violare audeas.* – Let the earth lie light on you, the buried, or underground gods be well-wishing to you. Please, do not ruin the shadow of the deceased.

Tolman believes that the common-place *Sit tibi terra levis* is of Greek origin (1910, p. 27), but professor Bohdan Cherniuh, head of the Department of Classical Philology (Ivan Franko National University of Lviv) does not think that there is enough evidence to prove this, and argues that this epitaph renders archetypal beliefs that the spirit remained in the tomb with the body and 'terra levis' appeared concurrently in two cultures (B. Cherniuh, personal communication, May, 2019).

In the Ukrainian culture epitaphs were first discussed in Ukrainian poetics and rhetoric of XVII –XVIII c. in which they were studied as the type of letters. Tsyhanok calls this type 'funeral letters' and claims that the epitaph is one of its principal genres together with the funeral speech. In the mentioned Ukrainian sources, they were studied as issues of applied rhetoric (Tsyhanok, 2014, p. 99). Functions of epitaphs, listed in the Ukrainian books on rhetoric, are generally the same as in Roman tradition: to tell about the deceased, his life, honours and dignities, how he died, especially if his death was in battle for his native land etc. In the first preserved Ukrainian school course of poetics (1637) it is indicated that ancient poets commonly used the image of 'light earth'. Tsyhanok (2014) mentions some fragments from Martial, a Roman poet: *Sit tibi terra levis, mollique tegaris arena, ne tua non possint eruere ossa canes* – and provides a Ukrainian translation: *Хай тобі пухом земля буде, вкриє нещільний пісочок, псам щоб неважко було вирити кості твої.* The final part of the epitaph in Martial seems rather strange for a modern reader and sounds like wishing torment even after death. Actually it renders the pagan belief that the human soul does not leave the body after death and the deceased can get out of the grave. Thus, to make it easier for him, the earth should lie light on the grave.

When the author's parents passed away, *Sit tibi terra levis* was the chosen epitaph for the father, Ivan Andreichuk, who was a classical philologist and taught Latin and ancient Greek, including Greek epigraphics, at Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, and its Ukrainian equivalent *Нехай земля буде тобі пухом* for the mother, Olha Andreichuk. These epitaphs are carved on the tombstone which is a discursive sign in the space of culture and can be analysed applying the above-mentioned approaches.

A codosemiosic approach, that is the study of the systemic organization of sign-vehicles characteristic of this tombstone, brings to light the following issues: 1) it is a multimodal entity and includes lingual and non-lingual signs; 2) it is identified as belonging to funeral discourse. At the perceptive level pictorial signs (the tombstone contains portraits, cross, book, candle, flowers) are combined with the texts of epitaphs, names and dates of earthly ways and are correlated to the existing cognitive model of a tombstone – discourse/genre identification occurs.

An infosemiosic approach presupposes that at the referential level the interpreter deals with the nature of signification, the knowledge of the dynamical object is of utmost importance and at this

stage information about the deceased is processed. On the evaluative level a sociosemiosic approach comprises the analysis of the nature of sign as a signal in the space of culture. In the context of our example the very tombstone is a cultural text which is a functioning semiotic unity and the carrier of several integrated messages (including natural language, visual art forms, rituals etc.). A sociosemiosic approach presupposes that semiosis is viewed as the communication-oriented process of generating cultural texts and the communication itself as the circulation of texts in culture. Lotman mentions that such communication comprises different, although complementary processes: 1) communication of the addresser and the addressee, 2) communication between the audience and cultural tradition, 3) communication of the reader with him/herself, 4) communication of the reader with the text, 5) communication between the text and cultural tradition (1990, p. 276-277). In the author's parents' epitaph, one may note that the cultural dimension of semiosis explains the choice of a Latin epitaph as classical philology. This is due to the importance it had in the father's life, and the choice of the Ukrainian translation meant love and devotion from the mother to her husband.

3. Conclusions

Answering the question whether one means by the term 'semiotics' a specific discipline with its own method and precise object; or whether semiotics is a field of studies and thus, a repertoire of interests, this article gives arguments to support the first belief and proposes a semiotic model deductively which would serve as a parameter on which to base the inclusion or exclusion of the various studies from the field of semiotics. It is claimed that the precise object of semiotics is semiosis and whenever semiosis occurs – interaction occurs. Semiosis is defined as the process by which representations of objects function as signs, that is the process of cooperation between signs, their objects, and their interpretants. Semiotics studies semiosis and is an inquiry into the conditions that are necessary in order for representations of objects to function as signs. The proposed methodological framework that was laid out in this paper aims at filling a gap in the existing semiotics-oriented discourse studies. Some ideas of Charles Peirce and Charles Morris on semiosis were revised and used to substantiate three main correlations: 1) dimensions of semiosis correlate with types of interpretants; 2) types of interpretants correlate with levels of analysis; 3) levels of analysis correlate with approaches to discourse interpretation. Thus, primary interpretant that leads to the identification of sign-vehicles makes the basis of the code dimension of semiosis which calls the codosemiosic approach for studying the systemic organization of sign-vehicles characteristic of discourse on the perceptive level. Notional interpretant that leads to the dynamical object described by Peirce as "the really efficient but not immediately present object" (1998, p.482) is associated with the informational dimension of semiosis. It is claimed that the latter can be studied applying an infosemiosic approach which aims at analyzing objective elements of cognition and can further develop the theory of discourse interpretation on the referential level. A cultural interpretant – interpretant for thought – leads to immediate objects and makes the basis for singling out the cultural dimension of semiosis, that moves the researcher to the evaluative level of interpretation. The term 'cultural' in semiosic context renders the author's conviction that the entire set of sign systems which endow the external world with value is the most general definition of culture: cultural dimension of semiosis deals with the interpretative mechanism through which the world is rendered meaningful.

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Résumé

Supporting Eco's attempt to make semiotics a scientific discipline the author suggests that the interpretant of sign should be the basis for the differentiation between three dimensions of semiosis. The latter is defined as the action of signs that organizes the very structure of the interpretation process.

It is propounded that three types of interpretant – primary, notional and cultural – are responsible for the existence of three dimensions of semiosis: code, informational and cultural. Discourse is considered to be a sign and it is suggested that its interpretation is a complex semiosis-based procedure involving three levels of decoding: perceptive, referential and evaluative. Thus, discourse can be decoded within: a) the enabling and justifying code; b) the knowledge which we have with regard to objects; c) the social-cultural realm. Scholars-interpreters can apply three approaches to describe an explain discourse as a category of communication. The first deals with signification systems that are exploited in order to physically produce components of discourse and is termed *codosemiosic approach*. The second – with judgements on discourse intermediary agency within the semiotic universe which allow us to grasp the reference to the processes of cognition and knowledge patterns. This one is suggested to be called *infosemiosic approach*. And finally, *sociosemiosic approach* can be identified with the study of how discourse communicates something graspable within a particular social and cultural community with all implications concerning identity.

The case-study provides the description of the semiosic analysis of a tombstone as a multimodal discursive sign in the space of culture which contains epitaphs as a separate genre of funeral discourse. The potential of three approaches for the tombstone interpretation is considered and three dimensions of its semiosis are discussed. It is suggested that codo-, info-, and sociosemiosic approaches elaborated in the article may provide a new tool for discourse studies.

Key words: semiotics, semiosis, interpretant, discourse, semiosic approach, epitaph.

Анотація

У цій статті семіотика розглядається як вчення про семіозис, тобто процеси, в яких щось функціонує як знак. Тлумачення семіотики як семіосичної доктрини передбачає, що вона забезпечує теоретичні засади та концептуальний інструментарій для інтегрування різних підходів до розуміння 'дії знака' безвідносно до його природи і об'єднує широкий спектр досліджень у природних, гуманітарних та соціальних науках. Анотована стаття привертає увагу до семіотичного вектору вивчення дискурсу в сучасному мовознавстві. Розглянуто можливість доповнити семіотично-орієнтовану дискурсологію новими підходами до аналізу об'єкта, які випрацювано з опорою на тлумачення дискурсу як семіозису. Опоровим твердженням дослідження є постулат про триєдність таких співвідношень: 1) виміри семіозису – типи інтерпретант; 2) типи інтерпретант – рівні інтерпретації; 3) рівні інтерпретації – підходи до аналізу дискурсу. З опорою на виокремлення первинної, поняттєвої та культурної інтерпретант знака розглядаються три виміри семіозису: кодовий, інформаційний та культурний. Названі виміри корелюють з перцептивним, референційним та оцінним рівнями інтерпретації дискурсу. Відповідно мовознавець-інтерпретатор може опиратися на три підходи, які пропонується назвати кодосеміосичним, інфосеміосичним та .соціосеміосичним. Перший передбачає розгляд систем означування, які застосовуються для фізичного продукування компонент дискурсу та їхнього застосування в процесі передавання інформації. Другий підхід пов'язаний з аналізом референції дискурсу до процесів пізнання та моделей знання. Третій підхід встановлює зв'язок з соціокультурними параметрами, які чинять вплив на інтерпретацію та забезпечують виявлення імплікацій, породжених ідентичністю продуцента. Таким чином, випрацювано методологічні засади дослідження дискурсу як семіозису.

Застосування запропонованих кодо-, інфо- та соціосеміосичних підходів проілюстровано на прикладі надгробного пам'ятника як цілісного знака в просторі культури, який поєднує мовні та немовні знаки. Зокрема проаналізовано епітафію як окремий компонент надгробка, який розглянуто як особливий жанр фунерального дискурсу. На прикладі латинської епітафії *Sit tibi terra levis* описано її розгляд у кодовому, інформаційному та культурному вимірах.

Ключові слова: семіотика, семіозис, інтерпретанта, дискурс, семіосичний підхід, епітафія.

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