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Social Communication as a Condition of Socio-Cultural Identity

The problems of interhuman understanding and agreement, social communication have a fundamental meaning in the analysis of all the forms and ways of social existence of man. We could even say that it is impossible to define any kind of component parts of human society, its groups and institutions without referring to interhuman communication thanks to which the existence of those social wholes is possible. Particular components of every social whole, no matter if they are separate human individuals or family, professional, territorial groups, etc., they secure for themselves their inclusivism and exclusivism just thanks to preserving the complex system of mutual comprehension and communication by means of appropriate exchange of words, gestures, signs, symbols, indications, signals and meanings, i.e. by extraordinarily rich and complex repertoire of both linguistic (verbal) and extralinguistic (non-verbal) nature. We can generally accept that some defined form of interhuman communication constitute an indispensable and non-transferable component of every social system. The language that is used by individuals and groups constituting social systems has a superior position among all those forms (Cicourel, 1964:2).

The problem of the sociology of communication as a separate sociological subbranch, implies some questions of structures of social world among which the considerations of the processes of communication between people are placed. And therefore the major task of this investigative orientation would consist of introduction and giving the grounds for the thesis that communication competence and rules of the partners in communication acts

are a function of strictly defined dimensions or a given segment of social stratification, or a given type of social world (family, work environment, amusement, religious community, dwelling-place, etc.). Therefore the allocation of rules of communication that constitutes an autonomous subject of cultural consideration, in its application perspective is closely associated with social phenomena analysed and investigated in the ranges of individual problem branches and, in our case, of the regional sphere. And so the behaviours associated with the processes of communication would refer to phenomena that are functionally related to widely understood sphere of identity — the forms and ways of communication participation in the complex social world of the region would just be the point here. In this way the intercourse perspective of both the instrumental and autotelic, *stricte* linguistic character and that concerning the interpretation of reported texts (notes, documentation, etc.) points at the possibility of formulation of the process of communication as a constitutive association for all the shapes of sociations, integration engaged people in performance of activities in organized social structures. In other words, communication perspective constitutes theoretical and methodological axis and structure of all the phenomena that take place in the system of mutual interhuman relations during realization of activity and cultural doings (Piotrowski, 1979).

The mentioned cognitive perspective in the study of processes of understanding and communication of people with each other in social situations is essentially different from that what is understood in hitherto, let us say, traditionally understood, sociology of culture through the “system of communication”.

The characterization of the dominant trend of considerations, concerning communication in social systems, does not aim at pointing at imperfection or incorrectness of such a perspective of investigations and analyses, but showing its insufficiency and also the necessity of carrying out the investigations concerning the mentioned processes suggested by the said idea worked out, or rather being worked out, within the sociology of communication.

Anyway, similar postulates seem to be proposed by sociologists themselves, for example by French investigators Crozier and Friedberg, who while writing about methodology of action based on actor's skill and logic of “one best way”, declare for the acceptance of the attitude of “limited rationality”: “We accept that actors are provided with only limited degree of freedom and limited rationality. The rationality and freedom, their purposes and ‘needs’ and at last they themselves cease to be understood in abstract way and start to be treated as defined creatures, or social constructs. The problem of choosing the explanatory model is no longer the basic problem of the analysis and the matters of procedure, investigative behaviour become that problem. It let us discover material, structural and social conditions that limit and define the

degree of freedom and rationality of actors and, as a consequence, it also let us discover the meaning of the observed behaviours" (Crozier, Friedberg, 1982:57).

The mentioned authors call their new investigative suggestion the "strategic analysis" that "forces the investigator to search for rationality of actors in organizational context and to explain the organizational construction through actors' experiences" (Crozier, Friedberg, 1982:59). The starting point for understanding the essence of the notion and possibilities of its use in the studies of an actor who acts in regional systems is the enumeration of five, as ascertained, empirical assumptions. They are the following:

1. Purposes stated by an actor himself and his intentions are changing during activities, they are non-univocal, contradictory, often hidden; in other words, they are problematic.

2. An actor's behaviour is as usually active and therefore it is not determined *a priori*; so it is usually the result of choices that are made.

3. An actor's behaviour always have defined meaning or significance with reference to given situations chances, stated purposes, choices that are made and rules of interaction games and other actors.

4. An actor's behaviour is characterized by dialectic of aggressiveness that is based on using the chances of improving their own situation and defence that consists of retention and widening the margin of freedom and possibilities of action. Those aspects manifest different intensification in defined time sections.

5. "Strategic" behaviours of an actor have distinctly rational character, they seem to be completely accidental, "irrational" and as for the latter, they are generated by moods and emotional reactions. In their case, it is possible to show regularity and correctness in relation to defined strategy.

After the presentation of their assumptions, the authors rightly point that considerations about the actor themselves are not sufficient because the actor's behaviours become fully understandable only in context from which the rationality of an actor's activities comes. It is worth underlying that they also notice distinct relationship in their idea with "comprehending sociology", mentioning such names as M. Weber, A. Schultz, P. L. Berger and T. H. Luckman, H. Garfinkel and E. Goffman. But if we study the appendix presenting the theory and practice of investigative procedure carefully, we will easily ascertain that only "similarity" of theoretical-methodological attitudes or at most the programme and postulates, that would require reformulation and specifying in categories of cognitive perspective of humanistic sociology, are the points here. And the considerations concerning communication, as it is perceived in this text, are placed just in this investigative perspective. However, the sociologists' conclusion that actors' behaviours are important only in the context that generates a given shape of their rationality should be recognized as extremely important (Crozier,

Friedberg, 1982:58—59, 420—440). So generally speaking, the fact that realization of purposes assumed by all the organized social systems, determined by the ways of communication between people in the context of the whole of social interactions in which individual and collective existence takes place, is the point here (Cicourel, 1964).

We should notice that in contemporary considerations on the subject of social communication we have to do with plurality of formulations. So the necessity of proclaiming in favour of one of them and acceptance as the basis of defined superior criteria appears here. In our discussion, it is enough to remind Ch. Morris's differentiation between semantic and syntactic and pragmatic dimensions of phenomena of signs that reflect situations of a man in different contexts and worlds of his individual and social activities (Piotrowski, Ziółkowski, 1976:19—60). This differentiation is just classical now. Because, in Morris's concept, pragmatic aspects of the phenomena of signs are closely associated with sociological formulation of communication. It is namely shown here from the point of view of external, observative and interaction behaviours. We can say that pragmatic dimensions of communication consist of the use and exchange of meanings that serve the partners of interaction to plan and understand their behaviours that are defined by the rules of interpretation and are the result of activities of many mechanisms of interpretation associated with individual features of communicating individuals and cultural-context dimension (Hymes, 1974).

The notion of communicative competence is the basic notion that joins different branches that go in for pragmatic aspects of comprehending and communicating. Most generally, we can define this notion as the knowledge received in the process of socialization and social participation knowledge that is not always realized that let the participants of interaction choose the variant of speech and also extraverbal, conventionalized forms of communication, accepted with respect to requirements of social situation. Sociological formulations undoubtedly deserve attention if we talk about many different suggestions of "speech variants" or language that is used by participants of interaction in the world of its practical activity. We can use here extended attempt to use defined linguistic theory. We can enumerate the works of A. V. Cicourel based on N. Chomsky's linguistic concept, and the works of J. Habermas that take inspiration from linguistic concept of J. L. Austin in the discussed trend of reflection on the phenomena of communication (Cicourel, 1974; Habermas, 1979; Chomsky, 1982; Austin, 1962).

The enumerated investigators of the phenomena of communication regardless of differences of metatheoretical positions that differ them (we have no need to discuss them here more precisely), seem to share a common methodological conviction (or rather epistemological one) about the status of the world of everyday life as the point of departure for social investigations

independently of dissimilarity of further precise theoretical investigation. Here, we mean A. Schutz's settlements and M. Scheler's ideas that were still earlier formulated. While writing about different forms of knowledge, in the context of his epistemological considerations, A. Scheler recognizes common knowledge as one of the fundamental factors defining the way of seeing social reality. He defines his suggestion of "relatively natural philosophy of life" in the following way: "Everything that is taken as 'given' without any doubts, similarly to every subject and contents of opinions about structural forms of that which is 'given', recognized without any separate spontaneous activities, everything that is in a given group kept and felt as something that does not require justification and that which is difficult to justify belong to relatively natural philosophy of life of a group subject. And just those things can be radically unlike for different groups or even for the same group on different stages of its development" (Scheler, 1960:170). Schutz's contribution is paying attention of the representatives of social sciences to the world of everyday life and the so-called common awareness. "We can answer the question of how scientific interpretation of human activity is possible only if we first answer the question of how a man can understand other people at all within natural attitude of everyday life" (Schütz, 1962:20). The reality in which man acts takes different forms that are characterized by coherence appropriate to them. Therefore a man has to do with multiplicity of reality. Other people's experience is essentially different from experiencing oneself by a man and in the same way social world becomes a common world of many people and guarantees its intersubjectivity in the reality of everyday life. A man's awareness realizes different typification in relation to reality accessible to him (Schütz, 1962:207).

A. Cicourel declares himself in his etnomethodological sociology of social interaction for the perspective of comprehending the language and meaning through the use of the settlements from N. Chomsky's generative-transformational linguistics. The investigation of the phenomena of the necessity of the use of practical or everyday understanding in the processes of communication of an author with others means that speech, activity and, as a matter of fact, all the manifestations of everyday life can be seen only within a given context and situation to which they refer and the elements of which they are. Expressions and indexical activities, that is, real, occasional activities refer to that which is called competence and performance, the rules of attribution, reference, phrase structure, surface structure and deep structure on the level of social interaction (Cicourel, 1974; Chomsky, 1982). Cicourel quotes extensive pieces of Chomsky's work and shows application of enumerated expressions in the process of human understanding and communication and more precisely in the use of interpretational procedures and normative rules by actors in the process of negotiating the social status and role. Language competence,

that is the knowledge of language, is according to Chomsky “simply some system of rules, that relates structural descriptions to sentences in some explicit and strictly defined way [...]; it attempts to mark that what is really known to the user and not that what he can report about his knowledge [...] because it tries to characterize that knowledge of language in possibly most neutral categories. The knowledge gives the grounds for real making use of a language by his user [...]; it does not constitute itself a formula for the character or functioning of perception model or the model of speech production” (Chomsky, 1982:21). The essential methodological problems are reduced for Cicourel to the following: “Can we say that particular actors use this kind of term while defining social situations for themselves and towards others? In what way does an actor relate and attribute meanings to objects and events in his environment. [...]; when an investigator intends to analyse written documents, he has to decide about the problem of abstraction of materials [...]? the investigator has to reconstruct the context of interaction [...]; the investigator has to decide about the problem of accuracy of vocabulary which he uses when he asks questions and the language that is used by our actor when he answers the questions” (Cicourel, 1974:305).

According to the discussed suggestion, an actor’s model should precisely define: first, in what way general rules or norms of justification or evaluation of procedure of some activity are reminded and in what way new constructions transform general rules and norms in scenes associated with the context, creating the grounds for change in this way. The idea of interpretational procedures itself should precisely state the way in which an actor negotiates and constructs his potential activity and also the way in which he judges the products of finished activity. Methodological usefulness of Cicourel’s considerations can be reduced to the following ascertainments:

1. Participants of social interaction “understand” both expressed and not expressed elements of their communicative situation.

2. Because of the use of interpretational procedures actors attribute “reasonable” meanings to that which is subordinate to communication.

3. Actors take attitudes of “looking and waiting”, that is the ability of sharing a common scheme of interpretation in that what concerns “gaps” of communication.

4. Participants of interaction, as a matter of fact, do not doubt their mutual expressions as long as each of them assumes attainability of reaching detailed information.

5. Articulation of general normative rules within direct scenes of interaction is assumed thanks to the control of the stock of handbook knowledge.

6. We should take into consideration first of all the procedures that make it possible for an actor to recognize “proper” behaviours while explaining

the place and role of a given participant of interaction in the situation of his practical activity.

Another perspective of expressing the phenomena of communication is found in J. Habermas's theory of "universal pragmatics". The identification and reconstruction of universal conditions of possible understanding (*Verständigung*) is the proper task of that pragmatics (Habermas, 1979). In other words, all activities aiming at reaching understanding are treated here as basic, others are only derivatives. The theory of acts of speech formulated by J. Austin is the basis for communicative activities understood in this way (Austin, 1962).

According to Austin's idea, the speech that is used by human subjects has two major functions: ascertaining and performing functions. Ascertaining function or informational-reporting function is based on the fact that speech do not create reality but only gives report of it. The participants of interaction transmit one another their thoughts, informing one another, organize common activities and transformation of reality is their result. Performance function consists of the fact that speech creates new reality directly in the so-called spiritual sphere, that is, legitimate, customary, of promise, model of behaviour, etc. Distinctly performative contents are expressed by such verbs as: advise, promise, ask, demand, obey, remind, entitle, etc.; such contents are not expressed by such verbs as: enjoy, suffer, love, hate, think, consider, perceive, wonder, miss, desire, wish, etc. Every speech can be treated as locution act or as illocution act. A locution statement is such that is considered taking into consideration only the aspect of meaning and subjective reference. An illocution statement is discussed taking into consideration the intentions of the person who express the statement. Illocution power of expression is stated on the grounds of situational context, intonation, gestures, mimicry, etc. We can also speak about aptness, communication luck, dependent on reasonability and sincerity of a speech act (statements, advice, request, promise), or also about unlucky communication that is insincere expressions and internally inconsistent, making the receiver feel insulted (Austin, 1962). The relation between a word (expression, statement, information) and its receiver and not only between a sender and a receiver by means of words is essential in this expression. Here the act of speech itself, projection of a receiver by means of a word, projection of a receiver towards the word and its meaning, its past and its significance. According to Habermas, normative conditions of the possibility of communication (claims towards their importance) are the following (Habermas, 1979:58):

- expressing something in comprehensible way,
- giving a listener something to understand,
- making oneself plain in this way,
- reaching understanding with another person.

A communication activity constitutes a defined type of social activity and is directed to reaching understanding (agreement), or is a consensual activity that includes the act of activity itself and a discourse. We can distinguish the following communicative structures and elements of social reality that corresponds to them:

Ways of communication	Types of speech acts	Subject matter	Claims of importance
cognitive	ascertaining	suggesting contents	truth
interaction	regulations	interpersonal contents	suitability
expressive	confessions	speaker's intention	truthfulness

The presented ideas of the process of communication, in their suggesting way, are meant to show their theoretical and methodological usefulness to extend empirical studies of the social world of a region.

From sociological point of view, the presented considerations refer only to pragmatic aspects of comprehension and communication of acting subject in social regional relations. But in the case of taking into consideration socio-linguistic dimensions or carrying out the analysis from the sphere of the sociology of language, we should necessarily consider semantic and syntactic aspects of acts of communication in regional conditions. So it seems obvious that such a treatment of the problem would require remarkable extension of the text. But the presented article does not constitute a reconstruction of existing state of investigations concerning the phenomena of communication in regional relations. The studies are, we should add, only fragmentary and quite marginal at least in home sociology of culture; they are rather some suggestion of methodological instruction for future empirical investigations of pragmatic dimensions of acts of social communication and their meaning in the processes of shaping the socio-cultural identity.

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Stanisław Nurek

Komunikowanie społeczne jako warunek społeczno-kulturalnej tożsamości

Streszczenie

Autor artykułu wychodzi z założenia, iż podstawowym warunkiem kształtowania się tożsamości tak jednostkowej jak i grupowej czy zbiorowej jest mechanizm komunikacji efektywnej. Rozważaniom zatem została poddana forma i treść języka, jakim posługują się uczestnicy interakcji społecznych. Koncepcje procesów komunikowania się w socjologii zostały tedy ujęte z punktu widzenia zasadniczych celów realizowanych w ludzkich działaniach. Z tego też punktu widzenia wyróżniono kilka zasadniczych założeń, na jakich — zdaniem autora — trzeba oprzeć rozumienie komunikacji międzyludzkiej. Analizie poddano koncepcje socjologiczne, które są znane jako „lingwistyczny zwrot” w badaniach nad komunikacją społeczną. Przywołane zostały podstawowe idee socjologii poznawczej A. V. Cicourela i J. Habermasa, które są oparte na teorii pragmatyki językowej N. Chomsky'ego i J. L. Austina.

Przeprowadzone rozważania nasuwają wniosek, iż aktywność komunikacyjna, nakierowana na realizację zawartego w niej potencjału porozumienia i rozumienia innych partnerów interakcji, prowadzi do ukonstytuowania się tożsamości kulturowej jednostki i grupy. Artykuł zdaje się wskazywać na pewną lukę w socjologii krajowej, która badaniom nad tożsamością kulturową w ich aspekcie komunikacyjnym nie poświęca należytej refleksji teoretycznej i metodologicznej; stanowi zatem skromną próbę zwrócenia uwagi na to zagadnienie.

Stanisław Nurek

Gesellschaftliches Kommunizieren als Bedingung der gesellschaftlich-kulturellen Identität

Zusammenfassung

Der Autor des Artikels geht davon aus, daß die Grundbedingung für die Gestaltung der Identität — sowohl der des Individuums wie auch der Gruppe oder der Gemeinschaft, ein Mechanismus der effektiven Kommunikation ist. Daher wurde hier die Form und der Inhalt

der Sprache erörtert, derer sich die Teilnehmer der gesellschaftlichen Interaktionen bedienen. Die Konzeptionen der Kommunikationsprozesse wurden daher in der Soziologie vom Standpunkt der Hauptziele, die in menschlicher Tätigkeit realisiert werden, erfaßt. Aus dieser Perspektive wurden einige Hauptannahmen hervorgehoben, auf die man — der Meinung des Autors nach — das Verstehen der zwischenmenschlichen Kommunikation zurückführt. Es wurden soziologische Konzeptionen analysiert, die in den Untersuchungen der gesellschaftlichen Kommunikation als "linguistische Redewendung" bekannt sind. Man beruft sich auf die Grundideen der Erkenntnissoziologie von A. V. Cicourel und J. Habermas, die sich auf die Theorie der Sprachpragmatik von N. Chomski und J. L. Austin stützen.

Die Erwägungen führen zum Schluß, daß die Kommunikationsaktivität, die auf die Realisierung des in ihr beinhalteten Verständnispotentials und das Verstehen anderer Interaktionspartner gerichtet ist, zur Festigung der kulturellen Identität der Einheit und der Gruppe führt. Der Artikel scheint auf eine Lücke in der Soziologie Polens hinzuweisen, die den Untersuchungen der kulturellen Identität im kommunikativen Aspekt keine ihr gebührende theoretische und methodologische Reflexion widmet; sie bildet daher einen bescheidenen Versuch, diesem Problem Beachtung zu schenken.