

DISCOURSE-WORLD MACROSTRUCTURE OF THE POLITICAL EVENT

Dr. Svetlana Kushneruk

Assoc. Prof. Maria Kurochkina

South Ural State Humanitarian-Pedagogical University, **Russian Federation**

ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on modeling the macrostructure of discourse-world of the political event as derived from G20 Leaders' Declaration and publications united by the theme of 2017 summit. The purpose of the authors is to reveal basic macroframes that are viewed as cognitive 'pillars' of discourse world of one of the most crucial political events of the past year – international forum for economic cooperation. The notion of discourse world macrostructure draws on World-Modelling Theory initially inspired by Text-World Theory, introduced by Werth, Gavins, Semino and then expanded upon contemporary cognitive-discourse approaches proposed by Russian scholars Kubryakova, Boldyrev, Demyankov, and Socio-cognitive Theory of discourse, introduced by van Dijk. Discourse world of political event is treated as representational structure of discourse having its macrostructure that is made explicit on the level of discourse topics. It is argued that global economic challenges specify basic macroframes that constitute the macrostructure of the discourse world. In the present research, the established macroframes are grouped into three cognitive-semantic fields – 'Man and Society', 'Man and Nature', and 'World Economy'. It is proved that discourse world macrostructure has economic ideology and political intentions behind the linguistic expressions. Correlations are found between discourse world macrostructure of the political event and major political and economic initiatives aimed at changing for the better economic life of the global community. The conclusions might present interest for further investigation of the socially-determined discourse structures that govern the perception of the political events by mass audience.

Keywords: World-Modelling Theory, discourse world, macrostructure, macroframe, political event

INTRODUCTION

Mass communication that traditionally includes press, television, radio and the Internet plays a decisive role in governing the perception of political and social events of global importance, and the management of opinions and attitudes on the part of the public. Power of media discourse is acknowledged as mechanism of social action. Scholars worldwide find it necessary to analyze media discourse and linguistic mechanisms of representation of political events that have serious impact on the global community [2], [3], [1]. Many of them generally point out that linguistic representations determine the way people think about situations or political events [5], [10]. None of them, however, view discourse world as a representational structure of discourse that reflects the power of framing information in the media.

In this paper discourse-world is treated as text-driven representational structure of discourse. It is a complex conceptual construct that has specific macrostructure

observable on the level of discourse topics. This perspective, as it seems, gives insights into interpretation of socially important texts organized around the political event as bases of mental representations of different conceptual complexity projecting worlds of reality that conform with political ideology and the necessity of the global community to rise to current challenges.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Within the scope of the present study G20 Leaders' Declaration and publications united by the theme of 2017 summit have been analyzed. It is stated that in media communication fragments of projective reality, or discourse worlds are textualized. Modeling the macrostructure of discourse world of the political event requires a cognitive-discourse theory that would take into consideration cognitive, communicative and social factors.

The paper presents analysis within **World-Modelling Theory** as a branch of discourse studies integrating ideas of European and Russian philosophy, logic, cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis to explain the characteristics of mental-linguistic representations of reality in discourse for the purposes of communication [7]. It mainly draws on Text-World Theory [16], [4], [10], Discourse Representation Theory [14], [6], and Sociocognitive Theory of Discourse outlined by van Dijk [13], [14].

Discourse Representation Theory descends from Hans Kamp, Josef van Genabith, Uwe Reyle. The central concern of it is to account for the context dependence of meaning. One of the basic assumptions behind the concept is that the hearer constructs a mental representation of the discourse as communication proceeds. Thus, 'discourse representation structure' is defined as a mental representation built up by the recipient as the discourse unfolds [15]. The theory postulates holistic approach to discourse processing. It means that discourse is interpreted by the recipients as a whole, even if it consists of many expressions: each utterance contributes to a complex mental representation in the interpreter's mind [8: 5].

The advocates of **Text-World Theory** follow the idea that reality is not given us directly, but through mental representations of the world, the totality of which tells us what reality is. The theory provides an explanation of interconnection between text and context. The full-fledged approach was posited by Werth [16] who introduced the notions of 'discourse-world' and 'text-world' to denote complex, rich, discourse-level mental representations. The concept was further developed by Gavins [4], Semino [9], Tincheva [11].

Discourse-world is the basic world that includes participants, objects and entities surrounding them together with background knowledge they bring to the language situation [4: 9]. The notion of 'discourse-world' proves an alternative to 'context' within cognitive-oriented perspective, i.e. when context is seen taking place only through the human mind. We find connections with Discourse Representation Theory in respect that it approaches context focusing on the cognitive properties of the participants in a communicative situation: "it is the context which should be seen as part of the cognitive constructs processed by the participants" [11].

Sociocognitive Theory of Discourse with van Dijk as the main proponent similarly upholds the application of embodied realism to the analysis of communication. That leads

to treating discourse as sociocognitive phenomenon. Hence the necessity to concentrate on social cognitive representations and cognitive preferences as part of the context. Sociocognitive concept, according to van Dijk, considers context in terms of subjective participant interpretations – mental constructs, “able to function as the interface between situational and societal structures and discourse structures, because they subjectively ‘represent’ relevant aspects of situations and society and directly interfere in the mental processes of discourse production and comprehension” [13].

Synthesizing the above-mentioned approaches, we develop **World-Modelling Theory** and argue that discourse-world is a representational structure of discourse that can be characterized as a dynamic system of meanings created by the initiators of discourse and interpreted by the public under the influence of different factors having geopolitical, social, cultural and ideological character. Dynamic by nature, it correlates with processes and results of representation of reality and/or its fragments for communication purposes. Representational structures of discourse can be of various degrees of conceptual complexity. We find reasonable to approach discourse-world as a cluster of contextually determined cognitive constructs related to the political event. In this sense, discourse-world is broader and more complex than text-world.

Discourse-world of a political event is defined as a multi-component representational structure of discourse, the cognitive content of which is inferred from a set of texts focusing on G20 summit. We find it possible to model discourse-world macrostructure of the political event from the texts that draw on it.

The term ‘**macrostructure**’ is borrowed from van Dijk’s theory of discourse, and is used to account for global meaning of discourse-world. According to van Dijk, ‘fast and efficient processing of complex information in cognition, communication, and interaction mainly takes place at the macrostructural level’ [14: 15].

Macrostructures characterize the higher or more abstract levels of semantic information and information processing. Without a level of semantic macrostructures, it is insufficient to account for various properties of ‘global meanings’ of discourse [14]. Following van Dijk, we admit that due to macrostructures, discourses are planned and understood as coherent wholes: ‘Without this kind of global organization in memory, retrieval and hence use of complex information would be unthinkable’ [14: 14]. Along with the essential *semantic* function of macrostructure that enables derivation of global meaning, there are two more principle functions singled out by van Dijk – *organization* and *reduction* of complex information. As soon as we want to characterize conceptual structure playing a role in understanding a political event and that involves complex semantic information processing, we resort to the notion of discourse-world macrostructure. It is revealed on the level of topics, or themes seen as properties of the whole discourse rather than words and sentences as parts of the discourse.

We approach macrostructure in terms of frames as its constituent elements and we call them **macroframes**. The term ‘frame’ is generally used to denote prototypical situations or contexts in which events and actions may take place. We believe that frames may be organized hierarchically. Macroframe is a term employed to denote conceptual structure of a higher level that can embrace frames and subframes. Thus discourse-world macrostructure of a political event is characterized with respect to the objects and things that are present in the constituent frames. We agree with Van Dijk & Kintsch that macrostructures cannot simply be replaced by hierarchical structures of knowledge, such

as frames. Macrostructures are ‘structures of the discourse itself’ and therefore they are often unique. Although macrostructures are formed with the help of frames, they are by no means identical with them [12: 195].

In the present study macroframes are considered cognitive units that organize knowledge about a political event and reflect different conceptual features in the mental space of the discourse-world. As macroframes are culturally variable, i.e. they specify what members of a culture expect to find in this or that situation, we more rely on globally accepted information resulting from world-leaders’ general agreement as presented in the final G20 Leaders’ Declaration.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

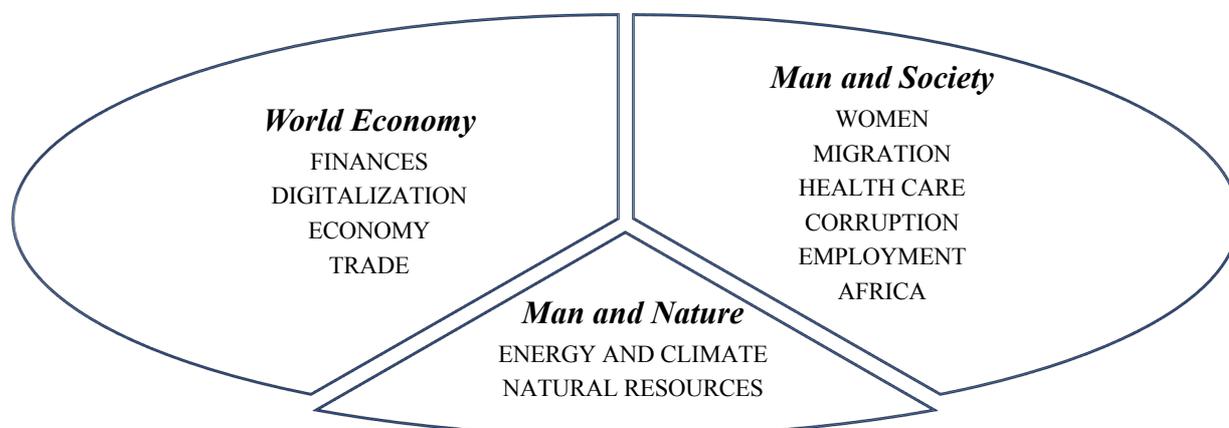
As discourse is adaptive to the communicative situation, we argue that global economic challenges specify basic macroframes constituting macrostructure of the discourse-world. Discourse-world macrostructure has got some constraints that come from the pragmatic context. These are parameters of *time* (7–8th of July 2017), *place* (Hamburg, Germany) and *key participants* (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, UK, Germany, European Union, India, Indonesia, Italy, Canada, China, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, USA, Turkey, France, South Africa, Japan). Discourse-world of the summit has a powerful world-modelling potential realized through the expression of meanings that should shape ‘the interconnected world’ and be accepted by most people in the world.

Discourse-world macrostructure is not essentially explicit in media discourse. See for instance the following: *The joint communique, formally called the G20 Leaders’ Declaration, covers a lot of ground, including that contentious arena of trade, as well as international financial architecture, health, employment, “harnessing digitalization,” and, of course, climate* (Daily Kos, 08/07/17). Examining words in their co-text gives us knowledge about the most urgent issues of the political event – TRADE, FINANCES, HEALTH, EMPLOYMENT, DIGITALIZATION, and CLIMATE. They are surface structures that present basic but not all macroframes constituting the semantic macrostructure of the discourse-world. Totally it is represented in G20 Leaders’ Declaration.

The macrostructure contains a finite number of macroframes relevant to the purpose of event, i.e. to master global economic challenges and to contribute to prosperity of the community. Because of these pragmatic constraints basic macroframes constituting the macrostructure of the discourse world are specified. As cognitive ‘pillars’ of discourse-world of G20 summit they represent semantic dominants reflecting the most crucial social and economic problems people face nowadays. We group them into three cognitive-semantic fields that unite macroframes on the basis of thematic grouping with the focus on communication objectives – ‘Man and Society’, ‘World Economy’, and ‘Man and Nature’ (Figure 1).

Broadly speaking, the main objective of the discussed summit and world-leaders as its participants is working out a strategy to react to the challenges that are taking new forms in the context of globalization and intensive technological development to shape globalization to benefit all people.

Figure 1. Discourse-world macrostructure of the political event



Man and Society

Cognitive-semantic field ‘Man and Society’ is the most granular as it presents information in greater detail than other two and, consequently, is the most relevant fragment of the discourse-world macrostructure. It consists of macroframes WOMEN, MIGRATION, HEALTH CARE, CORRUPTION, EMPLOYMENT, AFRICA. These macroframes activate knowledge about challenges people face in social (domestic) and international (foreign) relations.

Macroframe WOMEN (11) has got the most extended structure (number of frames is indicated in brackets): *gender equality, quality of female employment, employment discrimination, protection from all forms of violence, women’s access to labour markets, quality education and training, social protection policies, participation for women and girls in the digital economy, support for women’s entrepreneurship, women’s participation in the economy, economic empowerment of women*. The most obvious reason why the structure of this macroframe is conceptually ramified is seen in the overall strengthening of position of women in the world. The role of women in society has changed drastically in recent decades especially in western countries. Not only do women feel discriminated by the daily tasks they are supposed to do in the family, or by male bosses and colleagues, but they struggle more for their rights. The forms of discrimination are not necessarily straightforward, there are lots of indirect ways of treating women unequally. For instance, in some countries women are paid less than men for the same job. The most problematic issues of the contemporary world, thus, specify the cognitive structure of the macroframe.

Macroframe MIGRATION (10): *historic levels of migration, forced displacement, drivers of forced displacement, orderly and regular migration, irregular migration, reintegration of migrants, migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings, needs of refugees, governance of migration*. In the context of modern world, the role of the resettlement processes caused by serious political, economic and religious reasons, has greatly increased. Large scale migration during several last decades has raised problems of the world labor market, high crime rate in the countries giving refuge to asylum seekers, and stimulated anti-migration attitudes of people in general. It is reflected in the

structure of the macroframe. The global community needs to take steps to control attitudes about processes of migration in terms of tolerance.

Macroframe HEALTH CARE (8): *global health challenges, universal health coverage, strong health systems, health systems worldwide, health workforce, health challenges, health emergencies, prudent use of antibiotics*. The appeal to health as the fundamental human value is an indispensable condition of happiness and well-being. These universally shared beliefs underlie the structure of the macroframe. In the light of the key economic problems of the global community these issues remain urgent for the existence of people in the whole world.

Macroframe CORRUPTION (6): *fighting corruption, Anti-Corruption Action Plan, resilient against corruption, fight against corruption, high level of corruption, anti-corruption standards*. Corruption, its determinants, scope, breadth, and consequences continue to be serious challenges for people worldwide. On a global scale, vicious corrupt practices are recognized as phenomena that undermine economic and political stability of the world community. These constraints find realization in the semantic content of the macroframe: the selective focus of it is on commitment of world-leaders to taking anti-corruption measures.

Macroframe EMPLOYMENT (5): *diversity of employment, decent work opportunities, transition of the labor market, integrating young people into the labor market, work-based learning*. The conceptual content is framed with emphasis on current diverse forms of work, opportunities for decent work, transformations in the labor market that would eliminate injustice people worldwide experience at work. Violation of workers' rights might certainly add to the potential for exploitation. General concern about alleviating insecurity at work is also expressed as a need to attract young people and provide them with work-based learning.

Macroframe AFRICA (5): *challenges in African countries, aspirations of African countries, poverty and inequality, help interested African countries, African economic opportunities*. On the cognitive map of the discourse-world this macroframe occupies a special place, because it relates to 'external' problems connected with major challenges in African countries. The polarity of the world is construed in the discourse-world due to the opposition of 'mighty' countries taken collectively ('Group of twenty') and countries in need (African). Interaction, as presented in Declaration, entails responsibility on the part of the former to the latter to rise to the challenges, find ways to reduce poverty and inequality, and improve economic indicators on the poorest continent of the world.

World Economy

Cognitive-semantic field 'World economy' contains macroframes FINANCES, DIGITALIZATION, ECONOMY, TRADE.

Macroframe FINANCES (6): *resilient financial system, financial regulatory reforms, international financial architecture, global financial safety, boosting investment, financial transparency*. The semantic content of the macroframe is formed by elements of knowledge about sustainable international financial system, the need for regulation across large geographies, strengthening international financial architecture, and financial security. The structure of the macroframe is determined by the pragmatic aim of G20 organization, i.e. to manage transnational financial supervision to keep stabilized world economies and financial markets.

Macroframe DIGITALIZATION (6): *harnessing digitalization, digital transformation, digital literacy, digital skills, digital economy, digital technologies*. Innovations of rapid scientific and technological development of the world are strongly correlated with the macroframe representing an important segment of the discourse-world macrostructure. The application of digital technologies in all aspects of human life encompasses ideas about the development of digital technologies, improving digital literacy and digital skills to contribute to integration of digital technologies into international economic contacts.

Macroframe ECONOMY (3): *growth prospects, international economic and financial cooperation, economic activity*. The content of the macroframe is specified by the essential purpose of the international forum that was created to address the most important problems in the economy (1999) shortly after the outbreak of the global financial crisis of 1997–1998 to enhance the resilience of world economy.

Macroframe TRADE (3): *international trade and investment, reciprocal and mutually advantageous trade, rules-based international trading system*. Within the macrostructure of the discourse-world the semantic content of the macroframe is predetermined by the global goal (economic management) and the specific objectives of the G20 related to international trade and investment, mutually beneficial terms of cooperation and compliance with the established rules of trade relations.

Man and Nature

Cognitive-semantic field ‘Man and nature’ includes macroframes ENERGY AND CLIMATE and NATURAL RESOURCES that focus on the intensification of human impact on the natural environment, utilitarian use of raw materials and nature abuse.

Macroframe ENERGY AND CLIMATE (5): *clean energy technologies, greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency, energy security, commitment to the Paris Agreement*. The constituting frames represent universally shared knowledge about clean technologies in the field of energy, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency, energy security, as well as commitment to implement the Paris agreement aimed at putting the world on track to avoid dangerous climate change (adopted in 2015 by 195 countries of the world).

Macroframe NATURAL RESOURCES (4): *efficiency and sustainability of natural resource, sustainable consumption, marine litter, Marine Litter Action Plan*. The semantic scope of the macroframe comprises knowledge about certain aspects of natural resources use, danger of their overexploitation that presents a threat to the global community.

CONCLUSION

Discourse-specific ‘portrayal’ of a socially important event in the media is influenced by a great many economic, political, social, cultural, and ideological factors. Discourse-world of a political event is a context-dependent informational model of a particular fragment of reality, created in an integrative set of texts united by the theme of G20 summit. It is a conceptual construct of a complex type that is topicalized in the media and interpreted by recipients with orientation to knowledge relevant to understanding the discourse.

Discourse-world macrostructure of a political event is a socially and ideologically determined hierarchical representational structure of discourse that has economic

ideology and political intentions underlying the linguistic expressions. Its cognitive pillars are macroframes that constitute cognitive-semantic fields ‘Man and society’, ‘World economy’ and ‘Man and nature’. Discourse-world macrostructure has constraints coming from the selective focus on challenges the global community faces and the most problematic aspects of international economic cooperation.

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