



Functional stylistics and vertical context

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Abstract: Compared to the philological disciplines of general systematic nature functional stylistics and the studies of vertical context are relatively young and underdeveloped: the definitions of the disciplines in question are there, but the details have either not been investigated or have not been universally agreed upon. The aim of the present paper is to reveal the relevant points concerning functional stylistics and the investigations of vertical context as such and to study these two phenomena in their interrelation. Our analysis has shown that in the more neutral varieties of different functional styles vertical context elements are used sparingly realizing the communicative function of language. The conceptually condensed specialized (academic and official) texts contain a greater amount of these elements fulfilling the intellectual function and being directly relevant to developing the main idea of the text; taken together these elements form a consistent global thematic whole. In highly expressive journalistic texts the amount of vertical context elements is equally considerable, but their function is different: instead of developing the main idea they serve as mere intensifiers and their connection with each other is thematically loose and very general or simply non-existent, for they either develop the opposition of 'good' and 'bad' or refer to facts unrelated to each other, thus flaunting the author's sophistication only; vertical context elements here fulfill the aesthetic function of language or strive to render specialized and emotional kinds of content simultaneously. In imaginative writing apart from allusions and quotations, which one may come across in any text, special attention should be given to symbolic texts where one is likely to find vertical context elements aplenty, they perform mainly the aesthetic function of language, and deciphering them proves to be a gratifying undertaking adding significantly to the adequate interpretation of the material under study.

Key words: functional stylistics; functions of language; vertical context; functional style; journalism; imaginative writing; symbolic literary texts; antonomasia

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Функциональная стилистика и вертикальный контекст

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Аннотация: При всей разработанности функциональной стилистики и теории вертикального контекста обе названные филологические дисциплины нуждаются в дальнейшей разработке – и как таковые, и по вопросу их взаимосвязи. Проведенный в настоящей статье анализ показал, что в тяготеющих к нейтральности функционально-стилистических разновидностях текстов элементы вертикального контекста немногочисленны и реализуют преимущественно функцию общения. В специализированных концептуально насыщенными научных и официальных текстах элементы вертикального контекста более многочисленны, они выполняют функцию сообщения и вносят значительный вклад в развитие основной идеи содержащего их текста, в совокупности формируя некое тематическое единство. В публицистических текстах с выраженной экспрессивностью элементы вертикального контекста также многочисленны, но их функциональная ориентация иная: очень часто эти элементы

служат в роли простых усилителей, их тематическая связь друг с другом не прослеживается или прослеживается с большим трудом, они реализуют преимущественно функцию воздействия или одновременно передают эмоциональное и специальное содержание. В художественной литературе особого внимания заслуживают тексты символического характера, поскольку в них наряду с аллюзиями и цитатами, которые встречаются в любых художественных произведениях и не представляют особых проблем для распознавания и интерпретации, присутствуют символы, не подлежащие метафорическому имманентному толкованию; адекватное восприятие таких текстов требует от читателя серьезных знаний филологического и историко-культурного плана, в противном случае в ходе интерпретации текстов будут проигнорированы их значимые элементы, реализующие функцию воздействия.

Ключевые слова: функциональная стилистика; функции языка; вертикальный контекст; функциональный стиль; журналистика; словесно-художественное творчество; символические литературные тексты; антономазия.

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Информация о конфликте интересов: авторы заявляют об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

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Introduction

As is natural for any paper where global problems are discussed, we will begin with the definitions. With vertical context the situation is fairly simple, for it is universally treated as information of the philological or sociohistorical kind hinted at, but not explicitly presented in a text (allusions, quotations, toponyms, anthroponyms, etc.); without the exact knowledge of the sources or people or places alluded to, the understanding of the texts containing these elements cannot be complete and the adequate ‘horizontal’ – i.e. immanent – perception of this kind of linguistic material is impossible [Giubbenet 2010].

With functional stylistics the situation is less fortunate, because traditional definitions of this discipline contain one redundant component (“speech situation”) and omit another significant constituent part (“type of content rendered”) whose absence makes further practical work extremely problematic (Akhmanova 2005). In this paper by functional style we mean a gradually developing and generally recognized subsystem within the system of language, rendering a certain type of content (and not “related to a certain speech situation”) and characterized by the regular use of a set of phonetic, morphological, lexical and syntactic means distinguishing this subsystem from similar phenomena [Lipgart, Khourinov 2019]. Here we insist on introducing the notion of type of content rendered and on omitting speech situations for the following reason: speech situations may be different (a lecturer addressing schoolchildren or postgraduate students), but the functional style used in these different speech situations may be the same (academic or journalistic or official). Type of content rendered, on the contrary – be it non-specialized and non-emotional (the communicative functional of language), or specialized and non-emotional (the intellectual function), or emotional and non-specialized (the aesthetic function) – is the parameter which actually helps to differentiate between the

functionally-stylistically dissimilar phenomena and to show the ontological affinity between the phenomena which are allegedly heterogeneous if we look at them from the point of view of the notorious speech situations.

On Functional-Stylistic Theory

In this paper we are going to speak about five functional styles (conversational, academic, official, journalistic, imaginative writing), and not six, for the following reason. We firmly believe that it was due to the uncritical application of the speech situation parameter and the disregarding of the notion of functional stylistic heterogeneity that a truly great philologist thought it apt to single out two separate functional styles (the everyday business style and the official documentary style [Vinogradov 1963]) where only one functional style – the official one – is to be singled out if the problem is considered logically and consistently. Like in all other functional styles, variability here may be considerable, but still it is the variability representing one and the same conceptual and linguistic invariant and not leading to the appearance of the two separate invariants. The origin of the misnomer under discussion is evident, but it shows the objective complexity of the problems discussed, as here even the greatest specialists in the field may periodically offer fallacious theoretical propositions.

There are several other important points to be made in connection with the functional-stylistic theory. When we speak about the functions of language which are predominant in a certain functional style it is necessary to remember that in every style – with the exception of some specimens of the conversational one – at least two functions of language are regularly realized (the communicative plus the intellectual, as is the case with the academic and official texts, or the communicative plus the aesthetic, the combination being regularly reproduced in journalistic texts and

in imaginative writing). Moreover, the elements of the third function (the intellective one) will be regularly present in journalism and periodically used in imaginative texts, while the aesthetic function (at least on the level of intensifiers) may be found in academic and official texts. The conversational style may also contain elements of the aesthetic and / or of the intellective function; it is another matter that these elements by and large do not realize their semantic and metasemiotic potential to the full and invariably undergo what may be called desemantization. The amount of linguistic elements realizing this or that function of language may vary in texts belonging to one and the same functional style, which proves that functional styles are intrinsically heterogeneous. For this reason in some cases (i.e. stylistically marked academic texts and specialized journalistic texts) it may be difficult to attribute a text to a particular functional style off-hand, and it is only after a very careful consideration of the type of content rendered and the types of linguistic units used that the functional-stylistic orientation of a text can be established.

When we speak about functional-stylistic heterogeneity it is important to make up our minds on whether minor subdivisions of functional styles should be called genres or something different. In our opinion the notion of genre of writing is not a very happy choice in this case, for genres may be singled out on the basis of purely conceptual or purely thematic or purely linguistic parameters or the mixture of all the three of them or of the two of them, which makes it extremely problematic to apply these terms in an investigation presupposing the consistent use of a double, conceptual and linguistic, parameter. Thus, in non-functional-stylistic investigations we can speak about various genres of journalism whose conceptual and linguistic characteristics may be overlapping, but within functional stylistics it is preferable to distinguish between descriptive journalism where the conceptual component is prevailing and where expressivity is reduced to a minimum, and declarative journalism where the situation is exactly the opposite [Lipgart, Khorinov 2019]. For this reason it is advisable to speak about conceptual-linguistic varieties of functional styles, as this term is not overloaded with polysemy and as it is conceptually in full keeping with the theory we are guided by in our studies.

Another point to be considered is the very amount of functions of language we will be referring to in this paper. Academician V.V. Vinogradov following the functional stylistic theory suggested by the members of the Prague Linguistic Circle insisted on the three-fold classification [Vinogradov 1963], while other scholars were ready to single out four of them or even six, the way it was done by Roman Jakobson in his grossly overrated paper "Linguistics and Poetics" [Jakobson 1960]. Here we are going to confidently disregard Jakobson's theory, for it includes addressers and addressees, who are hierarchically inferior to the types of content rendered and types of linguistic units used when it comes to functional-stylistic studies. In

real practice of using a language we choose a set of units to be used in our text depending on what type of content we are going to impart to the reader or to the listener; certain further adaptation to the needs and to the intellectual level of the interlocutor may be made, but it is hierarchically distinctly inferior compared to the initial choice of linguistic units predetermined by the type of content rendered.

"Type of content rendered" is not synonymous to the thematic orientation of the text. In functional stylistics this distinction is of crucial importance, for the thematically similar texts (those related to religion or to business, for example) are often treated – or, rather, erroneously placed – within the functional-stylistic paradigm as fully-fledged members, which results in extending the existing classification of functional styles endlessly. In fact it is methodologically wrong, because texts united by thematic affinity may be written in different functional styles, from the conversational to the academic, official and journalistic and even 'artistic'. Thematically similar texts may be studied from the functional-stylistic viewpoint, but they should never be considered to be hierarchically equal to the functional styles they belong to.

The trichotomy of functions of language Academician Vinogradov and his followers were relying upon clearly reflects the objective opposition of neutral, specialized and emotional units (most clearly seen if we turn to the lexis of a developed national literary language), but in connection with this trichotomy an important reservation is to be made. If fact this trichotomy should have been a tetrachotomy, for it is based on the two global distinctions between units with 1) non-specialized and specialized and 2) non-emotional and emotional types of content. A function of language is thus characterized by two global conceptual parameters; hence the amount of these functions is to be four and not three. But the final classification contains three members only, and for a good reason. Units of emotional and specialized kind like 'democracy' and 'liberalism' (initially specialized, but through their active usage in emotional political discourse acquiring strong connotations and thus also becoming emotional) are numerically negligible compared to terminological units, expressive or neutral elements a developed literary language possesses, that is why they cannot be treated as ontologically and functionally comparable to the units representing the three-fold division in question.

Vertical Context in the Conversational Functional Style

Now that we have explained the theoretical propositions we are going to be guided by, it is time for us to turn to the more particular problem which comprises the subject of the present article – that is, the way vertical context manifests itself in various functional styles. The conversational functional style turns out to be the least promising material for discussion. When someone is overhearing a conversation between Bill and Bob about Julia and

Sam without having the knowledge of who Julia and Sam are and what the relationship between these two is, this knowledge may be interpreted as related to vertical context. When Bob is quoting a line from a popular movie the ‘overhearer’ is not familiar with, this can be treated as yet another element of the vertical context of the talk, requiring certain elucidation. But for all the ontological affinity of the mentioning of Julia and Sam to the situations when vertical context is studied in connection with William Shakespeare’s poem “The Phoenix and the Turtle”, for example, here one should not feel particularly overjoyed at these parallels and should not start developing theories or introduce complex schemes of analysis. Making some elementary inquiries will help the ‘overhearer’ to get a clear idea of the situation, as the vertical context elements here are elementary as well, they fulfil the communicative function of language, their content is non-specialized and non-emotional and thus calls for no complicated interpretations. It is only for the fairness’ sake that we include in the present paper the discussion of vertical context in the conversational functional style.

Vertical Context in the Academic and Official Functional Styles

When we turn to the academic (scientific) and official functional styles it transpires that compared to the conversational style the situation with vertical context here is more complicated, simply because for understanding it greater concentration is required on the part of the reader or listener. Simultaneously and somewhat paradoxically, vertical context here is easier to understand because in properly written academic and official texts the relevant information is presented in the text itself in the form of definitions, direct quotations from, or references to, other sources [Zubova 2013]. A certain degree of expressivity may be found in academic and official texts, but it never overshadows the specialized and the basically non-emotional content such texts are supposed to render. We confidently bring these two styles together when considering their vertical context properties, because to distinguish between the two functional styles in question the hierarchically inferior thematic criterion should be used (the nature of things in general being the subject of the academic texts and social relations viewed non-privately being the subject of official texts), while the conceptual and linguistic characteristics of these two styles are very close.

Texts realizing the intellectual function may be completely or almost completely devoid of vertical context elements:

“Item I Gyve and bequeath vnto my [sonne and] daughter Judyth One Hundred and ffyftie poundes of lawfull English money to be paied vnto her in manner & forme foloweng, That ys to saye, One Hundred Poundes *in discharge of her marriage porcion* within one yeare after my deceas, with consideracion after the Rate of twoe shillings in the pound for soe long

tyme as the same shalbe vnpaied vnto her after my deceas, & the ffyftie poundes Residwe thereof vpon her Surrendring *of*, or gyving of such sufficient securitie as the overseers of this my will shall like of to Surrender or graunte, All her estate & Right that shall discend or come vnto her after my deceas or *that shee* nowe hath of in or to one Copiehold tenemente with thappurtenaunces lyeing and being in Stratford vpon Avon aforesaied in the saied countie of Warr, being parcell or holden of the mannour of Rowington, vnto my daughter Susanna Hall & her heires for ever. Item I Gyve and bequeath vnto my saied daughter Judith One Hundred and ffyftie Poundes more if shee or Anie issue of her bodie by Lyvinge att thend of three Yeares next ensueing the daie of the date of this my will, during which tyme my executours to paie her consideracion from my deceas according to the Rate aforesaied” (Chambers 1930).

This is an extract written in the official style (the original orthography is retained) and coming from William Shakespeare’s Last Will and Testament. This text may serve as an excellent illustration to the initial part of the definition of functional styles where they are described as the gradually developing phenomena. For all the specificity of the spelling and of some lexical elements Shakespeare’s Will is similar to modern official texts in that it is not free from tautology (synonyms being the sworn enemies of the non-ambiguity of interpretation official texts are to aim at), that it is free from expressivity and that syntactically it is quite complicated (this latter feature originating from the necessity to include all the relevant constituent parts in a single sentence to make sure that later on they are not treated as something isolated and disconnected).

The playwright’s Last Will and Testament is the text most Shakespearologists are familiar with, and they are able to understand this piece of writing without any additional “vertical” explanations. Less advanced readers may wish to learn more about some topographical details (‘the countie of Warr’ standing for the county of Warwickshire, for example) or about Shakespeare’s family (the two natural questions to be asked here are: were there any other children of Shakespeare apart from Judith and Susanna still living at the time when the playwright’s will was written, or why is Judith mentioned without the indication of her family name [Chambrun 1957], though she is known to have been married, while Shakespeare’s elder daughter as designated as Susanna Hall, in her case both the first name and the family name being indicated in the text of the will). This is the information one may easily find in any standard biography of William Shakespeare [Bate 2009; Greenblatt 2005; Holden 1999], it is directly connected with his life story, and no leaps of imagination are required to grasp the meaning of the text. As both proper names and place names here directly relevant to rendering a specialized kind of content it seems reasonable to treat them as manifestations of the intellectual function of language.

Similar examples may be found among academic texts:

“When Elizabeth Tudor became Queen of England in 1558, King Philip of Spain, her former brother-in-law, had every reason to hope for the normal working relations with England. After all he was the one to protect his sister-in-law when his wife Mary Tudor, the then queen regnant, decided to imprison Elizabeth. Not that Mary Tudor’s wrath was totally unjustified, but still Elizabeth’s main fault was her status of heir apparent. Philip was shrewd enough to figure out that Elizabeth for all her secret protestant leanings was a much better choice as the next ruler of England than the staunchly Catholic, but distinctly pro-French Mary Stuart who was next in line of succession.

When Elizabeth eventually got the crown of England, Philip was controlling a vast empire he had inherited from his father, his resources were stretched to the utmost, and friendship with England would alleviate the extreme strain the Spanish king was subjected to on the daily basis. The last thing Philip could afford was to antagonize yet another ruler, however insignificant the role of England in the international politics of the time could have been” (Tasks... 2020).

The vertical context elements here are confined to proper names and to the religious doctrines the bearers of these names followed [MacCulloch 2004; Williams 1979]; Philip’s and Mary Tudor’s religious views are not mentioned explicitly, but from the general context it may be deduced that both of them were Catholics. No digressions from the main line of narration are made, and the text as a whole perfectly corresponds to the main tendencies one would expect to find out when dealing with the vertical context of academic or official writing. There is certain synonymy at the level of proper names (Elizabeth Tudor, sister-in-law), but understanding who is meant in the latter case requires no particular effort on the part of the reader. Like in the previous example, it seems reasonable to treat them as manifestations of the intellectual function of language.

There are more intricate cases, however, when the understanding of an academic or an official text is possible only if the reader makes a considerable effort familiarizing himself or herself with the information which is infinitely broader compared to what is necessary for the understanding of examples we have introduced above. To illustrate the point let us consider an example of an academic text by Richard Wilson (Wilson 2004) virtually oversaturated with vertical context elements:

“On 25 October 1598, at the Bell Inn, a hundred yards from the Blackfriars Gatehouse, and beside the royal Wardrobe that operated, under the control of the Catholic Fortescues, as an illicit Mass-centre, his Stratford friend Richard Quiney wrote the only surviving letter to William Shakespeare, begging ‘30 pounds upon Mr. Bushell’s and my security’. Here, in the oasis of licence where another Stratfordian,

Richard Field, had printed, among works by *politiques* like Harrington, his debut, *Venus and Adonis*, Quiney’s business was to link Shakespeare with men at the heart of Catholic hopes, as the Bushells, Thomas and Edward (whose sister married Quiney’s son), were former agents of the Stanleys in the core of the Essex Plot. We do not know whether the poet did trust Thomas Bushell’s word, but the Earl would be condemned on Edward’s, when the brother, himself incriminated in a 1594 plot to assassinate the Queen, testified to the contents of a ‘black bag’ that included the list of conspirators. And a year later, on May 1602, Quiney would himself be stabbed to death by assassins hired by Stratford’s Puritans” (Wilson 2004, pp. 6–7).

The understanding of the text requires a vast knowledge of the vertical context, otherwise the reader will fail to comprehend why Richard Wilson is speaking about a Mass-centre [Alford 2012] (and an illicit one for that matter), not a church, or who the *politiques* are [Asquith 2005]. It may seem that Richard Wilson is not very good at his dates, for in the text only three dates are mentioned, the last one coming as a surprise within the general context: Quiney’s letter was written in 1598, a certain plot against Elizabeth took place in 1594, “and a year later, in May 1602, Quiney would himself be stabbed to death”. The text also abounds in anthroponyms and place names, some of which (together with “an illicit Mass-centre” and “the *politiques*”) the reader of this highly specialized book meant for professionals, not beginners, is supposed to know, but in most cases Richard Wilson does not refrain from referring his readers to other sources where they will find these vertical context elements explained, as six other books are mentioned in the notes to the text of this passage (Wilson 2004, p. 9). If it had not been for the references just mentioned, Richard Wilson’s text should have been treated as a grandiose failure, because the immediate meaning of the passage can be extracted from it only with great difficulty (“In 1598 at the Bell Inn a certain Richard Quiney wrote a letter to Shakespeare asking for a loan and saying that either he, Richard Quiney, or a certain Thomas Bushell would be responsible for paying the money back; it is not known whether Shakespeare actually lent the money to Quiney”), while the remaining encyclopedic information may seem to be clearly redundant.

On closer examination, however, it turns out that nothing is wrong with the dates (Quiney died a year after the Essex rebellion which took place in 1601 and which is mentioned immediately before the year 1602), that anthroponyms and place names are given not because Richard Wilson wished to impress the reader with his erudition and that the somewhat trivial fact we have just deduced from Richard Wilson’s text does not exhaust its content, for the actual aim of the author was to show the implications of this seemingly unimportant event. The text is exceptionally rich factually, and to interpret it adequately we need to produce a passage at least of the same length (or, perhaps, even longer,

if we consult the reference material and give ampler and less condensed information concerning the people and the events mentioned). In order to do it we need not decipher metaphors of which there are practically none ('the oasis of licence' being the only notable exception), to eliminate expressive elements or fight synonymy on the level of proper names ('Essex' and 'the Earl', 'Shakespeare' and 'the poet' cause no serious difficulty for those who possess elementary knowledge of the history of Elizabethan England [Meyers 2011], and even if the use of the second elements in these couples may be treated as examples of anotomy, they are self-evident semantically). The adequate understanding here may be achieved if we thoroughly reconstruct the vertical context the passage is endowed with and directly alludes to [Fogg 2012].

The two people out of the three who were involved in the transaction (Richard Quiney and Thomas Bushell), as well as their relatives and acquaintances [Pogue 2006; Sams 1995], were the active members of the Elizabethan Catholic underground. Most of Shakespeare's contemporaries mentioned in the text operated within the precincts of a London Catholic enclave where Shakespeare 15 years later would buy a notorious Blackfriars Gatehouse [Lipgart 2018; Wood 2005], and three of them had even closer ties, as they were all born in Stratford-upon-Avon about the same time and kept in touch in their later lives, and one of them in four years would be killed by the local extremist Protestants precisely in Shakespeare's native town. Hence, the reader has every reason to believe that the problem of the religious affiliation should not be ignored when we speak about various facts of William Shakespeare's biography and his works. The vertical context elements introduced by Richard Wilson are clear manifestations of the intellectual function of language. They all related to one and the same specialized subject and are characterized by pronounced thematic affinity: William Shakespeare, his works, his political and religious views, all these being revealed through reference to the circle of his immediate and more distant Catholic acquaintances and contemporaries and their doings within the sphere of politics. This subject is much broader compared to what we have found in our previous examples, but it is still one subject (however broad), and not a motley collection of unrelated facts presumably testifying to the middle-headedness of the author.

Vertical Context in the Journalistic Functional Style

With journalism the situation is exactly the opposite. Far from being obliged to squeeze as much information as possible into a line or a sentence or a passage, journalists, on the contrary, have to represent an idea (which often may be covered in one brief sentence) in a linguistically memorable manner and in a relatively long text in order to bring this idea home to the reader or listener not through logical reasoning, but due to

the emotional impact provided, among other things, by vertical context elements. Sometimes emotional impact and rendering specialized information overlap in a linguistic unit or in a combination of linguistic units to such an extent that one feels confused when it comes to attributing a particular case either to the intellectual function or the aesthetic function of language. The impression here is that the fourth and so far unnamed function of language (specialized emotional type of content rendered) is being regularly realized. This tendency is especially noticeable in the declarative varieties of journalism, while in the more neutral varieties of it the expressive component does not prevail so obviously over the conceptual one. Now we will abstain from introducing the less conspicuous examples and immediately turn to those where the tendency we have just spoken about manifests itself most obviously.

Samuel Johnson was not only an adoring editor, but also a demanding critic of Shakespeare. In full keeping with the views on what a dramatic text should be like, predominant during Johnson's lifetime, he once gave a scathing description of Shakespeare's use of play upon words:

"A quibble is to Shakespeare, what luminous vapours are to the traveller; he follows it at all adventures, it is sure to lead him out of his way, and sure to engulf him in the mire. It has some malignant power over his mind, and its fascinations are irresistible. /.../ A quibble is the golden apple for which he will always stoop aside from his career, or stoop from his elevation. A quibble, poor and barren as it is, gave him such delight, that he was content to purchase it, by the sacrifice of reason, propriety and truth. A quibble was to him the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world, and was content to lose it" (Johnson 1986, p. 273).

The text contains just one idea which may be formulated in less than one line: "A quibble is a bad thing, and Shakespeare was wrong to have used it". The remaining six and a half lines serve as intensifiers to this idea, the main notion is personified and its negative sides are characterized through the plentiful usage of metaphors including such vertical context elements as the connotative word-combinations "the golden apple" and "the fatal Cleopatra". Ancient Greek mythology and Shakespeare's play "Antony and Cleopatra" are the sources from which these elements are borrowed, and a sophisticated reader will at once appreciate Johnson's skill in creating bright associations magnifying the enormity of Shakespeare's lack of discrimination when he chose the quibble as a recurrent stylistic device in his texts. Though not devoid of meaning conceptually, the vertical context elements here are significant first and foremost expressively, they do not develop the main idea, but only intensify it. In Richard Wilson's academic text the connection between Shakespeare, Richard Field and Richard Quiney was apparent, for they were all Stratford-born people dwelling at a

certain period of their lives in the ‘oasis of licence’, and no expressivity would accompany this plain statement of fact. In Samuel Johnson’s passage the quibble, the golden apple and the fatal Cleopatra are only loosely united thematically by a very general idea of ‘badness’, with the expressive component clearly prevailing, the semantic component reduced and these three motions turning into contextual synonyms. This is the fundamental difference between the use of vertical context elements in specialized texts, where they are significant conceptually and interrelated thematically, and their thematically loose application in emotional kinds of writing or speaking to which declarative journalism may be legitimately attributed.

The same loose connection of the vertical context elements with the main idea of the text or the absence of any connection between them whatsoever is found in the beginning of an article “Good Practice Trumps Blind Brexit Principles” by Magnus Linklater (Linklater 2018), published on November 19 2018 in *The Times*:

“Dr Johnson (Sam, that is, not Boris) got it about right when he expostulated to Boswell: “Sir, are you so grossly ignorant of human nature, as not to know that a man may be very sincere in good principles, without having good practice?”

We have had our fair share of principles in the past week. Principled departures from the cabinet, principled support for a second vote, principled rejection of a backstop on the Irish border, principled opposition to EU rules. In each case, devotion to sovereignty and defence of the Union have been rock-hard principles from which, say their proponents, there must be no defection”.

Had it been an academic text, we would have had every reason to expect an explanation in every case when the anaphoric adjective “principled” is used or at least a reference to other sources amplifying the essentially unprincipled behavior of the politicians. In a declarative journalistic text we find nothing of the kind, we are supposed to know in advance or to believe the author of the text blindly. The use of the vertical context elements (the opposition between Samuel Johnson and Boris Johnson) follows the same conceptually loose pattern. Either we accept it as an indisputable fact that the sage of the old times is superior to his modern namesake, or, if we possess some preliminary knowledge, we will embark on a search of differences between the two and confine ourselves in the end to a largely irrelevant statement that the former was ‘good’ and the latter was ‘bad’. The same ‘good’ – ‘bad’ opposition all over again, in no way connected with the main idea of the text, the vertical context elements serving as intensifiers and not as the conceptually relevant components of the article.

To illustrate the functioning of the vertical context elements in journalism with the utmost clarity we have taken the liberty of turning the academic text concerning the relations between Philip of Spain and

Queen Elizabeth discussed above into a journalistic one. Our experiment will allow us to represent in a condensed form the features of journalism which are rarely used in such great quantities in a single text:

“When the one who detested marriage in contrast to her namesake who tolerated her husband’s infidelity for years became Queen of England, Philip (the Armada man, not the quiet crony of James) had every reason to hope for the normal working relations with the country which of late had witnessed his extreme personal humiliation. After all he was the one to have protected his sister-in-law when Mary (not the William-and-Mary one, but the proud owner of the most despicable sobriquet in history) decided to imprison the future Gloriana. Not that the sobriquet owner’s wrath was totally unjustified, but still Elizabeth’s main fault was her status of heir apparent. Philip was shrewd enough to figure out that the sister-in-law for all her secret protestant leanings – only time would show whether she would confine herself to here I stand or accept double predestination – was a much better choice as the next ruler of England than the staunchly Catholic, but distinctly pro-French disciple of the Guise family, who was next in line of succession.

When Elizabeth eventually got the crown of England, Philip was controlling a vast empire the Pavia hero had bequeathed him (the Holy Roman thing had been dropped en route more or less, Charles having mercy on his heir and displaying his viciousness dynastically upwards, and not downwards). His resources were stretched to the utmost, and friendship with the land of St Augustine would alleviate the extreme strain the unfortunate Juana’s grandson was subjected to on the daily basis. The last thing the recipient of the problematic inheritance could afford was to antagonize yet another ruler, however insignificant the role of Albion in the international politics of the time could have been”.

What we received as a result is not an example of declarative journalism, but a highly expressive specimen of analytical journalism. When composing the initial sentence we were inspired by the Johnson-Johnson opposition we have just discussed, as within the context of the 16th century Anglo-Spanish relations [Ronald 2007] there is no reason to mention Queen Elizabeth II. But there she is, in the very first sentence, like Boris Johnson in Magnus Linklater’s text, antonomastically opposed to her 16th century namesake and promising the discussions of the further points within the virtually unidentifiable general context of “European royalty, their human qualities and political decisions”. Philip III of Spain (“the quiet crony of James” [Hogge 2005]) as opposed to Philip II (“the Armada man”), as well William III and Mary II as opposed to Mary I (“the proud owner of the despicable sobriquet”), may be categorized similarly, for they have a very loose thematic connection with the main idea of the text. To make matters more complicated some members of the oppositions are introduced through antonomasia which remains

unexplained in what comes next. “The future Gloriana” [Doran 2015] and “the disciple of the Guise family” [Carroll 2009; Graham 2008] are still other examples of anonomasia which are thematically closer to the immediate content of the text because they name the actual participants of the political battles of the Elizabethan epoch. The same applies to “here I stand” and “double predestination” which correspond to Lutheranism [Mullet 2004] and Calvinism [Hart 2013] respectively and which Elizabeth would finally have to choose from when formulating for herself the main political and moral principles she would follow during her reign [Childs 2014].

In the second passage the thematic orientation of the vertical context elements changes yet again, for now it is Philip’s family history that becomes the centre of attention: his father Charles V, who had defeated the French king Francis I near Pavia [Thomas 2013], who refused to release his mother Juana from close confinement and thus displayed “upward dynastic viciousness”, who had to control enormous territories including the Holy Roman Empire, Spain and the Netherlands and exhausted himself through this daily imperial work to such an extent that at the age of 56 he abdicated, giving the Empire to his brother and his other lands to Philip [Thomas 2014] (and thus sparing his heir the ordeal of coping with the task Charles himself had found impossible), and shut himself in a monastery where he died two years after the event in a state of acute depression.

Practically the whole of this information is to be deduced from the passage through deciphering cases of anonomasia, which for journalistic texts is a recurrent stylistic device representing their vertical context – sometimes very rich and very loose thematically. In the text we have just discussed the thematic orientation of the vertical context elements changes thrice: from European royalty generally to the dynastic situation in England during Mary Tudor’s reign, to be followed by the ideology of Protestantism and then by Philip’s family history. In declarative journalism such changes are nothing out of the ordinary, and anonomasia is used in them not just to avoid tautology (the way it is done, quite infrequently, in the academic texts, where cases of anonomasia are easy to understand and are thematically transparent), but to form unexpected contextual synonyms and either to inspire the cognoscenti to develop various associations or to induce the less knowledgeable readers to uncritically accept the author’s view because the readers get the impression that the author is obviously superior to them intellectually. In academic writing vertical context is supposed to be orderly and predictable; in journalism it is much less orderly, much less predictable, potentially boundless and at the same time not really relevant when it comes to comprehending the immediate content of journalistic texts. The functions of language realized are either the aesthetic one (when we speak about “fatal Cleopatra” in connection with the quibble, for

example) or the mixture of the intellective and the aesthetic (the unnamed fourth function), which is typical not only of cases of anonomasia, but also of such regularly occurring specialized-emotional units as “upward viciousness” and their derivatives.

Vertical Context in Imaginative Writing

Imaginative writing was chronologically the first functional style the vertical context theory was applied to, concentrating on various kinds of allusions and quotations [Giubbenet 2010]. These vertical context elements are easy to reveal when they are appropriately designated orthographically, while in the absence of the orthographic indicators they may be difficult to spot. In order to do this one should pay attention to the potential stylistic incompatibility of an allusion or a quotation with the rest of the text or to their gnomic character, as well as to their logical significance for the text as a whole. When none of these features can be revealed, spotting a vertical context element of this kind is next to impossible.

All these theoretical points have been convincingly developed by our predecessors, for this reason we find it unnecessary to repeat here what other people have already said, enlivening what is already known by introducing a new and refreshing set of examples. Instead, we are going to discuss the subject which is not at all obvious and which, to our knowledge, has not so far received due consideration: revealing vertical context elements in texts of symbolic kind.

In contrast to metaphors, which in spite of their potential complexity can be understood immanently, without taking recourse to the vertical context of a piece of verbal art, the interpretation of symbols or symbolically significant elements is impossible without going beyond immanent analysis. When in his poem “Oh! Think Not My Spirits Are Always As Light” (Moore 2016) Thomas Moore introduces an extended metaphor “the heart that is soonest awake to the flowers is always the first to be touched by the thorns”, the meaning of the lines may not be at once apparent to the reader, but sooner or later the implication will become transparent: some people react to joy and to sorrow with equal intensity because these people are highly emotional. This is the conclusion one may formulate immanently, without turning to any commentaries, as for all the originality of using them together with the word “heart” the flowers and the thorns in this poem metaphorically stand for something good and something bad, something pleasant and something unpleasant respectively. Logically and semantically these two nouns are definitely compatible, which proves to be an important feature allowing the reader to disregard the non-immanent information when interpreting the poem.

When the logical compatibility of some linguistic units is not there, one should think of revealing the possible vertical context implications and of treating what may seem to be metaphorical as symbolic. In the King James Bible (First... 1986) the translation of

Ecclesiastes 12:1-8 contains among other things the enumeration of the events occurring when a person gets old: the keepers of the house shall tremble, the grinders shall cease because they are few, those that look out of the windows be darkened, the almond tree shall flourish. Though with some difficulty one may give a metaphorical interpretation to the first three elements (things which are usually visible and bright getting quiet or blurred, thus showing the changes in the world on the day of a person's demise), all the same the fourth element logically falls out of this line of reasoning. Of course, it may happen simply because the text is badly written, and it is for this reason that the logical connection disappears when we come to the fourth element of the enumeration. But in fact there is nothing wrong about the logical side of the text simply because in Hebrew poetry the four above-mentioned elements stand symbolically for hands, teeth, eyes and hair getting weak, scarce, short-sighted and grey in a person's old age. The knowledge of the vertical context in this case is indispensable if one is to understand this piece of writing adequately, and the necessity to turn to biblical commentaries becomes obvious the moment the reader notices the lack of logical connection between some parts of the text and begins to suspect that immanent analysis here is insufficient and that the would-be metaphors in the text are actually symbols.

"Badly written and requiring no recourse to vertical context" is one of the explanations coming to a reader's mind at the sight of a text difficult for comprehension – an explanation which sometimes may be correct, and sometimes incorrect. "Representing entirely abstract phenomena, following an intricate logic all its own and requiring no recourse to vertical context" is another explanation to the incomprehensibility of a text – an explanation which sometimes may be correct, and sometimes incorrect as well. We have come to the right evaluation of a piece from Ecclesiastes through considering its philological vertical context, but it does not mean this type of extratextual information would suffice for the adequate understanding of any text going beyond immanent interpretations. Like the biblical text just considered, William Shakespeare's celebrated poem "The Phoenix and the Turtle" defies elementary logic, but studying the Phoenix legend throughout the world literature will not bring us any nearer to the understanding of why Shakespeare brought together the eagle, the swan and the crow as the birds that should attend the burial of the phoenix and the turtle, why other birds were not allowed to be present, why the love between the phoenix and the turtle was so unique that their separation from each other did not prevent them from forming the global whole where the border between the constituent entities was invisible though visible, and. Eventually, why their demise marks the irrevocable extinction of Beauty, Rarity and Truth. Reconstructing the philological vertical context here is of no help, and

many scholars were tempted to say that the value of this text lies precisely in its incomprehensibility. This may be quite true, but as Shakespeare is generally known to have been no modernist or postmodernist and to have produced texts with clear content one feels a bit uncomfortable about such an interpretation and begins to look for explanations elsewhere. The promising theoretical premise in this case is that confining oneself to the philological vertical context is not always acceptable and that turning to the socio-historical variety of vertical context may be an effective way out of certain awkward situations.

There is a plethora of competitive theories concerning the prototypes of the heroes of Shakespeare's poem, but it is our firm belief that the right interpretation of the text may be given only if we attach due importance to the word "requiem" and the prayers for the dead Shakespeare mentions in his text. These are the distinct indications that the dead birds were to be buried in accordance with the Catholic rites that had been banned in England four decades before Shakespeare's poem was written. This narrows down the search of prototypes to a Catholic couple living separately in perfect chastity and perfect spiritual union and dying tragically about the year 1601 when the collection of poems including "The Phoenix and the Turtle" was first published. The secret burial was attended by the leading members of the London Catholic community, and further studies of the vertical context elements in their symbolic meaning allow one to identify the prototypes with a fair degree of certainty and to suggest a more adequate interpretation compared to those based on the philological vertical context exclusively [Lipgart 2018].

Conclusion

Vertical context manifests itself differently in various functional styles, and within a style it may be of varying significance as well. In texts realizing mainly the communicative function of language vertical context is easy to interpret because no specialization and no emotionality is attached to the use of its elements. In texts where the intellectual function of language prevails vertical context may be complex, but thematically uniform, predictable and discernable, because the authors of such texts are obliged to give to their readers very clear explanations of where the relevant information not presented in the texts themselves is to be found and what it actually consists in. Journalistic texts and imaginative writing are potentially the most difficult for interpretation with respect to vertical context because its elements are not necessarily thematically coherent and not at all easy to discern. Antonomasia will be the regular stylistic choice for introducing vertical context in journalism, while imaginative writing in so many cases may be interpreted adequately only through establishing the right symbolic connections of the philological or socio-historical kind.

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