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THE PARADIGM USED TO TEXTUAL / CONTEXTUAL STUDIES OF GENERATIONS' SOCIAL-CULTURAL INTERACTIONS

Natalia Dovgan

Ph. D. in Psychological Sciences,

Senior Researcher at the Laboratory of Psychology of Political and Legal Relations

*Institute of Social and Political Psychology of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine
(Kyiv, Ukraine)*

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6150-5211

Abstract. The article presents the paradigm used for textual / contextual studies of generations' social-cultural interactions. A generation's perception of the reality is influenced by its dominant social-cultural styles used in its space-time. The textual / contextual bases to analyze the (non-) congruence between texts developed by a generation and social-cultural contexts are described according to the aspects proposed within the constructivist paradigm. The ontological aspect of the constructivist paradigm is viewed as a base for the theoretical construction of a generation's social-cultural reality. It is emphasized within the epistemological aspect that interacting actors are formed during interactions, and generations' textual constructions form the context for the historical reality. As for the methodological aspect, the general criteria for quality assessment are used to specify the requirements for textual / contextual research methods. These criteria are: the evaluating qualities for data; the impact of social-historical situations; the qualities of developed generalizations; the historical correspondence. Thus, the selected research methods should correspond the criteria of quality assessment, which is substantiated.

Key words: generation, generations' texts, context, constructivism, paradigm, ontological, epistemological, methodological, aspect.

ПАРАДИГМА ТЕКСТ / КОНТЕКСТУАЛЬНОГО ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ СОЦІОКУЛЬТУРНОЇ ВЗАЄМОДІЇ ПОКОЛІНЬ

Наталія Довгань

кандидат психологічних наук,

старший науковий співробітник лабораторії психології політико-правових відносин

Інституту соціальної та політичної психології Національної академії педагогічних наук України

(Київ, Україна)

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6150-5211

Анотація. У статті представлено парадигму текст / контекстуального дослідження соціокультурної взаємодії поколінь. Наголошується, що на уявлення поколінь про реальність впливають панівні соціокультурні стилі часопростору. За аспектами конструктивізму описано текст / контекстуальні основи аналізу (не)конгруентності текстів поколінь соціокультурним контекстам. Представлено онтологічний аспект конструктивістської парадигми базисом теоретичного конструювання соціокультурної реальності поколінь. У розгортанні епістемологічного аспекту аналізу наголошується, що процес взаємодії утворює акторів взаємодії, а текстуальні конструкції поколінь утворюють контекст історичної реальності. Для конкретизації вимог до означення методів текст / контекстуального дослідження в методологічному аспекті представлено загальні критерії оцінки якості. Описано критерії: якості оцінювання даних; впливу соціально-історичних ситуацій; якості сконструйованих узагальнень; історичної відповідності. Обґрунтовується необхідність підбору методів дослідження конгруентних критеріям оцінки якості.

Ключові слова: покоління, текст поколінь, контекст, конструктивізм, парадигма, онтологічний, епістемологічний, методологічний, аспект.

PARADYGMAT TEKST/KONTEKSTOWEGO BADANIA SPOŁECZNO-KULTUROWEGO WSPÓŁDZIAŁANIA POKOLENIOWEGO

Nataliia Dovhan

kandydat nauk psychologicznych,

starszy pracownik naukowy

Laboratorium Psychologii Stosunków Polityczno-Prawnych

Instytutu Psychologii Społecznej i Politycznej Narodowej Akademii Nauk Pedagogicznych Ukrainy

(Kijów, Ukraina)

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6150-5211

Adnotacja. W artykule przedstawiono paradygmat tekst/kontekstowego badania społeczno-kulturowego współdziałania pokoleniowego. Należy zauważyć, że na wyobrażenia pokoleń o rzeczywistości wpływają dominujące społeczno-kulturowe style przestrzeni czasowej. W aspektach konstruktywizmu opisano tekst /kontekstualne podstawy analizy (nie) kongruencji tekstów pokoleniowych do kontekstów społeczno-kulturowych. Przedstawiono ontologiczny aspekt paradygmatu konstruktywistycznego jako podstawę teoretycznej konstrukcji społeczno-kulturowej rzeczywistości pokoleń. W rozbudowaniu epistemologicznego aspektu analizy zauważono, że proces interakcji tworzy aktorów interakcji, a tekstualne konstrukcje pokoleń tworzą kontekst rzeczywistości historycznej. Aby uszczegółowić wymagania dotyczące definicji metod badania tekst/kontekstowego badania, w aspekcie metodologicznym przedstawiono ogólne kryteria oceny jakości. Opisano kryteria: jakości oceny danych; wpływu sytuacji społeczno-historycznych; jakości skonstruowanych uogólnień; zgodności historycznej. Uzasadnia się konieczność doboru metod badawczych zgodnych z kryteriami oceny jakości.

Słowa kluczowe: pokolenie; tekst pokolenie, kontekst; konstruktywizm; paradygmat; ontologiczny, epistemologiczny, metodologiczny; aspekt.

Formulation of the problem. We understand a generation as a cohort of people having common social-cultural experience, united by years of birth and historical context of their formation. To build a holistic picture of generations' interactions, as networks, we use a mutually related pair of social-cultural processes. This pair is: the *context* of a generation's life as an independent element of social reality and its *cultural text* as an interpretation by an actor of life situations, as well as the formed practices and artefacts that carry cultural information about the reality. We should note that the generational network is considered in our study as a non-hierarchical social structure that uses generational texts at interactions in accordance with corresponding historical contexts. Given that life conditions are changed with time, and the continuous social-cultural movement transforms notions about the reality, we have determined metaphorically generations' texts as "punctuation marks" of historical contexts.

The task was put forward to choose in a balanced way a paradigm as a foundation of textual / contextual research methods. This paradigm should be appropriate, on the one hand, for generations' world modelling and, on the other hand, for confirming or refuting of the idea that a generational reality exists on the physical and mental planes. The performed theoretical analysis of different scientific approaches (positivist, romantic-humanitarian, cultural-historical,

structural-functional, etc.) revealed the necessity to eliminate the constraints applied by these approaches concerning generations' interactions, thus we have decided to follow the *constructivist* theoretical-methodological system.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The theoretical ideas of J.A. Maxwell, W. John, T.A. Schwandt, S. Best, D. Kellner, E.A. Singer, W. John, Y.S. Lincoln, R.J. Bernstein, D.E. Polkinghorne, T.A. Schwandt were used to organise a reliable textual/contextual research project. These ideas allowed us to describe the *constructivist* forms of cognition and the corresponding methods of empirical data estimation, as well as to specify the ways interpreting control procedures or preventing decrease of result validity.

Formulating the empirical requirements for our study, we have taken into account that a generation's perception about the reality is influenced by dominant social-cultural styles, and textually / contextually different generational cultures do not have a universal construct for the reality, because, hypothetically, a generation's social-cultural reality consists of important phenomena, processes, facts that are historically influential *generational attributes*. These generational attributes are embodiments of the *meanings* developed by generations. The generational meanings, as units of culture, reveal the content of culture and have internal forms and the external framework – *cultural dimensions*. The cultural dimensions or “condensed” ideas on the real world exist as a generation's *cultural codes* that are based on experience acquired by the generation and reveal its understanding of the reality in a limited time-space. In essence, because the presented social-cultural relations in certain contextual conditions can be revealed with texts, this fact has allowed us to analyse interactions textually / contextually in the *ontological, epistemological and methodological aspects* of constructivism (Guba, Lincoln, 1994).

The purpose of this article is to introduce a paradigm that can be used in a textual / contextual study on generations' social-cultural interaction.

The objectives of the study:

1. To describe the ontological, epistemological, methodological aspects of the constructivist paradigm for the study.
2. To specify the general criteria for quality assessment of the study on generations' social-cultural interactions.

Presenting main material.

The ontological aspect of the paradigm was used as a constructive basis for the system of ideas about the social-cultural nature of a generation's reality.

According to constructivist relativism, our study has taken into account the significance of many mental social-cultural constructs acquired during life, as well as inherited historical cultural achievements. Although certain spheres of the social-cultural reality were analyzed as social products, nevertheless, the form and features of their construction, manifestations and socio-cultural influences were considered as results of specific actors' actions.

Basing on the ontological aspect of the constructivist paradigm, we should emphasize that:

- (1) (a generation's) reality is not a reflection of public life, but it is constructed by individual actors;
- (2) (a generation's) social ontology does not mean a space-time continuum, but the result of social influences that are different and relative in actors' perception.

That is, the existence of many generational ontologies has been confirmed, so the influence of actors' worldviews in interactions is important (Titov, 2015). Moreover, it is necessary to analyse a generation's cultural texts that correspond contextually to the reality in order to understand the interpretations of the world formed because of interactions.

As for the comparison of constructed generational spaces, we should note that textual differences are not an obstacle to interactions. Moreover, the textual / contextual variability confirm the naturalness of combined socio-cultural styles. In fact, generational spaces, as open and unstable systems, can be represented during conscious/unconscious interactions as a platform where texts developed by actors in different contexts are intersected. Thus, the ontological cognition of generational constructs can be based on the cognition of texts as *conditionally ideal* and historically adapted models of interactions within a conditional, conventional framework between the possible and appropriate. Thus, to understand the socio-cultural integration of texts, we should find a strategy for holistic analysis that helps to reveal the mechanisms of acculturation.

The second, *epistemological aspect* of the *constructivist paradigm* focuses on the peculiarities of the interactions between text actors in different historical contexts (Guba, Lincoln, 1994). Generations' life meanings have certain historically-related social-cultural limitations for their effectiveness, texts constructed by the generational network change dynamically. This process is self-organizing depending on contextual challenges and lies at the intersections of the spaces of generations-contemporaries. It is important to interpret generations as acting and perceiving actors, reflected in the texts of contemporaries and in self-creation. We have assumed that social-cultural inter-generational links do not disappear with a generation's transition to a conditionally effective status (during its leaving from a social “scene”), but (1) remain in older generations' cultural-textual artefacts; (2) continues to exist in descendants' texts, but with a different interpretation. That is, interaction forms interaction actors, and generations' textual constructions form the context of the historical reality. During self-creation, generations become active subjects constructing the social-cultural reality of contemporaries precisely in co-evolutionary processes. That is, from the epistemological perspective, *first*, a generation, constructing a social-cultural space, do not form the reality; but the world influences the generation's constructs through the historical context. The unified system “generation – reality” is determined by the reciprocal movements of its elements, because:

- there is no generation without contemporaries;
- there are no contemporaries outside the historical context;
- the social-cultural reality cannot be built out of generational spaces;
- generations' socio-cultural styles cannot be formed (updated) without the influences of the past socio-cultural styles.

Secondly, generations' texts can be defined by the determinants of the socio-cultural reality, within which generational network is built. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that generations contextually have many vectors for textual development, but, namely, a dominant social-cultural style determines how historical events are unfolded and the reality is constructed.

Third, the construction of generations' texts takes place during social-cultural interactions, so:

- the construction of reality by a generation affects the formation of meanings that are congruent to contexts, relevant and effective, but derived from social-cultural achievements of the past;
- the construction of reality by a generation takes place in relative reality on the basis of coherent mutual influences. In addition, generational spaces in the historical superstructure are not ideal or unchanging, but become fragments of reality and elements of the historical generational chain;
- the construction of reality by a generation, as a continuous process, covers the past and the present and forms the social-cultural basis of the future;
- a generation's space and the social-cultural reality are inseparable in the historical continuum.

Thus, we emphasize that a social-cultural style can be built at generations' interactions, this style is formed with life experience, meanings, worldview, possible and relevant life forms in a historical space. Thus, *reality cognition and the formation of a social-cultural style depend on a generation's movement in the continuum of others' socio-cultural styles. Generations' interactions are the only possible basis for the formation of future generations.* The constructivist paradigm used for the description of generational epistemology helps us to reveal the ontology of textual interactions – the path of social-cultural meaning-making.

Regarding the *methodological aspect* determining the appropriate methods of textual / contextual research, we have taken into account that the following should be analysed in order to study the dynamic nature of generations:

- actors' cultural texts;
- authentic world pictures and textual / contextual conditional *truths* owned by generations of different ages (Coulon, 1995);
- contextual features of generations' formation – “plural worlds” of the reality (Schutz, 2003);
- characteristics of actors as textual / contextual independent subjects and their subjective positions manifested locally and globally.

To prevent alternative but unreliable interpretations of obtained data and to identify threats of inaccurate causal explanations, general *criteria for study quality assessing* were specified (Maxwell, 2012). Accordingly, *first*, we have taken into account the specific of the examined phenomenon:

- a “universal” standard for obtained subjective data and respondents' assessment of objective reality cannot be a study *validity criterion*;
- the sequence of empirical procedures and the internal logic for result confirmation ensures compliance with the *consistency criterion*;
- if a researcher aware of cognition verification and its practical use it means compliance with the *pragmatic criterion* (Kvale, 2009).

Secondly, existing different texts of generations require choosing a strategy for comparative analysis of actors' realities. The triangulation of research methods and the triangulation of evidences ensure compliance with the *quality criterion* for obtained data evaluation (Campbell, 1980).

Third, due to the uniqueness of generational realities formed in social-cultural interactions, we should note that mental experiences (texts) belonging to actors of different ages are not similar because of different contexts (Cherepanov, 2017). Therefore, actors' contextual choices and textual manifestations should be taken into account in order to meet the criterion of *influencing socio-historical situations*.

Fourth, because universal parameters estimating a generation's space are absent it is difficult to prove the reliability of made conclusions. Age and social-cultural relativity in the perception of certain space-time periods by contemporaries imposes certain limits on the generalization of interactions. Therefore, we have decided to use interdisciplinary strategies for generational cognition in the textual / contextual research to ensure compliance with the quality criterion for constructed generalizations.

Concluding the review on the *criteria*, it is necessary to focus on social-cultural rules that do not remain stable, but are replaced by new generations. The point is that the formed cultural and social artefacts are always dynamic by their nature. And, since social-cultural rules are formed at society to achieve certain goals, we have taken into account that generations always form texts congruent with the time of their formation in order to ensure validity. That is why we have determined to adhere to the *criterion of historical correspondence*: to stress the peculiarities of actors' worldview that are fundamental for a generational space at a certain historical time.

Conclusions:

1. The textual / contextual bases to analyze the (non-) congruence between the texts developed by a generation are social-cultural contexts are described. The *ontological* aspect of the constructivist paradigm is viewed as a base for the theoretical construction a generation's social-cultural reality. The expediency to cognise generations by analysing their texts is substantiated. It is emphasized within the *epistemological* aspect that interacting actors are formed during interactions, and generations' texts form the context for the historical reality. As for the *methodological* aspect, the study of the dynamic nature of generations involves the analysis of: actors' cultural texts; authentic world pictures and textual / contextual conditional truths; contextual features of the generation's formation; textual / contextual characteristics.

2. According to the validity requirements (Maxwell, 1992; Maxwell, 2012; Angen, 2000; Morgan, 1983) (congruence of research purpose and conditions; methodologically correct, expedient and actual tools; realistic definition of theoretical problems examined with empirical research; formulated bases for generalised conclusions), the criteria have been formulated that *estimate quality research* on generations' social-cultural interactions and promote the analysis reliability.

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