

GENDER DISCOURSE IN MODERN ENGLISH

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Abstract

Mass media, being a component of interiorization, plays the important role in the course of gender socialization. Occurrence of «new journalism» and the information addressed exclusively to women has been noted in the end of the XIX century. Gradually press «feminization» was replaced «equalization» that has caused serious discussions on a wave of success of feminist movement. There of the tendency of dedication of researches to women in journalism was in the early eighties of the XX century observed, however basically in socially – economic aspect; after there was variety of the works devoted to studying of gender relations in journalism, and also to transformations in public consciousness concerning a role of women and information representation.

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There is no agreement among linguists as to the use of the term discourse in that some use it in reference to texts, while others claim it denotes speech which is for instance illustrated by the following definition: «Discourse: a continuous stretch of language larger than a sentence, often constituting a coherent unit such as a sermon, argument, joke, or narrative». On the other hand Dakowska, being aware of differences between kinds of discourses indicates the unity of communicative intentions as a vital element of each of them. Consequently she suggests using terms 'text' and 'discourse' almost interchangeably betokening the former refers to the linguistic product, while the latter implies the entire dynamics of the processes. According to Cook novels, as well as short conversations or groans might be equally rightfully named discourses.

The concept of «discourse» is very helpful in understanding why men must resist negative stereotypes of their gender imposed by those with a negative mind-set. Discourse is a term that is often used synonymously with «ideology». However, it is much more than this, and is a central concept in trying to make sense of the contested area of understanding gender.

U.S. Stepanov believes that the discourse is «language in language», but presented in the form of a special social reality. The discourse exists, mainly, in texts, but there is a special grammar, a special lexicon, special rules of the use and syntax, special semantics – finally – the special world... The phenomenon of a discourse, its possibilities are the proof of the thesis «language is the house of spirit» and, to a certain extent, of the thesis – «language is the life house».

In his turn V.Z. Demjankov defines a discourse as the text in its formation before a mind of the interpreter which consists of sentences or its fragments, and the contents of discourse often but not always concentrates around some «basic» concept, named «the topic discourse» or «discursive topic».

In the given definitions such concepts, as a discourse and the text are intertwined. But what is the difference of a discourse from the text? The text is a set of sentences, and the discourse is the base creating the text contextually-connected. According to V.Z. Demjankov, it is considered that discourse is the existence of the mental world which nuclear structures are «idealized cognitive models», «frames»

or concepts behind text frameworks. The set of given structures will make semantic system, semantics of the mental world.

The discourse also differs from the act of communication representing natural activity of people in a society – the most widespread form of use of language which covers linguistic activity. At the same time, even if the act of communication concerns the most widespread functions of language use, it all the same is the text of the certain kind constructed by rules of social use. Thus, the term «discourse», according to M. Stabbs, in connection with the discourse-analysis and the analysis of the act of communications is not the same. The former contains the latter; therefore the discourse-analysis should not be interpreted as the special grammatical-focused direction of the analysis of the act of communication.

In the area of pragmatists the discourse-analysis considers «body» of communications and helps to describe main principles of interpretation and ways of use of statements for achievement of the communicative purposes. Moreover, it is important to define the social and gender stratification. In what degree the gender aspect influences creation of this or that type of a discourse? According to P.B. Parshin, specificity of the social agent is essential to define the type of the discourse; therefore the given aspect should be included in a discourse-analysis. Depending on the agent the discourse can be: *feministic, pre-election, Soviet, racist, presidential etc.* Researches within the frame of a discourse and a gender are so various, that there is no uniform approach which would be named as «the feministic discourse-analysis». Actually, not all approaches are considered feministic in the given direction, but all of them are considered in four different, but interconnected research traditions: Anthropological (cultural aspect), sociological (social interaction), critical (text), and the most modern anthropological (historical trajectories of a discourse). Thus, we come to the fact that the discourse is a social, cultural and political phenomenon and the discourse theory is not simply reflection of a society, culture and the power, but it is also perennial source of the additional information.

For the present research the critical discourse-analysis which representatives are N. Ferkhou, T. van Dake, R. Vodak is important. The given approach considers language as means for manufacture and power and ideology reproduction. The given statement is also proved in sociology, thus, giving the basis to consider, that the gender discourse is considered as the form of «symbolical violence» which is understood as a kind of the symbolical struggle which purpose is the symbolical power and the symbolical capital. Hence, it is possible to consider any discourse political. It is possible to agree with it partially as pragmalinguistic principle of the analysis takes place in researches of discourse of such scientists as J. Searle, J. Austin, and P. Grace. From the given point of view, the discourse is a world of thought designed by the author in which it immerses the interpreter. The skilled author, especially the politician, anticipates such speech suggestion by preparatory processing of another's consciousness so that the new relation to a subject harmonized with the settled representations – realized or not realized. Indistinct semantics of language promotes flexible introduction in another's consciousness: the new sight is modified (it is an original mimicry) under the influence of system of the settled opinions of the interpreter, and at the same time it changes this system».

From the aforesaid it follows, that aspects of public relations are expressed and created in a discourse by the power, or by the cooperation. According to D. Tannen, the power deals there where dissymmetric relations in human relations take place, and cooperation, on the contrary, – symmetric [16, 77]. Men, protecting power territory, apply various receptions to support of manufacture of imperious relations, e.g. strategy on fall. The woman in the given context is considered as basic «consumer», and the man – «manufacturer» of a discourse. The given context is mainly presented by such version of a discourse, as institutional. The formula of the given discourse is presented E.I. Shejgal

Discourse = sublanguage + the text + a context

The following understanding of a discourse is offered to the researchers:

Communications system = real + the potential.

«In potential measurement the discourse represents the semiotics space including verbal and nonverbal signs, and also representations about typical models of speech behavior and a set of speech actions and genres necessary for the given type of communications», – writes E.I. Shejgal.

The social group carries out additional function of differentiation to a gender sign: accordingly, it dictates presence of a label for performance of the set social role; thus, specificity of style of gender communicative behavior of women and men is traced. The mentality of society in turn sets variability of representations on such concepts, as «feminine» and «masculine», i.e. gender model which is necessary for performance by the individual of social, gender roles and norms in a society during the certain historical period. There is a certain related communication with ritual, but change of a paradigm of values involves change in behavior of society. Hence, on the basis of all resulted above formulas it is possible to present following components of a discourse accounting social and gender aspect:

- 1) the agent;
- 2) intention;
- 3) a sublanguage (social aspect);
- 4) *a sublanguage (gender aspect)*;
- 5) the situational text;
- 6) interactivity;
- 7) a cultural context.

Generalization of results of researches of the given phenomenon shows, that the foreshortening of research of a discourse depends on those problems which face to scientists. Leaning against J.S. Stepanova, V.Z. Demjankova and E.I. Shejgal's concepts, we come to discourse definition as «language in language», but presented in the form of a special social reality, i.e. the discourse is considered in close interaction with social factors. It exists, mainly, in texts, which have a special grammar, a special lexicon, special rules of the use and syntax, special semantics – finally – the special world. Conceptually its creation is influenced by factors of situational-social, gender and cultural plan during interaction of participants in semiotics space. The discourse is created in a certain situation of dialogue where participants possess social roles, installations, intentions.

In regard to the question of gender and discourse, we need to identify the discourses around the nature of males in our society, and look for the power effects, or implications, of these discourses – for it is these discourses that will determine the social and political responses to men's and boys' health needs.

Various discourses about what constitutes «woman» and «man» have appeared over time. In European cultures, the Victorian era's dominant discourse on women saw them as weak creatures, subject to control by their emotions and reproductive biology. The power effects of this discourse led to social practices, and even legislation, concerning the appropriate occupations and roles of women, and it limited their opportunities to participate in the public sphere of social life. Men, on the other hand, were in this period seen as unable to provide the nurturing required by children, rather as the disciplinarians and provider's of their family's material needs. Thus, the power effects of this gender discourse on men resulted in their being largely excluded from the sphere of private life.

Discourses regarding men and women still differ today. This was exemplified in a presentation by an earlier speaker, who noted that young women smoke to control body weight so as to attain a socially defined «attractive» body shape. It was claimed that young men smoke because they see it as a «manly» thing to do. If we deconstruct this statement, we can see that there is an underlying discourse – women are perceived as being subject to outside influences (to their detriment) – that they lack «agency», the power to initiate actions in their own lives – they are largely victims of external forces. Men, however, are seen as having power to choose, as being agents for their own actions, so that men smoke to create a persona. The result (power effects) of this type of discourse, which is common in many areas of men's and women's health, is that we attempt to change environments for women (by reducing the emphasis

on thin bodies), but tell men to change themselves (by stopping smoking). We locate women's health challenges outside of themselves, but the challenges to men's health we see as arising within the men themselves (or in the abstracted men of «masculinities»).

The main way of social communications and manipulation is the language showing various situations of social communications which participants in the conditions of direct dialogue can be at least two real partners and in the conditions of text communications – two potential partners. The language signs making semiotics space of the oral and written text represent social life under different corners, including its political component. The political space of society is designed by various political movements, parties, associations, groups which structure includes the politicians differing not only on political views, on level of linguo-cultural competence, on popularity among members of the given society, but also under such biological factor (feminine, masculine) which deserve special research. The modern gender theory does not try to challenge distinction between women and men, believing, that the fact of distinctions is not so important, as their socio-cultural estimation and interpretation, and also construction of imperious system on the basis of these distinctions.

According to J. Mistrňk stylistics can be defined as the study of choice and the types of use of linguistic, extra-linguistic and aesthetic mean, as well as particular techniques used in communication. Considering the generally accepted differentiation between linguistic and literary stylistics, J. Mistrňk suggests that we carefully distinguish between the language style, belles-lettres and literary style (ibid., p. 30):

The language style is a way of speech and/or a kind of utterance which is formed by means of conscious and intentional selection, systematic patterning and implementation of linguistic and extra-linguistic means with respect to the topic, situation, function, author's intention and content of an utterance.

The Belles-Letters style (*artistic, aesthetic*, in Slovak *umelecká štýl*) is one of the language styles which fulfils, in addition to its general informative function, a specific *aesthetic* function.

The Literary Style is the style of literary works implemented in all components of a literary work, i.e. on the level of language, ideas, plot, etc. All these components are subordinated to aesthetic norms. (Thus *Literary style* is an extra-linguistic category while the language and belles-lettres styles are language categories.) We can recognize the style of a literary school, group or generation and also an individual style of an author (i.e. *idiolect*). This means that on the one hand we can name the so called *individual styles* and on the other the *inter-individual (functional) styles*.

The object of lingo-stylistics is the study of the nature, functions and structures of stylistic devices and expressive means on the one hand, and the study of the functional styles, on the other. A functional style of language is a system of interrelated language means which serves a definite aim in communication. A functional style is thus to be regarded as the product of a certain concrete task set by the sender of the message. Functional styles appear mainly in the literary standard of a language.

The literary standard of the English language, like that of any other developed language, is not as homogeneous as it may seem. In fact the Standard English literary language in the course of its development has fallen into several subsystems each of which has acquired its own peculiarities which are typical of the given functional style. The peculiar choice of language means is primarily predetermined by the aim of the communication. One set of language media stands in opposition to other sets of language media with other aims, and these other sets have other choices and arrangements of language means.

What we here call functional styles are also called *registers or discourses*.

In the English literary standard we distinguish the following major functional styles:

- 1) The language of belles-Letters.
- 2) The language of publicist literature.
- 3) The language of newspapers.
- 4) The language of scientific prose.

5) The language of official documents.

Each functional style may be characterized by a number of distinctive features. Each functional style is subdivided into a number of sub styles. These represent varieties of the abstract invariant. Each variety has basic features common to all the varieties of the given functional style and peculiar features typical of this variety alone.

The belles-lettres functional style has the following sub styles:

- a) the language style of poetry;
- b) the language style of emotive prose;
- c) the language style of drama.

The publicist functional style comprises the following sub styles:

- a) the language style of oratory;
- b) the language style of essays;
- c) the language style of feature articles in newspapers and journals.

The newspaper functional style falls into

- a) the language style of brief news items and communiqués;
- b) the language style of newspaper headings;
- c) the language style of notices and advertisements.

The scientific prose functional style also has three divisions:

- a) the language style of humanitarian sciences;
- b) the language style of «exact» sciences;
- c) the language style of popular scientific prose.

The official document functional style can be divided into four varieties:

- a) the language style of diplomatic documents;
- b) the language style of business documents;
- c) the language style of legal documents;
- d) the language style of military documents.

The classification presented here is by no means arbitrary. This classification is not proof against criticism. Other schemes may possibly be elaborated and highlighted by different approaches to the problem of functional styles. Thus, for example, some linguists consider that newspaper articles (including feature articles) should be classed under the functional style of newspaper language, not under the language of publicist literature. Others insist on including the language of everyday-life discourse into the system of functional styles.

Prof. Budagov singles out only two main functional styles: the language of science and that of emotive literature.

When analysing concrete texts, we discover that the boundaries between functional styles sometimes become less and less discernible. Thus, for instance, the signs of difference are sometimes almost imperceptible, between poetry and emotive prose; between newspaper functional style and publicist functional style; between a popular scientific article and a scientific treatise; between an essay and a scientific article.

Of all the functional styles of language, the most difficult to define is the belles-lettres style. Franz Kafka defines this style as «organized violence done on ordinary speech».

Literary works create their own world. Each is a unique entity. Just as a painter uses paint to create a new image, a writer uses words to create a text. An important thing to recognize about literary works is just how carefully and consciously they are crafted. Words are the raw material of literature and literary writers stretch them to their limits.

D. Crystal said that the literary language is the art in making the unnatural appear natural. For example, a playwright or novelist may write a dialogue which is naturalistic – i. e. it employs colloquialism, dialect words and so on – but this dialogue is very different from spontaneous speech. It will contain no non-fluency features; it will probably be less repetitious and more dramatic than ordinary speech.

Other forms of literature make no attempt to appear natural – in fact they deliberately surprise the readers' expectations. They might use familiar words in unfamiliar ways as e. e. cummings does, or they might coin new words as Gerald Hopkins does. Perhaps we expect poets to use deviant language, but prose writers like James Joyce do it too. The *belles-lettres* style is a generic term for three sub styles in which the main principles and the most general properties of the style are materialized.

These three sub styles are:

1. *the language of poetry*
2. *emotive prose*
3. *the language of the drama*

Each of these sub styles has certain common features. First of all the common function comes which may be called «aesthetical-cognitive». This is a double function which aims at the cognitive process and, at the same time, calls for a feeling of pleasure. This pleasure is caused not only by admiration of the selected language means and their peculiar arrangement but also by the fact that the reader is led to form his own conclusions. So the purpose of the *belles-lettres* style is to suggest a possible interpretation of the phenomena of life by forcing the reader to see the view point of the writer. Nothing gives more pleasure and satisfaction than realizing that one has the ability to penetrate into the hidden tissue of events, phenomena and human activity and to perceive the relation between various seemingly unconnected facts brought together by the creative mind of the writer.

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