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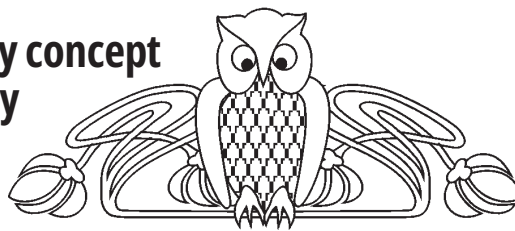
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Article

The evolution of the language personality concept in the course of constructing social reality



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Abstract. The article presents the stages of transformation of the concept “linguistic personality” in correlation with the changes of social reality. The reasons for the appearance of the concept “communicative personality” in connection with the formation of the social reality of the information society are substantiated. Comparative analysis of these concepts, involving linguistic, socio-cultural and socio-psychological factors is presented. The “linguistic turn” in socio-humanitarian research contributed to a new content of linguistic personality as a discursive concept. The sociological approaches of M. Weber and P. Bourdieu are given as the theoretical grounds of the connection between the social status of a linguistic personality and its belonging to a certain speech community. The example of the sociolinguistic discourse proves the influence of the level of education, linguistic in particular, on the access of the linguistic/communicative/discursive personality to the social lift (professional career development). Thus, the linguistic personality as a subject of social reality construction creates and maintains social communication, contributes to the enlargement of knowledge, intergenerational connections and, ultimately, to the improvement of the quality of life.

Keywords: linguistic personality, communication, linguistic turn, discourse, social status, habitus, linguistic capital, speech community

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Научная статья

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Эволюция концепта «языковая личность» в процессе конструирования социальной реальности

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Аннотация. В статье представлены этапы трансформации концепта «языковая личность» в корреляции с изменениями социальной реальности. Обоснованы причины появления концепта «коммуникативная личность» в связи со становлением социальной реальности информационного общества. Представлен сравнительный анализ этих концептов с привлечением языковых, социокультурных и социопсихологических факторов. «Лингвистический поворот» в социогуманитарных исследованиях способствовал новому наполнению языковой личности как дискурсивного концепта. Социологические подходы М. Вебера и П. Бурдьё приведены как теоретические основания связи социального статуса языковой личности с ее принадлежностью к определённому речевому сообществу. Пример социолингвистического дискурса доказывает влияние уровня образования, лингвистического, в частности, на доступ языковой/коммуникативной/дискурсивной личности к социальному лифту (профессиональному карьерному росту). Таким образом, языковая личность как субъект конструирования социальной реальности создает и поддерживает социальную коммуникацию, способствует приращению знаний, связей между поколениями и в конечном итоге улучшению качества жизни.

Ключевые слова: языковая личность, коммуникация, лингвистический поворот, дискурс, социальный статус, габитус, лингвистический капитал, речевое сообщество

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*Язык возникает в повседневной жизни
и тесно связан с ней*

Т. Бергер, П. Лукман

Language as a social fact and action actualises all kinds of human life activities in the past, present and future, both in the constant and virtual social reality. The main function of any language – communicative – provides all kinds of human interaction. Consequently, it is natural to consider all native speakers, first of all, as linguistic personalities, in other words, as individuals using a language to describe all phenomena, ideas, concepts, subjects and objects of the surrounding world picture.

The phenomenon of the linguistic personality is a subject of research of a wide range of socio-humanitarian sciences, as the linguistic personality is the subject of construction of social reality. When referring to the definition of the concept of the linguistic personality, one should take into account the fact that there is no single definition due to its complexity and multidimensionality. However, the reason lies not only in this fact, but also in the fact that the functioning of the linguistic personality in the perspective of the subjective (personal) attitude to the surrounding social reality is manifested, in particular, in the choice of language tools adequate to the socio-cultural areal of the described or constructed social reality. And yet, most of the research is based on Y. N. Karaulov's concept, which is focused on the text generated by the linguistic personality. According to this theory, the linguistic personality is actualised in three aspects:

- verbal-semantic as an adequate command of the linguistic means;
- cognitive as a process that describes how the linguistic individual relates to the reality around him or her;
- pragmatic (activity-based), reflecting the target preferences, knowledge and skills of the linguistic individual [1].

In the psychological context, the linguistic personality is seen as a set of personality traits and qualities that determine the generation, perception and interpretation of texts as speech acts. All studies of the linguistic personality have the basis of analyzing texts both in terms of their linguistic characteristics and the availability of native speakers' readiness and ability to create and adequately perceive these texts [2].

The emergence of the information society, the creation and constant development and improvement of new technologies of information processing gave rise to new forms of communication. The new cultural and civilizational paradigm emerged

and further actualized the importance of information and determined both new trends in the process of communication and new contents of the concept of the linguistic personality [3].

Each linguistic personality as the subject and object of interpersonal interactions creates a communicative field in the form of the combination of personal characteristics, connections between them, moral and ethical norms, as well as the degree of their adequacy to the moral and value models accepted in this social reality. Within these communicative fields there is a formation of the communicative personality as the augmented linguistic personality [4].

It should be noted that there are three perspectives on the relationship between the concepts of linguistic and communicative identity:

- the linguistic personality is a broader concept than the communicative personality because of its actualisation in the speech, mental, linguistic and communicative aspects [5];
- the concepts of the linguistic personality and communicative personality are synonymous, as the linguistic personality acquires the status of the communicative personality in the process of communication [6];
- the status of the communicative person is higher than that of the linguistic person, because the communicative person has both verbal and non-verbal tools in his/her arsenal, including artificial and mixed communicative means [7].

While linguistic personality functions on the verbal-semantic, cognitive and pragmatic levels, communicative personality can be represented as the combination of the following components:

- the motivational component as the combination of both personal motives and willingness to enter into communication, and their adequacy to the needs accepted in society [8];
- the cognitive component reflects personal specificity in terms of the intellectual and emotional experience, adequate to the generally accepted social norms;
- the functional component is represented in the activities of the communicative personality in the process of using verbal and non-verbal tools [9].

Thus, the communicative personality as a subject of construction of social reality has a wide range of socially significant characteristics, social relations, regulations and norms that allow the establishment of the full-fledged communication. In other words, in this case, communication exists not only as the interaction of the communicants to exchange information, but also as the process that reflects and incorporates their socio-cultural and



socio-psychological thesaurus. Consequently, the communicative personality incorporates the entire range of the social ties of the communicants, their social roles, the degree of their adequacy/inadequacy to the existing socio-value norms.

The expansion of the scope and variability of all aspects of human activity and the creation and implementation of the new information technologies, which began in the second half of the 20th century, revealed two interrelated trends in the functioning of the linguistic personality:

- the apparent inadequacy of using only linguistic tools to describe a new kind of social reality;
- the linguistic personality as a subject constructing a new social reality is brought to the fore.

This phenomenon, called the “linguistic turn”, was a real revolution in the field of the social humanities, namely that linguistics became one of the social sciences, and the social sciences, in turn, began to use linguistics in their research [10].

The increasing role of information and communication in its exchange, perception and interpretation has contributed to the further evolution of the concept of the linguistic personality. The status of the communicative personality as a supplement and development of linguistic personality evolved the concept of the discursive personality. This phenomenon is related to the emergence of a new phenomenon in the socio-humanities – discourse as a new way of describing the surrounding reality. There are many interpretations of the phenomenon of discourse, which do not contradict each other, but describe different aspects of this phenomenon:

- the formalist interpretation represents discourse within structuralism as a speech act in the form of oral or written communication;
- the situational interpretation stresses the socio-cultural and socio-psychological conditioning of the discourse;
- the functionalist interpretation understands the discourse as a language in a social context;
- the ideological interpretation presents the discourse from a historical and cultural perspective [11].

Thus, the concept of discourse is a multidimensional phenomenon that incorporates, in addition to the text as a specific set of linguistic signs, also the information about the surrounding reality. The discourse, in this case, is a volume of information based on both the objective component (information about social reality, historical facts, etc.) and the subjective part in the form of moral and value norms of the communicants’ points of view on the problem, etc.

As an example, the sociolinguistic discourse as a characteristic of the linguistic personality presents

the actualization of the social factors in the activity of linguistic personality. Among them we can highlight such as: a social class, gender, age, ethnic identity, membership in a speech community [12].

Sociolinguistic discourse is based on accepting the fact that any language is not only a sign system, but, above all, a social construct, an action and a result of the social interaction of the linguistic personalities. P. Bourdieu’s concept which defines discourse as a set of human habitus with different socio-genetic specificities is of particular importance. According to P. Bourdieu in the framework of his theory of habitus and linguistic capital, it is the habitus as a set of mental, moral value and bodily characteristics of the linguistic personality that determines the pragmatics of each individual’s life activity [13].

The integral part of the habitus is its linguistic aspect in the form of the knowledge of the language acquired in the family, kindergarten, at school, university, workplace. In other words, different social groups exhibit different linguistic habitus formed in different social contexts. Linguistic habitus are shaped in the processes of socialisation and enculturation, taking into account the fact that different social strata have unequal access to the linguistic markets. The linguistic differentiation of the linguistic personalities is directly related to their social background. Thus, a low level of the language proficiency at the verbal semantic level (phonetic, lexical, morphological, syntactic and stylistic) demonstrates a low social status of the linguistic personality, which does not allow the access to the social lift. Conversely, the linguistic personalities belonging to the middle and higher social strata respond more successfully to the linguistic dens and achieve their pragmatic goals (career and professional development). Consequently, the difference in the linguistic capitals due to different social affiliations of the linguistic personalities is directly dependent on the level and system of education and manifests itself in social differences [14].

It is interesting to note that M. Weber in his theory of the “middle class” argued that social status (class membership) is determined by differences in education and professional affiliation, with each social group exhibiting its own linguistic specificity [15].

Within the discursive context, there is a new filling of the phenomenon of the speech community, which is increasingly being applied in sociological research. Speech community, i.e. the association of the linguistic personalities uses different sociolects, dialects slang units within a common language. These linguistic variations are due to



the multitude of socio-cultural factors, reflecting a specific sociolinguistic environment. They either follow the existing linguistic norms or modify them according to the norms dictated by power structures. That is, all speech communities are constantly transforming according to the dynamics of social changes, which leads to the changes in language practices [16].

Thus, the linguistic personality as the subject of social reality construction reflects the whole range of socio-cultural practices and ensures continuous communication of people, contributing to their education, professional, personal and career development. Furthermore, the linguistic personality is the custodian of all knowledge and skills accumulated by humanity and transmits them from generation to generation.

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