Aspects of contemporary trends in linguostylistics and in Slovak linguostylistics

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The study presents the contemporary trends in linguostylistics within the global context and points out the impact of the communication-pragmatic turn upon this discipline. The pragmatization of stylistics is connected with the shift of stress from a goal-oriented modelling of the abstract potential of language to the usage of language in monologues and dialogues. From the methodological point of view, current linguistics is inclined towards investigations within an inductive method ("bottom-up"), or towards applying a combined methodology, i.e. both top-down and bottom-up. The outline of some specific stylistic sub-disciplines (e.g. spoken stylistics, discourse stylistics, rhetorical stylistics, or everyday stylistics) is followed by statements regarding multimodal stylistics. The general context of contemporary trends in stylistics is viewed within its relatedness to the situation in Slovak stylistics, and specific attention is paid to introducing Slovak interactional stylistics.

1. Introduction

Stylistics is traditionally understood as a discipline which is either more inclined to working with literary texts having aesthetic impact (i.e. stylistics of literary science, with an inclination towards poetics as a methodological set of instruments), but above all towards non-literary texts (linguistic stylistics).

Although literary stylistics does not constitute the subject of this study, it is necessary to point out at least one of its contemporary orientations that deals with the relationship of language and thinking. This is above all the case of Anglophone (literary) stylistics. It is inspired by cognitive-linguistic stimuli that participate in the process of the creation and interpretation of artistic texts. At the theoretical basis of such stylistics are cognitive-linguistic ideas with regard to which the existence of notional constructs of metaphorical character in human minds is presupposed (these concern, e.g. syncretic mixing of the abstract domain of time with space that is perceivable by senses – cf. e.g. Lakoff – Johnson 1980). Such cognitive (conceptual) metaphors play an important role in literary cognitive stylistics, e.g. in the team of Semino and Culpeper (2002). Within profiling his stylistic theory, Semino differentiates the ideological point of view and the mind style (2002: 95). These constitute two complementary views of the world (the first one being culturally conditioned, the second one depending on the individual mental disposition and experience of its author or interpreter). Both participate in the resulting style of the text. Aspects of metaphor as means of cognitive-stylistic analysis have also found their reflection in the Slovak context, e.g. in the publications by Bohunická *Variety metafory* (Varieties of Metaphor 2013) and *Metaforika činnostného aspektu jazyka* (Metaphorics of the active aspect of language 2014).

If viewed as a linguistic discipline (with an increasing intensity of overlaps with the humanities; cf. Orgoňová 2018: 91–100), the possibilities of investigating it cannot be isolated from the general trends in linguistics. The first half of the 20th century can be perceived as a period of building structuralistic theories in linguistics, as well as in stylistics, continuing in the ideas on modelling Saussurean structuralistic systemic oppositions of the abstract system of language, with the help of which, by deduction (through "top-down"), there were constructed invariants valid as basic patterns for classifying and profiling styles, genres or texts. The texts deemed "fit" for this manner of linguistic treatment were monological. The advantage of the systemic structuralistic stylistic theories is comprised in their stability and non-contactness of the models that are reduced into unequivocal and final sets of distinctive parametres distinctly delimiting the "clear" place in the given typology for the concrete sample from the final number of styles or genres. The perspectives that are available to the contemporary linguistic stylistics of the 21st century within the international context, to a large extent reflect the pragmatic-communicative direction of linguistics. Such approach does not avoid investigations by means of the inductive method ("bottom-up"). It creates space for working with any "non-typical" intertexts (hybrid texts combining e.g. scientific characteristics with popularization, high style with low style, aesthetic features with their lack, etc., as well as with multimedia-produced visual-and-textual items of communication, and new genres born thanks to the current technological achievements, in particular to internet and the blogs and discussion forums circulating within it). These texts, without any limitations, can be monological or dialogical, with some degree of predictability, but can also be non-predictable, grounded in a concrete situation/context. Attention is devoted not only to written, but also to spoken texts, as well as to prepared or unprepared, i.e spontaneous utterances. Contemporary linguistics, and within it, with differing degrees of courage, also stylistics itself, becomes open to inspirations from other related disciplines, in their number above all from sociology and psychology. Consequently, there appear borderline sciences as sociolinguistics and subsequently sociolinguostylistics, and, similarly, also psycholinguistics, or subsequently psycholinguostylistics (Slančová 2003: 207–223).

In addition to the selection of a principle-based strategy of the stylistic investigations characterized as "top down" (with the ambition of creating typological models applying exclusion in the sense of "either – or"), or else, on the contrary (with the ambition towards the gradual scaling of phenomena), worth considering is the usage of combined possibilities of research. This is well explained by Dolník when he considers the idea of the pragmatists (Peirce and others) concerning the joining of the theoretical and the practical spheres: "The theoretical and the practical spheres are merged, because human beings are practically acting creatures that need to resolve problems in order to "survive", and they preserve this status also as cognizing subjects (theoreticians), hence also the construing of theories means a practical activity within the framework of the practical existence of human beings." (Dolník 2018: 20). Such approach is also selected by Gajda (2016) or Culper (according to McIntyre 2014: 152), when they tend to use the combination of inductive as well as deductive, holistic as well as particular, non-generalizing as well as generalizing investigations.

2. Expansivity of the object and methodologies of linguistic stylistics

If we return to the statement in the Introduction to this paper that contemporary stylistics does not digress from the wave of pragmatization (in the context of the linguistics of at least the recent five or more decades, any distinct avoidance of the current trends in linguistics would indicate a risk of anachronisms), it needs to be added that such profiling of this linguistic discipline is, at the same time, connected with the pragmatic, action-related, user´s perception of its goal-orientedness in the sense of its "being useful", i.e. being socially useful for people.

How to achieve this? One possibility lies in the conception of a most varied character of the discipline and of its sub-disciplines, while copying the multifariousness of extra-linguistic existence. Stylistics is open to the spectrum of methodologies, too, which has also been noted e.g. by British linguists (Wales 2014: 35; Carter & Stockwell 2008: 209), regardless of their own preferences. In general, it is stated that while in the middle of the previous century, dominating in the centre of interest was the structuralistic methodology, in the following period it was influenced by the findings of philosophy of language dealing with speech acts by Austin (1962; Slovak translation 2004) and Searle (1969, Slovak translation 2007), and by the understanding of the "action-based" aspect of language as a pillar of linguistics that is undergoing pragmatization. Linguists have also been extending their interest to context-based utterances from real life (not from literary fiction) considered to be legitimate objects of investigation, with the aim of understanding the actual meaning of the utterance within the concrete circumstances, and understanding not only the verbal utterances, but also their producers, the historical period, the time when the utterance was made, and also all the circumstances forming the discourse (in the sense of a text in a context). This is the manner how discourse stylistics is created within its connectedness with discourse analysis (Simpson 2002: 16).

At the same time, the same author points out the fruitful continuity between sociolinguistics (above all interactive) and stylistics, while also specifying the profile of stylistics as "a performative interactive practice" rather than "a frequency-related and textual pattern" (Simpson, ibid.). However, such orientation of contemporary stylistics distances itself from written literary texts, and, as the object of its interest, it primarily perceives the vivid spoken language of real conversation. The authorship of such understanding of the object of stylistics is connected with the works of stylists from Birmingham University, namely Sinclair & Coulthard (2003; original from 1975). The approach to stylistics as a science investigating dialogical, actually being-born (emergent), ordinary co-productive utterances, at the same time also takes into consideration the inspiration from the philosophy of the 1970-ies, i.e. the maxims of cooperation (of quality, quantity, relevance and manner) by Grice (1975), as well as the theory of politeness by the cultural anthropologists Brown & Levinson (1978; 1987). The latter of the cases mentioned works with strategies for gradual regulation of politeness expressions within communication on the basis of a "negative face" (i.e. preserving in communication the formal verbal respect with regard to the co-locutor), or of a "positive face" (with the selection of formulations reflecting the author´s own desire to gain recognition).

A special area of issues within the development of this discipline is represented by rhetoric and its relationship to the subject of stylistics. Already the antiquity-based Aristotelian rhetoric from the 4th century B.C. formed the basis of the art of persuading people, and its conception is also valid at present. (The neo-rhetoric by Toulmin from the second half of the 20th century only further develops and in more detail models the argumentative expansion of

the text, without negating the antiquity-based foundations of this "forerunner" of stylistics.) Nevertheless, neither in antiquity did rhetoric aim, nor does it at present aim, primarily at dealing with literary texts and their aesthetically effective figures of speech, but its aim has been the art of selecting correct arguments at a correct time (cf. antiquity-based "Καιρός/kairos") for convincing the listeners of spoken or written utterances. This was regardless of the fact whether the utterances were aimed at future (in the case of the so-called deliberative – advisory – rhetoric concerning political matters), or whether the utterances were aimed at the past, in the case of forensic – court-of-justice-related – rhetoric, or whether the utterances were occasional and intended for a celebration of the anniversary of a prominent person.

Inspirations concerning the art of persuasion have their place also in contemporary "rhetoric stylistics" as a specifically profiled part of stylistics (Fahnenstock 2002: 4). The rhetoric art of persuasion is at present applied in any sphere of reality and in the related communication – in science, as well as in journalism, advertising, etc., hence not only in politics, as it had been indicated by Aristotle within the context of his times. The above is dealt with in the so-called applicational stylistics. Carter specifies it in the following way: "So stylistics as applied to non-literary texts such as media discourse or a study of scientific language or the registers of different curriculum subjects or as analysis that assists in the processes of language teaching and learning is closer to the core concerns of applied linguistics and to a definition of applied linguistics as the investigation of real-world problems." (Carter 2014: 78).

However, it is necessary to realize that in contemporary stylistics the rhetoric basis lies not only in its potential "horizontal" cross-section reach to various spheres of communication. The point also is that rhetoric primarily navigates stylistics into creating (convincing, effective) texts, i.e., if we are to formulate it pragmatically, it smoothens its goal also with regard to such aspect of "usefulness". Hence, if with regard to language usage pragmatics deals with the action-related aspects ("we do something with language"), rhetoric concretizes that activity ("we use language for convincing the collocutor"). Stylistics only "wraps" it up by a fictitious answer to the question: "In what way, by what means is this happening?" (cf. Slančová, ibid.). At the same time, adequate interpretation of the collocutor´s argumentation, revealing conscious or unconscious beguilements, forms an inherent part of the stylistic competence of the participant in such interaction (e.g. in political discussion of the candidates for the position of president, Member of Parliament, Mayor, or else in civic discussions, in commercial talks, but also at scholarly events). In this connection British stylistics uses the term "spoken stylistics", while stressing that what is concerned in this context is not the following of norms or deviations of the style, but the practical interactional activities. Empirical sources for the stylistic interpretations of spoken communication are constituted by dialogues in various contexts – those taking place at school classes, at the doctor´s, interviews for jobs, etc.

Special attention in orienting the stylistic investigations is to be paid to the stylistics of everyday communication. One of the reasons why some stylists are inclined to investigating spontaneous utterances in everyday communication is the fact that they constitute the natural and primary form of language usage. Literary texts only imitate this form, or creatively reshape it. However, the authenticity lies in ordinary, everyday communication. Useful methodological support for working with authentic utterances is provided by the works of the discourse analysts

Sinclair & Coulthard, and, within a wider context, also e.g. in the volume of papers *Advances in spoken discourse analysis* (2003) edited by Coulthard.

Not only in the western context, but also in "geographically" closer publications, e.g. in those by Czech linguists (Nekvapil and others), already for decades there have been well-established research works on sociolinguistics that thoroughly interpret the aspects of social interactions within spontaneous as well as institutional conditions (cf. https://www.czechency.org/slovnik/ KVANTITATIVNÍ SOCIOLINGVISTIKA × KVALITATIVNÍ SOCIOLINGVISTIKA). From them there is only a "small step" to enriching these socio-linguistic probes by the stylistic aspect, i.e. by the aspect reflecting also the manner of the linguistic formation of texts when penetrating into micro-social relationships. In the number of research works of such orientation, we should point out the works by the team of authors of the publications headed by Čmejrková & Hoffmanová which include *Mluvená čeština: hledání funkčního rozpětí* [Spoken Czech: Searching for a Functional Expansion] (2011) or the collective publication of the authors Čmejrková, Havlík, Hoffmannová, Müllerová & Zeman *Styl mediálních dialogů* [Style of Media Dialogues] (2013). Here we follow such interactional strategies as cooperativeness, and attention is paid to initiating and reaching agreement, harmonizing interests, as well as to expressing (im)politeness and to various manifestations of growing non-cooperativeness leading to disagreement, or to making conflicts more acute. All the above can be expressed either directly or by indirect linguistic utterances (i.e. by means of irony, mockery, provocation, etc.). Investigations of interactional strategies are outbalanced by interpretations of the linguistic structure of the dialogues observed (with regard to their text-related, grammatical, lexical or phonetic signs).

One of the perspectives of orienting stylistics is the so-called multimodal stylistics. This forms part of a broader trend that brings along pragmatization of communication. The point is that linguistic utterance does not constitute the only content of communication, but it merely represents its minor part (cf. the investigations of American non-verbalists in Pease 2004), and so a lot of space remains for non-verbal communication (gesticulation, face movements, kinesics, posturics, haptics, olfactorics or colourics). Kořenský nearly twenty years ago pointed out that within the framework of pragmatic stylistics the research of non-verbal communication is lagging behind (Kořenský 2001: 32–36). Published in the same year was the work *Multimodal Discourse* (2001) by Kress & van Leeuwen that concentrates on investigating language and image within the discourse-analytical light, and a more complex view of the aspects of multimodal investigations is undertaken by a team of authors in the publication *The SAGE Handbook of Visual Research Methods* (2014). There are also being created multimodal corpora as the third level of the corpora of texts after the written and spoken corpora that, in addition to the range of the so-far existing materials, also contain audio-visual documents. Worth noting is also the Czech corpus DIALOG (http://ujc.dialogy.cz/) which linguistically is the closest one for the Slovaks. In addition to conversational-analytical transcriptions, it contains audio-visual recordings of discussion programmes that took place on Czech television. This corpus became the starting point of analytical and interpretational works on the style of the media dialogues mentioned above. Cf. also https://www.czechency.org/slovnik/MULTIMODÁLNÍ KOMUNIKACE.

Hence, a many-sided operational space is being opened for multimodal stylistics. It offers a challenge for treating audio-visual documents, for example based on interdisciplinary

synergic cooperation of linguists with health-care specialists, e.g. in investigating the spontaneous communication of patients who have speech disorders. Another possibility is aimed at complex semiotic interpretation of goal-oriented commercial multimodal items of communication, such as advertisements, for adequately grasping such persuasive statements. The ability to work with multimodal artistic pictorial-textual materials such as e.g. comics, is actually also a matter of literary-scientific stylistics. In this case it is necessary to count also on poetical stylizations of creative authors above the framework of satisfying the natural communicative needs, i.e., in the wording of Miko, on iconization of natural communication (see further), while the non-verbal component of such statements – the pictograms – constitutes a topical challenge for research workers to be open to interdisciplinary semiotic investigations.

3. Slovak interactional stylistics

In the works of its 20th century representatives (Pauliny, Mistrík, Miko, Findra), Slovak stylistics was building on the reliable basis of the Prague School of Linguistics, and it joined the stream of structuralistically oriented works. The idea of everyday character in natural interaction in stylistic investigations found its place in Slovak linguistics in the work of the authors Orgoňová & Bohunická *Interakčná štylistika* (2018) that, several years earlier, was preceded by the authors´ partial studies on the given theme. As the authors write: "Interactional stylistics stems from its own potential (in the sense of Hegelian complementary antinomy in which one element constitutes the basis for its own opposite). The centre of interactional stylistics is represented by the human being who in the processes of communication "actively" negotiates the contents of interactions with regard to his or her own interests, the needs and interests of the addressee, as well as with regard to the cultural, social and time-related conventions" (Orgoňová & Bohunická 2018: 156–185).

The above stylistics is also based on ethno-methodological observations on the legitimity of investigations of ordinary speech in ordinary life within the sense of Garfinkel´s ideas. The sociologist Garfinkel in his classical publication on ethnomethodology (*Studies in Ethnomethodology*) that was published in the 1960s, since when it has been re-issued more than ten times, points out the importance of such studies. The common activities of ordinary people, their thinking and ordinary cognition, are inseparable from socially "organized" events. What is concerned is neither an academic topic, nor a domain reserved for philosophers, and Garfinkel himself, after 12 years of preparation, understands the investigations of everyday situations as a step towards getting to know the actions of people that are of equal value as the investigations of public situations by objective methods. In his work, he places the documentary method of research in the foreground, as it is neither the question of assessment of correctness nor of non-correctness (of speech or deeds) that is concerned, but the interpretation of what is happening.

Regardless of those ethno-methodological inspirations, this preference can also be perceived as a trend that is complementary to what was investigated in the context of the representatives of the structuralistic stylistics of the 20th century. Slovak stylistics of the second half of the 20th century, in compliance with the investigations of language by the structuralistic methodology, was primarily oriented upon investigating the linguistic system, its invariant dimensions used in literary works. There, language was understood as the object of

investigation and as a tool of communication (cf. *selectional stylistics* by Mistrík, who concentrated his attention upon the goal-oriented selection of linguistic means within creating the text with regard to some style-constituting means). Another Slovak variant of structuralistic investigations was represented by the theory of František Miko. Within modelling the stylistic aspect of communication in the form of a system of **expressions**, Miko situated these simultaneous and interconnected aspects into a relationship of opposition in the form of categories of expression, labelling them as *operativity* (communication function) and *iconicity* (expressive/representative function). In connection with Miko´s so called *stylistics of expressions* it has to be stressed that that Miko focuses his attention not only on text creation, but also on its reception/interpretation, his approach being based on configuring the expressive categories of the text as invariant potential structures investigated within a literary text, or within its translation.

The Slovak stylistics of the 21st century starts, though modestly, to extend its sphere of interest also towards another, non-structuralistic paradigm of linguistic investigations. The starting point of pragmatically oriented stylistics with the attribute "interactional" is based on the understanding of the key notion of the subject – style – as a manner of realizing a particular "activity". There, it is not a matter of an objective "reflection" of static segments of reality, but it presents (inter)subjective pictures of sections of reality. Within it language is not only an object of description, but, above all, a process emergently created by the subjects of interaction, i.e. a unique process creating new meanings of the traditional senses. This process emerging from the actual context has to be interpreted, and in this way the person interpreting it may share with the others his or her own contributions to the action-based shaping of the world, as well as to its conscious reception and subsequent (both verbal and non-verbal) reproduction. Any interpretation is a manifestation of comprehending the depicted sections of the world and of good orientation in them (both in everyday communication and in public discourse, e.g. political, but also institutional – media-related, educational, or in commercial discourse, as well as in advertisements, etc.) The questions of optimal interpretation, without succumbing to the globalization pressures upon the consumer-aimed flattening of recipient-related or construction-related ambitions on the basis of the natural disposition of the humans, are explained by Dolník in a series of his works, and in a complex form above all in his publication *Language in Pragmatics* (2018: 72–93).

4. In conclusion: Slovak stylistics in the context of the indicated trends

Contemporary Slovak linguostylistics has the character of "inter-stylistics". It faces the task of drawing on the evoked *interdisciplinarity* and on the aim at *interactionality*, *interpretativeness*, but also at *intertextuality* (in *interlocutional* or *interdiscoursive* dialogue). Only in such manner will it be both internationally (and interculturally) able to satisfy the needs of the partners in communication as a useful source of enlightenment with regard to the ways of interactional behaviour of the participants in communication within the globalizing times. Through the proposed methodology, it is harmoniously integrating into the trendy linguistic and broader social-scientific disciplines in Slovakia, as well as into the broader international context. To the users of its contents it offers the indispensable know how for full-fledged verbal behaviour

satisfying their needs and, at the same time, complying with the stylistic and communication norms of the times.

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