

LANGUAGE, SUBJECT, IDEOLOGY

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In this paper the problem of interdependence between power and language is viewed. The authors point out that the problem may be investigated in two aspects: from the point of view of a conscious use of language as a political instrument and from the point of view of an unconscious dependence of an individual on language and ideology. In this context, the authors investigate the ideas expressed by Louis Althusser and Michel Pêcheux. The theory of Ideological State Apparatuses by Althusser is represented here as one of possible conceptual bases for defining gender distribution of power. In this paper the specificity of the Pêcheux's discourse analysis is revealed: discourse is viewed by Pêcheux as a sphere of intersection of language and extra-linguistic restrictions created by ideology.

Keywords: power, language, ideology, interpellation, subject, ideological state apparatuses, discourse analysis.

Introduction

The problem of fundamental interdependence between language and power is one of the main problems of modern philosophy: a great number of its variations is known.

On the one hand, language is an important instrument that is used to deal with public affairs, i.e. it is a political instrument. In this meaning we may speak about “political application of language”, “political language”, etc. This “instrumental political” attitude towards language can be seen in antiquity: sophists, Isocrates, Demosthenes and others. The political engagement of the antique eloquence and its orientation toward the persuasion of the audience in order to get control over the people's thoughts and feelings are well known. V. S. Nersisyan wrote that “the public speech in the context of city state becomes the public power” (Nersisyan 1979: 104).

The rhetorical appliance of language has a *political* sense (the way the ancient Greeks un-

derstood it – “everything that concerns “polis”, i.e. state and public affairs and political decisions that were to be fulfilled). Aristotle making a systematic analysis of persuading “technique”, i.e. rhetoric, postulates that “rhetoric turns out to be a branch of dialectics and the science of morals that is to be called politics” (Aristotle 2000: 89). However, pointing at the correlation of politics and art of persuasion, Stagiritis insists on the *subordinate* character of rhetoric towards politics. To possess the skills of rhetoric doesn't mean to be a politician: “Sophists know nothing of politics, otherwise they would not rank it with rhetoric or even below it” (Aristotle 1984: 292) In other words, it is impossible to rule using only rhetoric, but it is very difficult to rule without it.

On the other hand, the idea of interdependence between language and power is expressed in the conception of influence of language on different types of human activities. It can be traced

back to Humboldt, who thought that a person can get access to the “surrounding world” or “reality” only with the help of language.

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is a peculiar development of Humboldt's ideas. According to this hypothesis there is a systematic relationship between the grammatical categories of the language a person speaks and how that person both understands the world and behaves in it. This happens because language has a system of notions (some “metaphysics”) that organizes a kaleidoscopic experience of a person.

Judging from these well-known examples we see that language has a power, a power over those who apply it. The way a question is stated turned out to be a very productive one. It helped to realize that something “political” (obligatory, compulsory) exists in the essence of language, in its core. “The power of language” is not just a metaphor; this word-combination means that there is a mechanism of compulsion and subordination in the language itself.

Roland Barthes wrote that “the object in which the power exists from time immemorial is the linguistic activity itself, or, to be precise, its obligatory expression – the language” (Barthes 1994: 548). According to this philosopher, the “fascistic” nature of language “is not in prohibition, but in compulsion to say something” (Barthes 1994: 549).

However, “the power of language” means not only the limits that are caused by its structure and are enforced on us, but also the fact that some practices which have an ideological nature and are connected with the realization of social power are embodied in language. Language in this aspect occurs as a field of different ideological strategies that are realized on the level of unconscious.

When postulating this, we are to question the “sovereign” subject of speech, who uses this or that language. The actualization of this point of view occurred in structuralism and poststructuralism: the common idea of these conceptions is the idea that not a subject but some impersonal extra-subject factors (lan-

guage, ideology) determine both the possibility of speaking and the limits of what can be said.

Thus, we deal with two aspects of the problem “language and power”:

1. The conscious pragmatic application of language as an instrument of political influence (for the fulfillment of the purposes of supremacy).
2. The fundamental dependence of an individual on unconscious dictates of the language and the ideology that speaks inside this language and through it.

In the first case we face with such a phenomena as George Orwell's “newspeak” (Orwell 1989), H. Marcuse's “authoritarian ritualization of discourse” (Marcuse 1994), “LTI” (“the language of the Third Reich”) described by V. Klemperer (Klemperer 1998) and others.

In the second case the problem is stated fundamentally, without any details. We speak here not about deliberate tricks or malicious intent of some individuals, groups or parties. The question is that there is a social impact, that forms the subject, preceding this subject and this impact cannot be realized in its essence. The result of this impact is some universal fiction of consciousness, the illusive view of the world that K. Marx called “ideology”.

It is important that not the world outlook is illusive. It is the subject who is illusive, and who is of course unaware of it. If such suspicions occur, we would postulate this impact as “ideological”.

However, we believe that these two aspects of the problem “language and power” may be combined, because a definite style of political application of the language (this or that rhetoric) is formed unconsciously, under the influence of many sociocultural and ideological factors, of which the creators of this style are unaware. In addition, even those rhetorical methods that are worked out consciously become an element of everyday practice, transform into the routine and begin to be perceived and reproduced almost automatically. This means that they lose any connection with their creators, stop to be

subordinated and start to subordinate. Thus, the circle of “ideology” is closed because methods stop to be realized as figures of speech, they become “ordinary”, “normal” expressions that cannot be doubted.

The topic “language and power” is a very broad one, so we have no purpose of giving its complete review. We would like to emphasize some important points connected with interdependence between language and ideology. We were interested in L. Althusser’s and M. Pžcheux’s ideas first of all. Besides, it is important for us to reveal the possibility of applying the Althusser’s theory of ideology to gender problems.

Among the most important theses of the Althusser’s conception is a postulate about “interpellation” that is in the basis of his understanding of the mechanism of ideology functioning. Althusser, introducing this notion, fixes the fact of the “constructed character” of the subject (as a subject of ideology). He writes: “<...> the category of the subject is constitutive of all ideology, but at the same time and immediately I add that *the category of the subject is only constitutive of all ideology insofar as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of ‘constituting’ concrete individuals as subjects.* In the interaction of this double constitution exists the functioning of all ideology, ideology being nothing but its functioning in the material forms of existence of that functioning” (Althusser 1971: 171).

Such a statement of the question follows logically from “the theoretical anti-humanism” proclaimed by Althusser and allows to comprehend in detail the problem of correlation between language and ideological formations. This was undertaken by the researchers of the so-called “French school of the discourse analysis”, the leader of which is Michel Pžcheux. As Patrick Sériot points out “the intellectual environment in which the discourse analysis formed itself was the structuralistic trend of the 60’s... Referring to the heritage of Russian formalists in viewing the texts in their immanence,

this movement paved the way for the analysis of discourse, that broke off with the traditional philology. Around the structuralism new ideas of “the script” (l’écriture), that united linguistics, Lacan’s psychoanalysis and Althusser’s philosophy, were born” (Sériot 1999: 18).

Discourse was analysed by M. Pžcheux from the stand point of intersection of “language” (langue), the way F. de Saussure understood it, and some extra-linguistic restrictions, that formed the discourse: on the one hand, language predefines the forms of its expression, but, on the other hand, there is something “besides” language, something that constitutes the discourse in its definiteness.

Pžcheux, Henri, Haroche and some other researchers thought that the birth of meanings was not purely a linguistic process, and thinking that semantics exists only in language is naïve. It would also be to appeal to some subject who is supposedly the source of discourse, creating meanings according to his intentions. “The semantic unit cannot be built as a constant and homogeneous projection of the “communicative intention”; it is built as some knot in the conflict space as some always unfinished stabilization in the game of various forces” (Sériot 1999: 30).

Pžcheux postulates doubt concerning such “obvious truths” as “a word means a thing”, “a word has a meaning” “everyone who speaks is a subject”, etc. Pžcheux aspires to find the conditionality of the spoken by some ideological factors, which determine the limits of what can be said. In other words, Ideology (the way Marx and Althusser understood it)¹ puts over some restrictions that decrease a choice of what can be said.

The unexpressed is constantly absent in the discourse and in this capacity of “absent presence” allows to outline this discourse formation.

¹ It is known that Marx and Engels considered that “ideology” is a “false consciousness”. Althusser followed this tradition and wrote that **ideology is an imaginary relation of the individuals to the real conditions of their existence.**

Althusser's Marxism here meets psychoanalysis because ideological mechanisms (Pžcheux like Althusser calls it "Ideology in general" ("Idéologie en générale")) are unconscious for those who speak.

In his famous work *The truths of la Palice* (or *Common Truths*) M. Pžcheux wrote: "common characteristic of both functioning structures, ideology and the unconscious, is that they hide their existence in their functioning, creating a chain of "subjective" common truths, and the adjective "subjective" means here not as "concerning a subject" but as "in which the subject forms" (Pžcheux 1999: 259).

We can trace here a close interdependence with the Althusser's concept that a subject is an "ideological effect", moreover, that he as such is formed by ideology.

This formation of an individual as "a subject" occurs as a result of interpellation: from some unfixed place in the society an impersonal, addressed to the individual hail (like "Hey, you there!") comes, answering which a person constitutes as a subject. Althusser writes: "ideology "acts" or "functions" in such a way that it "recruits" subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or "transforms" the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: "Hey, you there!" Assuming that the theoretical scene I have imagined takes place in the street, the hailed individual will turn round. By this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he becomes a *subject*. Why? Because he has recognized that the hail was "really" addressed to him, and that "it was *really him* who was hailed" (and not someone else)" (Althusser 1974: 174)².

"The theatre of consciousness", as M. Pžcheux says, in this case is observed from the other side of decorations, and this gives a possibility to understand that something or someone talks to a subject before the subject can say "It is me"

or "I speak". The impersonal and anonymous character of "the interpellation" is fundamental: in this interpellation any presumption of the existence of any "subject", which interpellates the individual transforming him into "a subject" – is avoided.

M. Pžcheux, like Althusser, says that this is Ideology that hails the subject. However, the Ideology cannot be called a "true" or "initial" subject, it occurs as non-subject. This anonymity of the Ideology does not allow us to view it as something derived from the whole complex of subjects, that impose some norms and values in the process of socialization on the individual, because the individuals can become subjects only when the Ideology hails them! M. Pžcheux remarks: "the paradox is that the interpellation has, so to say, a retroactive effect, as a result of which every individual is "already always a subject" (Pžcheux 1999: 261).

This effect leads to obviousness: I am a subject; I am the only one who can say "me" about myself. This obviousness hides the fact that the individual says "me" not by himself but because he is addressed (interpellated).

By analogy, we may say that "beneath the obviousness in which "me is me really" ("je suis bien moi") (with my name, my family, my friends, my memories, my "ideas", my intentions and my duties), there exists a process of interpellation and identification, that creates a subject on the place that was empty: "someone who", i.e. X, somebody, who will be there; and this everything exists in different forms,

² Judith Butler commenting on this fragment of Althusser's work "Ideology and the State Ideological Apparatuses" writes that "subordination of the subject happens through the language as an effect of peremptory voice, that hails the individual" (Butler 2002: 19). However, we should remark that Battler is critical towards Althusser's understanding of the constructing of the individual as a subject: considering the helpfulness of this conception, however, she remarks that the question remains: why does the individual answer this "Voice"? A separate chapter of her book "The psychic life of power: Theories in subjection" is devoted to this question, but it deviates from the theme of our article.

imposed by “legal ideological social relations” (Pžcheux 1999: 264). The illusion that a subject is “cause in himself” and the generator of meanings is called “The Munchausen’s effect” (Pžcheux 1999: 235), meaning the well-known episode, in which this famous German baron was pulling himself by his hair in order to get out of swamp.

Thus, behind the illusive “transparency” of the language, behind the illusive “obviousness” of the subject “the material nature of the meaning” is hidden, i.e. the conditionality of the meaning by the ideological factors: the meaning does not exist “in itself”, “words, expressions, sentences, etc. change their meaning according to the positions that speakers occupy, they assume a new meaning, ... pointing at the ideological formations, in which these positions are inscribed.” (Pžcheux 1999: 265).

M. Pžcheux calls the *discourse formation* something “that in this ideological formation, i.e. proceeding from this position in this situation, caused by the class struggle, defines *what may be said* and *what must be said* (appearance in public, sermon, pamphlet, report, program, etc.)” (Pžcheux 1999: 265). Discourse formations are “interlaced” with ideological formations and represent them in “speech”.

It is obvious that one and the same word (expression, sentence) may have a different meaning, depending on the correlation with this or that discourse formation, the same as different words having different literal meanings may have one and the same “ideological meaning” inside some discourse formation. In other words, a great number of substitutive relations (synonymy, paraphrase, etc.) occur between the elements of the discourse formation. M. Pžcheux calls the system of such relations a *discourse process*.

Thus, different “spheres of thought” form historically and socially as some “points of stabilization”, producing a subject together with what he can see, hear, understand, be afraid of, etc. The material objectiveness of discourse is connected with the fact that “They say” (French

“*ēa parle*”, German “*man sagt*”) is always “previously in another place and independently” – under the supremacy of some complex of ideological formations. Here M. Pžcheux, like Henri, uses the notion “*pre-construct*”, “for the designation that goes back to the previous, external in any case independent construction as opposed to what is “constructed” by the utterance”. In short, we speak about the discourse effect, which is connected with syntactic insertion” (Pžcheux 1999: 239). Subsequently, the pre-construct acquires a broad interpretation: it means something that “is already said” (in this impersonal sense – *ēa parle*), before “the subject” begins to speak.

Discourse is based on inter-discourse, i.e. on something that “is already said”, “already exists”. M. Pžcheux points out that “the functioning of Ideology as a whole, as interpellation to the individuals in the capacity of subjects (especially in the capacity of subjects of their discourse) is carried out through the complex of ideological formations (especially through the inter-discourse, in which it is interlaced) and supplies “every subject” with his “reality” in the form of a system of received, recognized and experienced obviousnesses and their meanings” (Pžcheux 1999: 267).

In the main essence, a subject (M. Pžcheux uses an expression “subject-effect” emphasizing a derivative character of this “subject”) is created through the “oblivion” of what defines him and this “oblivion” means not the loss of something we knew before but the concealment of some cause in its effect.

Imaginary unity and wholeness that supposedly a subject disposes of his speech, his discourse (“intra-discourse” in Pžcheux’s terminology), determine for themselves some “linking thread”: this thread links what this subject talks about now, what he talked about before and what he will talk about in future. The author of *Common truths* remarks that “intra-discourse as “a thread of discourse” of the subject is a result of the impact of inter-discourse on itself, by the “interior” (*une “int  riorit  *)

that is itself determined completely “from without” [...] the subject-form (through which “the subject of discourse” is identified with the discourse formation that creates him) strives for absorption and forgetting of inter-discourse in intra-discourse” (Pžcheux 1999: 271).

M. Pžcheux and K. Fuchs introduce two notions – “oblivion № 1” and “oblivion № 2” (Pžcheux, Fuchs 1999: 116–119). The zone of “oblivion № 2” is a sphere in which the speaking subject in the discourse formation, that subordinates him, selects one utterance and rejects another. The subject may penetrate into this zone, the zone of what he could say, but didn’t (the subject corrects himself in what he says). “Oblivion № 2” is to some extent the same as Freud’s “pre-conscious”.

The zone of “oblivion № 1” is more fundamental and refers to “unconscious” as itself: in this “oblivion” the subject rejects the fact that the meaning is formed not by the subject himself, but from without. In “oblivion № 1” the fact that the subject is subordinated to the discourse formation and is created by it is obscured.

M. Pžcheux’s conclusion says that the starting point for the interpretation of the social world is “not the individual, not the subject, not the individual’s activity, but *the ideological conditions of reproduction/transformation of the relations of production*” (Pžcheux 1999: 283).

Thus, the specificity of anti-subjectivism of those who represent the discourse analysis is the following: they didn’t try to connect directly “the subject” with the activity of purely “language” mechanism, but to reveal how the sphere of language and the extra-linguistic sphere of Ideology interact.

According to E. Pulcinelli Orlandi, the discourse analysis is based on the fact that “it finds in the discourse the material expression of a contact between the ideological sphere and the sphere of language. The basis of the French discourse analysis in the way M. Pžcheux intended it is the connection between the communicative activity and ideology. Pžcheux investigates the relation between “the subjective obviousness”

and “the obviousness of the meaning” assigning an important part to the discourse, where the communicative activity and ideology join” (Pulcinelli Orlandi 1999: 198). The task of the discourse analysis is to explain discourse in its historical conditionality by ideology.

Further Pulcinelli Orlandi remarks that the discourse analysis is critical towards linguistics, and “this critical position lies in the fact that in contrast to linguistics the subject is taken into account in the discourse analysis; simultaneously the subject is not in the centre of analysis, i.e. it is not viewed as a source of the meaning and is not responsible for it, though is thought as a constituent part of the process of the production of meaning” (Pulcinelli Orlandi 1999: 201).

Going back to the Althusser’s theory of ideology, we should note the importance of his notion “the ideological State apparatuses” in this topic. We should remind that the Althusser’s ideology exists as one of two levels of the public “superstructure” (another level is legal and political, including State apparatus and law). Althusser points out that we should distinguish not only between *the State power* and *the State apparatus*, but also between *the Repressive State Apparatus*, that contains the Government, Administration, Army, Police, Courts, Prisons, etc., and *the Ideological State Apparatuses* (ISA), containing the religious ISA (the system of the different Churches), the educational ISA (the system of different public and private Schools), the family ISA, the legal ISA, the political ISA (the political system, including different Parties), the trade-union ISA, the communications ISA (press, radio, television, etc.), the cultural ISA (Literature, the Arts, sports, etc.).

The basic difference between the Repressive State Apparatus and the Ideological State Apparatuses is, firstly, that there is only one (Repressive) State Apparatus and the *plurality* of Ideological State Apparatuses and, secondly, that the (Repressive) State Apparatus belongs entirely to the *public* domain, whiles, on the contrary, a larger part of the Ideological State Apparatuses (in their apparent dispersion) be-

longs, to the *private* domain. Churches, Parties, Trade Unions, families, some schools, most newspapers, cultural ventures, etc. are private (Althusser 1999: 144).

At the same time the Althusser thought, that distinction between public and private is internal to bourgeois law, is limited. If we exceed these limits, we should admit that the State, which is the State *of the ruling class*, is neither public nor private; on the contrary, it is the precondition for any distinction between public and private (Althusser 1999: 144).

The Ideological State Apparatuses, despite their private character, are also integrated into the State system, because with their help the ruling class supports its supremacy, keeps the status quo. Althusser writes: "It is unimportant whether the institutions in which they are realized are "public" or "private". What matters is how they function. Private institutions can perfectly well "function" as Ideological State Apparatuses" (Althusser 1999: 144).

We suppose that these Althusser's ideas found a broad response among the feminist authors, who offered a cardinal revision of the notion "political" taking into account the fact that gender differences are significant from the point of view of power.

Henceforth "political" stops to connect closely to the public sphere and all the everyday practices that appear in the gender-marked field of ideology acquire the political interpretation. Exactly in these practices the system of gender inequality is embodied, and exactly through these practices the relations of supremacy/subordination are realized.

The slogan "Personal is political" (Carol Hanisch) lets us view private institutions (i.e. the institutions of a civil society) as the institutions that support and fix the distribution of power in society. It is obvious that communicative (speech) practices are formed under the influence of these institutions, and they integrate the gender aims and stereotypes that exist in society.

Among all the institutions that Althusser included into the notion "Ideological State Apparatuses", school plays an important role. He thought that exactly in our time it assumes the functions of a dominating ideological institution as inherited from the Church. The ruling bourgeois ideology, according to Althusser, "represents School as a neutral environment purged of ideology..., where teachers respectful of the "conscience" and "freedom" of the children who are entrusted to them (in complete confidence) by their "parents" (who are free, too, i.e. the owners of their children) open up for them a path to freedom, morality and responsibility of adults by their own example, by knowledge, literature and their "liberating" virtues" (Althusser 1999: 156).

However, from our point of view, school is an important but secondary ideological institution, while family is a primary institution that forms the subjects according to certain ideological requirements. At first sight, family is separated from the public sphere and relations connected with politics. However, an intent look at it reveals a primary ideological meaning because it models a system of power relations (both class and gender) for new generations. Of course, families differ, but the effect of uniformity is reached by further including an individual into communication with coevals and school education, etc.

Thus, family serves as a basic reproducer of the patriarchal supremacy, setting the main directions of gender socialization of individuals.

Keith Millett writes, that "the main institution of patriarchy is family. It is... the unit inside the patriarchy as a whole, acting as a mediator between the individual and the social structure, the family exercises control and subordination where political and other powers are insufficient" (Millett 1994: 155).

The language that is taught first in a family acts as a mechanism of forming the gender identity because exactly in speech practices a child acquires the conception of "typically female" or "typically male" communicative behavior.

J. Coates writes: "Language is one of means, with the help of which individuals position themselves in the social space. Speech is an act of identity: when we speak, we identify ourselves as a man or woman. In childhood or youth we acquire the communicative behavior according to our gender, and it becomes a part of identity" (Coates 2005: 221).

The gender-marked models of the communicative behavior are as a rule unequal from the point of view of social prestige, and in the final analysis – from the point of view of the distribution of power. ("The male" is in "a stronger" position.) The difference in the male and female speech that are fixed empirically is not "natural", "inborn" for this or that sex, though common "opinion" ("doxa") tells it. Sociolinguistic research shows that different elements of the speech style, defined as "typically female" or "typically male" (e.g. non-categorical expressions demonstrating lack of self-confidence or showing respect, more often used by girls (modal expression "I think", for example)) are formed in a family according to the models that parents suggest. These models already contain the notions of how the girls and boys should speak.

An even deeper view of the problem is possible: a rather socio-philosophical than sociolinguistic one. May language itself be an instrument of the male supremacy, from which the woman is excluded at all? Here we come to the postmodern problems of phallo-logo-centrism that we leave aside, because it requires a special analysis. We shall only note that J. Butler, in a detailed analysis of these questions in her book *Gender Trouble*, contrasted the Monique Wittig's position, that interprets language as a neutral instrument which becomes misogynistic only in a definite usage, with that of Luce Irigaray, for whom language in its essence is an expression of the male power and, by the definition, excludes the women's representation. (Butler 2002: 330). However, both positions, according to J. Butler, are underproductive from the point of view of the criticism of the existing

gender procedure of power, because from its point of view the question is not in the subversion of existing power, ideology, dominating language, but in the deconstructive work inside this procedure of power.

To sum up, we may establish that interdependence between language and the power is one of the most essential problems of modern social philosophy and is found in the works of different philosophers of different trends and schools. We have viewed only one of possible variants of the statements of the question, suggested by Althusser and the French school of the discourse analysis. We have also viewed some interesting common ideas of the Althusser's theory of ideology and modern gender research. It should be noted that work in this direction could be very fruitful.

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KALBA, SUBJEKTAS, IDEOLOGIJA

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Straipsnyje apžvelgiama galios ir kalbos tarpusavio priklausomybės problema. Autoriai parodo, kad problemą galima nagrinėti dviem aspektais: sąmoningos kalbos, kaip politinio įrankio, vartojimo požiūriu ir nesąmoningos individo priklausomybės nuo kalbos bei ideologijos požiūriu. Šiame kontekste autoriai tiria L. Althusserio bei M. Pžcheux idėjas. Althusserio teorija čia pateikiama kaip viena iš galimų konceptualių pagrindų galios pasiskirstymui pagal lytį apibrėžti. Šiame straipsnyje atskleidžiama M. Pžcheux diskurso analizės specifika: diskursą M. Pžcheux laiko kalbos bei ekstralingvistinių apribojimų, sukurtų ideologijos, susikirtimo tašką.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: galia, kalba, ideologija, interpeliacija, subjektas, diskurso analizė.

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