# Structure of Linguistic Personality in the Aspect of the Center-Periphery Theory

*Olga Petrovna Fesenko*

Omsk Economical Institute, Komarov Prospekt, 13, 644012, Omsk, Russia

**Abstract:** This paper is focused on linguistic personality from the perspective of communicative linguistics, cultural linguistics, sociolinguistics and linguodidactics. Two interpretations of the term "linguistic personality" are given: the broad one – as an abstract model for a number of language carriers and the narrow one – as a systematized combination of language and verbal units that are typical of a certain native speaker. Linguistic personality is displayed not only as a multilayered and multi-level phenomenon that comprises the semantic, cognitive and motivation-pragmatic levels. The structure of linguistic personality is described as a complex phenomenon consisting of prototypical and peripheral units, which can be isolated within the framework of different linguistic theories, according to the author. It is concluded that the central and peripheral units are typical both for the structure of linguistic personality in general and for each of its levels. The isolation of prototypical (central) and peripheral units became possible by referring to "the theory of prototypes and basic-level categories" (E. Rosch). This approach to description of the structure allows one to unite the points of view of the broad and narrow interpretations of the phenomenon and to find the common trends in studying linguistic personality in different directions in linguistics. The common approaches to the description of the structure of linguistic personality are revealed.

**Key words:** Linguistic personality · Structure · Center–periphery theory · Speech

## INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, a large body of research articles devoted to studying the linguistic personality (LP) have been published in Russian and foreign linguistics. Scientists give different interpretations to this term and discuss the structure and properties of linguistic personality from different aspects. Such a regular referring to the concept may create the illusion that it is monosemantic and generally acknowledged among the scientific community. However, the difference in interpretations and approaches to the analysis significantly complicates understanding of the phenomenon and makes its studying more difficult. In this situation, we are more interested in revealing the general tendencies and properties in the structure of linguistic personality (which make it the universal object of study in various linguistic disciplines) rather than describing the linguistic personality and its structure. In this connection, we would like to propose several ideas to our reader, which have emerged when trying to understand the structure of LP and which can determine the specific character of its analysis using different

scientific approaches. Of course, in order to ensure complete description, we need to refer to the conventional studies and briefly outline the point of view of the classical researchers for this problem.

**Main Body:** Today, one of the most authoritative definitions of linguistic personality in Russian linguistics is that proposed by Yu.N. Karaulov: "A combination (and results of implementation) of the abilities to generate and perceive verbal works (texts) that differ in a) degree of structural linguistic complexity; b) depth and accuracy of representation of reality; and c) certain target orientation" [1, p. 245] can be known as linguistic personality. Despite the fact that this definition most frequently functions in cultural linguistics and linguodidactics, it is also used in communicative linguistics and in linguistic studies. However, the interpretation of linguistic personality proposed by Yu.N. Karaulov is not the only one among scientists.

All these possibilities of interpreting the nature of linguistic personality yield two main interpretations: the broad (collective LP) and narrow (individual LP) ones. Within the framework of broad interpretation of this term,

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**Corresponding Author:** Olga Petrovna Fesenko, Omsk Economical Institute, Komarov Prospekt, 13, 644012, Omsk, Russia

one can speak about Russian linguistic personality, linguistic personality of an Englishman or of an ethnic Germans living in Russia, etc.; about linguistic personality of a translator, a contemporary economist, bearer of a dialect, etc. In this case, linguistic personality acts as an abstract notion, whose model is based on the analysis of features of speech (oral and/or written) of certain native speakers.

The narrow interpretation allows one to analyze the specificity of linguistic personality of a certain communication entity (e.g., linguistic personality of V.V. Putin or L.N. Tolstoy, etc.). This meaning is related not to the linguistic personality but to its verbal implementation to a greater extent.

Both these interpretations are tightly interconnected, since accumulation of the knowledge about different types of linguistic personalities in the broad interpretation of this term cannot be performed without accumulating the results of analyzing the features of speech of certain native speakers. Meanwhile, the study of the uniqueness of the linguistic personality of an individual is associated with the availability of the data regarding the specificity of linguistic personality of the social or cultural class which this native speaker belongs to. In studies conducted abroad, the problem of differentiation of linguistic personality in broad and narrow sense is not as topical as for Russian researchers. Most frequently, scientists study how the personality factor manifests itself in the discourse [2], how the personality of a native speaker affects speech generation [3] and generation of texts [4], how the properties of a linguistic personality affect the use of specific verbal signals [5] and what traits of linguistic personality can be found in all languages of the world [6].

If one discusses the broad sense of the term "LP" in Russian science, the researchers mainly study an abstract notion, the model based on the analysis of speech representations of a number of native speakers. The model is obtained by generalizing the features and a set of systematized typical data regarding the use of certain linguistic units and their meaning organization. However, if one speaks about the features of speech of a certain native speaker (LP in narrow sense), the process and result of speech behavior of an individual becomes direct subject of study. The relationship between these two interpretations can be most clearly seen when the structure of linguistic personality is described.

It has been generally acknowledged that the linguistic personality has a complex, nonuniform and multi-component structure. Modern researchers have proposed various models of linguistic personality, the

three-level model by Yu.N. Karaulov [7, pp. 36-52] being one of the earliest among them. Let us discuss it more thoroughly.

The verbal semantic level is the simplest one in this model in terms of its organization. This level was referred to as zero, since Yu.N. Karaulov believes that no individuality can be seen behind the sense connections of words, their combinations and lexical semantic relationships. "Individual words and relationships between them" act as units through the variety of "paradigmatic, semantic-syntagmatic and associative connections". This level is correlated with words by Yu.N. Karaulov; it can represent only the extent to which one knows a language. The analysis of this level means "either comprehensive description or differential description, which records only the individual differences and is performed for the averaged concept of the given linguistic structure".

The next level referred to as the first one is correlated with the text. It represents the linguistic world image and is defined as the linguo-cognitive (cognitive, thesaurus) level. The generalized and large concepts and ideas are implemented at this level through the generalized statements, catchphrases, proverbs, sayings, etc. used by language carriers. The analysis of this level based on combination of text generated by a LP establishes the system of senses and values in the linguistic world image of a linguistic personality. Yu.N. Karaulov believes that the analysis can be performed only if the basic, invariant part of the world image of a certain epoch is already known to scientists. Otherwise, it would be impossible to reveal the specific character of a certain linguistic personality.

The final (second) level is correlated with the subtext, "determines the hierarchy of senses and values in the linguistic world image of a personality", represents the communicative-active demands of a person that provide information about inner attitudes, aims and motives guiding the development and behavior of LP; this level regulates text generation of LP and is known as motivation (motivation-pragmatic) level. The process of text generation and their content, as well as the features of perceiving texts created by somebody else, are analyzed at this level.

All the levels are tightly interrelated and mutually dependent. However, Yu.N. Karaulov deems it necessary to have at one's disposal additional extra-linguistic data (history of socialization of a person, data on social functioning of linguistic personality, its social roles, etc.) in order to conduct a thorough analysis of linguistic personality.

There is no doubt that the proposed theory is very efficient; however, there is some uncertainty regarding the accuracy of the terminology used. If the study of each preceding level in the structure of linguistic personality determines whether the next level can be analyzed, neither of them can be referred to as zero level, especially since examination of the structural linguistic level can reveal some specific traits of a linguistic personality that make it differ from other native speakers. Hence, predominance of certain parts of speech (e.g., verbs) can demonstrate greater communication dynamics, while frequent use of adjectives and adverbs makes one's speech more emotional and expressive as it actively implements the pragmatic potential of verbal communication and helps the author to express his/her attitude to what is going on more vividly. These traits do not coincide in different linguistic personalities. Moreover, neither cognitive nor pragmatic levels can be represented without the verbal semantic level (vocabulary). For this very reason, vocabulary is as important as thesaurus and pragmaticon. In this case, the zero lexico-semantic level will be the center of the structure.

The structure of LP proposed by Yu.N. Karaulov is not the only one used in science today. Thus, E.A. Gorlo has proposed a completely different "versatile" model based on the dichotomy of verbal behavior: introvert / extravert + static / dynamic + intuition / sensing + pessimist / optimist + egocentric / altruist [8, pp. 31-38]. The researcher believes that each communicative dichotomy can underlie the description of any linguistic personality: both of an average one (in the broad sense of the term LP) and of an individual one (in the narrow sense). Linguistic units that are the means of representing a certain dichotomy poles are mentioned in the study by E.A. Gorlo. However, questions arise regarding some of provisions. E.A. Gorlo considers that "linguistic units with a high degree of thoroughness are markers of extroverted verbal behavior" (including repetitions, parallelisms, parenthetical constructions, participial and adverbial participle phrases, etc.). Thus, a conclusion can be made that the more a linguistic personality is oriented towards the society and the greater demand for and capability of communication it has, the more complicated syntactic constructions it uses. A question arises, whether this regularity is always observed. It is a well-known fact that ellipsis (as a shortened structure) allows a native speaker to transfer information to his interlocutor when he/she is strongly excited emotionally. It does not matter in this case whether an extravert or an introvert is the source of information. Shortened structures are also used if a linguistic personality is

seeking to create an informal and friendly communication atmosphere. Furthermore, the means of implementation of extraverted verbal behavior given as an example (participial and adverbial participial phrases) can be elements of the bookish style (but not the colloquial, within which the extraverted traits of a linguistic personality can be observed). In other words, some "expanded" syntactic structures are not indicative of the corresponding traits of a linguistic personality. There use is limited by 1) functional style of communication, 2) characteristics of the speech genre and 3) some extra-linguistic factors affecting the state of the communicants. In this context, the "versatility" and objective character of the proposed model are disputable. However, the idea of using dichotomies of verbal behavior for creating models of the linguistic personality is very efficient and allows one to describe the structure of the phenomenon being analyzed as a communication participant.

The horizontal and vertical models of a linguistic personality are typically discussed in cultural linguistics and linguopersonology. The horizontal model is the ratio between speech genres used by a certain native speaker. Speech genres are organized in this case as a field with a center and the periphery. This model allows one to describe the linguistic personality as a representative of the social group. The vertical model demonstrates the level of culture and linguistic proficiency [9, p. 314]. However, modeling in these studies is transformed into the development of typologies for various representation of the LP rather than description of its structure.

The models developed within linguodidactics differ fundamentally from the previous approaches to the description of the structure of LP. They represent the degree of linguistic proficiency of each native speaker. Multi-level structures are eventually created; the model proposed by G.I. Bogin can be used as an example. It is the model of "readiness to act in the same key situations that are to be resolved by understanding" and comprises five levels:

- Correctness level ("He/she does not know Russian language (yet)").
- Integriorization level ("He/she has not learnt the language well yet").
- Saturation level ("His/her speech is rather poor").
- Level of adequate choice ("He/she chooses the wrong words").
- Level of adequate synthesis ("He/she uses the right words but the result is incorrect") [10].

We deem the attempt of the researchers to describe the structure/model of the linguistic personality using terms "center/periphery" rather interesting and efficient.

The attempt made by T.Yu. Ma to construct the linguistic personality as a conceptual/categorical system and detecting its value kernel (prototype) is close to this theory. The scientists points out that the linguistic personality is a product of world cognition formed during practical learning or under the influence of the world. Hence, the value system in the structure of linguistic personality is invariant (prototypical – O.F.). It is typical of most representatives of the certain type of linguistic personality and can be seen "in the communicative practice of a group (...) at different levels of perceptive decoding and in different discourse types [11, pp. 5-8].

V. Rigovanova has also suggested that the linguistic personality should be defined "as the category having the internal (center-periphery) structure and the external signs of implementation [12, p. 349]"; however, her study did not contain a list of structural components.

The center-periphery concept is based on the "Theory of prototypes and basic-level categories" (E. Rosch) [13], according to which the unit "best corresponding to a certain combination of criteria" is the center of a system (i.e., the most typical structural unit). The center is known as prototype. This approach does not preclude the analysis of levels of the structure of linguistic personality. Hence, each level can be described as a combination of 1) components that are typical / central for this type of linguistic personality (if it is considered as a representative of its epoch, a certain social class, etc.) and 2) specific components that are typical of a certain native speaker only.

## CONCLUSION

In this case, structure of linguistic personality (in the broad sense of this term, as an abstract notion) will be prototypical; i.e., it will represent the features that are typical of all (or the absolute majority) of representatives whose speech has underlain modeling of a certain type of linguistic personality (Russian LP – based on the analysis of speech of Russian native speakers, LP of an English knight – based on the analysis of speech of certain representatives of knighthood in England, etc.). The peripheral units will be typical of verbal personality both for a specific representative of a certain type of linguistic personality but with its own characteristics that will make it differ from the other native speakers within the specific type of LP. The prototype can be distinguished at the level of vocabulary, thesaurus and pragmaticon

(according to the theory proposed by Yu.N. Karaulov). Each of these levels contains units that are typical of linguistic personality of both sociocultural type (in the broad sense of term LP). These very units constitute the model of linguistic personality. The "non-typical" units are peripheral and form (in combination with prototypical units of each level) the structure of verbal personality as a specific native speaker.

It must be admitted that none of the aforedescribed models is complete. The most objective picture that best represents the reality can be obtained only when we will be able to design a universal model based on all the models that have been proposed in linguistics thus far. In this respect, any new attempt at modeling will be extremely useful for further research in the field of linguopersonology, communicative linguistics, linguodidactics or cultural linguistics. One can hope that a universal model will be eventually developed, which will be capable of representing the linguistic / verbal personality with allowance for features of each of the research spheres mentioned above.

**Summary:** Phenomenon of linguistic personality is a rather complex and ambiguous phenomenon in modern science. Researchers distinguish various units and levels when describing its structure (depending on objectives and tasks of scientific analysis). However, most approaches to the description of the organization of linguistic personality can be united based on the "Theory of prototypes and basic-level categories" proposed by E. Rosch. Despite the perspectives from which linguists describe linguistic personality, the units that are typical for most native speakers will constitute the center of its structure. In this case, we can speak about the model and modeling of linguistic personality. If one analyzes the features of speech of a certain native speaker, it is peripheral structural units that make it unique. In this case, linguistic personality in the narrow meaning of this term will be an object of analysis.

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