AFTERWORD

ROLE LANGUAGE AND CHARACTER RESEARCH IN A WIDER PERSPECTIVE

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The present issue of ALA offers readers a unique opportunity to become familiar with the developments in character and role language research, which evolved in Japan mainly around and after the turn of the millennium.

The research, growing among others from the stimuli of Japanese pop culture from that period, is, depending on the focus, intriguingly reminiscent of insights from European and American literary criticism, social science and history, namely, from the Bakhtin circle, Bourdieu, Goffman and Braudel among others. Here, I attempt to point out some connections.

The concept of role language proposed by and discussed in detail in this issue by Kinsui and Yamakido, resonates closely with Bakhtin's (1934/1981) notion of heteroglossia (разноречие, basically use of social context of communication based varieties of language) and Goffman's (1955) social roles (being one aspect of his dramaturgical model of social interaction analysis). Kinsui and Yamakido in their detailed treatment view role language as variety stereotype widely recognized within a given speech community, and thus as a rather static phenomenon. Contrary to this, Bakhtin and his circle take a more dynamic view, viewing language as a "continuous generative process implemented in socioverbal interaction of speakers" (Vološinov 1929 /1973).

Regarding the definition "character" (*kyarakuta*), Sadanobu (in this issue), seems to take a more dynamic view, seeing "character" primarily related to (stability of) identity of a person, among others also as "a balancer for external and internal pressure". In this sense, "character" as a dynamic phenomenon seems to be closely related with the notion of habitus, elaborated by Bourdieu's (1982). Habitus is physical, psychological and linguistic demeanor, unconsciously acquired throughout individual's dialectical interaction with his social environment through one's whole life. In my understanding, perceived stereotypes regarding collective habitus of an ethnic group or social class play an important role in present treatments of both "role language" and of "character".

The notions of "role language" and of "character" should also be connected with notions of "register" and "genre". On of very explicit treatments is in the framework of Systemic Functional Grammar, i.e. Hasan (2009, based on Halliday (1991). Hasa posits connection among system and instance, between collective and individual, mediated via the notion of the context of situation. To this schema a further layer of social system as a part of wider context of social interaction going beyond communication, based on Bourdieu's observations on habitus can ba added to obtain a more general framework for description and analysis of phenomena, related to "character" and "role language". To avoid teleological interpretation at the root, the question, where the sytemic, i. e. structural, part is coming from, must be answered. As mentioned above, the relationship between the social context and the individual is dialectic, thus every instance of social interaction must be seen as negotiable in the particular social and more narrowly cultural context. Structure is borne out of repetition of interactions at the individual and collective level, as, for the case of language, studies grammaticalisation processes, of spontaneously developed sign languages (c.f. Ragir, 2002) etc, and of pidgins, show. This view holds even on a wider scale, in history, which has been considered a nonstructural discipline par excellence. As Braudel (1958) argues, long term (*longue durée*) view of historical processes can reveal more stable, more structural aspects of historical developments.

Systematisation of the already abundant results in the field of "character" and "role language" research in a wider framework of literary and social science will undoubtedly expand the scope of the research and deepen our understanding of how the language works in its natural environment - society. I view the present issue as an important step in this direction.

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