

CHANNELING AS PRAGMATICALLY MARKED DISCOURSE

ЧЕНЕЛІНГ ЯК ПРАГМАТИЧНО МАРКОВАНИЙ ДИСКУРС

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This article continues a series of publications dedicated to channeling discourse analysis. Channelings, as an integral part of the New Age teachings, are produced in several languages with the biggest popularity in the USA from where they spread to other countries and continents. Channeling, as a modern substitution for God's revelations, is defined as communication of a non-physical entity and the human beings, with a channeler as the mediator of communication. As a separate type of discourse channeling presents an interesting type of communication from the point of view of its structure, informative counterpart and the means of influencing human conscious. The research is carried out within the domain of cognitive-communicative paradigm and employs such methods of analysis as inferential, descriptive, pragmatics. The article tackles the problem of suggestive influence of channelings on the readers and focuses on the means of its verbalisation in the texts of modern American channelings, namely the channelings of Seth (through Jane Roberts) and Kryon (through Lee Carroll). The analysis is carried out on the lexical-semantic (channeler's verbalisation of the message), syntactic (structures performing suggestive influence) and pragmatic (intentions of the addresser) levels. The conducted research shows that suggestion is one of the dominant features of channelling discourse, which reveals itself at different levels of text organisation. Therefore it makes it possible to define channelling as a pragmatically marked type of discourse, aimed at a definite perlocutive effect – changing the outlook of the reader, his/her values and style of life. The article describes in details the means of the suggestive influence employed in the texts of the analysed channelings, including such textual categories as implicitness (realised in the model "if..., then" at the deep structure level of the sentence) and identification (the addresser positioning himself as a member of his addressee's group).

The prospects for the research on the suggestive power of channeling discourse include: (a) category of author's modality; (b) imperative constructions and modal verbs; c) a comparative research on channeling discourse and other types of discourses with suggestive potential, etc.

Key words: addresser, addressee, pragmatically marked, suggestive power, implicitness, identification.

Стаття продовжує серію публікацій, присвячених аналізу ченелінг-дискурсу. Ченелінги як складник учення нью ейдж виходять у світ різними мовами, однак найбільшу популярність вони отримали у США, звідки й поширилися до інших країн і континентів. Ченелінги існують як певною мірою сучасні божественні одкровення, оскільки вони, по суті, є комунікацією істот нематеріальних вимірів із людиною, а посередником цієї комунікації є так званий ченелер (людина у стані трансу чи напівтрансу). Як окремих вид дискурсу ченелінг цікавий із погляду структури, інформативного складника та засобів мовленнєвого впливу на свідомість читача. Дослідження виконано в межах когнітивно-комунікативної парадигми, застосовано такі методи аналізу, як інференційний, дескриптивний і метод прагматичного аналізу. У статті проаналізовано проблему сугестивного впливу ченелінгів на читача, зосереджено увагу на засобах вербалізації цього впливу в текстах сучасних американських ченелінгів – сета (за посередництва Джейн Робертс) і крайона (за посередництва Лі Керролла). Аналіз проведено на лексико-семантичному (вербалізація послання ченелером), синтаксичному (структури із сугестивною функцією) та прагматичному (наміри адресанта) рівнях. Проведене дослідження показує, що сугестивність є однією з домінантних рис ченелінг-дискурсу, яка виявляє себе на різних рівнях організації тексту. Отже, ченелінг можна визначити як прагматично маркований тип дискурсу з певним перлокутивним ефектом, мета якого – змінити світогляд читача, його/її цінності й стиль життя. Стаття детально описує засоби сугестивного впливу в текстах ченелінгів, а саме такі текстуальні категорії, як імпліцитність (зреалізована в моделі "if..., then") та ототожнення (коли адресант позиціонує себе як член групи, до якої належить адресат).

Перспективою дослідження сугестивного потенціалу ченелінг-дискурсу вважаємо аналіз категорії авторської модальності, імперативних конструкцій і модальних дієслів, а також порівняльний аналіз ченелінг-дискурсу та інших дискурсів із сугестивними ознаками тощо.

Ключові слова: адресат, адресант, прагматично маркований, сугестивний потенціал, імпліцитність, ототожнення.

Introduction. The last decades revealed increasing interest towards human subconscious and means of influencing and manipulating it. Of interest are verbal and non-verbal means of suggestion realised in different types of the texts: from shamanic spells to religious prays, from daily communication to psychotherapeutic discourse. Among the instances

that skipped researcher's interest is channelling-discourse. This type of discourse is hardly studied at all, a few publications issued by the author of this article. The suggestive aspect of channelings has not been studied yet, and this article is the first attempt at distinguishing the means of suggestive influence in them.

Channelings are usually perceived as a modern substitution for God's revelations as they are the messages or teachings transmitted to humanity from the non-physical spiritual beings (angels, spiritual guides, ascended masters, etc.), who use the bodies and minds of people (channelers) and produce either automatically written text or an oral message. Channelings have become an integral part of the New Age teachings. Among the earliest are the channelings of Seth by Jane Roberts; among the latest and most popular – the channelings of Kryon through Lee Carroll.

Being *terra incognita* for the linguists as a separate type of discourse, channeling presents an interesting type of communication from the point of view of its structure, informative counterpart and the means of influencing human conscious. The research offered in this article is based on the channelings of Seth (channelled by Jane Roberts) and Kryon (channelled by Lee Carroll) which were published as books. The aim of the article is to describe and classify in terms of linguistics the means of suggestive influence of the channelings and prove that channelings belong to the type of literature with definite suggestive power. The research is carried out within the domain of cognitive-communicative paradigm and employs such methods of analysis as inferential, descriptive, pragmatics. The analysis is carried out on the lexical-semantic (channeler's verbalisation of the message), syntactic (structures performing suggestive influence) and pragmatic (intentions of the addresser) levels.

Suggestion as a Means of Speech Influence. The very term 'speech influence' still causes discussion among the linguists. They offer their understanding of the term in the broad and narrow sense, for example: influencing the consciousness and behaviour with messages in natural language vs separate messages with higher suggestive power [1, p. 30], verbal influence resulting in reshaping of individual consciousness/picture of the world vs change of the object's connotative meaning/general emotional state in a separate communicative frame [2, p. 21–22], and some other. Common for all the approaches is the statement that speech influence presupposes that the addresser has an aim which he wants to achieve through communication.

From the view point of cognitive linguistics speech influence is the realisation of cognitive strategies which help introduce the information into the consciousness of the addressee and make him accept it as if it were his own. Pragmalinguistics considers any text to be endowed with the ability to influence in the broad sense of the word, thus speech influence

is termed as the intention of the addresser realised through speech strategies within a separate speech act. Shelestiuk E.V. states that speech influence is realised in the sets of speech acts joined in a number of types: social influence, figurative images, argumentation, dialogue simulation, etc., while the main means of speech influence are argumentation, suggestion and motivation [3, p. 11]. Also for the texts to have strong suggestive power they should be rich in linguistic and logical-rhetoric means which help achieve suggestive effect [3, p. 11].

One of the first definitions of the term "suggestion" was offered in 1898 by Boris Sidis in his work "The Psychology of Suggestion: A Research into the Subconscious Nature Of Man and Society": 'By suggestion is meant the intrusion into the mind of an idea; met with more or less opposition by the person; accepted uncritically at last; and realized unreflectively, almost automatically' [4, p. 15]. It is possible to stress such basic features of suggestion as: a) the influence on the sub-consciousness of the addressee (as well as his feelings and emotions), b) a certain degree of opposition on the addressee's part which decreases and finally disappears, c) a low level (or absence) of critical comprehension of the information, as suggestive influence "activates peripheral stimuli, while argumentation operates upon the nuclear ones" [5, p. 8]. The power of suggestion influences our daily life, because we are born suggestible and suggestibility – a "peculiar state of mind which is favourable to suggestion" – is "present in what we call the normal state, and in order to reveal it we must only know how to tap it" [4, p. 15–17]. Of course, suggestibility of a man is scarcely a sufficient condition when it comes to intended purposeful influence of one person upon the other: here come forward special techniques and units of high suggestive power properly arranged in an oral or written message.

The focus of attention in this research is language means and mechanisms of verbal suggestion employed in Kryon's and Seth's channelings from the linguistic point of view. Therefore of primary interest for us are the language units of different levels which have suggestive power, their arrangement in the texts and the role they perform in channelings' suggestive influence.

Suggestive Power of Textual Categories in Channeling Discourse. The analysis of the suggestive power of a text may follow different patterns, already described in works on linguistics. The research offered in this article begins with the analysis of the suggestive power of textual categories. The majority of textual categories are endowed with

the influence power. Textual categories like cohesion, informativity, intertextuality and others have a certain degree of suggestivity, though implicitness is the most important textual category, which ensures the suggestive influence of the text. Implicitness is the hidden sense of the text; its logic formula is **“if... then”** [6, p. 169].

In Kryon's channelings the logic formula “if... then” is a common occurrence. First of all, Kryon manipulates with the reader's desire to be powerful, to gain the abilities he is deprived of at present: *Everything that I do here is focused into one purpose: to give you peace over the change, and to give you information that will make so much sense to you that you will self-enable your entity and take the power which belongs to you* [7, p. 22]. The example shows Kryon's explicit statement that his only purpose on Earth is to be useful for humanity; the information implied is: “if you accept my information, then you'll become powerful”. Kryon also uses such human characteristics as fear, namely the fear for death, to manipulate the reader and suggest the desirable idea. The information implied is: “you are to understand my message; if you do, then you'll survive; if you do not, you'll die”. Negative lexemes *to terminate, uncomfortable, fearful* add to the emotional counterpart of the message, increasing its suggestive power: *I am not here to tell you that my third adjustment will require your termination, but without some understanding many of you will terminate yourselves anyway* [8, p. 27]; *It will agree with your changes when you move in a direction with those attributes, and will cooperate with your life as you co-create with it. It will do the opposite if you do nothing and don't move at all spiritually. There is no punishment implied here at all, just a lack of growth and a shorter life of being uncomfortable and fearful* [7, p. 22].

The formula “if... then” may be realised in the text with the help of complex sentences with the subordinate clauses of condition. This way of suggestive influence is described in the very text of one of Seth's channeling “The Way Toward Health”, where he speculates upon the power of suggestion and its influence on human's health: *To a large extent, suggestions are tied into conscious thought processes, following the dictates of reason. For example: “If thus and thus be so, then thus and thus must follow”. There is no magic connected with suggestions – but repeated often enough, and believed in fervently, such suggestions do indeed take on a deeply habitual nature. They are no longer examined, but taken for literal truth* [9, p. 168]. Having described this way of suggesting ideas into human consciousness, Seth, nevertheless, often uses the for-

mula in his messages to the humankind, stating that they contain the true information, beneficial to all the humanity. On the first pages of the book “Seth Speaks: The Eternal Validity of the Soul” Seth introduces himself and through the implicit formula “if... then” insists on the fact that he does exist: *I address an unseen audience. However, I know that my readers exist, and therefore I shall ask each of them, now, to grant me the same Privilege* [10, p. 3]. The idea of this statement is as follows: **if** I (Seth) do not see you, but still believe that you exist, **then** you should believe that I do exist, though you do not see me. Next Seth tries to disillusion the readers concerning his and their nature. Using the “if... then” formula, lexis with negative connotation and particles “no/not”, Seth creates a kind of opposition between the human idea of their nature and the information he offers, thus attributing negative features to the human comprehension of the world and positive – to his own. In the sentence *“My readers may suppose that they are physical creatures, bound within physical bodies, imprisoned within bone, flesh, and skin”* [10, p. 4] physical creature is described as “bound”, “imprisoned” thus arousing in the reader the desire not to be the one. The implicit meaning of the sentence is **“if** you believe that you are physical entities, **then** you are prisoners”.

From the strategy of implicitness Seth moves to more overt suggestion with “if... then” syntactic constructions. The next sentence of his message develops the idea that for a human to identify oneself with the physical body is to recognise one's own mortality: *If you believe that your existence is dependent upon this corporeal image, then you feel in danger of extinction, for no physical form lasts, and no body, however beautiful in youth, retains the same vigor and enchantment in old age* [10, p. 4]. We, people, have always searched for the means of life-term prolongation as well as immortality; therefore our mind is very susceptible when it comes to the topic.

For the speaker to perform effectively, it is necessary to verbalise the expectations of the audience/readers. To be accepted positively he is to say things, which are desirable for his addressee. Besides, creating positive emotional state of the recipient leads towards the decrease of critical information comprehension, at the same time increasing the level of confidence in the addresser. The stronger the positive emotions evoked by the text, the higher the level of sympathy and confidence in the addresser. The formula “if... then” to some extent stimulates us to think, that after the bad variant there will follow a brighter alternative and we are ready to accept it. Though Seth continues to create suspense and intro-

duces one more “if... then” construction, adding to the negative aspect of human body’s mortality: *If you identify with your own youth, or beauty, or intellect, or accomplishments, then there is the constant gnawing knowledge that these attributes can and will vanish* [10, p. 4]. Together with the previous sentence it constitutes such a stylistic device as parallel constructions. Parallel constructions are used as a means of idea accentuation and are very powerful in rendering/suggesting the author’s viewpoint. In our case they intensify the reader’s desire to get the “right” explanation of his essence, to hear that humans are not mortal. Therefore the reader’s consciousness is not critical anymore, when the answer is given: *I am writing this book to assure you that this is not the case. Basically you are no more of a physical being than I am, and I have donned and discarded more bodies than I care to tell... I am quite independent of a physical image, and so are you* [10, p. 4].

The last two sentences employ another means of suggestion – identification, which is the process of audience transformation through the contact when the speaker reveals and forms common references in communication [11, p. 22]. This helps the addresser gain the status “he is one of us” in the addressee’s picture of the world and in this way win the addressee’s confidence. The sentences render the idea that a human being is as immortal as Seth himself, and it flatters the reader to know that a high spiritual being (Seth) is of the same origin and of the same essence with him.

All the means of identification enable the addresser to “mould” his addressee and are aimed at the idea of symbolic alliance. One of the major ways of identification is the inclusive “we” usage. It positions the addressee as its counterpart. In their channelings Kryon and Seth are rather different concerning this aspect.

In the majority of instances Seth uses the exclusive variant of “we”, meaning the addressee does not belong to the group mentioned in the context. This serves another addresser’s strategy – positioning himself as an entity higher in its development and, therefore, more knowledgeable and experienced. What concerns the inclusive “we”, it is not explicated in the text. Instead, Seth offers syntactic variations of this pattern: “we (non-physical entities) are such, and you (humans) are such, too”, “we (non-physical entities) are such, and you (humans) are also such”, “you (humans) are as... as we (non-physical entities) are”, etc. The implicit meaning of these patterns is “we (both non-physical entities and humans) are such”. The following examples from the text illustrate the idea:

(a) *I will try to give you some idea of my own nonphysical existence. Let it serve to remind you that your own basic identity is as nonphysical as my own* [10, p. 15]. Seth identifies himself with his readers and humanity in general concerning our entities basic essence. Syntactically it is rendered through “as... as” construction; the implication is: “We are both nonphysical, but humans have just forgotten about it”.

(b) *Having long ago recognized the dependence of form upon consciousness, we have simply been able to change our forms entirely so that they more faithfully follow each nuance of our inner experience. This ability to change form is an inherent characteristic of any consciousness. Only the degree of proficiency and actualization varies* [10, p. 18]. It renders the idea that consciousness (even human one) can shape the physical form; the difference is that humans are not “proficient” in this sphere. The chain of Seth’s implicit suggestion is: we (non-physical entities) can change our form – any consciousness can change its form – human has consciousness – human can change the form – we (non-physical entities) and humans are identical.

(c) *Now, we can also take several forms at one time, so to speak, but you can also do this although you do not generally realize it. Your physical form can lie sleeping and inert upon the bed while your consciousness travels in a dream form to places quite distant* [10, p. 18]. Here Seth uses both parallel constructions and the particle “also” to realise his strategy of identification: humanity is postulated to have the ability to exist simultaneously in several forms, like the entities of a higher order.

(d) *We communicate telepathically, but then again, telepathy is the basis for your languages, without which their symbolism would be meaningless... We communicate ... through ... images* [10, p. 19]. Here Seth stresses the similarity in the basic principles of his and our communication: images/concepts stay behind the symbols we communicate with – behind the words. And in examples (e) and (f) he states that humanity will experience the existence on the same plane with Seth, implying that we are similar in the way of our development:

(e) *Each reader is a portion of his or her own entity, and is developing toward the same kind of existence that I know* [10, p. 22].

(f) *My environment, now, is not the one in which you will find yourself immediately after death. I cannot help speaking humorously, but you must die many times before you enter this particular plane of existence* [10, p. 16].

Kryon channelings, to the contrary, actively exploit the “we”-inclusive pattern. The author

identifies himself with the reader, stating that humans are of the same divine origin and as mighty as the other dimensions entities: *We are God. You are a piece of God, and you have the power to become as high on your side of the veil as you were before you came...* [8, p. 16]; *We are collective, but the power source is singular. This means that we all share a common oneness that is the* [8, p. 34].

Similarly to Seth, Kryon elevates the emotional state of the readers, ascribes positive characteristics to them and endows them with uniqueness: *There are many kinds of entities, but the number is always the same. We are constant, and reflect the whole at all times. You are a very important part of the whole, and you are very special. You have elected to be the ones to bring the frequency of the whole to a higher level* [8, p. 15]. The explicit plane of the message informs the reader that the number of entities in the Universe is constant, while the implicit meaning is “when you die, you do not disappear, because the number remains the same, therefore you are immortal”. The idea that they are immortal and so important for the whole makes Kryon’s addressees totally trust him, as any human strives if not to be, than, at least, to seem important and unique. In addition, such information helps create the emotion of joy and happiness within the audience. Such a “flattering” technique complies with the addressees’ desires and, turning them into trustful audience, increases the suggestive power of the channeling. Kryon also employs the objective case of the “we”-pronoun and pronoun “our” when he speaks about different planes of our existence: *Each of us has this exact attribute as an entity of the Universe. Our shape and our colors tell those around us our "names" and our service. And so it is also that each time you descend into humanoid form on any planet, you earn a badge of color that intermingles with the ones you already carry* [7, p. 18–20].

Conclusions. The analysis of Seth’s and Kryon’s channelings shows that their texts have a strong suggestive potential. This potential is realised through such textual categories as implicitness, identification and personality, but is not limited by them. Category of implicitness realises channelings’ suggestive power through the model “if..., then” at the deep structure level of the sentence. Lexemes with negative connotation serve as additional means of contrasting the “wrong” worldview of a human and the “right” one of Seth, leading the reader to noncritical acceptance of the information through the emotionally coloured suggestions.

The next textual category with suggestive power is identification, when the addresser positions himself as a member of his addressee’s group, and thus – the one to be trusted. The mechanism of identification is realised through the usage of “we”-inclusive pronoun and Kryon uses this pattern throughout all his channelings. Seth offers syntactic variations of the pattern: “we (non-physical entities) are such, and you (humans) are such, too”, “we (non-physical entities) are such, and you (humans) are also such”, “you (humans) are as... as we (non-physical entities) are”, etc.

The analysis carried out in this article is not exhaustive concerning the language means of suggestive influence employed in channeling discourse. Certain phenomena intentionally skipped the researcher’s attention, as the amount of the material does not comply with the article’s limitations and requires a separate insight into the problem under discussion, in this way presenting the perspective for further research. It is possible to outline a number of prospects for the research on the suggestive power of channeling discourse in terms of linguistics: (a) category of author’s modality as suggestive influence realisation; (b) imperative constructions and modal verbs as the units with suggestive power; c) a comparative research on channeling discourse and other types of discourses which reveal suggestive potential.

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