

VERBALIZATION OF SOCIAL CONTRASTS IN THE NOVEL "NORTH AND SOUTH" BY ELIZABETH GASKELL

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The article presents a linguostylistic analysis of Elizabeth Gaskell's novel «North and South» in the context of the social contrasts of the Victorian era. The study's theoretical basis is the concepts of L. Bulahovsky, O. Selivanova, T. Yeshchenko, and I. Kochan regarding the nature of individual style and the methodology for analyzing a literary text. The paper outlines that language in a literary text performs an aesthetic and a sociolinguistic function, reflecting society's class, cultural, and ideological divisions. Based on the novel «North and South», it is traced how lexical, syntactic and intonational means serve as markers of the characters' social affiliation: southern heroes (Margaret Hale, her family) are characterized by intellectualized, morally colored vocabulary, complex syntactic structures and reflexive intonation; instead, the northern characters (Thornton, workers) use business, economic, dialect vocabulary, fragmentary remarks and emotional exclamations. The article identifies the role of metaphor, color symbolism, and genre-intonation changes in forming spatial and social contrasts. It is revealed that Elizabeth Gaskell uses language as a means of social analysis, where each linguistic register serves as a marker of class, professional, and moral identity. Special attention is paid to the combination of the poetic style of the South with the realistic, dynamic language of the North, which symbolizes the gradual overcoming of class boundaries and the achievement of social harmony. Significantly, the language system of the novel is a holistic model of Victorian society, in which the artistic word combines aesthetic, sociological, and ideological functions, and linguostylistic analysis makes it possible

to identify the deep mechanisms of interaction of language, culture, and society in literary discourse.

Key words: *Victorian fiction, Elizabeth Gaskell, idiosyncrasy, linguostylistic analysis, sociolinguistic contrasts, literary discourse.*

ВЕРБАЛІЗАЦІЯ СОЦІАЛЬНИХ КОНТРАСТІВ У РОМАНІ «ПІВНІЧ І ПІВДЕНЬ» ЕЛІЗАБЕТ ГАСКЕЛЛ

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У статті здійснено лінгвостилістичний аналіз роману Елізабет Гаскелл «Північ і Південь» у контексті соціальних контрастів вікторіанської епохи. Теоретичну основу дослідження становлять концепції Л. Булаховського, О. Селіванової, Т. Єщенко та І. Кочан щодо природи індивідуального стилю й методики аналізу художнього тексту. Окреслено, що мова в художньому творі виконує не лише естетичну, а й соціолінгвістичну функцію, відображаючи класові, культурні та ідеологічні розмежування суспільства. На матеріалі роману «Північ і Південь» простежено, як лексичні, синтаксичні та інтонаційні засоби служать маркерами соціальної приналежності персонажів: південні герої (Маргарет Хейл, її родина) характеризуються інтелектуалізованою, морально забарвленою лексикою, складними синтаксичними структурами та рефлексивною інтонацією; натомість північні персонажі (Торнтон, робітники) послуговуються діловою, економічною, діалектною лексикою, уривчастими репліками та емоційними вигуками. У тексті визначено роль метафорики, кольорової символіки та жанрово-інтонаційних змін у формуванні просторових і соціальних контрастів. Виявлено, що Елізабет Гаскелл використовує мову як засіб соціального аналізу, де кожен мовний реєстр виконує функцію маркера класової, професійної й моральної ідентичності. Особливу увагу

приділено поєднанню поетичної стилістики Півдня з реалістичною, динамічною мовою Півночі, що символізує поступове подолання класових меж і досягнення соціальної гармонії. Важливо, що мовна система роману є цілісною моделлю вікторіанського суспільства, у якій художнє слово поєднує естетичну, соціологічну та ідеологічну функції, а лінгвостилістичний аналіз дає змогу виявити глибинні механізми взаємодії мови, культури та соціуму в художньому дискурсі.

Ключові слова: *вікторіанська література, Елізабет Гаскелл, ідіостиль, лінгвостилістичний аналіз, соціолінгвістичні контрасти, літературний дискурс.*

In the modern scientific paradigm of the study of literary text, linguostylistic analysis dominates, involving the systematic identification of individual characteristics of the author's writing style. This method aims to identify a complex of linguistic means that implement the figurative-aesthetic function of the text, i.e., forming imagery as a defining indicator of the author's idiosyncrasy. The expansion of the scope of application of linguostylistic analysis at different levels of the language system and communicative situations has led to the emergence of new methodological-stylistic directions and the variability of the goals of stylistic studies [2, p. 15].

The theoretical foundations of linguostylistic analysis of a literary text were laid by the Ukrainian linguist L. Bulakhovsky, who emphasized that the linguistic manner of an individual author, his individual artistic style, are inextricably intertwined with the broader linguistic context of the era. The scholar believed that the originality of the writer's speech is determined not only by the level of development of the literary language, but also by the genre features and social linguistic preferences of the time. However, according to his conviction, the decisive importance in creating an image and conceptual integrity of the work belongs to the language [2, p. 33].

Linguostylistic analysis is considered a special procedure for studying linguistic phenomena and patterns of language through the systematic study of the work of art, its content, formal components, and the relationships between text parts [5, p. 339; 3, p. 150]. As I. Kochan emphasizes, the analysis of the text's language involves the study of the ways of figurative-aesthetic use of language means by the author at different levels, and the main task of linguostylistic analysis is to identify those language techniques conveying the ideological and emotional content of the work [4, p. 11–19].

In the encyclopedia «Ukrainian Language», individual style is explained as «a set of linguistic and expressive means that perform an aesthetic function and distinguish the language of an individual writer from others» [7, p. 603]. Time, circumstances, and social-historical conditions significantly influence the formation and features of a writer's individual style. Thus, the literary heritage of Elizabeth Gaskell is an important part of Victorian prose, which combines realistic accuracy with deep psychology. Her literary works include social novels, short stories, and biographical texts, distinguished by details, artistic authenticity, and sympathetic depiction of human experiences. Her novels mainly focus on two aspects of 19th-century England: the influence of urban industrialism and the change in traditional rural life.

The article aims to analyze the linguostylistic means of reflecting social contrasts in E. Gaskell's novel «North and South» through lexical, syntactic, and intonational analysis, to show how the language of the text performs aesthetic and sociolinguistic functions, reflects the social context of the Victorian era, and forms spatial and social contrasts.

The literary heritage of Elizabeth Gaskell is an important reflection of the social and cultural realities of the Victorian era, when industrialization changed the face of England, giving rise to new social structures and challenges. The writer managed to convey through literary works not only changes in production processes, but also deep social and emotional transformations that took place in society. In particular, the novels «Mary Barton» and «North and South» are literary documents that accurately reflect the socioeconomic realities of that time. In the novel «North and South», the writer reveals herself as a literary master, possessing a vast arsenal of stylistic means.

In the novel «North and South» by Elizabeth Gaskell, social oppositions are not only the thematic core, but are also actively implemented at the linguostylistic level. First, the novel clearly traces the lexical contrast, which reflects the differences in worldview and education of representatives of different social groups. In particular, South residents, Margaret Hale and her family, use intellectualized, morally colored vocabulary. Elegant structure, complex syntactic constructions, and the use of abstractions mark their speech:

*«It is surely wrong to judge a man solely by the amount of capital he controls. There must be some higher measure – of **character**, of **worth**, of **heart**»* [2, p. 46].

This passage demonstrates speech's moral and philosophical register, peculiar to the characters from southern regions. The lexemes «*character*», «*worth*», and «*heart*» have an emotional and evaluative coloring and are often used for rhetorical purposes. In contrast, the characters belonging to the northern regions, in particular Mr. Thornton, Nicholas Higgins, and the workers, use speech constructions full of practical, economic, and business vocabulary and dialectal words. For example, Thornton, in a conversation with Margaret, notes:

*«My first duty is to those who depend on me for their daily bread. Sentiment won't **keep the machines** running, nor the wages **paid**»* [2, p. 107].

The rational style prevails in the text – direct statements, action verbs («*keep*», «*paid*»), and the metonymic image of «*machines*» as a symbol of the industrial world. Thus, vocabulary usage becomes a means of marking social and professional identity:

*«**We'n** had **nowt** but bad luck this year. **Th' childer** are hungry, an' there's no work to be had»* [2, p. 171].

In this excerpt, the dialectisms «*we'n*», «*nowt*», «*th' childer*», and the ellipsis of auxiliary verbs are stylistic markers of social belonging. Such speech conveys the character's authenticity and class position and performs the function of emotional reinforcement.

The contrast of intonations is also particularly significant in the stylistic analysis of the novel by Elizabeth Gaskell. While Margaret's speech has a meditative, often reflective character, the speech of Higgins or the strikers is marked by impulsiveness, emotional saturation, and reflects social inequality even in linguistic expression. For

example, in the clash scene with Thornton, the workers exclaim: «*Th' stone was meant for thee; but thou wert sheltered behind a woman!*» [2, p. 232].

The short, emotionally charged line captures the affective state of the crowd and displays a simplified syntax that emphasizes the aggression and unbridledness of the speakers. Similarly, the author uses an extended descriptive line in the scene when the crowd first sees Thornton:

«*As soon as they saw Mr. Thornton, they set up a yell, to call it not human is nothing, – it was as the **demoniac desire** of some terrible **wild beast** for the food that is withheld from his ravening. Even he drew back for a moment, dismayed at the intensity of hatred he had provoked*» [2, p. 228].

The comparison of the strikers with a wild beast and the sharp metaphor convey the inhuman energy of the crowd, its instinctive aggression, and social tension. In stylistic terms, this episode contrasts the workers' intermittent exclamations and the author's detailed, rich in stylistic tropes, description, which focuses the reader's attention on the threat of the situation and deep social conflicts. At the same time, Margaret, who belongs to the educated class, thinks completely differently – her speech is complex, reflexive, and internally contradictory. Her own assessment of her actions evidences this:

«***I, who** hate scenes – **I, who** have despised people for showing emotion – who have thought them wanting in self-control – I went down and must needs throw myself into the *melée*, like a romantic fool! **Did I do any good?** They would have gone away without me, **I dare say***» [2, p. 246].

This quotation demonstrates syntactic complexity because of repeated subordinate clauses, rhetorical questions, and self-reflection, reproducing the heroine's inner monologue – the use of anaphoric repetition «*I, who...*» emphasizes her self-irony and moral conflict.

An important means of expressing social contrasts is the various metaphors used by the characters. The inhabitants of the South are characterized by sublime comparisons, hints at nature, spirituality, historical or biblical allusions. Such images reflect a more harmonious, idealized worldview in an environment closer to cultural tradition and stability. A significant example is the episode when Margaret, recalling her native places, resorts to natural symbolism:

«*One day Margaret and her father had been as far as the fields that lay around the town; it was early spring, and she had gathered some of the hedge and ditch flowers, **dog-violets, lesser celandines, and the like**, with an unspoken lament in her heart for the **sweet profusion of the South***» [2, p. 91].

This passage traces the metaphorical correlation of nature with the heroine's emotional state. The specific names of the flowers («*dog-violets*», «*lesser celandines*») emphasize Margaret's sensitivity to details and, simultaneously, symbolize her nostalgia for the natural beauty of the South. The generalized metaphorical image of «*sweet profusion of the South*» recreates an idealized picture of her native land and serves as a sign of lost harmony.

In contrast, for Thornton, the metaphors of struggle, strength, and mechanics dominate the workers. Moreover, Elizabeth Gaskell approached the depiction of the image of workers comprehensively, since the novel also depicts the gender aspect of their lives, in particular, family relationships, social activity, and the formation of social consciousness. The piece where Thornton describes the development of the textile industry is important:

*«The whole **machinery** – I don't mean the wood and iron machinery now – of the **cotton trade** is so new that it is no wonder if it does not work well in every part all at once. <...> Raw, crude materials came together; men of the same level, as regarded education and station, took suddenly the different position of **masters and men**, owing to the motherwit, as regarded opportunities and probabilities, <...>» [2, p. 105].*

In this text fragment, the metaphorical correlation of the «*machinery of the cotton trade*» with the social structure emphasizes the interdependence between the technical processes of industrial production and the people who carry them out. The opposition of «*masters and men*» reveals the social hierarchy and expresses the reproduction mechanism of class differences in the new economic system.

However, Elizabeth Gaskell does not leave social contrasts unresolved. She shows a gradual convergence of linguistic styles, in particular in the finale of the work, when Margaret, the educated daughter of a southern pastor, and Thornton, the northern industrialist, begin to speak in a language devoid of class markers, in which emotional sincerity and intimacy prevail:

*«Look here! Lift up your head. I have something to show you!» She slowly faced him, glowing with **beautiful shame**.*

*«Do you know these **roses**?» he said, drawing out his pocket-book, in which were treasured up some **dead flowers**» [2, p. 564].*

In this passage, Elizabeth Gaskell uses the symbolism of flowers as a universal metaphor for feelings, understandable to both the South and the North. The rose symbolizes love, beauty, and spiritual depth in traditional English culture. Thornton's preservation of «*dead flowers*» reveals not only his memory of Margaret, but also his ability to appreciate emotional experience. Here, the metaphor of «*dead flowers*» is transformed into a sign of «*living*» love that has survived social conflicts.

The description of Margaret's reaction («*She slowly faced him, glowing with beautiful shame*») is a vivid example of Elizabeth Gaskell's style. The author uses the oxymoronic combination of «*shame*» and «*beautiful*», emphasizing the ambivalence of her feelings: shame and, at the same time, spiritual elevation and demonstrating the fusion of the southern reflective style with northern pragmatism in a single emotional space. Moreover, the pragmatic aspect of Thornton's address, which does not contain social distance and reflects character transformation, is paramount.

Social contrasts in Gaskell's novel are realized not only in the characters' speech, but also in the author's speech, which changes depending on the described environment. In scenes related to Helston or London – conventionally «*southern*» spaces – the descriptions acquire a poetic aspect, expressed by soft epithets, descriptive turns creating a calm, traditional, and stable atmosphere:

*«Helstone is like a village in a poem. The **little** village lay nestled among **green** hills, its cottages covered in **climbing** roses, breathing of peace and **old** England» [2, p. 19].*

This description is full of landscape vocabulary, epithets like «*little*», «*green*», «*climbing*», and «*old*», which form an idealized picture of rural England. Such a style serves as a kind of «southern code» – a symbol of harmony, but at the same time, stagnation, isolation from change. In contrast to this, Milton's descriptions of the North are shorter, more dynamic, with a large number of nouns and verbs, creating the effect of industrial rigidity:

*«Meanwhile at Milton **the chimneys smoked, the ceaseless roar and mighty beat and dazzling whirr of machinery** struggled and strove perpetually. **Senseless and purposeless were wood and iron and steam** in their endless labours; but the persistence of their **monotonous work** was rivalled in tireless endurance by the **strong crowds**, who, with sense and with purpose, were busy and restless in seeking after...» [2, p. 541].*

This description is dominated by functional vocabulary with industrial semantics («*chimneys*», «*machinery*», «*wood and iron and steam*»), which enhances the sense of a mechanized world. The accumulation of verbs of movement («*smoked*», «*roar*», «*beat*», «*strove*») gives rhythm and conveys the work's monotonous but continuous nature. The metaphor «*senseless and purposeless wood and iron and steam*» emphasizes the alienation and soullessness of the industrial environment, in which people are equated with parts of the mechanism. Using onomatopoeia («*roar*», «*whirr*») creates the sound illusion of factory noise. Besides, the semantics of color play an important role within this opposition. In the southern descriptions, light shades like green, gold, and white prevail:

*«The great long misty sea-line touching the **tender-coloured** sky; the **white** sail of a distant boat turning **silver** in some pale sunbeam: – it seemed as if she could dream her life away in such luxury of pensiveness» [2, p. 73].*

While Milton is depicted through the use of gray, black, and red colors:

*«The colours looked **grayer** – more enduring, not so gay and pretty» [2, p. 74].*

*«For several miles before they reached Milton, they saw a **deep lead-coloured** cloud hanging over the horizon in the direction in which it lay. It was all the **darker** from contrast with the **pale gray-blue** of the wintry sky» [2, p. 74].*

Color symbolism performs not only an aesthetic but also a social and cultural function – light tones are associated with an idealized past, and dark ones are associated with the social tension of the present. Through such stylistic means, Gaskell subtly emphasizes the spatial and mental division between worlds.

Another form of stylistic realization of social contrasts in the novel “North and South” is the use of different genre intonations, which change depending on the environment. In the scenes with the Hale family, the intonation of domestic essayism, sometimes even a sentimental novel, prevails. The dialogues are accompanied by the author's remarks, descriptions of feelings, and inner state:

*«But at the sound of the **tender voices** of her aunt and Edith, of **merry little** Sholto's **glee** at her arrival, and at the sight of the **well-lighted rooms**, with their mistress, pretty*

in her paleness and her eager sorrowful interest, Margaret roused herself from her heavy trance of almost superstitious hopelessness, and began to feel that even around her joy and gladness might gather» [2, p. 532].

Instead, in scenes of Milton's strikes and disputes between workers and manufacturers, the style approaches realistic social drama with short dialogues, minimal authorial intervention, and a focus on action:

«*We're starving!*» [2, p. 225].

«*Then go home!*» [2, p. 226].

«*Bread for your family!*» [2, p. 226].

This shift in stylistic registers is due not only to the compositional structure of the novel but also to the social content of what is depicted in the text. The author uses appropriate stylistic means to emphasize social tension, drama, or, conversely, the intimacy of the situation.

Thus, we believe that language in the novel «North and South» by Elizabeth Gaskell acts as a means of self-expression and an instrument of social marking. Through lexical, syntactic, intonational, and pragmatic features, the writer creates a complex system of social codes, where each language style reveals its character's cultural, economic, and moral position. Thus, the novel's language simultaneously performs an artistic, sociological, and ideological function, and social contrasts acquire both a thematic and a stylistic dimension.

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