

Signaling interpersonal distance in academic discourse

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This paper utilizes certain achievements of my earlier study from the domain of my doctoral dissertation, which has been conducted on the basis of academic handbooks in linguistics with the aim in view to detect the manifestation forms of interpersonal stage encoded in the lexical exponents of the text content. Since that time on the area of my interest has been extended to include also some considerations involving the analysis of the interpersonal distance in the written text.

My initial research focused, namely, on the written form of verbal means of communication in search of interaction participants. In consequence, the verbal exponents of the actors on the stage were described and presented in terms of their significance for a respective type of discourse. To provide an illustrative example, the indefinite pronoun “one” was classified as a verbal signal occurring in complementary distribution in texts where either a desirable or undesirable contexts for the author were referred to. This observation, among others, suggested that “one” is not to be treated as an “empty” category of linguistic character, which is used merely for the purposes of stylistic convention or structural adequacy. Similar conclusions were drawn, furthermore, from the analysis of other address forms, both grammatical and nominal.

As far as the subject matter of the present paper is concerned, I shall make inquiries into the writer’s intentions and the context as interrelated phenomena. I will try to find out how the common ground of interactants who take part in the written discourse is realised through the linguistic context of the intera-textual lexical features. The object of my investigation will constitute this time the deictic expressions which appear in writing in conjunction with some discursive lexical patterns referring to the writer and the reader as the most efficient means in creating the interpersonal relation between the addresser and the addressee.