

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

**AS A THEORETICAL
AND METHODOLOGICAL
FRAMEWORK OF RESEARCH**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| INTRODUCTION | 7 |
| 1. THEORETICAL SOURCES OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (FROM SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM TO DISCOURSE)..... | 11 |
| 1.1 Theoretical Starting Points of Discourse Analysis..... | 11 |
| 1.2 Cognitive Approach to Language Study – Psycholinguistics..... | 12 |
| 1.3 Social Approaches to Language Study | 13 |
| 1.3.1 Semiology | 13 |
| 1.3.2 Ethnomethodology..... | 15 |
| 1.3.3 Speech act theory..... | 16 |
| 1.3.4 Theory of social representations..... | 17 |
| 1.4 Summary | 19 |
| 2. DISCOURSE AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS..... | 20 |
| 2.1 Delineating the Notion of Discourse..... | 20 |
| 2.2 Approaches to Discourse Analysis..... | 22 |
| 2.3 Objectives of Discourse Analysis | 23 |
| 2.4 Components of Discourse Analysis..... | 24 |
| 2.5 Interpretative Repertoires | 26 |
| 2.6 Implications of Discourse Analysis and Discourse Psychology..... | 27 |
| 3. CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS..... | 29 |
| 3.1 Foucault’s Concept of Power..... | 29 |
| 3.2 Characteristics of Critical Discourse Analysis | 32 |
| 3.2.1 An Overview..... | 32 |
| 3.2.2 Halliday’s theory of language..... | 32 |
| 3.2.3 Althusser’s theory of ideology | 34 |
| 3.3 Objectives of Critical Discourse Analysis..... | 34 |
| 3.4 Discourse and Entry into Discourse | 35 |
| 3.5 Discourse Structures..... | 36 |
| 3.6 Categories of Discourse Analysis..... | 38 |
| 3.6.1 Syntax..... | 38 |
| 3.6.1.1 Placement – Prominence..... | 38 |
| 3.6.1.2 Unexpressed doer of an action | 39 |
| 3.6.1.3 Tense vs time in utterances | 40 |
| 3.6.1.4 Nominalization – substantiation, objectification..... | 40 |
| 3.6.1.5 Fronting, Clefting, Extraposition | 40 |
| 3.6.1.6 Syntactic ambiguity..... | 41 |
| 3.6.1.7 Pronouns | 41 |
| 3.6.1.8 Contrastive conjunctions | 42 |
| 3.6.1.9 Proposition..... | 42 |
| 3.6.2 Identification of relevant participants | 43 |
| 3.6.2.1 Description of participants | 43 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 3.6.2.2 Participant types and their semantic tasks..... | 43 |
| Inclusion/Exclusion..... | 44 |
| The participant's role..... | 44 |
| General or specific nature of the description..... | 44 |
| Associating..... | 44 |
| Identifying..... | 45 |
| Depersonalizing..... | 45 |
| 3.6.3 Summary..... | 45 |
| 4. METHODOLOGY OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS..... | 47 |
| 4.1 Discourse Analysis Approaches..... | 47 |
| 4.2 Research Procedure in Discourse Analysis..... | 49 |
| 4.2.1 An Overview..... | 49 |
| 4.2.2 Research questions..... | 49 |
| 4.2.3 Sampling..... | 50 |
| 4.2.4 Collection of records and documents..... | 51 |
| 4.2.5 Interviews..... | 51 |
| 4.2.6 Transcription..... | 52 |
| 4.2.7 Encoding..... | 52 |
| 4.2.7.1 An overview..... | 52 |
| 4.2.7.2 Open encoding..... | 53 |
| 4.2.7.3 Axial encoding..... | 54 |
| 4.2.7.4 Selective encoding..... | 54 |
| 4.2.8 Analysis..... | 55 |
| 4.2.9 Validation..... | 55 |
| 4.2.10 Research Report..... | 58 |
| 4.2.11 Application..... | 58 |
| 4.3 A Survey of Discourse Analysis Research Studies..... | 59 |
| 4.4 Discourse Analysis Approach in the Research on Subjectively Assessed Quality of Life..... | 61 |
| 4.4.1 The impact of gender discourse on quality of life..... | 62 |
| 4.4.2 Subjectively assessed quality of life..... | 63 |
| 4.4.3 Psychological needs as a selected aspect of children's quality of life – parents' discourses..... | 64 |
| 4.5 Discourse Analysis Approach in the Research of Secondarily Victimized Children..... | 65 |
| 4.6 Summary..... | 68 |
| 5. CONCLUSION..... | 70 |
| REFERENCES..... | 74 |

INTRODUCTION

The monograph deals with discourse analysis as a theoretical and methodological framework for psychological research. The aim of the monograph is to justify the place of discourse analysis in psychological research through analyzing theoretical concepts that support its emergence and development, through clarifying its methodology, and through documenting the peculiarities of its usage in selected research tasks. The conceptual framework involves the theoretical approach recognizing two basic ways of forming knowledge and assumptions in social sciences – structural and post-structural thinking; the two require distinct reflection on words, concepts, and meanings.

Structural thinking encompasses assumptions and ways of thinking that have influenced a wide range of disciplines – from linguistics to philosophy, anthropology, and psychology of the 20th-century. I agree with Shazer (Shazer, Berg, 1992) that when looking at typical ideas about the structure of the psyche or when examining the idea of the relationship between consciousness and non-consciousness, we see how structural thinking has penetrated not only field-specific but also general consciousness of a society. The still prevailing structuralist view sees truth and meaning as something “beneath the surface” or “inside” the personality, system, structure. Older structuralist works (see e.g. Chomsky, 1965, Saussure, 1916/1996), in an effort to create a “science dealing with meaning”, assumed that, at least when using one’s mother tongue, the surface structure (of words used) can be “translated,” “converted,” or derived from deeper structures or the non-consciousness, and thanks to this, it is possible to find true meaning for every word.

Contrariwise, poststructuralism (see Harland, 1987) argues that it is the actual interaction of people that creates meaning. Contemporary poststructuralist thinking, according to Shazer (Shazer, Berg 1992), understands our world, i.e. the shared social, interactional context, as an “entity” created by language and words. From a poststructuralist perspective interpreting language as a universal medium, (metaphorically) language shapes the human world and the human world creates the whole world. The new post-

modernist approach (emphasizing that social reality is shaped by language) questions the possibility of finding general laws pursued by the structuralist stream of thought.

In Harland's view (1987), while structuralists focus more on the exact knowledge and revelation of the (human) world, and the meaning of phenomena is constant and identifiable for them, for poststructuralists the meaning is known only through social interactions and negotiations. According to Harland (1987), the meaning created in communication is accessible because it exists among people, and not because it is "hidden" within the individual psyche (system, family unit). Post-structuralist thinking brings a different view at cognizance in psychology (and other social sciences). In the newly developed post-structural concept of a language (Harland, 1987), this impossibility of changing the word meaning becomes possible.

The new approach in social sciences is significantly supported by Wittgenstein's ideas (1958/1970) – he favored the treating a language as an active means in creating meaning, rather than a mere neutral transmitter of meaning. Wittgenstein (1958/1970) argued that language does not acquire its meaning from its own mental or subjective substance, but it does so in its actual usage, i.e. in action, in organized interaction, or in "language games", as he puts it. I agree with Wittgenstein (1958/1970) that the meaning of a language becomes active in its usage, the meaning is not absolute, and its definition (if ever possible to be defined) is given by the social interaction framework.

The aforementioned poststructuralist thinking enabled the emergence and development of several methodologies – ethnomethodology, narrative analysis, feminist studies, but it also significantly supported the emergence and development of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis has long been associated with linguistics, semiotics, and sociology, and less with psychology. This is supported by the review of research conducted so far, which pointed to the usefulness of discourse analysis on societal issues, such as gender issues, racism, and ethnicity.

However, to the best of my knowledge, the application of discourse analysis in psychology is absent. Discourse analysis, originally prominent in dealing with societal problems, as it were, is a useful method in research

focusing on a person's psychological issues. The discourse analysis approach to examining psychological phenomena has been proved relevant in the pilot work (Mikulášková, 2008) – it contributed important information about the person's life perception. The study shows that through discourse analysis it is possible to clarify so far insufficiently explored psychological phenomena and processes (the process of stigmatization by psychiatric diagnoses, the formation of the identity of a mentally ill person, etc.). The present monograph reports on further research studies implementing discourse analysis.

The monograph has four chapters. The first chapter provides a survey of theoretical sources of discourse analysis. The second chapter defines discourse and depicts discourse analysis as an autonomous method of qualitative research. The third chapter deals with critical discourse analysis (including its aims and structures). The fourth chapter explicates the methodology of discourse analysis while providing an overview of research studies in which discourse analysis was used. The conclusion states the possibilities and limits of using discourse analysis in psychological research.

1. THEORETICAL SOURCES OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (FROM SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM TO DISCOURSE)

1.1 THEORETICAL STARTING POINTS OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The emergence of discourse analysis is, in a sense, a reaction to classic positivist research in social sciences, which, in an effort to maintain the objectivity of research, excluded language and communication. Harré and Secord (1972) critically state that for positivist research, the characteristic claim of the non-existence of “debate” in research is actually a denial of meaning. This lack (denial of communication and meaning) is compensated for by the theory of social constructivism which claims that social reality is an actively created and transformed entity, a product of the joint interaction of people creating it (Harré, 1983; Shotter, 1975). The constructivist position with a new view of man and social phenomena brings a change in the way we “grasp” them in research (see Banister, 1996). In the view of this theory, the traditional “objects” of cognizance in psychology can no longer be perceived as static, unchanging “objects” under contemplation.

Shotter and Gergen (1994) maintain that social constructivism explores the processes by which human capacities, experiencing, ordinary thinking, and research-based knowledge is produced and reproduced in human communities. Bačová (2000) upholds a view that the variations of constructivist approaches are governed by a central organizing principle creating psychological reality, namely social procedures, and especially discourse. Despite the diversity of socio-constructivist approaches, they share another feature – the assumption that social reality is shaped, reproduced, and maintained in a language.

The assumed founders of discourse analysis are Potter and Wetherell (1987/1997). Through identifying the relationship between discourse analysis, attitudes, and behavior, they established discourse analysis as a relevant research method in social psychology. According to them, discourse

analysis is a new perspective with implications for all areas of social psychology. Not only does it relevantly question conventional research, but it can provide a working methodology. Potter and Wetherell (1987/1997) also identified significant conceptual frameworks for this emerging method. According to the authors, the current socio-psychological research focusing on the analysis of discourse can be built on the foundations of Austin's speech act theory (Austin, 1962), ethnomethodology, and semiology. Plichťová (2002) expands the theoretical framework by historically older psycholinguistics, the theory of social representations, and Wittgenstein's concept of language games (1958/1970).

The complicated classification of the conceptual framework of discourse analysis can be concisely summarized in two important categories: 1.) cognitive approaches to the study of a language (psycholinguistics can be included here), and 2.) social approaches to the study of a language (semiology, ethnomethodology, speech act theory, and the theory of social representations). Since these theoretical approaches influenced and legitimized discourse analysis as an autonomous method of psychological research, due space will be given to them below.

1.2 COGNITIVE APPROACH TO LANGUAGE STUDY – PSYCHOLINGUISTICS

As the present monograph favors social approaches to the study of a language, the cognitive approach is illustrated here solely through psycholinguistics. The psycholinguistic theory is associated with its founder Noam Chomsky, who was among the first to study a language and its usage. Unlike behaviorists, Chomsky (1965) argued that the ability to learn a language is part of an innate genetic makeup. An important idea introduced by Chomsky (1965) is that there is a so-called generative grammar that explains two functions of a language: its productivity and at the same time that language productivity is governed by certain rules. Thus, when using a language, it is not only sufficient to learn the words, but also to learn the rules when or how it is possible and/or appropriate to use these words.

According to Chomsky, learning the rules of a language use is guided by mental processes other than learning a literal expression. Chomsky does

not stop here; he continues to claim that the rules of language usage are real cognitive structures, so they can be a suitable object of research in psychology. The psycholinguistic theory enriched psychology with new concepts, such as language competence (the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences according to the rules) and language performance (the production of specific sentences in specific interactions). Chomsky (1965) argued that people use the so-called linguistic intuition when using and decoding a language, and this allows them to assess the correctness of the sentence composition, and to recognize the ambiguity of the words or paraphrases.

The following Chomsky's ideas can be employed to treat discourse analysis:

1.) language usage and the rules for the usage of language are, as in Wittgenstein's concept of language games, two independent processes;

2.) the rules of language usage are psychological structures, and thus provide implications for psychological research;

3.) a language is often used seemingly "intuitively", but this does not mean that language usage is not based on certain cognitive structures or certain mental representations. However, the psycholinguistic theory, which was later criticized for being static (Potter, Wetherell, 1987), does not provide an answer to how mental representations of objects are formed, how they "operate" in the people's minds, and how connections between associations and the structure of a language are formed. As it were, the most appropriate theory providing for some explanations of how individual concepts are associated with each other in a language and how they are connected and interconnected, i.e. how the system of rules for the language usage is formed, is Saussure's theory on the relationship between associations and the structure of a language; this theory is discussed in the next chapter.

1.3 SOCIAL APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE STUDY

1.3.1 SEMIOLOGY

According to Potter and Wetherell (1987/1997), the founders of discourse analysis approach in social psychology, semiology is considered a significant source of discourse analysis. Psycholinguistics tended to de-

rive the word meaning from the relationship between the word denoting an object and the object itself. Semiology, emphasizing the connection between associations and the structure of a language, provided a different explanation and undermined classic psycholinguistics. As a linguist, Saussure (1916/1996) approached a language unconventionally, as a system of mutual relations.

Saussure argued that a language is structured according to paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes. Syntagmatic structures of a language ensure the understanding and the production of speech (the stronger the syntagmatic associations, the smoother the speech). Association structures ensure the meaningfulness of lexical units. The associations between lexical units form a public and mental vocabulary. Syntagmatic associations are defined as those that complement stimulus words (kitchen – cook, water – wash), giving rise to a sentence. Paradigmatic associations connect lexical units of the same type (verb – verb), creating a semantic field in which we can distinguish relations of contrast, similarity, superiority, and this process helps organize concepts.

An important principle in semiology, apart from the relationship between associations and the structure of a language, is the arbitrariness of signs, i.e. the premise that there is no natural relationship between what language denotes and what is denoted (each thing is denoted differently in different languages). Bačová (2000) summarized the ideas of semiology relevant to the further study of a language as falling in two levels: 1/ a language has rules that “cause” signs (words) to have meaning for us, 2/ the rules of using a language allow for the substitution of one sign with another. Semiology thus demonstrates that the presence as well as the absence of a certain description are equally relevant in a language. A source for discourse analysis is also the inferred summation of Saussure’s theory: a) each lexical unit always has meaning in relation to other lexical units (lay arguments that the word was used unintentionally, in terms of randomness, turn out to be unsupported), b) the meaning of the lexical unit is constructed in the given sentence, and, above all, c) the usage of a language does not equal with denoting things. The ideas of semiology contribute to the understanding that the structure of the uttered, i.e. the structure of a person’s speech is not a random sequence of words but is always related to a specific meaning. The

implication for discourse analysis is the premise that speech production (words and their meaning) should be evaluated comprehensively (the use of classic questionnaire method does not allow for this).

1.3.2 ETHNOMETHODOLOGY

Ethnomethodology has established the concept of a “code” and defined it as a system of informal rules of how and with whom to converse in a certain environment. Ethnomethodological research differs significantly from other socio-psychological approaches in that the “code” (the mentioned way of using a language) does not serve as a source of explanation for the participants’ behavior, rather it becomes a mere object of research.

Potter and Wetherell (1987/1997) mention Wieder’s research – he found that when he interviewed people during research, they sometimes interrupted the conversation and said only: “I’m not reporting.” Instead of interpreting the statement as an explanation of refusal to provide help in the conversation, Wieder tried to grasp this as a “code”. He started to study what intention triggered its usage and what this “code” prompted in the subsequent conversation.

The ethnomethodological approach illustrates and demonstrates that narratives are not only narratives about actions (in the sense of a simple description of conducted, ongoing, or anticipated acts), but are themselves part of constitutive actions. The above approach emphasizes so-called indexicality (this concept later became part of broader qualitative research) – i.e. a premise that the statement acquires a completely different meaning in relation to the context. The sentence “Thank you for coming early” achieves a dramatically different meaning if students arrived unexpectedly an hour earlier to help their teacher prepare for class, or if the sentence is uttered by the teacher when a student is late.

However, the conceptual frameworks mentioned so far (psycholinguistics, semiology) still understand a language and speech acts as specific psychological processes. They examined human speech independently without any connection to other psychological and, above all, social processes, thus insufficiently highlighted the importance of examining a language. My view is that only after accounting for Austin’s speech act theory (discussed in the

next chapter), did the study of a language become a relevant object of psychological research.

1.3.3 SPEECH ACT THEORY

Semiology and ethnomethodology, along with the speech act theory, are considered important in the “shift” from the cognitive understanding of a language to the understanding of a language as a product of social exchange. The speech act theory reflects British philosopher John Austin’s basic idea (1962) that a speech act is an act of behavior. This theory asserts that any demonstration of language usage determines, creates, and confirms the state of affairs, which means that it has meaning and force (see Potter, Wetherell, 1987/1997).

The speech act theory (similarly to ethnomethodology and semiology, described in previous chapters) turns away from Chomsky’s psycholinguistic tradition that views a language as a formal system principally describing or representing the world. Similarly, it retreats from the view that a language can be best understood if we abstract it from the specific situations in which it is used.

According to the speech act theory, in communication:

1. the speaker utters a sentence with a specific meaning (the sentence has a certain proposition and relates to certain phenomena),
2. the sentence has a specific force (the force of the sentence differs from its meaning – a sentence with the same proposition can serve as a request or a threat),
3. the final effect on the listener is determined by the combination of the first two features (proposition of the sentence and force of the sentence).

The speech act theory is a typical example of an approach that views speech as an act of behavior and therefore emphasizes that the study of speech acts should be given the same attention as any other act of behavior (which is a common object of research in social sciences). I agree with Bačová (2000), who, with regard to this premise, states that people use a language to induce certain actions or events. With the help of a language, parents punish their child, reject the partner’s request, or express their consent to marriage. I believe, the asset of this theory lies both in drawing attention to norms and conventions in the implementation of speech acts, but also in recalling the role of the social context in which a language is used.

1.3.4 THEORY OF SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS

The theory of social representations provides, in my view, an opportunity to link language study and social processes. According to this theory, “social representations are a constructed and shared form of knowledge that influences actions and leads to constructions of reality shared by a certain social unit” (Jodelet, 1989, p. 36; my translation). Concisely, we can refer to social representation as the representation of something or someone (Jodelet, 1996; Moscovici, 1984). In this theory, the social meanings of objects, not objects themselves, become the subject of conversation.

In the Slovak linguaculture, Plichtová (2002) has been systematically developing the theory of social representations. In describing the relevance of this theory to psychology, she surveyed classic research studies in cognitive psychology. In her assessment of Ebbinghaus’s experiments (demonstrating that association processes reflect objective reality), she states that his explanatory model of human learning is inappropriate, as it ignores the idea that human learning is acquired through language and meaning (Plichtová, 2002). She adds that these experiments meant to be attempts to transform complex human activities, taking place in symbolic interactions, to formal processes. The mechanisms of their atypical functioning were declared by Ebbinghaus to be their essence. Plichtová (2002) considers this approach of cognition in psychology to be mechanistic.

As opposed to that mechanistic view of the individual, Plichtová (2002) states the following: Human memory works with language signs and their meaning – a person does not have “unfamiliar” perceptions stored in his/her memory, because, unlike other animals, he/she has a lexicon that can be used to clarify the perceptions. Perception and the representation of perception are inseparable. From this point of view, associations are not reproduced in relation with particular time and space, but in relation with what people remember. At the same time, a language as a system of signs makes it possible to create a social representation of reality that is relatively independent of a specific physical situation.

The implications of the aforementioned theoretical assumptions go even further. In practice, this means that a person enters each new interaction with a “framework” into which he/she places his/her perceptions. Creating, sup-

plementing, and reconstructing a certain representation is done using speech and meaning. This flexible process helps to create much larger systems in the mind than the current representation of reality, and a person constructs their identity and life story through this process (Plichtová, 2002).

Linguistic representations of reality at the macro level allow people to share an experience that is formed and later reproduced in narratives and stories. A good example is the reproduced image/representation of the stepmother who appears in stories – this image binds certain typical characteristics (favoring biological daughters, aggression towards stepdaughter, etc.). In terms of the theory of social representations, social meanings are renewed, interpreted, and reinterpreted in communication; the bearer of social and cultural meanings is a language and denotation.

The theory of social representations expands its interest in exploring the language of science and everyday learning. Currently, there are other approaches to examining social representations. Doise (1989), being part of the so-called Geneva School, treats social representations differently from Moscovici, and calls attention to social representations as organizing principles that structure symbolic relationships between individuals and groups. The unifying line of Doise's and Moscovici's understanding of social representations is that even Moscovici, when considering social representations, talks about the principles organizing and structuring practical knowledge; he calls them *thēmata* (Moscovici and Vignaux, 1994).

The process whereby social representations are formed is a long-term process. The first stage of this process is the so-called anchoring of social representation, through which the object/experience is integrated into the already existing categories of experiences of the given community. The second stage is a process called objectification, which allows the new object to become specified and grasped more clearly (according to Moscovici, 1984). The practical impact of objectification (specification) is evidenced by Jodellet's research (1991), in which the interaction of residents of a small town with the so-called mentally ill changed according to how they objectified the mental disorder.

In the theory of social representations, it is emphasized that not every object has the "power" to become an object of research and to become, in the true sense of the word, an object of social representation (Guimelli, 1994). In this respect, the

literature names two basic pre-requisites. The first pre-requisite is the socio-cultural distinctiveness of the object, which is most often associated with the fact that it is at once the subject of public discussion and a focal topic of discussions. The second pre-requisite is that certain practices of conduct should be bound to this object. According to Moscovici, its author, the application of the theory of social representations (1984) allows social psychology to examine social representations, and these allow for revealing systemic features of a certain collection of attitudes.

The theory of social representations was criticized mainly for inadequate transparency of its underlying fact – i.e. that social representations are created and maintained in communication. For this reason, they cannot be perceived as static (see Edwards and Potter, 1992). The way of constructing social representations in communication makes it possible to delineate the approach of discourse analysis more effectively.

1.4 SUMMARY

The present chapter deals with the theoretical framework of discourse analysis. A brief evaluation of the theoretical starting points aims at a better understanding of the following important ideas:

- 1.) in psychological research, the understanding and studying of a language, historically, has shifted from cognitive approaches (psycholinguistics) to social approaches (ethnomethodology, semiology, speech act theory); the interlinkage between the exploration of social processes and the study of a language is documented by the theory of social representations,
- 2.) speech is not understood as an independent cognitive process, because it is always constructed by context, i.e. ongoing social processes,
- 3.) speech is an act of behavior (being offensive in language means exercising aggression),
- 4.) in the language, shared representations (evidenced by the theory of social representations) are not only descriptions of people's real actions and thoughts, but they have the potential to actively create and reproduce new ways of acting and thinking.

2. DISCOURSE AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

2.1 DELINEATING THE NOTION OF DISCOURSE

The matter of discursive turn and the need for discourse analysis in social sciences was elaborated in detail by social constructivists Harré and Gillet (2001). They state that the subject is discursive in that it uses symbols the meaning of which becomes simultaneously the function of their usage in discourse. Thus, discourse encompasses both symbolic interactions as well as conventions and relationships in which these interactions are bound by informal rules and interconnected in ways that (as expressed by Foucault (1999)) “reflect” the order of things.

People are also discourse participants who produce their own constructs and self-expressions, based on the contexts in which they live and exist. It is for this reason that the context in which people occur cannot be excluded from psychological cognition. We share and communicate conceptualizations and meanings based on the discourses with which we are familiar. From a different perspective, it can be said that discourse analysis focuses more on the process of transferring knowledge/information than on the mere knowledge/information.

Historically, the reference to “discourse analysis” dates back to Gilbert and Mulkey’s (1984) research in the sociology of leadership; later, it was adopted by psychologists Edwards and Potter (Potter, 2003). The aforementioned sociologists Gilbert and Mulkey dealt with the analysis of the researchers’ discourse (they investigated what methods of argumentation are used to refute, challenge, or confirm research theories) and they were first to formulate the concept of interpretive repertoires as varying ways of depicting various phenomena in different ways (see Chapter 2.5 for more details).

In contemporary psychology, the term discourse most often designates the way in which we describe and present certain phenomena. From the perspective of discourse analysis, all forms of language usage are discourse – communication, rhetoric, all forms of speech, formal and informal communication, written texts of all kinds. It is also the use of certain symbols or intentional signs according to certain rules (see Harré, 1995). Burr (1995)

asserts that discourse also includes metaphors, representations, images, statements that together, in a certain way, produce a certain version of phenomena.

The practical application of the usefulness and relevance of the theoretical framework of discourse analysis is the groundbreaking work by Potter and Wetherell (1992) that dealt with the possibility of linking language analysis and the exploration of attitudes. They examined racial bias; in their study, they showcased how the white population of New Zealand constructs, justifies, and argues for the reasons of maintaining the superior status of “the white” over the indigenous people. In so doing, they unveiled the research participants’ hidden, explicitly unarticulated, attitudes. This research provided grounds for making a discourse analysis an established method of studying how an individual constructs the subject and object of the debate.

Potter and Wetherell (1997), who continued to elaborate on the theoretical framework of the discourse analysis, argue that discourse analysts do not aim to “just” “reveal” participants, uncover phenomena, beliefs, and cognitive processes; they rather view a language as an indicator or sign of a certain state of affairs. They primarily ask how the discourse or explanations of these things become “produced”. They emphasize that in analyzing a language, the following premises need to be considered:

1. a language has many functions and consequences,
2. a language has been created but is continuously evolving,
3. the same phenomena can be described in different ways,
4. the ways of displaying (presenting) various phenomena therefore vary,
5. there is no way to escape from a “language”, therefore it is not possible to clearly distinguish “literal” explanations from “disguising” explanations,
6. constructive and flexible ways of using a language should become an important object of research.

The current form of the discourse analysis focuses on narratives and texts as social practices, and on the sources from which these practices are drawn and which enable them. This can be illustrated by the discourse analysis of racism: it deals with how descriptions are placed in individual contexts to legitimize the accusation of a minority group and how they relate to the sources (or “interpretive repertoires”) available in a certain cultural environment to legitimize racist practices. The discourse analysis deals with

the organization of texts and other narratives and sources of discourse on which texts and narratives rely.

The above considerations on the current form of discourse analysis are rather vague, thus a more specific treatment should be given due space. From the perspective of discourse analysis, if anybody in the mass media calls any minority group criminal, violent, and socially inapt, it creates and maintains awareness that the members of this minority are anti-social, and the majority population should be careful when interacting with them. The assumptions of discourse analysis go even further. The discourse analysis claims that this discourse, i.e. the way in which a particular minority is referred to, legitimizes local phenomena such as being on informal terms with a stranger (with the implicit assumption that they are not entitled to respect and equal treatment). The practical application of discourse analysis can have the form of reflection on how to treat the prevailing discourse on ethnic minorities, men, women, children, or seniors. The discourse analysis, which is based on social-constructivist approaches, emphasizes that presenting certain phenomena in a certain way leads to the reproduction of stereotypes and may promote discriminatory treatment of a certain group of people.

2.2 APPROACHES TO DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Due to the presence of several approaches to discourse analysis, discourse analysis can be considered a heterogeneous theoretical and methodological framework. The literature mentions four basic approaches to discourse analysis; the following classification takes as a criterion the main focus (see Taylor, 2001):

1. The language itself – patterns of a language, regularities of an imperfect and unstable system; variations and imperfections of a language as a system. Discourse analysis reveals how a language varies and applies these variations to different social situations and environments or to different users. The main goal is to point out the mutual relationship between a language and a social situation.

2. Usage, interaction – the language usage, not a mere language, becomes the object of discourse analysis: the process of language usage in interaction and the search for patterns that language users adopt. Meaning is created in interaction. The user of the language conforms to the limits that the context of interaction poses.

3. A set of terms associated with a certain object or activity – the emphasis is on a specific social and cultural context. The patterns created in a language are associated with a certain object or activity. Emerging terms trigger communication, e.g. in a certain group of people.

4. The social nature and historical sources of the world which is perceived as self-evident – the nature of discourse as a fluid, shifting medium in which meaning is created and questioned. This approach unfolds that a language user is part of a certain period, historical context, and s/he actively emphasizes his/her position. The role of discourse analysis is, among other things, to examine patterns in the language in a broader context, community, or culture; e.g., labeling or categorizing people in a society. On the one hand, the language of categorization implies values, philosophy, or logic; on the other hand, these are the consequences and social effects of classification. A scholar goes beyond the language usage, they reach for the areas “outside the discourse“ or abolish boundaries. The basic form of discourse analysis in this approach is controversy; it includes exploration of power and resistance, content, and struggles. The language that people have at their disposal allows and limits not only the expression of certain ideas, but also actions. A common feature of all these approaches is the examination of hidden and denied topics. Unlike other approaches that analyze “existing” findings, discourse analysis deals with the “missing” parts of the discourse, while assuming that the omission of certain topics in the discourse has a particular meaning, i.e. it asks about the author’s reason for not talking about certain topics (see Bačová, 2000).

2.3 OBJECTIVES OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The objectives of discourse analysis are related to the definition and delimitation of discourse. Plichtová (2002) gives two basic definitions:

1.) a narrower definition of discourse implies any speech expression: this definition allows that a discourse analysis approach is combined with another method – conversation analysis. However, a narrower understanding of discourse does not permit the comparison or inclusion of an individual into broader discursive thoughts.

2.) a broader understanding of discourse is inspired by the ideas of poststructuralism (see e.g. Foucault, 2000a; Derrida, 1976/1999) that understands discourse as a socially constituted form of a debate that makes it possible to construct themed and social reality in a certain way. Discourse includes practices and representations that systematically constitute the subject and object of discourse and produce sets of interrelated statements (Parker, 1997).

In this broader understanding, discourse shapes, categorizes the social world through making certain topics more favorable, while it tends to neglect other topics. Plichtová (2002) narrows down the general objectives of the discourse analysis and presents the possible outcomes of what can be learned about the text if discourse analysis is employed: 1.) how the speaker constitutes the subject of the debate, 2.) what connotations, implications, narratives are evoked by the text, 3.) what discourse the narrative is related to, and what is its meaning, 4.) how the speaker creates their position, 5.) where they place the debate, 6.) what institutional practice they refer to. Understanding the discourse analysis objectives is related to the knowledge of the basic components of the discourse analysis, which is dealt with in the next chapter.

2.4 COMPONENTS OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Potter and Wetherell (1997), prominent figures in discourse analysis, consider the function and construction of discourse to be the main components of discourse analysis. According to them, the function of discourse is recognizable in the fact that people use a language to actively do things: to order and demand, to persuade, or to maintain their status – this is among the basic functions of a language. Persuasion, negotiation, and control of the impression that one makes does not happen explicitly; therefore the functions of a language cannot be understood mechanically (if a husband refuses to buy his wife new clothes, there is a discourse about a lower income and canceled financial bonus; indirectly, the husband's complaint allows him to reject the partner's request without losing the "good image" of himself).

The analysis of the discourse function is not only a simple "categorization" of the discourse content. It primarily depends on how the researcher

“reads” the context (if someone complains about a low salary, the message itself is not refuted – apart from the context – it is not a rejection of the wife’s request.) The functions of a language can have global implications, e.g. creating a positive self-image cannot be achieved in a language by emphasizing one’s virtues, so in the given case it is better to be implicit. As it were, the functions of a language vary in time according to the purpose that the author wants to achieve.

Another component of discourse analysis is its “ability” to create or build a new reality, to construct, as language social constructivists would call it. According to the assumptions of discourse analysis, people use their language to construct versions of the social world. The underlying principle of discourse analysis is that the function of a language contains construction of versions, which is demonstrated by variations of the language. The term “construction” is appropriate for three reasons. Firstly, it brings into attention that explanations of phenomena are built from a variety of pre-existing linguistic means, almost as a house is constructed of bricks, beams, etc. Secondly, the construction implies active selection: certain sources are included, certain omitted. Finally, the notion of construction emphasizes the potent consequential nature of explanations. Much of social interaction is based on dealing with phenomena and people, which is experienced only in specific language versions. In the very basic sense of explanation – depicting things “constructs” reality.

The aim of the discourse analysis is to clarify what psychological reality certain depictions of phenomena produce, deny, discriminate against or, on the contrary, favor. This way of understanding a language makes it possible to abandon the existing perspective of contemplation in psychology, whereby the language was a mere messenger, and now it becomes a constitutive, flexible tool that actively creates new meanings. When examining the function of discourse, the so-called interpretative repertoires are an important “object” of discourse analysis.

2.5 INTERPRETATIVE REPERTOIRES

The issue emphasized by discourse analysis is the selection of the language means that induce, maintain, and legitimize a certain “decoding” of the communicated information. In discourse analysis, to make the matters easy, this selection is called interpretative repertoires. Potter and Wetherrell (1987) disagree with Moscovici’s assumption that “social representations” function as references to certain social groups. They affirm that such a treatment contributes to a meaningless circle of mutual definitions. Instead of the term “social representations”, they enable work with so-called interpretative repertoires, which they even prefer to the term discourse. They define interpretative repertoires as recurrently used delimited systems, as elements serving to characterize, evaluate, and create versions of actions, events, metaphors, vivid images, and speech figures.

In Potter and Wetherrell’s approach (1987/1997), interpretative repertoires represent systematically related sets of terms, stylistically and grammatically coherent and organized around one or more central metaphors. They have become an important part of culture; some are specific to certain institutional areas, though.

The concept of “interpretative repertoires” mainly specifies the features of one class of interpretative sources. They meet two considerations: 1. some of the available resources can be used in different environments to accomplish different tasks, 2. these resources are “tailored”, they are flexible, which allows for their being selected and formed according to the environment. This flexible local application makes interpretive repertoires different from Foucault’s notion of “discourses”.

Participants often choose from a number of different repertoires when they need to make sense of particular phenomena or when they perform particular activities. The classic research that employed the concept of interpretative repertoires is Gilbert and Mulkay’s study of the researchers’ discourse (see Chapter 2.1). The authors noted the way in which researchers use one interpretative repertoire in their formal contributions when trying to justify facts, and another interpretative repertoire in their informal conversations when explaining the mistakes made by the fellow researchers with whom they competed. Interpretative repertoires “talk” about the

manner in which stable language means are used to describe various socio-psychological phenomena. From the perspective of discourse analysis, a suitable example of interpretative repertoires is the presence or absence of certain parts of speech, the use of the passive instead of the active voice, and the like.

2.6 IMPLICATIONS OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND DISCOURSE PSYCHOLOGY

Some authors (see Parker, 1997) suggest the presence of different approaches within discourse analysis. The so-called “classic” discourse analysis deals primarily with how people talk about certain things and phenomena, while critical discourse analysis examines how forms of a language serve social, ideological, and political interests. In close connection with the Foucauldian perspective, the critical discourse analysis seeks to clarify hidden ideological and political meanings or messages of the analyzed text. Simply put, it tries to answer the question of who and what benefits from the fact that the world is constructed in this way and not in another way (Bačová, 2000).

According to Potter and Wetherell (1997), a language is a means that directs and organizes our perceptions, causes things to happen, and creates social interactions and distinct social worlds. Not only do social texts reflect or mirror objects, phenomena, and categories existing then and now in the social and natural world, but they also actively construct or create them by giving a certain version of these things and phenomena. They do not describe things; they rather do these things, produce them. By being so active, they have social and political implications. A language is not unproblematic and simply descriptive – the description of phenomena is always associated with evaluation. Different versions of one phenomenon can at once support and criticise that phenomenon. The authors define discourse analysis as research into a language within its social and cognitive context, and at the same time as research into linguistic units above a sentence level (i.e. the object of discourse analysis is not just a sentence; it can be a clause complex, a paragraph, etc. – cohesion, incoherence, flow is examined).

The described theoretical assumptions led Potter and Edwards to the idea of an autonomous theoretical framework in psychology, which became established under the name of discursive psychology. Discursive psychology defines discourse as a “medium of action” (Potter, 2003b), thus enabling the cognizance and exploration of the human mind and social processes. It offers (as mentioned above) a radically different idea about the functioning of mental processes. This concept significantly articulates the poststructuralist model of cognition in psychology. It does not treat discourse as a product of mind and psychological processes; contrariwise, it treats psychological processes as products of discourses (Potter, 2003a). In discursive psychology, mental states and processes are not considered hypothetical mental structures; they are viewed as interactive social processes (Wooffitt, 2005). Edwards (2001) introduces the relevance of discursive psychology in the study of emotions and clarifies the process by which emotions are constructed in individual and shared discourses.

3. CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

3.1 FOUCAULT'S CONCEPT OF POWER

Critical discourse analysis draws on the same assumptions as discourse analysis; however, it considers the works of the French philosopher Michel Foucault to be an important framework. The reason why the issue of discourse attracts the attention of social sciences relates to the view that dominant discourse has impact on the society, is seemingly powerful. This perspective was stressed by Foucault; he introduces radical claims about power and the exercising of power especially through the domineering knowledge in society, which he calls "leadership".

In the discussion on the positive consequences of power, Foucault (2000a) does not treat "positive" in the usual sense, i.e. "desirable" or "useful"; rather, he understands the positive effects of power in terms of shaping human lives. The concept of power the consequences of which are negative contributes to the theory of repression; the concept of power the consequences of which are positive yields the theory of the role that power has in shaping human lives. When Foucault (2000b) speaks of "truths," he does not mean a belief in the existence of the objective or independent facts about the nature of people; he refers to fabricated ideas that have been granted the status of truth. These "truths" are "normalizing" in the sense that they form the norms around which people organize their lives.

Foucault's understanding of the inseparability of power and so-called leadership is reflected in his considerations. Not only does Foucault offer an analysis of "global totalitarian" theories, but he also follows the other leadership – "enslaved leadership". He proposes two classes of enslaved leadership. One class consists of a rather consolidated "erudite" leadership, being erased during its evolvment and during the growth of a more global and unified leadership. According to Foucault, this erudite leadership was hidden and disguised as "the functional coherence of the formal systems into which the world was organized" in order to "hide the disruptive effects of conflicts and struggles". This leadership could only be "resurrected" through careful and scrupulous study, and thanks to this resurrection, the history of

struggle became significant again, and the demand for a unified truth was questioned.

The second class of enslaved leadership is what Foucault calls “locally popular” or “indigenous” leadership: it is “regional” leadership that is constantly in motion but is denied or deprived of the space in which it could adequately manifest itself. This leadership “resides” only on the margins of the society and is attributed a low value. It is considered insufficient and is excluded from the legitimate domain of formal leadership and accepted research-based knowledge and opinions. It is a naive leadership, placed at the lower levels of the hierarchy, far below the required level of knowledge or research-based knowledge (Foucault, 1999).

According to Foucault, by uncovering the details of these autonomous and disqualified discourses, we can rediscover the history of conflict and struggle. In the adequate space in which this leadership can manifest itself, we can develop effective criticism of dominant leadership – criticism the value of which does not depend on the approval of established modes of thought. Clearly, Foucault does not propose an alternative ideology, a kind of unified leadership that could organize people’s lives. He does not even claim that it is possible to deny leadership, i.e. to act and define the world outside the mediating influence of leadership and discourses. Nor does he encourage a return to positivism which sought to isolate experience from discourses. Instead, he uses the terms “rebellion” of enslaved leadership against “institutions and against the consequences of leadership and power disguised as research-based discourse.”

Foucault’s ideas were criticized by Fairclough (1985) who argued that a person is not completely “helpless” against the prevailing social discourse; he examined what practices are used by the person in their resistance to power and discourse. The advice on how to understand Foucault’s ideas in practice are evident in his concept of the representation of mental illness. Foucault (1963/1994) states that the way of recognizing mental illness in various historical periods (Renaissance, Classicism, Modernism) does not result from scientific progress, but is governed by the rules of discourse, from which the subject “disappeared” and is constituted into certain positions by the rules of discourse.

Plichtová (2010), following the ideas of Foucault, sees resemblance in

that one's talk about their ethnicity is not a lone verbal product, it is a part of a certain type of ethnic discourse. The research involving analyses of discourse on diagnoses and psychodiagnostics (Mikulášková, 2008) confirmed the backgrounding of the subject to an epistemological secondary position. The qualitative preliminary research confirmed the premise that one's statements do not reflect one's experience, rather they are organized by the forms and rules of discourse. Thus, the decisive element is not one's experience but the practices and organization of the discourse which a person joins. The findings showed that people to whom a psychiatric diagnosis was assigned, regardless of age, gender, education, and the specific psychiatric diagnosis, joined the current biomedical discourse, which, regardless of their personal experience, proved to be homogeneous and consistent in all details of the discourse. The research confirmed Plichtová's considerations (2010) in that the secondary significance of the subject is manifested by various limitations resulting from the context, i.e. not the subject but the institutional context determines what can be said and what is the scope of verbalized modalities.

Foucault's premises on the inseparability of power and knowledge lead to a fundamental question: What alternative leadership would be disqualified and what groups of people would be rejected if the arguments for the domination of a certain leadership were successful? In other words, what remains the basic feature of critical discourse analysis is the answer to the question who and what benefits from saying things in a certain way, and what group of people is marginalized or discriminated against by means of the prevailing discourse. In qualitative research, the usage of critical discourse analysis can verify how contemporary mass media depict ethnic minorities, women, children, etc., and above all, who benefits from certain phenomena being depicted as they are.

3.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

3.2.1 AN OVERVIEW

Critical discourse analysis focuses on the role of discourse in the reproduction and questioning of power. Critical discourse analysis is understood as a subcategory of discourse analysis; it draws on the functionalist definition of discourse and links linguistic analysis with the analysis of social practices (Plichtová, 2010). There is a whole spectrum of critical discourse analysis approaches, e.g. social cognitive (van Dijk, 1990), discursive-historical Viennese school (Reisigl, Wodak, 2000), exploring the relationship between specific language use and wider socio-cultural structures (Fairclough, 1995). Socio-psychological works applying a critical discourse analysis include Wetherell and Potter's research on racism and discrimination of Maori in New Zealand (Wetherell, Potter, 1992); though being an older source, it is still referenced not only by psychologists.

In Slovakia, critical discourse analysis is dealt with and systematically developed by Plichtová (2010) – she defines it not only as a method of text analysis, but also as a set of theoretical assumptions that conceptualize the relationships between discourse, knowledge, ideology, and the social subject. Plichtová (2010) includes the following among its theoretical sources: Foucault's premises (described in the previous chapter), a sociolinguistic theory of a language (represented by Halliday's theory of a language), and Althusser's theory of ideology; the two latter approaches are described below.

3.2.2 HALLIDAY'S THEORY OF LANGUAGE

The central goal of the sociolinguistic theory of language is to explain how a language shapes the self and how it mediates relations among people and between people and society.

The intention to clarify the relationship between a language and a society is conceptualized by Halliday (1978), who postulated a theory that the subject and a language are in synergy. Thus, they are equal, and they construct each other; i.e. it is impossible to separate the subject from the language and the language from the subject. This premise dominates in Halliday's

theory. He even claims that a person becomes an independent human being through the language based on which his/her relationship with other people is formed. Halliday pays attention to what topics are present and what topics are avoided in the discourse, what relationships are created in interaction, and how the text is created. He presents several options for analyzing the text while referring to three functions of a language: ideational, interpersonal, and textual (Halliday, 1985).

When examining the organization of discourse, Halliday examines the field, tenor, and mode. The field in which the discourse is organized, according to the author, is formed by the situation in which social activities take place; the tenor refers to the relationships between participants – the emotionality of the role and the like; the mode of discourse refers to the chosen means of expression, interpretive repertoires and modes of communication) (e.g. Kačmárová 2005, pp. 64 – 77; Bilá, Džambová, Kačmárová, 2011, pp. 23 – 36). Halliday's main idea is the inseparability (or lack of the borderline) between the sign and the meaning on one side, and the form and content of the discourse on the other side. When analyzing the text, the author recommends examining: 1.) what information is emphasized in the text, 2.) what information is unspoken, 3.) what information is defined in the text as “new” vs. as “given”, 4.) what is the “key” topic of the text and how it is related to the previous and subsequent parts of the text, 5.) how the text relates to a specific social situation.

Fairclough's (1992) ideas are seemingly similar to Halliday's concept; however, Fairclough focuses more on the formation or constitution of social identities in discourse. He analyzes and describes how social identities are articulated in discourses, how relationships between discursive partners are established and negotiated, and how the text relates to the overall social functioning. He postulates text functions differently than Halliday. A significant difference is the usage of terms, e.g. he refers to “meaning” of the text while Halliday uses the term “function” of the text. He describes several meanings of the text – representative (one that applies to claims about the outside world), active (one that describes what action the text “performs” – the text can advise, inform, intimidate), and identification meaning (one that relates to defining the position of a person – attitude, belief).

3.2.3 ALTHUSSER'S THEORY OF IDEOLOGY

The main idea of Althusser's concept of ideology is that ideology as a system of ideas and thoughts aims to control thinking and consolidating social cohesion and reproducing productive forces (Althusser, 1972). The institutions that carry out ideological activities are referred to as ideological state apparatuses. Pecheux (1982) applied this theory to the analysis of sociohistorical structures of thought, and he argues that ideological formations, through discourse and discursive practices, define what the subject should know, what should not know, what ways of understanding should be available. At the same time, Pecheux (1982) argues that the identification of an individual with a predominant discourse is necessary, otherwise one's discrimination or marginalization by their social group may occur. Therefore, his central idea is to examine how or into what position social subjects are placed. Althusser's ideas were accepted, albeit supplemented by Fairclough's (1992) – they draw attention to the ability of the individual as a social actor who knows of some possibilities of how to enter discourse.

3.3 OBJECTIVES OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Critical discourse analysis attempts to examine (more or less direct) relationships between the structure of discourse and the power structure. The objectives of critical discourse analysis can be formulated as follows: 1/ it examines the style, rhetoric, or meaning of the text to reveal strategies aimed at concealing social power relations, e.g. by making the liable action of influential social actors trivial, implicit, weakened; 2.) it examines the rhetorical formation of the conditions of legitimacy or acceptability of power, 3.) it examines the role of social ideas/representations and tries to show that social cognition is a necessary theoretical and empirical “interface”, if not the “missing link” between discourse and domination (Plichtová, 2010; Kusá, 2008).

The aim of critical analysis is to clarify how power practices are maintained, shaped and constituted in a language. Principally, it tries to answer the question of who benefits from the fact that social reality is depicted as it is. Critical discourse analysis does not primarily try to contribute to a certain discipline,

paradigm, school, or discourse theory. It is predominantly interested in and motivated by urgent social problems that could be better understood through discourse analysis. Serious societal problems are inherently complex, so they usually require a multidisciplinary approach in which the distinction between theory, description, and “application” becomes less relevant. A common platform for discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis is the effort to go beyond the text and explore how texts are created – that is, to explore “inputs” into discourse and discourse structures.

3.4 DISCOURSE AND ENTRY INTO DISCOURSE

There is a parallel between social power and access to discourse: social groups, institutions, and elites are the more influential, the more discourse genres, contexts, participants, viewers, scopes, and textual characteristics they can actively control or influence (Kusá, 2008). Each group, position, or institution could be attributed its “discourse approach profile”. What is the profile of the discourse approach for Slovak rural, lagging regions? How do they get on the television or on the radio? Controlling the ways of accessing discourse focuses on access to public thinking, which we refer to as social cognition or cognizance. Social cognition is defined by socially shared ideas about social order, groups and relationships, as well as thought operations, such as interpretation, thinking, proving, and learning.

Discourse analysis assumes that the production and interpretation of a specific text is based on so-called models, i.e. thought representations, visions of experiences, events or situations, as well as our opinions of them. The news report on the war in Korea (specific events) is based on journalistic models of the war, and these models can in turn be constructed during the interpretation of many source texts, i.e. other media, key witnesses, or politicians’ press conferences. It is the models that allow to combine the personal with the social, individual actions and discourses, as well as their interpretations, with the social order.

Unlike other discourse analysts, critical discourse analysts should take an explicit socio-political position – formulate their opinion, viewpoints, principles and goals. Their critical goal is power elites that establish, maintain, legitimize, ignore, or turn a blind eye to social inequality and injus-

tice. Their problems are “real” problems, that is, serious problems that may as well jeopardize the lives or well-being of many, and not primarily some minor disciplinary problems of describing discourse structures (van Dijk, 1998). The task of critical discourse analysis is to clarify the complicated relationships between text, speech, social cognition, power, society, and culture. Its adequacy criteria are not only observational, descriptive, or even explanatory (Fairclough, 1985). Its success is measured by its effectiveness and relevance, that is, by its contribution to change.

In the analysis of a specific text, critical discourse analysis focuses on the recording and analysis of speech practices that legitimize or excuse a certain type of power distribution or governance practices or creates the impression that there is no power asymmetry in the given area. It also pays attention to the ways of (positive and negative) presentation of various groups and institutions which are usually associated with excusing and justifying unequal treatment and asymmetry (Kusá, 2008).

3.5 DISCOURSE STRUCTURES

Discourse structures form part of the conceptual apparatus of the rather socio-cognitive critical discourse analysis approach (see van Dijk, 1993, 2000). From the viewpoint of this approach, the theory and practice of critical discourse analysis focuses on the structures of text and speech and examines how power is “exercised” by speech. If influential speakers and groups are able to persuade or otherwise influence their listeners, then we want to know what discourse structures and strategies are involved in this process. One of the decisive sources of power is privileged or advantaged access to discourse. Most people or groups are just passively waiting to be approached by the editor; others are active – they organize press conferences, make statements to press agencies, which, however, do not have to be published. Critical analysis of such ways of entering communication events is particularly attentive to forms of contextual control that are legally or morally unacceptable.

Kusá (1998) argues that discourse can be limited in many ways, whether reduced to institutional power sources (positions, work experience, e.g. doctors or judges), or to in-group membership (men, white). More “micro”

or “surface” structures may be less regulated by laws or moral rules, but they may also allow for the “unofficial” exercise of power, that is, domination. Many studies have examined the occurrence of more or less “influential” styles of power either in specific contexts (e.g. in court, in the classroom) or between specific groups (men versus women). These studies showed, for example, the presence or absence of meandering, pauses, laughter, interruptions, signs of doubt or confidence, special lexical items, forms of address, use of pronouns.

However, the critical discourse analysis approach must be as gentle as are the means of control that it explores. For example, the “rude” form of addressing (using a given name, being on first-name terms) can characterize the discourses of many people in many situations (situational and performance sensitivity). Thus, it must be considered that occasional and personal violations of discourse rules are not an expression of power control. Justification of injustice requires two complementary strategies, namely a positive presentation of one’s in-group and a negative presentation of the others (Kusá, 2008). For example, “our” tolerance, help or compassion is emphasized, while attention is focused on negative social or cultural differences, deviation, or threat attributed to “them”. If such “polarized” models are consistent with negative attitudes or ideologies, they will help maintain negative attitudes or create new negative attitudes.

Critical discourse analysis methodology has benefitted from the postulation of so-called discursive structures as certain ways of “depicting” phenomena. An example of how certain groups of people can be depicted negatively are the following discursive structures (according to van Dijk, 1993, 2000):

(a) Argumentation: a negative evaluation results from “facts” (sounds unbiased).

(b) Rhetorical figures: hyperbolic exaggeration of “their” negative actions and “our” positive ones; euphemisms, denials, restrained description of “our” negative actions.

(c) Lexical style: selection of words that indicate negative (or positive) reviews.

(d) Storytelling: presenting negative events as personally experienced; giving credible details about the negative characteristics of events (increasing credibility).

(e) Structural emphasis on “their” negative actions, e.g. in headlines, cover stories, summaries, or other features of textual schemes (i.e., reporting schemes), transactional syntactic structures (i.e., mentioning negative factors in a prominent place).

(f) Citing credible witnesses, sources, or experts, e.g. in newspaper reports. These and many other, often very delicate, structures can be interpreted as modifying processes of understanding in such a way that the “preferred models” are created by the listeners/readers themselves. Depending on the objectives of such discursive marginalization by the dominant group, one can therefore generally expect such structures and strategies of dominant speech to target positive “self” presentations and negative presentations of the “other”.

3.6 CATEGORIES OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

3.6.1 SYNTAX

Several syntactic structures are relevant for critical text analysis. They have no meaning in themselves; rather they are laden with functions in relation to semantic, pragmatic, and other (interactive, cognitive) structures. The above categories of discourse analysis come from the stream of critical discourse analysis, but they are also relevant in classic discourse analysis. We usually examine the following syntactic structures according to van Dijk (1993, 2003), who postulated that some discursive structures have a defined semantic, cognitive, and interactive function in a language.

3.6.1.1 PLACEMENT – PROMINENCE

With this term, discourse analysis refers to the “shifting” of words or sentence sections in texts to what is considered a prominent sentence position in the statement from the perspective of that particular language. In the Slovak language, which is a synthetic language allowing shifts of sentence elements, the following change can take place: if an unmarked placement of sentence elements is in Slovak “Každá piata žena je týraná” (literal transl. “Every fifth woman is abused.”), the marked one will be in Slovak *Týraná je každá piata žena* (literal transl. “Abused is every fifth woman”), By placing the word “fifth” at the beginning, we stress the importance of the described

phenomenon. In linguistics, we also see this in relation to suprasegmental language phenomena – in calm speech, (sentence) stress is placed on the last word in Slovak. In accord with the speaker's intention, the word order can change, which involves changing the position of the stressed sentence element.

Making a sentence element prominent and using other syntactic structures serves semantic, cognitive, and interactive functions. According to van Dijk (1993, 2003), the semantic function of making a particular sentence element prominent is pursued through placing special emphasis on the theme of the text, contrast, or choice between alternatives. The cognitive function is reflected in the expression of importance and in the intention to make the aforementioned elements seem important. The interactive function may mean emphasizing, questioning, correcting, or objecting to the elements mentioned by the previous speaker.

3.6.1.2 UNEXPRESSED DOER OF AN ACTION

In the analysis of discourse, it is both interesting and relevant that the object can become a prominent sentence element through avoiding explicit mentioning of the doer of the action. Such a Slovak sentence can have the following form: „O deti sa nemá kto postarať, kým ja som chorá“ (literal tr. The kids have nobody to take care of them while I am ill); instead of stating that a particular person (husband, partner, parent, friend, etc.) can step in, as in “X cannot take care of the kids”.

The semantic function usually lies in (a) maintaining thematic continuity, (b) regulating the description of the actor and their responsibility for the action, e.g. reducing the importance of the role or relevance of the actors, focusing on the object or goal of the action, or hiding (or expressing disregard towards) the identity of the doer. The cognitive function of using this syntactic structure is to naturalize intentional acts of behavior as “events” without an author. The interactive function is evident in the maintenance of politeness and is probably related to the control of the impression of oneself and others (in the example, the author of the statement did not directly accuse anyone, which allows her to maintain a positive self-image and at the same time not to deteriorate relations with her surroundings).

3.6.1.3 TENSE VS TIME IN UTTERANCES

The identification of tense in the sentence allows to identify whether the respondent distances himself/herself from the actually produced discourse or identifies with it. The usage of the past tense implies disinterest, while the usage of present tense indicates identification with the stated. If a respondent talks about positive relationship with a partner and uses only the past tense, it indicates that there has been a change in the quality of the relationship. Similarly, if the respondent claims that s/he has come to terms with the separation from the partner and uses the present tense (to indicate that, though separated, they continue to pursue some activities), it suggests that the content of the talk does not correspond with the form.

3.6.1.4 NOMINALIZATION – SUBSTANTIATION, OBJECTIFICATION

Nominalization as another discursive structure is a process in which the verb becomes a verbal noun, e.g. from “kill” to “killing” or from “examine” to “examination”, as in “The examination of the patient usually takes place in a psychiatric outpatient clinic.” The semantic function of nominalization aims at targeting the action itself and reducing emphasis, ignoring or not expressing (depending on the context) of various participants, and in particular the doer of the action. This makes the author of the text disappear. The cognitive function of nominalization implies a lack of knowledge about the identity of the doer of the action. The interactive function consists, for example, in positive self-presentation, in control over making impression, or in politeness – for instance, if a negative depiction could jeopardize a positive impression of oneself (e.g. if a distraught broker says “there was a deferral of tenants” instead of more polite informing “I evicted tenants because they did not pay”). Van Dijk (2000) also adds the socio-political function, which may be, for example, the reduction of emphasis or the concealment of the group members’ responsible performance/management/acting.

3.6.1.5 FRONTING, CLEFTING, EXTRAPOSITION

In discourse analysis, we can focus on cases where phrases are extracted from the structure of the sentence or “transferred” to the beginning or end of the main clause (or the sentence is embedded in a separate existential

phrase). An example is the sentence: “It is X who...” (e.g. “It is foreigners who cause all the unemployment” or “Unemployment is what foreigners bring us”). The semantic function is reflected in the emphasis on dislocated meaning, while using contrast. The cognitive function of the structure is the clear attribution of acting to a certain person, or to a group of people. The interactive function is implied in confirming the identity of the author of the statement (it allows him/her to be included in a community sharing that opinion).

3.6.1.6 SYNTACTIC AMBIGUITY

Defining syntactic ambiguity in discourse analysis means identifying such a sentence structure that may have more than one interpretation (e.g., “Hispanic problem” – it may be a problem caused by Hispanics or experienced by them). The semantic function in this case is ambiguity and multitude/diffusion of meaning. The cognitive function tends to create confusion about the participants’ roles. The interactive function is especially noticeable (as in already mentioned discursive structures) in controlling a positive impression of oneself before the listeners (if the author of the statement uses such a phrase, it is practically impossible to “prove” that s/he discriminates against Hispanics).

3.6.1.7 PRONOUNS

An important discourse structure is anaphoric, exophoric, or cataphoric means, which can provide interesting conceptual tools for critical analysis. For example, personal pronouns and demonstrative pronouns are typically used for referencing and co-referencing, and thus serve as symbols of basic semantic coherence. Therefore, deixis (e.g. ‘me’, ‘we’, ‘you’, ‘here’, ‘now’ and ‘tomorrow’) can be used to refer to specific features of the communication context, such as speakers, listeners, spatial and temporal arrangement. They contribute to what can be called the contextual (or pragmatic) coherence of the talk. On the other hand, personal and demonstrative pronouns can be used to refer to ‘things’ that have been talked about before. In this case, they express basic semantic coherence. The typical ‘political’ pronouns are

‘we’, ‘our’, ‘us’, ‘they’, ‘their’, referring to members and non-members of various kinds. The analysis of pronouns is a powerful means of pondering over personal or group identity – we get an answer to the question of how identity is constructed in the debate. On the other hand, name avoidance is a typical feature of semantic distancing; it corresponds to social detachment in basic models and social ideas. Further, the use of the pronoun “we” implies sharing a relationship with someone, it is tied to social representation in the mind.

3.6.1.8 CONTRASTIVE CONJUNCTIONS

The usage of conjunctions “but,” “while,” “yet” aims to express contrast to the content of the first clause and allows to distance oneself from it. The clause following the contrastive conjunction mainly thematizes the message of the sentence. For instance, a sentence “You have helped me a lot, but I still suffer from insomnia” at a first glance indicates the client’s satisfaction with the services provided. More comprehensively, the first part of the sentence can be understood as the control of impression (in this case, not to lose face in front of the counselor, and at the same time not jeopardize his/her abilities). However, the key message is in the second clause: “... I still suffer from insomnia”. As another example can be presented a quite often mediated statement, such as: “I am not a chauvinist, but we have a lot of black people here.”

3.6.1.9 PROPOSITION

Van Dijk (1993, 2003) works with the abstract philosophical concept of proposition. The proposition of an utterance is determined according to its propositional structure (proposition – assumption), which consists of a predication (statement), the number of participants and their role, overall modalities representing the possibility, necessity, obligation, etc. (such as ‘it is necessary’, ‘it may be true that...’). Since most sentences (at least in political conversations) are complex, it is assumed that their structure has many assumptions, i.e. it is ‘propositionally complex’.

3.6.2 IDENTIFICATION OF RELEVANT PARTICIPANTS

3.6.2.1 DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS

According to van Dijk (1993, 2003), an important part of critical discourse analysis in the text analysis is the identification of relevant participants. Succinctly, in addition to examining the characteristics of the present persons, we examine what other “characters” they interact with in the text. The presentation of, for example, a certain minority in steady connection with institutions such as “preliminary detention”, “police”, “social office” and the like, creates, maintains, reproduces the idea of tagging that minority as criminal.

Critical discourse analysis examines what adjectives are used in texts to describe different actors. The object of discourse analysis are the characteristics of the actors. Descriptions using adjectives such as “backward,” “slow,” “dependent,” or “less educated” facilitate particular cognitive schemes about actors. Examining participants’ descriptions is an explicit demonstration of how discourse analysis works. If a wife emphasizes that she tolerates, respects, and appreciates her husband, but at the same time uses adjectives like “incompetent”, “stubborn”, “egoistic”, this gives a rise to the discrepancy between the content and the form of the discourse.

3.6.2.2 PARTICIPANT TYPES AND THEIR SEMANTIC TASKS

Text analysis works with how event participants are presented. Different descriptions of the participants make available a different way of “grasping” the participants. In addition to the explicitly and specifically attributed characteristics, an important part of the description is the portrayal of their relationships, attribution of responsibility, intentions, and the like. There are several ways of presenting the participants of the debate:

- 1/ inclusion/exclusion,
- 2/ the participant’s role,
- 3/ general or specific nature of the description,
- 4/ associating,
- 5/ identifying,
- 6/ depersonalizing.

Since they are little known in psychological research, they are given due attention below.

Inclusion/Exclusion

In discourse analysis, we understand that some actors may not be mentioned; if so, we can reconstruct them only from passive voice structures, infinitives, or nominalizations. On the other hand, some actors are deliberately excluded from the description of events. In media debates, for example, the positive depiction of the Roma community is missing. When reconstructing personal statements, instead of fair stating “my partner cooked dinner,” the speaker says, “the dinner was cooked” or “the children are taken care of”. In discourse analysis, if we identify a recurring pattern of describing the partner, a question arises “why and under what circumstances” the wife “fell out” of the description.

The participant's role

Another element addressed by the discourse analysis is the role in which the participant is described, or what role the author of the debate attributes to the participant. In other words, the discourse analysis analyzes “who” the actor/participant becomes in the debate. S/he asks himself/herself how the actor is described: “as a victim?”, “as an aggressor?”, “as a leader?”

General or specific nature of the description

Participants (but also groups, events, specific actions) can be described in varying degrees of generalization using various lexical, syntactic, and semantic means (“schizophrenics in general...” “drug addicts are always...”) or through the usage of quantifiers (“all/most/many/some drug addicts are...”). Actors can be identified by name or remain anonymous (“someone,” “most people,” etc.). In the discourse analysis, the function of the description formulated in this way is to induce a static impression about the above-mentioned group of persons or a person and to indirectly acknowledge stereotypes.

Associating

Participants can often be described in the debate in interlinkage with other actors. In media – political texts, this can have both negative and pos-

itive implications (with whom do the Roma appear together in descriptions – if at all?). Associating can take place in a language by identifying the actor with their profession, religion, or work position.

Identifying

Another way of describing actors is to state what they more or less still “are”. For example, they can be classified by origin, nationality, gender, or ethnicity; they can be defined by their relations to others, by their political ideology (communists, liberals), by their values and norms (conservatives), or social resources to which they have or do not have access (the rich, the poor, elites, masses, the disadvantaged).

Depersonalizing

Depersonalization makes it possible to identify “silent” actors in the discourse. A common example is the presentation of people as abstract “cases”. This way of presenting actors is common in medicine, law, or state administration records (police, courts, social guardianship). The function of the discourse formulated in this way is to conceal the identity of the actor that could potentially either conceal or promote discriminatory attitude towards them.

3.6.3 SUMMARY

Summarizing the stated on critical discourse analysis, the following needs to be emphasized:

1. Like discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis has a strong theoretical background: Foucault’s premises on the relationship between knowledge and power, sociolinguistic theories assuming that language constitutes the relationship between the individual and society, and the theory of ideology according to which the task of ideologies is to control persons through mass communication.

- 2.) Critical discourse analysis is not a homogeneous approach, as, for example, the social-cognitive approach (van Dijk, 2000) emphasizes the use of a language in shaping social processes and calls attention to the political dimension of a language use/abuse; exploring the relationship between specific language use and broader socio-cultural structures is explored by a different approach (Fairclough, 1995).

3.) Despite the diversity of approaches in critical discourse analysis, all directions (regardless of how they implement their intentions) emphasize the connection between knowledge (formed/constituted and reproduced in language), power, and socio-political consequences for the individual.

4. METHODOLOGY OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

4.1 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS APPROACHES

Discourse analysis encompasses a group of often significantly different approaches to meaning creation in social interactions. From a methodological point of view, it embodies systematic data collection, transcription, and analysis of qualitative data, especially verbal interactions and records (Zábrowská, 2010). For this reason, it is necessary to point to the range of methods described within discourse analysis methodology. A closer understanding of the distinctiveness of methods can be achieved through an insight into the current forms of discursive analytical research. Wetherell, Taylor, and Yates (2001) recognize six forms of discourse analysis research:

- 1.) conversational analysis and ethnomethodology,
- 2.) interactional sociolinguistics,
- 3.) discursive psychology,
- 4.) critical discourse analysis and critical linguistics,
- 5.) Bakhtinian research,
- 6.) Foucauldian research.

The above inventory emphasizes the peculiarity of conceptual frameworks of these methodologies; however, I believe, the methodology is better associated with the research objective. Based on the postulated objective of discourse analysis research, as it were, it is more appropriate to consider a more general classification postulating two basic traditions: 1/ conversational-analytical and 2/ critical socio-political.

The conversational-analytical stream (see Drew, 2003; Wooffitt, 2001) emphasizes discourse in the sense of speech or writing and emphasizes its intention to achieve a specific goal in the existing social interaction. The aim is not to include the whole social context; discourse analysts focus more on how, for example, the role or the status is maintained in a specific conversation, and, above all, on what forms of discourse, rhetorical turns, and interpretive repertoires are used by speakers. Speech is treated as an act of action (inspired by the theory of speech acts), and it is analyzed as a form of

social practice. Researchers following this tradition treat discourse as part of a spoken interaction or written record. The classic type of methodology that meets this research tradition is conversational analysis.

The second strong current in discourse analysis research is critical socio-political stream (Clarke, Kitzinger, Potter, 2004; van Dijk, 2000) striving to include relevant political and social topics, while reproducing the majority domination, bringing topics like how a discourse helps in reproducing various types of power and, drawing on the poststructuralist tradition, to examine how the subject and object of the talk are constituted in the talk and what socio-political consequences it has. This stream argues that a detailed understanding of a language means deconstruction of the knowledge prevailing in the society.

Even though some authors deny any classification of discourse analysis approaches and consider it unnatural (see e.g. Lafrance, Stoppard, 2006), I uphold a view that the insufficient articulation of differences between discourse analysis approaches can cause an undesirable misunderstanding in terms of postulated goals and methodology. The fact that today's discourse analysis research does not form a homogeneous whole is evident even in the later published works of the founding authors of discourse analysis – Potter and Wetherell.

Despite their common research history, Potter and Wetherell currently offer different methodological frameworks. Potter prefers a conversational-analytical approach and emphasizes verbal interaction in micro-social interactions. Wetherell goes beyond the “narrower” definition of her colleague and prefers a more comprehensive analysis of socio-cultural discourses and practices. With this theoretical as well as practical poststructuralist orientation, Wetherell can be referred to as a critical discourse analyst. However, she has not fully broken association with her colleague, which is noticeable in her effort to link the discourse microanalysis with its macroanalysis. It asks how (and with what socio-political consequences) the prevailing social discourse is represented in specific everyday conversations.

4.2 RESEARCH PROCEDURE IN DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

4.2.1 AN OVERVIEW

Discourse analysis as a research method in social sciences (sociology, psychology) mainly uses material obtained in discussions through the methods of interview or focus groups. However, it is possible to process already existing texts – state administration records, protocols, medical records – that are transcribed and analyzed. In practice, discourse analysis proceeds through phases that merge and do not have a stable order. Only for the purposes of a concise overview, the discourse analysis procedure can take ten stages (see Potter, Wetherell, 1987).

1. Research questions
2. Sampling
3. Collection of records and documents
4. Interviews
5. Transcript
6. Encoding
7. Analysis
8. Validation
9. Report
10. Application

Due to the significance of the encoding and validation phases, more attention will be paid to these aspects.

4.2.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Discourse analysis can study micro-conversations between two people, e.g. a husband and a wife, a patient and a physician, a teacher and a pupil. Discourse analysis also allows to analyze the discourse in which public figures address listeners and viewers, or to focus on the details of turn-taking in a conversation. From the obtained material, we postulate hypotheses about how certain procedures become part of group and society-wide discourse. The material can be even “prominent” texts as the president’s speech or the government’s report on the implementation of its program, as well

as an ordinary conversation of people. When examining any questions by discourse analysis, the object of analysis is the mere discourse or the social text. It is not about uncovering things “beyond” the discourse, such as attitudes, phenomena, or cognitive processes. Discourse analysis does not focus on obtaining the respondents’ “objective” attitudes or the “accurate” description of socio-psychological phenomena. The accuracy of the depiction does not typify positivist research; it is not important or even necessary. Research questions focus on current or ongoing constructions/representations of certain phenomena in the respondents’ language. They focus on how discourse blends to yield a certain image of the world, and also on what this image induces, causes, and achieves.

4.2.3 SAMPLING

The principles of sampling in discourse analysis are identical to the general principles of sampling in qualitative approaches in psychological research. Charvát (2004) analyzes different approaches to the selection of respondents in research and emphasizes the following:

A) The qualitative approach allows flexible treatment of the number of respondents and usually combines several methods of sampling (non-probability sampling techniques tend to be chosen – snowball sampling, self-selected sampling, occasional sampling, and most often targeted sampling).

B) The emphasis is put on the research objectives (if the research aspires to examine the respondents’ discourses about an unconventional construct – e.g. experiencing guilt – suitable respondents include clients of psychological counseling or convicted persons in correctional institutions; even priests can become an important part of the sample).

C) The method of sampling must be accurately described and justified.

In the same vein, it should be emphasized that the method of determining a sampling technique is part of the cyclical evaluation of each phase, and it is always necessary to reflect the usefulness and shortcomings of the selected sampling technique after each cycle (see MacDougall, Colin, 2001). If repeated interviews with respondents do not sufficiently clarify the basic discursive line, it is advisable to change the sampling technique.

My preference is a so-called theoretical sampling in which the sampling technique directly depends on the results of discourse analysis processing and interpretation (see Glaser, Strauss, 1967). The sample size for discourse analysis is indirectly defined by the research question, using the principle of sample saturation (if more and more respondents do not provide relevant discourse analysis, the process is terminated). Primarily, we study whether the language, terminology and its arrangement are recurrent or reappear in a different form, and therefore it is not possible to clearly define the scope of the sample.

4.2.4 COLLECTION OF RECORDS AND DOCUMENTS

The discourse analyst works with records and documents of interaction, s/he is not necessarily involved in the data collection, thus their influence on the data collection process is prevented. The researcher does not have to be involved in the production of the conversation records, newspaper reports, scholarly papers, letters, or official documents. The obtained material makes it possible to capture all depictions of a certain phenomenon as extensively as possible. Documents from multiple sources, recorded interactions, direct conversations, letters, and the combination of the mentioned give a more comprehensive idea of how research participants organize their language than if only one source was analyzed.

Discourse analysis, as opposed to content analysis of documents, makes it clear that diverse documents and interaction records reveal the respondents' differing renderings of things and phenomena. These versions both complement each other and refute each other; they point to the weaknesses of other versions or language constructions. (Note: it is necessary to arrange for an informed consent when treating the collection and compilation of discourse analysis material; a much more demanding process is to ensure the ethics of the research analyzing ready-made documents).

4.2.5 INTERVIEWS

In addition to the aforementioned benefits of recordings, documents, and transcripts of conversations, the method of direct data collection by the researcher (interviews conducted in person) makes it possible to ensure

active intervention. In the responses intended for discourse analysis, variety is just as important as consistency. The semi-structured interview method proves to be sufficiently flexible in discourse analysis. A semi-structured interview makes it possible to clarify deeper meanings, often inaccessible by classic questionnaire methods. The scenario of a semi-structured interview is associated with the following advantages: a) facilitating the establishment of a relationship and empathy between the researcher and the participant; b) allowing greater flexibility in asking questions; c) opening and exploring new topics that will arise during the interview; d) producing richer data (Smith, 1995, cf. Smith and Osborn, 2003).

4.2.6 TRANSCRIPTION

The relevance (scope) of the transcribed data is determined by three aspects: 1.) it derives from the research question that establishes what information the transcription should contain, 2.) it is appropriate to be validated by the expert data triangulation method, 3.) it depends on the chosen level of discourse analysis.

In addition to the standard methods of validation (expert data triangulation and validation by participants), Silverman (2005) introduces the principle of so-called full data processing. When applying this principle in the analysis, we do not select anecdotal cases to represent a “theory”, but consistently include all material “produced” in the interview, related to research questions. This may be a reaction to what Ten Have, already in 1998, noticed – the tendency towards a “biased” approach, in which such a sample of cases is chosen that best suits the analytical argumentation.

4.2.7 ENCODING

4.2.7.1 AN OVERVIEW

The aim of encoding is to organize the material into smaller units. Since discourse analysis does not provide a sufficiently precise methodology, it makes use of Glaser and Strauss’ grounded theory (1967). A grounded theory (Strauss, Corbin, 1999) is inductively derived from the investigation of the phenomena that it represents. This means that it is detected, created,

and verified by the systematic collection of data on the phenomenon and by the analysis of this data. We do not start the research with an already existing theory; rather we start with researching a phenomenon and let the theory be gradually created from the accumulated material during the analysis. The grounded theory method aims to create a theory that would faithfully correspond to the studied area and explain it.

Strauss and Corbin (1999) elaborated three basic encoding procedures: 1/ open encoding, 2/ selective encoding, and 3/ axial encoding. The boundaries between the procedures are artificial and help get an insight into creating codes. The role of encoding is significantly different in grounded theory and in the discourse analysis. In the grounded theory, encoding and creating clusters of codes is the goal and is considered the final part of the research process after which only interpretation follows. The discourse analysis approach considers the creation of a code system to be a necessary step in the fulfillment of research objectives, namely the identification of the discourse and discursive line. Since discourse analysis emphasizes the forms of language arrangement, it views mere creating codes, not accompanied by further analysis, as inadequate. In discourse analysis, all encoding methods are applicable in practice; their description is presented below.

4.2.7.2 OPEN ENCODING

Strauss and Corbin (1999) describe open encoding in grounded theory as an analytical process through which we identify concepts and develop them in their properties and dimensions. The basic analytical procedures through which these processes are carried out include asking questions about the data, comparing all cases, events, and other examples of phenomena, and noting similarities and differences between them. Similar events and incidents are tagged and grouped into categories. Succinctly, the basic principles of open encoding presuppose the following steps:

1. gradual marking of the phenomena,
2. determining the categories,
3. naming the categories,
4. developing the properties and dimensions of the categories.

Throughout the open encoding process, we constantly ask questions, compare and contrast the phenomena, and later compare and contrast the categories.

4.2.7.3 AXIAL ENCODING

Axial encoding is the procedure that follows open encoding and aims to rearrange categories in order to identify the relationships between them. In other words, we connect categories and subcategories into a set of relationships that denote causal conditions, phenomena, intervening conditions, strategies of action and interactions, and consequences. A significant difference between axial and open encoding is that in open encoding it is possible to define a semantic relationship only within the content of a category, but not among categories. According to Strauss and Corbin (1999), it is worthy to work with a scheme that they call a paradigmatic model: A) causal conditions → B) phenomenon → C) context → D) intervening conditions → E) consequences. It is necessary to emphasize that axial encoding is only an auxiliary method in discourse analysis research. In the original theory, the formation of a paradigmatic model is the goal of axial encoding; however, discourse analysis asks how different discourses of different groups of research participants present different schemes.

4.2.7.4 SELECTIVE ENCODING

Selective encoding is a process in which we select one central category which is later systematically put into a relationship with other identified categories. The aim of selective encoding is to create a skeleton of the story, around which other categories can be “arranged”. Encoding has a pragmatic rather than an analytical goal. Therefore, it must include all the material. It differs from encoding in standard content analysis. Encoding in discourse analysis produces the widest possible number of cases, tries to encompass the entire material and does not try to limit the material as content analysis does. An example of the usage of selective encoding can be research that answers the question of what different discourses the majority population uses with regard to ethnic minorities (the central category in this case would be ethnicity).

4.2.8 ANALYSIS

Discourse analysis is metaphorically compared to skills – therefore, there is no mechanical procedure that would provide guidelines on how to obtain results from a number of records and documents. The results of discourse analysis research are confirmed and critically verified for psychology in a completely new way. Despite the absence of precise guidelines on how to do discourse analysis, its goal is clear: to create the meaning that discourse transcripts have, and to identify the structuring of documents. When analyzing discourse, it is necessary to pay attention to nuances, contradictions, unclear places. Fragments and contradictory details of individual passages can reveal what the materials are really about, what they actually say.

The analysis of the text necessarily includes the ongoing process of the researcher's self-reflection, which helps to answer some questions: 1/ Why does this part of the text have a special meaning for me? 2/ What are my personal, professional and religious assumptions that influence the discourse analysis process? 3/ What other knowledge is disqualified if we read and study the text in the way we analyze it. The mere discourse analysis has two phases: 1/ identification of a certain pattern, structure, differences, and consistency in the content and form of the discourse, and 2/ identification of the discourse functions and consequences.

4.2.9 VALIDATION

Data validation is an essential part of any quantitative or qualitative psychological research. Summarizing the literature in this field (Potter, Wetherell, 1987; Parker, 1997; Edwards, 2001), three analytical procedures for validating the results of discourse analysis are most often described: 1.) coherence, 2.) validation by research participants, 3.) bringing new problems and analysis productivity.

Coherence

The analysis should show and explain how a certain discourse is created by combining different meanings, how its structure produces certain effects, how the discourse “works” and what it causes. If some features of the

analyzed discourse do not fit into the given explanation of the discourse, if there are weak points – disagreements, we do not consider the discourse analysis to be complete and credible. From another perspective, excessive consistency in the participant's responses suggests that the participant draws only from a limited repertoire of explanations. Consistent responses are not informative; they say little about the diverse resources from which people draw and which they use when giving meaning to their social world. Variations and diversity of responses reveal much more about how the participant constructs social reality and its consequences.

Validation by research participants

Since the objective of discourse analysis is to examine the participants' discourses on socio-psychological phenomena, the language usage and language means cannot be analyzed without confirmation on the side of the participants. An important question is how the participants view their discourses, whether they see them as consistent, different, or how they perceive and interpret the incompatibility of explanations that they provide. If the participant does not agree with the researcher's interpretation, the validity of the findings is questionable (given that the discourse analysis operates in the theoretical assumptions of the phenomenological paradigm).

Updating new research issues

Discourse analysis clarifies the linguistic practices that allow things to take place by talking about them. These practices not only solve a problem, but also generate new problems. For example, developing a system to maintain a smooth conversation creates another problem – the need to develop a system to end the conversation. Introducing a new problem suggests that linguistic resources work as expected. Analysis productivity refers to the capability of the analysis to generate new explanations and new research problems. In my perspective, the aforementioned methods of discourse analysis validation are not entirely sufficient, and I suggest that they be supplemented with other qualitative approach techniques.

According to Mioviský (2006), the basic validity control techniques in discourse analysis must include the triangulation method. Several alternatives of this technique are used; in general, triangulation means finding and

determining the position of the object of research through three (and more) different data sources, perspectives (points of view), researchers, and ways of interpretation (see Čermák, Štěpaníková, 1998). Quality research tries to ensure triangulation in several ways: triangulation of researchers (analysis and interpretation of data, the author of the research consults with two other experts on an ongoing basis), triangulation of theoretical perspectives (it is confirmation of research results from the viewpoint at least three known established psychological theories/streams), triangulation of the employed methods (verification of discourse analysis results by two other methods of psychological research).

Another possibility of data validation is the method of systematic comparison; according to Silverman (2005), it is a process in which the researcher tries to constantly compare and look for another case on which the hypothesis could be tested. This method has a significant value in the data analysis phase. In practice, this represents continuous construction of basic discourse lines, comparison of the participants' statements, and their inclusion into one of the emerging discourses. This validation phase represents a continuous process of comparing emerging assumptions about the form of discourses and the data obtained from interviews.

In discourse analysis, it is appropriate to verify the validity of data by another method – by identifying restrained, unappealing respondents in order to reduce the possibility of elitism, i.e. data collection only from eloquent respondents highly interested to participate in research (see Huberman, Miles, 1984). According to Silverman (2005), a similar method is the analysis of deviant cases. Through this method, we analyze the respondents' discourses that, at a first glance, do not conform to the assumptions of the basic discourse organizing principle (in discourse analysis, identification of racist attitudes in the respondent who claims to be liberal and anti-racist).

The discussion on the validity of findings in discourse analysis can be concluded by Reason and Rowan's (1981) approach. They propose to justify the data validity through "revisiting" the study and having the participants respond with the benefit of hindsight. I agree with with Chrz's (2004) who understands the participants' statements as the creation of certain narratives influenced by the current context of the conversation, but also with Silverman (2005) who questions this procedure. I assume that going back

to the statements in hindsight (in a different or new context) would create new or different and unrepeatable perspectives on a given topic. It is the researcher's thorough reflection that can help cope with the "dynamics of change" caused by the impact that the context has on the ongoing research (see Mioviský, 2006).

4.2.10 RESEARCH REPORT

In discourse analysis, the report is more than the presentation of research findings. It is part of the confirmation and validation procedure of the entire research procedure. The analysis and conclusions should be presented in such a way that the reader can follow and evaluate the researcher's explanations. The report should include examples and their detailed explanation, the entire procedure of the analysis, justification of the procedure from data analysis to conclusions, and all this in sufficient detail. Each reader should have the opportunity to evaluate the stages of the analysis process, agree with them or have a basis for a contrary opinion. In this sense, discourse analysis is more rigorous than a report on an experiment, in which the independent control of data processing is often impossible.

A significant part of the report is taken up by excerpts from transcripts or documents. In its conclusion, a report should provide their detailed explanation and draw attention to the arrangement and structuring of the materials. In discourse analysis, extracts are examples of the mere data; they are not just illustrations of the data. In traditional content analysis, reliability is important, and it is determined through an agreement between independent assessors. The assessors' sharing of an opinion is generally accepted in the qualitative approach, yet with some reservations. The reason is that if both assessors come from the same stream and metaphorically use the same assessment scheme, the shared opinion relates more to the scheme than to the examined constructs.

4.2.11 APPLICATION

The practical use of discourse analysis proves that our understanding of the social world is completely mediated by discourse – conversations, newspapers, news, or commercials. Discourse analysis aims to create an

informed critical attitude towards discourses in general, to draw attention to the constructionist nature of discourse. It highlights the connection between talking about something in a certain way and specific measures and laws adopted in this area. The discourse analysis assumptions promote the transfer of results and findings into the practice.

4.3 A SURVEY OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS RESEARCH STUDIES

A literature review and a survey of the implemented research shows that discourse analysis represents a theoretical model rather than a practical method of exploration in psychology. This is to say, theoretical premises prevail (Kusá, 2010, Zabrodská, 2010), and specific research with documented methodology is absent. An overview of internationally published research indicates the consistency in the chosen theoretical and methodological frameworks. As expected, the familiarization with the classification of discourse analysis approaches and their theoretical frameworks has shown purposeful in understanding the entire process of discourse analysis. The published sources consider Potter and Edwards's (2001) work to be a classic example of discourse analysis. They are considered the founding authors; they introduced its possibilities in the processing of medical reports or media texts.

Since discourse analysis developed within the poststructuralist Foucauldian approaches, the outputs tend to take the perspective of critical discourse analysis; for instance, the outputs dealt with social constructions of homosexuality. Clarke, Kitzinger, Potter (2004) published ways in which interviewed gay parents constructed and defended their beliefs about the problems of homophobic bullying of children raised by heterosexual parents. Similarly, gender issues are tackled in Dixon and Wetherell's study (2001) – they identified interpretive repertoires by which partners mutually confirm/legitimize inequality of gender roles in everyday conversation. A discourse analysis view is applied to gender issues in, e.g. the work of Ahmed, Reavey, Majumdar (2009) who clarified the women's insight into the link between violence, ethnicity, and culture.

The applicability of discourse analysis is declared not only in gender research but also in other topics of psychological research. Dobson, Keith,

Drew (1999) focused on the clinical psychology and conducted interviews with depressed patients. The research brought findings related to the discourse on inferiority and negative self-esteem. The research by Rolfe, Oxford, and Dolton (2009) provides insights into the association between alcohol dependence, stress, and self-expression in women. Another insight into the psychology of health is Brehen and Stephens's research (2003) – they analyzed women's freely stated opinions to identify their attitudes towards menopause – they identified interpretive repertoires that helped the respondents reject the dominant medical discourse.

The discourse analysis approach aiming at a narrower definition of a discourse (discourse as a way of conducting a certain conversation) is seen in Silverman (1997). He explored ways in which counselors maintain control over the course of conversation when talking to HIV-infected patients, and how they thematize topics such as death, illness, or dying.

In the Czech and Slovak setting, discourse analysis is used to process and clarify two macro-social socio-psychological phenomena – gender and ethnicity. Research on gender issues was carried out by Stanková (2012), who pointed out three different discursive sources in the construction of parenthood (one dominant and two marginal) by using discourse analysis in the discussion of the participants. Despite some diversity in parental micro-discourses, she identified a predominant tendency towards the biologizing understanding of motherhood and fatherhood in both women and men. The biologizing view emphasizes the importance of parenthood for women, as well as the “suitability” or predisposition of women to parenthood, which then results in the secondary role of a man – father; in the biologizing discourse, a father (unlike a mother) does not have parental prerequisites, he only gradually acquires parenthood. The so-called emancipatory discourse of fathers emphasizes the importance of fatherhood (a father being as important as a mother). The third identified discourse in the study is the discourse of free choice; it implies that gender should not be a determining or limiting factor in one's performance in any area.

Critical discourse analysis is applied to gender issues (specifically the analysis of social constructions on paternity) in Petrjánošová's research (2013). She analyzed the media texts and identified explicit and implicit references to paternity in these texts. She states that the authors of these texts draw on dif-

ferent discourses in relation to the goal they want to achieve. She comments on how differently paternity is thematized in different contexts and describes what discursive structures are activated to make the theme prominent. She claims that different texts use different arguments when discussing paternity, the authors of the texts refer to different lead figures, emphasize different participants, but also use different vocabulary and a different degree of emotionality in the texts. Together with Láštíková (2010), she summarizes the possibilities of critical discourse analysis applied to mass media texts.

The discourse analysis approach, as indicated above, is mainly used when examining ethnic issues. The topic of ethnicity was focal in Láštíková's research (2007), in which she identified three basic discourses on Slovaks' patriotism. She stated that the identified discourses on patriotism (trivializing, individualistic, and pseudodeterministic) construct or co-construct a different identity of the author, and at the same time are marked by different organizational principles of discourse.

My research, in which I applied discourse analysis falls into two categories: 1/ works focusing on the subjectively assessed quality of life, 2/ works researching secondarily victimized children. As the present goal is to document the applicability of discourse analysis, I consider it important to present my experience with this method. In the following text, I describe significant findings pointing to the applicability and usefulness of discourse analysis in the research into psychological topics.

4.4 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS APPROACH IN THE RESEARCH ON SUBJECTIVELY ASSESSED QUALITY OF LIFE

My works on subjectively assessed quality of life embrace three topics:

- 1.) the impact of gender discourses on the quality of life,
- 2.) subjectively assessed quality of life in the discourse of psychiatric patients,
- 3.) parents' discourses on the psychological needs of children.

The following brief commentary on the published works aims to draw attention to specific findings that have not yet been revealed by other methods.

4.4.1 THE IMPACT OF GENDER DISCOURSE ON QUALITY OF LIFE

The first theoretical study that dealt with the relationship between quality of life and discourse is “The influence of gender discourse on men’s and women’s quality of life” (Mikulášková, 2004). It was framed in poststructuralism, specifically it drew on Foucault’s idea of the analogy of text and narration, which assumes that meaning is created by structuring experiences into a narration. It is through the implementation of the story how one’s life and relationships are constituted.

In the perspective of poststructuralism, the narrating of experiences depends on the language, as by attributing meaning to our experience, we also actively construct our relationships and lives. When we engage in language, we do not engage in a neutral activity. A particular culture has a “supply” of available discourses that are considered appropriate and relevant and help us express our personal experience. (A person who would describe oneself as sad and unhappy at the beginning of the 20th century could use the depression discourse to express the experience with oneself and to describe one’s current state).

Foucault’s ideas encourage the view that our understanding of lived experience, including what we call “self-understanding,” is also mediated through language. The discourse on “truth”, i.e. our discourse on what phenomena around us “really” are, is not isolated, but is created and operated within a unified/global leadership.

It can be stated that the quality of life is undoubtedly a multi-component model. However, as it seems, it is partly predetermined by whether we are a man or a woman. A man or a woman lives their life in a certain social space that determines the way of life and basic life values specific to their gender. If a man/woman is compliant with the prevailing discourses, it is possible that they will live their life of no lesser quality. Otherwise, they “go against the flow” and mostly at the cost of experiencing a failure, misunderstanding, feeling of isolation, because they perceive, interpret, and act differently than it is thought of the respective gender. The present study outlines how gender discourse can indirectly but intensively affect the quality of life.

4.4.2 SUBJECTIVELY ASSESSED QUALITY OF LIFE

The second study presents the research on changes in the subjective assessment of quality of life in patients after being diagnosed with a psychiatric condition (Mikulášková, Babinčák, 2012). The discourse analysis made it possible to clarify the impact of the diagnosed condition on the quality of life, based on the subjectively perceived assessment presented in the interviews. The analysis of the interviews pinpointed that the patients' discourse focused on changes in the psychological aspect of quality of life – low self-esteem, feelings of inferiority, morbidity, helplessness, and a change in one's career. When identifying other changes of psychological nature, the most significant discourse is the discourse on the negative, stable, change of identity (acceptance of the identity of a patient, which leads to helplessness and dependence on others and treatment).

No positive psychologically-related changes in the quality of life have been noticed among the respondents. If they were presented as positive, they implicitly indicated possible stigmatization (conclusive acceptance of the role of a sick person). Discourse analysis pointed out that respondents who accept their diagnosis also accept the “stigma” of a diagnostic label as an essential part of their lives as something permanent, unchanging, in some cases even declared as part of their identity. The results also confirm the theory of secondary deviance, according to which “labelling” can make a person gradually internalize, stereotype, and finally accept their new “deviant” identity. The results of the analysis showed, among other things, the validity of Goffman's considerations (Asylum 1990) in that conditions in some psychiatric institutions do not facilitate the normal functioning of the patients – they are not treated as ordinary people there.

Discourse analysis made it possible to identify another area of quality of life, in the field of environment – the discourse on the deteriorated quality of the provided health care dominated (downplaying physical difficulties by doctors, stereotypical assessment of their difficulties with regard to the mental disorder, and limited/denied access to information about their diagnosis. In identifying the impact/changes in the social aspect of quality of life, the dominant discourse was the discourse on discriminatory treatment by the environment, even loss of employment.

Discourse analysis of the respondents' statements also pointed out, in accordance with the theory of labelling (Kapř et al. Eds., 1994), that the mere labelling, the "stigmatizing" of a person may as well cause psychological harm. The results of the discourse analysis correspond to Schlippe and Schweitzer's opinion (2001) that if experts call on family members to "monitor" the psychological state of their loved one (the bearer of the diagnosis), it will only result in the family's contribution to the strengthening of the role of a patient rather than to the healing of the person. In summary, in this research, discourse analysis proved to be a useful method clarifying processual phenomena – gradual deterioration of quality of life and stigmatization by psychiatric diagnoses.

4.4.3 PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS AS A SELECTED ASPECT OF CHILDREN'S QUALITY OF LIFE – PARENTS' DISCOURSES

The third study focuses on the discourse related to the psychological needs of children as a selected aspect of the quality of life (Mikulášková, 2013). The discourse analysis was applied to the statements of parents who took part in the interviews. The research focused on a selected aspect of quality of life in children, namely what parents count as the child's psychological needs. By analyzing the parents' discourse, two basic discourses on the child's needs were identified – the discourse of psychological needs and the discourse of physiological needs.

In the discourse of psychological needs, four key topics were identified: the need for security and safety of children (mainly its psychological aspect – emotional security and safety, etc.), the need for the child's self-realization (recognition, self-assertion, performance), the need for social contact, and the need to know the world, its material and social components. An interesting result is that being praised by a father attracts more attention in the discourse. Discourse analysis pointed out that social needs do not form a homogeneous discourse in relation to the described quality of children's life. The relationship between quality of life and children's needs was presented only in subcategories: nuclear family continuity, parental acceptance and interest. In principle, parents attributed importance to a stricter upbringing of children, yet they did not associate it with the quality of life in their statements.

Other results pointed to the different needs with regard to the child's gender. By analyzing the discourse, I recorded a significantly different gender discourse in the parents' statements (in girls – physical contact and appreciation from the father, in boys – activity, stimulation, less emotional needs). This study confirmed the existence of gender stereotypes, both genders tend to use stereotypical assessment. The discourse analysis pointed out that the mother and the father share view on presenting psychological needs (the invalidity of the stereotype was confirmed). The form of discourse points to the fact that despite the different form of discourse (fewer words), men tend to present similar psychological needs as important.

4.5 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS APPROACH IN THE RESEARCH OF SECONDARILY VICTIMIZED CHILDREN

Discourse analysis method was also applied in the research of secondarily victimized children, and it was combined with other quantitative and qualitative approaches (Kovalčíková, Mikulášková, Karkošková, Fuchsová, Babinčák, 2012, Mikulášková, 2013). Since the topic of secondarily victimized children (children who witness violence against the mother) is socially and politically topical (and the results can be misused), it should be stressed that the research results do not present an “objective” reality. They capture the subjective reality – processed and presented in state administration records and presented in interviews with women.

Two types of materials were the object of discourse analysis: state administration records (case files describing domestic violence against the mother) and interviews with abused women. The main objective of the research was to identify: 1.) the way of how the violence against the mother and its impact on the child is presented in state administration files, 2.) the way of how the interviewed mother described the impact that witnessing violence had on the child in selected areas (performance in school, social relations, relationship with the mother, relationship with the father). The results were validated by two different types of discourse analysis – interview, written records. We found that the discourse on psychological violence prevailed (in women, namely the discourse associated with threatening their gender role, preventing access to information and to the shared property).

The women's prevailing discourse is the discourse about the aggressive father-in-law, dysfunctional ex-family of their partner, as well as the lack of family support (interesting data are the descriptions of the emotionally "cold" mother). In my view, the asset of the discourse analysis approach (analysis of the content and form of discourse) is in the clarification of mother being a role model. The content of the discourse indicated that mothers viewed themselves as positive role models for children, however, the form of discourse indicated the opposite (the validity of the finding that the mother is not a sufficient role model was confirmed through another research tool – in the scenario results). Mothers perceive their children, regardless of gender, as significant support and perceive their manifestation of love. Discourse analysis identified the following hidden discourses: 1/ the child's perspective – mothers did not describe their children's needs/hobbies, 2/ manifestation of children's affection to fathers, 3/ processing of the traumatic experience in conversation with parents.

The integration of all expressed and unexpressed descriptions of children's experiencing was summarized in the discourse on the secondarily victimized child, which in the later stages of the research was verified using the Hartr self-assessment scale and the scenario method.

Discourse on a Secondarily Victimized Child

The discourse on child experiencing integrates the results of all interviews with mothers. In order to assess the applicability of discourse analysis, I present it together with the psychological interpretation, which I consider to be a "working" hypothetical model necessitating further verification.

A) A child as a witness of violence

In the discourse, the "image" of the child as a frequent witness to violence against the mother dominates; mainly, it is emphasized what impact the perceived violence has on the child's self-esteem. Although the mother states that she does her best to care for the children emotionally and materially, her later statements cast doubt on their well-being. Discourse analysis shows that the child witnesses not only aggressive behavior towards the mother, which causes their fear and anxiety, but also the mother's "coping strategies" (e.g. the mother is cooking food for the father to calm him down

and is crying). Mothers' strategies can be an ambivalent message for children, and this can cause uncertainty and confusion in the child. The father becomes a significantly negative role model for the child, but the mothers' statements make the impression that the mother is another possible source of internal tension in the child.

In addition to the above, the child may experience ambivalence: on one hand, s/he perceives the mother's suffering, likes her, and defends her, but on the other hand, it is perhaps the mother who, in the child's eyes, "allows" the aggressor to resort to violence. The child thus enters into an "insoluble" conflict between the need to defend the mother and the need to show anger (also towards her, not just towards the father). A mother in a submissive position towards the father is probably not a proper role model for her children, and many children even take on (mothers explicitly stated this) the role of a mother. Fathers are probably identified by children as aggressors, with no possibility of influencing events. The father's aggression seems to work differently depending on whether the witness is a son or a daughter. Boys tend to defend their mother, as if compensating for the absent positive male role model and replacing the role of the father – the defender. Girls either actively act against the aggressor or are passive in the family (mothers describe them as emotionally cold).

B) Child and school

The topic of school as an institution is presented controversially in the mothers' discourse. Since this is very often the case of a child with good school results, their teachers are often unaware of the unfavorable family environment. Teachers are supportive if the child's school performance is unproblematic. If the child has poor study results or behaves aggressively, the school ceases to be a supportive institution.

C) Social relationships of a secondarily victimized child

Regarding socializing and relationships with peers, the child is presented as rather isolated, taking a submissive position among friends. Social isolation is indirectly supported by the fact that the child does not bring friends home because of the shame felt (mothers are also ashamed of the home environment). This brings multiple burdens to the child: not only does the

child lack support from the immediate family, but s/he is also deprived of support from grandparents (the positive father role model is also absent at the level of the grandparent subsystem).

D) Experiencing of a secondarily victimized child

The dominant discourse is the description of the tension and anxiety experienced by the child. It can be manifested externally through disturbed sleep, bedwetting, escape from the worrying reality by means of daydreaming, and other manifestations of anxiety. The child's impaired self-esteem is a significant topic of the discourse. In some cases, the mother deals with this through the help of a psychologist. However, learning that the child visits the psychologist leads to further stigmatization of the child and their rejection by other children. Discourse analysis pointed out that the child lives not only in constant stress, but also in experienced ambivalence, which may be more traumatic than mothers assume. The validity of the "working" experiencing model of a secondarily victimized child was confirmed with quantitative research tools – Hartr's methodology (see Babinčák, Mikulášková, Kovalčíková, 2012) and scenarios.

4.6 SUMMARY

The following results offer the final evaluation of the discourse analysis approach; I dare venture, the only way of obtaining them is the analysis of interviews. Discourse analysis:

- 1.) provided information on possible reasons why children did not see their mother as a role model,
- 2.) clarified another source of experienced tension (to-date research assumed that it was only the father),
- 3.) brought knowledge about the gradual process of social isolation of the child,
- 4.) provided insight into why and how the school, as an important institution, does not fulfil a protective function,
- 5.) provided one of the explanations for the mechanism of transgenerational transmission of violence (it was assumed that the aggressor was a person who had experienced aggression before), but the results point

to the complex nature of this phenomenon (violence transmission occurs mainly if the partner does not have social support in the family).

The conducted research met the postulated objectives and, in accordance with the idea of how discourse analysis can be valid, it brought a number of new research topics that should be processed by combining qualitative and quantitative approaches (which can also validate the present findings). The challenge for further research is to clarify the connection between the woman's/man's primary families and violence happening in their current family, to clarify the children's real performance and, above all, to clarify the child's view (how they perceive the relationship with their father, mother, and grandparents).

5. CONCLUSION

The monograph presents the analysis of the theoretical sources of discourse analysis, introduces the discourse analysis methodology, and documents its applicability in the psychological research. As pointed out, the emergence and development of this method is significantly related to the development of other, or related, disciplines. I agree with Plichtová (2010) that discourse analysis (unlike other methods of psychological research) is an interdisciplinary and complex construct that allows for defining relationships between language, subject, and object of narration.

Several theories influenced and shaped the current form of discourse analysis. Historically, it was inspired by the works of poststructuralists (Foucault), by Wittgenstein's concept of language games, by Austin's theory of speech acts, and it was supported by social sciences closely related with psychology – ethnomethodology and semiology. Discourse analysis is not a unidimensional theoretical concept, and thus does not have a uniform methodology. The goals of discourse analysis and those of critical discourse analysis are different. Critical discourse analysis, as a subcategory of discourse analysis, integrates the linguistic analysis with the analysis of social practices, even allows for several directions: socially cognitive, discursive-historical Viennese school, or a stream emphasizing the exploration of the relationship between the specific use of a language and broader socio-cultural structures. This brief summary of theoretical approaches is not purposeless; it serves the illustration of the complex nature of discourse analysis approach. I believe, only if the author of the research becomes thoroughly acquainted with these concept, can high-quality research be done.

The description of the discourse analysis methodology aims at acquainting with the individual steps of its implementation (also because of the absence of its comprehensive treatment in the current literature). The transparency of the methodology is not only a matter of quality research standards, (in the sense of the “necessity” that we endure) but is primarily intended to serve the enhancement of the chosen method. This can be an inspiration for future research.

The community of researchers who prefer a qualitative approach incline (for various reasons – and quantitative researchers have them, too) to “self-management” in order to support their own assumptions (i.e. verifying, checking, and confronting the findings within one approach). Even if the procedure is well-intended, this way of improving our own methodology exposes us to the risk of being overwhelmed by our own professional/personal assumptions; as a consequence, we neglect other approaches, yet most importantly it becomes questionable what value is ascribed to the knowledge only shared within one community and not properly communicated to others.

It should also be mentioned that discourse analysis is not a mechanical procedure, and like most qualitative (but also quantitative) methods, it requires the acquisition of certain skills (just as driving a car, cycling) – this does not presuppose just theoretical analysis, but also repeated implementation of the procedure. A necessary part of considering discourse analysis and the possibilities of its use in psychological research is the search for answers to the question: how is discourse analysis different from other methods, what novelty does it contribute? Based on the study of the literature and the conducted research, the following ideas are worth consideration:

1/ discourse analysis works with speech – the natural manifestation of an individual; it does not require the researcher to induce an unnatural situation (ecological validity ensured),

2/ paradoxically, despite its “novelty”, discourse analysis has a strong complex multidisciplinary theoretical background,

3/ discourse analysis makes it possible to clarify the hitherto hidden connection between the language used and the topics studied in psychology (beliefs, attitudes),

4/ discourse analysis allows for an analysis of the ready-to-use material (documents, interviews, records of meetings), but unlike the classic positivist content analysis, it makes possible to analyze the meaning of the text and its socio-political consequences,

5/ I dare say, as one of the few psychological research methods, discourse analysis is able to comment on processual phenomena – it was documented in the research on, e.g. the emergence and gradual development of stigmatization by psychiatric diagnoses (Mikulášková, 2008) or the gradual negative impact of child-perceived violence on the mother (Kovalčíková, Mikulášková et al., 2012),

6/ discourse analysis makes it possible to grasp phenomena in greater complexity (a similar method that can clarify the “networks” of respondents’ beliefs is, to my knowledge, IDEX),

7.) discourse analysis, by not examining the content of what has been said, but mainly the way in which the phenomena are depicted, it does not give the respondent space for answers that would be socially desirable (it offers psychology a partial solution of how to obtain and interpret the respondents’ answers).

Discourse analysis, despite the aforementioned advantages, similarly to other research methods in psychology, has several “gaps” that require theoretical and methodological enhancement. The following considerations offer some food for thought for future work. Thorough acquaintance with the literature (the starting point is the present work) indicates that the information on discourse analysis as a theoretical construct is in excess. In other words, it provides researchers with a rationale for using it, but lacks more precise “guidance” on how to conduct research. Since discourse analysis, as a relatively stable method, dates back to the end of the 20th century, plus not every research problem is suitable to be solved by this method, this shortcoming is understandable. The absence of a wide range of research probably leads to concerns about using this method, consequently less research is published, and the imaginary circle is undesirably closed.

An overview of the research conducted in Slovakia shows that the preference is given to critical discourse analysis (gender and ethnicity); research on particular respondents’ issues is rare or even absent. Since more research is of a critical-discursive nature, this theory provides a more accurate description of the methodology. With regard to classic discourse analysis, it is desirable to elaborate on the description of discursive structures suitable for analysis. I perceive this shortcoming as a challenge and the solution is offered in multidisciplinary. If the discourse analysis is to be a transparent and sophisticated method, it is necessary to cooperate with linguists (who are familiar with the structures of a language, although they do not interpret the specific psychological meaning in them). The gained experience points to the diversity, quality and validity (the data were validated by other methods) of the findings obtained by this method.

In conclusion, it can be stated that Wittgenstein's ideas of a language being not just a reflective but also a constitutive tool of shaping reality are valid. Talking about things not only in terms of the content of speech, but above all in terms of the chosen form of discourse induces, maintains, and confirms differentiated forms of social reality.

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