

Domeniul de predilecție al idiolectului ar fi, după Rabatel, interacțiunea, cel al stilului ar fi genul de discurs, iar cel al ethosului ar fi argumentarea.

Aceste trei componente ale figurii de autor se leagă de problematica PDV, acoperind ansamblul fenomenelor lingvistice și retorico-textuale prin care autorul „îmbină limbajul și experiența, limbajul și valorile (inclusiv estetice), limbajul și acțiunea” (p. 70). Aceasta este baza translingvistică pe care Alain Rabatel așază relațiile dintre idiolect, stil și ethos. După o analiză enunțiativă și interacțională a idiolectului, fenomen deopotrivă lingvistic și ideologic, Rabatel abordează problema stilului, plecând de la noțiunea de mijloace de expresie, care îi permite să elaboreze o concepție monistă a stilului în opoziție cu concepțiile dualiste, larg vehiculate în acest domeniu. Folosind instrumentele pe care le oferă cadrul enunțiativ și textual în abordarea stilului, Alain Rabatel se străduiește să aproximeze raportul dintre « le poids configurant des déterminations socio-culturelles et la force reconfigurante des innovations individuelles et collectives » (p. 482). Demarcându-se de concepțiile dominante, care reduc stilul la textele literare, Rabatel alege spre exemplificare o figură de autor din sfera cercetării lingvistice. Figura autorului lingvist Jean-Michel Adam este prezentată într-o dublă postură enunțiativă: prima este postura care se degajă din lucrările de lingvistică textuală ale lui J.-M. Adam, iar a doua, cea care trimite la o figură de autor vulgarizator adresându-se unui public studentesc. Fie că o privim în cadrul stilului, al idiolectului sau al ethosului, figura de autor este supusă unor tensiuni între afirmarea de sine, « *la primauté de sa singularité* » și „*primatul condițiilor sociale*” în care ea se formează (p. 76).

Ampla lucrare a lui Alain Rabatel abordează o problematică complexă și îndelung dezbătută. Fenomenul figural a dat naștere unei întregi literaturi situate la confluența mai multor domenii: retorică, stilistică, lingvistică, pragmatică. Lucrarea aduce o contribuție importantă, în primul rând prin metoda inedită de analiză (funcțiile enunțiativă și textuale ale punctului de vedere), și în al doilea rând prin aceea că, pe de o parte, tratează figuri puțin studiate de lingvistică (antimetabol, *à-peu-près*, listă, repetiție...), iar, pe de altă parte, îmbogățește descrierea unor figuri ce au cunoscut diverse abordări (ironie, umor, hiperbolă, paradox...). În fine, ca să cităm chiar cuvintele autorului (p. 24). « cet ouvrage défend une conception énonciative globale du fait figural qui va plus loin que ce que les taxinomies anciennes ou récentes rangent sous cette dénomination ».

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WENDY AYRES-BENNETT, HELENA SANSON (eds.),
Women in the History of Linguistics, Oxford, Oxford
University Press, 2020, 648 p.

Where are the women? The question has been sounding louder and louder for the past few decades. In the wake of renewed feminist energies released by the #Me Too movement, women academics have also started posing this question with regard to various fields of academic inquiry, including music, history, economics, and international politics, in a collective effort “to change the traditional male-dominated methodologies and canon across a range of disciplines” (p. 1). If arts and humanities, and especially the literary canon, have often been more open to acknowledging the value of women writers and artists, notably since the 19th century onward, other areas of research are still to find those women usually seated, by historical circumstances, in the back rows of science and politics, many of them anonymous, or their names only mentioned in passing. Failing to do so may mean not only a biased outlook on the development of these fields, but also losing a whole dimension intrinsic to each of them.

For instance, speaking about international relations, Cynthia Enloe (*Bananas, Beaches and Bases*, 2014) describes state relations as depending “not only on capital and weaponry but also on the control of women as symbols, consumers, workers, and emotional comforters”, something that male economists have also noticed, not only with regard to capital (Thorstein Veblen), but also with regard to their own body of work. The conjoint influence of John Stuart Mill’s wife and daughter on the economist’s thought is a somewhat rare instance of such acknowledgement: “Myself and the work I have done [...] are the products not of one intellect and conscience, but of three” (Robert L. Heilbroner, *The Worldly Philosophers*, 1953). Otherwise, economics remains a field where women are noticeably underrepresented as professionals, especially in the academia (Betsey Stevenson and Hanna Zlotnick, *Representations of Men and Women in Introductory Economics Textbooks*, 2018), despite the breakthrough research in the newly established field of feminist economics in the late 1980s (Marilyn Waring, *If Women Counted: A New Feminist Economics*, 1988).

Historiographers have moved even further in the direction of uncovering women’s contributions to human progress. Lucy Worsley, one of the foremost representatives of feminist voices in the field, has recently prefaced the British edition of the first book entirely concerned with the image and role of women in the development of mankind, from prehistorical times to modern feminism (*Women: Our History*, 2019). While the chapter dedicated specifically to female literature through the ages is, given the scope of the volume, not particularly comprehensive, language-related issues are mentioned throughout the book, especially in connection with the essential role played by women in preserving their communities’ linguistic heritage. For instance, the most important writers of the Heian period were women who lacked the education necessary to write in Chinese. Consequently, all their works are written in the language of the people (Japanese), and this may be one of the most relevant reasons why the Heian period is now considered to be the golden age of home-grown Japanese culture. Such examples can be noticed around the world and across the ages. Having said that, the opposite also holds true. It is not seldom that women had to abandon their native languages and adopt the language of the conquerors, sometimes finding themselves in the position of linguistic and political mediators between their own tribes and the invaders, as in Pocahontas’ case (Camilla Townsend, *Pocahontas and the Powhatan Dilemma*, 2005).

This kind of linguistic adaptability seems to be one of the features that characterize women’s historical path. Despite that, the largest *Who’s Who* in the history of world linguistics published so far, edited by Harro Stammerjohann in 1996 (*Lexicon Grammaticorum* 1996) and revised in 2009, has no entries on women linguists active before the 18th century (when only one is mentioned) (p. 3). Given the seeming paucity of relevant information, therefore, and not a moment too soon, the book entitled *Women in the History of Linguistics*, edited by Wendy Ayres-Bennett and Helena Sanson, both working for the University of Cambridge, comes to complete the singular, and singularly important, project of uncovering women’s contributions to the history of the field.

Having noticed themselves the deep-rooted gap in research concerning women’s role in the history of linguistics “on their own terms” (p. 2), the two editors’ professed aim is not only to challenge linguistic ideas developed in male-dominated accounts and expand the field of inquiry into historical linguistics, but also to discover the “distant and neglected voices” (p. 1) of women who broadened our knowledge of languages either by describing them or by analysing their codification and acquisition methods. The subject itself seems to be close to the editors’ hearts. Before embarking on this complex project, Ayres-Bennett has also included a chapter on women’s influence on French language in the 17th century in her book on *Sociolinguistic Variation in Seventeenth-Century France* (2004), while Sanson’s interest in the topic is persistent in her works on women, language and literature in Italy, from medieval to modern times. Their own contributions to the volume are, therefore, focused on the marginalised contributions and silent voices of women in the Italian cultural context (Sanson) and on women as linguistic writers and audience in the French tradition (Ayres-Bennett).

Perhaps it’s worth mentioning that research on the issue of women’s language (i.e. the language spoken by women) is not new. In his volume of linguistic anthropology (*Language. Its Nature, Development and Origin*, 1922), Otto Jespersen dedicates a subchapter to “The Woman” (although there’s no such subchapter on “The Man”, which already suggests that his perspective on women’s

language takes it to be a case of deviation from male standard language). Discussing French, English and non-European examples, he concludes that “there can be no doubt that women exercise a great and universal influence on linguistic development through their instinctive shrinking from coarse and gross expressions and their preference for refined and (in certain spheres) veiled and indirect expressions” (*ibidem*, p. 246). It is therefore up to men to be “the chief renovators of language”. Were it not for their “vigour and vividness” of expression, language left to women would be in danger of remaining forever “languid and insipid” (*ibidem*, p. 247). On the other hand, Jespersen himself notices the strong foreign language learning abilities women seem to possess (they are “linguistically quicker than men”), even though he attributes these skills to the traditional system of female upbringing, according to which, along with “music and embroidery”, speaking a foreign language was a “specially feminine accomplishment” (*ibidem*, p. 249). Under the circumstances, he seems genuinely surprised to note that linguistics itself as the science of language has very few women representatives (“women votaries”, as he calls them).

The topic of women’s language is also taken up again in the context of gender studies, the field itself born in the middle of the 1990s third-wave feminism. Revisiting and popularising earlier feminist work on women’s language becomes *de rigueur* at this point, with Robin Tolmach Lakoff’s article “Language and Woman’s Place” (1973) a landmark on the subject. As though replying to Jespersen’s treatment of “The Woman”, Lakoff remarks that the fact itself of speaking about a “woman’s language” implies the marginality of women to the serious topics of life discussed by men. She approaches the subject both from the perspective of the way women are expected to speak and from that of the ways they are spoken about by others, aiming to demonstrate that standardised language works against treating women “as serious persons with individual views” and justly observing that linguistics data only reflect the social mores of the times when they are collected.

So, considering the existing amount of research into linguistic variation between the sexes, it is surprising to see how very little has been done to analyse women’s contribution to shaping the way we think about language in general. That is why, besides revisiting and detailing much of the information on women’s language already mentioned in *Women: Our History*, the new volume edited by the two researchers is meant to focus specifically and entirely on the part played by women in the linguistic tradition understood as comprising not only institutional contexts but also, given women’s educational circumstances, domestic ones. In view of this purpose, the two researchers wish to broaden the meaning of the term “linguistics” (a field of study founded on scientific methodology, most often confined to the academia, traditionally represented by male researchers with access to higher learning) to include the study of language in all its forms and interdisciplinary networks. Once the background is thus enlarged, women’s contributions begin to shine through, revealing a rich authorship tradition. Women become suddenly visible as translators and interpreters, as writers of grammars and dictionaries and of studies in philology and critical editions, but also as those who record and preserve little-known languages, and who produce language teaching and learning textbooks. Some even play a role in debates on language use and language policies, influencing official language versions and writing systems in their countries.

An ambitious project both diachronically (from the late 15th century to the beginning of the 20th century) and geographically, the book comprises nineteen studies, most of them by women scholars, each taking up women’s language or linguistic representation in different countries or parts of the world, such as Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, the Netherlands, Britain and Scandinavia, but also Russia and the United States, China, Japan and India, Australia, Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. If many other linguistic traditions have remained uncovered, it is not for lack of interest on the part of the two editors, who disclose their original intention to include the Greek, Finnish, Polish or Romanian experience into the project. However, as it has turned out in the case of Romania, there seems to be no record of women’s taking part in linguistics before the 1950s (2020, p. 11) or, if these women’s voices exist, bringing them out of obscurity is still an ongoing process.

Just to emphasise the fact that there is a starting point to this kind of research, it’s worth mentioning that peculiarities in women’s language have also been recorded by Romanian scholars, and long before the 20th century. In his *Descriptio Moldaviae* (1716), for example, Cantemir mentions that Moldavian women and men speak differently, referring to certain variations in their pronunciation.

Today, even if their interests lie in literature and sociology rather than in linguistics, authors such as Ioana Pârvulescu still manage to expose some of the linguistic habits of women in 19th century Romania (*În intimitatea secolului 19*, 2009). Writing about their education, she mentions letters in which husbands entreat their wives not to neglect practising their French, German and gymnastics, or letters in which young women write in German and French with the distinct purpose of practising these languages. This kind of evidence of women as assiduous language learners in the Romanian space suggests that there may be more to the contribution of women to linguistics in this country if researchers cared enough to take a closer look, something we believe will happen soon enough.

So, even though it is not an exhaustive project, the historical and spatial span of the study proposed by Ayres-Bennett and Sanson underlines the challenging nature of the contributors' work. They need, and display, on the one hand all the skills of linguistic historians, including looking for and analysing any existing manuscripts or surviving sources and, on the other hand, the ability and sensitivity required by a feminist perspective. By completing such an important investigation – the very first on the subject of women in linguistics – they set the tone for the entire body of research to follow. Work on the twentieth century, from the onset of World War II onwards, still remains to be done by equally dedicated researchers determined to discover the “submerged archipelago” (p. 6) of women whose language-related activities have made an unostentatious, but nonetheless universal, difference to the way we think about linguistics today.

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