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Assertiveness of Discursive Self-referential Identity: Postmodern Paradigm

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Abstract: The article analyzes the theoretical foundations that made it possible to identify patterns and explanatory principles of assertive behavior of discursive self-referential identity in the sphere of interpersonal relationships. The process of self-reference is viewed through operations: self-determination, self-recognition, self-creation, self-reproduction, and self-realization. They help to distinguish and describe identity, where discourse is a communicative field of meaning against which the process of creating discursive self-referential identity takes place. The assertive behavior is viewed in the context of life meanings, emphasizing the need to enhance the subjectivity of life, which allows to build such relationships with the outside world that promote creative growth, expanding the degree of freedom and self-development based on responsibility for their feelings, actions and relationships with others acts of social interaction. The conclusion is made about the correspondence of assertive behavior with the content of the category "discursive self-referential identity" as self-representation, constructed in the process of self-reference. Qualitative characteristics of assertive behavior of discursive self-referential identity are revealed. It is noted that assertive behavior forms a model of transparent self-referential identity, which focuses on free, autonomous, transparent self-creation and self-realization in interpersonal communications. An indicator of the model is the need to "be yourself", which, in the context of the uncertainty and volatility of social reality, allows us to build relationships with the outside world that facilitate the self-realization of the subject.

Keywords: *identity; assertiveness; assertive behavior; self-reference; construction.*

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Introduction. Topicality

Postmodern and post-classical thinking inherent in it place in the center of psychological research the subjective criteria and interpretations from own experience, self-organization and self- construction, what become a sign of individuality, uniqueness of worldview of personality (Ceauşu, 2018). The necessity to take into account the postmodern field of psychological science makes it possible to see the identity of the individual in a new perspective, where post-nonclassical methodology emphasizes the process of its interpretation and construction.

Thus, the categories "identity", "self-referentiality" and "assertiveness" are linked and understood in the context of post-classical scientific thinking. In our opinion, despite the considerable level of research in the time interval, the depth of these categories leaves room for their refinement in applied research. Above all, we explain the relevance of the study as the impact of the consequences of social transformation and the situation of uncertainty on the subject of understanding the processes of self-determination and self-fulfillment in different areas of life: marriage, family, professional, intimate and personal. In this regard, the scholarly discourse redefines the classic-traditional notion of identity as a stable coherent core of personality. In a number of studies, scholars have substantiated the idea that, in the postmodern world, identity becomes an achievement not of consciousness but of relationships and is formed on the basis of a situationally communicative experience. The investigated category is considered in view of its discursive nature and multiple essence, conditioned by the principle of self-referential social system, discovered by N. Luman (2009), and is perceived as an object of social design and construction M. Jorgensen and L. Phillips (2008). In view of the foregoing, the identity phenomenon is that by positioning it in discourses, the subject is determined by who he is and what he is. Therefore, we consider the position of B. Benwell, E. Stokoe, according to which identity is not displayed in the discourse, but dynamically constructed in it (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). Obviously, in postmodern sociality, the notion of identity as a socio-psychological phenomenon is radically transformed in connection with another type of rationality. This means that the category "identity" is no longer interpreted only within the framework of a single semantic center model, but is a multiple discursive construct of a polydiscursive space and is self-determined and self-fulfilling in social practices. We can confidently say that identity is created and maintained by discourse as a social practice,

involved in shaping the social world and reflecting understanding of communication as a social process. The analysis of communications in social practices points to changes in the sense where "the world in myself" "and the world around me" is transformed into "the world for myself" (Kochubeynik, 2010), thus realizing the actual life intentions of the subjects of relations. O. Issers notes that "the discursive formation of society is caused by the free play of ideas in the minds of people. This is a consequence of their social practice, which is deeply rooted and focused on material, social structures" (Issers, 2015 : 83). It should be noted that in modern social conditions the processes of individualization and formation of subjectivity are intensifying, where the basis is taking care of oneself, the content of which is revealed in the process of self-reference.

The purpose of this article is to identify patterns and explanatory principles of assertive behavior of discursive self-referential identity in the sphere of interpersonal relations.

Discursive Self-referential identity in postmodern sociality

In the context of the new methodology, articulation on the correspondence of assertiveness and self-referential identity contributes to understanding the phenomenon of new sociality. Let us consider the theoretical and methodological aspects of the content of the categories "discursive self-referential identity" and "assertiveness", which reveal the explanatory principles of assertive behavior of discursive self-referential identity.

In post-classical sociality, identity is viewed through the understanding of the subject primarily as a subjective position within the discursive structure. According to N. Luhmann's system theory, the principle of self-referentiality is to distinguish and self-describe identities among many others, where self-identification occurs through correlation with one's own personality. As a set of communications, the social system has external and internal reasons to reproduce itself. According to N. Luman, the reproduction of oneself through one's own operations solves the problem of subject and object, because as a system it creates a description of itself, and every communication involves a self-description. This is due to the fact that these operations are possible only in the system and the possibility of joining the operations the system is looking for only in itself. Self-referential systems are capable of observing themselves, adjusting their own operations to their own identity on the basis of a distinction, by which

it is possible to distinguish their identity (Luman, 2009: 96). Thus, according to N. Luman, subjects are also defined as self-referential systems.

In our opinion, discursive self-referential identity (DSI) as a category explains the principle of multiple identity formation in postmodern realities, which differs significantly from the principles of its formation in modern conditions, where the key categories were stationarity, inviolability, integrity, monism, linearity and stability.

Excessive emphasis on social aspects of identity formation and insufficient attention to the individual motives of the subject gave reason to K. Zlokazov capable of finding new directions of self-development, possessing greater potential of self-regulation and more mature mechanisms of social functioning in comparison with those who imitate predetermined models of identity (Zlokazov, 2015). K. Zlokazov rightly notes the transformation of the theoretical construct of identity: "the vivid features of its transformation are the expansion of the field of analysis from the psychological to the social and cultural contexts of identity development; the transition from static, "frame" models of identity to dynamic ones that focus on changing the content of aspects of identity" (Zlokazov, 2015). Instead, in postmodern sociality, the DSI theoretical model emphasizes functioning rooted in the subjectivity of a life position, which is formed in relation to the surrounding reality, to oneself, to others. We consider the above as a statement of paradigm shift from classical to post-classical, which led to the adoption of a fundamentally different ontology - discursive, where linguistic acts and discourses play a major role. The discursive approach makes it possible to consider identity as a continuously changing product of local situations, which in different discourses allows the multiple identifications.

Thus, we consider the process of self-reference through operations: self-determination, self-recognition, self-creation, self-reproduction and self-realization, through which identity is distinguished and described, where discourse is the communicative field of meaning, against which the process of creating discursive self-referential identity takes place. In addressing oneself, self-referential identity identifies itself according to the relationships, actions, and behavioral situations in which it is involved. Differentiating multiple identities allows the subject to determine what his or her need is and make sense in an actual communicative situation. Essentially, in creating a self-description, self-referential identity also describes the meaning of the social practice in which self-realization takes place.

The following is an understanding of the content of operations of the process of identity self-reference (Yatsina, 2015).

1. Self-determination - establishing one's attitude to acceptance / denial, identification /

alienation of values, norms, rules, traditions, stereotypes, roles.

It is known that the culture of any historical period, as a set of discourses, allows subjectivity to be within a certain historical consciousness, which determines the limits of the interpretation of its individual consciousness. Subjectivity is conditioned by the nature of communication with Others / Others and is built in their close interaction. Thus, subjectivity is formed by a world represented by discursive practices, which explains the coexistence of a set of non-identical meanings against which individual values and identities are constructed. The peculiarity of the operation of self-determination is that it occurs in a situation of uncertainty, blurry, superfluous meanings, in which subjectivity as a property of consciousness and the factor of human identity is perceived by the world in its plurality: mottled, shocking, dissimilarity, novelty, tradition, stereotype. In this spatial diversity of discourses and subjective experiences, personality is released from sole subjectivity, its self-determination is given by discourses that distinguish and denote multiple identities. Self-determination is governed by the content of one's own experiences and is not determined by socially prescribed prescriptions, stereotyped behavioral frames. In this context, we draw attention to the fact that self-determination involves the responsibility of the individual for planning actions, decisions in accordance with their standards, principles, and made choices and their results (Sălceanu, 2019). Therefore, identity as a discursive self-referential formation, self-determination, resolves a situation whose meaning is meaningful for distinguishing and defining oneself; self-organizing constructs goals, meanings, means of action; individually distinguishes itself from others.

2. Self-cognition is an operation whereby identity acquires a special perception –

"postmodern sensitivity".

It is known, the concept of identity rethinks the role and place of sensitivity in the ontological structure and vital functions of the individual, so the identity judgment is logically considered through its feeling, perception and experience. In this context, "postmodern sensibility" is interpreted as the perception of the world when it comes to worldviews, to a deeply emotional, internally felt, lived reaction to the biographical situation, to the surrounding fragmentary world with its local situations. According to O. Kochubeynik, postmodern sensitivity becomes the main tool of cognition, which allows to identify and capture the diversity of individual life experience and the social world, and therefore all procedures for obtaining

and interpreting data are aimed at "grasping" how the individual, through his or her unique subjective understanding of the surrounding social world, translates and generates intersubjective meanings (Kochubeynik, 2010). Using this understanding of "postmodern sensitivity", we note that the operation of self-discovery reveals the sensitivity of the subject to changes in communicative situations in which he is sensitive to his own peculiarity.

At the same time, the articulation of one's own feelings and experiences is of major importance for the DSI. The main feature of any experience is that it has a directly bodily sense. It should be noted that the concept of "experience" is one of the key in phenomenology and hermeneutics, the beginning of which was studied by E. Husserl in connection with the study of self-consciousness as an experience of oneself, physical and mental states of one's body in the context of the phenomenal "I". The concept of experience is also reflected in the phenomenological concept of J. Jendlin, within which the concept of "felt meaning, felt sense" is analyzed. This is what we feel when we turn to ourselves. It is a carnal feeling that exists when it matters to us, what we do, what happens to us. "Any situation in a certain way is experienced by us on the bodily level and gives rise to a certain" inner "bodily feeling" (Jendlin, 2000: 255), - assures J. Jendlin. We believe that the above emphasizes not only the importance of experiences in the life of the subject as an experience of his interaction with the world, but also emphasizes the importance of these discoveries in himself, which becomes a resource in self-knowledge. Therefore, due to the special sensitivity / "tangible meaning" a person is able to determine for themselves the importance, value of the communicative situation and the meaning of the constructed practice.

At the same time, we note that in modern rationality, along with the change in the way of thinking, subjectivity changes and becomes complicated. Because of this, it seems to go beyond itself: it disintegrates, is replaced by an infinite number of "simulacra masks". Thus, we conclude that subjectivity is learned in a certain communicative situation, it exists in it and influences the ability to change regarding the urgency of one's needs, feelings, desires, etc.

3. Self-creation - aimed at creating the subject of self in a discursively formed social.

In the works of M. Boryshevsky (Boryshevsky, 2013), self-creation is defined as the process of building oneself and one's self in order to reach agreement with oneself in order to preserve identity as an active subject of self-creation with a relatively high level of development. The scientist considered self-creation as "an ontological category, in the context of which

one realizes the alternatives and perspectives of preservation and development of being human as a supreme being, and the condition or principle of self-creation is the spirituality of personality as the basis for its ascension to the highest values" (Boryshevsky, 2013). From this point of view, self-presentation is presented as "self-activity of the individual, which implies a relatively high level of its development, in particular, a significant representation in its structure of such entities as moral beliefs, formed worldviews and other orientations are constituents of the spirituality system, the presence of a structured "I-concept", the development of the system of self-regulation and some components, which testify to a sufficiently high level of development of the individual as an open socio-psychological system, which is in a state of constant self-development" (Boryshevsky, 2013).

Certainly, in postmodern sociality with its uncertainty, fragmentation and singularity, the purpose of self-creation cannot preserve the integrity and stability of identity when it comes to "avoiding fixation and preserving freedom of choice" (Bauman, 2009). Within the cited is our approach, in which the multiplicity of identity is the answer to the challenges of situations in which the self-creation of identity consists in the feeling and disclosure of one's personality in the changing patterns of the outside "world" (Bauman, 2008: 94).

In our view, in the discursive field of meanings, a person aligns himself / herself with the mosaic of the social world with the individual meanings of practices and multiple representations of himself / herself. And while its content is reminiscent of a collage, in our view it only reinforces the value of identity creation in social practices.

4. Self-realization is the operation of performing targeted behavioral acts, actions in which self-referential identity distinguishes and describes itself.

It is important to emphasize the essential importance of one's own feelings, thoughts, values, which make it possible to understand oneself. Each person creates his own design of his life, and constructing identity on the basis of transcendental values is not denied - only the discourse about their alleged absolute value changes. Thus, identity, characterized by G. Saikina, becomes "an objective social force capable of influencing not only the perception of sociality in a specific defined quality, but also the objective social structures and connections, as well as the way of life of a person in society" (Saikina, 2015). In full agreement with the researcher, it should be noted that filled with an individual sense of existence, identity is experienced

and lived not only as a subjective phenomenon, but as an objective component of the modern plural world.

Assertiveness as a means of self-expression of discursive self-referential identity

In view of the above, assertiveness is perceived as a means of self-expression by the DSI. This opinion does not contradict the position of V. Romek's researcher, who gave special emphasis to the formation of techniques of their own behavior or their own position. In their belief, "assertive behavior" is the establishment of relationships that promote creative growth, willpower and self-development based on the responsibility for choosing one's feelings, actions and relationships with oneself and others; the ability to predict the system-forming role of assertiveness in the personality structure of the subject of adaptation and its essential role in the self-disclosure of the individual in special conditions of life; identifying assertiveness as a subjective personality trait that integrates initiative and willingness to take risks in difficult life situations, self-confidence and positive attitude to others, the ability to make decisions freely and be responsible for their consequences, perseverance in protecting their rights and achieving their lives, aimed at self-disclosure and self-improvement (Romek, 1996). Perseverance (as well as courage and determination) refers to the subjective qualities of the individual, provided they are not related to a specific situation and become a generalized way of behavior in all situations where justified risk is needed to succeed. Perseverance should be distinguished from destructive forms of aggression. Persistent, hostile behavior, seeks to protect one's rights and interests in achieving the goal, and is defined as an assertive position (Renger & Mommert, 2019). Assertive position contributes to the direction of aggression in the constructive channel (constructive aggression), is developmental, stimulating and fruitful in solving problems in a changing environment. Constructive aggression serves the goals and promotes self-fulfillment as a fundamental human need. According to scientists, each person is born with the potential of the so-called constructive aggression, that is, with the desire to learn the world around, to creatively realize themselves. In normal development, constructive aggression leads to creativity and creation. With defective development, constructive aggression develops into destructive (Lenţa & Viorica, 2017). The criteria for constructive reactions are: determination of their requirements by the social environment; focus on solving certain problems; unambiguous motivation and clear purpose; awareness of

behavior; the presence in the manifestation of reactions of certain changes in the intrinsic personality and interpersonal interaction. These forms of behavior fully characterize the assertive behavior of the individual in society.

The idea of assertiveness as a practical methodological theory of interpersonal interaction was proposed and developed by the American psychologist A. Salter. The assertiveness (lat. assero - to claim) was investigated by the author as a certain way of behavior of the person, accompanied by a sense of respect for one's own personality and emotional-value attitude to other people. A. Salter believes that a person with a developed sense of self-respect in any situation is able to act assertively, openly, confidently and decisively (Salter, 1949). Assertive actions of personality are revealed in behavior such as: knowledge of one's rights and responsibilities; adequate assessment of oneself and others; ability to reflect, analyze their actions and actions, properly understand themselves, their tendencies and abilities, character traits, analyze well-developed real goals, plans of activity, awareness and justification of decisions about their behavior, which make it possible to work and maintain relationships with others (Fleischmann, 2013); awareness of personal needs and interests; an understanding of one's own goals, intentions and paths, with the ability to be open without fear and strain to state it; respect for the rights and interests of others; the ability to achieve set goals without manipulating others; ability to persuade, gain affection, seek advice or help from people; ability to make compromise decisions; establish business contacts and partnerships (Alberti & Emmons, 2008).

In the works of Czech psychologists V. Kapponi and T. Novak (1995), assertiveness is seen as a harmonious combination of personal qualities of a person, which are reflected in the form of specific worldviews and positive orientation, manifested in the knowledge of the human essence, in the skills and skills of effective interaction. The assertiveness is a way of organizing one's behavior, the ability to formulate one's personal needs and desires, the pursuit of ambition in achieving the intended goals, respectful people, and most importantly, respect and love for oneself (Kapponi & Novak, 1995: 84).

In a number of works the conceptualization of the category "assertiveness" is carried out as a parallel between self-esteem and self-respect of the individual and his desire for self-expression, self-realization and self-fulfillment. Scientists note that the process of forming their "I" awakens a high need for self-expression, in "approbation" of their strengths and capabilities. The authors see a close relationship between these categories, which is: the ability of the individual to adequately determine his

or her own claims, which can be considered as a key to positive experiences of success, the latter directly influences the increase of one's own value. If the person is not able to activate their inner capabilities or is not aware enough of them, then this is the path to painful self-love. A prerequisite for positive feelings of self-esteem can be considered a feeling of self-expression and self-realization (Saikina, 2015: 141). For example, V. Semichenko states that assertiveness is the core of the sense of respect and self-esteem and views the category as an individual-value quality, which is manifested in the active actions of the individual, in particular the ability to maintain one's "autonomy", avoiding pressure and manipulation. (Semichenko, 2003: 139).

S. Maksimenko connects the category of "assertiveness" with the set of retrospective and prognostic experiences of the individual, which determine the individual theme of life in the process of its self-realization. Reflexive understanding of oneself and one's place in the world allows one to "go own way, choosing one's own pace, time, stops, satellites, or neurotic, fanatically to go forward without understanding the road". At the same time, "the productivity of the life path is determined by the balance of awareness of the leading values and meanings and unconscious experiences-movements" (Maksimenko & Solovienko, 2000: 122).

The basis for explaining the nature of assertive behavior in psychology are works of czech authors Kapponi and Novak. The assertiveness is defined by them as autonomous, independent of external influences and assessments of the ability of the individual to self-regulate their own behavior (Kapponi & Novak, 1995). Such personality is characterized by: orientation to real life events that give it meaning for the future; independence of values and behavior from outside influence; ability to form their own opinion about life; freedom to express one's potential, openness, faith in oneself and trust in others, and most importantly, respect and love for itself. The algorithm for behavior promoted by the authors promotes equality in human relationships; allows a person to act taking into account his interests; develops the ability to stand up for oneself without confusion, to boldly express their true feelings and enjoy their rights without harming others (Kapponi & Novak, 1995). Being assertive means having the capacity for self-initiation and self-regulation. The expression of assertiveness is reflected in the belief in one's own effectiveness, based on self-esteem and personal importance (Maksimenko & Solovienko, 2000). Assertiveness is considered by researchers as a property of the subject, allowing not so much to adapt to the changing conditions of life, but to build such relationships with the outside world that promote creative growth, expanding the degree of freedom and self-development on the basis

of responsibility for the choice of their feelings, actions and relationships with itself and others. As a socio-psychological phenomenon of the concept of "assertive behavior" represents a systemic multilevel personality trait that manifests itself in a high degree of acceptance of itself and others spontaneity and directness of behavior, positive self-esteem and appreciation of other people, accepting responsibility, belief in one's own authority, ability to establish close and deep interpersonal relationships. The property studied in interpersonal interaction is considered as a determinant, which contributes to the formation and disclosure of such indicators of "quality" communication as responsibility, justice, tolerance, mutual understanding, equality, respect and recognition of the sovereignty of the individual (Betancur & Sánchez, 2019). V. Zinchenko and B. Mesheryakov characterize them as a person's experience of their capabilities, adequate to the tasks they face in life and which they set themselves. In this context, they are seen as being able to assert their rights confidently and with dignity, without neglecting the rights of others (Mesheryakov & Zinchenko, 2009).

Conclusions

Summarizing the above, assertiveness as a psychological quality shapes the behavior of the individual in a society that manifests itself in confident decisions, timely response to the dynamics of social and psychological change, and psychological balance and ethical attitude to others (Marchuk, 2016).

Thus, assertive behavior is viewed in the context of life meanings, emphasizing the need to enhance the subjectivity of life, indicating an ability to be independent of external influences and evaluations. Assertive behavior allows you to adapt not only to changing conditions, but to build relationships with the outside world that foster creative growth, expanding degrees of freedom and self-development based on responsibility for one's feelings, actions and relationships with other actors of social interaction. It is noted in the sense that it is included in the content of the category "discursive self-referential identity" as self-representation, constructed in the process of self-reference through operations of self-determination, self-recognition, self-reproduction, self-realization and self-fulfillment in significant communicative situations (Yatsina, 2015).

According to the results of theoretical analysis, the assertive behavior of discursive self-referential identity includes qualitative characteristics that are adequate to the process of self-reference:

- a sense of inner freedom in expressing their thoughts and feelings

- upholding the limits of autonomy
- high level of personal reflection
- providing situations, phenomena of individual values that reproduce axiological pluralism and polyphony of meanings.

We note that in personally meaningful situations, self-referential identity is distant from standards of role-based behavior, conditioned by "status", normativity. The above suggests that assertive behavior forms a model of transparent self-referential identity, which focuses on free, autonomous, transparent self-creation and self-realization in interpersonal communications. An indicator of the model is the need to "be yourself", which, in the context of the uncertainty and volatility of social reality, allows us to build relationships with the outside world that facilitate the self-realization of the subject.

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