

ORAL ENGLISH PRAYER IN MODERN FEATURE FILM DISCOURSE: PHONETIC ASPECT

УСНА АНГЛОМОВНА МОЛИТВА У СУЧАСНОМУ КІНОДИСКУРСІ: ФОНЕТИЧНИЙ АСПЕКТ

Lisovska A.O.,

orcid.org/0000-0001-6288-1032

Candidate of Philological Science,

*Associate professor at the Department of Language Training
Odesa State University of Internal Affairs*

Prayer, as the highest manifestation of religious discourse, intertwined with semiotically heterogeneous (creolized, heterogeneous, polymodal, polycode) discursive formation of synthetic nature – film discourse – becomes one of the components of multilevel semiotics. The functioning of prayer as a kind of religious discourse in film discourse clearly demonstrates one of the leading categories of film text and film discourse – intertextuality. In this article this category is interpreted not just as the use of elements of existing text in the process of creating and functioning of new, but as a universal, ubiquitous secondary, reference, as the flow of cultural texts into each other, as a manifestation of the idea of dialogic texts.

The study of oral religious discourse, in particular prayer as a precedent phenomenon within artistic film discourse, emphasizes the importance of identifying its prosodic parameters as means of oral prayer realization in English modern feature film discourse and their role in the implementation of oral pictorial discourse. The choice of the topic of the article is determined by the priority of the communicative-functional paradigm in modern linguistics in general and the scientific need to establish linguistic and extralingual mechanisms for the formation of different discourses in particular. The aim of the article is to identify the features of the prosodic organization of prayers that are reproduced in the character speech of feature film discourse. The article reveals general lingual and extra lingual film discourse peculiarities and determines the place of the prayer in the religious discourse. The analysis of the material under study resulted in prayers classification structured according to the film discourse peculiarities. The study of oral English prayer, reflected in film discourse, allows not only to trace the author's vision of the essence and role of prayer in human life, but also through the magic of cinema to look into the deepest depths of human feelings towards God and his relationship with Him.

Key words: oral English prayer, feature film discourse, religious discourse, integral prosodic parameters, differential prosodic parameters.

Молитва, як вищий прояв релігійного дискурсу, що вплетена у семіотично неоднорідне (креолізоване, гетерогенне, полімодальне, полікодове) дискурсивне утворення синтетичної природи – кінодискурс – стає однією з складових багаторівневої семіотики. Функціонування молитви як різновиду релігійного дискурсу у кінодискурсі наочно демонструє одну з провідних категорій кіно тексту та кінодискурсу – інтертекстуальність. В статті ця категорія трактується не просто як використання елементів вже існуючого тексту в процесі створення і функціонування нового, але як універсальна, повсюдна вторинність, посилальність, як перетікання текстів культури один в інший, як прояв ідеї діалогічності текстів.

Дослідження усного релігійного дискурсу, зокрема молитви як прецедентного явища в рамках художнього кінодискурсу, наголошує на важливості виявлення його просодичних параметрів як засобів реалізації усної молитви в сучасному художньому англомовному кінодискурсі та ролі в реалізації усного зображеного дискурсу. Вибір теми статті зумовлений пріоритетом комунікативно-функціональної парадигми в сучасній лінгвістиці загалом та науковою необхідністю встановлення лінгвістичних та позамовних механізмів формування різних дискурсів зокрема. Метою статті є виявлення особливостей просодичної організації молитов, що відтворюються у персональному мовленні художнього кінодискурсу. У статті розкрито особливості загальнономовного та позамовного кінодискурсу та визначено місце молитви в релігійному дискурсі. Аналіз досліджуваного матеріалу привів до класифікації молитов, структурованої відповідно до особливостей кінодискурсу. Дослідження усної англомовної молитви, що відображена у кінодискурсі, дає можливість не тільки простежити бачення колективного автора кіно сутності та ролі молитви у житті людини, але й завдяки магії кіно зазирнути у найпотаємніші глибини почуттів людини до Бога та її стосунків з Ним.

Ключові слова: усна англомовна молитва, кінодискурс, релігійний дискурс, інтегральні просодичні параметри, диференціальні просодичні параметри.

Stating the problem. Religious communication is one of the most ancient cultural and ideological components of private and public communication, which forms different types of religious discourse. Being one of the main functions of religious discourse, the prayer function permeates most of the genre samples of religious discourse. However, in its pure form, it is

realized in prayer, which reflects the essence of religious discourse – union in faith, supplicating to the Almighty appealing for help and salvation, communion with God [12, c. 86].

As the highest display of religious discourse included into semiotically inhomogeneous discursive formations of synthetic origin – film discourse –

prayer becomes one of the components of multilevel semiotics. Functioning of prayer as a type of religious discourse in film discourse clearly demonstrates one of the major categories of film text and film discourse – intertextuality. Intertextuality is understood as the usage of elements of the already existing text in the process of creating and functioning of a new one, and is considered in its specific manifestations in feature films that we regard as a special type of religious text, functioning within film discourse. Being one of the most discussed recently, the phonetic aspect of a religious discourse, however, still requires further research.

Recent theoretical research analyses. The existence of different linguistic approaches to the study of text and discourse provides reasons to interpret *text* as a product of thought and speech activity, as speech realization of the author's objective as well as communicative unit of the highest level, implemented in both written and oral speech. If it is necessary to take into account the extra-lingual component in the process of generation and perception of the text, the term *discourse* is used, which is generally understood as a coherent text combined with extra-lingual factors.

Religious discourse is a special structural-semantic and communicative-pragmatic unit with specific goals and objectives with its special place among other types of discourse. The system-forming features of religious discourse, distinguishing it from other discourses, are system of addresser and addressee; high level of cliché and ritualization; stable system of values that has remained unchanged for over two thousand years; sacredness and priority of faith.

The importance of verbal actions in ritual can recede into the background, while order of ceremonial actions of any religious act come to the forefront. In this regard, it is advisable to distinguish verbal and non-verbal rituals in religious discourse.

Functions of religious discourse are divided into two classes: general and specific only for religious discourse [14, c. 160]. Among general functions are appellative, expressive, representational, communicative, informative and phatetic ones. In this article, a specific function – *prayer function* is of particular importance. However, in its purest form, it is realized primarily in prayer, which reflects the essence of religious discourse – union in faith, talking to God, pleading for help and salvation.

An analysis of numerous definitions of prayer in theological and linguistic works has shown that there are different approaches to understanding its essence. In theological sense, prayer is coming of soul to God or asking God for proper blessings [8, c. 2]. Linguistic interpretation of prayer defines it as a fixed

text which is read when aimed to God. Despite different approaches to interpreting this phenomenon, in general sense, prayer is an appeal to God and communication with Him.

It is the understanding of prayer as an act of communication that determines the need for its clear affiliation with a particular form of speech communication – dialogical or monologic. Formally prayer is a monologue, but at the same time it has signs of dialogue, since the praying person is in constant internal dialogue with God, asking Him for help, forgiveness and blessing [6, c. 125].

In linguistics the question under consideration is whether prayer is a part of primary or secondary speech genres. In this article prayer is considered secondary speech genres, as firstly, prayers do not reach the Scriptures; secondly, the authors of prayers are mainly Holy Fathers but not apostles as direct disciples of Christ; thirdly, throughout Christian history, prayers have emerged and continue to emerge in the process of forming a new denomination. In addition, new prayers that meet needs of modern Christians are also found in established confessions. It is the permanent emergence of new prayers that gives us reason to believe that prayer is a secondary genre, since the authorship of the prayers studied in our work mainly belongs to the creators of the film discourse in which these prayers function.

Film discourse is a concept that contains both cinema text with the content which filmmakers put into their work and the perception (interpretation) of the film by the viewer. It is possible to speak about correlation of film discourse with other types of discourses, because the list of its components includes such extralinguistic factors as cultural and ideological environment in which communication takes place. It is believed that different cultural, historical and *religious* backgrounds of film recipients lead to different levels of perception of cinematographic works. In particular, perceptions of prayer discourse by representatives of the Christian culture differ significantly from perceptions and interpretations by representatives of another denominational culture. Therefore, the factor of presence / absence of cultural heritage background knowledge (to which religion undoubtedly belongs) greatly simplifies / complicates perception of the elements of Christian prayer discourse.

Stating the task. The study of oral religious discourse and prayer in particular, as a precedent phenomenon within the framework of feature film discourse, emphasizes the importance of revealing its prosodic parameters and their role in realization of the oral discourse. The purpose of the article is to find out the peculiarities of prosodic organization of

prayers, which are used in personal speech of feature film discourse. The object of the article is oral English prayer in a person's speech of modern feature film discourse, while the subject of the article is prosodic organization of oral English prayer in feature film discourse.

Basic material presentation. An instrumental-phonetic research of oral English prayer within the framework of film discourse is complex. A number of subjective and objective research methods are included in this article. Subjective features include auditory and auditive analysis, which allow us to identify prosodic speech characteristics of the praying characters at a perceptual level. Instrumental analysis makes it possible to describe the objective physical characteristics of the speech works under analyses. The method of quantitative and statistical analysis, used for the calculation of indicators and their mathematical processing, makes it possible to further interpret the data obtained empirically during the auditive and instrumental analysis. This comprehensive approach makes it possible to identify the relevant prosodic parameters of prayers being studied and to determine the role of prosody in optimizing the transmission of the oral prayer message contained in oral English feature discourse.

For the auditive analysis the auditors were asked to determine: what types of prayers (by criterion of intention, authority, and situational conditioning) the trans-phrases they listened to belong to; which part of the prayer the fragments belong to; what is the degree of participation of certain prosodic parameters (melody outline, phrasal accent, volume, tempo, rhythm, pause) in the realization of the intention of prayer and the expression of emotions in different parts of the text. In the second stage, the auditors evaluated main intonation characteristics of the prayer texts under study – volume, tone, tempo. Conclusions on the frequency, dynamic and temporal parameters of speech, revealed by the results of PRAAT electroacoustic analysis, were made on the basis of the average values of analysed indicators. To verify the reliability of obtained results, instrumental analysis data were quantitatively processed using mathematical statistics.

Characteristics of the study material made it possible to classify prayers from feature films by the following parameters: by the authority parameter, by the situational condition parameter, by the intentional content parameter.

The authority parameter involves addressing film characters to the Lord with canonical prayers (from the Book of Common Prayers) or with 'spontaneous' prayers, the authorship of which seems to belong

specifically to film characters. The use of the word 'spontaneous' in quotation marks indicates that the real authorship of these prayers belongs to the film authors or literary work, the film was based on. The analyses of the prayer texts give grounds to state that 87% of all the analysed prayers belong to the so-called 'spontaneous' prayers, which are hereafter referred to as 'quasi-spontaneous'. This fact indicates that the main purpose of using prayer in film discourse is to expose the emotional state of a film character, his experiences, feelings and emotions. It is the appeal to God by means of quasi-spontaneous prayer that seeks to immerse the viewer in the inner world of film characters.

A small percentage (13%) of the canonical prayers are mainly related to the formal (ritual or conventionally predetermined) action of religiously minded persons: during service in a church, daily morning or bedtime prayer, before or after eating. The main function of prayer in such cases is general characteristics of character – if he / she believes in God (Christians) or follows traditions, his / her lifestyle and habits.

It should be noted that the most common canonical prayer used in the studied discourses (75% of all canonical prayers) is 'Our Father'. Firstly, it is a demonstration of the importance for Christians of the prototype Lord's Prayer; secondly, it is a testament to the versatility of this prayer, because it is used in different life situations; thirdly, this prayer sets out the basic model for building a prayer appeal of both other canonical and quasi-spontaneous prayers. This led to the existence of certain repeating features of form and content in the studied prayer texts, namely the presence of a six-part distribution of compositional structure of prayers: appeal, reasons of appeal, prayer gist, argumentation, praise, acclamation Amen [12, c. 271]. Such structure is observed in 69% of the analysed quasi-spontaneous prayers in feature films. The rest (31%) are either short prayer requests such as "*Dear God, make me a bird so I can fly far, far, far away from here*" (*Forrest Gump*), or more elaborate prayers in the form of initial replicas (or even monologues in a dialogue) of informal conversational dialogue. Such communication with God is more characteristic for nonreligious persons, who, in extraordinary life situations, either come to God or turn to Him despite lack of faith in Him.

The degree of following / infraction of the traditional composition in the quasi-spontaneous prayers under study, first of all, indicates the awareness of the praying film characters of prayer practice, as well as may serve as an additional marker / signal of the particular emotional state of the character.

Not only following the rigid matrix structure of prayers, but also following a specific verbal code with prayer clichés in quasi-spontaneous prayer, testify to the degree of character religiosity. The use of archaic forms of second-person pronouns *Thee, Thy*, and basic prayer formulas and archaic lexical units gives the quasi-spontaneous prayer an odor of canonicity, and at the same time testifies to the ‘mark’ of the matrix verbal component of prayer for collective authors of film discourse, as well as existence of religious communication among addressees of quasi-spontaneous prayers (hereinafter, slash (/) marks a break in phonation, and end of text lines in graphical presentation):

(1) *Almighty and most merciful Father.../we humbly beseech thee.../of thy great goodness.../to restrain this immoderate weather.../with which we've had to contend. / When I raise my flashing sword.../and my hand takes hold on judgment.../I will take vengeance upon mine enemies. / And I will repay those who haste me. / O Lord, raise me to Thy right hand.../and count me among Thy saints. / Amen.*

(“*The Boondock Saints*”)

Based on the fact that any prayer is not identical with the pronouncement of a particular formula, but above all implies *intention*, in this article the intentional criterion is the most important parameter for the classification of prayers. The analysis of the intensely meaningful component of the studied prayers made it possible to reveal the frequency of the occurrence of prayers of different kinds, identified on the basis of existing classifications.

Prayers of request (by the degree of intensity – even prayers of supplication) are the most recurrent. The range of requests is very wide, from the ritual request for support or assistance in everyday life situations to the supplication for saving life or giving eternal salvation (for instance, ritual canonical prayer to the Lord ‘Our Father’ from such films as “*The Boondock Saints*”, “*Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World*”, “*Shane*” etc.). Non-canonical prayers of request are characterized by the diversity of request gist. Quasi-spontaneous prayer can be used as an excuse for any life situation of a film character, in which help of God is needed – from minor troubles to life-or-death situations. *Prayers of intercession* belong to prayers of request, as they contain the very request to God, only the subject differs – in prayers of request the addressee appeals for the God’s help for himself, while in prayers of intercession the addressee requests to help another person or persons.

A separate group of prayers of request is *prayers of repentance*. On the one hand, these prayers con-

tain *requests to forgive* the addressee, so they can be attributed to prayers of request; on the other hand, the addressee’s prayers are *confessional* and therefore differ from ordinary prayers of request.

The next most common type of prayer is *prayers of thanksgiving*. They range from ritual thanksgiving prayers during (before or after) the meal to spontaneous sincere thanksgiving for support during important moments in life. Prayer of thanksgiving is not limited to formal ritual statements, but also can be represented in global situations.

Prayers of praise are not frequently used in film discourse. They are mostly observed in traditional religious communication – in a temple, where film characters give praise during ritual religious communion or sometimes in situations of highest emotional tension.

Narrative prayers are also not recurrent in discourse under study. These prayers contain a description of events from the life of Christ, saints, or a story about the essence of a church holiday or a holy event. Therefore, it is only natural that most of these prayers can be observed in the temple during service. Reflection of church ritual in film discourse is not frequent, which explains the small percentage of narrative prayers in comparison with other types of prayers.

An analysis of the study material revealed another type of prayer that is not listed in any of the existing classifications – these prayers were proposed to call *prayers of blame*, because they contain blame of God. It is clear that for such prayers there must be extraordinary events in lives of characters, which result in despair and feelings of hurt.

Thus, the analysis of the study material made it possible to distinguish types of prayers according to the following parameters:

- a) authority – canonical / non-canonical (quasi-spontaneous);
- b) situation – ritual (everyday) / situational (non-ritual, sporadic);
- c) intention – prayers of request (appeal, supplication, intercession, repentance), prayers of thanksgiving, prayers of praise, narrative prayers, prayers of blame.

It should be noted that prayers of the above kinds are rarely used in their pure form. For example, repentance prayers are accompanied by either a request, thanksgiving or praise; thanksgiving prayers often contain request or praise, etc. Therefore, first of all, the dominant intention of prayer is taken into account.

Results of complex phonetic research and their linguistic interpretation. The perceptive analysis,

consisting of auditory and auditive analysis, helped to identify integral and distinctive features of oral English prayer, which functions in feature film discourse. The auditory analyses, conducted by the author of the research, allowed selection and segmentation of the material under study. The research offered a six-part compositional structure of prayers (appeal, basis for appeal, essence of prayer, argumentation, praise, acclamation Amen). But given the pragmatic guidelines of each of the abovementioned parts of prayer and the fuzziness of the borders between the majority of quasi-spontaneous prayers, for conducting auditive and instrumental analysis, the 1st and the 2nd parts were combined into one joint part – the *introduction*, the 5th and the 6th parts – in the *concluding* part. The main part of prayer, which contains its essence – appeal, intercession, praise, thanksgiving, repentance, blame – is marked as the *intention*.

The auditory analysis allowed to confirm the offered classification of prayers, as well as to distinguish such prosodic peculiarities of speech as altitude, tempo, and volume of speech.

Identification of types of prayer by auditors according to criteria of authority and situational conditionality has proved, firstly, competence of the offered classification, and secondly, demonstrated that ritual prayers differ in a higher degree of recognition than extra ritual prayers in all the parts of the prayer text. The identification of parts of the investigated prayers by the auditors made it possible to state that they identify the offered compositional parts of prayer due to the existence of certain intonational markers which, with high probability, enable identification of different parts of prayer. Identification by the auditors of prayers types by the content-intentional criterion not only proved competency of the offered classification of types of prayers, but also demonstrated existence of the greatest number of differential features in the main part of prayer, where intention is realized, and the least – in the introductory part of all prayers and the concluding part of prayers of appeal and narrative prayers.

Determination by the auditors of the intonational means level of participation in the differentiation of ritual and extra ritual prayer made it possible to highlight the dynamic component of intonation as a leading parameter for the differentiation of extra ritual prayer and the temporal component of intonation (rhythm above all things) as the main differential parameter of ritual prayer.

Electroacoustic analysis made it possible to detect frequency, energy and temporal differentiators of the types of investigated speech implementations.

Comparison of the melodic characteristics of ritual prayers, used by personages in film discourse and prayers pronounced by the personages ‘spontaneously’, proved the existence of certain differences in the researched parameters. These differences are manifested in the brilliant melodic organization of quasi-spontaneous prayers (existence of a greater number of emphatic tones, increased pitch of the voice), which demonstrates anxious emotional state of a person who appeals to God in prayer in unusual life situations. According to frequency indicators in quasi-spontaneous non-ritual prayers, appeals to God, contained in the introductory part and directly in the part of ‘intention’ (supplication, intercession, repentance, and especially blame), come to the fore, while in the ritual prayer the maximum indices of frequency are registered in the concluding part that contains praise.

The research of dynamic characteristics of prayers texts made it possible to conclude that prayer in general is characterized by increased loudness, although the indicators of medium-intensity in extra ritual prayers substantially exceed the corresponding rates of ritual prayers. Differences in the values of peak intensity in investigated texts of prayer texts are significant. In general, extra ritual prayer is characterized by higher indices of maximum intensity, which is proved by the results of the audit analysis and confirmed instrumentally. However, in the analysed texts, the rates of the investigated parameter in the introductory and concluding parts exceed the average ones in the text in general.

Diagnosing the temporal structure of prayer in the dynamics within each of its separate parts has shown that at the level of temporal organization certain differences between ritual and extra ritual prayers are recorded, which is shown as a prevalence of a stable normal tempo in ritual prayers and a contrasting (from slow to very fast) tempo in extra ritual prayers, as well as in the distribution of pauses: in ritual prayer, short intra-syntagmatic pauses of the same duration and long pauses after the appeal create a special prayer rhythm, whereas in an extra ritual prayer, with the help of breaks in phonation, the person who prays is focused on the essence of the request, which testifies to the main intention of the extra ritual prayer – the sporadic appeal to God in extraordinary times, but not the habit of regular communication. That is, the temporal component of intonation is informative for the differentiation of types of prayers in film discourse, since with this parameter it is possible to determine the level of ‘spontaneity’ and the sporadicity of character’s prayer appeal in a represented feature discourse.

Complex phonological research of intonational structure of prayer texts in feature film discourse proved the hypothesis of the existence of a certain set of frequency, temporal and energy parameters that help in organizing and differentiating both the types of prayers and their structural parts.

Conclusion. The research described in the article made it possible to establish the basic laws of prosodic means of realization of oral English prayers, which function in feature film discourse. It also created an author's prayers classification by the following parameters: according to the authority parameter – canonical / non-canonical (quasi-spontaneous)

prayers; according to the situational conditionality parameter – ritual (everyday formal) / situational (non-ritual, sporadic). The authority parameter involved personages' appeal to God with canonical prayers (registered in the Book of Common Prayers) or with "spontaneous" (quasi-spontaneous) prayers, which authorship ostensibly belongs to the film personages. The main parameter for prayer classifying is the intentional and semantic one, according to which prayers in were divided into the prayers of request (appeal, supplication, intercession, repentance), prayers of thanksgiving, prayers of praise, narrative prayers, prayers of blame [13, c. 163].

REFERENCES:

1. Beaugrande, D.R.-A. de. & Dressler, W. (1981): *Einführung in die Textlinguistik*. Tübingen, Max Niemeyer Verlag, 290 p.
2. Bennett, C. (1996): *In Search of the Sacred. Anthropology and the Study of Religions*, www.dissercat.com/content/novaya-religioznost-v-sovremennoi-kulture#ixzz4rVxnsYqw [8/02/2021].
3. Shields Charles W. (1864): *Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, as Amended by the Westminster Divines in the Royal Commission of 1661, and in Agreement with the Directory for Public Worship of The Presbyterian Church in the United States*, Philadelphia, William S. & Alfred Martien, 745 p.
4. Brazil, D. (1997): *The communicative value of intonation in English*, London, Cambridge University Press, 324 p.
5. Brinker, K. & SAGER, S.F. (1996): *Linguistische Gesprächsanalyse, 2.*, durchg. und erg. Berlin, Aufler, 184 p.
6. Brümmer, V. (1984): *What are we Doing when we Pray?* London, SCM Press, 253 p.
7. Claraham, M.A. (2009): *Mystagogy and Mystery*. *Worship*, 83(6), pp. 502–524.
8. Collins, E.F. (1998): *Reflections on Ritual and on Theorizing about Ritual*. *Journal of Ritual Studies*, 12 (1), pp. 1–7.
9. *Common Worship: Daily Prayer*. (2002). Services and Prayers for the Church of England. London, Church House Publishing, 850 p.
10. Cross, F.L. (1983). *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1520 p.
11. Catechism, www.azbyka.ru/otechnik/Aleksandr_Semenov-Tyan-Shanskij/pravoslavnyj-katehizis/ [11/02/2022].
12. Кравченко Н.О. (2017): *Синергійність англomовного релігійного дискурсу (теолінвiстичний пiдхiд): монографія / Н. О. Кравченко. – Одеса: КП ОМД, 408 с.*
13. Лісовська А.О. (2019): *Усна англomовна молитва в сучасному художньому кiнодискурсі (iнструментально-фонетичне дослідження): дис. на здобуття наук. ступеня канд. філол. наук: 10.02.04 / Лісовська Алла Олегівна. – Одеса, 168 с.*
14. Прилуцкий А. М. (2015): *Специфика структуры религиозного дискурса / А. М. Прилуцкий, Л. Е. Андреева. – СПб.: Вестник ЛГУ, С. 158-164.*