



LINGUOCULTURAL FEATURES OF SOCIAL
CLASS CONFLICT IN ELIZABETH GASKELL'S
NORTH AND SOUTH

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Abstract: *This article explores the linguacultural representation of social class conflict in Elizabeth Gaskell's North and South. The study examines how linguistic choices and cultural values reflect ideological and social differences between the industrial North and the rural South of Victorian England. Using a linguacultural approach supported by discourse analysis, the research investigates how language constructs identity, power relations, and cultural perception within the novel. The findings demonstrate that the industrial North is characterized by pragmatic, duty-oriented discourse, while the South is associated with morally reflective, emotionally nuanced communication. The study concludes that social conflict in the novel is represented not only as an economic issue but also as a linguistic and cultural division.*

Keywords: *linguacultural analysis, discourse, social class, Victorian literature, Elizabeth Gaskell, North and South*

Аннотация: *Данная статья посвящена лингвокультурной репрезентации конфликта социальных классов в романе Элизабет Гаскелл «Север и Юг». В исследовании рассматривается, каким образом языковые средства и культурные ценности отражают идеологические и социальные различия между промышленным Севером и сельским Югом викторианской Англии. Используя*

лингвокультурологический подход в сочетании с дискурс-анализом, автор исследует, как язык создает идентичность, властные отношения и культурное восприятие в романе. Результаты исследования показывают, что промышленный Север характеризуется прагматичным дискурсом, ориентированным на долг и практическую деятельность, тогда как Юг ассоциируется с нравственно-рефлексивной и эмоционально насыщенной коммуникацией. В заключение делается вывод о том, что социальный конфликт в романе представлен не только как экономическая проблема, но и как языковое и культурное противостояние.

Ключевые слова: *лингвокультурологический анализ, дискурс, социальный класс, викторианская литература, Элизабет Гаскелл, «Север и Юг».*

Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* is one of the most important Victorian novels representing the social and economic transformations caused by industrialization in 19th-century England. The novel contrasts two regions—the industrial North and the rural South—which differ not only geographically but also culturally and ideologically.

This article focuses on the linguacultural features of social class conflict in the novel. It argues that Gaskell represents social differences not only through narrative events but also through linguistic variation and communication styles. Language in the novel reflects attitudes toward work, morality, authority, and human relationships. The relevance of this study lies in the growing importance of linguacultural and discourse-based approaches in literary analysis, which allow

researchers to examine how cultural meanings are encoded in language (Fairclough, 2015).

This article aims to analyze how social class conflict is linguistically and culturally represented in *North and South*. Language in literature is widely understood as a form of social practice that reflects ideological and cultural meanings. Fairclough (2015) emphasizes that discourse is closely connected with power relations and social structures, making it a key tool for analyzing literature from a socio-cultural perspective.

Halliday (2004) argues that language functions as a semiotic system shaped by its social context. His systemic functional approach highlights that linguistic choices reflect social meanings, making it particularly useful for analyzing class-based differences in Victorian fiction.

Lakoff and Johnson (2003) further contribute to this perspective by explaining how metaphor structures human thought. Their theory of conceptual metaphor helps to understand how abstract social realities such as class conflict and industrialization are linguistically constructed in literature. Research on *North and South* highlights its representation of industrial society and class division; however, limited attention has been given to its linguacultural mechanisms of meaning construction in dialogue and discourse. This study addresses this gap. This study adopts a qualitative approach based on textual and linguacultural analysis. It examines selected passages from *North and South* that represent interactions between different social classes.

The research framework combines linguacultural analysis and discourse analysis. Linguacultural analysis explores the relationship

between language and cultural values, while discourse analysis focuses on speech patterns, lexical choices, and communicative strategies (Fairclough, 2015; Halliday, 2004). The material includes dialogues and narrative fragments illustrating contrasts between industrial and non-industrial social groups. The analysis focuses on how language reflects ideology, identity, and cultural perception. In *North and South*, the industrial town of Milton is associated with pragmatic and labor-oriented discourse. Working-class speech is direct and emotionally expressive, reflecting harsh working conditions. The workers emphasize human dignity in response to industrial dehumanization: "We are not like machines." - This expression reflects resistance to mechanization and the reduction of human identity to labor functions.

Mr. Thornton represents industrial ideology through authoritative discourse: "I will not be turned from my duty." - His language reflects discipline and economic responsibility, emphasizing order and hierarchy.

The South, represented by Margaret Hale, is associated with moral reflection and emotional sensitivity. Margaret expresses ethical awareness of social injustice:

"I have seen suffering, and I cannot be silent." - Her language emphasizes moral responsibility and empathy, contrasting with industrial pragmatism.

Social conflict in the novel is expressed through communicative breakdown between classes. Workers express collective resistance: "We have no more to lose." - This reflects desperation and social instability.

Thornton emphasizes control and order: "There must be order." - The modal verb "must" reflects authority and ideological rigidity.

Margaret challenges economic reductionism: “You do not know what it is to suffer.” This statement reveals a cognitive and emotional gap between social groups, highlighting different worldviews.

Overall, Gaskell presents social conflict as both linguistic and cultural (Halliday, 2004). The study demonstrates that *North and South* represent social class conflict as a linguacultural phenomenon. The industrial North is characterized by pragmatic, duty-oriented discourse, while the South is associated with moral and emotionally reflective language.

The novel shows that social misunderstanding arises from differences in linguistic and cultural perception. Therefore, language functions as a key instrument for constructing identity and expressing ideological conflict. Gaskell’s work suggests that social reconciliation requires not only economic change but also mutual linguistic and cultural understanding.

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