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# Forms Used to Convey Reported Speech in French Epistolary Novel

Formos naudojamos perteikti  
netiesioginę kalbą prancūzų  
epistoliniame romane

LINGUISTICS / KALBOTYRA

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## Abstract

The article is focused on the study of forms used to convey reported speech in the French epistolary novel of the 18<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The study is based on the novels *Les Liaisons dangereuses* by Pierre Choderlos de Laclos, *Mémoires de deux jeunes mariées* by Honoré de Balzac, and *Les jeunes filles* by Henry de Montherlant, which are prominent examples of the epistolary novel of the respective epochs. Proceeding from duality of the epistolary novel, i.e., a combination of the form of a letter and the genre of the novel, the French epistolary novel is defined by its special structure and composition, which determine perception of the information delivered in the novel. The form that conveys reported speech is aligned with writer's intention. A descriptive variant of presenting dialogues prevails, while the use of direct speech in decisive moments of narration results from the pursuit of credibility. When the credibility is not more important, the reported speech is used to describe the characters and cover their characterisations. Indirect speech is used in an epistolary novel more often, but free indirect speech is virtually absent, which is explained by the absence of narrative speech that is usually interpreted via free indirect speech.

**KEYWORDS:** French epistolary novel, dialogue, direct speech, indirect speech, free indirect speech, reported speech.

## Introduction



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The epistolary novel as a specific genre of literary text comes from the combination of a certain form of expression, namely the letter, and the literary genre – the novel. The composition of the epistolary novel reveals the peculiarities of its dual origin: on the one hand, the form of the letter binds to a particular communicative structure; on the other hand, the genre of the novel modifies its sense and meaning by introspection and pursuit of the credibility of a piece of work (Versini, 1979, p. 45). It could be argued that the novel in letters originates from the intersection of the form of the letter and the genre of the novel (Rousset, 1962, p. 38). But, in fact, it is impossible to divide these two phenomena; in addition, their components and their combination form an epistolary novel as a literary genre.

In modern linguistics, epistolary text is studied using different approaches, and various aspects

of this type of text are studied: syntactic (Sumkina, 1987), lexical (Tsytzarina, 1989), stylistic (Antonenko, 2000; Ketsba, 1973; Mazokha, 2007; Nozhkina, 1993; Sedova, 1985; Sirotnina, 1993), formal (Hryhorenko, 2017; Logunova, 2010; Morozova, 2006), and structural (Roginskaya, 2002; Sarafanova, 2009). In our study, we will focus on the compositional characteristics of the epistolary novel, namely, on the forms of conveying reported speech through narration by letters.

Various aspects of reported speech have been studied by linguists for a long time. In the concepts of scientists, a number of approaches to consider reported speech was formed (for example, the concepts of Bakhtin (1986), Banfield (1982), Fludernik (1993), Genette (1983), Mylne (1994), Rosier (1999), Schmid (2003) and others). The concept of reported speech includes direct speech, indirect speech, and free indirect speech, as well as other ways of conveying reported speech (words not said by the author) in a literary text. Study of direct speech and indirect speech is interesting in the functional aspect (linguistic characteristic of the character), in the grammatical aspect (conveying direct speech in the form of indirect speech), and in the punctuational aspect. Free indirect speech and other ways of communicating other people's words bring the problem to the level of text. All three types of reported speech have significant stylistic differences. Direct speech, as being closest to the colloquial language, is especially emotional. Free indirect speech enables the writer to expose the same phenomenon from different points of view at the same time, both objectively (from the author's perspective) and subjectively (through the character's perception). In this way, free indirect speech acquires great expressive power, and it is reckoned among stylistic devices of expressive syntax. Unlike direct speech, indirect speech only conveys the content of other person's utterance, without reflecting its stylistic characteristics or individual peculiarities. Direct speech contributes to subjectification of narration, while indirect speech makes the text more objective. In each case, the choice of the form of communicating reported speech should be determined by particular stylistic goals to be achieved in a particular text.

In an epistolary novel, the choice of ways to convey reported speech is different, because each letter that makes up the novel is an utterance of a character and can be considered as direct speech that is shaped compositionally rather than syntactically. Each letter addressed to someone requires an answer; therefore, dialogism is present, and the entire novel obtains the features of a dialogue where the whole letter plays the role of an utterance, and the utterance itself is presented in the form of a monologue. Also, in an epistolary novel, the role of the author as a narrator is the same as that of a character: characters themselves speak in their letters about what's going on. The author embodies the principal narrative function of the composition through characters and yet again faces the problem of how to convey reported speech in the narration when retelling conversations with other characters. In this case, the way of conveying reported speech becomes not only the tool to achieve stylistic goals of the text, but also the way to portray characters' images, to clarify the extralinguistic social and cultural context, which is the focus and the novelty of this study.

Characteristics of an epistolary text is its correspondence to a speech situation specific to a dialogue. Indeed, a change of roles of the speaker and the listener, the addresser and the addressee is a feature specific to both a dialogue and an epistolary text. Speeches in a dialogue derive from one another, as are letters in an epistolary conversation. Each utterance in a dialogue is characterised by specific completeness; it reflects a certain position of the speaker, in relation to which the other speaker takes a respective position. The same can be said about a letter in epistolary communication. The pragmatic function of a dialogue is to influence the conversant, to convince them and impel an action. It is this function that defines the author's choice of the right form of the piece of writing in the tradition of imaginative epistolary literature.

## Data and Methodology

This study is based on *Les Liaisons dangereuses* by Pierre Choderlos de Laclos, *Mémoires de deux jeunes mariées* by Honoré de Balzac, and *Les jeunes filles* by Henry de Montherlant. The choice of those works is determined by the fact that all the three novels are spectacular examples of an epistolary novel from different epochs, namely 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The 18<sup>th</sup> century was replete with epistolary novels in European literature. That was the golden age of the genre itself, which reached its climax in de Laclos' *Les Liaisons dangereuses*. It is deemed an epistolary novel masterpiece not so much because of depicting strong feelings or an outstanding narration style, but because of complete epistolary mastery of the author. As for the 19<sup>th</sup> century, our choice of Balzac's novel *Mémoires de deux jeunes mariées* is attributed to the fact that it is the only French novel of this period that corresponds to its classic form, the novel in letters. Other authors used the letter as an auxiliary element of narration. The same practice prevails in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, so we decided in favour of Montherlant's novel *Les jeunes filles* as the work where letters make up the largest part of the text. When exploring the forms in which reported speech is conveyed in those novels, we can trace the transformation of French epistolary novel over three centuries, and the change of writers' narration practices in accordance with their intentions, which is the objective of this article.

To achieve our objective, we applied the methodology based on the essential points of the theory of discourse, which present basic ideas for the linguistic study (Arutyunova, 2012; Dijk, 2009; Kecskes, 2013; Reboul, Moeschler, 1998). Discourse analysis aims to understand the functioning of language as a means of reflecting mental processes, communicative perspective, and thematic coherence of statements. The purpose of discourse analysis is to identify the social context behind oral or written speech, and to study the relationship between the language and social processes. The interpretation of language as a discourse includes considering it as a form of social action directly embedded in the social conditions of its realisation. Discourse researchers who focus on text interpretation are interested in the language choice made by the speaker for a specific social purpose. Discourse analysis can be used both as a structural tool for the analysis of textual organisation and as an ethnographic tool for deeper understanding of a particular culture.

Here we use the method of discourse analysis that involves interpreting the language means available in the epistolary text in order to determine the hidden motivations for using different forms to convey reported speech in an epistolary novel. This enables us to highlight linguistic characteristics of the epistolary novel genre that are important for its identification and analysis, and for exploration of cultural and social context where this particular genre is perceived and understood.

## Results and Discussion

In *Les Liaisons dangereuses* by Laclos, dialogues where characters exchange their utterances aloud are rarely used. The number of dialogues in the novel is limited: out of 175 represented letters, only 44 contain parts grammatically shaped up as direct speech. However, even among those, not all are parts of a conversation. Some express thoughts of the character: *Pourquoi, me suis-je dit, cette privation de plus?* (Laclos, 1998, p. 409); others only exist as future intentions: *Je lui dirai: "Lisez dans mon cœur [...]"* (Laclos, 1998, p. 424); there are also quotes from literature and historic quotes. However, Letter 161, dictated by Madame de Tourvel in the state of fever, contains many questions addressed to Valmont. But there are no answers; besides, due to her illness, Madame de Tourvel was forced to express her feelings in front of a third person instead of writing about them. So, this letter is more of a monologue, despite numerous questions.

Then, 29 letters remain where dialogues are represented as a scene or conversation. Besides, one letter may contain more than one conversation. Thus, we get 47 different scenes

out of 29 letters. By analysing these conversations, we get an interesting result: over a half of the conversations, 32 of 47, have only one utterance shaped up as direct speech. Of course, it shows that, by interpreting a certain conversation, the author tries to use either indirect speech from which we can extract words spoken by the character, or sort of a summary of what was said, which offers an abridged version of a verbal communication without exact phrases used by the communicants.

As for other examples of direct speech, there are 4 conversations with two utterances, 5 conversations with three utterances, 1 conversation with four utterances, 1 conversation with five utterances, two conversations with six utterances, and 1 conversation with seven utterances.

However, in one letter, a dialogue dominates in the form of direct speech, and it consists of 33 utterances. This is about Letter 125 written by Valmont to Marquise de Merteuil, where he tells her how Madame de Tourvel could not resist his advances. This letter shows de Laclos' two principal methods. The first method is implicit and is about the author using direct speech by quoting the characters' words only in key scenes; for instance, when Valmont seduces Madame de Tourvel, which is one of the main story lines in the novel. The other method involves the portrait of a character reporting a speech act in their letter. Laclos explicitly draws attention to an uncommon use of direct speech:

- (1) *J'étudiais si attentivement mes discours et les réponses que j'obtenais, que j'es-père vous rendre les uns et les autres avec une exactitude dont vous serez contente* (Laclos, 1998, p. 345).

The character stresses that they intentionally report all the utterances exactly in the order they were said (*rendre [...] avec une exactitude*). French researcher of Laclos' works Laurent Versini points out that in Letter 23 of the novel's first edition, the author uses a similar move:

- (2) *C'est en me promenant à côté d'elle que se tint cette conversation que je puis vous rendre mot pour mot et dans laquelle vous distinguerez facilement les interlocuteurs sans que je prenne le soin de les nommer* (Versini, 1979, p. 155).

The sentence was supposed to introduce Valmont's confession of love to Madame de Tourvel, which is also a key scene in the novel. This time, he does not try to check his memory, but his remark on the reporting of the dialogue without naming the communicants shows Valmont's feelings, as he is more of a publisher here than a passionate lover. Laclos excluded this part from the novel while leaving an utterance in Letter 125 underlining Valmont's cold and calculating mind. At the same time, the utterance does not seem too trustworthy to the reader as the very fact of explicit guarantee of the exact reproduction of the dialogue when exciting events happen makes further scene rather unlikely.

Such a move where the character in a normal situation emphasises the exact reproduction of a dialogue, proves the author's efforts to make the novel more credible. Besides, it explains an exceptional usage of direct speech in the novel, which becomes very special because of it. Communicating characters of epistolary novels mostly write about their feelings, especially if they are lovers. They can also exchange their views on subjects going beyond their emotions, such as education of women or music, for instance. However, when somebody starts acting and certain events take place, the addresser reports about them to the addressee, and it is exactly in such a type of letters where a dialogue mostly appears.

It is worth mentioning that Laclos often reports certain conversations in a descriptive form. For example, Valmont explains his reason for staying at Madame de Rosemonde in the following way:

- (3) *Heureusement il faut être quatre pour jouer au Wisk; et comme il n’y a ici que le Curé du lieu, mon éternelle tante m’a beaucoup pressé de lui sacrifier quelques jours. Vous devinez que j’ai consenti* (Laclos, 1998, p. 39).

The scene of a conversation initially containing several utterances was shortened to only two verbs summarising the utterances of both parties. Madame de Rosemonde’s speech is reported by the verb *presser* v.t. – *exercer une contrainte, influence sur qqn* (Le Petit Robert, 2016, p. 822), while Valmont’s statement is expressed by the verb *consentir* v.t. – *accepter que qqch se fasse* (Le Petit Robert, 2016, p. 251). The phrase following the part also summarises what Madame de Rosemonde said in the course of many conversations within the context of the situation:

- (4) *“Vous n’imaginez pas combien elle me cajole depuis ce moment...”* (Laclos, 1998, p. 39).

All her statements are expressed by the verb *cajoler* v.t., which means “*entourer d’attentions affectueuses, de paroles tendres*” (Le Petit Robert, 2016, p. 166). Thus, the novel has more dialogue situations than the 47 conversations shaped up as direct speech.

In most cases, Laclos mixes indirect speech and a descriptive variant of dialogue interpretation. For instance, in Letter 170, Madame de Volanges tells Madame de Rosemonde about her visit to the monastery where her daughter was staying:

- (5) *[...] et après avoir vu la Supérieure, je lui ai demandé de voir ma fille; celle-ci n’est venue qu’avec peine, et bien tremblante. Je lui ai parlé devant les Religieuses, et je lui ai parlé seule: tout ce que j’en ai pu tirer, au milieu de beaucoup de larmes, est qu’elle ne pouvait être heureuse qu’au Couvent; j’ai pris le parti de lui permettre d’y rester, mais sans être encore au rang des Postulantes, comme elle le demandait* (Laclos, 1998, p. 445).

In the story, Laclos largely uses a descriptive variant to convey Madame de Volanges’s conversation with her daughter, but Cécile’s words that she can be happy only in a convent are conveyed by the author by indirect speech.

Laclos also uses free indirect speech to recreate the dialogues between the characters:

- (6) *[...] N’ayant pas la force de vaincre sa curiosité, elle eut au moins celle de contrarier mon désir. Il devait faire une chaleur excessive; je risquais de me rendre malade; je ne tuerais rien et me fatiguerais en vain; et, pendant ce dialogue, ses yeux [...] me faisaient assez connaître qu’elle désirait que je prisse pour bonnes ces mauvaises raisons. Je n’avais garde de m’y rendre, [...] et je résistai de même à une petite diatribe contre la chasse et les chasseurs...* (Laclos, 1998, p. 71).

This part features a conversation between Valmont and Madame de Tourvel when she tries to convince the Vicomte not to go hunting. The statements are in first person, but their syntax in certain sentences without expletives proves that the statements belong to Madame de Tourvel. Such a way to interpret a conversation gives the author a possibility to stress the words of one party while shortening the words of the other. The continuation of the dialogue is largely generalised by the noun *diatribe* n.f. – *critique très violente, parfois injurieuse* (Le Petit Robert, 2016, p. 332).

To generalise, a descriptive form of interpreting a conversation and indirect speech exist to introduce direct speech carrying important information. In Letter 63, Marquise de Merteuil passes on her conversation with Madame de Volange when the former revealed Cécile’s secrets:

- (7) *Je parlai enfin presque aussi bien qu’aurait pu faire une Dévote; et [...] j’allai jusqu’à dire que je croyais avoir vu donner et recevoir une Lettre. Cela me rappelle.*

*ajoutai-je, qu'un jour elle ouvrit devant moi un tiroir de son secrétaire, dans lequel je vis beaucoup de papiers, que sans doute elle conserve. Lui connaissez-vous quelque correspondance fréquente? Ici la figure de Mme de Volanges changea, et je vis quelques larmes rouler dans ses yeux. "Je vous remercie, ma digne amie, me dit-elle, en me serrant la main, je m'en éclaircirai"* (Laclos, 1998, p. 158).

In the scene, direct speech (*Je vous remercie, ma digne amie, me dit-elle, en me serrant la main, je m'en éclaircirai*) is the climactic moment of the conversation. It is preceded by indirect speech (*j'allai jusqu'à dire que je croyais avoir vu donner et recevoir une Lettre*) and free indirect speech (*Cela me rappelle, ajoutai-je, qu'un jour elle ouvrit devant moi un tiroir de son secrétaire, dans lequel je vis beaucoup de papiers, que sans doute elle conserve. Lui connaissez-vous quelque correspondance fréquente?*). It seems that Laclos reserves the form of direct speech for decisive moments of narration. It does not mean, however, that he only uses that form for serious and dramatic scenes. True, almost all scenes containing several utterances or whole pieces shaped up as direct speech are actually conversations between Valmont and Madame de Tourvel. In Letters 70 and 79 written by Valmont, however, there prevail speeches by Prévau, who is a minor character. Here, Laclos follows Samuel Richardson who depicts characters by letting them speak and presenting their statements in direct speech.

The longest part said by Prévau and presented as direct speech is composed of 12 lines in Letter 70. Valmont passes on Prévau's words about his doubts in Marquise de Merteuil's moral virtues and interrupts them with a scenic remark: *encouragé par le sourire de quelques femmes* (Laclos, 1998, p. 175). Therefore, when Laclos quotes his characters he interrupts their speeches by his digressions. We see the same in Letter 23, where Valmont passes on to Marquise de Merteuil his confession of love to Madame de Tourvel in 32 lines. Laclos again uses a scenic remark: *ici elle voulut m'interrompre [...]* (Laclos, 1998, p. 77), but also an aside: *Vous voyez, ma belle amie, combien j'étais près de la vérité* (Laclos, 1998, p. 77).

After Valmont's long emotional speech, Madame de Tourvel responds with a short utterance: *Ah! malheureuse!* (Laclos, 1998, p. 78). The author then quotes almost the same exclamation, but out of the mouth of another character, Cécile, who throws herself into her mother's arms in Letter 97: *Ah! Maman, votre fille est bien malheureuse!* (Laclos, 1998, p. 263). These two short phrases embody the novel's aesthetic meaning – both a decent woman and an inexperienced girl suffer from their connection with a libertine.

Short phrases in Laclos' prose always stress strong emotions. For instance, in Letter 18:

- (8) *Il se mit à accorder ma harpe, et après, en me l'apportant, il me dit: Ah! Mademoiselle! ... Il ne dit que ces deux mots-là, mais c'était d'un ton que j'en fus bouleversée* (Laclos, 1998, p. 66); or in Letter 147: *Elle [...] m'a dit d'une voix forte mais sombre: "Je meurs pour ne vous avoir pas crue"* (Laclos, 1998, p. 402).

In the language of the seducing characters, short touching phrases are also present, but with a different purpose, i.e., to influence the other party in order to achieve a certain objective, as, for instance, is Valmont's phrase in Letter 44:

- (9) *Arrivé à la porte de son appartement, j'ai voulu baiser cette main. [...] La défense a commencé par être franche; mais un songez donc que je pars, prononcé bien tendrement, l'a rendue gauche et insuffisante* (Laclos, 1998, p. 126);

or Prévau's phrase in Letter 85:

- (10) *Observez seulement que, dans ma feinte défense, je l'aidais de tout mon pouvoir: em barras, pour lui donner le temps de parler; mauvaises raisons, pour*

*être combattues; crainte et méfiance, pour ramener les protestations; et ce refrain perpétuel de sa part, je ne vous demande qu'un mot; et ce silence de la mienne, qui semble ne le laisser attendre que pour le faire désirer davantage; au travers de tout cela une main cent fois prise, qui se retire toujours et ne se refuse jamais* (Laclos, 1998, p. 232).

In these two examples, there is no grammar structure typical for direct speech. The statement is substantivized, to become a subject in the first case (*un songez donc que je pars*) and a separated apposition subordinate to a homogeneous complement *refrain* in the second case (*je ne vous demande qu'un mot*), and only the use of italics by the author points out that the phrase has a separate status. By doing so, Laclos tries to put the words of direct speech into the story without breaking the narration.

If we compare the ways different authors of the epistolary novel use direct speech to convey a dialogue, each writer displays individual features in it. In his novel *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, Jean-Jacque Rousseau uses large fragments shaped up as direct speech to convey the main ideas and develop the characterisations. In terms of using direct speech, Laclos' practice rather resembles works by Prévost and Madame de la Fayette, as they all use indirect speech and a descriptive variant of a dialogue while keeping direct speech for decisive moments of narration and principal scenes. Such a choice is explained by the pursuit of credibility of a story which prevailed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The novel *Mémoires de deux jeunes mariées* by Honoré de Balzac features correspondence between two heroines in the form of a dialogue between the voices, which is a more natural way of presenting an epistolary novel. However, in this case it is not about the correspondence between two characters united by the same story, for example, lovers. After leaving the convent, the lives of Louise and Renée follow two very different paths that diverge over time. Each of them lives in her own world and solves life problems in her own way. So, there are two plotlines in the novel developing at the same time and yet connected with each other due to regular correspondence between Louise and Renée. Each of them is a confidante of the other and thus takes part in the life of her friend. Based on a mutual crossing of the confessions, the novel is not at all limited to a mere confrontation. Despite a contrast in the destinies of the main characters (or rather thanks to it), a shared story is formed, which develops from one letter to another and becomes the plot of the novel.

As the two heroines live far away from each other, they use their letters to express what is going on in their lives and speak about their worries and sorrows. It is quite natural that when talking about these events, the characters use reported speech. But the two heroines do it differently, which is one of the ways to show the contrast between Renée and Louise.

Louise is a passionate young lady living in Paris where she has an eventful social life and regularly meets new people. When telling Renée about this, she often uses direct speech to convey a dialogue. She quotes quite large parts of a conversation. Out of 26 letters to Renée from Louise in the first part of the novel, 22 contain direct speech. In Louise's letters, dialogues are always passed on with direct speech, by which Balzac shows Louise's passionate and infantile personality. In Letter 21, Louise communicates her conversation with Felipe de Macumer in three pages using direct speech. Even words addressed to a servant are syntactically expressed as direct speech:

(11) *Hier, à une heure, au moment où Griffith allait se coucher, je lui ai dit: – Prenez votre châte et accompagnez-moi, ma chère, je veux aller au fond du jardin sans que personne le sache! Elle ne m'a pas dit un mot et m'a suivie* (Balzac, 1981, p. 143).

In this part, the request to escort Louise to the garden could have been as well communicated via indirect speech. By using direct speech, however, Balzac demonstrates Louise's passion for theatre as she tries to add certain theatricality to everything surrounding her by the exact recreation of all utterances in a dialogue. Besides, the author uses punctuation specific to a dialogue, that is, a colon and a dash. Quotation marks are used very rarely and only to communicate short utterances.

In Renée's letters, dialogues are, on the contrary, quoted not often and largely in the form of indirect speech. Her life is much calmer than that of Louise, so her letters communicate thoughts rather than events. The novel includes twenty letters written by Renée, and out of those, only six contain dialogue situations, three of which are shaped up as direct speech. The others are expressed via indirect speech or a descriptive form:

(12) *Je l'ai fait parler, je lui ai demandé compte de ses idées, de ses plans, de notre avenir. Mes questions annonçaient tant de réflexions préconçues et attaquaient si précisément les endroits faibles de cette horrible vie à deux, que Louis m'a depuis avoué qu'il était épouvanté d'une si savante virginité* (Balzac, 1981, p. 105).

Towards the end of the novel, however, Balzac shares with Renée Louise's practice to fully quote reported speech. Letter 57 completely passes on the last conversation between dying Louise and Renée, as well as Louise's monologue that takes a page and a half. Thus, Balzac follows Rousseau by using direct speech to convey the main ideas and develop the characterisations.

The letters are represented in the form of a dialogue between the main heroines. In their letters, they ask each other mostly rhetorical questions that do not always have answers. Sometimes they ask themselves questions and conduct dialogues with themselves, which is the case in Letter 28:

(13) *Dévouement! me suis-je dit à moi-même, n'es-tu pas plus que l'amour? n'es-tu pas la volupté la plus profonde, parce que tu es une abstraite volupté, la volupté génératrice?* (Balzac, 1981, p. 179).

Renée tries to determine what fidelity means to her by personifying it and conducting a dialogue with it.

Similarly like Laclos, Balzac uses short phrases to express strong feelings and emotions, as it happens in Letter 36:

(14) *Nous avons chanté tes louanges sur tous les tons, car il a bien vu que je t'aimais comme une sœur que l'on aime; et après l'avoir amené, sans qu'il y prît garde, à des confidences: "Louise, lui ai-je dit, n'a pas encore lutté avec la vie, elle est traitée en enfant gâté par le sort, et peut-être serait-elle malheureuse si vous ne saviez pas être un père pour elle comme vous êtes un amant. – Et puis-je?" – a-t-il dit!* (Balzac, 1981, p. 209).

In this part, Renée passes on to Louise a conversation with her husband Felipe, first in a descriptive form, then gradually leading her to the core statement syntactically shaped up as direct speech. A short utterance by Felipe, which also has features of direct speech (*Et puis-je?*), shows his confusion.

The epistolary form enables Balzac not only to convey the innermost feelings of the heroes, to clarify the love story from within, but also to show the story of a true friendship, which has a philosophical and lyrical nature. The characters speak up freely on all issues of contemporary life, in many cases representing author's ideas. This way, through the "inner" history of relationships between the characters, Balzac draws an educative thread of the novel. Reported speech, in turn, becomes an artistic device to describe characters, to portray their images.



The novel *Les jeunes filles* by Henry de Montherlant is based on a different principle, as letters are not the only form of a story there. The letters just represent the characters' feelings and thoughts. The events that take place in the novel are presented in the text as a narration occasionally followed by letters. Therefore, conversations are represented traditionally as a dialogue with respective syntax. The author uses letters in the beginning and at the end of the novel, when the characters are separated in time and space because of the way the plotline goes. As we deal here with correspondence that exists in two directions without crossing with each other, there is no need to convey dialogues via reported speech in a letter.

However, letters in the novel are abundant with quotes from various sources, starting from the Bible and finishing with books contemporary to the addresser. Sometimes there are several quotes even in one letter, as it is the case in the letter by Costals to Andrée in which he tries to refuse from her love:

- (15) *Bossuet a écrit fortement: "On fait un tort irréparable à la personne qu'on aime trop". C'est presque ce que j'ai écrit moi-même: "Vouloir aimer sans être aimé, c'est faire plus de mal que de bien". La conséquence est dans La Rochefoucauld: "Nous sommes plus prêts d'aimer ceux qui nous haïssent, que ceux qui nous aiment plus que nous ne voulons"* (Montherlant, 2000, pp. 41–42).

Considering the dialogue nature of the correspondence, letters in the novel often contain quotes from the characters' previous letters:

- (16) *Vous me dites que vous ne "méritez" pas d'entrer en religion. Dites "Je ne suis pas destinée" ou "Je n'ai pas été triée". Cela est fort possible. Mais ne parlez pas de mérite* (Montherlant, 2000, p. 48).

In this letter, Costals decides to convince Thérèse to devote her life to religion. He quotes her from her previous letter, using only quotation marks without colons. Such a move puts us closer to a real dialogue, when two communicants try to convince each other by either confirming or denying words of the other party. The author does not encumber the grammatical structure with the colon, so only quotation marks remind us that the words belong to the girl. In order to convince a communicant, and because of the characters being separated in time and space, the writer makes them model potential dialogues. Letters by Andrée and Thérèse very often contain thoughts of the heroines expressed as direct speech, which in fact are merely intentions to be voiced. In the letter by Costals to Andrée, the main character models possible utterances by the other party, and even designs them syntactically with quotation marks and answers them.

- (17) *Dans chacun des livres que j'ai publiés vous trouverez, sous une forme ou l'autre, cette affirmation: "Ce qui m'importe par-dessus tout, c'est d'aimer". Mais il ne s'agit jamais d'amour. Il s'agit d'un composé d'affection et de désir, qui n'est pas l'amour. "Un composé d'affection et de désir, qu'est-ce, sinon l'amour?" Eh bien, non, ce n'est pas l'amour. "Expliquez-moi..." Je ne m'en sens pas l'envie. Les femmes ne comprennent rien à tout cela* (Montherlant, 2000, p. 43).

In Andrée's letters, there are even long fragments presumably by Costals but actually made up by Andrée, which is caused by the impossibility to communicate directly due to them being far away from each other. The addresser tries to build up a dialogue with Costals in her letter and then thinks up his possible replies by herself.

- (18) *Assassin perfide et tenace! [...] Et un alibi merveilleux: "Comment, moi! Moi qui ai tant fait pour elle! Moi qui, maintenant encore, suis "en pleine sympathie" avec elle, moi qui comprends si parfaitement sa souffrance, qui lui prodigue mes encouragements, mes condoléances, mes consolations!"* (Montherlant, 2000, p. 149).

From the late 19<sup>th</sup> century on, European novel as a genre already established itself, and therefore a strict form limitation specific to the epistolary novel no longer satisfies the writers, especially since the classic novel is now regarded as incredible. Letters in a novel are an auxiliary means that is used as a credible source or an opportunity for the characters to speak on their own behalf. A letter is no longer an element used to narrate a story, because the story develops beyond the letters. Therefore, there is no need to communicate reported speech in letters. This is another proof of the decline of the epistolary novel genre.

The use of reported speech in an epistolary novel mostly depends on the writer's intention. In *Les Liaisons dangereuses* by Laclos, the best example of the epistolary novel genre, reported speech is used in a variety of ways compared with the other works analysed: there is both direct speech and indirect speech, and, to some extent, free indirect speech. The latter is not very common though, given the fact that characters' speech is presented mostly in a monologue form in an epistolary novel. This is because in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the epistolary novel was the most convenient form to give credibility to the narration. Readers wanted to look into the world of feelings and emotions of the character. Therefore, when there is a need to communicate reported speech, Laclos uses mostly indirect speech or a descriptive version of conveying the dialogue speech to preserve the integrity of the narration. On the other hand, direct speech is used solely for decisive moments of the novel and becomes a means to develop the plot.

Unlike Laclos, Balzac in *Mémoires de deux jeunes mariées* is not at all concerned about credibility in his novel. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, authors already stopped trying to hide the fictitious nature of their novels. Balzac skilfully uses an epistolary form, first of all, to speak from the first person and in the present time. Besides, this form turned out to be useful to embody the aesthetic function of the novel and start a discussion on marriage without having to express the author's point of view. The author tries to develop the characterisations through the letters of his heroines and their direct statements. The style of the letters, and especially the ways to deliver reported speech, is one of the ways to creatively cover the characterisations.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, interest in the epistolary form of narration revived. However, since the previous century, the change in the function of letters in the novel resulted in the fact that correspondence became one of the techniques for creating multi-layered modernist and postmodernist text. The novel *Les jeunes filles* by Montherlant is considered a leftover of an epistolary novel, as it is not completely made up of letters and its events take place beyond them. Reported speech is barely used; instead, letters in the novel are rich in quotations from other works, quotations from previous letters, and fictional dialogues. Partial usage of an epistolary form in the novel turns out to be a convenient tool for the author to contrast characters, a man and a woman, a misogynist and a feminist.

Using as an example the ways to convey reported speech in the works analysed, we can see the transformation of the epistolary novel that laid the foundations of modern European novel and gave it its interest in the rich inner world of a human. However, soon afterwards it went off the literary scene, giving way to other varieties of the genre, such as psychological and philosophical novel. The epistolary form itself is now used by the authors as one of possible techniques in the narration. The results of this study can be used both in further linguostylistic research of the epistolary text and in the analysis of hidden motivations for the use of language means in a literary work, which will help reveal cultural and social context of their use.

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## Conclusions

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## Olga Rogoza. Formos naudojamos perteikti netiesioginę kalbą prancūzų epistoliniame romane

Straipsnyje nagrinėjamos formos, naudojamos perteikti netiesioginę kalbą XVIII–XX amžių prancūzų epistoliniame romane. Tyrimas remiasi žymiais romanais: de Laclos „Les Liaisons dangereuses“, Balzako „Mémoires de deux jeunes mariées“ ir de Montherlant „Les jeunes filles“. Šie kūriniai yra vieni iš garsiausių šių amžių epistolinio romano pavyzdžių. Remiantis epistolinio romano dviypumu, t. y., laiško formos ir romano žanro deriniu, prancūzų epistolinį romaną apibūdina jo ypatinga struktūra ir kompozicija, romane nulemianti pateikiamos informacijos suvokimą. Forma, kuria perteikiama netiesioginė kalba, suderinta su rašytojo intencija. Šio stiliaus romane vyrauja aprašomasis dialogų pateikimo variantas, kai tuo tarpu tiesioginės kalbos vartojimas išskyla lemiama pasakojimo momentais siekiant įtikinti skaitytoją. Kai įtikinimas nėra labai svarbus, vartojama netiesioginė kalba, pavyzdžiui, apibūdinant veikėjus ir jų bruožus. Netiesioginė kalba epistoliniame romane naudojama dažniau, tačiau laisvosios netiesioginės kalbos praktiškai nėra. Tai paaiškinama pasakojamosios kalbos, kuri paprastai išreiškiama per laisvąją netiesioginę kalbą, nebuvimu.

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