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## CONSTRUCTING R. L. STEVENSON'S IDENTITY IN HIS CHILDREN'S POETRY

*кандидат філологічних наук, доцент,  
доцент кафедри іноземної філології, Комунальний заклад  
«Харківська гуманітарно-педагогічна академія»  
Харківської обласної ради*

**Pikalova A. O.**

*Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor,  
Associate Professor at the Department of Foreign Philology  
Municipal Establishment «Kharkiv Humanitarian Pedagogical Academy»  
of Kharkiv Regional Council  
Kharkiv, Ukraine*

**Introduction.** The concept «identity» attracts the attention of scientists in various branches. The study of the phenomenon «identity» is shifting from philosophical, psychological and social positions, acquiring the features of interdisciplinarity. This process leads to the necessity to study the mechanisms of constructing the identity. The concept «identity» covers the mental, social, cultural, communicative and linguistic spheres.

The attempt to clarify the mechanisms of constructing the identity of the author of literary texts seems timely in theoretical and practical aspects; in particular, there is an urgent necessity to study the principles of constructing the identity of the children's poet. The above determines the relevance of our research.

The purpose of this investigation is to reveal the essence of the principles of constructing the identity of such an author as Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894), whose poetic texts are dedicated to children.

**Materials and Methods.** The material of the study was poetry included in the collection of poems by R.L. Stevenson «A Child's Garden of Verses» [9]. Revealing the ways of constructing the poet's identity also required analysis of the author's letters (Robert Stevenson, Alps, Highlands, Hyeres, Bournemouth, 1880-1887) [6].

Language provides tools for constructing and forming identity [10, c. 93]. Identity is determined as a conceptual structure that involves beliefs and knowledge, norms and values, views, expectations, and emotions. It is defined as constructed in discourse [7, c. 19]. Identity is considered as a phenomenon

constructed in discourse; as a result of interaction in a social context; as something that comes from forms of subjectivity and a sense of «self» [4].

M. Bucholtz and K. Hall offer the conception of constructing the identity in the process of interaction. The researchers theorize a scheme of identity analysis, According to the scientist the identity constructs in language interaction, based on the following principles: «Emergence, Positionality, Indexicality, Relationality, and Partialness» [5, c. 585].

**Results.** This paper focuses on the constructing the identity of the author who creates poetry devoted to children. This identity is constructing in a particular cultural and historical society.

The identity of a children's poet is considered as the result of self-determination in accordance with the person's occupation. This process is manifested in the realization of himself as a poet who creates for children; identification or differentiation of oneself with the case and children; in the cognitive, affective and behavioural components of the "I-concept". Thus, the genesis, determination and representation of the identity of the children's poet are obtained.

Identity is a relational entity that predetermines its partiality and causes its construction through various configurations of oneself and others [5, c. 606].

Robert Louis Stevenson in his letter to Edmund Gosse dated by March, 23 1882 writes about «an advertisement of his new appearance as a poet (bard, rather)» [6, c. 88]. In his other letter to W. E. Henley in 1883 Stevenson writes he is «a great writer of verses», he has written «three or four pretty enough pieces of octosyllabic nonsense, semi-serious, semi-smiling», and he likes it [6, c. 141].

The above facts indicate the validity of the the partialness principle of constructing the identity of the children's poet.

M. Bucholtz and K. Hall state the relationality principle underscores «the point that identities are never autonomous or independent but always acquire social meaning in relation to other available identity positions and other social actors». This principle suggests such the relations as «*adequation / distinction*», «*authentication / denaturalization*», «*authorization / illegitimation*» [5, c. 598–605].

Nowadays, many years ago after R.L. Stevenson's death, some of his children's poems are included into modern anthologies of children's poetry. It is the evidence of the popularity of R.L. Stevenson's verses. At the same time, this fact testifies that identity of the author is being constructed through such relations as similarity / difference (the category that identifies the poet's identity is the children for whom the author's verses are devoted), recognition / non-recognition (whether the author is popular or not), reader's acceptance / rejection (whether the author's poems are accessible and understandable for children's perception or not, whether they are read with pleasure or not).

Thus, the identity is relationally constructed. In such way the relationality principle is attested.

Identity of a children's poet can be determined as a set of identifications that were acquired in childhood, as a set of identifications of internal experience of all previous life and professional stages [1, c. 71]. In this case, there are the possibilities to distinguish the principle of continuity as one of the principles of constructing identity [2]. This mechanism testifies to the development of the identity throughout the life, because the identity is considered as a phenomenon that is located in a changing and evolving flow of time. «Identities are produced and reproduced, as well as transformed and dismantled, discursively» [11, c. 11].

About the collection of children's poems "A Child's Garden of Verses" R.L. Stevenson notes in the letter to his nurse Alison Cunningham; «This little book, which is all about my childhood» [6, c. 11]. Moreover, R.L. Stevenson writes «I shall have a dedication; I am going to dedicate 'em to Cummy; it will please her» [6, c. 122]. He wrote the charming lines «To Alison Cunningham From Her Boy» as a dedication to his book of poetry "A Child's Garden of Verses" (Stevenson 1999: 67): «*And grant it, Heaven, that all who read/ May find as dear a nurse at need,/ And every child who lists my rhyme,/ In the bright, fireside, nursery clime,/ May hear it in as kind a voice/ As made my childish days rejoice!*» « [9, c. 67]. At the same time, he devotes this book to children who can listen or read his poems.

The dedication of "A Child's Garden of Verses" to a person who was almost always near R.L. Stevenson during his childhood; recognition of the fact that this book is about his own childhood, – all these facts prove to the presence of R.L. Stevenson's «memory of childhood». It testifies to the continuity of the author's memory, which is also associated with the continuity of the process of the identity's development.

This paper is part of a broader research project on constructing the identity of the children's poet, which proves the the reasons for distinguishing the principle of the emotive constructing the identity of the poet who creates for children [3]. According to the principle of the emotive constructing R.L. Stevenson's identity, the types of «emotive-I» («optimist», «wonderer», «childlike», «ingenuous», «fantasizer», «dreamer», «lyricist», and «moralist» [8]) were distinguished.

**Conclusions.** The research results suggest considering the identity of R.L. Stevenson who creates children's poetry as constructed on the basis of the relationality principle, the partialness principle, the principle of continuity, and the principle of the emotive constructing.

Perspective for further research can be a thorough investigation of the ways of constructing R.L. Stevenson's identity.

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