Introduction

The discourse of M, a fictional character from the James Bond film series, who originally appeared in Ian Fleming's series of books about a famous spy on Her Majesty's secret service, has turned out to be intriguing and multifaceted enough to merit a study from a linguistic perspective. Among various publications devoted to the main character and the series of books and films as such, this approach, scientific in its nature, is intended to depict the well-known stories from a different, sociolinguistic angle. Surprising though it may seem, it is not James Bond to whom attention is drawn in this book. It is primarily directed towards M, James Bond's supervisor, who is in charge of MI6.

Therefore, the fundamental aim of the research is a linguistic investigation of Ms' discourse throughout decades, in relation to James Bond as one of M's operatives on the one hand, and to M's supervisors on the other. The study substantially views M as a manager, and thus directs the scientific enquiry towards the linguistic manifestations of M's managerial responsibilities and competencies. It examines M's discourse as part of institutional discourse, embracing the issues indissolubly attributeable to it, including power relations characteristic for organisational hierarchies or pragmatic aspects such as the specificity of interactional frameworks and procedures within the institutional context.

Although, to some extent, the fictional stories are interpreted or retold once again here, the scientific approach is manifested by the composition of the book and by its content. Chapter 1 constitutes both a theoretical introduction and background for the considerations which follow. The theoretical part elaborates on the issues strictly connected with further analyses. It encompasses the concept of institutional discourse because M is a manager who operates in the MI6 organisational context. The research assumes a paradigm of discourse analysis, and consequently the aspects the authors have decided to focus on, such as the pragmatic dimension of discourse, or the matter of

gender-related and context-related language differences, are mentioned as well.

The theoretical background allows to establish a methodological framework for the further discussed analysis. It is described in the last section of Chapter 1 which focuses on the research material and the methodology applied for the investigation of M-Bond encounters.

Chapter 2 discusses the results of the analysis of M's discourse, primarily of the character's interactions with Bond, but also with others. The discourse of M is presented diachronically, which has two underlying advantages. Firstly, adopting such a paradigm allows to analyse whether and how the discourse of M evolves, and how the M-007 interactions change over time within the context of the fictional stories. Secondly, it makes it possible to observe the tendencies resulting from the changing socio-cultural reality, external to the stories, within which the movies are produced. And vice versa, to some extent, it also makes it possible to presume about the evolution of the image of contemporary social and cultural reality.

The analytical part is subdivided into two. The first subchapter discusses the changing position of M in the MI6 institution. The other one presents M's discourse in terms of his/her managerial duties and responsibilities, and it arranges the considerations according to three categories: M orders, M criticizes, and M cares.

M's discourse is multidimensional, and so may be its analyses. To their surprise, the sociolinguistically oriented authors of the present book have found it an inspiring research source. Hopefully, the reader, whether a researcher or a Bond stories fan, will find the results of this work inspiring as well.