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STYLISTIC FUNCTIONS OF SYNONYMS IN MEMOIRS BY MITCH ALBOM

У статті визначено стилістичний потенціал синонімічних лексичних одиниць у мемуарному жанрі на прикладі мемуарів американського письменника і журналіста Мітча Елбома «Вівторки з Моррі». Серед стилістичних функцій виокремлено характеристичну функцію, інтенсифікуючу та уточнювальну функцію, створення емоційного колориту оповіді.

Ключові слова: синоніми, синонімічна домінанта, мемуари, функціональний стиль, стилістична функція, експресивний, емоційний.

Oksana Halaibida. Stylistic functions of synonyms in memoirs by Mitch Albom

Synonyms as one of the most important stylistic means have been discussed in linguistics for a long time. As far back as the ancient times Greeks came to the conclusion that the wealth of the language, its euphony and potential were reflected in synonyms. They emerged as a result of selection of improved forms of expression of thoughts and feelings. The phenomenon of synonymy has been investigated by a number of foreign and Ukrainian linguists: J. Lyons, N. Lewis, R. Harris, I. V. Arnold, H. B. Antrushina, A. H. Nikolenko and many others. Scholars recognize not only the similarity of synonymic words, but the difference between them, and that is the difference that creates stylistic sophistication of the text with synonyms and serves for the diverse expression of thought.

In most cases the research was conducted on the basis of fiction texts and little attention was paid to memoir literature which can be referred to fiction-publistic or epistolary style. The aim of our research is to define stylistic functions of synonyms in a famous memoir by Mitch Albom «Tuesdays with Morrie».

Lexical synonyms is one of the most important means of ensuring expression in all its subtle semantic shades. Synonyms satisfy the author's desire for accuracy and beauty of narrative. Synonyms can be used to transfer different shades of characteristics of people and phenomena. For this purpose the author often uses contextual synonyms.

Stylistic use of synonyms gives a writer a possibility to express his ideas emotionally adequately, with the nuances of meaning, thus intensifying perception of events and creating the desired stylistic effect.

Stylistic function of synonyms in the memoir genre is to characterize the characters, intensify emotions, specify different features and states, avoid unnecessary repetition, convey the shades of meaning, pay attention to the most important moments of expression.

Key words: synonyms, contextual synonyms, synonymic dominant, memoir, functional style, stylistic function, expressive, emotional.

The system of synonyms of each language is original and unique. It is gradually created by historical development and enrichment of its vocabulary. Although the phenomenon of synonymy belongs to a fairly developed language areas of semantic relations, this question remains controversial in modern linguistic science. There isn't even an unambiguous definition of a synonym. There are different approaches to classification of this many-sided and rather ambiguous linguistic phenomenon.

Synonyms are used in all language spheres: oral or written, especially stylistically differentiated. Synonyms as one of the most important stylistic means have been discussed in linguistics for a long time. As far back as the ancient times Greeks came to the conclusion that the wealth of the language, its euphony and potential were reflected in synonyms. The phenomenon of synonymy has been investigated by a number of foreign and Ukrainian linguists: J. Lyons, N. Lewis, R. Harris, I. V. Arnold, H.B. Antrushina, A.H. Nikolenko and many others. Scholars recognize not only the similarity of synonymic words, but the difference between them, and that is the difference that creates stylistic sophistication of the text with synonyms and serves for the diverse expression of thought.

In most cases the research was conducted on the basis of fiction texts and little attention was paid to memoir literature which can be referred to fiction-publisistic or epistolary style [Mazyp 2013, c.577]. The aim of our research is to define stylistic functions of synonyms in a famous memoir «Tuesdays with Morrie» by an American writer and journalist Mitch Albom.

In linguistic literature there is no unanimity of opinions on the typology of synonyms as well as on defining the criteria and features of synonymous linguistic units. Synonyms are words that are similar, or have a related meaning to another word. Synonyms with exact meaning share a seme or denotational sememe, whereas those with inexactly similar meaning share a broader denotational or connotational sememe [Martins 2014]. Lexical synonyms is one of the most important means of ensuring expression in all its subtle shades [Gibbons, Whiteley 2018]. Synonyms satisfy the human desire for accuracy and beauty of speech. They have emerged as a result of selection of improved forms of expression of thoughts and feelings. The richer and more developed lexical synonymy, the richer and more developed and perfect is the language itself.

T.B. Bondarenko defines semantic and stylistic functions of synonyms. Among semantic functions she mentions replacement (of a word by a word, a word combination, phraseological unit, periphrasis, abbreviation) and specification (to describe some features and characteristics in a detailed way). Stylistic functions of synonyms are realized by stylistic and semantical-stylistic synonyms: the function of assessment/intensification, the function of stylistic organization of the text (to create climax, for example), euphemism function (to substitute words which are considered indelicate, rude, too direct or impolite) [Бондаренко 2013, p.157].

Fiction with its rich imagery is an ideal space for the realization of stylistic features of synonymy. In our research we referred to the genre of memoir which is also very rich in expressive and emotional devices. In his book «Memoir: An Introduction», 2011, the scholar G. Thomas Couser argues that we go to the genre not so much for detail or style as for “wisdom and self-knowledge,” for what the main character, who is always the author, has learned. Sometimes, though, the style is the lesson [Burt 2017]. Memoirs focus on the relationship between the writer and a particular person. They explain the significance of the relationship. They tell not a story of life (as an autobiography does) but a story from life. To tell the story with the utmost care the writers use synonyms for describing feelings and intensifying emotional impact on the readers.

«Tuesdays with Morrie» (1997) is a memoir by an American writer and journalist Mitch Albom. He recounts the time spent with his 78-year-old professor of Sociology, Morrie Schwartz, who was dying from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). Albom, a former student of Schwartz, had not been in touch with the professor for sixteen years since attending his college classes at Brandeis University. After meeting professor and understanding how seriously he was ill, Albom commutes to his place every Tuesday and has some talks, which results in a book based on these fourteen Tuesdays they meet, supplemented with Schwartz's lectures and life experiences, flashbacks and allusions to contemporary events.

The memoir is rich in synonym usage which enables delivering subtle nuances of dramatic situation and enriches the prose language itself. Let's examine the following example: *Morrie laughed, then shook his head* [Albom, p. 35]; *"You notice," he added, grinning, "there's nothing in there about a salary"* [Albom, p. 37]; *He*

closes his eyes and smiles [Albom, p. 49]; *I snicker, but the idea is momentarily appealing* [Albom, p. 20]; *Morrie chuckled. "Maybe. But, Mitch, all this talk that we're doing"* [Albom, p. 39].

The verb 'to laugh' means to make the spontaneous sounds and movements of the face and body that are the instinctive expressions of lively amusement and sometimes also of derision [OALDCE]. It has the most neutral meaning and is a synonymic dominant. The other words convey the different shades of meaning of this verb: 'to grin' – to smile broadly; 'to smile' – to form one's features into a pleased, kind, or amused expression, typically with the corners of the mouth turned up and the front teeth exposed; 'to snicker' – to give a smothered or half-suppressed laugh; 'to chuckle' – to laugh quietly or inwardly [OALDCE]. These synonyms have positive meaning and in relation to the professor perform a characteristic function and create an image of a kind, good-natured person.

Synonyms can be used to transfer different shades of characteristics of a certain phenomenon. It can be traced in the following sentences: *His hair fell out, his face went gaunt as a skeleton* [Albom, p. 44]; ... *he was so small, so withered, it was more a boy's body than a man's* [Albom, p. 70]; *His bony fingers hold his glasses across his chest, which rises and falls with each labored breath* [Albom, p. 68].

'Gaunt' (of a person) – lean and haggard, especially because of suffering, hunger, or age; 'withered' (of a part of the body) means thin and weak and not fully developed because of disease; 'bony' (of a person or part of the body) – very thin so that the bones can be seen under the skin. [OALDCE]. There is no synonymic dominant in the following example, as all of the lexemes are stylistically coloured. The most neutral meaning can have a word "thin". The synonyms also perform a characteristic function and underline hardships and sufferings the professor had gone through.

There is one more example that intensifies the miserable condition of Morrie: *Because Morrie sat in the wheelchair, the camera never caught his withered legs* [Albom, p. 8]; *He was weary all the time* [Albom, p. 3]; *"He wants you to come visit," Charlotte said, "but, Mitch . . . He's very weak"* [Albom, p. 52]; *Morrie's love for music was strong even before he got sick, but now it was so intense, it moved him to tears* [Albom, p. 36]; *And then I saw him as the adult who had drifted away, thin and frail, his face bony from the chemotherapy treatments* [Albom, p. 51]; *I can't speak for too long without needing a rest now. I have already canceled a lot of the people who want to see me. Mitch, there are so many. But I'm too fatigued* [Albom, p. 38].

The word 'weak' has the most neutral meaning, so it is a synonymic dominant. 'Weak' means not physically strong. The synonyms of this word give us the opportunity to distinguish some insignificant differences in their meanings: 'sick' means those that is affected by physical or mental illness (more specific word, indicates the reason of the weakness). 'Withered' (of a part of the body) – thin and weak and not fully developed because of disease, the word of high stylistic tone. 'Weary' has a bit different shade of meaning. It denotes extreme tiredness especially as a result of excessive exertion. 'Frail' means weak and thin, delicate, that can be easily broken. 'Fatigued' shows the extreme tiredness resulting from mental or physical exertion or illness [OALDCE]. So, all these words describe a person that almost has no energy, but each word describes the shade of this meaning.

These synonyms are used to describe the state of an ill person. This detailed description helps to affect a reader deeply, make him understand all the tragedy of the doomed person.

Here is one more example: *Selfishly, I wondered if I were in his shoes, would I be consumed with sad thoughts of all that I had missed* [Albom, p. 29]; *I covered stories where people died. I interviewed grieving family members* [Albom, p. 23].

This pair of words is also a synonymic row. In this row the word 'sad' is a synonymic dominant because it has a neutral meaning: unhappy or showing unhappiness [OALDCE]. 'Grieving' is a word of a deeper intensity than a previous one, it carries more darkness and sorrow. When a person is grieving, it means that he/she is very sad, especially because somebody has died. In this sample synonyms perform intensifying function.

In the memoir there are also many contextual synonyms. For example: *With each visit, Morrie seemed to be melting into his chair; his spine taking on its shape* [Albom, p. 38]; *"It's horrible to watch my body slowly wilt away to nothing. But it's also wonderful because of all the time I get to say good bye"* [Albom, p. 17].

These two words out of the context have almost opposite meanings: 'to melt' means to become or make something liquid as a result of heating, whereas 'to wilt away' means to become limp through the heat, loss of water, or disease [OALDCE]. When in the first case there is the excess of water, in the second one there is the lack of it. But in the context these words denote the same concept – the decay of a person, his suffering and slow and painful dying.

In the listed example synonyms are used distantly and perform the function of intensification of the utterance. If placed in juxtaposition they are used to specify the quality or some feature: ... *he was so small, so withered, it was more a boy's body than a man's* [Albom, p. 70]; *He inhaled, then began his number count in a soft, wobbly voice* [Albom, p. 17].

The instability, the weakness of Morrie's voice is ascertained by the adjectives 'soft' and 'wobbly'. 'Soft' doesn't mean only smooth and pleasant in touch, but in this case it has the meaning of weakness and instability. 'Wobbly' means "not firm or confident" [OALDCE]. The combination of these two adjectives emphasizes this

weakness of the voice and makes the illusion of the readers' perception of this trembling of the voice in reality. These words denote the concept of the old age. In relation to each other they are contextual synonyms of specification because they both express the same characteristics feature of a person with different shades of meaning.

And quite often synonyms are used to create climax: *Morrie's love for music was strong even before he got sick, but now it was so intense, it moved him to tears* [Albom, p. 36].

Synonyms of replacement are also widely used to avoid repetition of words and monotony of narration: *In the fall of 1994, Morrie came to the hilly Brandeis campus to teach his final college course. He could have skipped this, of course* [Albom, p. 4].

There are synonyms of replacement among different parts of speech: *gingerly – cautiously ; alongside – nearby; to keep going – to go on; embarrassed– confused; this is the end– someone's time is off , etc.*

So, synonyms in the memoir genre create a great potential for evaluative subjective depiction of life situations. Stylistic use of synonyms gives a writer a possibility to express his ideas emotionally adequately, with the nuances of meaning, thus intensifying perception of events and creating the desired stylistic effect.

Stylistic function of synonyms in the memoir genre is to characterize the characters, intensify emotions, specify different features and states, avoid unnecessary repetition, convey the shades of meaning, pay attention to the most important moments of expression.

Synonymy is a source of enrichment of language means of expression, so it is of particular interest for the development of the problems associated with the culture of language, the study of language and functional styles in speech as well as in texts.

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ABBREVIATIONS

OALDCE – Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English: International student's 7th edition (2010). Oxford: Oxford university press, 1715 p.

Albom – Albom, Mitch. Tuesdays with Morrie. URL: [http://faculty.ksu.edu.sa/inaam/Literary%20Translation/Mitch%20Albom%20-%20Tuesdays%20with%20Morrie\(2\).pdf](http://faculty.ksu.edu.sa/inaam/Literary%20Translation/Mitch%20Albom%20-%20Tuesdays%20with%20Morrie(2).pdf).

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ЗВУКО-КОЛІРНА СИНЕСТЕЗІЯ В ТЕКСТАХ КОМЕРЦІЙНОЇ РЕКЛАМИ

У статті розглянуто феномен звуко-колірної синестезії (кольоровий слух) як одного із найяскравіших принципів організації текстів комерційної реклами відомих брендів і описано методологію його аналізу. Експериментальне дослідження здійснювалося шляхом залучення методики вільних асоціацій, фоносемантичного аналізу голосних і приголосних звуків та їх колірної кореляції. Означені методи дослідження дозволили експериментальним шляхом виявити й описати характер синестетичних реакцій студентської молоді під час рецензії текстів акустичної і/або візуальної комерційної реклами.