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MULTIMODAL DIVERSITY OF POSTMODERNIST FICTION TEXT

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the analysis of structural and functional manifestations of multimodal diversity in postmodernist fiction texts. Multimodality is defined as the coexistence of more than one semiotic mode within a certain context. Multimodal texts feature a diversity of semiotic modes in the communication and development of their narrative. Such experimental texts subvert conventional patterns by introducing various semiotic resources – verbal or non-verbal.

Keywords: postmodernism, postmodernist text, multimodality, paragraphemics.

1. INTRODUCTION

The fiction politics of contemporaneity reflects diversified patterns of language forms and their functions. This has brought to life the experimental postmodernist writing whose key principles include parody, play, non-selection, fragmentation, collage, destruction and multimodal heterogeneity.

In the postmodern era, a large-scale experiment with the technique of writing has been performed. Postmodernist fiction texts are the models of rhizomatic nonlinear writing, hypertext, which destroys any hierarchical consistency [3; 4; 7; 10]. Fiction eclecticism of postmodernism captures all channels of explication the meaning of the text in the play concept of modern culture. In ludic space of postmodernist fiction such trends account for the interwoven interaction of means of various semiotic systems.

The relevance of this research lies in macrophilological comprehensive approach to the analysis of contemporary fiction text from the standpoint of cognitive-discursive paradigm of knowledge and consists in highlighting semantic, structural and functional mechanisms of postmodernist text.

The keen interest of scientists in the study of semiotically heterogeneous text led to the emergence of various nominations for the studied phenomenon. So, E. Anisimov, A. Bernatska, Y. Sorokin call the type of text under study kreolized; L. Bolshakov, G. Eiger, O. Sonin, V. Yuht treat it as polycode. In this study, we use the term multimodal text that is widely used by Western scholars (E. Bearne, C. Charles, A. Gibbons, I. Karlsson, K.M. O'Halloran, B.A. Smith, E. Ventola). Multimodality is defined as the coexistence of several semiotic modes within a particular context [11, p. 8]. Multimodal texts show a plurality of semiotic modes in communication and progression of their narrative [12, p. 420]. Multimodal texts are accompanied by images, photographs, diagrams, the print enhanced by a variety of font size and shape, layout and design in general [4, p. 1-2].

The discourse of postmodernism finds a great interest in play. Today the postmodern play grows into a free experimentation, unpredictable innovation of fiction writing. A considerable number of studies has grown up around the theme of play in modern culture and literature: a theory of playful genesis of culture by Johan Huizinga, a theory of language games by Ludwig Wittgenstein, postmodern performance discussed by Alison Lee and James Mellard.

This research attempts to assess the extent to which semiotic diversity contributes to the “playfulness” of postmodernist text.

2. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Exploring the multimodal essence of postmodern fiction text within the framework of play concept of nowadays culture, we follow the guideline that the analysis of text, its structure, semantics and functions should be directed to the disclosure of its communicative potential. In postmodernist text the author uses diverse verbal and nonverbal surroundings to attract the readers, to introduce an intellectual game, putting multiple interpretations on a literary conception. As the postmodernist text is converted to non-linear, hypertextual canvas, all lingual synthesis together with visual and graphemic means forge the multimodal space of postmodernist fiction text, aimed at achieving a common goal – engaging the reader to a co-play.

One of the aspects of the analysis of multimodal syncretism of postmodernist text is paragraphemics. Paragraphemics is interpreted as a set of semiotic units that mark a part of literary abstract by graphical structuration and punctual segmentation of text fragments, carrying significant expressive and pragmatic potential [13, p. 190]. The concept of paragraphemic stylistic means includes layout, typographic variations, non-verbal signs weaved into the structure of the text (pictures, emoticons, ideograms, mathematical symbols) [6, p. 140]. The effective combination of verbal and non-verbal means ensures the fullest interpretation of the text. The role of image increases, not only as a means of transmitting information in fiction, but as a means of communicating a postmodernist text. It's obvious that iconic information is better remembered. Moreover, non-verbal (paragraphemic) means play a significant role in organization of the text and its communicative pragmatic aspect [14, p. 202]. The active introduction of paragraphemic means to the structure and semantics of the text effects its interpretation.

The efficiency of this technique has been exemplified in Chapter 12 of the novel *“A Visit From The Goon Squad”* by Jennifer Egan. The whole novel presents an eclectic pattern of narrative and the final chapter summarizes the life journey of the main character, Sasha Blake, from her daughter's, Alison, point of view. The chapter with its layout of Power Point features childhood memories of Alison, her autistic brother Lincoln and the relationship (sometimes quite tense) with their parents. Such iconic arrangement of the text serves as a means of information compression on the one hand, and it presents the most significant information to the portraying of the mature main character on the other one.

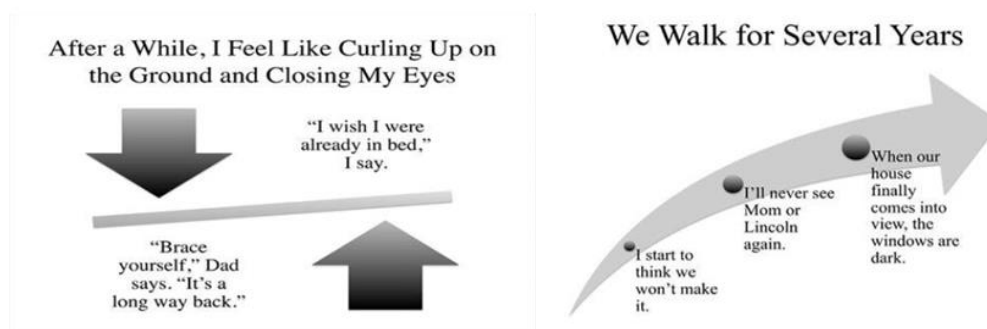


Fig.1. [8, p. 164].

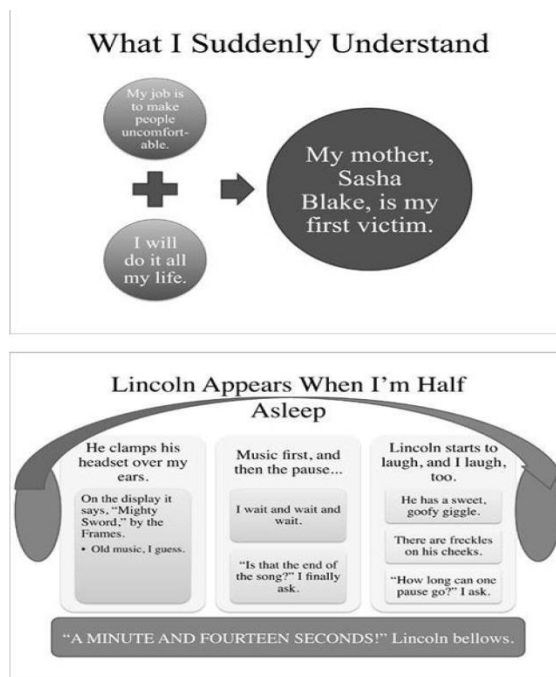


Fig. 2. [8, p. 147].

This visual organization of the text might also show the generation gap, the story's characters are struggling through. It is also very interactive for a reader to read between different signs and charts and find the connections and the ties that bind these people.

Among the iconic markers in postmodernist multimodal texts we fix a range of semiotic units: numbers, symbols, figures, pictures, graphic segmentation of text, type and font variations, graphic symbols, unconventional punctuation. Punctuation is seen as supporting nonverbal semiotic system that facilitates the implementation of speech in written communication [15, p. 256; 16, p. 58-62].

Fragmentation in postmodernist text is achieved by a breach or abuse of punctuation rules. For example, in one of the chapters of the novel *"The Eyre Affair"* by J. Fforde, Mycroft's bookworms start exploiting punctuation and capitalization, the instances of which constitute the implementation of metafictional technique. The bookworms create signs that materialize themselves in characters' speech, emphasizing the fact that the characters in Charlotte Brontë's novel *"Jane Eyre"* cannot escape the impact of the new context of the novel by J. Fforde. In the scene of the bookworms, the text is randomly fragmented with apostrophes and ampersands, indicating the new values for each of the individual words and larger grammatical units. For example, apostrophication in the sentence *"In he're the Pla'sma Rifle work's perf & ectly. All we've to do is open' the book with the Pros'e Portal, bring out the we'apons & is'sue them"* [9, p. 106] can be interpreted not only as additional punctuation symbols, but as manipulators of statement's content. Apostrophication and ampersandaction stress one more feature of the postmodernist play – commerciality of the text message. Thus, the order by the detective, Thursday Next, *"& a 50% Cut On Every'thing That 'Comes Out Of It!"* sounds like an advertisement. Commercialism also demonstrates the expressions *"Any'thing That The Hu'man Imag'inaton Can Think Up, We Can Reproduce"* and *"With It We Can Ma'ke Anything We Want"* [9, p. 107].

Commercial interpretation of grammatical capitalization is emphasized with an excessive apostrophication that serves a means of complication of the meaning that is often used to manipulate inattentive potential customers. The same function is performed by abnormal hyphens:

'Shut-Up, My-croft, 'snapped Schitt. 'Ha-de's, please, The In-Struc-tion Man-ual.'

'Man-ual, My De'ar Chap?'

'Yes, Mr Hade's. Ev-en You Will Not be Im-Pervious-

To My Associate's Small Artill-ery Piece. You Have My-croft's Manual For The Por-tal & The Po-em In WhicH You Have Im-pris-oned Mrs Next. Give-Them-To-Me.

'No, Mr -Schitt. Give Me The Gun -'

'You Dare To Dou-ble-Cross-Me?

'Sure I Do. If I Did-not You'd Have No Res'-pect From Me & That's No Basis 'For A Work-able Part-ner-ship' [9, p. 107].

In the analyzed British postmodernist fiction texts we also find:

- typographical contractions typical of the Internet communication: *"I HATE THIS PLACE, GAB! I AM GOING INSANE! U'VE GOT 2 COME AND GET IT; I can not wait 2 tell U about the move I pulled with Mr Wolf! OMG! It was a masterstroke! What an idiot! I almost felt SORRY 4 him!" [2, p. 273].*

- maths signs: *"He was a superlative examiner of undergraduates: scrupulous, painstaking, stern yet just. No one could award a delicate mark like B + / B +? + With such confident aim, or justify it with such cogency and conviction" [17, p. 18]; "I said, 'Are you sure you do not mean" contumace ", Mr Endive - from the Latin com = intense + tumere = to swell?" [2, p. 19].*

Among the playful graphic means we also distinguish:

- deviant emotional expressive punctuation: *"Darlingest, Darlingest-est-est Mummy, Ethan says I must tell you, straight away (because he's far too lazy to write himself, but he loves you VERY VERY VERY MUCH !!!)" [2, p. 267]; "Well, whatever it is, one thing's for certain: this girl is VERY, VERY ANGRY, Rog! She's absolutely LIVID! She's SPITTING TACKS! She is FURIOUS, Rog! Her rage is absolute, it's all consuming, it's DOWNRIGHT, BLOODY MAGNIFICENT!" [2, p. 7];*

- discursive deviant punctuation: *"The Colvin Bridge; demolished the very same year he visited (it was flooding back, suddenly. Memory worked that way; damming up, the pressure building, building... then something giving; the wall - the buffer - the block - the nothing... then information - the news - the facts - the evidence - the data... a mass of it -an agony - gushing right past him in relentless torrents. Useless stuff, mostly. Rubbish - guff - padding)" [1, p. 93]. This method is common while styling a text fragment as a riddle and involves drawing the reader's attention and his active role in the perception and decoding of literary message.*

- communicative-pragmatic deviant punctuation by which the author verbalizes additional intentions and which also serves as a means of expressing physical or emotional state of the speaker: *"I was like, NO! NO! NO! THIS CAN BE HAPPENING TO ME!!" [2, p. 269] or expressiveness particular phenomenon: "BOINNNNNNNNGGGGGGGGG! The penny drops thunderously inside Morris Zapp's head. He steals a glance over the back of his seat "[17, p. 28]; "The foul cold air hit him, without relenting - Fr-fr-fr-fucking-fr-freezing!" [1, p. 139].*

The whole novel *"Behindlings"* by N. Barker is accompanied by graphically marked exclamations that fragment the narrative:

HAH!

... a little ...

Almost always happened...

Huh-huh...

...five hours ...

Huh-huh

...in ...

HAH!

Arthur checked his watch. Four and three [1, p. 87].

Such graphic play shows, on the one hand, informality of the text, and on the other – expresses the feelings of the main character, who is constantly chased.

The analyzed postmodernist fiction texts are saturated with a variety of means of graphic imagery and expressiveness at the spatial layout and italics selections. The expressive possibilities of graphic play at the font are used to display loud speech and in some cases it is accompanied by the lexemes with the appropriate semantic load (shout, scream, bellow, cry, yell). For example: *"I'M BEING SARCASTIC, MISS BROOKS! I bellows ..." [2, p. 313]; "And yell HALLELUJAH! Because MEDIDITH HAS FOUND HER JESUS!" [2, p. 46].*

Graphemic play can accompany and emphasize a comic situation. For example, in the novel *“Behindlings”* by N. Barker, Leo changed the text saving settings on the computer, he borrowed from Ted, and when he turned on his computer, then immediately Leo’s private online correspondence appeared: *“LeO iS deeP inSide oF Me. He INhabits My eVerY nerVe, My very cOrE, mY evERy fibRe !! Yes! YeS! YES He Is riGht, DEEP INSIde OF mE - wiTH hiS big HAndS and His kEEen tonGuE aND His BOLD anD sTRonG aND INSIStaNT cOck. Yes! yES! YeS !! hE is rISEn and he is COme! He iS COme! HE is comE aND coMeand COme aLL ovER me !! AHHHHHHHHhhHHHHH! Do Not PLAY wiTH my KeyS So TEDDy. It is TicklinG. It is HAHA ha fucKINg Ha Ha HA! I am LEO’s whORE. So have CleaN hanDs whEN yOU touCH me, okAy? And alwAYS asK NiCEly wheN you - uH! uH! UH! USE ME ”*(*Insistant? Someone had forgotten to use spellcheck, apparently*) [1, p. 55]. Humor of this context is underlined by a metanarrative comment on incorrect spelling.

Thus, paragraphemics is defined as an additional source of semantic information to constitute the playful strategy of postmodernist texts. The paragraphemic signs serve as coding elements of information space in the structurally and semantically fragmented postmodernist hypertext the intellectual reader is to decode.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Concluding, the findings of this research provide insights for paragraphemic (iconic and punctuation) representations of play concept within a postmodernist fiction text. In terms of philosophical and ideological grounds, postmodernism declares perception of the world as chaos, individual as a puppet, and his/her behavior as a rebellion against conventions. Postmodernist fiction text opposes linguistic and semiotic homogeneous puritanism to diverse multimodal structuration. The inclusion of multitude of semiotic modes aims at impacting the reader, bringing to the interaction of decoding the concept of fiction text. Multimodality as a symbiosis of different semiotic modes within a coherent textual unity meets the requirements of modern communications and linguocreativity of homo ludens.

A further research might explore the pragmatic role of multimodal heterogeneity in postmodernist fiction texts and expand the taxonomy of paragraphemic means.

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У статті проаналізовано структурні та функційні репрезентації мультиmodalної еkleктики в контексті лудичності постмодерністського художнього тексту. Мультиmodalність як співіснування кодів різних семіотичних систем розглянуто крізь призму іконічних та пунктуаційних засобів параграфеміки.

Ключові слова: постмодернізм, постмодерністський текст, мультиmodalність, параграфеміка.