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CONNOTATIVE FEATURES IN THE NOVEL „IN THE HEART OF THE COUNTRY” BY JOHN MAXWELL COETZEE

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The article is devoted to functions of connotative meaning in the semantic space of a literary text. Common approaches to the study of connotative meaning in linguistics are overviewed. The focus of the paper is directed on the types of connotation and in text and peculiarities of their functions. Connotative meaning is studied in expressive and evaluative aspects which contribute to the notion of stylistic connotation. Connotative meaning of lexical units with the semantics of nature in one of the first novels by John Maxwell Coetzee is analyzed.

Keywords: meaning, connotation, expressiveness, evaluation, semantic space, literary text, lexical semantic field.

Introduction. The specific feature of a word in a fiction text is its immersion in the semantic space, which determines its value and sets the trajectory of its semantic and sense development. By means of words as linguistic signs a literary text expresses its overall semantic meaning and shapes its general sense. It, therefore, seems consistent that Catherine Elgin reckons a work of fiction to be „the laboratory of the mind”, within which reconfiguration offers new perspectives on things and phenomena and, moreover, results in creation of wholly new and original textual meanings [10, p. 46–47].

The semantic space of a literary text centers on the subtlety of meaning, which constitutes its distinctiveness and sets the direction for interpreting activity. As meaning in text appeals to lexical meaning, the meaning hidden in the semantic space appeals to lexical structures of a literary text. Furthermore, as meaning is regarded through the lens of its major components – denotative and connotative, the semantic space too addresses the denotative and connotative meaning components in its own way. Presently attention is focused on the latter, highlighting peculiarities of its functioning within the semantic space of a literary text.

Connotation, or connotative component of lexical meaning, generally refers to associative potential of the lexical meaning that foregrounds its salient property or quality [14, p. 16]. In this vein, connotations tend to bear a flavor of subjectivity based on people’s individual experiences and feelings [13, p. 24]. What is more, connotations are mainly culturally specific, reflecting idiosyncratic differences in customs, traditions, the way of communication, etiquette – on the whole, world perception [7, p. 140].

Overview of current works on the problem.

Ukrainian and Russian linguists have noticed two major viewpoints concerning the nature of connotation. From one point of view, connotation is considered a component of lexical meaning that stands in opposition to denotation; it represents the so-called „shade of meaning”, an umbrella term for cultural, expressive, emotive and stylistic features it covers. From the other standpoint, connotation does not constitute word meaning at all; it only comes to the fore in speech and discourse aiming serve its pragmatic goals [4, p. 20–21; 11, p. 276]. Roland Barthes, extending the semiotic focus of Ferdinand de Saussure,

regards denotation and connotation in terms of different orders of signification: while denotation has a signifier and a signified, connotation employs denotation as its signifier and supplies it with its own signified. Thus, connotation is viewed in terms of its own code which is apparently constructed within the plane of meaning of a linguistic sign [16, p. 479].

In text, however, connotation functioning on the lexical level should be delineated from connotation of the global semantic space. Umberto Eco argues that „the text is the locus where meaning is produced and becomes productive (signifying practice). Within its texture, the signs of the dictionary (as codifying equivalences) can emerge only by a rigidification and death”. Moreover, he considers a text to be „a device which questions previous signifying systems, often renews them, and sometimes destroys them” [9, p. 25]. Lexical connotations appear to be glowing in the lexical semantic canvas of the text, yet they stand out linguistically; connotation of the global semantic space reflects the general meaning of the text, representing it as artistically and literally modified. Global connotation results in attaching the inherent semantic quality to general meaning, which contours the literary aesthetic quality of the fiction text and acts as its global connotative perspective.

The essence of connotation in the semantic space is also prompted by the poetic function of the language, which centers on the message of the fiction text rather its verbal form. Of the six functions that language performs in the process of communication it is the poetic function that, as Roman Jakobson argues, ensures „not a supplementation of discourse with rhetoric adornment but a total reevaluation of the discourse and of all its components” [12, p. 93]. While the text is meant to denote a specific situation, it is its poetic underpinning that turns on total reconsideration of the denotative plane. The latter becomes vague, fading and unimportant within the textual meaning [15, p. 126]; it surrenders to focalize literary development of sense, which the semantic space brings out into open through the network of sense relations among word meanings.

Nevertheless, the paper concerns lexical aspects of connotation in the semantic space of a fiction text. Lexical connotation pins down the linguistic backbone of the semantic space and deals

with semantic nuances of word meanings that are semantically peculiar and stylistically relevant. Semantic expressiveness of word meanings, achieved by means of connotation, is determined, according to V.N. Teliya, firstly, by double modality of an expressively coloured meaning and, secondly, by the connotative extension of analogy. Double modality lies in correlation of evaluative and emotionally evaluative modalities, with the first focusing on evaluation of the chosen object / phenomenon based on a certain property, whereas the latter displaying its additional (axiological) property as fused with the major one that acts as its „inner form”. As for the extension of analogy, it implies juxtaposition of the denotative meaning component with the property represented by the so-called „inner form” [5, p. 24–27]. Consequently, connotation is being shaped by total rethinking of denotation, which merges rational and emotionally expressive features of both.

The novelty of research lies in the fact that the role of meaning components within the scale of the semantic space of a literary text has not been focused on yet. Furthermore, the semantic space of a literary text has not been studied from the angle of word meaning, which, essentially, lies at the core of text semantics and determines its peculiarity and uniqueness. Finally, the semantic space of novels by John Maxwell Coetzee constitutes a new and prospective material for linguistic research in the fields of Germanic studies, namely in the area of author's individuality in language.

The purpose of the study is to analyze connotation and its functioning in the semantic space of the novel „In the Heart of the Country” by J.M. Coetzee.

The outcomes of the research. In a literary text connotation is aimed at expressing evaluative or emotive attitude of the narrator to his / her surroundings – natural, material and social. It is of paramount importance to note that evaluation is seen in close connection to emotiveness defining the mindset towards a thing / phenomenon [1, p. 37–38]; together they form the core of connotation that projects its emotive and evaluative essence onto the lexical semantic stratum of the literary text.

Connotative meaning is regarded as stylistic type of connotation, which implements its stylistic potential in textual environment and consists of evaluative, expressive and emotive components (N. G. Khodakovska) [6, p. 34]. In a literary text connotative meaning reflects certain ways of the author's thinking as well as realizing his literary intention.

Present research focuses on the novel „In the Heart of the Country” (1977) by John Maxwell Coetzee, a renowned South-African novelist and Nobel Prize in Literature laureate. The semantic space of his novels has brought to prominence three lexical-semantic fields that are closely interconnected within the novel. The paper highlights the lexical-semantic field „ENVIRONMENT”, namely its constituent lexical-semantic microfield „Natural Environment” and concerns functional potential of connotative meaning that its constituents carry out in the semantic space of the novel.

The study of J.M. Coetzee's novel showed that connotative meaning realizes its stylistic potential in two out of three abovementioned ways, i.e. through *expressive* and *evaluative* components, which constitute the overall stylistic function of connotation in the semantic space of the novel by J.M. Coetzee. The emotive element of stylistic connotation in the semantics of nature has not been identified in the novel by the South-African author, as nature is predominantly used for natural descriptions or literary expressive sense.

Lets us have a closer look at the examples taken from the novel „In the Heart of the Country”, Coetzee's first literary work that features an enumerated collection of diary entries written by an old spinster who lives in the center of the desert. Being completely ignored by her father, Magda translates her loneliness into lengthy monologues that show her solitude and hurt feelings. In this light, nature plays an important role: it constitutes the biggest part of her surroundings and serves as the mirror of her world perception.

The total of 147 relevant textual fragments featuring the use of connotative meaning by the author has been extracted for further research. Next, textual fragments have been analyzed concerning their expression of one of the abovementioned components of stylistic connotation. Eventually it was possible to state dominant ways of verbalizing these elements of connotation.

As for the expressive component of connotation, it constitutes 62 times of usage in the analyzed novel, or 42% of the total number of cases of connotation usage. The expressive type of connotative meaning foregrounds a specific property / quality of an object or phenomena through semantic „over exaggeration”. The expressive type of connotative meaning is verbalized by the adjective model (ADJ + N). Considering its stylistic nature, it turns out to be structurally similar to an epithet, which again proves its semantic luster within the semantic environment of the text. Thus, its stylistic functioning is qualified as an epithet, i.e. an expressive means which highlights a salient property of the denoted object (I.R. Galperin) [2, p. 138].

Let us analyze some examples found in the novel „In the Heart of the Country”:

„Far down in the earth flow underground rivers, through dark caverns dripping with crystalline water (...)” [8, p. 13] – transparency of water vs. the clear sparkling quality of a crystal = connotation of exceptional translucency of water surface;

„The air is cool and green even in the afternoons” [8, p. 34] – the green color associated with freshness and softness of grass vs. the substance of colorless air = connotation of green as a quality of fresh and crisp air;

„He is actually threatening me in sober daylight” [8, p. 94] – the quality of soberness + bright sunshine = connotation of sunlight pouring out as if revealing the truth,

“(...) the cicadas would not pause in their grating, the heat-waves would still thrill on the horizon, the sun would still lie ponderous and indifferent on my skin” [8, p. 108] – the qualities of ponder-

ousness and indifference vs. the sun in its shining quality = connotation of blazing and fatiguing sunshine in the desert.

Another way of implementing the expressive component of stylistic connotation is ensured by metaphor, i.e. an expressive means which encompasses transfer of meaning from one word to another [3, p. 126]. In the contextual environment of the novel „In the Heart of the Country” expressive component of stylistic connotation embodied by metaphor demonstrates a vivid imagery-oriented potential. To be more precise, the use of metaphor by J.M. Coetzee creates a unique image of the described object / phenomenon, which results in semantic elaboration of the relevant quality. The foundation of expressiveness that this type of connotation produces rests upon vivid imagery which semantic background of meanings conjures up. Therefore, this kind of connotative expressiveness gains ground in the mental environment of consciousness once connotation is discerned and interpreted adequately.

Expressing connotative meaning through metaphor requires verbalization by means of a noun model which structurally consists of two elements – **N + N**. This type of model has been found 48 times in the analyzed novel, which makes 33% of the total number of connotation usage. Thus, the stylistic effect of expressiveness is reached with the help of juxtaposition and transference of meanings, mainly those of nouns, which creates individual linguistic vigor of the author.

Let us provide a few examples to demonstrate the imagery-oriented stylistic potential of connotation:

“(...) *this prim voice, spinning out sentences without occasion, gaping with boredom because nothing ever happens on the farm, cracks and oozes the peevish loony sentiments that belong to the dead of the night (...)*” [8, p. 8] – the quality of being dead vs. natural darkness of the night = the image of pitch blackness at night;

“*My eyes pinch against the stab of sunlight*” [8, p. 39] – the quality of painful piercing through skin vs. the sun ray = the image of bright sun rays hurting eyesight;

“*Perhaps I am wrong to picture time as a river flowing from infinite to infinite (...), and I flow with it and can be heard again after all those summers and winters in the bowels of the earth (...)*” [8, p. 123] – the quality of inwardness vs. the substance of earth = the image of earth as if having internal space.

The evaluative component of connotation in the semantic space of novels by J.M. Coetzee is represented through simile, a stylistic device which presupposes literary compassion of two heterogeneous objects that could have one feature in common [3, p. 153]. As the nature of simile lies in implicit comparison of two objects or phenomena, in the semantic space of a literary text it brings to the foreground the author’s individual understanding of common features between two things, people, phenomena etc.

The evaluative type of connotation is mainly represented with **LIKE + N / ADJ + N** verbal pattern and has been found 37 times (25% of the total number) in the novel under analysis. Furthermore,

along with the expressive component of connotation, simile ensures a palpable expressive effect which, however, is realized through the author’s individual evaluation. Evaluation is ensured through transferring some quality of one object onto the other one, which anchors an evaluative relation between them. Let us illustrate this point of view:

“*I smelled the sour recesses where they slept pell-mell like rabbits, I sat at the feet of their blind old grandfather while he whittled clothes-pegs and told his stories of bygone days (...)*” [8, p. 6]. The image of children sleeping is compared to the way rabbits sleep. Thus, the common quality that concerns both children and rabbits is a disorganized way in which they sleep, making it both really pleasant and heart-warming to observe;

“*(...) my father would float like a black cloud and be sucked into the lair inside my head to beat the walls and roar like a bear*” [8, p. 73]. In this example the quality of the memory of Magda’s father occurring to her mind is compared with the quality of a black cloud is soaring in the sky. Thus, the common quality is an erroneous and menacing movement which implies an unexpected thing to happen. Also, Magda evaluates her father’s physical power and pitch of voice as those of a bear, which, most likely, stems from the quality of severe strength and loud roar of a wild animal;

“*Once I lived in the time like a fish in the water, breathing it, drinking it, sustained by it. Now I kill time and time kills me*” [8, p. 80]. The simile used in this contextual setting, where Magda compares herself to a fish, is aimed at expressing her comfort being alone. As fish feels free swimming in the water, this way the way Magda felt when her life was free from outer problems.

Conclusions and further research. All in all, within the lexical semantic field „**ENVIRONMENT**”, and its lexical-semantic microfield „**Natural Environment**”, connotation reveals its expressive and evaluative components. In the semantic space of the novel „In the Heart of the Country” connotation performs a stylistic function and is implemented with the help of epithets, metaphors and similes. The peculiarities of their functioning distinguish the usage of connotation in the semantics of nature within the semantic space of John Maxwell Coetzee as that which conveys expressive and evaluative components. Nature, therefore, is most often used to emphasize some salient features and grant them an additional expressive flavor. The expressive type of connotation, applied to nature, is aimed at bringing more vividness to natural descriptions in text. On the other hand, the evaluative component is used to stress some salient properties of animals in order to apply them to description of people.

Further research will be devoted to functioning of connotation within the other lexical semantic fields in the semantic space of novels by John Maxwell Coetzee. The next step in research of connotation will focus on the cumulative role of textual connotation that reflects the author’s way of usage of expressive, emotive and evaluative components in the whole semantic space.

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**ОСОБЛИВОСТИ КОНОТАЦІЇ У СЕМАНТИЧНОМУ ПРОСТОРИ РОМАНУ
„IN THE HEART OF THE COUNTRY” ДЖОНА МАКСВЕЛЛА КУТЗЕЕ****Анотація**

Стаття присвячена функціонуванню конотативного значення у семантичному просторі художнього тексту. Розглянуто основні підходи до тлумачення конотативного значення у мовознавстві. Особлива увага сконцентрована на типах конотативного значення у художньому тексті і специфіці їх функціонування. Конотація розглянута в експресивному й оцінному аспектах, які виформовують поняття стилістичної конотації. Вивчено конотативне значення слів у семантиці природи в одному з перших романів Джона Максвелла Кутзее.

Ключові слова: значення, конотація, експресивність, оцінка, семантичний простір, художній текст, лексико-семантичне поле.

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**ОСОБЕННОСТИ КОННОТАЦИИ В СЕМАНТИЧЕСКОМ ПРОСТРАНСТВЕ
РОМАНА «IN THE HEART OF THE COUNTRY» ДЖОНА МАКСВЕЛЛА КУТЗЕЕ****Аннотация**

Статья посвящена функционированию конотативного значения в семантическом пространстве художественного текста. Рассмотрены основные подходы к толкованию конотативного значения в языковедении. Особое внимание сконцентрировано на типах конотативного значения в художественном тексте и специфике их функционирования. Коннотация рассмотрена в экспрессивном и оценочном аспектах, которые формируют понятие стилистической коннотации. Изучено коннотативное значение слов в семантике природы в одном из первых романов Джона Максвелла Кутзее.

Ключевые слова: значение, коннотация, экспрессивность, оценка, семантическое пространство, художественный текст, лексико-семантическое поле.