

## INSIGHTS INTO LINGUISTIC RESEARCH OF PERSPECTIVE IN DRAMA: THE CASE OF O. WILDE'S PLAYS

**Yu. Tsys,**

Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University  
18/2 Bulvarno-Kudriavska St, Kyiv, 04053  
E-mail: y.tsys@kubg.edu.ua

*The article focuses on linguostylistic means of representation of perspective in O. Wilde's plays. The main feature of drama that limits the ways of expression of perspective is absence of the narrator. Thus, in the text of drama perspective can be represented through such narrative elements as prologue, author's remarks, chorus odes, lines of epic characters and built-in narratives. These narrative elements can implement author's perspective. The linguostylistic analysis of perspective in O. Wilde comedies lend support to the idea that the main stylistic means of expressing the author's direct perspective are simile and epithet. The author's indirect perspective can be interpreted from the lines of characters, it is usually represented in the text by means of irony and sarcasm. Character's perspective can be interpreted from monologues, dialogues and polylogues and is predominantly verbalised through metaphor and epithet.*

**Key words:** drama, play, perspective, point of view, focalization, narrative in drama, linguostylistic means.

**Цис Ю.О.**

### **Лінгвостилістичне дослідження перспективи в драмі на матеріалі п'єс О. Уайльда**

*Статтю присвячено виявленню способів реалізації перспективи в тексті англomовної драми. Дослідження сфокусоване на лінгвостилістичних засобах репрезентації перспективи в п'єсах О. Уайльда. Головною особливістю драми як роду літератури, що обмежує способи вираження перспективи в тексті, є відсутність наратора. Узв'язку з цим зроблено пошук способів реалізації перспективи саме у такому тексті і з'ясовано, що в тексті драми такі нарративні елементи, як пролог, авторські ремарки, пісні хору, репліки епічних героїв, вбудовані наративи можуть презентувати перспективу. У результаті лінгвостилістичного аналізу засобів на позначення перспективи в комедійних п'єсах О. Уайльда встановлено, що основними стилістичними засобами вираження прямої авторської перспективи є образне порівняння та епітет. Непряму авторську перспективу можливо визначити шляхом інтерпретації реплік персонажів, і зазвичай вона представлена в тексті твору засобами іронії та сарказму. Перспектива персонажів може бути інтерпретована через їх монологи, діалоги та полілоги. Найчастіше таку перспективу виражають метафора і епітет.*

**Ключові слова:** драма, перспектива, точка зору, фокалізація, наратив в драмі, лінгвостилістичні засоби.

**Цис Ю.О.**

### **Лингвостилистическое исследование перспективы в драме на материале пьес О. Уайльда**

*Статья посвящена выявлению способов реализации перспективы в тексте англоязычной драмы. Исследование сфокусировано на лингвостилистических средствах репрезентации перспективы в пьесах О. Уайльда. Главной особенностью драмы как рода литературы, ограничивающей способы выражения перспективы в тексте, является отсутствие рассказчика. В связи с этим сделано поиск способов реализации перспективы именно в таком тексте и выяснено, что в тексте драмы такие нарративные элементы, как пролог, авторские ремарки, песни хора, реплики эпических героев, встроенные нарративы могут представить перспективу. В результате лингвостилистического анализа средств для обозначения перспективы в комедийных пьесах О. Уайльда установлено, что основными стилистическими средствами выражения прямой авторской перспективы являются образное сравнение и эпитет. Косвенную авторскую перспективу можно определить путем интерпретации реплик персонажей, и обычно она представлена в тексте произведения средствами иронии и сарказма. Перспектива персонажей может быть интерпретирована через их монологи, диалоги и полилоги. Чаще всего такую перспективу выражают метафора и эпитет.*

**Ключевые слова:** драма, перспектива, точка зрения, фокализация, наратив в драме, лингвостилистические средства.

## Introduction

In the recent years, the notion of “perspective” has been investigated in terms of drama analysis. Perspective is one of the ways of understanding the nature of characters and events around them. It might influence the perception of a text and its different components in a certain way. Following G. Prince, “perspective is a way of regulating the information that arises from the choice of some restrictive point of view and equals thoughts and feelings of a character at the particular situation” [17, p. 56].

Drama is devoid of such an integrating figure as the mediator between an author and a reader or a spectator. This is the most problematic issue concerning perspective in plays as perspective is usually associated with a narrator in epic. W. Shmidt holds that as far as dramatic texts can be considered as mimetic narrative texts, they might represent a story without a narrator [7]. Although drama lacks the narrator as such, narrative elements still can be found there and the presence them gives grounds for searching for perspective markers in the text of drama [3].

Thus the paper presents an attempt to find out the ways and means of perspective representation in dramatic works.

The research is based on Oscar Wilde’s comedy plays: *An Ideal Husband*, *A Woman of No Importance*, *Lady Windermere’s Fan* and *The Importance of Being Earnest* [21, 22, 23, 24].

## Theoretical Background

Dramatic texts are written to be staged. Following Aristotle, drama is “an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions” [1, p. 1077]. Aristotle associates drama with mimesis, an imitation or a representation, and narrative, with diegesis, a storytelling. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle attributes mimesis not to the representation of a living speech, but to the representation of a fictional speech, that is, the character’s speech [1].

M. Fludernik claims that mimesis is a type of narrative based on narrative principles whereas diegesis assigns the main role to the narrator [11, p. 58]. Since drama is defined by Aristotle as mimetic text, it determines the specific features of dramatic texts. So the characteristic features of drama are staginess, presence of a plot, conflict of an action, division into episodes, dialogues and polylogues of characters, author’s remarks that accompany character’s lines and absence of a narrative-descriptive depiction of events.

The last feature significantly limits the ways of expressing perspective in the text of drama.

However, according to P. Hühn and R. Sommer, there are narrative elements in drama such as prologue, author’s remarks, lines of choral odes, lines spoken with no addressee, built-in narratives, means of “play-in-play”, narratives of epic characters and lines addressed to the audience that usually represent the author’s perspective [13]. The perspective also can be found in character’s monologues, dialogues or polylogues and represent character’s perspective.

In Anglo-Saxon research tradition, “perspective” and “point of view” are considered to be synonyms that can in narratology substitute each other [11]. So point of view is defined as “a position of an observer in the narration with its range of vision and expression of the author’s attitude to the subject and his worldview” [2, p. 425]. Another fairly synonymic term is “focalization”. Thus, G. Genette defines focalization as “an organization of point of view in the narrative and the means of transmitting it to a reader or a spectator” [5, p. 395]. All these terms determine the position of an observer in the text, the observer’s evaluation of the situation or its participants and the ways of expressing it.

Initially, perspective, point of view and focalization were studied in epic texts. The term “point of view” was introduced by H. James who looks at it as a manifestation of the author’s nature, character and his worldview [14]. The first linguistic research on the point of view is related to avant-garde tendencies and aims at studying the technique of narration. Later P. Lubbock systematizes critical observations by H. James into a coherent theory of “point of view” [15, p. 156].

Perspective as a narrative term is anonymous by origin and is widely used in German linguistics. Thus, F. Stanzel, the author of theory of narrative situations, uses the term in the meaning of the narrative technique that is presented with the fictional reflection of events through the consciousness of a character in a novel without narrator’s comments [19, p. 141]. He claims that if the story is represented with the help of internal perspective, the perception of a character is more effective than if it is transmitted through external perspective.

The term *focalization* appears as G. Genette develops F. Stanzel’s typology. It is defined as “a limitation of the range of vision or the choice of narrative information in relation to omniscience” [5, p.128]. The author classifies focalization as zero focalization is associated with the omniscient narrator, inner focalization, with the narrator who knows the inner nature of a character, and external focalization, with the objective narrator [5, p. 265].

Currently, perspective in dramatic texts, unlike in epic ones, lacks coherent research. One of the first researchers of perspective in drama is E. Groff. He argues with P. Lubbock in terms of defining drama as an objective kind of literature and treats it as a subjective kind [12, p. 272]. His argumentation

holds that the events in drama are transmitted through characters' lines. E. Groff distinguishes such types of creating perspective in drama as dramatization of character's inner life, character's dream sequences and intrusion of narrator's speech in form of remarks into the text of a play. Dramatization of character's inner life is a depiction of character's internal state and perspective by the author, through the character's actions and speech, accompanied by facial expressions and gestures. The character's dream sequences is the embodiment of the author's fantasy on a stage. E. Groff asserts that a spectator sees those things that the author wants him to see. Following E. Groff [12, p. 274], the character's thoughts and actions are analogous in reproduction of the inner monologue of an epic character. His research is more relevant to the features of a stage representation of plays than to dramatic texts per se.

Similarly, B. Richardson holds that narration is one of the main elements of drama that is also a means of the perspective representation in its text. He sets off the types of narrator that cause the emergence of perspective in drama. As defined by B. Richardson, "narrator is the speaker that narrates the events or motivates a character to do something" [18, p. 197].

The types of narrator by B. Richardson are the following: internal narrators, monodramatic narrators, generative narrators and frame narrators. Internal narrator is the fictional character in a play that narrates behind the scene events or the events preceding the first act of a play. Monodramatic narrator is present in monologic plays, in which events' reflections and reasoning of a character fill the entire space of a play. Generative narrator in terms of one discourse generates another one and can be found in plays where events from the past are narrated. Frame narrator introduces events in the prologue and summarizes them in the epilogue [18, p. 202]. By this classification, B. Richardson highlights that narrators play important role in creation of perspective in drama.

From a more psychologically oriented perspective, J. Barnard likens the point of view in a play to the feeling of sympathy for a character. In his view, the feeling of sympathy is transforming during the development of the plot of a play [8, p. 293]. Thus, he defines the point of view as a degree of sympathy and admiration for a character.

B. Weingarten investigates the role of an author in creation of perspective in drama. In his research, he demonstrates the ways of building perspective by a character and readers' perception of events thorough the eyes of the character. As an example he uses the play *La Fundacion by Antonio Buero Vallejo* [20]. The main character in the play is considering a prison cell to be a nice bedroom, but actually it is just the character's illusion created by the author [20, p. 148]. By showing that perceptual perspective of the character differs from conceptual perspective

of the reader, B. Weingarten holds that the process of creating perspective is one of the key processes in dramatic text.

D. McIntyre explains the point of view in plays in terms of deictic shifts. Suchwise, he claims that spatio-temporal deictic field of a reader in the real world is unprimed when he or she reads the text but it is still connected with the real world. During the reading, the reader's attention is concentrated on the fictional world, and his deictic field gradually loses connection with the real world, and in this way the process of building of the new deictic field in the fictional world of a play begins. If the reader distracts for a moment, his spatio-temporal deictic field in the real world becomes primed but deictic field in the fictional world of the play becomes unbound. When the reader starts reading the play after distraction, his deictic field in the fictional world of the play becomes primed again. After the reading, spatio-temporal deictic field in the real world becomes primed again, but deictic field in the fictional world of a play becomes unbound. The presence of the reader simultaneously in two deictic fields creates multiple perspective in the play [16, p. 91–121]. Such phenomenon, according to D. McIntyre, is significantly relevant in drama.

E. Böhm analyses the perspective in terms of a staging process and the real performance of a play. She singles out three types of perspective: external, internal and mediating. The author associates external perspective with an interaction of actors (characters) and the audience. Internal perspective, according to E. Böhm, is an interaction between the actors (characters) on the stage [9, p.141]. Mediating perspective is a narrator in a story. Since it is absent in dramatic text, this type of perspective is not applicable to drama.

Focalization in dramatic text is explored, among others, by E. Gordienko as she used G. Genette classification of focalization in terms of drama. The main claim of E. Gordienko is that in the text of a play only internal focalization can be represented. Characters' monologues and the author's remarks are the main forms of transmitting internal focalization [4].

The above mentioned studies offer different views on creation and representation of perspective, point of view and focalization in drama. As linguostylistic means of perspective representation in drama up to date lacks systematic research, we present the analysis in the following sections.

## Methods

The research material (the examples of expression of the author's and character's perspective in O. Wilde's comic plays) has been collected by the sampling method. Further on, the stylistic analysis will be applied to identify linguostylistic means that represent the author's and characters' perspective in O. Wilde's plays and to reveal the verbal

aspect of author's and character's perspective, which will allow us to trace the interdependence between the form of text and the content of images.

### Results and Discussions

In our view, linguostylistic means used for perspective representation in drama add emotional colouring to the perspective they represent. They allow the reader to understand the real nature of the character and to feel the author's implications about the situation or the character.

In *A Woman of No Importance* [22], the character's perspective on marital life is presented.

LORD ILLINGWORTH: I adore simple pleasures. They are the last refuge of the complex. But, if you wish, let us stay here. Yes, let us stay here. The Book of Life begins with a man and a woman in a garden [22, p. 43].

The metaphor *The Book of Life* [22, p. 43] is used by Lord Illingworth to imply that he treats marriage as a new continuous stage of life that is saturated with various events. He correlates the stages of a real marital life with the chapters of a book. We may also trace the similarities between development of the plot of a book and development of the relationships between spouses. Thus, just as in a book, in the beginning of the plot there is exposition that can be correlated with the stage of falling in love. The next stage is rising action that in a marriage resembles the moments of getting used to each other. The climax follows, and in a real life it can be quarrels of spouses. Falling action goes next and it is similar to finding common solutions of problems in a marital life. The final stage is denouement, and in a marriage it is a period of full understanding and true love. Lord Illingworth expresses his perspective on the role of women in marriage by the ironic remark *a woman in a garden* [22, p. 43]. Suchwise, he demonstrates that in his view of marriage a man plays the leading role and a woman is just a minor character. He confirms his point of view by using the epiphora *But, if you wish, let us stay here. Yes, let us stay here.* [22, p. 43] showing that he is not really interested in anyone's wishes because he has already decided what to do. In this example, the character's perspective is presented directly, but at the same time the author's indirect perspective is hidden by means of irony.

The following example from *Lady Windermere's Fan* [23] expresses the character's perspective on another character.

DUMBY: Looks like an *édition de luxe* of a wicked French novel, meant specially for the English market [23, p. 387].

Dumby uses simile *like an édition de luxe of a wicked French novel* [23, p. 387] in the description of Mrs. Erlynne in order to highlight her exceptional taste and to show her hidden vicious traits of character. It implies that under this beautiful cover there is a person with evil intentions. The simile is extended by the metaphorical remark *meant specially for the English market* [23, p. 387], which is used to specify that Mrs. Erlynne looks perfect in terms of the English society, and her behaviour perfectly fits it. In this quote, the author's perspective is evident as well. The choice of the novel to describe Mrs. Erlynne, particularly *wicked French novel* [23, p. 387], is not accidental. The French society is treated by the author throughout the play as hostile and malevolent.

In *An Ideal Husband* [21], the character's perspective on London society is presented:

MABEL CHILTERN: Oh, I love London Society! I think it has immensely improved. It is entirely composed now of beautiful idiots and brilliant lunatics. Just what Society should be [21, p. 496].

Mabel Chiltern shows her admiration for London society by the exclamation and characterises it with the help of epithets and antithesis *beautiful idiots and brilliant lunatics* [21, p. 496]. By way of antithesis she stresses that the regular way of functioning of any society is equivalent to filling it with people of versatile characters, abilities and appearances. The choice of epithets highlights that even one person can have an absolutely unexpected combination of traits of character and abilities, and it makes every person unique and remarkable. The author's indirect perspective on London society is also present in this quote. The author chooses such lexical items as *idiots* and *lunatics* [21, p. 496] to characterise London society in ironic way, and he supports this idea throughout the text of the play.

The example of the character's perspective on female characters can be found in *The Importance of Being Earnest* [24]:

JACK: Oh, Gwendolen is as right as a trivet. As far as she is concerned, we are engaged. Her mother is perfectly unbearable. Never met such a Gorgon. In any case, she is a monster, without being a myth [24, p. 467].

To show Gwendolen's youthful uselessness and childish character, Jack uses simile *as right as a trivet* [24, p. 467]. He demonstrates that she is not ready for an adult life and not able of making decisions that really annoys people around her. Her mother



is described by Jack with the help of the metaphors *a Gorgon, a monster, without being a myth* [24, p. 467]. He identifies Lady Bracknell with the dreadful creature that could turn everything living into the stone. By this metaphor, Jack shows that Lady Bracknell has a terrible character, a duplicitous nature and evil motives.

The author's direct perspective can be found in the author's remarks. For instance, in *An Ideal Husband* [21] the author characterises Mabel Chiltern by means of the oxymora *the fascinating tyranny of youth*, and *the astonishing courage of innocence* [21, p. 468] that stress her maturity in decisions, readiness to face real life difficulties and to fight with them despite her young age.

Another example of the author's direct perspective is taken from *Lady Windermere's Fan* [23]. The author, in his non-verbal remark, uses the metaphor *...sails into the room* [23, p. 385] to describe Mrs. Erlynne. This metaphor has several implications. The first one is the comparison of Mrs. Erlynne's moves with the moves of the ship that are usually smooth, deliberate and slow. Thus, it characterises Mrs. Erlynne's motion as graceful and hasteless. The second implication is connected with the nature of these moves: as they are very soft and calm, the implication is that despite the intense situation that developed at that moment, Mrs. Erlynne pulls herself together and behaves calmly like a real English lady.

### Conclusions and perspective for further researches

The argumentation offered above suggests that in the plays the character's perspective is widely presented and the metaphorical group of stylistic devices is often used to express it. The number of examples of the author's perspective is lower than for the character's perspective due to the small number of the author's remarks. At the same time, the indirect or hidden perspective of the author can be found in characters' lines, and it is predominantly verbalised through irony of sarcasm.

The analysis of four comedy plays by O. Wilde demonstrates that the character's perspective usually semantically correlates with the author's perspective, but the verbal means of their implementation in the texts differ: metaphor and epithet are the main linguostylistic means that depict the character's perspective while the direct author's perspective is mostly represented with the help of simile and epithet but indirect author's perspective, is usually expressed by irony and sarcasm.

All these provisional conclusions necessarily need more empirical verification. For further research, there is an urgent need to contribute to the area of Empirical Studies of Literature [10] and to verify whether the readers of drama are sensitive to the verbal tools of expressing the author's and the characters' perspectives and whether the comic effect depends on the perspective.

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