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EXPRESSIVE FUNCTION OF ENGLISH ARGOT IN A LITERARY TEXT

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ABSTRACT

This article deals with the problem of determining the place of the English argot in a literary text. The main functions of argot in a literary text are described. The author analyzes the expressive function of the English argot by the example of a detective novel by J.H.Chase. Considerable attention is paid to the expressive function of the English slang as a means of enriching the language of a literary work.

KEYWORDS

English argot, literary text, functions argotic vocabulary, expressive function, detective fiction.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of social differentiation of language is one of the central ones at the present stage of development of linguistics. Many works, both in native and foreign linguistics, are devoted to the study of the languages of individual social and professional groups, the distinction between the concepts of argo, cant, jargon, slang, as well as their influence on the literary standard of the language. The appearance of linguistic works of this kind is natural: in connection with the democratization of the language, slang concepts and

terms become known to almost everyone, and the diversity of this layer of vocabulary provides scientists with rich material for research and systematization.

A systematic description of English argo as the language of a criminal subculture was undertaken in the works of E.Partiridge (1960, 1963-1964), S.B.Flexner (1964, 1975), R.Spears (1982), D.Lighter (1997), V.A.Khomyakova (1971, 1974, 1980), V.P.Korovushkina (2008, 2009, 2010), I.V.Fischuk

(2009, 2010) and others. However, the term argo itself is interpreted in these works in different ways.

In the system of sociolects of the English language, among the various definitions, the most traditional is the definition of the term "slang" as a layer of esoteric vocabulary and phraseology with pejorative expression and sharpness of assessment [3, p. 30-32].

Many scientists consider expressiveness to be one of the most important characteristics of argo.

The expressiveness of argo is exhibited first and foremost in the expressiveness, emotionality, and evaluativeness of words and statements with various semantic shades (mainly negative), allowing the speaker to communicate his attitude toward the world around him in this way.

Currently, the works of English-speaking writers, reflecting the main trends of the language, are replete with argo vocabulary. However, "these elements in the style of artistic speech appear in a processed, typified, selected form. They are not used here in their, so to speak, natural form; such use of non-literary words would litter the language and would not contribute to the enrichment and development of the literary norm of the language [1, p. 108-110].

By including this layer of vocabulary in a work of art, the authors want to draw the reader's attention to the inherent expressiveness of argo, as well as a special choice of words that differs from the literary standard. The choice of argotic means is due to the need to recreate a certain communicative situation, and is also used as a means of stylistic characteristics in the characters' speech.

Argotic vocabulary reproduced in a literary text retains all its functional-stylistic characteristics that are valid for a situation of real communication. However, when moving into the space of a literary text, it additionally acquires functions specific to a given area of use.

The main functions of argotisms in a literary text are filling in the nomination gaps, conveying the color of the depicted environment, and the speech characteristics of the character. It should be noted that at present, argotisms perform not so much an informational and pictorial function as an expressive one [4, p. 78-80].

The expressive function of argo is intended to express the subjective aspects of the perception of reality, i.e. emotional states, feelings, judgments and ideas of a person about the world around him. Its components are figurativeness, appraisal and intensity. An important aspect is also the speaker's expression of his attitude to reality.

It is quite natural that when the author refers to the description of the life of asocial elements, one of the main tasks is to include argotisms in the text of a work of art, since they sometimes surpass the literary language in figurativeness and accuracy. Thus, argo is a means of enriching the text with its expressiveness.

In this paper, we set ourselves the task of examining the expressive function of English argo using the example of detective literature. One of the most popular representatives of the detective novel genre of the second half of the 20th century is J.H.Chase. The analysis of the factual material (—An Ear to the Ground, —No Orchids for Miss Blandish) allows us to identify the main cases of the implementation of the expressive function of argo in a literary text:

1) When conveying the emotional state of the characters. Argo, as an intensifier of the characters' emotions, expresses various shades of mood - from positive to negative. Moreover, the latter significantly predominate due to the negative connotation of argo. Often, argotisms are used by heroes in order to relieve emotional stress. So, in the novel “—No Orchids for Miss Blandish”, one of the members of a gang of robbers accidentally kills a witness to their crime. The leader of the gang, having learned about this, says with fear and indignation: He's dead! You jackass! What did you kill him for? [6, p. 81-83]. The resentment of non-compliance with the agreement by the members of the gang is intensified through the introduction of the argotism jackass (fool) [7, p. 53-56]. Thus, even one argotism, endowed with high expressiveness, is able to convey a different range of feelings of the characters.

2) To express the hero's value attitude to the current situation. Argotic vocabulary conveys the character's value attitude to the world around him, other characters, or himself. Argo is also able to convey hierarchical relations in a criminal sphere, because depending on the position he occupies, the offender performs certain work. For example, the hero of the novel “An Ear to the Ground”, taking a large share of the loot for himself, points out to his accomplices their place in the criminal hierarchy: ...what you three don't seem realize is that you are in big time, but you are small timers [5, p. 46-47]. Disdainfully calling his accomplices small timers (small scammers) [7, p. 53-55], he thus humiliates them, emphasizing his high social position.

3) For the realism of the story. The depiction of the life of criminals, the everyday life of the police is impossible without the dialogues of the characters, in which the author uses argotism. Credibility plays an

important role here, as in the absence of vocabulary that lies outside the literary standard, the speech of the characters loses its naturalness and liveliness. J.H.Chase in the novel “No Orchids for Miss Blandish” uses the expressiveness of argotism to stylize the speech of criminals. In an excerpt from the robbers' dialogue, it is about the failure of their operation and the need to get rid of the witness: This is a murder rap now. We'll all burn. If they catch us... – We'll have to knock her off. She knows much [6, p. 81-83]. In this case, the expressions We'll all burn (we are consummated) [7, p. 54-56] and knock off (get rid of) [ibidem, p. 53-57] indicate that the characters belong to a criminal environment. Thus, argo is a kind of social marker that characterizes the heroes of a work of art through the peculiarities of their language. In this case, the expressions indicate that the characters belong to a criminal sphere. Thus, argo is a kind of social marker that characterizes the heroes of a work of art through the peculiarities of their language.

4) As a means of author's evaluation. Of all the types of connotations of the emotional component of slang, the author most often chooses contemptuous, less often ironic. The actions and illegal actions of the characters are always evaluated negatively by the author. To express the author's worldview, attitudes towards crime in general, police officer Brennan appears in the novel “No Orchids for Miss Blandish”. In a conversation with criminals, he speaks in their own language (argo) to emphasize his negative attitude: All you rats say the same thing – I'm still here [6, p. 82-84]. Argotism rat (scoundrel) [9, p. 440-441] shows the unambiguous position of the author - any criminal, from a petty fraudster to a murderer, is a marginal who has no place among respectable citizens, and any illegal activity is immoral and deserves punishment.

It should be noted that the means of implementing the expressive function of argo in a literary text are often pejorative nominations, i.e. neutral vocabulary, which is not inherently expressive, under certain conditions and depending on the context, is able to take on this function. Among the pejorative nominations in the detective novels of J.H.Chase, zoosemantic metaphors prevail, referring to the names of animals with the general meaning of "scoundrel": rat, bull, monkey, ass, pig.

Often there are also nominations with a "hidden" expression, "contained in the real meaning of the word" [2, p. 15-18], which is possessed by argotic units denoting traditional criminal specialties and reflecting the hierarchy in the criminal environment: fence (buyer of stolen goods) [7, p. 81-82], stoolie (informer) [Ibidem, p. 80], jail bird (recidivist) [8, p. 372].

Thus, the implementation of the expressive function of English argo in detective literature is a feature of this genre, which determines the specificity of the lexical means used in it. The purpose of including English argo in fiction is to perform various stylistic tasks that reveal the author's intention. The use of argotisms in the novels of J.H.Chase is not an end in itself, they are harmoniously combined with common vocabulary. Using argo, J.H.Chase plausibly describes the underworld, conveys the characters of the main characters, their thoughts and feelings. In this regard, it can be argued that slang can serve as a means of enriching the language of a work of art with its expressiveness.

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