Description of Theme and Form in Literary Works

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Abstract: This research deals with the relationship between theme and form in literary works, focusing on how thematic content is shaped and expressed through artistic and structural elements. The study explores the ways in which narrative structure, genre, stylistic devices, and compositional techniques contribute to the development and interpretation of literary themes. By analyzing selected literary texts, the research demonstrates that theme and form are interdependent components that together create meaning and aesthetic value. The findings highlight that form is not merely a technical framework but an active medium through which themes are communicated, reinforced, and transformed. This study contributes to literary theory by emphasizing the importance of integrated analysis of theme and form in the interpretation of literary works.

Introduction: As noted earlier, literary techniques constitute a broad concept that encompasses several interconnected blocks. Most scholarly studies traditionally single out one principal block expressive and stylistic devices. However, an analysis of texts belonging to different genres of fiction and journalism has led us to conclude that textual specificity is not determined solely by the presence or absence of expressive stylistic means. Other blocks also play a significant role in shaping a text. In this regard, we propose two additional blocks, which we define as compositional-constructive devices and artistic art-objects. [10, 42] These components receive little or virtually no attention in the education of journalism students, despite forming the foundation of their future professional practice. Below, each block is presented together with suggested practical tasks.

Block I. Expressive and Stylistic Devices. Expressive and stylistic devices represent the most widespread category of literary techniques. As is well known, these devices include words and fixed expressions employed in texts to create particular images and meanings. Virtually no literary text can exist without such lexical and stylistic units. Journalists also actively resort to them in order to make texts vivid, dynamic, engaging, and appealing to the reader.

The classification of expressive means is well established and traditionally includes tropes, figures of speech, and phonetic stylistics. Students usually become acquainted with this block during secondary school education, and at the university level they revisit it in courses on the history of national and world literature, often only superficially. In classroom practice, work typically focuses on analyzing the appropriateness of using expressive means in texts of different functional styles, genres, and types; identifying instances of incorrect usage; and editing textual material accordingly. This aspect is of particular importance in the context of developing professional textual competence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to facilitate the reader's understanding of the essence of the problem, we now turn to the next blocks of literary techniques identified in our study. We define the second block among the newly proposed categories

as compositional-constructive techniques. This block includes the means that assist in shaping and organizing a text. Through these techniques, the author constructs the internal logic of the work and introduces a complex system of structural components and textual segments, with the aim of attracting and sustaining the reader's attention. It should be taken into account that in some cases the text demonstrates a clearly organized structure, while in others it may deliberately violate coherence or logical consistency (depending on the author's pragmatic intention).

It is important to note that this block is primarily based on the form of the text; however, in terms of application, it has a broader functional scope. Individual components of this block have previously been examined in the studies of N.I. Baklanova [4, 110] and A.I. Lipnevich. [3, 30] N.I. Baklanova focuses exclusively on constructive devices, whereas A.I. Lipnevich concentrates on compositional techniques. In contrast, our research adopts a comprehensive approach, integrating both aspects. Teaching students to perceive a text as a complex product of speech activity through the unified system of compositional and constructive literary techniques enables them to acquire skills for working with textual information of any type.

DISCUSSION

The exercise employed at this stage is aimed at modifying the textual basis in accordance with a given task. We refer to this exercise as the "Shuttle": students are required to transform a given textual content and present it in different styles and genres, metaphorically "moving" from one genre-style to another while taking into account the specific features and conventions of each. We propose the following conceptualization of this block.

The block of compositional-constructive literary techniques consists of two types, as implied by its designation.

The first type is compositional. It includes such structural components (elements of composition) that are considered basic for a conventional text: prologue, exposition, inciting incident, development of action, climax, denouement, and epilogue. It may also contain optional components, such as inserted elements, parallel plot development, authorial digressions, or

remarks. The toolkit of this type, depending on the author's intention, is responsible for ensuring textual logic, smooth narrative progression, and the disclosure of the author's conceptual design. [5, 236] Although the compositional type of literary techniques is more closely associated with fiction, it is also actively employed in journalistic writing. When a text presents a defined sequence of events, a well-developed composition allows the author to convey ideas to the reader clearly and logically without disrupting semantic cohesion between textual segments, as is often the case, for example, in feature articles.

The second type is constructive. From a technical perspective, this represents a textual instrument that determines the external organization of the text. In literary works, the constructive type includes the division of a work into chapters, acts, or scenes, while appropriately placed emphases help to highlight semantic units evenly. In journalism, this type is associated with tools for creating leads, headlines, and subheadings. [4, 111] The underlying function remains the same – highlighting semantic focal points – though the final textual construction differs. A unifying element for both literary and journalistic texts is paragraph segmentation, which serves as a fundamental mechanism enabling the reader to engage thoughtfully with textual information and to perceive the material in its full semantic scope. [5, 238]

At this stage of instruction, students and instructors jointly conduct a detailed analysis of different types of paragraph segmentation, clarify the objectives and functions of various paragraph structures, and complete exercises aimed at identifying and correcting errors in paragraph organization, as well as determining the proportionality of paragraphs and their functional roles within the text.

Subsequently, the set of compositional-constructive devices is referred to as instrumentation, since in this context these techniques function as tools that correct textual form and enhance its effectiveness. Particular attention during classroom practice is devoted to mastering this instrumentation and eliminating structural errors in the process of text production.

The third concluding block of literary techniques identified in this study and proposed for use in the educational process consists of artistic art objects.

Their purpose is the visualization of diverse objects, items, real-life phenomena, and imaginative analogues, as well as details and images that emerge in the reader's consciousness. In classroom analysis, we use complete excerpts from literary works, including both fictional and journalistic texts. Students determine that the object of visualization may be elements of the surrounding world (inanimate objects, material items) as well as living beings. The key requirement is that such elements should influence the development of the plot or significantly enrich the image—specifically through detail, landscape, portrait characterization, interior description, and related means. Each of these elements will be examined in detail below.

1. Landscape. As a literary device, the term landscape refers to the use of nature in literary works as a means of expressing the author's artistic intention. According to the classification proposed by M.N. Epstein [10, 258], four types of landscape can be distinguished:

a) Seasonal or spatial (landscape-based). This type is used by the author to visualize a change in location or the passage of time. For example, the events of a literary work may shift from an urban to a rural setting. Such a change of place influences the plot and the overall mood of the text. A seasonal landscape may also represent the change of seasons or time of day, the description of which plays a significant role in the narrative.

b) According to scale and degree of thematic generalization. The scale of the landscape involves the division of the depicted scene into general (panoramic) and local (focused) perspectives. The latter is most often used to create an image of action limited to the perception of a single character, for instance, through the eyes of the protagonist. The general landscape, by contrast, establishes the mood of the collective or the broader narrative space. A thematic landscape contributes to the overall color and atmosphere required by the literary work, such as national, ethnic, or exotic settings.

c) Genre-stylistic. This type of landscape is employed to convey the psychological state of the protagonist or the general emotional tone of the entire work. For example, the dominance of gray tones in description creates a gloomy atmosphere, whereas bright, sunlit images generate a positive mood. Throughout the development of the plot, the landscape may change, symbolizing a shift either in the emotional state of the protagonist or in the direction of the narrative itself.

d) Fantastic and Idealized Landscape. This type of landscape functions in the text as a symbol of something utopian, unattainable, romantic, or extraordinary. Its use is often determined by genre conventions, particularly those of fantasy or science fiction, where such landscapes contribute to world-building and ideological symbolism.

2. Portrait Characterization. Portrait characterization serves as a primary means of artistic or informational realization of the author's intention, enabling the presentation of a character type and the expression of the author's attitude toward the character through the depiction of outward appearance (figure, face, clothing, movement, gestures, and manners). Literary scholarship distinguishes several types of portrait characterization:

a) External portrait. This is the conventional form of portrait characterization describing a character's physical appearance. It is used to create a clear and memorable image in essays or fictional works. It is important to note that this type of portrait does not imply a dry enumeration of visual traits; rather, it constructs a vivid and distinctive image. To create an effective portrait that immerses the reader in the narrative and clearly defines the character's personality, authors employ tropes and expressive details that add color and intensity to the image.

b) Internal portrait. The purpose of this type is to reveal not the character's external appearance, but their psychological dimension, inner world, and personal traits. Often, the internal portrait plays a more significant role in plot development than the external one. The disclosure of a character's psychology allows the reader not only to visualize the character but also to empathize, understand, and interpret the ideological and emotional processes unfolding within the character. For this reason, authors strive to elaborate the internal portrait by enriching the narrative with vivid emotional states.

c) Medial (integrated) portrait. This type represents a synthesis of external and internal portrait characterization. Authors frequently resort to this method to present a complete image of the character

at once, thereby introducing into the narrative a typical figure as a reflection of the general or universal. As a result, there is no need to return to portrait description later in the text, since the essential characteristics have already been embedded in the plot structure.

3. Interior Description. As an expressive device, interior description refers to the detailed depiction of the space inhabited by a character, including the arrangement and atmosphere of rooms. While it serves a function similar to that of landscape description, its methods of representation exhibit certain distinctions. Interior description as an artistic device facilitates visualization of the following aspects:

a) The owner's social status. This is conveyed through descriptions of luxurious or, conversely, modest furnishings, order or disorder, cleanliness, and related features. Interior description may also become a key means of characterizing an individual's personality, a technique frequently employed in journalistic writing.

b) Taste and aesthetic preferences. Closely related to the previous point, this aspect approaches interior description from a different perspective. For example, when comparing the interiors of two wealthy individuals, one may identify only superficial similarities, while the differences in detail reveal the characters' distinct tastes. These differences visualize aesthetic preferences, whether an inclination toward excessive luxury, refined minimalism, or simple functionality. Authors often use such contrasts to compare personalities in journalism and character portrayals in fiction.

c) The country or historical epoch in which the character lives. Although this feature also applies to landscape description, interior depiction conveys it more subtly and implicitly. Through references to cultural markers embedded in furnishings and spatial organization, the reader identifies the setting without explicit authorial explanation. Similarly, details of a character's interior environment signal the historical period in which the narrative unfolds.

4. Detail. In other words, details function as minor cues or textual signals that help the reader uncover the deeper meaning of the text and understand a character more profoundly. A detail represents an idealized and recurring specificity through which the author constructs an image, drawing attention to elements

that may initially seem insignificant. Two main categories of detail are distinguished:

a) Symbolic detail. This is a specific image that permeates the entire work and directs the reader toward the climax. In literary studies, the concept of "Chekhov's gun", introduced by A.P. Chekhov, exemplifies this principle. According to this notion, if a gun appears on stage in the first act, it must be fired by the final act. In journalistic texts, such symbolic details are not always realized explicitly; rather, they may appear as implicit or anticipated outcomes, which are analyzed during instructional sessions. [4, 112]

b) Detail as elaboration. This type supplements the depiction of a phenomenon, action, object, or character. Such details are more commonly found in fiction than in journalistic texts, where their purpose differs. The determination of the functional role of elaborative detail is addressed within the educational context.

During instructional sessions, we examine the purpose of artistic art objects, methods of their effective application, appropriate placement within a text, and the rationale for their inclusion (from the reader's perspective). We also analyze texts to determine the functional necessity of portrait characterization and its various types within specific textual contexts.

CONCLUSION

The present study has demonstrated that literary techniques such as landscape, portrait characterization, interior description, and artistic detail play a crucial role in shaping meaning and constructing imagery in both literary and journalistic texts. These expressive means function not merely as decorative elements, but as structurally and semantically significant components that influence plot development, character formation, emotional tone, and ideological orientation of a text. The analysis confirms that landscape serves as a dynamic narrative tool capable of reflecting temporal change, psychological states, genre conventions, and symbolic meanings. Portrait characterization, in its external, internal, and integrated forms, enables a multidimensional representation of characters and facilitates deeper reader engagement through psychological insight and emotional empathy. Interior description operates as an implicit indicator of social

status, aesthetic preferences, cultural context, and historical epoch, allowing authors to convey essential information without explicit exposition. Artistic detail, including symbolic and elaborative elements, functions as a mechanism of semantic concentration, guiding the reader toward key interpretative points and enhancing textual cohesion.

Special attention has been given to the pedagogical potential of these techniques. The use of artistic art objects in the educational process proves effective in developing students' analytical skills, visual thinking, and interpretative competence. By identifying and applying literary techniques in authentic texts, learners acquire a deeper understanding of narrative construction and the functional role of expressive means in meaning-making.

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