VI. ЭВОЛЮЦИОННЫЕ, РЕЦЕПТИВНЫЕ И ТРАНСФОРМАЦИОННЫЕ ПРОЦЕССЫ В ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННОМ (ЛИТЕРАТУРНОМ) ДИСКУРСЕ

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STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE DASH IN LITERARY TEXTS

The present paper is devoted to the stylistic analysis of the dash in literary texts. The author analyses functions of the dash that is used to convey various ideas and emotions.

1. Introduction

Punctuation has usually been neglected by researchers in theoretical linguistics over the years. This has been due to the absence of a concise, formal background for such an abstract problem. However, once we remember that punctuation is an orthographical component of written language, we see that research on punctuation makes reasonable sense. Accordingly, it is evident enough that a true understanding of written language will be impossible if punctuation marks are not taken into account.

Punctuation appears in every variety of written discourse in all language styles. Some theoretical works present quite a satisfactory list of punctuation marks and their functions in the text [Quirk 1972; Jarvie 1992; Strunk 1993; Burton 1995], although their interpretation is based mainly upon grammatical issues. Quirk divides punctuation marks into categories of *separation* and *specification* [Quirk 1972: 1055-6]. The first comprises *successive units* (when punctuation separates units which are in a simple linear relation to each other) and *included units* (when the separated unit interrupts a larger unit and the orthographic symbol must therefore be correlative, indicating both the beginning and the end of the included unit). Specification embraces the punctuation marks having a clear role (often in addition to marking the point at which one unit is separated from another) in specifying a function.

The stylistic view is put forward by Mistrík who states that punctuation marks are the visual demonstratives which complete and refine the appearance of a written text [Mistrík 1989]. They represent equivalents to the complex of sound elements (melody, emphasis, pauses, etc.) and the elements of movement (mimicry, gestures, proximity, etc.). The role of punctuation in stylistic studies is

to distinguish various functional language styles. Galperin maintains that the degree of variability regarding the usage of punctuation marks in a text exactly indicates the attachment of the text to a certain style [Galperin 1977]. Consequently, there is a great difference in the usage of punctuation within the individual styles. Crystal and Davy point out that "*while the language of legal documents hardly uses any punctuation at all and its application in the language of religion is very simple (conditioned by phonetic criteria), in the language of newspapers punctuation marks appear very frequently*" [Crystal and Davy 1986: 156]. Similarly, Turner views the largest employment of punctuation in personal written discourse (essays and features) and, generally, in 'belles-lettres' style [Turner 1973].

Although placing punctuation mainly within the sphere of grammar, Quirk believes that punctuation is also concerned with "*expressing emotive or rhetorical overtones*" [Quirk 1972: 1056]. Furthermore, punctuation can help modify the semantics of the uttered statements, particularly in 'belles-lettres' style and it is the dash which is the most effective and expressive device for doing so.

Due to their frequent appearance in texts, the greatest attention has generally been given to the comma and the full stop. However, none of the works mentioned above offers sufficient information on **the dash,** even though its presence in literature is, to put it mildly, by no means rare. As this paper attempts to prove, the dash deserves far more attention than it receives because its employment transcends the limits of grammar. This particular punctuation mark is an inevitable aid in the domains both of stylistics and of semantics.

2. The dash – a stylistic and psychological signal in text

The dash is a multifunctional punctuation mark of separation "*stronger than a comma, less formal than a colon, and more relaxed than parentheses*" [Strunk 1979: 9]. The dash has three main functions: as a pause (to indicate a pause in a sentence), as an indication of parenthesis, and as a link (to indicate a connecting link between the general and particular, before lists and summaries, etc.). From the phonetic point of view the dash can be a substitute for prosodic features of spoken language and its main function is to indicate a *pause*, which naturally creates a certain *emphasis* which, consequently, often generates *rhythm*. In grammar it has a significant importance, namely in syntax and hypersyntax. It participates in the dividing of texts into structural units. From a stylistic point of view it is largely used as a stylistic device, as well as a mark to indicate the peculiar semantics of an utterance [Štulajterová, Jesenská 2013].

It is rather difficult to present a detailed inventory which would sum up the functions of this punctuation mark. Linguists present the dash from different angles. As a result, the precise, systematic and coherent enumeration of its employment in the written or printed text has not yet been fully encountered.

Therefore the aim of this paper is to outline the principal nuances concerning the usage of the dash, with respect to its actual use in fiction.

2.1 Aposiopesis

Aposiopesis – an unfinished or interrupted discourse – becomes stylistically significant when the speaker is not able to continue in his or her speech mainly because of the emotional reasons. The dash supplies what cannot be expressed by words due to emotions of various origin.

"My dear, I am so sorry – " Margaret did not know what to say. (Forster)

The dash in aposiopesis can imply the process which proceeds in the mind of a literary character:

- *"That was the work of – " Isabel scarcely knew what: of nature, of providence, of fortune, of the eternal mystery of thing. (James)*

Furthermore, this punctuation mark stands for the gesture made by the speaker to make his or her unfinished statement meaningful.

- *"Oh, if it's for sentimental reasons – " and Lord Warburton made a gesture of apology. (James)*

Moreover, the dash can show what can be seen in the actual situation and, consequently, does not have to be expressed by words.

- *"How are you baby? How do you feel? I bring you this – " It was a bottle of cognac. (Hemingway)*

There are examples of aposiopesis in fiction in which the dash indicates that the speaker expects the listener to provide him or her with help to express something:

- *" I don't want anything. I'm all right now, Mr – "*
  "Carraway." (Fitzgerald)
- *"You're not – ?"*
  "Married? No, no, I'm an old maid schoolteacher!" (Williams)

Finally, a dash is put in the place of words not enunciated because of the speaker's strong emotions – anger, astonishment and so on – and can be a substitute for the sequence of that part of a narration which is not important and is thus left out:

- *"Bearded sniffy old men sitting and demanding that we bear children. If they had to bear them – ! I wish they did have to!" (Lewis)*
- *"Just that. I made an examination – " He detailed the results of the examination. (Hemingway)*

2.2. Prosiopesis

Prosiopesis appears when the beginning of an utterance is omitted. Its expressiveness is visible when the speaker leaves out the starting point as a consequence of his emotional state of mind. The dash is used mainly when the prosiopesis is a result of an aposiopesis which has occurred earlier in the text.

"That's what I mean sir. You swear a great deal too much. I don't mind your damning and blasting, and WHAT the devil and WHERE the devil and WHO the devil – "

"Mrs. Pearce: this language from your lips! Really!"

"– but there is a certain word I must ask you not to use." (Shaw)

2.3. Break-in-the-narrative

According to I.R.Galperin, break-in-the-narrative is the type of sentence which is interrupted by the dash or dashes, but its content and form are un-abridged [Galperin 1977]. When the syntactical structure of the fragmented sentence is disturbed, the device is perceived as imperfect, as defective. Such sentence is not expressive from the syntactical, but from the psycholinguistic point of view. The utterance broken into pieces is usually the result of positive or negative experience, of somehow disturbed emotional condition of the speaker. Any kind of excited speech (both positive and negative) can be well tinged by the usage of the dash. It can help to express a wide range of feelings and the most frequent ones include:

a) **surprise**

• *"But you – you've put on some weigh – yes – you're as plum as a little partridge! And it so becomes you!"(Williams)*

• *" How did he take it when you said I was coming?"*

" Oh, Stanley doesn't know yet."

"You – haven't – told – him?" (Foster)

b) hesitation

• *"Oh – oh well – you know—sympathy and everything – if you were—say you were a lawyer's wife." (Lewis)*

c) uncertainty

• *"Can it be – you – no – it is – the fair Wendy!" (Barrie)*

d) despair

• *"Don't, don't do such a thing! I tell you don't – don't ! I know – don't!" (Forrest)*

e) reproach and self-pity

• *"Other men – I don't know – they do it easier. I don't know why – I can't stop myself – I talk too much." (Miller)*

• *"You're – you're – so good to me! And I – " (Williams)*

f) curiosity

• *" What is it? Is it for me?"*

"Yes, I hope you like it!"

"Why, why – Why, it's a – " (Williams)

g) shock

• *"Ivory," jerked the nephew; "lots of it – prime sort – lots – most annoying, for him." (Conrad)*

h) anger

• *"Watch your step! I've had – I've had – I've had – just about enough. Get it?" (Pinter)*

• *"Don't ever talk that way to me! Pig – Polack – disgusting – vulgar – greasy! – this kind of word has been on your tongue and your sister's too much around here!" (Williams)*

i) fear

• *"A voice. He was very little more than a voice. And I heard – him – it – this – voice –other voices – all of them were so little more than voices – and the memory of that time itself lingers around me..." (Conrad)*

To conclude, the stylistic significance of the dash in the 'break-in-the-narrative' is unquestionable. In this syntactical stylistic device, the dash functions as a psychological signal and the instances stated above prove that the dash has a definite semantics (uncertainty, surprise, fear, anger, etc.).

2.4. Suspense

From the stylistic point of view, suspense is created when the matter of communication is arranged in such a way that the less important parts are stated at the beginning of the sequence and the main idea is not released until the end [Galperin 1977]. The dash effectively sets off the individual elements of the utterance which consequently helps generate suspense.

• *"I will go home – I will go tomorrow – I will leave you alone," he murmured at last. (James)*

• *And there wasn't any look – any long funny look – any long funny Velma look afterward. (Morrison)*

When the information creating suspense is arranged in the order of gradation it is very hard to distinguish it from another syntactical stylistic device – climax.

2.5. Climax

The arrangement of sentences or their homogeneous parts which secures a gradual increase in significance of tension of an utterance is called climax. The dash can be placed between the words or statements producing desired effect of gradation and thus reinforce it.

• *I saw on that ivory face the expression of sombre pride, of ruthless power, of craven terror – of an intense and hopeless despair. (Conrad)*

• *To the untrue man, the whole universe is false – it is impalpable – it shrinks to nothing within his grasp.*

3. Conclusion

The paper analyzed the capacity of the dash on the stylistic as well as semantic layers of the language. We examined the potential of the dash when used to complete the appearance of psychologically significant expressions along

with its function outside the borders of language. We also wanted to demonstrate that the dash needs and deserves more attention of theoretical works on linguistics which generally do not outline its full value and significance. Our aim was to prove that the dash is capable of modifying the semantics of uttered statements, particularly in emotive prose and drama where the dash is effectively used to convey such feeling as happiness, fear, anger, disappointment or surprise.

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СТИЛИСТИЧЕСКИЙ АНАЛИЗ ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЯ ТИРЕ В ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННЫХ ТЕКСТАХ

Настоящая статья посвящена стилистическому анализу использования тире в художественных текстах. Автор анализирует функции тире, которое используется для передчи различных идей и эмоций.

Ключевые слова: стилистика, тире, апозиопезис, прозиопезис, прерывание повествования, саспенс