

Peculiarities of Using Stylistic Means in American Artistic Discourse

Alla Martyniuk¹, Alla Hubina¹, Nataliia Kyseliuk¹, Anastasiia Shevchuk¹, Valentyna Tryndiuk² & Iryna Voitenko¹

¹ Lutsk National Technical University, Lutsk, Ukraine

² The Municipal Higher Educational Institution «Lutsk Pedagogical College» of the Volyn Regional Council, Lutsk, Ukraine

Correspondence: Alla Martyniuk, Lutsk National Technical University, Lutsk, 75 Lvivska street, 43000, Ukraine.

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Abstract

The article analyzes the use of stylistic means in contemporary American novels about the challenges of postmodern society, such as terrorist attacks, loneliness in digital reality, and digital technologies. Descriptive, continuous sampling, dictionary definitions, and contextual and component analysis methods were used to analyze the language material from novels by Douglas Coupland and Don DeLillo. The analyzed stylistic units were diverse and characterized by an emotional and evaluative component, with negative assessments being the most common. The units were divided into thematic groups, such as drugs, money, human behavior, and success/failure. The place and role of stylistic units in the novels were related to their content and stylistic features, with colloquial lexical items playing a significant role in creating a special atmosphere. The study also identified prospects for analyzing current trends in the development of English spoken language based on the works of contemporary American authors. The article concludes that excerpts from the analyzed novels can be used in the study of professional terminology and in seminars on the course "Features of literary translation" to help students compare online terminology and Internet jargon in English and Ukrainian. The Internet as an object of fiction and the use of these works of fiction in teaching English deserve further study.

Keywords: stylistic means, contemporary American literature, postmodernism, online terminology, Internet jargon

1. Introduction

American artistic discourse is a major aspect of American culture and has a significant impact on the way Americans perceive and understand the world around them. By understanding the unique stylistic devices used in American art, we can gain insights into the cultural and social values of American society. As American art continues to evolve and adapt to changing social and political contexts, it is important to examine how stylistic means are being used to convey new and complex messages. By studying the latest trends in American artistic discourse, we can gain a deeper understanding of the issues and concerns that are shaping contemporary American culture. The study of the peculiarities of using stylistic means in American artistic discourse is highly relevant and important in our understanding of American culture, as well as in our ability to critically engage with the messages presented to us through various forms of media and communication.

The aim of the study is realized by solving the following tasks. Firstly, it is necessary to make a sample of stylistically marked lexical units from the text of the analyzed work and find out how their semantics and stylistics are interpreted in dictionaries of modern English. Secondly, it is crucial to analyze the semantics of the selected units in the selected novels and their thematic relevance. Thirdly, it is worthwhile to determine the place and role of colloquial vocabulary and phraseology in the text of the novel and its role in building the author's style.

2. Literature Review

The scientific interpretation of discourse and artistic discourse in particular, as well as the nuances of its realization, is reflected in the works of many scholars (Bensko, 2009), (Gee, 2005), (Ketcham, 2011), (Babeliuk, 2010, 2011), (Pasichnyk, Zakordonets, and Plavutska, 2022), (Shymchyshyn, 2007).

Scholar James Paul Gee notes that "discourse is the result of the integration of language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, and evaluating that are necessary to realize a particular kind of socially recognizable identity" (Gee, 2005).

According to scholars N. Pasichnyk, N. Zakordonets, and I. Obikhod, "the status of digital discourse as a separate type of discourse and a new form of communication is confirmed by its specific features due to the environment of its functioning and the dominant role of the Internet in the life of modern society" (Pasichnyk, Zakordonets, and Plavutska, 2022).

The researchers also note that today it is indisputable that popular fiction is actively influenced by the Internet. Recently, the communicative space of the Internet has become an environment where new genres emerge. The system of genres helps to organize our communication and human-made text in any form (oral, written, electronic) in a certain way. Authors are using digital discourse genres to write their novels, as this contributes to the popularity of their works. We tend to believe that the future of popular fiction lies in such

works. The same is true for the way the text is arranged on the page, the style in which it is written, and the vocabulary repertoire. So we can conclude that online genres may transform some "paper" genres of popular fiction in the future. The number of works of popular fiction in which the Internet is the background of the story or the main storyline is increasing significantly. They can be used in the process of learning English, in particular, such topics as "Intercultural Online Communication", "Features of Literary Translation", "Academic Writing", and "The Main Foreign Language" (Pasichnyk, Zakordonets, and Plavutskaya, 2022).

Literary critics and linguists pay special attention to the problems of stylistic features of contemporary American prose. The researchers appeal to various nuances of the consideration of contemporary American prose writing, highlighting stylistic means that have become natural for the whole corpus of texts (Miller, Vandome, McBrewster, 2010), (Hoberek, 2011), (Irr, 1995), (Jordison, 2016), (Kelly, Kessel, 2006), (Marshall, 1992), (Osteen, 1998), (Rangno, 2006), (Weinstein, 1993), (Barri, 2008), (Olenieva, 1999), (Polishko, 2004), (Tupakhina, 2007), (Shon, 2003), examine the lexical features of contemporary American prose (Bloom, 2003), (Bonca, 1996), (Dillard, 1972, 1977), (Haskins, 1973), (Labov, 1972), etc. Given the available scientific research, the stylistic features of contemporary American prose about the digital realities of modern life and the crisis moments of the development of modern American society have not been sufficiently studied, which determined the relevance of our study.

3. Method

In the study on the peculiarities of using stylistic means in American artistic discourse, several methods were used to analyze the language material from the selected novels by Douglas Coupland and Don DeLillo.

The descriptive method was used to provide an objective and detailed description of the stylistic devices used in the novels. This method involved identifying and categorizing the various stylistic means, such as metaphors, similes, and personification, and describing how they were used in the text. The continuous sampling method was used to collect a representative sample of the text for analysis. This involved selecting passages from the novels that contained the most frequent and significant examples of the stylistic devices identified through the descriptive method. Dictionary definitions were also used to ensure accurate and consistent interpretation of the stylistic devices. By consulting dictionary definitions, the researchers were able to ensure that their analysis was grounded in the recognized meanings of the various stylistic means. Contextual analysis was used to understand the meaning and significance of the stylistic devices in the context of the novels as a whole. This involved examining the surrounding text and the broader narrative and thematic elements of the novels to gain a deeper understanding of how the stylistic means were used to convey meaning. Finally, component analysis was used to identify the individual elements that made up the stylistic devices. This involved breaking down each example of a stylistic device into its constituent parts, such as the tenor and vehicle of a metaphor, to better understand how the device functioned in the text.

Overall, these methods were used in combination to provide a comprehensive analysis of the language material in the selected novels. The use of multiple methods allowed to identify patterns and trends in the use of stylistic devices in American artistic discourse, and to gain a deeper understanding of how these devices contribute to the overall meaning and impact of the novels.

4. Results

In his novel "Microserfs", American writer Douglas Coupland described the life of professional programmers in detail and color. In the novel, the author showed the life of Silicon Valley residents, and the psychological peculiarities of their communication with the outside world and within their group in a very professional manner from the point of view of a psychologist. The author used the professional jargon and slang of programmers and hackers to describe the characters' lifestyle more accurately, to convey their way of thinking, the way they speak and build a dialogue with others: chip designer, hippie geeks, scan somebody for "hireability", misfile names and faces of people, a Marburg virus, email addict, installing oneself in the house, body as hardware, techno-chicken, bits (for naming information contained in the human brain) (Coupland, 1995).

One of the main features of D. DeLillo's artistic discourse is based on the most important principle of existentialist philosophy, which considers individual consciousness, not the world around us, to be the true reality. Following the aesthetics of existentialism, D. DeLillo's reality does not exist in isolation, but as a fact of the consciousness of his characters, subjectively reflected and manifested in their individuality, thus demonstrating an independent perception of the world separated from society.

In his works, DeLillo reflects various forms of skepticism that prevail not only concerning the modern world but also to the postmodern understanding of consciousness. He believes that consciousness is inherently powerless, confused, and influenced by powerful systems, such as technological, linguistic, or economic structures (DeLillo, 1991).

We define this feature of the linguistic and aesthetic paradigm of D. DeLillo's work as the problem of human isolation and confusion in the world of visual images, symbols, and signs. Their influence on human consciousness is well demonstrated in the novel *White Noise* (DeLillo, 1985), which resembles a movie script. The novel consists of *mise en scène*, vivid visual images, and endless Socratic dialogues. It is replete with inserts from television programs and advertisements, which only enhance the effect of the presence of television, which eats into the conversations and thoughts of the characters with its incessant noise. The hypnotic influence of advertising even permeates the subconscious of the characters (DeLillo, 1985).

In the novel, D. DeLillo's ironic view cannot hide the fact that Americans pay too much attention and time to watching various low-quality television programs, becoming slaves to television. They are beginning to confuse real reality with the virtual reality reflected in television programs and newscasts. In addition, people's excessive zombie-like dependence on television creates the illusion of a

successful life. They feel insignificant and dissatisfied, realizing that they do not live up to the standard of living of television characters. It seems that representatives of all walks of life as if bewitched, are constantly under the magical influence of the sounds and images produced by television. D. DeLillo's favorite theme of the dominance of television is also described in such novels as "Players" (DeLillo, 1977), "Mao II" (DeLillo, 1991), and others. The author needs to talk about how America feels in a post-industrial society at a time when the media is absorbing everyone's attention day after day. It is getting to the point where the media is no longer a conductor of actual events, but is re-creating them in its interpretations. Thus, radio, television, photography, and the Internet, as social factors, have played a major role in the formation of postmodern America. Another linguistic and aesthetic feature of D. DeLillo's authorial discourse is that in all his novels he deliberately and consciously blurs the boundaries between fiction and historical reality, masterfully intertwining existing historical facts and personalities with events and characters created by the imagination. As a result, the reader no longer feels where the boundaries of virtual artistic reality end and where objective reality begins. It should be noted that D. DeLillo's mythology is on the surface. It is something that expresses our hidden desires and fears, and something that can be found in full in everyday life, seen in newspapers, on television, and in the news. That is why D. DeLillo's embodied artistic reality is perceived and interpreted by each reader in his or her way.

5. Discussion

D. DeLillo's artistic discourse reflects essential features of postmodern aesthetics, including reflections on death, both physical and symbolic. In "Zero K," the author explores thought-provoking questions regarding the value of human life determined by death, the consequences of defeating physical death, and the direction of human development in such a scenario. Similarly, in "White Noise," the protagonist Jack Gladney experiences a fear of death and emptiness in life, leading to obsession and a loss of connection with his family. This work is less surreal than the previous one but more eccentric, bizarre, and ultimately confusing. After a man-made catastrophe in the novel, fear of death permeates not only the characters but also all the city's inhabitants, as they live remotely from death yet are said to be dying.

The novel addresses the contemporary American world, conveying only the familiar sounds of advertising, television shows, and entertainment programs that have become a part of everyday life, and listing places such as supermarkets and shopping centers: "Marriott" at the airport, Downtown Travelodge, Sheraton, Conference Center, etc (DeLillo, 2003). In "White Noise", the reader, along with the characters, constantly visits these and similar "places of power," modern "temples" that direct the spiritual aspirations of Americans, where they seek spiritual peace focused on profit, consumption, pleasure, and satisfaction. The promise of happiness and bliss through consumption and the acquisition of things is represented in the novel through a kind of sacralization of supermarkets, through the symbolic representation of shopping centers as spiritual shrines. A metaphorical parallel between paradise and the fruit aisles in a supermarket is drawn when Jack Gladney is shopping with his family and meets Marry, who in turn compares the supermarket to a place of rebirth: "This place recharges us spiritually, It's a gateway or a path-way. Look how bright. It's full of psychic data...Forever symbolism, hidden veils of mystery, and layers of cultural material. But it is psychic data absolutely. The large doors slide open, they close unbidden... Look how well-lighted everything is. The place is sealed off, self-contained. It is timeless" (DeLillo, 2009).

It seems that the author is following a familiar route by listing items, habits, and advertising jingles, but in fact, he is taking a road that few people have taken. He embeds detailed dialogues in supermarkets into the text to tell us something more about the characters. The sounds from the TV and the endless commercials begin to take on the character of mantras, and eventually, everything boils down to the sacred triad "Mastercard, Visa, American Express".

The mystification of the trivial in "White Noise" can be interpreted as one of the characteristics of postmodern poetics, which is known to be a rebellion against everything rational and the absence of mysterious forces that was characteristic of modernism.

It should be noted that D. DeLillo and other contemporary American writers choose to describe catastrophic events that reveal human traits to the fullest extent.

D. DeLillo's most notable work in the 21st century is "Falling Man" (DeLillo, 2007), a novel that revolves around the devastating events of September 11, 2001. In contrast to the typical postmodern literature, this novel features a linear timeline and characters who are trapped in a closed space, unable to escape their haunting memories of the tragedy. The character David Janiak, with his performance mimicking a fall from a skyscraper, perpetuates the traumatic memories for the townspeople, keeping them stuck in the past.

As a resident of New York City, DeLillo's personal connection to the events of 9/11 is evident in the book. However, as a writer, he also acknowledges that not everyone in the world shares American values and that terrorism is a complex issue. DeLillo presents varying perspectives on the matter through his characters. Some believe that America is responsible for the attacks, as it has flaunted its wealth and political superiority, inciting anger and hatred from disadvantaged residents of Islamic states. Others argue that the terrorists are solely to blame for their heinous acts and that other nations should not be held accountable for their development and economic success.

Throughout the novel, DeLillo employs postmodern irony to highlight the absurdity and farcical nature of the tragedy. Although he feels a deep sense of pain and anger towards the terrorists, DeLillo recognizes that the world is not a simple place, and different perspectives on terrorism exist.

The lack of linearity of time is also characteristic of "The Body Artist" (DeLillo, 2001), where the heroine Lauren Hartke cannot let go of the past, constantly reliving the happy moments of her life with her husband who died. For her, the present does not exist, time has

stopped, concentrated on one point in the past. Lauren reflects on the category of time and its properties as follows: "<...> Maybe the idea is to think of time differently. Stop time, a6o stretch it out, a6o open it up. When time stops, so do we <...> Doesn't time slow down or seem to stop? What's left? Who's left?"

Another character in the novel, Mr. Tuttle, exists outside of temporal and spatial relations altogether, suggesting that he can be in several places at the same time, coming and going from there at the same time. Moreover, he has already seen what he just had to see (meaning the future): "Coming and going I am leaving. I will go and come. <...> Because I am here and where. And I will go or not or never. And I have seen what I will see".

The linguistic and aesthetic paradigm of D. DeLillo's authorial discourse is characterized by the peculiarity of language. According to A. Weinstein, the distinctive features of D. DeLillo's style is restraint, slowness, sometimes sadness, depressed mood and boredom of the characters, and concentration on the surreal presentation of information (Weinstein, 1993).

The researcher also calls D. DeLillo a masterful wordsmith, who can control the most intricate lexical and syntactic structures. He notes that D. DeLillo's reflections on the language are carried out in a parallel universe, the advantage of which is that the author can freely rethink, rebuild or discard certain tendentious and simplistic elements in linguistics, psychology, and literary studies (Weinstein, 1993). In most of his works, language is one of the main characters. In his novel "White Noise" it is the language of visual images of television, the language of advertising and supermarkets, in "Mao II" the language of terror is in the foreground, in "The Names" (DeLillo, 1982) it is the language of conspiracy, the language of signs and symbols, the language of a religious cult. His talent for using artistic language is demonstrated in "The Names". The novel is set in a foreign country, Greece, and therefore the problem of language becomes one of the main issues for the novel and its protagonist. Language is seen here in its broadest sense - as a means of communication, as a way of understanding signs and symbols, and as an object of religious worship. The novel focuses on members of a secret society who kill people, justifying the bloodshed by the "sanctity of language." In "The Names", D. DeLillo brings terrorism, conspiracy, and religion together for the first time. The study of these phenomena will later become one of the main features of his authorial discourse.

D. DeLillo is not afraid to experiment with literary language, filling his novels with an abundance of syntactic techniques and linguistic clichés, skillfully and purposefully using them to create artistic imagery.

Thus, in his writings, D. DeLillo presents an individual concept of solving the crisis of the individual at the present stage of human development. He is convinced that the further survival of civilization depends on a fundamental restructuring of the development of our minds, which perceives the surrounding reality. The writer calls for a return to the original meaning of existence, which will lead to the realization of the self. The aesthetic paradigm of D. DeLillo's authorial discourse includes the mastery of traditional problems for modern postmodernism. Among them are individual consciousness and consumer society, individual consciousness and the virtual world, disasters and conspiracy, the axiological collapse of post-industrial society, etc. The ways of their representation are: blurring the boundaries between fiction and historical truth; mixing reality and unreality; skepticism, irony, lack of linearity of time, etc. The stylistic features of artistic discourse are represented by the following stylistic and linguistic markers: stylistic - restraint, unhurriedness, surreal presentation of information, etc.; linguistic - wide use of visual images, symbols, and signs; contextual dominance of linguistic elements depending on the topic of the work (language of the media, language of advertising and supermarkets, language of terror, language of conspiracy, etc.).

6. Conclusion

The stylistic units used in the analyzed novels are semantically diverse, with many units having broad or polysemous meanings. However, they all share a common characteristic: the presence of an emotional and evaluative component in their semantic structure, with negative assessments being the most frequent. These units can be grouped thematically, with the most prominent themes being drugs, money, physical and emotional states of individuals, human behavior towards others, and success/failure. These units play a significant role in the novel's content and stylistic features, with their usage reflecting the protagonist's character and environment, creating a unique atmosphere in the novel. The analyzed novels highlight new problems, including the individual's existence in a media-saturated society, leading to the study's skeptical and satirical understanding of consumerism's impact on modern society's spiritual and intellectual life. The novels' portrayal of consumerism combines descriptions of the world of shops, supermarkets, and shopping centers with representations of mass media and advertising influence on individuals, forming the novel's artistic space. Colloquial lexical items used in the novels reveal the author's attitude towards discussing problems, contributing to the author's overall worldview. The study's prospects involve analyzing contemporary American authors' works to determine current trends in the development of spoken English, focusing on vocabulary and phraseology. Future studies may also explore other linguistic aspects, such as analyzing colloquial style grammar.

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