Expressive use of punctuation marks in the novel "The Moon and Sixpence"

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Abstract

The present study aims to investigate expressive use of punctuation marks in the novel "The Moon and Sixpence" by Somerset Maugham. The principle method of the research involves that of linguistic description, including observation, interpretation and the contextual analysis. The present paper aims to investigate the concept of expressive punctuation, and revealing the main emotive punctuation marks in the novel "The Moon and Sixpence" by SomersetMaugham. The results of the present study can be used in developing materials for EFL learners, which can be a facilitative factor to raise the learners' awareness.

Keywords: linguistics, punctuation, expressiveness, syntax, punctuation.

Uso expresivo de los signos de puntuación en la novela "La Luna y el Sixpence"

Resumen

El presente estudio tiene como objetivo investigar el uso expresivo de los signos de puntuación en la novela "The Moon and Sixpence" de Somerset Maugham. El método principal de la investigación implica la descripción lingüística, incluida la observación, la interpretación y el análisis contextual. El presente trabajo tiene como objetivo investigar el concepto de puntuación expresiva, y revelar los principales signos de puntuación emotivos en la novela señalada. Los resultados del presente estudio se pueden utilizar en el desarrollo de materiales para estudiantes de EFL, que pueden ser un factor de facilitación para aumentar la conciencia de los alumnos.

Palabras clave: lingüística, puntuación, expresividad, sintaxis, puntuación.

1. INTRODUCTION

At present, more and more attention is being paid to the role of punctuation in the creation and interpretation of a literary text (Beregovskaya, 2004; Valgina, 2004; Mel'nichuk, 2002). The linguists consider that punctuation is a tool in the hands of a writer. Punctuation marks are auxiliary elements, which serve not just for the syntactic and semantic organization of the text, but at the same time can represent the attitude of the writer (Mel'nichuk, 2002). Thus, they can be a

narrative element; the presence of the author is achieved through the competent use of punctuation.

Punctuation marks partially compensate for not only intonation in the literary text, but also body language (Beregovskaya, 2004). Moreover, reflecting the dynamics of oral speech in writing, punctuation marks not only represent the rhythmic structure of the sentence, but also emotive evaluative nuances of the author's intonation. That is why punctuation is not only narrative, but also expressive. Hence, punctuation marks have two main functions: notional, and expressive.It is obvious that punctuation marks cannot be expressive on their own, they need to be used with awareness of their main meaning and ability to see their qualitative potential.

Analyzing a literary text, one should differentiate two sides: the author's side, and the reader's side. In this regards, punctuation is the means by which the writer expresses certain meanings and shades; and the reader, in his turn, seeing these punctuation marks in the written text, perceives them (Beregovskaya, 2004; Valgina, 2004; Gol'tcova, 2001). In other words, with the help of punctuation marks the reader can understand the text in the way the author composed it. However, this can be possible, if the author and the reader have the same understanding of the implications of a specific punctuation mark. Accentuation, some shades of meaning –everything is achieved through punctuation marks, which are not obligatory in terms of rules, but the author considers them absolutely necessary; they do not

complicate the text, but on the contrary, facilitate comprehension, clarify the meaning. Consequently, punctuation system to some extent ensures that the text would sound like it should sound according to the author, with those accents, pauses, rhythm, modulations in melody (Beregovskaya, 2004).

2. METHODOLOGY

For many years Russian and English linguists have been paying attention to the problem of punctuation. Interest in this important means of oral language transformation into written language is continuously growing. Scientifically substantiated unity of the oral and written forms of speech is now of significant importance and it is particularly important to understand the extent, to which the oral form of speech can be reflected in writing (Ahmanova, 1969a).

Punctuation system is one of the most important language systems. Despite the fact that a number of scholars are studying punctuation, its nature and functions are under-investigated in terms of general linguistics as well as in terms of individual languages.

One more actively researched linguistic category is expressiveness, because of the focus on "linguistic personality" his behavior and inner intellectual activities. Expressiveness in the text

serves as a means of pragmatics, revealing the author's speech strategy, and becomes one of the means of speech influence on the reader.

Expressing his thoughts by means of language, the author inevitably expresses his attitude to the object or situation. Very often, such message reveals author's subjective attitudes to what he says or writes. Therefore, expressiveness is regarded as the representation of the speaker's individuality, manifested in the feelings, emotions and evaluations of the subject. This author's expression is manifested in speech, in the selection of linguistic means, and may have the additional purpose of influencing the listener or reader. Expressiveness, thus acts as a phenomenon of the linguistic personality and its subjective intentions(Ahmanova, 1969b).Expressiveness can be manifested at various levels, lexical and syntactic. We are interested, first of all, in the expressive syntax.

People talk and listen to what others say, write and read. Hence two forms of speech exist – oral language, which has a sound form, and written language, which has a graphic form. Of the two existing forms of speech the first is the main one. Written language originated historically on the basis of oral language as a means of recording oral speech for reading aloud later. Oral and written languages are not separate, particular speeches each; they only represent a variety of forms, in which one and the same speech exists.

A human thought, expressed by means of language, is formed into speech. Speech is known to be oral activity, as well as speech formation, or - the text (its oral and written forms). Text can have different expressive colors, which is the result of the expressive function of the language. Thus, the expressive function of the language is the ability to express the emotional state of the speaker, his subjective attitude to the objects and phenomena of reality. One of the most important elements of expressiveness is expressive syntax, expressive punctuation in particular.

Punctuation marks are an important tool for the formation of the English-language text, for expression of the relations between individual parts of the sentence, and for giving the text certain expressiveness. That is why there are two main functions of punctuation marks: notional and expressive(Barhudarov and Shteling, 2013).

The analysis of literary texts shows that writers are not limited to the use of punctuation marks only to express syntactic relations between the parts of the sentence; they also use punctuation, (consciously or intuitively) as an effective means to represent meaning and expressive relations.

Good punctuation should always reflect the writer's train of thought. Too little punctuation imposes a heavy burden of their interpretation on the reader, and sometimes it creates a lot of

uncertainties and inaccuracies. Too much punctuation makes the same impression as unnatural variations of voice and exaggerated gestures in speech (Arapieva, 1985).

In general, it should be noted that punctuation is a powerful means of expressive syntax, and competent use of it can have a strong impact on the expressiveness of the text as a whole. Also, punctuation can quite often be a distinguishing feature of different writers.

While examining the text of the novel "The Moon and Sixpence" by Somerset Maugham there appeared certain difficulties in the analysis of the functions of punctuation marks due to lack of strictly defined rules of punctuation in English.

The following punctuation marks are used to express pauses of different duration in the text:

1. The comma - when referring to the minimum pause.

2. Semicolons, colons, dashes, parentheses are used to indicate a longer pause.

3. The full stop, question and exclamation marks indicate the maximum pause separating independent communicative acts.

In the written text, the comma is the representation of a short-term pause, which highlights some of its elements of the sentence (as a rule, these are introductory words and phrases, clichéd phrases, etc.)

'Nonsense,' I said, a little embarrassed.

In this example, the comma reflects a short pause.

The full stop and its equivalents indicate an emphatic pause, which is made before the words, which in the speaker's point of view carry a special informative value.

No. She will not speak. She lies on her back quite quietly. She does not move for hours at a time. But she cries always.

The example above demonstrates the use of the full stop to reflect the emphatic pause. The situation is very serious at the moment described, and the author uses five short sentences with five full stops in one line. This is done to attract reader's attention to the very words and at the same time expresses difficult physical and emotional state of the person.

The dash is used to indicate either incomplete phrases, or pauses, which are the result of searching for words.

Do you not see the thickening of your features and a look - how shall I describe it? - The books call it lion-faced.

Have you found out who - I did not quite know how to express myself - who the person, who it is he's gone away with?

Both of the above-mentioned examplesshow how the dash is used to indicate pauses caused by the difficulties in the selection of words, or phrases. The first sentence shows the use of the dash to express a pause at the moment of trying to speak to a person who has a fatal disease, so the speaker is trying to carefully choose his words in order not to offend or frighten the other person. The second sentence shows the same use of the dash at a quite delicate situation when the woman's husband leaves his family and everybody thinks he escaped with another woman; the speaker also very carefully chooses words trying not to offend the devastated woman (Budnichenko, 2004).

In addition, a pause is often reflected by the ellipsis, which, like the dash indicates incomplete statements due to various reasons (the excitement of the speaker, external interference, etc.), Also the ellipsis indicates consciously omitted words.

He's ... abominable.

In the given example the ellipsis indicates a pause caused by excitement, very strong emotions.

Ellipsis in the middle of the sentence expresses the difficulties of speech, great emotional stress.

You scold yourself; you know it is only your nerves - and yet ... in a little while it is impossible to resist.

The sentence shows the use of ellipsis to express difficulties of speech caused by great emotional stress.

In the examples above, we can see that sometimes the author uses the dash and the ellipsis in the same function and the reader can only guess about the grounds for their differentiation.At the end of the sentence, we sometimes find combinations of punctuation marks: question marks and ellipsis, exclamation marks and ellipsis.

"That's better! ..." I laughed.

"How did you manage that? ..." she asked.

In these examples, we see a combination of different shades of meaning and emotional coloring. The question may be accompanied by resentment, bewilderment; a strong emotion may cause reticence, etc. We can find quite many of such cases in the text of the novel.

The break in the sentence is sometimes used as a means of simulating a live conversation, expression of the speaker's emotional

state, emphasis, accentuation of the most important moments of the sentence, which is achieved mainly through the actualization of the special functions of punctuation marks.

"I should have thought I was the last person to be unsympathetic to – to aspirations of that kind."

The sentence above shows the use of the dash to simulate a live conversation, express the speaker's emotional state.

The ellipsis at the end of the sentence may indicate a "psychological incompleteness", prompting the reader's imagination to the simulation of reality in images:

Men are always the same. Fear makes them cruel...

The example above demonstrates the pause, expressed by the ellipsis, which makes the reader pause for a while, to fully imagine and experience the described picture- image.

The question and exclamation marks convey the overall emotional speech; often they express the tension of the situation. The question mark sometimes indicates peculiarities of the heroes' thought processes; and with the help of the exclamation mark the author gives an additional characteristic to the heroes (these can be simulated

emotions, a sense of superiority over the others), or expresses his sympathy for this or that hero.

We cannot let him die like a dog. It would be inhuman. Why cannot he go to a hospital? - A hospital! He needs the care of loving hands.

The example above shows the use of the exclamation mark, as an indicator of the general tension of the situation related to the hero's disease; that was a matter of life and death.

But why did not you let me know you were coming? How long have you been here? How long are you going to stay? Why did not you come an hour earlier, and we would have dined together?

Frequent use of question marks in the sentences above conveys the emotion of the speaker, who is excited by the arrival of a guest.

3. RESULTS

On the basis of the analyzed material, we can find out that the expressiveness of the text has much in common with the expressiveness of oral speech; and by means of expressive syntax,

including expressive punctuation all the features of speech are reflected in writing.

Punctuation plays a very important role in enhancing the expressive impact of the text on the reader, and performing a distinctive function. Punctuation marks, as a means of expressive syntax, are able to report the presence of the author in the text. Such use of punctuation is defined as a system of punctuation marks, peculiar for the author. They add expressiveness to the statement, emphasize significant parts of it (Maugham, 1972).

The analysis of literary texts, in this case, the text of the novel by Somerset Maugham "The Moon and Sixpence" shows, that writers are not limited to the use of punctuation marks only to represent the proper syntactic relations between the parts of a sentence. They use punctuation (consciously, or intuitively) as an effective means for the reflection of the meaning and expressiveness.

Having analyzed the text of the novel, we found out that the punctuation marks that are mostly used to express emotions in the novel, or the so-called emotive punctuation marks used by the author are the following: the full stop, the exclamation and question marks, the dash, the ellipsis, and the comma.

4. DISCUSSIONS

Many prominent linguists, like Vinogradov (1958), Shcherba (1979), Aleksandrova (2009),Beregovskaya (2004)and others pointed out the importance of expressive syntax. Academician Vinogradovincluded "the problem of expressive - emphatic, depictive nuances peculiar for a particular syntactic construction, or whatever combinations of syntactic constructions" (Vinogradov, 1958: 9) into the sphere of investigation on the stylistic syntax (Vinogradov, 1958). In the publications of Beregovskaya expressive syntactic constructions are contrasted with the constructions, which are syntactically neutral, and expressiveness is defined as "the peculiarity of syntactic forms to increase the pragmatic potential of statements to the level higher than that, which is achieved with the help of the lexical meaning of words that fill these syntactic forms" (Beregovskaya, 2004: 14). The author includes the length of the sentence, the stylistic role of a paragraph and a complex syntactic unit, the affective potential of punctuation, expressive syntax as a component of individual style, syntactic forms and their stylistic features into the range of problems of expressive syntax(Gol'tcova, 2001).

Expressiveness as a common language category affects all areas of language and the variety of its expressive means is boundless. Communicative situation features affect the appearance of expressiveness as a distinctive characteristic of speech. Among them are the intentions of the speaker, or the writer; the reader's, or

listener's knowledge and ideas, as well as linguistic and extra-linguistic (social) context of an act of communication. Expressiveness is linked to a number of linguistic categories, which have the same complex and multi-level nature. Expressiveness is closely related to emotiveness; sometimes these terms are even used interchangeably and the distinction between them seems unimportant. Expressiveness is also linked to accent and intensification, evaluativity, persuasion (the ability of the structure to make an impact on the reader, or listener), to imagery and figurativeness.

The expressive aspect of the language as a result of the oral activity of the linguistic personality is being actively developed now in linguistics. Despite the fact that a number of scholars are studying punctuation, its nature and functions are under-investigated in terms of general linguistics as well as in terms of individual languages (Panasjuk, 1976).

5. CONCLUSION

Certain theoretical information on the subject has been studied in the course of work, the concepts of "punctuation" and "expressiveness" have been explained, the main trends of the use of emotive punctuation marks in the novel by Somerset Maugham "The

Moon and Sixpence" have been identified based on the publications by well-known linguists.

Modern punctuation is a very complex and rich system. The greatest achievement of modern punctuation is its systemic organization. Punctuation helps the writer not only to convey ideas, but also emotions.

The peculiarity of punctuation to obey the context adds a significant quality to it – flexibility, which is manifested in variation. Punctuation, with a creative and competent use of it, turns into a powerful semantic and stylistic means.

Emotional potential of expressive punctuation marks is widely used by writers. Richness of the range of emotional expression is a distinguishing feature of talented authors.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The material of this article can be recommended for use in developing materials for EFL learners, it can be a facilitating factor to raise the learners' awareness.

7. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work was funded by the subsidy allocated to the Kazan Federal University for the state assignment in the sphere of scientific activities

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