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COGNITIVE-STYLISTIC AND PRAGMATIC ASPECTS OF SEMANTIC DEVIATIONS IN THE SHORT STORY “FAULT LINES” WRITTEN BY BARBARA KINGSOLVER

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КОГНИТИВНО-СТИЛИСТИЧЕСКИЕ И ПРАГМАТИЧЕСКИЕ АСПЕКТЫ СЕМАНТИЧЕСКИХ ОТКЛОНЕНИЙ В РАССКАЗЕ БАРБАРЫ КИНГСОЛВЕР «ЛИНИИ РАЗЛОМА»

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the pragmatic and cognitive stylistic analysis of semantic deviations in the short story “Fault Lines” written by Barbara Kingsolver. It goes without saying that in literary works a language tends to have immense meaning since the author has unlimited freedom to communicate his/her ideas in his literary works. This allows a writer to make full use of his creativity to convey his/her message towards the readers by applying his individual style. Semantic deviation is one of the linguistic deviations which is implemented when a combination of incompatible and illogical words violates literary norms of a language in an attempt to evoke a reader’s surprise, grab a reader’s attention, exert emotional effect and bring aesthetic beauty to a literary text. On top of that, very few investigations have been carried out to research cognitive-stylistic characteristics along with pragmatic characteristics of semantic deviations as key mechanisms of foregrounding and thus this can be an attempt to fill this gap. The language in use will be analyzed in an attempt to study “the meaning of language in relation to a context and of use and users”. Therefore, it becomes apparent that cognitive aspects and pragmatic aspects go hand in hand and in order to conduct effective research both aspects have to be and will be taken into account.

Аннотация. Статья посвящена прагматическому и когнитивно-стилистическому анализу семантических девиаций в коротком рассказе Барбары Кингсолвер «Fault Lines». Само собой разумеется, что автор имеет неограниченную свободу для выражения своих мыслей в своих литературных произведениях. Применение своего индивидуального стиля позволяет автору в полной мере использовать свое творчество, чтобы донести свою мысль до читателя. Семантическая девиация — одна из лингвистических девиаций, которая образуется при сочетании несовместимых и нелогичных слов и нарушении литературных норм языка с целью вызвать у читателя удивление, привлечь его внимание, оказать эмоциональное воздействие и придать эстетическую красоту художественному тексту. Вдобавок к этому очень мало исследований было проведено для изучения прагматических характеристик семантических отклонений как ключевых механизмов выдвигания и, таким образом, это может быть возможностью заполнить этот существующий пробел. Используемый язык будет проанализирован в попытке изучить «значение языка по отношению к контексту, использованию и пользователям». Таким образом, становится очевидным, что когнитивные аспекты и прагматические аспекты идут рука об руку, и для проведения эффективного исследования оба аспекта должны быть и будут приняты во внимание.

Keywords: linguistic deviations, stylistic devices, defamiliarization, Grice's matrix, pragmatics.

Ключевые слова: языковые девиации, стилистические приемы, остранение, максимы Грайса, прагматика.

Introduction

No need to say that a language serves the purpose for conveying thoughts, emotions orally and in a written form. In a literary text writers deliberately decide not to conform with language norms so as to exert an aesthetic beauty to a literary work, to communicate their ideas in a creative and outstanding manner, to display their conceptual world picture and implement their individual style of writing. According to Leech [6], it is possible to distinguish the following types of linguistic deviations: lexical, grammatical, phonological, graphological, semantic, dialectal deviations, deviation of register and deviation of historical period. When it comes to semantic deviations, they are implemented by means of stylistic devices such as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, irony, pun, wordplay and convergence of the aforementioned stylistic devices.

Linguistic deviations are considered to be an integral part of a literary work since a literary text is predominantly expressed in a figurative way. Thus, words which are abnormal, incompatible and odd tend to capture a reader's attention and the words of this sort are perceived to be salient against the background of the words which comply with language norms. Peter Stockwell [15] claims that a writer can maintain a reader's attention by placing "salient" words to the forefront and renewing them so that they do not remain the same. Unless a writer alters the language means on a regular basis, it is quite likely that a reader's interest will be diminished and it will be difficult for a writer to retain a reader's concentration on a read. This phenomenon is known as the inhibition of return. The main reason is that words which do not breach language norms do not tend to drag and retain a reader's attention.

Pragmatics and Cognitive Linguistics are interconnected because Cognitive Linguistics is concerned with cognitive structures and processes and the way a reader perceives information during a reading process. Pragmatics is primarily concerned with what actions and intentions are implied beyond articulation of language means. Pragmatics primarily investigates what individuals imply behind the articulate message, the way they converse and comprehend one another. According to Ninio [8], Pragmatics studies the words or phrases which are deliberately utilized in an attempt to trigger certain attitude and thoughts.

Odeunmi holds the view that metaphor functions as a tool which enables a reader to link his/her impressions with his/her convictions and actions by means of a language [9, 10]. According to Kovecses [4], metaphor that a writer makes use of in a literary text in an attempt to exert an aesthetic effect on a reader has a tendency to be more ambiguous and more insightful in terms of meaning and function as opposed to a regular metaphor that is utilized on a daily basis. Fafiyebi [2] asserts that the usage of metaphor reveals a writer's emotions, the way he/she relates to different aspects of life, the way he/she conceptualizes real-life situations. The findings of the researcher's investigation revealed that metaphors fall into the following categories such as historical metaphor, evaluative metaphor and descriptive metaphor. As for historical metaphor, it draws on historical facts to maintain the course of an argument, evaluative metaphor deals with a particular contextual situation in an attempt to make a certain inference. Descriptive metaphors allow a writer to depict a situation providing a reader some room for thoughts so as to draw a particular conclusion.

Having carried out a grammatical analysis, Perrine [11] distinguishes four types of metaphorical forms such as grammatical, literal, figurative and contextual. According to the researcher, metaphors fall into the category of literal or implied metaphors. Figurative metaphors are predominantly utilized in words of wisdom and occasionally encompass the characteristics of the two aforementioned categories. When it comes to contextual metaphor, a reader comprehends the genuine meaning of metaphor in a particular context exclusively. Unless a reader encounters metaphor of this kind in a certain context, he/she will fail to decode the implicit meaning behind it or this type of metaphor will be perceived to be a nonsense.

Odebunmi [10] points out that the main function of metaphor from pragmatic perspectives is to involve awareness of shared contextual factors, object(s) of discourse and common knowledge of issues in a social discourse and the ability of discourse participants to utilize their verbal resources to enhance meaning.

Taguchi [16] asserts that the pragmatic interpretation of metaphor calls for socio-cultural knowledge which is integral part of the meaning of a linguistic symbol since linguistic symbol and culture go hand in hand.

According to Wilson and Sperber [17, 18], irony is regarded to be one of the most broadly used figures of speech in a non-literal or humorous language. They argue that irony is a complex pragmatic phenomenon because it is driven by a wide range of mental processes.

According to Wilson [17], it is possible to distinguish three main characteristics of an ironical statement which fall into three categories such as “the rule of attitude”, “the normative bias”, “the ironical tone of voice”.

1. The first characteristic “the rule of attitude” is that irony is used in an attempt to express a certain attitude. Attitude is one of the most crucial aspects of how irony is normally deployed. Irony and metaphor can be regarded as equivalent tools. Metaphor does not tend to carry a specific attitude, whereas irony is primarily applied in order to express mocking, scorn and contempt.

2. Writers make use of irony so as to express criticism, disapproval and complaint about a certain situation which went wrong than it was initially anticipated. What is more, Wilson states that irony is not applied in a literary text in order to express praise or reassurance.

3. Ironic tone of voice bears a resemblance to the first feature; it does not occur in metaphor.

Grice and Searle claim that the tropes such as metaphor, irony, and hyperbole breach the principle of the maxim of quality [1, 13]. According to the maxim of quality, the information cannot be shared if it doesn't have “adequate evidence” or if it is not true. According to Grice [1], breaching the maxim of quality by these tropes gives a rise to an implicature that is right the opposite of the direct meaning of the statement. Sperber and Wilson [17] have not sought out the right answer to the question why a writer chooses to articulate a message that is false over uttering implicature which is true or which could be uttered directly.

Kreuz & Link distinguish two types of a verbal irony which are canonical and non-canonical irony [5]. Canonical irony allows a writer to positively evaluate a negative situation, whereas by means of non-canonical irony a writer gets to express negative thoughts about a positive situation. Their investigation revealed that “ironic statements are more typically positive evaluations of negative situations (i.e., canonical irony) than negative evaluations of positive situations (i.e., non-canonical irony)”. They have proved that people more often than not people have a tendency to show their reactions and share a comment concerning negative occurrences because they give importance to saving their faces. Kreuz & Link carried out three experiments which aimed at testing how the interaction of four variables such as whether an anticipation is positive or negative, if the outcome of event is positive or negative, whether the evaluation of the outcome is positive or

negative and the degree of mutual characteristics shared by addressee and addresser influence the way English native speakers grasp ironic utterances [5]. The findings of the experiments indicated that canonical irony is more reasonable, faster to consume, more ironic and is more apt in contrast with non-canonical irony. Similarly, Salman (2016) also states that in comparison with non-canonical irony, canonical irony is by far the most effective strategy for irony recognition. The subjects of the research detected more canonical ironic statement than non-canonical ones.

Having conducted research regarding the detection and decoding of a verbal irony by Malaysian ESL Learners, Salman revealed that the learners encountered difficulties in differentiating ironic from non-ironic utterances [12]. Due to the fact that ironic statement have to do with expressing the intended meaning indirectly, the learners do not have a tendency to express their ideas literally and directly. The outcomes indicated that the learners spotted the ironic expressions with ease which were used to express a praise, persuasion and blame as opposed to the ironic utterances which were utilized for evaluative, humor and mocking purposes. Moreover, the research revealed that irony is more often than not perceived to have positive rather than negative implications. However, the Malaysian ESL faced the most difficulties when they had to identify the right function of the ironic utterances since ironic statements possess a wide range of functions. The data analysis outlined that hyperbole and jocularities are ranked to be by far the most effective strategies for irony detection, whereas understatement is regarded as the most difficult one.

Furthermore, cognitive-stylistic and pragmatic characteristics of semantic deviations as key mechanisms of foregrounding have been researched separately. However, cognitive-stylistic and pragmatic characteristics of semantic deviations collectively have been superficially investigated or completely neglected so far. For this reason, it becomes the central focus of the research to be investigated and it is an attempt to fill the gap in it. Regarding Linguistic Pragmatics, the research will focus on investigating the language in use and the correspondence between semantic meaning of language, the context and the interlocutors [17, 18]. Therefore, it becomes apparent that cognitive aspects and pragmatic aspects go hand in hand and in order to conduct effective research both aspects will be and have to be taken into consideration.

Analysis and Discussion.

Ontological Metaphor

“When *the life insurance came through* she thought it would help her mind-set to get away from Kentucky, so they moved to Oakland.”

“*The concrete is still trembling under her shoes* and Grace laughs so hard she can’t stop.”

In the above-mentioned extracts the usage of ontological metaphors can be observed. In the examples above “life insurance” and “the concrete”, which are technically regarded to be tangible items, but in these extracts they are perceived as animate or human objects. This allows the reader to perceive this experience with non-human entities through human-related terms-terms that we normally comprehend based on actions and features that human beings make and possess. Displaying a tangible object as something animate enables the reader to imagine and get a profound insight into what is being described by the writer. According to Leech [6], the characteristics of inanimate objects are comprehended more vividly and become more real for a reader providing that they are depicted by means of characteristics, actions, experiences that are related to a human being.

Container Metaphor

“*She doesn’t want to drive to U.C. Berkeley and fall in love tonight.*”

In the above-mentioned extract the usage of container metaphor can be displayed. According to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson [7], we tend to perceive our surrounding world or field of vision in the form of a container and conceptualize what we perceive as though it is in it. We are containers as human beings, who tend to be bordered by surface and an inner and outer orientation. Not only do we establish boundaries around our own bodies, but also we tend to conceptualize inner and outer orientation of other tangible objects. In the aforementioned extract “love” can be seen as a container inside which the main character, Grace, is scared of finding herself in and end up falling in love. The provided example functions as a condition that can be conceptualized in the form of a container to allow the reader to get a better understanding of the condition being depicted in the short story by the writer [7].

Conceptual Metaphor

“They had preteen baby **faces**, no jawbones, no real noses yet just stamped-out *cookie dough faces* like all kids have till they’ve lived long enough to reveal their family secrets.”

The above-mentioned extract is expressed with the help of a conceptual metaphor. At first glance, “face” and “cookie dough” are completely incompatible words. However, the used metaphor draws on the comparison or resemblance of these two objects in terms of their shapes. This conceptual metaphor allows to interpret the entity of one kind through another one. To be more certain, the entity of “face” is comprehended through the entity of “cookie dough”. Thus, “face” is a target domain, while “cookie dough” is a source domain.

Orientational Metaphor

“I used to know he was back there visiting his mother and went swimming at the Country Club pool. After he’d left, the city council found out he was HIV positive. They revoked his mother’s membership and drained the swimming pool. They don’t have any idea of how big a disaster it is. I guess they figure they had a near miss, but *it’s all under control now.*”

In the aforementioned extract we can observe the usage of orientational metaphor. According to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson [7], orientational metaphors tend to structure “a whole system of concepts with respect to one another”. Metaphor of this kind is primarily concerned with spatial orientation. Spatial orientation rests upon bodily experience and is based on the common knowledge that human beings possess bodies and how they operate in our physical surrounding. This example of metaphor gives a concept “under control” a spatial orientation which draws on physical and cultural experience. In most cultures people see themselves as someone who can gain control over living creatures and physical environment, and it is their unique ability that makes human beings superior to other animal species and gives them the ability to keep them under control. As a result, it becomes clear that CONTROL IS UP thus it provides a basis for MAN IS UP and therefore for RATIONAL IS UP, whereas the situation concerning “draining the swimming pool” is under the supervision of human beings, it provides the basis for Controlled situation is DOWN and therefore it becomes obvious why orientation metaphor functions this way in “all under control now.” Thus, “CONTROL IS UP, MAN IS UP, RATIONAL IS UP” gives a rise to an English expression such as “under control”.

From pragmatic perspectives, the aforementioned metaphors violate the maxim of quality. Once the reader comes to realize that the sentence is false, the writer induces him/her to decode the genuine meaning of the hidden message. The usage of metaphor violates the maxim of quality because it involves “misapplication of a term”. This occurs since selection restrictions are violated

by transforming inanimate objects such as “life insurance” and “concrete” into animate ones. In the third extract the integration of the metaphor violates the maxim of manner as well since the interpretation of the metaphor calls for the reader’s brain work and efforts to unravel the implicit meaning. The usage of this metaphor is unnecessary according to the maxim of manner. If the writer had avoided using the metaphor, this would have made the literary text more clear and it would be easier for the reader to comprehend the content. For instance, the metaphor, “cookie dough faces.” could be less ambiguous and sound simpler if the writer uttered this way “round faces”.

Irony

“She’s a secretary for a company that sells high-pressure liquid chromatography systems to scientists everywhere. She’s not clear on what high-pressure liquid chromatography is, but Kareema, the cheeky receptionist who shares the front office, has even less of an idea, and she’s been there over a year. “*Do I look like a rocket scientist?*” she asks Grace.”

“No, I’ve got two boys. Teenagers in the house are like living in a buffalo herd.

I’m envious,” he says. “My life is too quiet. Nothing ever happens. *Maybe one of my books might fall off the shelf.*”

In the first extract we can see the usage of sarcasm which falls into the category of verbal irony, when the characters of the short story “Fault Lines”, Kareema, emphasizes that she is not willing to be well-informed about “high-pressure liquid chromatography”, which are sold by the company she works for. In this very case the example where irony was introduced we can see a discrepancy or incongruity between what is uttered and what is implied. To put it simply, the writer made use of a statement “*Do I look like a rocket scientist?*” which allows her to place an emphasis on the value of the depicted object significantly by accentuating the meaning that is exactly the opposite. The writer evokes the reader’s intelligence to interpret the hidden message behind the irony. By integrating the irony into the message, the writer stimulates the reader’s brain work to decode the hidden meanings being communicated. Consequently, the interpretation of the irony calls for the reader’s scrutiny, meticulous analysis and intelligence.

In the second example we can observe the usage of one type of verbal irony which is understatement. The exterior meaning of this line is that the character’s “life is too quiet”, but the interior meaning is more dramatic. The character of the short story “Fault Lines”, Loren, finds his life very boring. Understatement is used to express the problem as something less severe than it is in order to exert an ironic as well as humorous effect on the reader. The writer managed to convey an unpleasant message in a less direct manner, but still effectively. This way the writer induces the readers to analyze and decode the hidden message behind the writer’s lines.

From pragmatic perspectives, in these extracts the writer communicates something indirectly or implicitly thus irony breaches the maxim of quality. Consequently, the reader is obliged to seek out an appropriate proposition that will restore the application of the maxim. As far as irony goes, the related proposition is the opposite of what was uttered, which is derived as an implicature of the utterance. From pragmatic perspectives, since understatement was utilized in the above-mentioned extract, the related proposition tends to be a stronger implicature. As far as understatement goes, the writer communicates something that is more than it is literally uttered, which requires the reader to intensify what has been articulated in order to restore the application of the maxim of quality to something that is considered to be true.

Conclusion

Linguistic Deviation is implemented when a writer deliberately decides to violate language norms in order to make use of language means in a creative manner. This enables a writer to strike a reader by dragging his/her attention to a certain chunk of a literary text, placing an emphasis on a certain message, intensifying reader's cognitive work and efforts to unravel the hidden meaning and eventually exerting an aesthetic effect on a reader. This investigation gears towards studying the cognitive stylistic and pragmatic aspects of the stylistic devices which fall into the category of semantic deviations such as metaphor and irony utilized in the short story "Fault Lines" written by Barbara Kingsolver. When it comes to the outcomes, the findings indicate that the usage of metaphors enables the writer to decode the entity of one type through another one. To be more specific, when the reader encounters a conceptual metaphor, he/she is encouraged to find correspondences between a target domain and a source domain that primarily rest on bodily experience. Ontological metaphor was utilized to enable the readers to perceive abstractions in a metaphorical manner as tangible items. By means of the metaphor of this sort the characteristics of inanimate objects are consumed more vividly and this allows the reader to envision a certain experience and comprehend it more profoundly. As for container metaphor, the reader tends to perceive his/her surrounding world or field of vision in a form of a container and conceptualize what he/she perceives as though it is in it. When it comes to irony, integrating irony into the literary text stimulates the reader's brain work to decode the hidden meanings behind the message being communicated. The usage of irony in speech or in a literary text allows the writer to place an emphasis on a value of depicted object significantly by accentuating something that is exact the opposite. Understatement which is one type of a verbal irony is used to convey an unpleasant message in a less direct and severe manner.

From pragmatic perspectives, the aforementioned metaphors violate the maxim of quality. Once the reader comes to realize that the sentence is false, the writer induces him/her to decode the genuine meaning of the hidden message. The metaphors violate the maxim of manner as well since the interpretation of the metaphors calls for the reader's brain work and efforts to unravel the implicit meaning. The usage of these metaphors is unnecessary according to the maxim of manner. If the writer had avoided using the metaphors, this would have made the literary text more clear and it would be easier for the reader to comprehend the content. As for irony, the writer communicates the message indirectly or implicitly thus irony breaches the maxim of quality. Consequently, the reader is obliged to seek out an appropriate proposition that will restore the application of the maxim. As far as understatement goes, the writer communicates something that is more than it is literally uttered, which requires the reader to intensify what has been articulated in order to restore the application of the maxim of quality to something that is considered to be true.

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