THE STYLISTIC CONVERGENCE OF ARTISTIC SYMBOLS

This article examines the role of stylistic convergence in the process of artistic symbols interaction. The main task of the present research is dedicated to the study of artistic symbols in the novels by J. R. Fowles because his books are filled with deep philosophical content. The main methods of the present research included a definition analysis of the word representing the artistic symbol; contextual analysis and methods of interpretation, generalization, as well as the method of quantitative calculation of contextual actualization of the studied units in order to fix their functional activity.

The literature review allowed us to form the following definition: an artistic symbol is a conventional figurative-semiotic object of language and culture, (unconsciously or consciously) included by the author in a figurative text, in which the symbol actualizes one or some interpretations that reduce the denotative meaning of the word and expand the semantic boundaries of the lexeme. As a result, it was revealed that stylistic convergence of artistic symbols accentuated their dominating meanings and influenced their changing. It was also found that stylistic convergence could appear not only in the level of micro context but also in the level of macro context. This study has a scientific novelty, as it has studied the process of formation of new meanings in an artistic symbol with the help of their interaction.

Keywords: an artistic symbol, a figurative text, convergence, stylistic devices, a seme.

DOI: 10.35634/2412-9534-2022-32-5-996-1002

Any figurative text is characterized by a high degree of expressiveness which is achieved with the usage of different stylistic devices. Some texts contain artistic symbols that can transfer the idea of the text. They usually represent some concrete objects that acquire deep abstract content in the process of the narration. According to the origin The artistic symbols can be divided into 3 groups: cultural symbols, cultural-individual symbols and fully individual symbols. The first group of symbols includes conventional symbols existing in many cultures, the second group of symbols are based on the conventional cultural symbols which have additional change in the meaning or interpretation belonging to the author of the text. The third group of symbols is created by different authors, so that new objects acquire symbol status. Sometimes artistic symbols interact within the text, so this phenomenon is related to convergence in stylistics.

The purpose of this work is to consider the convergence of artistic symbols within a single sentence or context, as well as within a single book. The term “convergence” comes from the Latin word “convergere”, which means “to approach, to converge”. In the field of stylistics, this concept is defined as the convergence of language elements or stylistic techniques that perform one common function [20]. The convergence and interaction of artistic symbols complement the interpretation of each of them, enhance their dominant meanings, and can also influence the plot of the work.

The methodology of the analysis of the actual language material includes a set of generally accepted techniques and procedures for the linguistic description of language units:
1) definition analysis that includes using of explanatory dictionaries and thesaurus dictionaries;
2) contextual analysis that determines relevant factors of actualization symbolic meaning and the potential of their compatibility;
3) methods of interpretation, generalization, as well as the method of quantitative calculation of contextual actualization of the studied units in order to fix their functional activity.

The combination of the methods and types of word analysis used contributed to the comprehensive consideration of the artistic symbol not only in a certain context, but also in the entire work of the author.

Interpretation of an artistic symbol is based on the comparison of data from special dictionaries of symbols (for example, Kerlot H., Dictionary of Symbols; Tressider J., Dictionary of Symbols) and comparison of data from explanatory dictionaries, thesauruses and associative dictionaries of modern English: Oxford Dictionary for Advanced Learners; Webster's New Dictionary of English; Cambridge International Dictionary of English; Free Farlex Dictionary; Word Associations.
Due to the complex nature and many properties of a symbol in culture, an artistic symbol can be defined differently. Having the ability to express the semantic load with the help of a combination of the concrete and the abstract content, an artistic symbol is understood as a spiritual-eidetic integrity that represents a certain reality and is realized only in the process of aesthetic perception of a specific text by a specific recipient through their inner world [3].

An artistic symbol contains a specific image and the signified, connected by transferring the features of the object to the object of description. This connection is motivated and acts as the basis of symbolization, as well as a form of interaction between the symbolic meaning of the object and the meaningful component of the signified [14, p.127-129]. The artistic symbol appears in a literary text on the basis of symbols existing in language and culture, being filled with new content and author’s understanding, and it also can be supplemented by the reader’s interpretation. In addition, an artistic symbol can be created by an author in the case of a new concept symbolized in the text, as well as in the case of symbolization of an already existing object for the first time in the context of the writer.

The analysis of the definitions above allows us to form the following definition: an artistic symbol is a conventional figurative-semiotic object of language and culture, (unconsciously or consciously) included by the author in a figurative text, in which the symbol actualizes one or some interpretations that reduce the denotative meaning of the word and expand the semantic boundaries of the lexeme. This interpretation of the artistic symbol emphasizes its belonging to the language, culture and text, and also explains its figurative essence, iconic character and the presence of a dominant interpretation.

It is noted that the artistic symbol is characterized by such properties as polysemy and universality [11, p.240-253].

The polysemy of the symbol appears in a chain of different meanings, in which the movement of the semantic perspective occurs from the concrete to the ideal, from the denotation to the referent under the influence of a certain context [2, p. 53-54]. For example, the sea in many cultures performs both the positive function of purification and the negative function of sacrifice, so the symbol “Sea” is characterized by ambivalence of meanings. At the same time, the ambivalence of the symbol is revealed not only in its ability to harmoniously contain opposite meanings, but also in its ability to create a special contrast of playing on the antithesis [7; 8].

The universality of the symbol is associated with its stability in the culture of different peoples and its representation of the collective idea of society for many years [1, p. 545]. In addition, the symbol actively functions in many cultural systems and it is also the main mechanism for the preservation and transmission of culture [11, p. 240-244]. Along with universal symbols, there are many national and cultural symbols. For example, the white colour in Chinese culture fulfills the meaning of the mourning colour, though this function is realized by the black colour among the European peoples. National-cultural symbols characterize culture, distinguishing it from the others [12, p. 100-102]. The degree of universality of the symbol is influenced by many factors of society: religion, territory, climate, living conditions of the people and their rituals. This property intersects with conventionality, which appeared as a result of the general recognition of a certain set of significant characteristics of the object, which are reinterpreted in the process of symbolization. These properties most fully emphasize and reveal the complex nature of an artistic symbol, making it a special unit of language, culture and a separate text. The universality of the symbol ensures not only its transmission from generation to generation, but also from culture to culture. The polysemy of a symbol allows it to transform the field of its meanings and interpretations with the passage of time and changes in culture, and can also lead to ambivalence of the symbol, manifested in the ability to denote ideas that are opposite to each other.

In the beginning of the work, we will consider the interaction of artistic symbols at the level of micro context (text fragment). Before proceeding to the example illustrating a combination of artistic symbols, they should be considered separately. In the novel “Daniel Martin” by John Fowles the artistic symbol “Thorncombe” represents a place of refuge, peace, loneliness, and also represents the past of the protagonist:

(1) “…which took me back to Thorncombe, my past there and my present, and the impossibility of weaving Jenny into any lasting future. <…> As always, Thorncombe had already made him retreat into the past, his lost domaine, his other world, <…> …the peace and solitude of Thorncombe. Retreat, to lick wounds, to discover what had gone wrong…” [5].
This symbol is individual only, since it has been created in the author’s text. The name of the place itself is symbolic too: “thorn” is a sharp excrescence on a plant; “combe” = “coomb” is a gorge, narrow valley [WD]. The root “combe” is also present in the name of Daniel’s aunt (Mrs Luscombe), who to some extent replaces his mother (“And his aunt smiles maternally at him”) and affectionately calls him “Danny”. This connection emphasizes that the artistic symbol “Thorncombe” is not only a place of refuge for the main character, but also a place of comfort and native origin. This name reflects the plot because the main character finds his refuge through the passage of obstacles, but in this place he is “pricked” by the memories of his happy past. Throughout the whole narrative of the novel, the main character has returned to this place several times, so the whole plot is connected by this symbol:

(2) “Then I would once more fall in love with the place. It came less to matter that I knew that within a fortnight I should feel restless again. Thorncombe felt right; and I was wrong” [5].

In addition, being in another city, the main character returns to Thorncombe in his thoughts, because this place serves as his refuge from reality:

(3) “It is a thing in the mind, a Utopia we secretly retreat to from our daily ordinary world; just as I have always lived far more in the mind at Thorncombe than in reality.> Thorncombe that my real need for the place came from the depths of my unconscious, and only secondarily from the various conscious reasons I found. There were, with Thorncombe, quite conscious reasons of an emotional and nostalgic kind” [5].

In the same novel by Fowles there is another artistic symbol, “River”, which is based on a general cultural symbol. In many cultures, this symbol is traditionally interpreted as life and time passing by. Rivers have the meaning of wealth, fertility, purification and constant movement for some peoples. They also depict boundaries between different worlds and act as geographical boundaries between regions [17]. The river also stands as a symbol of the irreversible flow of time and loss [10, p.435].

The analysis of the definitions of the word “river” in the explanatory dictionaries of the English language allowed us to identify the sema “flow” [16], which can be metaphorically reinterpreted in the meaning of time:

(4) “The river moved and the river stayed, depending on whether one saw it with the eye or the mind; it was the Heraclitean same and not the same. It was the river of existence” [5].

(5) “… stared down at the now dark river she decided on an adjective for the river. It was wise; both in itself and to what it bore” [5].

In these examples, the physical property of a river as a stream is transferred to a mental phenomenon – the flow of life events. At the same time, the flow of the river and its waves symbolize the flow of life, the sharp turns of the river are mysterious choices and changes, and the rapids of the river are possible obstacles. In the novel “Daniel Martin”, this lexeme is presented 90 times and is surrounded by the following descriptions: “noble, silent, great, wise, serene, dark, rich, perpetual, marvellous, placid”, while the epithet “perpetual” allows the word “river” to get an interpretation of the symbol of time and life.

In the following example, the convergence of these artistic symbols leads to their opposition: the symbol “River” represents time and its indifference, constant movement and infinity (in the context, this meaning is expressed by the epithets “endless, indifferent”, the comparison “like time”), and the symbol “Thorncombe” represents happiness and eternity (this is expressed contextually by the descriptions “unchangingness, safe, happiness”):

(6) “Dan went to the window and stared down at the dark silence of the Nile; endless, indifferent, like time itself. He felt obscurely trapped, not master of his own destiny at all, at a nadir from his moments of happiness at Thorncombe. Strangely his mind slipped away from the nocturnal view to his father; to a wondering, not the first of his life, whether he hadn’t… in depths beyond his conscious reach, <…> He thought of the old man’s flight into stasis, unchangingness, immemorial ritual and safe tradition”. [5].

As a result of this convergence of artistic symbols, their main meanings are emphasized, and the emotional impact of the text on the reader is enhanced.

In addition, the interaction of symbols can occur in the level of the macro context, within the entire narrative. An example of such a case is the convergence of two artistic symbols “Wind” and “Stone” in John Fowles’s novel “The French Lieutenant’s Woman”. These artistic symbols are also based on general cultural symbols.
In many cultures the word “stone” symbolizes strength, stability and integrity, as well as death. It is also believed that some stones have magical power and spiritual meaning. Over the time this symbol has received an interpretation of stubbornness and indifference [17]. The definitional analysis of the word “stone” allows us to identify such main semes as “hard, solid, concreted, cold” [18], which determine the character, physical properties and qualities of the stone, and the peripheral semes “used for a purpose of ceremonies” [16] emphasize its functions in the culture of Great Britain. Under the influence of metaphorical transposition the revealed semes “precious, ritual” [19] form the meaning of magical power, and other semes also contribute to the symbolization of the word: “hard”: indicates the meaning of stubbornness; “solid” forms the interpretation of power; “concreted” shows the meaning of integrity; and the seme “cold” metaphorically creates the meaning of indifference. This symbol is introduced into the character diagram of Charles, one of the main characters of the novel, and is expressed through his interest in the study of stones. The symbol “Stone” in the analyzed novel is contextually surrounded by the following words and descriptions: “stone, sea-urchins, marine-shells, fossils, stone deaf, Stonebarrow, keystone, touchstone, stone walls, stone face, to throw stones, a falling stone, ammonite, stranded”. At the same time, this word is an integral part of the names of some of the characters in the work: Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Dizzystone. Also, this symbol is verbalized by various words that are united by common semes (stone, solid): stone (47), flint (18), fossil (20), ammonite (7), keystone (1), millstone (1), touchstone (1), cobble (5), the repetition of which makes “Stone” one of the main symbols of the novel. In addition, in the context of the narrative, the stone was revealed to change from a state of immobility (“stone walls”) to a state of dynamism (“a falling stone, throw stones”). This symbolic gradation conveys changes in the emotional state and behavior of the protagonist of the novel, Charles: he defies the conventions of Victorian society, drops out of school, breaks off his engagement and begins dating Sarah Woodruff, whose independence and strength affect his perception of the world.

At the beginning of the novel, such meanings of the symbol as immobility and hopelessness are expressed:

(7) “…he was no more than an ammonite stranded in a drought <…> Because he had no more free will than an ammonite. <…> He actually stopped, poor living fossil, as the brisker and fitter forms of life jostled busily before him” [6].

This meaning of immutability is updated in the descriptions “stranded, no more free will, stopped, caught, turned to a fossil”. This state of complete immobility, hopelessness, impossibility of change, long-term and strength is reflected in some idioms (“to be carved in stone”, “set in stone”, “etched in stone”, “stone broke”, “stone dead” [18].)

The epigraph to the 48th chapter of the novel (a quote by Tennyson) conveys a situation that serves as an incentive for change, while the state of immobility of the stone changes and leads to resurrection:

(8) “I held it truth, with him who sings / To one clear harp in divers tones, / That men may rise on stepping-stones / Of their dead selves to higher things” [15; 6].

This interpretation is also reflected in the national-cultural connotation of the word in the form of the idiom “stepping stone” and the proverb “Constant dropping wears away a stone” [4].

Thus, the comparison, metaphorical transposition of this word, as well as the national-cultural connotations of the word “stone” contribute to its symbolization and are reflected in the work by John Fowles, where the stone acts as a symbol of hopelessness.

The symbol “Wind” is also widely used in Fowles’s novel “The French Lieutenant’s Woman”, in which it is presented in the very beginning with the help of an epigraph to the first chapter, which serves as an excerpt of T. Hardy’s poem “A Riddle”:

(9) “Stretching eyes west Over the sea, Wind foul or fair, Always stood she Prospect-impressed; Solely out there Did her gaze rest, Never elsewhere Seemed charm to be” [9; 6].

In this example, the epithets “foul, fair” indicate the meaning of impermanence. The wind accentuates the description and appearance of the main character of the novel, Sarah Woodruff, so it can be assumed that she is the personification of the symbol “Wind”:

(10) “Her hair, he noticed, was loose, as if she had been in wind; but there had been no wind. It gave her a kind of wildness, which the fixity of her stare at him aggravated. <…> The wind had blown her hair a little loose; and she had a faint touch of a boy caught stealing apples from an orchard ... a guilt, yet a mutinous guilt. Suddenly she looked at Charles, a swift sideways and upward glance from those almost exoph-
thalmic dark-brown eyes with their clear whites: a look both timid and forbidding. (...) The sharp wind took a wisp of her hair and blew it forward.” [6].

In this example, the epithets “swift, sharp” indicate the value of strength, and the adverb “suddenly” depicts the value of unpredictability. In the context of the novel, the symbol “Wind”, appearing at the beginning of the book, receives a certain emphasis and is further characterized by the following epithets in the narrative: “disgusting, beginning, great, freezing to the timid, harsh, sharp, fundamentalist, invigorating”. These descriptions emphasize the natural strength and freedom of the wind. The word “wind” is used 122 times in the mentioned novel by Fowles, which makes this symbol one of the main objects of the novel. In addition, epithets form a gradation that unfolds throughout the narrative: from “disgusting” to “harsh”. The dominant meaning of the wind in the novel is its strength:

(11) “There came a stronger gust of wind, one that obliged Charles to put his arm round Ernestina’s waist to support her, and obliged the woman to cling more firmly to the bollard. (...) he stepped forward as soon as the wind allowed” [6].

In addition, the wind is perceived as a symbol of change, which can be both positive and negative:

(12) “His discoveries blew like a great wind, freezing to the timid, but invigorating to the bold, through the century’s stale metaphysical corridors. (...) “I fancy that’s one bag of fundamentalist wind that will think twice before blowing on this part of the Dorset littoral again.” [6].

(13) “The young lady was dressed in the height of fashion, for another wind was blowing in 1867: the beginning of a revolt against the crinoline and the large bonnet.” [6].

In the last example, the significance of change and force is expressed by an allusion to the revolution in Great Britain, as a result of which the law on popular representation was adopted, allowing workers to participate in elections [13, p. 41].

So it can be noted that the symbol “Wind” in the analyzed work by John Fowles implements the values of force, change and unpredictability, which are implemented by epithets, allusion and comparison.

Thus, it was revealed that the symbol “Wind” characterizes the main character of the novel, Sarah Woodruff (“as if she had been in wind; (...) It gave her a kind of wilderness”), and the second (“Stone”) characterizes the main character, Charles Smithson (“poor living fossil”). According to the plot of the work, these characters interact with each other (Charles falls in love with Sarah), which is also manifested in the interaction of artistic symbols, as a result of which a change is made, the movement of the symbol “Stone” (“stepping stones, falling stones”). This case of convergence of symbols emphasizes the importance of the power of the symbol “Wind” and in the novel under consideration neutralizes the sense of hopelessness and immobility of the symbol “Stone”. As a result of the interaction of the main characters of the novel and artistic symbols, some changes occur at the plot level: Charles stops collecting stones, breaks off the engagement and begins dating Sarah.

In this research the cases of artistic symbols convergence at the level of micro- and macro-context were presented. At the same time, a comprehensive analysis of the artistic symbol in the text was also carried out, which included not only the consideration of stylistic techniques, but also the interpretation of the this symbol meaning in culture, the functioning of the word-symbol in the language, as well as the analysis of the semes leading to the symbolization of the word. As a result of the convergence, the interaction of artistic symbols was noted, which led to the accentuation of the dominant meanings of the symbol, the juxtaposition of the meanings of symbols, as well as to a change in the spectrum of symbol meanings within the work. This phenomenon helps to increase the emotional expressiveness of the text and helps to reveal the idea of the book and the author’s message.

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Стилистическая конвергенция художественных символов

DOI: 10.35634/2412-9534-2022-32-5-996-1002

В данной статье рассматривается роль стилистической конвергенции в процессе взаимодействия художественных символов. Основная задача данного исследования посвящена изучению художественных символов в романах Дж. Р. Фаулза, поскольку его книги наполнены глубоким философским содержанием. Основные методы данного исследования включали дефиниционный анализ слова, обозначающего художественный символ; контекстуальный анализ и методы интерпретации, обобщения, а также метод количественного подсчета контекстуальной актуализации исследуемых единиц с целью фиксации их функциональной активности. Обзор литературы позволил нам сформировать следующее определение: художественный символ – это условный образно-семиотический объект языка и культуры, (неосознанно или осознанно) включенный автором в художественный текст, в котором символ актуализирует одну или несколько интерпретаций, частично редуцирующих денотативное значение слова и расширяющих семантические границы лексемы. В результате было выявлено, что стилистическое взаимодействие художественных символов акцентирует их доминирующие значения и влияет на их изменение. Также было устано- новлено, что стилистическая конвергенция может проявляться не только на уровне микроконтекста, но и на уровне макроконтекста. Данное исследование обладает научной новизной, так как в нем изучен процесс формирования новых смыслов в художественном символе с помощью их взаимодействия.

Ключевые слова: художественный символ, художественный текст, конвергенция, стилистические приемы, сема.
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Поступила в редакцию 23.02.2022

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