

## THE ROLE KEYWORDS IN THE INTERPRETATION OF THE LITERARY TEXT

**Rano Pulatova**

Teacher, UzSWLU Department of Linguistics and English literature

### ABSTRACT

This research examines the role of keywords in the interpretation of the literary text from the perspective of cognitive linguistics. For the analysis excerpts from different belles-lettres texts were taken. The investigation of the studied material illustrates that identification and the analysis of keywords simplifies the process of understanding.

**Keywords:** keywords, strong positions, repetition, interpretation, literary text.

### INTRODUCTION

The interpretation of the literary text is a complicated process which requires certain mental activities from the reader. Moreover, this process is based on finding and revealing the “prompts” that the author intentionally leaves so that readers could understand his/her conceptual message. One of the so called “prompts” is keywords. The term keywords is a relative expression since word combinations, phrases and even sentences can function as keywords in the literary text.

### METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Various researchers define the keywords in terms of its explication in the literary text. Keyword is understood as a conceptual-aesthetic notion that performs the main semantic function and eases the process of perception and interpretation of the literary text (Ryzhova). Yu.N. Karaulov claims that keywords are the units of pragmatic level, and together with other such linguistic units (presupposition, deixis, precedent text, evaluation, etc.) reflect the intentions and aims of the the author, his/her position in the world and dynamics of his/her world picture.

In the framework of cognitive linguistics, every literary text is an expression of author’s individual way of perception and world organization, personal variant of one’s conceptualization. In this case, KW are the elements of semantic structure of the text.

According to M.N.Kojina (1999), keywords are words that express the main conceptual message of the whole literary text. In this respect, E.V. Baturina (2005) presents the following definition of KW: “KW – are lexico-semantic elements of the literary text (LT), that are repeated throughout the text serving to its semantic integrity and coherence, denoting specific meaning and conceptual importance, being the fixators of the most pivotal information for the recipient necessary for constructing an interpretation of the meaning and adequate understanding of the author’s intention.

V. Petrovsky (1984) adds that keywords are the substantial elements of the composition of the literary text since they create the inner unity of its lexical system. It is particularly to be noted that the scientist marks the symbolic nature of keywords in the poetic text.

V. A. Lukin (1999) notes that there can’t be less than two keywords in the literary text, since the structure of the text is built on a number of interrelations among its keywords, so the singularity of keyword implies the absence of structure in the text. Consequently, keywords create and strengthen the structure of the poetic text, concentrate the attention of the reader on the main message and conduce to the interpretation of the author’s intention. Moreover, keywords form semantic complexes: around them are grouped synonymic and antonymic linguistic units, paronymous words.

M.M.Bakhtin asserts that keywords are always in dialogue with each other or supplement each other. They may be found in any place of the text. However, predominantly keywords come in the strong positions of the text (title, epigraph, beginning/end of the text, beginning/ end of the chapter).

Differentiating keywords from other linguistic units is an arduous task. For diversifying the keywords I. A. Nikolina enumerates their distinctive features:

- frequency of repetitions;
- condensability of the word, i.e. word’s capacity to generalize the main content, express the conceptual message;
- correlation of factual and conceptual levels of the text. Also, eliciting non-trivial aesthetic connotation out of this correlation.

In addition, the most important characteristics of keywords are their obligatory polysemy, semantic complication, realization of their paradigmatic, syntagmatic, word building relations in the text.

Furthermore, the next problem of the interpretation is identifying which definition of the keyword carries the conceptual information. For defining it, the keyword is analyzed in the context.

However, keywords of the literary text may be thematic word groups. In the dictionary of linguistic terms they are defined as:

word complexes of different parts of speech that are united on the basis of extralinguistic properties;

words of different parts of speech that are necessary for revealing a particular theme, e.g. group of words related to seasons.

In this research the qualitative methods of analysis, more specifically, conceptual analysis is implemented. In order to gain a better insight into the interpretation of keywords used in fiction, a short story by Katherine Mansfield is analyzed. The study of the material in question is described

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Let's analyze thematic keywords and identify their conceptual importance in the story by Katherine Mansfield "The wrong house". The story is about a woman and her reflections of her housemaid Dolliccas, and unknown terror of the funeral procession that confuses her house with the house of the dead. While knitting a vest for a "*mission parcel*" Mrs. Bean fretfully reflects about her housemaid who has gone for shopping at quarter to two and has not come by three o'clock. She is discontented with her becoming **slow day by day**. She suddenly hears the noises outside and looking out sees the funeral procession that stops in front of her house. She is so much terrified by this fact that "*her old heart leaped like a little fish*" as they come up to her door. She tells them that they have come up to the "*wrong house*" and they go away. Dolliccas returns and Mrs. Bean does not want her to see in such a frightened state which is why she begins her knitting again. Being unaware of Mrs. Beans state of being, Dolliccas thinks that she was asleep and begins cooking the chicken for supper.

The story is full with the thematic and symbolic words related to funeral and death as *black objects, grey paper sky, clock, black horses, black glove, black hats, dusk*, etc. The description parts of the story also create the atmosphere of death:

*"It seemed dusk already; dusk came floating into the room, heavy, powdery dusk settling on the furniture, filming over the mirror"*.

*“...the blow fell, and for the moment it struck her down. She gasped, a great cold shiver went through her, and stayed in her hands and knees”.*

*“Her hand lifted to point but shook and fell”.*

*“Clockety-clock-clock. Cluk! Cluk! Cluk! Clockety-clock-cluk! sounded from outside, and then a faint Cluk! Cluk! and then silence”.*

The main theme of the story “death” is revealed by thematic word group related to “funeral”. Although, the funeral procession has confused her house, the reader almost physically feels that the old lady’s time of “joining the majority” is also coming. This feeling is strengthened by the use of thematic word groups, thus creating a true to life atmosphere.

## CONCLUSION

The investigation of the theoretical assumptions under discussion and the analysis of the fictional text reveal that: keywords are presented in strong positions of the literary text; they refer to the same thematic word groups; they are explicated by repetition.

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