

DEPICTING THE CHARACTER'S TRAITS IN THE ARTISTIC DIALOGUE

Gabriela ȘAGANEAN

conferențiar universitar, doctor în filologie,

Universitatea de Stat din Moldova

ORCID: 0000-0001-7772-2405

Articolul se axează pe analiza particularităților dialogului ca tehnică narativă în ficțiune și rolul acestuia în crearea imaginii personajului literar (trăsături de caracter, pasiuni, obiceiuri, stare emoțională) prin mijloace lingvistice explicite și implicite. Imaginea personajului în dialog în proza modernă poate fi dezvăluită printr-o gamă destul de largă de mijloace lingvistice: epitet, metaforă, comparație, hiperbolă, joc de cuvinte, ironie și sarcasm, proverbe, zicători. Unele mijloace lexico-frazeologice și stilistice care descriu personajele necesită cunoștințe extralingvistice pentru a fi interpretate (aluzie, nume de locuri, referiri la date ale unor evenimente istorice, nume de oameni celebri, nume de cărți, teatre etc.) din partea cititorilor.

Cuvinte-cheie: opera literară, dialog, imaginea personajului, figuri de stil, proverbe, mijloace lingvistice explicite și implicite.

The article deals with the peculiarities of the dialogue as a narrative technique in fiction and its role in creating the characters' image (their traits, passions, habits and emotional state) through explicit and implicit linguistic means. The character's image in the dialogue in modern prose can be revealed through a fairly wide range of linguistic means: epithets, metaphors, similes, hyperboles, play of words, irony and sarcasm, allusions, such as proverbs, sayings. Some lexical-phraseological and stylistic means that describe characters require the additional background knowledge in order to be interpreted (allusion, place names, references to dates of historical events, names of famous people, names of books, theaters, etc.) on behalf of readers.

Keywords: literary work, dialogue, character's image, stylistic devices, proverbs, explicit and implicit linguistic means.

A dialogue contributes to underlining the personal characteristics of its participants. Communicators' psychological, bio-physiological and intellectual characteristics, mood, interest to the subject, their socio-cultural status and interpersonal relations, external circumstances affect interlocutors' behaviour in the course of communication. All these aspects have a direct impact on the selection and use of linguistic means in the process of the dialogic communication, and that is why they are linguistically relevant.

Nature and essence of communication as a basic form of human being is reflected in the dialogue [1, p.168]. Dialogic interaction describes characters indirectly, requiring readers to further efforts to model their inner world and personality traits. With indirect characterization a reader must himself draw conclusions about the peculiarities of character through his speech, dialogue with other characters [2, p.74].

Characterization involves interpretation of a number of components and traits of the character such as appearance, age, sex, educational level, profession, wealth, social status, marital status, hobbies, religious beliefs, ambitions, motivation and other [3, p. 47]. Characterization of the interlocutor in the dialogue is closely connected with the evaluation. Estimated value does not indicate any objective evidence of the character, while characterizing value can contain both objective and subjective description. In other words, characterization might be self-descriptive or evaluative [4, p. 42].

The character's image in the dialogue in modern prose can be filled with diverse artistic means: lexical-phraseological, syntactic and stylistic ones. A special role in creating the image of a character in an artistic dialogue is given to linguistic means that require extralinguistic knowledge from the reader.

The information about the characters' personality may be revealed in their own speech or in their interlocutors' speech explicitly or implicitly. Here, in the first place, writers use epithets: *I know she looks like a sex-object **but she's really very strict**. You insist on things all the time, **you're a very insistent person**. Nanny was **very firm**. The chain of epithets is the most informative: *O 'Rourke is not a sex-god. He is a **kindly, sensible, responsible, earnest, sturdily booted, borderline-bossy doctor***. The value of epithets can be intensified by other means of expression such as hyperbole and symbolization. *What makes you think I'm aggrieved? - Ha! You're **the definition of aggrieved**. David, **you make your living from being aggrieved***. In this example, the adjective *aggrieved* is central in describing characters. He is offended by the entire world for his failed life, a failed marriage, and, above all, he is offended by his wife. The significance of the adjective is enhanced by a hyperbole: *you are the definition of aggrieved, you make your living from being aggrieved*. In addition, it should be noted such an important stylistic device as repetition within the same sentence or paragraph that usually indicates the character's emotional state in this situation.*

In the following example, the adjective *angriest*, used in the superlative degree, reflects the character's attitude to life and the people around him. The value of the adjective is also enhanced by a hyperbole - *the angriest man in Holloway: We wake up with **the angriest man in Holloway** every day of our lives*.

In other cases, characters' speech contains explicit information about their actions, passions, habits: *What she loves too much is gin; And she loves the traditions —all the history; The problem with you, Olivia, is that you have an overac-*

tive imagination; *You do not strike me as the kind of woman who seeks, out the predictable; Which is what makes Ms Joules so interesting. She's a natural spy; But you always probe —you're always fishing for information.*

In such cases, such phrases are used: *to be good at* (Nanny is very **good at** organizing things; *to be obsessed with* (He's **obsessed with** that place. - Better that he's **obsessed with** something glamorous like his ancestral home; *to be full of* (And you, because you are so damn full a wisdom; *to be keen on* (So your father is ... ?' - An earl. ... I'm awfully sorry. I didn't want to tell you. I gathered from your diary that you **weren't** too **keen on** the aristocracy; *to be crazy about* (He is **crazy about** his planes; *used to* (You **used to** e-mail me filthy jokes about Clinton and Lewinsky all the time; *to be pretty comfortable around* (Well, Jennifer seems **to be pretty comfortable around** men.

In many cases, the implicit information about the character's traits contained in their speech can be transmitted through a fairly wide range of linguistic means: play of words, irony and sarcasm, kinds of precedent and allusive texts such as proverbs, sayings, fragments of known texts, allusive names, metaphors, similes, direct expression of character's life principles and views.

Alliteration is frequently used by authors when introducing character names, their typical nature in order to be easily remembered. *Got up this morning, didn't bloody well **Boris Believe** it —family of eight outside my hut wanting to move their tent nearer the river; Where's my **Kit-Kat**? My bloody **Katerina Kit-Kat**. I left it in **Fenella Fridge** and somebody's **Sophia scoffed** it.*

Irony and sarcasm are often used by writers in the dialogue in order to create an idea about the character's traits. *Great to see you! Hi! You must be the new doctor, great to see you, great! **Great to have some more old buggers around the place to dilute the totty**; Thought we might have a last little drinkie together **while you're still in one piece, all goddess-like limbs still attached**, so to speak; You can manage without me, can't you? - Course we can, old sock. Don't you worry about that. **We 'll make sure they all die in an organized manner.***

It is the use of irony and sarcasm that shows that the characters like to joke and they are witty and laugh even in difficult situations. The following example contains the method of decomposition of a set expression *to be thick with someone or something*, which creates an ironic effect. Irony also shows that the heroine is witty, optimistic and able to joke: *only came here because I was told the **wedding would be thick with millionaires**. But I suppose **they were right about the thick bit.***

Allusive texts and names also convey information about the character's traits. The character may use proverbs, sayings. Proverbs are understood here as “aphoristically short sayings with didactic meaning” [5, p. 339]. In the O. Goldsmith's book, “*Pen Pals*”, one of the heroines consistently uses proverbs in her speech: *You know what they say about modesty, don't you? They say modesty*

is the art of letting other people find out for themselves just how wonderful you are. That's what they say about modesty; Never look a gift horse in the mouth ... especially this one.

It is clear that a person who frequently uses sayings in the speech intends to consider himself wise, knowledgeable and experienced and loves to teach others. The heroine has such qualities. In the following example the proverb helps to show that the man's inner world is more important than the external gloss for the heroine: *It's what's inside you that counts, Oliver.*

However, the analysis showed that proverbs used by characters are rare in modern literature. In some cases, fragments from other works are used in the artistic dialogue: *One day people will know what all this was for. All this suffering. There'll be no more mysteries. But until then we have to carry on living. We must work. That's all we can do. I'm leaving by myself tomorrow. I'll teach in a school and devote my whole life to people who need it. It's autumn now. It will soon be winter and there 'll be snow everywhere. But I'll be working.* When the heroine gets a job in a television shop, she is asked to recite something, and she chooses the given passage without naming the artwork. The author assumes that the reader has known these lines. They are taken from Irina's final monologue in A.P. Chekhov's "*Three Sisters*". With this precedent text the author apparently tries to draw an analogy between the heroine and Irina, and between all the other young people - the characters of his work and A.P. Chekhov's. The heroine and her friends are concerned only with themselves and their interests: drugs, sex, shopping. The following example contains the line uttered by the heroine and taken from William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and shows that she is not indifferent to the woes of others and is willing to help them: *We do not have a right to live in luxury and make token gestures when half the world is poor. - A hair shirt does not suit you, darling. - **Waste and excess. Waste and excess. It eats away at the soul.***

The character describes his favorite moments from the animated film *The Lion King* in the following replicas: *And there's this moment. This really terrific moment. ... The Lion King was crushed... by a wild herd of these big cows. ... And the son has grown up. - And this sort of monkey thing comes to him. And this monkey says: 'It's time to speak to your dead dad.' So he goes to the stream ... Excuse me. It takes you right here. Your throat tightens ... and now the dad speaks. And he says: 'The time has come. It is time for you to take your place in the Cycle of being (words to that effect). You are my son and the one true King.' And he knows what it is he's got to do. He knows who it is he has to kill. And that's the moment, that's our favourite bit. Our second favourite bit was the end. Because by then he's got a kid of his own. Right at the end he stands alone. He's on the rock and he looks up at the night. He looks up at the stars and he says: 'Father. Everything is alright. Father. I remembered. The Cycle of Being.*

The above-mentioned paragraph shows that the character is sentimental, and he likes the idealized image of his father, an ideal relationship between father and son represented in the cartoon. This text serves as a contrast to everything else that he does and says. In fact, the character is very practical, a difficult man, but in contrast to this, he dreams about ideal, friendly relations of parents and children.

In some cases, the use of metaphors and similes in the artistic dialogue helps readers to create a vivid picture of the character's traits: *I'm very weak, you know. I've **the willpower of a mat***. In the following example, the use of visual metaphors and similes will help reader understand that in the past the character was full of negative emotions, anger, hatred, which is compared with a black haze: *He just sort of **sucked it all out of me. Every bad thing. I could almost see it coming out of me, like a black mist. I didn't realize I was so full of all this stuff**. You're sticking up for Clinton. - I'm not sticking up for him. I'm just sick of all the poison. The **drip drip drip of slagging off** and cheap cracks and judgments of people we don't know and the endless nastiness of it all*. The metaphor *the drip drip drip of slagging off* is enhanced by repetition of onomatopoeic word (onomatopoeia) *drip, drip, drip*. Verbal noun *slagging off* with the label *very informal* means *criticizing someone or something*. In the past, the character liked to criticize and condemn others.

It is interesting when a character talks philosophizing about life, the meaning of life, love, friendship, etc. The character's arguments, his views reflect their human nature.

His teacher says 'It's a gift from God.' Kid like that, nice hid-picks up a bit of wood and string and grown men cry. But behind beauty, behind God, behind paradise there's Money. There's boarding fees and the uniforms, the gear, the music, skiing./ Tell me, son, says my dad, what are the first few words in the Bible? Son, the first few words in the Bible are ... get the money first. Get. The. Money. First. It's not perfect. I don't deny it. We haven't reached perfection. But it's the closest we've come to meaning, civilization is money. Money is civilization. The getting is cruel, is hard, but the having is civilization. In all these examples, the character considers that money is the first priority in life. He believes that money is important, it is a civilization. According to him, everything in the world - beauty, purity, heaven – must be paid, so the main purpose and meaning of life is to make money.

The characters' speech also reveals their traits implicitly, for example irony can transmit information about the nature of another character: *He is married to his airplanes*, in the following example the heroine has a bad character: *She likes to say she hasn't found herself. - Has she tried looking in the reptile house?*

Famous names are commonly used to express the emotive evaluation, as well as to give expressiveness to the text. *It's what's inside you that counts, Oli-*

ver. - *Oh. Is it really? Thank you. Thank you, **Mother Teresa**, you have shown me the light.* The character with ridicule names the interlocutor *Mother Teresa*. It can be concluded that the heroine possesses qualities peculiar to *Mother Teresa*: kindness, unselfishness, high moral standards, even though the character exaggerates them.

In the following fragment the character is referred to *Casanova*. This name usually characterizes very loving men: *Marriage is a huge step for anyone — much less a kid like you and a screwed up middle-aged **Casanova**.*

Metaphors help to underline the most important traits of the character: *He fancies the frigid Paddy. - Who? **The Ice Queen**? Didn't know you were into masochism.* The heroine is called *Ice Queen*, thus emphasizing that she is cold, unapproachable woman.

In the following example, the metaphor *a money factory* shows that the heroine in question likes money and spends it unnecessarily: *My wife doesn't understand me at all. I'm just **a money factory** as far as she's concerned.*

In the example below, the heroine is compared with the *storm of nine points force*; this indicates that she has a very strong character: *She's a strong character. — Strong! She's a **force nine gale**.* The reader should have some background knowledge to understand such metaphors. In the next example a character is compared with the *Teflon coating*. It is a pleasure to be with this character – he does not click with somebody: *Just in case you were thinking about Troy. **Human Teflon. Wonderful to have around but he's non-stick.*** Teflon is used as a non-stick coating for pans and other cookware.

Simile also helps the reader understand the character's traits: *Don't give the woman a hard time. She's doing everything she can. You 've seen the way it worked today — like **clockwork**; She's an agent and she's willing to go. **Sharp as a tack** that one.* The simile *like clockwork* reveals the heroine's character: her ambitiousness, discipline, organizational skills. The simile *sharp as a tack* emphasizes the character's perception and observation.

Thus, the information about the character's traits is presented either explicitly or implicitly in the artistic dialogue using a variety of techniques and linguistic means that play an important role in character image creation. The authors “encode” meaning in their text and the reader has to understand the “coded meaning.” Both the explicit and the implicit context should be taken into account at perceiving the character's image in the artistic dialogue; special attention is given to the latter, as hidden meaning, which gives an indication of a person's identity, has important value for the linguistic interpretation of characters' speech.

Readers need literary competence and knowledge in order to perceive adequately the literary work which are reflected in the categories of the “background knowledge” (proper names, toponyms, dates, historical events, names of famous people, names of musical groups, movies, books, theaters) and “intertext-

tuality.” Each of these categories has a special significance in forming adequate characters’ images in the reader’s mind based on information received from an artistic dialogue.

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