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A TERM AS A STYLISTIC DEVICE IN SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY TEXTS

Summary. The purpose of the article is to examine the stylistic role of terminological units in English-language science fiction and fantasy texts. Particular attention is paid to how scientific and technical terms are integrated into the literary text to enrich the narrative and create an artistic world. Based on the analysis of more than 4,000 pages of works by such authors as A. Asimov, F. Dick, W. Gibson, A. Clarke, F. Herbert, D. Simmons and others, the article examines terms that originate from various scientific fields and are transformed into means of expression in an artistic context. The study demonstrates that authors use such terms metaphorically or figuratively. They are able to acquire emotional and stylistic colouring, contributing to the unique linguistic imagery of science fiction and fantasy.

The article identifies the dominant stylistic techniques using terminological units. They include metaphors (43%), similes (24%), epithets (19%), and personifications (14%). These techniques allow authors to bring abstract scientific concepts to life, embody complex ideas in clear images for the reader, and evoke their emotional responses. In V. Gibson's «Neuromancer,» the terms of cybernetics and computer science become central to building the atmosphere of the digital future. Similarly, in the works of A. Asimov and F. Dick, terms such as «positronic brain» and «vacuum» are personified or metaphorically enhanced to convey existential and futuristic themes.

Furthermore, the study highlights how terminology contributes to stylistic richness and creates authentic and logically coherent fictional worlds. By using neologisms, quasi-terms, and lexical innovations, authors imitate scientific discourse, lending plausibility to their narratives while simultaneously engaging the imagination of readers. These stylistic terminology uses also reflect broader cultural, technological, and philosophical concerns, allowing science fiction to serve as a vehicle for intellectual inquiry and aesthetic experimentation. The findings show that terminology transcends its traditional role as a precision tool in science fiction and fantasy and becomes a dynamic element of artistic language. This transformation contributes to emotional expression as well as the symbolic creation of alternative worlds, underscoring the linguistic creativity and cultural significance of these genres.

Key words: terminology, stylistic devices, science fiction, fantasy, world-building

Problem statement. Science fiction and fantasy have always been fields of language experimentation. Since authors of this genre create new worlds, they need to utilize unique vocabulary in order to describe imaginary realities. One of the key features of modern English-language science fiction is the use of special terms as a part of stylistic devices, which adds depth and complexity to the narratives.

The aim of the study is to define and describe the stylistic functions of the terminology used in English-language science fiction and fantasy texts.

The research material was novels by English-speaking science fiction and fantasy writers of the second half of the 20th century: Asimov, I., King, S., Dick, Ph., Clarke, A., Gibson, W., Herbert, F., Simmons, D. in a total of 4,040 pages.

Review of recent research and publications on this issue. Ukrainian and international scholars analyze the utilization of terms within literary texts. They examine the stylistic functions of these terms and their contributions to constructing an imaginary world. In her 2011 work, Horodylovska G. [1] investigates the stylistic peculiarities of chemical terminology in literary contexts, focusing specifically on R. Ivanychuk's historical narratives. In this research, the author conducts a lexical and semantic analysis of chemical terms, emphasizing their significance within historical prose. Furthermore, the study identifies trends in applying these terms and their roles across various rhetorical frameworks.

Another study by Voroniuk I. (2018) considers the distinctive features of terminology within artistic texts. The author scrutinizes the function of terminological vocabulary in Y. Malanyuk's poetry [2]. The paper draws attention to the unique characteristics of term usage in literary works. The study also describes the processes of determinization. The researcher uncovers the potential semantic, stylistic, emotional, and expressive characteristics of terms in a literary context. Since the terms are typically regarded as foundational elements of scientific language, they usually lack metaphorical or emotional colouring. However, their application in the artistic text allows for definite semantic transformations. Thus, terms can become autonomous components of the artistic lexicon and expressive instruments. This helps to enrich literary language with terminology and reveals the inherent potential of these terms within the artistic text.

Pogrebnyak O. [3] conducts a comprehensive analysis of the language of science fiction, highlighting its unique speech patterns and stylistic features. Konkulyovskyi V. considers the problem of rendering proper names in science fiction. His research is based on the «Star Wars» movie series [4]. In the paper, «Aliens and Linguists: Language Study and Science Fiction,» Meyers W. E. examines how language interacts with the science fiction genre [5]. Kennedy K. describes the language of science fiction [6]. They research the process of the incorporation of fictional languages and neologisms and how this enriches this genre. Additionally, Noletto I. presents the paper «Fictional Languages in Science Fiction Literature: Stylistic Explorations». This article presents a comprehensive analysis of the stylistic elements of fictional languages within science fiction [7].

As we can see, scholars explore the utilization of specialized terminology within literary texts, uncovering their stylistic, semantic, and expressive potential. Studies reveal how terms that traditionally belong to the scientific realm transform in artistic discourse to enrich literary language. They can be stylistically coloured and are able to enhance the author`s creative expression. Additionally, research on science fiction highlights the interaction of language, cultural context, and stylistic innovation.

Results and discussion. The terminology used in science fiction often originates from scientific contexts. However, when employed in the artistic text, this terminology receives stylistic colouring and becomes a creative and visual tool. So, the artistic environment can alter the semantic structure of original terminological units. This paper considers the figurative use of the terms in science fiction.

Stylistic figures can generate a strong associative field and shape the unique language imagery in fantasy worlds. Writers naturally depict characters, both animate and inanimate, as well as abstract concepts and a wide range of emotional and physical states, as if experienced by real people and fictional heroes. They use specific vocabulary for this purpose.

The study revealed that terms in science fiction texts are employed within various stylistic devices, including metaphors, personification, epithets, and similes.

The pie chart in Fig. 1 illustrates the average frequency of these stylistic devices in science fiction. The calculation was conducted in detail in our previous study [8].
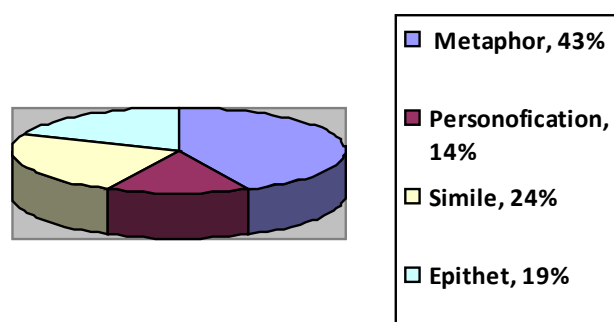

Metaphor, 43%

Personofication, 14%

Simile, 24%

Epithet, 19%

Fig. 1. Terms as a part of stylistic devices in science fiction

Notably, terminology within metaphors requires particular attention. It occurs more frequently than other stylistic tropes. According to the pie chart [Fig.1], metaphors incorporating terminology account for 43% of all identified tropes.

As is known, a metaphor is a stylistic device built using words and expressions in a figurative sense. The research shows that authors use scientific and technological terms to create and attribute new meanings to imaginary objects and phenomena. For example, in W. Gibson's novel «Neuromancer», terms from cybernetics and computer science become parts of metaphors to describe the future. This allows readers to experience the atmosphere of cyberspace and understand complex ideas through familiar images.

The metaphor, which includes a term, is a compressed text unit containing specific information. For example, the author describes Europa, Saturn's satellite, with the metaphor of the *kingdom of sulphur* [9, p. 60]. It helps to depict the environment of Europa, where sulphur prevails.

Metaphors result from the intervention of the author`s imagination into a concept, i.e., the individual author's vision of an object or phenomenon. There is another example from W. Gibson`s «Neuromancer»: «*The street was a river of neon and noise.*» [9, p. 75]. Here, the term «neon» is used to create a metaphor that describes the street that resembles a river of bright light and sound.

In the texts analyzed, we observe the use of terms as part of personification, another stylistic figure. It is a trope that attributes human traits and qualities to inanimate objects, animals, or abstract concepts. Personification adds expressiveness to the text and helps readers better imagine and feel what is being described. According to Fig. 1, stylistic devices represented by personification account for 14% of other stylistic figures in science fiction texts.

In the following example, the term «cyberspace» is personified, gaining the ability to whisper secrets: «*The cyberspace whispered secrets to those who knew how to listen.*» [9, p. 98].

Another example involves the term «matrix», which is endowed with a will that does not obey any master, so it possesses human-like abilities: «*The matrix had a will of its own, bending to no master.*» [10, p. 67].

In «Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?» by Philip K. Dick, the term «**void**» is also personified. The author describes forgotten dreams as if the void could reflect their silent screams: «The **void** echoed with silent screams of forgotten dreams.» [11, p. 56]

In the story «The Man in the High Castle» [12], the term «**history**» is another example of personification. «*History*» can change the course of events: «*History twisted and turned, plotting its own course.*»

In his story «I, Robot,» [13] I. Asimov describes android robots that resemble humans. These robots possessed intelligence and consciousness: «*The positronic brain pondered the mysteries of existence.*» Here, the term «**positronic brain**» is personified as if it can reflect on the secrets of being.

We believe that terms used in personification enhance imagery. It becomes accessible for various forms of imaginative perception, including visual, auditory, and tactile. The term «p**sychohistory**» [14] is endowed with the ability to watch over the galaxy, like an eye that never blinks: «*Psychohistory watched over the galaxy with an unblinking eye*».

As we can see from these examples, the authors use human qualities in abstract or technological terms. All this demonstrates that personification adds depth and vividness to science fiction works.

The next stylistic figure, which uses terminology, is a simile. Fig.1 shows that similes constitute 24% of the total stylistic figures in science fiction texts.

A simile is a stylistic device utilized in science fiction texts to explain unfamiliar concepts using familiar ones. When authors utilize scientific terms in similes, they make their text more understandable and closer to the reader. For example, in the novel «Hyperion» by D. Simmons [15], complex scientific ideas are explained through comparisons with real and understandable phenomena. This method facilitates the perception of the text and allows readers to immerse themselves deeper into the story`s world.

In «Neuromancer» [9], W. Gibson said, «*The city was like a giant circuit board, pulsing with neon and data.*» Here, the simile is used to describe a city. The basis for this comparison is a city view full of illumination (*like a giant circuit board pulsing with neon and data*).

A simile is a stylistic device that conveys the characteristics of a person, object, phenomenon, or action by comparing it to another person, object, or phenomenon with similar traits. As a rule, this figure is marked by the use of comparative conjunctions, such as «like,» «as,» «identical to,» «compared with,» or «similar to.». It can also involve a comparative phrase with a lexical unit, such as «... more ... than ...». For example:

«*The robot's movements were **as precise as a clockwork mechanism**.*» [13]. Here, the simile emphasizes the robot's precision in movements, which resembles the workings of a clockwork mechanism. We can observe a logical comparison, which is more characteristic of the scientific style. When such a comparison is made, new information is added to the described subject. In his description, the author mixes the familiar, earthly traits with the unusual and extra-terrestrial ones. In such a way, the author imitates scientific texts and creates the illusion of authenticity in the story.

In the following example, the author compares the Earth's atmosphere to Europa's, a satellite of Jupiter, whose main component is sulphur. The author notes that a sulphur-rich atmosphere does not provide energy to living things as effectively as the Earth's oxygen-rich atmosphere.

«*The sulphur-based biochemistry that powered the Europs was **not as efficient as the oxygen-driven** one that energized the vast majority of terrestrial animals*» [16, p. 66].

It is important to note that comparisons made by the author using specific terms are grounded in a deep understanding of the characteristics associated with the objects or phenomena that those terms represent. In the earlier example, the author describes Europa's biosphere through a logical comparison.

In addition to logical comparisons, science fiction writers also use terms as a part of figurative comparisons:

«*Reality was like a shifting **mirage**, constantly changing and never stable*» [17].

In this example, we can observe a figurative comparison (***like a shifting mirage***). Such a comparison outlines one of the most striking features, which is sometimes unexpected, and makes it the basic one. In the example above, the simile emphasizes the instability of reality, which is constantly developing. Such examples demonstrate how authors use similes to create vivid and understandable images in their works.

The epithet is the next stylistic device considered in this study. According to our calculations, epithets in science fiction texts account for 19% of other stylistic devices (see Fig. 1). An epithet is a stylistic figure that combines the expressiveness of semantics with its specific syntactic position. Epithets are usually expressed through attributes or adverbial modifiers of a metaphorical, metonymic, or expressive-emotional nature. They can convey the author's subjective attitude about the object or phenomenon. They serve as artistic and figurative descriptions highlighting one distinguishing feature, thereby defining the quality of a phenomenon, object, concept, or action. Here are examples of the use of an epithet with robotic creatures: «***Scary Androids***»: The epithet adds a sinister tone to the androids [11]. «***Mighty Robot***»: The robot is described as strong and reliable [13].

The terms «***Scary***» in the first sentence and «***Mighty***» in the second are examples of emotive epithets. They also contain elements of personification, as these adjectives are typically used to describe living beings. Additionally, it is important to note that these epithets are familiar to readers because they have become lexicalized.

Here are some examples of epithets used with terms in the works of W. Gibson, Philip K. Dick, I. Asimov, and other science fiction authors:

The epithet «***Pulsating** Neon*» in W. Gibson's «Neuromancer» [9] enhances the futuristic atmosphere. This epithet describes neon as something alive, adding a futuristic vision to the city. The emotive epithet **Dark** describes «cyberspace» [9]. It depicts Cyberspace as a sinister and mysterious world. The planet in F. Herbert`s «Dune» is described as a **Dark** Planet, so the reader understands that it is desolate and harsh [18].

Thus, these epithets help create rich and detailed imagery that lends depth and atmosphere to works of science fiction. We also believe that by describing the images of the fictional world in this way, the author tries to convey their own sensory perception of the world.

Additionally, terminology can create a certain mood or atmosphere in a text. So, scientific terms can emphasize a sense of the future, of the unknown, or danger. In S. King's novel «The Dark Tower», terms from the fields of physics and cosmology are used to create a sense of anxiety and mystery, making the world of the work even more exciting and meaningful [19].

Stylistic devices enable science fiction authors to create complex, multi-layered texts that not only entertain but also encourage reflection on today`s pressing issues. Modern science fiction and fantasy expand creative expression and offer intellectual enjoyment through their use of terminology and stylistic figures. The following examples demonstrate how S. King uses terms to create mood in his works:

«*The gunslinger's eyes were like **twin black holes**, sucking in all light and hope.*» [19, p. 61].

The author describes eyes using the term «***twin black holes***» that drain all light, hope, and excitement from life. This helps to create a mood of dark menace and hopelessness.

«*The Overlook Hotel was a **monolith** of ice and stone, its windows like the eyes of a dead god.*» [20, p. 87].

The term «***monolith***» creates an impression of cold, isolation, and even horror.

Building new worlds is one of the most important functions of terminology in science fiction texts. Using terms, authors create unique realities that, on the one hand, are different from our world but, on the other hand, are logically sound and convincing. For example, in Philip K. Dick's novel «Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?» [11], terms from the field of genetics and bioengineering help create a vision of a future where androids and humans live side by side. This adds depth and complexity to the plot.

We believe that terminology used as part of stylistic figures stimulates the reader's imagination to perceive imaginary things, subconsciously comparing them with existing analogues.

Conclusions and prospects of the study. Terms in science fiction and fantasy often acquire emotional and expressive colouring. They become significant elements within various stylistic devices such as metaphors, personifications, similes, and epithets.

From an analytical standpoint, the focus encompasses the examination of lexical units that have transitioned from neologisms to established language forms, the investigation of issues related to the processes and methods by which quasi-terms are incorporated into mainstream literary language, the distinctive language

and stylistic characteristics of individual science fiction authors, as well as the impact of ethnocultural factors on the linguistic construction of science fiction narratives.

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Вільховченко Н. Термін як стилістичний засіб у текстах наукової фантастики та фентезі

Анотація. Метою цієї статті є дослідження стилістичної ролі термінологічних одиниць в англомовних текстах наукової фантастики та фентезі. Особливу увагу зосереджено на тому, як наукові та технічні терміни інтегровано в літературний текст для збагачення оповіді та створення художнього світу. Ґрунтуючись на аналізі більше 4000 сторінок творів таких авторів, як А. Азімов, Ф. Дік, В. Гібсон, А. Кларк, Ф. Герберт, Д. Сіммонс та інших, у статті досліджують терміни, які походять із різних наукових галузей та перетворюються на засоби вираження в художньому контексті. Дослідження демонструє, що автори вживають такі терміни у метафоричному чи символічному значенні. Вони здатні набувати емоційного та стилістичного забарвлення, сприяючи унікальній мовній образності наукової фантастики і фентезі.

У статті визначено домінуючі стилістичні прийоми з використанням термінологічних одиниць: метафори (43 %), порівняння (24 %), епітети (19 %) та персоніфікації (14 %). Ці прийоми дозволяють авторам оживити абстрактні наукові концепції, втілити складні ідеї в доступні для читача образи та викликати емоційні відгуки. У «Нейроманті» В. Гібсона терміни кібернетики та інформатики стають центральними для побудови атмосфери цифрового майбутнього. Подібним чином у роботах А. Азімова та Ф. Діка такі терміни, як «позитронний мозок» і «вакуум», персоніфіковані або метафорично посилені для передачі екзистенціальних і футуристичних тем.

Крім того, дослідження підкреслює, як термінологія сприяє не тільки стилістичному багатству, але й створенню автентичних і логічно послідовних вигаданих світів. Використовуючи неологізми, квазітерміни та лексичні інновації, автори імітують науковий дискурс, надаючи правдоподібності своїм наративам і водночас залучаючи уяву читачів. Ці стилістичні використання термінології також відображають ширші культурні, технологічні та філософські проблеми, дозволяючи науковій фантастиці служити засобом інтелектуального дослідження та естетичних експериментів.

Висновки показують, що в науковій фантастиці і фентезі термінологія виходить за межі своєї традиційної ролі інструменту точності та стає динамічним елементом художньої мови. Ця трансформація сприяє емоційному вираженню, а також символічному створенню альтернативних світів, підкреслюючи лінгвістичну креативність і культурне значення цих жанрів.

Ключові слова: термінологія, стилістичні засоби, наукова фантастика, фентезі, створення художнього світу.