

**STYLISTIC AND EXPRESSIVE PECULIARITIES
OF THE CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH DYSTOPIAN DISCOURSE
(BASED ON THE NOVELS “THE HUNGER GAMES”
BY SUZANNE COLLINS)**

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The article deals with special aspects of stylistic and expressive peculiarities of the contemporary dystopian discourse. The given research studies the term “dystopian discourse”, its constituent structure and functional meaning in linguoculture. Stylistic and expressive peculiarities and also verbal means of their realization in English linguoculture scope are analyzed.

Keywords: *dystopia, contemporary dystopian fiction, stylistic peculiarities, dystopian discourse.*

Fiction discourse is the reflection of the reality, development process and culture of a society in some historic epoch. It contains information about the futuristic society characterized by extreme oppression and despondence. It is best represented in dystopian fiction, as it is the synthesis of the society with a focus on things which are contrary to the author's ethos, such as mass poverty, public mistrust and suspicion, a police state or oppression. Dystopian fiction provides fresh perspectives on problematic social and political practices that might otherwise be taken for granted or considered natural and inevitable. It all is seen in its discourse, the language of its characters that live in the futuristic society.

The relevance of our research is that any discourse is sensitive to the regular changes in the world. It creates the immanent necessity to investigate the tendencies of language and speech changes that can be easily detected in the contemporary dystopian discourse.

The object of the research is dystopian discourse as the reflection of language dystopian worldview. **The subject** is stylistic and expressive peculiarities of the contemporary English dystopian discourse which represented by series of novels “The Hunger Games” by Suzanne Collins.

The aim of the investigation is to determine genre and stylistic peculiarities of the contemporary English dystopian discourse.

The main tasks are:

1. To analyze the concept of dystopia and its role in English discourse.
2. To analyze stylistic and expressive peculiarities of dystopian fictions on the material of “The Hunger Games” by Suzanne Collins.

The Oxford English Dictionary provides such definition of dystopia: “an imaginary place or condition in which everything is as bad as possible” [1]. Nanelle and David Barash in their article entitled, “Biology, Culture, and Persistent Literary Dystopias”, clarify this definition and tell us that literary dystopias contain imagined societies in which the deepest demands of human nature are either subverted, perverted or simply made unattainable. Additionally, all dystopian discourse shares a dominant theme – the horror of a society that runs roughshod over our instincts, forcing people to be, literally, inhuman.

While their definition focuses on the aspect of human nature in dystopia, M. Keith Booker, in his theory and research guide “Dystopian Literature” points to utopianism and political and social critique as key elements of the form.

He observes that briefly, dystopian discourse is specifically that discourse which situates itself in direct opposition to utopian thought, warning against the potential negative consequences of arrant utopianism. At the same time, dystopian discourse generally also constitutes a critique of existing social conditions or political systems, either through the critical examination of the utopian premises upon which those conditions and systems are based or through the imaginative extension of those conditions and systems into different contexts that more clearly reveal their flaws and contradictions [2].

Thus, the main peculiarity of dystopian discourse is a result of environmental degradation or totalitarian government. In some sense, all dystopian fiction aims at reminding us of the past to ensure that we don't make the same mistakes again. It shows the main difference between imaginative and fictional discourse.

Dystopian fiction is often considered a sub-genre of science fiction. Science fiction and dystopian fiction have much in common, they are distinct in a significant way. There is clearly a great deal of overlap between dystopian fiction and science fiction, and many texts belong to both categories. But in general dystopian fiction differs from science fiction in the specificity of its attention to social and political critique. This seemingly small and insignificant distinction is really what makes dystopian literature so unique and fascinating. Dystopias are set in futuristic, imaginary worlds, but are also firmly planted in the here and now, which makes them so accessible to contemporary audiences.

"The Hunger Games" is told in the first-person from the perspective of Katniss Everdeen, a 16-year-old girl living in District 12 of Panem. She is protagonist during trilogy and our narrator. The antagonist is somewhat harder to identify, as we are not quite sure whom to blame for the harsh realities of Katniss's life. The Capitol and the Gamemakers set the stage and pull the strings, but the other tributes are the ones who try to end our protagonist's life. This discussion about who is the true enemy recurs throughout the series. The major conflict in "The Hunger Games" is Katniss's struggle to survive the Games and return home to her family without losing her sense of self.

The topic of survival, in various forms and modes of expression, is a central idea in "The Hunger Games". It is a motivator that causes characters to act in certain ways and do particular things. It is a justification for characters when they commit unethical acts. It is the reason why Katniss plays along when Peeta declares his love for her, and later on, why she escalates their relationship by kissing him in the arena. She realizes that the more "in love" with Peeta she acts, the more help Haymitch will send them in the Games. Finally, survival is the weapon the Capitol and the Gamemakers leverage against the tributes. They rely on the idea that, when tested, the human will to survive will be stronger than the human sense of right and wrong.

"*May the odds be ever in your favor*" [8], - is the slogan of the Hunger Games and is typically directed towards potential or actual tributes. Throughout the novel various characters recite it both seriously and sarcastically. The phrase is an example of verbal irony, as the odds are actually in no one's favor. It doesn't matter if someone lives in the rich districts of 1 and 2 or the poverty-stricken ones of 11 and 12. They all must offer up child tributes to be killed. Tributes only have a 1-in-24 chance of survival, and even when someone manages to win, they return to a life trapped under the Capitol's yoke.

Trained from birth to compete in and win the Hunger Games, the Careers are an important source of irony in the novel. Year after year, they are the favorites to win the games for several reasons. They train in martial arts and with weapons; they never go hungry and thus are not malnourished like the tributes from other districts; they have more free time to increase their strength and agility; and the list goes on. Thus, it is incredibly ironic that in the 75th Hunger Games, the qualities that would typically give the Careers an advantage over the other tributes are the very qualities that lead to their loss. For example, because they have never had to hunt or forage for themselves like Katniss and Rue have, the Careers are ill equipped to nourish themselves in the arena.

The lives of the people in the different districts are a clear example of parallelism in the novel. At first glance it may seem that life in District 12, one of poverty and back-breaking

drudgery, is diametrically opposed to that of District 1, where inhabitants have enough resources and free time to specially train for the Hunger Games. However, whether they are pampered or impoverished, all non-Capitol inhabitants of Panem follow parallel life trajectories. At age 12, whether their family makes precious jewels for the Capitol or mines coal to power Panem, their name gets entered in the reaping lottery and stays there until age 18. The parallel lives of Panem's citizens illustrate that no one is beyond the reach of the Capitol. The entire Hunger Games tournament is an allusion to the Greek myth of Theseus and the Minotaur.

"The Hunger Games" has a lot of imageries. For example, the Seam: within District 12 Katniss and her family live in a neighborhood called "the Seam". Composed of the poorest of the District's families, the Seam is a collection of dilapidated buildings and "black cinder streets". The poverty and desolation contained within the Seam are conveyed through rich descriptions of the place and its inhabitants. For example, the men and women of the Seam are described as having "*hunched shoulders, swollen knuckles with nails and faces full of coal dust*" [9]. In this way the reader is given a clearer picture of Katniss's place in her society.

The reaping is one of the most pivotal moments in The Hunger Games. The moment Katniss volunteers as tribute in the place of her sister she sets off a change of events that will rock her world and change Panem as a whole. As such, Collins takes particular care as she crafts the scene, especially with regards to the emotions, feelings, and actions of the characters. For example, the instance when Effie Trinket calls Prim's name, we don't simply read about Katniss's horror. We feel it, as "*every wisp of air*" is knocked from Katniss's lungs and she struggles to inhale and exhale. Another example is the image we are given of Prim right after her name is called: her "*blood drained from her face, hands clenched in fists at her sides*" [8]. In such way we can see strongly marked Prim's fear.

Tracker Jacker hallucinations is also an imagery. Tracker jackers are killer wasps that were genetically modified in the Capitol's labs. They are bigger than regular wasps, and their stings cause lumps the size of plums, along with vivid hallucinations. Katniss cuts down a tracker jacker nest above the pack of sleeping Careers and Peeta, causing the death of Glimmer. In the process Katniss receives several stings from the tracker jackers and experiences haunting visions. For example, butterflies "*balloon to the size of houses then shatter into a million stars*", "*trees transform to blood and splash down over [Katniss's] boots*" and "*ants begin to crawl out of the blisters in [Katniss's] hands*" [10]. With these horror-filled, frantic, and frenetic illusions, Collins conveys the seriousness of tracker jacker stings and depicts how they can be lethal.

The climax is the moment Katniss and Peeta are about to eat the nightlock at the end of the Games shows the dedication of the main characters:

"I spread out my fingers, and the dark berries glisten in the sun. I give Peeta's hand one last squeeze as a signal, as a good-bye, and we begin counting. "One." Maybe I'm wrong. "Two." Maybe they don't care if we both die. "Three!" It's too late to change my mind. I lift my hand to my mouth, taking one last look at the world. The berries have just passed my lips when the trumpets begin to blare. The frantic voice of Claudius Templesmith shouts above them. "Stop! Stop! Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to present the victors of the Seventy-fourth Hunger Games, Katniss Everdeen and Peeta Mellark! I give you - the tributes of District Twelve!"" [8].

In conclusion, on the one hand, we definitely have a repressive regime in control. On the other hand, we have a lot of glamor and fanfare leading up to the games, not to mention the gladiatorial spectacle that must be thrilling for many in the districts. Just as the name of the fictional setting of "The Hunger Games", "Panem", suggests, the people are given both bread and circuses (panem et circenses). Perhaps for roots of the dystopian world of "The Hunger Games", we need to cast our gaze farther back to ancient Rome.

As mentioned above, the dystopian discourse is an extremely complex and original genre with a special characteristics of it: the goal is a warning about the possible danger of building a totalitarian society, ridiculing utopian motives and human vices, the

predominance of negative traits in the depicted society. With the help of expressive peculiarities, author shows total destruction of the person by the state both on the physical level and on the moral level. As it turns out in the course of the narrative, the most terrible word for the inhabitants of a fictitious state is “to disperse” means not to destroy, but much worse - to erase from the person all thoughts of freedom, love, friendship, to blindly follow the course set by the government and the party.

These peculiarities of contemporary English dystopian discourse show the main language and literature tendencies of today, reveal the tendencies of social and technological development, human worldview, make dystopian fictions urgent, let it naturally fit today's world and change along with it. At the same time, we still can see a great relation of the dystopian fiction with the past, old times, elements of what are mixed with our reality.

Practical value of the research is in detalization of dystopian discourse in English linguoculture that makes it easier for recipients of other linguocultures to perceive verbalization of this concept. We consider a detailed investigation of concept dystopian discourse and its verbalization in modern English discourse to be perspectives for our further researches.

**СТИЛІСТИЧНІ ТА ЕКСПРЕСИВНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ СУЧАСНОГО
АНГЛІЙСЬКОГО АНТИУТОПІЧНОГО ДИСКУРСУ
(НА МАТЕРІАЛІ РОМАНІВ “ГОЛОДНІ ІГРИ” СЮЗАННИ КОЛЛІНЗ)**

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У статті розглянуто стилістичні та експресивні особливості сучасного антиутопічного дискурсу. У даному дослідженні вивчається термін “антиутопічний дискурс”, його складова структура та функціональне значення в лінгвокультурі. Проаналізовано стилістичні та експресивні особливості, а також вербальні засоби їх реалізації в англomовному лінгвокультурному просторі.

Ключові слова: антиутопія, сучасна антиутопічна фантастика, стилістичні особливості, антиутопічний дискурс.

**СТИЛИСТИЧЕСКИЕ И ЭКСПРЕССИВНЫЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ СОВРЕМЕННОГО
АНГЛИЙСКОГО АНТИУТОПИЧЕСКОГО ДИСКУРСА
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В статье рассмотрены стилистические и экспрессивные особенности современного антиутопического дискурса. В данном исследовании изучается термин “антиутопический дискурс”, его составляющая структура и функциональное значение в лингвокультуре. Проанализированы стилистические и экспрессивные особенности, а также вербальные средства их реализации в англoязычном лингвокультурном пространстве.

Ключевые слова: антиутопия, современная антиутопическая фантастика, стилистические особенности, антиутопический дискурс.

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