

**TACESIC CONSTITUENT AS A PART OF THE MULTICOMPONENT  
NONVERBAL MODULE: THE PRINCIPLES OF COMBINATION**

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*The article deals with the study of the character's touch behavior in the contemporary English language fictional discourse from the modular perspective. The tacesic module is defined as a structural part of the English fictional discourse which contains one or more nominative units designating touch. The analysis of the principles governing the combination of the tacesic module with other nonverbal modules results in the conclusion that at least three factors influence the modes they are combined within the frame of the multicomponent nonverbal module. They are the factors of directivity, harmony and equilibrium. In the English fictional discourse the character's nonverbal signals can be directed at either one or more than one communicative partners. In the first case the directivity factor results in the appearance of the single-vectored multicomponent nonverbal module while the second case gives rise to the differently vectored one. The harmony factor can also be realized in at least two ways, i.e. the consonance and dissonance of the nominative units designating different nonverbal components, including touch. The equilibrium factor predetermines the inverse relationships between the nonverbal constituents of the multicomponent nonverbal module.*

**Keywords:** *touch, touch behavior, tacesic module, directivity factor, harmony factor, equilibrium factor.*

In contemporary linguistics the notion of module defines the simplest systems or parts which form the structure of mind, knowledge, language etc. By modality, in its turn, is meant such an understanding of a person's behavior including communication that interprets its complex nature as a result of interaction between some simple subsystems – modules, which possess a number of essential features. Modules are relatively independent (the information exchange between modules is weaker than inside them, the inner ties being quite integrated), specialized (each module functions due to its own principles), localized, universal and genetically predetermined. [1, p. 164]. The module conception is used by researchers of the dialogical discourse to formalize the communicative act as an interaction of two modules, i.e. verbal and nonverbal [2, p. 125], to present the discourse as a structural combination of lingual modules (phonetic, prosodic, lexical and syntactic) and extralingual ones (pragmatic and referential) [3]. The notion of module is construed as a communicative unit of the fictional dialogical discourse [4], structural unit of the somaticon of the character's emotional response [5, p. 7] etc. The application of the modular approach to the study of the speaker's tactile behavior in the contemporary English fictional discourse enables us to single out a tacesic module as a structural unit of its dimension. Thus, the tacesic module is defined as such a part of the modern English fictional discourse that contains one or more nominative units designating the character's touch. The study of not only the internal features of the module but also the external ones is considered to be relevant. Under the external features of the modules we understand the peculiarities of interaction between different nonverbal modules. Therefore, **the purpose** of the article is to define the external principles which regulate the combination of tacesic modules with other nonverbal modules within the frame of the multicomponent nonverbal module. **The modular methodology** is applied to the study of the character's touch behavior, tacesic modules being analyzed from the nominative perspective.

The **scientific novelty** of the research lies in the attempt to formalize the character's touch behavior in the nominative space of the contemporary English discourse in terms of

tacesic modules and analyze the principles of their combination with other nonverbal modules within the multicomponent nonverbal module. The **object** of the present paper is the tacesic modules of the contemporary English fictional discourse, its **subject** being the factors governing their combination with other nonverbal modules. The **material** used for the research is taken from the novels by the contemporary English speaking authors written **in the end of the twentieth – the beginning of the twenty-first centuries**.

The analysis of the illustrative material has shown that within the frame of the multicomponent nonverbal module the tacesic module mostly combines with the proxemic module «distance» (*Eric touches my cheek gently, then turns and strides off* [6, p. 139]), the oculestic module «eye behavior» (*Going to her father, she cupped a hand round his face and gazed into his liquid blue eyes* [7, p. 96-97]; *Joy placed her arms around her friend again, and gazed at the dark sky* [8, p. 146]), kinesic modules «gesture» (*Abruptly, David reached out and grabbed my arm* [9, p. 52]), «smile» (*Poppy grinned and gave him a nudge* [10, p. 140]) and «facial expression» («Great!» *His face is animated as he kisses her on each cheek* [11 p. 100]), paralinguistic module «voice» («Lexi, this is bound to be a shock,» *Maureen says kindly, putting a hand on my shoulder* [6, p. 38]), olfactory module «smell» (*I closed my eyes and wrapped my arms around his neck, letting my cheek rest against his, breathing in the citrus smell of his aftershave* [12 p. 349]), and occasionally with other nonverbal components, symptoms, artifacts etc.

The combination of the nominative units designating touch with those designating other nonverbal components generates new significant interpretations in the English fictional nominative space. The analysis of the factors governing this combination resulted in distinguishing of at least three principles regulating it. They are the factors of *directivity*, *harmony* and *equilibrium*. The principle of directivity is realized within either *single-vector* or *differently vector* multicomponent nonverbal modules. In the first case all the character's nonverbal actions are directed at one communicative partner, e.g. *As he reached her and slipped his free hand into her hair, his smoky grey eyes told her more profoundly than words how glad he was to be home* [7, p. 49]. The differently vectored multicomponent nonverbal modules, in their turn, contain the verbal representations of the character's nonverbal actions directed at different communicative partners. It is noticed that within the multicomponent nonverbal module differently vectored tacesic and oculestic nominations are often combined, i.e. the character's touch is addressed to one partner, while his eyes are directed at the other partner. It can be assumed that the use of such differently vectored nominations of the character's nonverbal behavior not only facilitates "the keeping" in the reader's sight contextually important fictional characters, but also enriches the discourse nominative space, to a certain degree providing its multi-faceted and more holistic reading from the point of view of the currently central priorities and personal relationships between the characters. For instance, *He [Augustus] offered me his arm. I took it, glancing back to Mom. «See you by eleven,» she said* [17, p. 160]. In the suggested discursive extract the tactile and visual contacts are made with different communicative partners. On the one hand, the character's eyes being directed at her mother are likely to imply the girl's desire to get both the approval from her mother and the standardized social instructions typical in the pair «mother-daughter». On the other hand, from the previous pages of the novel the reader knows about the complicated nature of the relationships between the characters, doomed with the girl's terminal illness and thus her wish not to make her mother's life even more difficult and to allow her enjoy her daughter having an abundant life experience. Apparently, the inclusion of the mother by means of the eye behavior into the important moment of every teenager's life – the date, is motivated by the daughter's values and the desire to make her mother happy at the same time demonstrating her importance.

In the similar vein the following example can be considered: «*She's the girl of my dreams*», said Will. *He gave her a squeeze and winked at Caspar. «I like a cosy armful, don't you?»* [10, p. 149]. The given extract demonstrates the two-component nonverbal module containing nominative units designating the character's touch (he gave her a

squeeze – a tacesic module «touch») and eye behavior (winked at Caspar – an oculesic module «eye behavior»). It should be pointed out that the character's nonverbal behavior has different addressees – his squeeze is addressed to one communicative partner, while his wink is intended for another. This not only helps to introduce contextually important characters to the reader, but also indicates either deliberate or unintentional eye contact avoidance with the addressee of the touch. Herein it should be mentioned that, firstly, one of the maxims of competent and polite touch behavior emphasizes the importance of having an adequate eye contact with the addressee of the touch [20, p. 12], and, secondly, the connection arising during the eye contact is inconsistent with the lie [21, p. 80]. Besides, the pragmatic interpretation of the character's touch and eye behavior in the given context generate additional meaning from the point of view of the relationships between the characters, in this case revealing the degree of the character's sincerity and the seriousness of his intentions. According to G. Kreidlin the nominative units *to wink at sb*, *to give sb a wink* carry the meaning of inviting the addressee to join in a common secret cause, for instance, it can be a joke at the third person's expense [22, p. 376-377]. Thus, in the fragment given above, the speaker's verbal message acquires the playful tone –squeezing the girl and simultaneously winking at the man, the character invites him to share the joke, in such a way either deliberately stating the lack of seriousness in his intentions, or unintentionally revealing his own insincerity.

The *harmony* factor, governing the combination of tacesic nominations with those designating other nonverbal components, can be realized in at least two ways within the frame of the contemporary English fictional discourse. They are *the consonance* and *the dissonance* of the nominative units designating different nonverbal components, including touch, combined within the multicomponent nonverbal module. In the first case, it is the concord and harmony of the present nominative units, and conversely, in the second case it is the discord, or lack of harmony in the meanings conveyed by the nominative units representing different nonverbal components, including tacesic ones. As part of the study, it was found that the consonance of the nominative units under consideration is of regular occurrence. The following example illustrates the combination of oculesic and tacesic nominative units that together express the character's positive attitude towards her communicative partner: *Her lovely dark green eyes sparkled and she patted Gibbo's hand. I was glad she liked him* [9, p. 23]. The verbal component of the oculesic nominative unit *to sparkle* belongs to the range of so called «light» nominations of the character's facial expression, emphasizing the intensity and fleeting nature of lighting of the given mimic kineme and possibly indicating the implied emotion of positive valence. Moreover, considering the fact that the sparkling of eyes can hardly be simulated, it is very likely to prove the character's emotional sincerity. [23, p. 123]. In its turn, the tacesic nominative unit *to pat* is associated with the fundamental positive emotion of joy, friendly and approving attitude to the addressee and his behavior. Therefore, the harmoniously combined tacesic and oculesic modules mutually reinforce each other and jointly create the effect of the nominative consonance, indicating the positive tune of relationships between the interacting characters. In fact, the unambiguous and informative nature of the present nonverbal means of communication is confirmed by the immediate narrator's comment.

On the other hand, the harmony factor can be realized in the dissonance of nominative units within the frame of the multicomponent nonverbal module. It appears as a result of the combination of nonverbal modules, expressing opposite meanings. Whereas the nominative consonance in the present study is referred to as a harmonious union of the nominations combined in the multicomponent nonverbal module, the nominative dissonance, alternatively, manifests the asymmetry between the combined nonverbal modules, i.e. the lack of agreement between the meanings conveyed by them. The phenomenon under analysis is illustrated in the following example: *«Is something troubling you? » His smile seemed forced as he shook his head. «Not a solitary thing.» Then he wrapped his hand around the back of her neck and touched her forehead to his own* [24, c. 140].

The equilibrium model representing the inverse relationships between nonverbal signals supported by M. Argyle [21, p. 87-90] was used as a basis to single out the *equilibrium* factor of combination of nonverbal nominative constituents within the multicomponent nonverbal module. From the perspective of the modular approach to the speaker's nonverbal behavior applied in this study, the equilibrium model is deemed to predetermine the inverse relations between the parts constituting the multicomponent nonverbal module. This can be exemplified by the following extract: «*Never mind, I'll be off now. » She walks by me, grabs my arm, and squeezes hard but still refuses to look at me. «Take care of yourself, love»* [25, p. 82]. In the given example the multicomponent nonverbal module comprises three constituents – the proxemic module «distance» (she walks by me), the tacesic module «touch» (grabs my arm, and squeezes hard), and the oculusic module «eye behavior» (refuses to look at me). The given context suggests a very delicate and complicated situation caused by an irrevocable loss the character has experienced in her life. The character's communicative partner expresses her condolences and offers her help, however, not being too intrusive. The balanced effect is achieved through the use of the appropriate verbal and nonverbal communicative means, inversely related to each other. The character's intensive tactile actions, which obviously signal the expression of empathy, i.e. the high level of understanding of the partner's psychological state and sympathizing with her, are combined with the intentional avoidance of the direct eye contact. Thus, the relationships between the character's eye behavior (the avoidance of eye contact) and her intensive even excessive tactile actions are of inverse nature, therefore balancing the character's nonverbal signals and helping to avoid undesired effect of intrusiveness into the personal space within the given communicative situation. In other words, the constituents of the multicomponent nonverbal module are combined due to the equilibrium factor in this case.

**Conclusions.** The modular approach applied to the study of the character's touch behavior in the English fictional discourse enabled us to single out the structural unit of its analysis – the tacesic module. It is viewed as such a part of the discourse which contains one or more nominative units designating the character's touch. It is found that within the frame of the multicomponent nonverbal module at least three factors regulate the combination of tacesic modules with other nonverbal modules of different referential contents. These are the directivity factor, the harmony factor, and the equilibrium factor, all of them being of external nature. The further study of internal factors governing the combination of nonverbal modules should be taken into consideration since they are assumed to regulate the specific interaction between the significant parameters of the character's nonverbal signals verbalized in the modern English fictional discourse.

#### ТАКЕСИЧНА СКЛАДОВА БАГАТОКОМПОНЕНТНОГО НЕВЕРБАЛЬНОГО МОДУЛЯ: ПРИНЦИПИ КОМБІНАТОРИКИ

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*Стаття присвячена дослідженню тактильної поведінки персонажа в номінативному просторі сучасного англomовного художнього дискурсу з позиції модулярного підходу. Такесичний модуль як структурна одиниця виміру тактильної поведінки персонажа визначається як така частина англomовного художнього дискурсу, що містить одну або декілька номінацій на позначення дотику персонажа. У статті аналізуються принципи комбінування такесичного модуля із іншими невербальними модулями в англomовному художньому дискурсі та виокремлюється ряд чинників їхнього поєднання в межах багатокomпонентного невербального модуля. До них відносимо фактор адресованості, фактор гармонійності та фактор рівноваги. У сучасному англomовному художньому дискурсі невербальні прояви персонажа можуть бути спрямовані на одного або декількох комунікативних партнерів. Таким чином, за фактором адресованості розрізняємо одновекторні та багатовекторні невербальні модулі. Фактор гармонійності реалізується у щонайменше двох протилежних конфігураціях – консонансі та дисонансі поєднаних невербальних модулів. Фактор рівноваги передбачає обернений характер відношень між невербальними модулями – складниками багатокomпонентного невербального модуля.*

*Ключові слова: дотик, тактильна поведінка персонажа, такесичний модуль, фактор адресованості, фактор гармонійності, фактор рівноваги.*

## ТАКЕСИЧЕСКАЯ СОСТАВЛЯЮЩАЯ МНОГОКОМПОНЕНТНОГО НЕВЕРБАЛЬНОГО МОДУЛЯ: ПРИНЦИПЫ КОМБИНАТОРИКИ

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*Статья посвящена изучению тактильного поведения персонажа в номинативном пространстве современного англоязычного художественного дискурса с позиции модулярного подхода. Такесический модуль как структурная единица измерения тактильного поведения персонажа определяется как часть англоязычного художественного дискурса, содержащая одну или несколько номинаций прикосновения персонажа. В статье анализируются принципы комбинирования такесического модуля с другими невербальными модулями и выделяется ряд факторов их сочетания в рамках многокомпонентного невербального модуля. К ним относим фактор адресованности, фактор гармоничности и фактор равновесия. В современном англоязычном художественном дискурсе невербальные проявления персонажа могут быть адресованы одному или нескольким коммуникативным партнерам. Таким образом, по фактору адресованности выделяются одновекторные и многовекторные невербальные модули. Фактор гармоничности реализуется в двух противоположных конфигурациях - консонансе и диссонансе комбинируемых невербальных модулей. Фактор равновесия предполагает инверсивный характер отношений между невербальными модулями - составляющими многокомпонентного невербального модуля.*

*Ключевые слова: прикосновение, тактильное поведение персонажа, такесический модуль, фактор адресованности, фактор гармоничности, фактор равновесия.*

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