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BLACK HUMOUR IN A FAIRY TALE: VERBALIZATION OF THE CONCEPT *DEATH*

Abstract

The paper deals with the study of the influence of black humour elements on R. Dahl's story "Pig", qualified by us as a fairy tale genre. The purpose of the research is to describe the verbalization of the author's individual concept DEATH as a key component for revealing the black-humorous tonality of the story. The model of fairy tale discourse has been specified, which presupposes the use of the initial formula, verbal elements, and patterned compositional structure. The peculiarities of R. Dahl's creative method (reflected in the fairy tale), whose poetics is characterized by a vivid black-humorous component, have been considered. An interpretation of the lexeme 'death' in modern lexicographic sources of the English and Ukrainian languages has been provided. A conceptual model based on the arrangement of frames and slots has been introduced. The functioning of the concept DEATH in the author's individual worldview has been analysed.

In the short story "Pig" the writer draws the reader's attention to the black-humorous macabre element, i. e. death, which is described tragicomically in the author's and character's speech with the help of linguistic means to indicate the hero's enthusiastic and exciting mood and the entertaining tone of the story. Metaphors, contrast, irony, hyperbolization, and allusion occupy the leading place among them. The lexeme 'death' belongs to the author's favourite word that appears as a literary concept. The expansion of the content potential of the specified word occurs due to numerous repetitions and its use in different contexts.

The linguistic representation of the concept is given in the form of building a lexical and semantic field consisting of four frames ('cessation of existence, the life of the organism, the end', 'reflection of a person's value', 'eating habits of meat-eaters', 'a process that equalizes people and animals') and corresponding slots. Contextual analysis and a figurative approach give reasons to claim that the literary text organizes a system of meanings of the lexeme 'death' in a different way. Its figurative meanings as of a symbol of transition to another world and eternal spiritual life, as well as of the personification of evil, generated by people, occupy the first (main) position in the hierarchy of dictionary definitions, thereby expanding its metaphorical meaning.

Keywords: *fairy tale, black humour, concept, death, model, frame, slot.*

1. Introduction.

The text as a communicative and speech formation in all its aspects is in the focus of attention of modern philology, especially of linguopoetics as a field that received a new impetus for development at the end of the 20th century. At the present stage it contacts actively with cognitive linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, linguistic and cultural studies, etc.

In the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, considering the latest achievements of philological science, the principles of researching the texts of different genres of fiction were critically rethought, which made it possible to reveal the originality of the verbal literary structure as a whole and its individual components at a deep level. At the same time, it should be noted that nowadays the texts of different genres have been studied unevenly. The belles-letters prose discourse has not been sufficiently studied in this aspect.

Our research deals with the analysis of the compositional and aesthetic originality of a short story by R. Dahl to prove the introducing of black humour distinctive features in it, which is not a widely used characteristic of a fairy tale genre. Of course, one can find the traditional cruel ending in the works of folklore that can be considered a black-humorous feature, but R. Dahl depicts horrifying violence in a lighthearted and hilarious manner.

Black humour is viewed as one of the varieties of a comic category (along with humour, irony, satire, sarcasm); as humour with an admixture of cynicism, the comic effect of which consists in mocking of 'gloomy', macabre topics; as an ironic-bitter smile of a person about their miserable situation in the real world (Blynova, 2023, p. 263). Traditionally, the main communicative purpose of black humour is to make fun of macabre topics, and the effect of the comic is created by making fun of danger, death or any other topic that is strictly prohibited for jokes. At the same time, the nature of laughter is marked as mocking, cynical, sharp, and cruel.

Critics describe R. Dahl as a great master of stories with elements of black humour. As a rule, they indicate such typical features of the author's poetic style as fantasy, contradiction, irony, double meaning, absurdity, black humour, and grotesque. So, the following quotations serve as an indisputable confirmation of this fact: "The style that Dahl developed over the years is based on the tension and friction between fantasy and reality, between fact and fiction. Dahl's fictional world is full of contradictions and ironies. It is also full of double meanings where things are not what they appear to be and where meaninglessness and absurdity are prominent components. Dahl's world is also coloured with blackness and grotesqueness; full of comedy that makes you shiver instead of laugh and characters who invite a sneak peek into a different side, a dark side of human nature" (Jaber, 2016, pp. 1170–1181).

2. Literature Review.

Currently, the works of linguists are aimed at investigation of black humour various aspects. The authors describe the stylistic features of black humour (Kuzebna & Usyk,

2021); study the communicative and linguistic characteristics of the comic category functioning, its black-humour type in particular (Blynova, 2022); consider black humour patterns that emphasize the theme of death (Khraban, 2021); characterize the elements of black humour in the works of postmodernism (Nalini, 2016); reveal the cognitive and emotional aspects of the black humour perception (Willinger et al., 2017).

Moreover, studies of modern linguoconceptology, as one of the branches of cognitive linguistics, are associated with the reconstruction of the concept by analysing its semiotic (primarily verbal) representations. In this respect, Zhabotynska (2020) introduces the algorithm for the analysis of a narrative multimedia concept, performed from the standpoint of linguistic concept-study and cognitive theory of naming. Likewise, the scientific work by Izyumtseva (2021) concerns contrastive research of conceptual metaphors of Biblical realia in two languages based on representing 'frames and slots' model. In Prystupa's paper (2021) the lingo-cognitive approach to understanding irony, where both linguistic and non-linguistic levels are reflected, provides an analysis of linguistic factors in their connection with the organization of the conceptual system. The functioning of a concept from a linguosynergetic perspective as spontaneous equipment of the structure of a homeostatic hierarchical complex organized as an open nonlinear system is introduced by Tatsenko and Molhamova (2023).

There are also works connected with the study of the linguistic representation of the concept DEATH, which is an important element of the culture of any national and cultural community that is involved in the formation of cultural norms. For instance, the work of Fedoriuk (2018) identifies and characterizes the specifics of the concept DEATH verbalization in Ukrainian literature of the 20th–21st centuries, and it carries out a comprehensive analysis of the aforementioned concept based on the Ukrainian cognitive-linguistic worldview. Based on lexicographic sources Molhamova (2019) systematizes common and distinct semes of the name of the concept DEATH as of a complex multi-dimensional structure that includes a conceptual framework and socio-psychological and cultural part.

However, the representation of the concept DEATH in a prose text as the author's individual concept for identifying black humour with simultaneous consideration of the linguistic and extralinguistic (cognitive) characteristics of its actualization as a kind of comic category is overlooked by linguists, which determines the topicality of this paper.

3. Aim and Objectives.

The aim of the paper is to describe the verbalization of the author's individual concept DEATH for identifying a black-humorous tonality of R. Dahl's short story qualified as a fairy tale genre.

Achieving the overall goal presupposes the solution of the following objectives, namely:

1) to specify the model of a fairy tale discourse, i. e. its opening formula, verbal elements, and patterned compositional structure;

2) to consider the peculiarities of R. Dahl's creative method (represented in a fairy tale), whose poetics is characterized by a clearly expressed black-humorous component;

3) to provide an interpretation of the lexeme 'death' in modern lexicographical sources;

4) to introduce a conceptual model based on the frame-slot-arrangement;

5) to analyse the functioning of the concept DEATH in the author's individual worldview.

4. Methodology.

The following methods and techniques were used to accomplish the general aim of the research and to solve specific objectives, such as:

general scientific ones (*observation method* and *quantitative analysis* that predetermine the revealing of patterned elements typical of a fairy tale genre and the analysing of various author's individual manifestations of the concept DEATH);

general philological ones (*compositional analysis* that aims at understanding the compositional and speech forms of the literary work; *contextual analysis* that intends to study the functioning of language units in the context, *distributive analysis* that helps to construct distributive formulas, and *conceptual analysis* that involves identifying, modelling (on the basis of the language) and examining the author's individual concept as a unit of the author's conceptual worldview);

partial philological ones (*semantic-stylistic analysis*, based on the study of semantic colouring of linguistic means used by the author of the literary text).

The material of the study is the short story "Pig" by Roald Dahl (1916–1990), the most prominent representative of the English-language literature of the 20th century.

5. Results and Discussion.
5.1. Patterned elements of a fairy tale.

Importantly, the analysed short story has some patterned elements that are typical of a fairy tale structure. Firstly, the introductory formula of the story "Once upon a time" signals the reader about the producing and perceiving of a fairy tale discourse: *"ONCE upon a time, in the City of New York, a beautiful baby boy was born into this world, and the joyful parents named him Lexington"* (Dahl, 1960, p. 3). This opening phrase contributes to the recognition of a fairy tale genre as a conventionalized framework that has formal structural features and functions as a reference point for discourse unfolding: "one order of speech style, a constellation of systemically related, co-occurrent formal features and structures that serves as a conventionalized orienting framework for the production and reception of discourse" (Bauman, 2000, p. 84). Obviously, the reference to the generic (i.e., genre-specific) framing device "Once upon a time" carries a set of expectations regarding the further development of a fairy tale discourse, thereby indexing other texts that are initiated by this typical verbal formula.

Secondly, the main character of the story, named Lexington, is presented by the narrator as 'our hero', which is a traditional, specified name of the tale protagonist: *"Our hero now sets out for the city of New York to find Mr Samuel Zuckermann"* (Dahl, 1960, p. 17); *'The whole world is before me!' our hero cried as he emerged into the street* (ibid., p. 20); *"Our hero seated himself at a corner table and hang his knapsack on the back of his chair"* (ibid., p. 21); *'Never in my life have I smelled anything as rich and wonderful as this!' our hero cried, seizing his knife and fork* (ibid., p. 21) and the like.

Thirdly, the model of a fairy tale is determined by the presence of the functions of the characters in a variable sequence, that is, the character's actions in terms of the importance of his influence on the course of events. Propp (2009), a philologist and folklorist, proves that fairy tales of any people of the world have a similar structure, and the content of each of them can be conveyed using a certain number of key components. According to the scientist, any fairy tale can be divided into a chain of successive episodes that form its structural model.

In a fairy tale, a protagonist / hero who leaves home for a special reason is addressed with an interdiction that he violates. Then an antagonist appears. It is the person who begins to act, causing harm, trouble or injury to the hero or depriving him of his possession and

lodgings. The hero goes in search of something that has been taken away or that he lacks. In his search he is tested: the hero undergoes a kind of initiation rite resulting in maturing and improving himself. The hero also meets a noble mentor-assistant who supports him in achieving his goal or provides him with some magical means. This help plays a significant role when the hero conflicts with the antagonist – they get into confrontation. As a result of a direct struggle, the hero defeats the villain and acquires the object of search. The winner is chased, but he escapes successfully. In the end, the hero returns home after a long absence.

Let us consider the main components of a fairy tale suggested by Propp (2009, pp. 23–50), which are formed due to a set of permanent functions (31 in total). They are 1) the steps that function in relation to the story as a whole and 2) a list of characters, a total number of which is 7, namely: a hero, an antagonist / villain, a dispatcher, a donor / provider of magical things, a helper / magical agent, a princess, and a false hero. Being stable elements of a fairy tale, the functions of the characters do not depend on who and how they are performed. According to our observations, the uniformity of the construction of the story-tale "Pig" can be traced in the use of the following functions:

1. *Absence* (a family member absents himself from home): after the accidental death of his parents, who are mistaken for robbers by the police and shot dead, a baby named Lexington is cared of by his seventy-year-old Aunt Glosspan. She transports a new-born baby from New York to the state of Virginia. Consequently, one can notice an intensified form of absentation in the story represented by the death of parents.

2. *Interdiction* (the hero is addressed with an interdiction): upbringing style of Lexington and the way he receives education are dictated by the guardian, who teaches the boy to follow a vegetarian diet strictly and develops his culinary skills.

3. *Mediation*, *the connective incident* (some troubles occur; the hero is approached with a request, command or order; he is allowed to go away, reach some place, or he is dispatched): after the aunt's tragic death, Lexington finds out her request expressed in a farewell letter; the young man should see a doctor to document the fact of her death as well as a lawyer to receive a sum of money notified in her last will and testament.

4. *Departure* (the hero leaves home): the misfortune with his aunt forces the hero to leave the house for New York.

5. *Trickery* (the antagonist tries to deceive his victim in order to take possession of him or his property): a lawyer named Samuel Zuckermann appropriates most of the inheritance of the naive, gullible Lexington.

6. *Complicity* (the victim is deceived and thus unwittingly helps his enemy): instead of the sum of money of $50,000, which was supposed to be used for the further research in vegetarian matters and work on a cookbook, the young man agrees to receive only $15,000.

7. *Lack* (one of the family members lacks something, he desires to have something): being in a restaurant, Lexington realizes the lack of experience in cooking; he aims to test the art of cookery from an unknown chef and get useful tips for the book.

8. *Violation* (the interdiction is violated): the young man tastes a pork roast for the first time in his life in a restaurant and he is fascinated by the incredible taste of the dish.

9. *The first function of the donor* (the hero is tested, interrogated, attacked, etc., which prepares the way for his receiving a magical agent or helper: after verbal mockery, the cook tells Lexington the details of preparing the dish for compiling the final recipe and gives the address of the packinghouse from where the meat is delivered to the kitchen.

10. *Difficult task* (the hero is offered a difficult task): the protagonist has to learn about the intricacies of cooking a meat dish, including how to get a good piece of meat.

11. *Spatial transference* (the hero is transferred, delivered, led, or guided to the location of an object of search): Lexington ends up at a packinghouse, where the guide gives him and other visitors a tour concerning slaughter of cattle (pigs).

12. *Non-solution* (the task is not solved, the lack is not liquidated, the helper turns out to be a villain): suddenly Lexington finds himself hanging by his leg from the animal slaughter container; the slaughterer turns out not to be a magical agent, but a murderous villain who cuts the hero's throat; Lexington dies without realizing his dream of creating a masterpiece – a cookbook.

As Propp points out, the number and sequence of introducing functions in the plot can vary, which is realized in the story under consideration. There are 12 of them respectively, used in a different order. This does not affect the syntagmatic series in general – all main functions are arranged in pairs, for example: interdiction – its violation.

However, we should note that the content of the guidance of functions, outlined by Propp, does not coincide completely: in particular, instead of the positive function of the hero's victory, we notice a shocking ending that is unexpected for both the hero and the reader. This tale does not have a happy end, demonstrating the divergence of the typified pair functioning such as 'struggle – victory'. Moreover, the last macabre scene (the death of the hero) contrasts with the fairy tale plot thanks to the unexpected change from an adventure story into a horror picture, which is a clear feature of black humour.

5.2. The notion of "death".

Throughout the story, it is accentuated on the black-humorous macabre element – **death**. The death of Lexington's parents, the killing of animals by meat-eaters, and the poisoning of Aunt Glosspan are also described in addition to the death of the protagonist directly at the end of the text. The mockery of death is inherent in all these fragments: the tragic is combined with the comic due to, first of all, the sublimely colourful tone of the narration, which does not reflect the sadness, despair, or pain of the situation. This concerns the general tone of the story, conveyed by the speech of the author and characters.

As an example, here is a passage that demonstrates the tragic death of Aunt Glosspan: *She was afflicted in the night by a violent seizure, and Lexington, who had rushed into her bedroom to see what all the noise was about, found her lying on her bed yelling and cussing and twisting herself into all manner of complicated knots. Indeed, she was a terrible sight to behold, and the agitated youth danced around her in his pyjamas, wringing his hands and wondering what on earth he should do. Finally in an effort to cool her down, he fetched a bucket of water from the pond in the cow field and tipped it over her head, but this only intensified the paroxysms, and the old lady expired within the hour.*

"This is really too bad," the poor boy said, pinching her several times to make sure that she was dead. "And how sudden! How quick and sudden! Why only a few hours ago she seemed in the very best of spirits. She even took three large helpings of my most recent creation, devilled mushroomburgers, and told me how succulent it was."

After weeping bitterly for several minutes, for he had loved his aunt very much, he pulled himself together and carried her outside and buried her behind the cowshed (Dahl, 1960, p. 15).

As one can see, the fragment in the form of direct character's speech includes exclamatory sentences (*And how sudden! How quick and sudden!*); adverbs (*This is **really** too** bad; for he had loved his aunt **very much**; she seemed in the **very** best of spirits*); intensifying particles and adjectives used in the superlative degree of comparison (*She **even** took three large helpings of my **most recent** creation*), which convey Lexington's exaggerated surprise at the sudden fatal attack. Examining the author's speech of the

passage, we emphasize that the contrast between the aunt's painful condition and the boy's illogical behaviour when providing help is reflected in metaphors: *Lexington ... found her lying on her bed **yelling and cussing and twisting herself into all manner of complicated knots**; the **agitated youth danced around her** in his pajamas, wringing his hands.* The situational irony about the lack of Lexington's mourning for the aunt (*After **weeping bitterly for several minutes***) and the hint to the poisoning dish from mushrooms (*devilled mushroomburgers*), being prepared by a young man, give the reader a reason to look at the death of the aunt from different perspectives. The situation is viewed, on the one hand, as an accident (for which Lexington is blamed; it is he who is unable to quickly assess the situation and act accordingly), on the other hand, as a deliberate action – a planned murder.

In our opinion, the lexeme 'death' should be attributed to the author's favourite units that appear as literary / artistic concepts. Based on the common language content, it contains a number of features of the writer's worldview and embodies a certain ideological setting of the aforementioned specific text. According to Selivanova, we understand the concept as "the informational structure of consciousness, a multi-substrate memory unit organized in a certain way, which contains a set of knowledge about the object of cognition; verbal and non-verbal knowledge, acquired through the interaction of five mental functions of consciousness and the unconscious" (2006, p. 256).

It means that the cognitive level, which includes concepts, leitmotifs, etc., is expressed quite clearly in R. Dahl's literary works, and the conceptual analysis by identifying and describing the concepts of the author's individual style is quite productive. To identify the author's individual conceptualization of the most important concept for the author's worldview, let us turn to the planes of the author's discourse and the character's discourse. Taking into account the features of the narration in the story under study, we note that this is an objectified story from the 3rd person, characterized by neutral omniscience (the narrator is absent in the narrative structure) – the author's non-interference. So, the story is presented in the 3rd person narrative in such a way that the readers are given the impression of witnessing the events as they are guided by the observer-author who records the speech and actions of the characters without analysing them.

Identifying the meaning of the word 'death' in the short story, first of all, it is necessary to refer to its lexicographical description in reference sources. In modern dictionaries of the English literary language, this lexeme has a total of 5 meanings: "**death** *noun* 1. [countable] the fact of somebody dying or being killed; 2. [uncountable] the end of life; the state of being dead; 3. [uncountable] the stopping of biochemical processes of life in a cell or tissue, in a way that cannot be reversed; 4. [uncountable] *death of something* the permanent end or destruction of something; 5. (*also* **Death**) [uncountable] (*literary*) the power that destroys life, imagined as human in form" (Wehmeir, 2023).

Identical definitions are found in the description of the corresponding lexeme in explanatory dictionaries of the Ukrainian language, cf.: "death – 1) Termination of vital activity of an organism and its death; cessation of biological metabolism in the body or its part. 2) Termination of the existence of a person or an animal; life; end || The same as capital punishment (death penalty) (mortal). || to whom. Used as a call for revenge, retribution. || The personification of death – a human skeleton, usually with a scythe. || Death, cessation of existence of something. || Decline of something. 3) Something very bad, unpleasant, undesirable. || (Imaginable mystical figure), noseless, bony, snub-nosed, bonehead" (ABBYY Lingvo, 2023) (hereinafter the translation is ours. – I. B.). As we can see, there is a certain similarity in the understanding of the notion "death" in the English and Ukrainian languages. Nevertheless, the Ukrainian language dictionaries present the metaphorical meaning of "death" as a presage of something bad, some disaster.

The analysis proves that the author's direct illustration of the intensifying in the content potential of the specified word occurs due to numerous repetitions throughout the story, its use in different contexts, which leads to the hyper-semanticization of the lexeme. Regarding the verbal-grammatical level of the studied work – the lexicon, we state that the lexeme 'death' as well as various derivatives (the adjective 'dead', the verb 'to die') are found in the discourses more than 15 times. We present the most prominent of these micro-components below: *But now, suddenly, his labours were interrupted by the tragic **death** of Aunt Glosspan* (Dahl, 1960, p. 15); *In his luxurious office, he shook Lexington warmly by the hand and congratulated him upon his aunt's **death*** (ibid., p. 17); *The celebration of **death** was therefore a deeply religious affair in Mr Zuckermann's eyes* (ibid., p. 19); *'You mean live animals?' 'No,' she said. '**Dead** ones.'* (ibid., p. 11); *'You mean when they **die** they eat them instead of burying them?' 'They don't wait for them to **die**, my pet. They kill them.'* (ibid., p. 11); *'This is really too bad,' the poor boy said, pinching her several times to make sure that she was **dead*** (ibid., p. 15); *'Old Glosspan?' the doctor said. 'My God, is she **dead**?' 'Certainly, she's **dead**,' the youth answered* (ibid., p. 16); *'Then she's **dead**,' the doctor announced. 'Here's the certificate.'* (ibid., p. 17); *Darling boy [the letter said], I know that you have never yet been down the mountain since you were thirteen days old, but as soon as I **die** you must put on a pair of shoes and a clean shirt and walk down to the village and find a doctor* (ibid., p. 16).

The above examples confirm the writer's efforts to focus attention precisely on the key component of the concept, which is achieved by various means. Thus, thanks to the repetition of the favourite keyword in parallel structures of dialogical speech (*'You mean live animals?' – 'No,' she said. '**Dead** ones.';* *'You mean when they **die** they eat them instead of burying them?' – 'They don't wait for them to **die**, my pet. They kill them.'*) this lexeme forms its own semantic structure, which, as it can be seen, bears a significant storage of individual and associative meaning: death is the personification of evil, generated by meat-eaters. The woman's attitude towards vegetarians and meat-eaters is conveyed through contrast (good – bad, respectively) and is based on the exaggeration about the way of eating the meat of killed animals, which is excessive cruelty on the part of meat-eaters.

The detailed description of the death of animals, meat-eaters' food preferences, and the way meat is prepared and eaten, provided by the explanations of the vegetarian aficionado, Aunt Glosspan, takes the form of straightforward, horrific answers that are not shocking to a six-year-old Lexington. Emotional pressure during the conversation is conveyed by the boy's unusual interest in death, atypical for a child, as well as in the killing of animals as an object of food by meat-eaters, which is further demonstrated by the sublimely fascinating remarks of Lexington with a characteristic intonation of surprise.

We should also consider, among other things, the distribution of the analysed lexeme, which is defined as the amount of all environments in which this linguistic element (word) occurs, that is, the amount of all possible positions of the element in relation to other elements of the same level, its combinability. The most common distributive formulas are the following ones, where the lexeme 'death' functions as a noun and an adjective:

A + death (*tragic **death***);
death + of + N (***death** of aunt*);
death + N sg/pl (***death** duties, **death** certificate*);
(the) N + of + death (*the celebration of **death***);
N possessive + death (*aunt's **death***).

It seems that in this case, the indicator of the absolute frequency of the expressed word is less essential for understanding the author's idiostyle and its impact on the reader. The more important thing here is the qualitative characteristics of the contexts of its use and

the distribution of these contexts on the plane of works. To understand the role of this word in the work under study, it is necessary to analyse and typify the contexts of its use. As one can point out, the writer significantly increases the 'number of meanings' associated with this concept, giving it new, broader meanings. With such a view of this unit, a peculiar picture emerges, which has the following interpretation.

Death is the end of earthly (bodily) life, separation of the soul from the body, resurrection, transition to eternal, spiritual life. The protagonist moves from this world, the best of all possible worlds, to the next one. It is noted that the phrase "the best of all possible worlds" is an allusion to the optimistic view of the German mathematician and philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (Duignan, 2023), according to which the actual world in which we live is the best one, since it is the Universe chosen for a man by God, organized in a perfect harmony for self-improvement, manifestation of will and aspirations. This thesis is the central argument of his treatise in the attempt to solve the problem of evil. Due to the interconnection of events, it may happen that any world that does not contain the evil of the existing world will necessarily contain other, greater forms of evil. Furthermore, it is also possible that the existing world, despite the apparent evil in it, is indeed the best possible according to the divine standard of goodness.

As a rule, the plot of a fairy tale is the ritual of initiation, where an immature personality acquires spiritual and physical strength, reaches a new level of development, which cannot be a characteristic of the main hero of the "Pig". The writer mocks the dark reality and essence of evil of the best world created in the story in a black humorous (apocalyptic) tone. Lexington cannot function in this world due to his isolated idealistic upbringing and as a result he is unable to critically evaluate people and adapt to a given situation in order to survive. The system of laws in society does not protect innocent people, it deceives and robs them. In the end, everything results in death, which is depicted with shocking mockery.

The analysed concept is the subject of emotions, feelings, sensations, experiences, states, antipathies, and collisions of the main characters, a set of associations that the characters of the short story experience and that accompany the word-lexeme. In our opinion, with a figurative approach to its analysis, there are grounds for asserting the fact that a literary text builds a system of meanings of the word 'death' in a different way. Thus, its figurative meanings as, firstly, a symbol of transition to another world and eternal spiritual life; secondly, the personification of evil, generated by people, occupy the first (main) positions in the hierarchy of dictionary definitions, thereby expanding its metaphorical meaning.

In its turn, the lexeme 'death' is (which is very important) an associate that reveals the physiological phenomena accompanying this state and denotes the mental and emotional indicators of the state. The most used lexemes expressing the concept DEATH include ***blood, bloody, red, kill, bury, body, heart, flesh, meat, expire, pass away, fatal***, for example: *The cops, all of whom had received medals before for **killing** robbers, opened fire immediately, and although the wife in particular was presenting them with a very small target indeed, they succeeded in scoring several direct hits on each body sufficient anyway to prove fatal in both cases* (Dahl, 1960, pp. 5–6); *The news of this **killing**, for which the three policemen subsequently received citations, was eagerly conveyed to all the relatives of the deceased couple by newspaper reporters, and the next morning the closest of these relatives, as well as a couple of undertakers, three lawyers, and a priest, climbed into taxis and set out for the house with the broken window* (ibid., p. 6); *She loved him so much now that it would **kill** her to be parted from him for any length of time* (ibid., p. 10); *'They cut them up into bits and they cook the bits. They like it best when it's all **red** and **bloody** and sticking to the bones.*

*They love to eat lumps of cow's **flesh** with the **blood** oozing out of it.'* (ibid., p. 11); *'Lumps of **bloody** pig's **meat**,' the boy said. 'Imagine that. What else do they eat, Aunt Glosspan?'* (ibid., p. 12); *Everything was still upside down and the **blood** was pouring out of his throat and getting into his eyes, but he could still see after a fashion...* (ibid., p. 32); *Suddenly our hero started to feel very sleepy, but it wasn't until his good strong **heart** had pumped the last drop of **blood** from his **body** that he passed on out of this, the best of all possible worlds, into the next* (ibid., p. 33). So, the associative environment in the text forms a kind of attraction fields that allow the concept to be a lexical attractor / attractant, the centre of drawing other associated words in the structure of the text.

As widely known, there is a modelling stage that allows to describe a concept as an integral mental unit. There are various means for organizing concepts, i. e. frame, schema, script, global pattern, base, scene, and the like (Croft & Cruse, 2004, p. 8). The most influential version in cognitive linguistics has been the model of frame semantics developed by Fillmore (Fillmore & Baker, 2010) as a model of the "full, rich understanding that a speaker intends to convey in a text and a hearer constructs for that text" (Croft & Cruse, 2004, p. 8).

In the theory of knowledge, such various structures as frames are used to study and represent knowledge. Following Minsky, we consider a frame as "a data structure designed to present a stereotyped situation" (Minsky, 1978, p. 254). More broadly, it can be said that a frame is a conceptual structure for a declarative representation of knowledge about a typified thematically unified situation, containing slots connected to each other by certain semantic relations. Slots activate the frame, providing reproduction of the entire structure of the typical thematic situation in general (Prystupa, 2021, p. 93). Reflecting the non-language situation, the frame includes a relatively free set of slots or subframes determined by the prototypes' social, cultural, economic, political, and individual conditions. Overall, the concept DEATH may be represented like a model that is based on the frame-slot-arrangement. As examples we point out words or word combinations from the story context containing the lexemes that are the elements of the concept DEATH reconstruction.

The frame '**cessation of existence, the life of the organism, the end**' includes the following slots:

Slot 1. *The cause of death (murder, accident (poisoning, shooting)* (tragic death, violent seizure, to pass away in the prime of life from being eggbound).

Slot 2. *The process of death, conditions / circumstances under which death occurs* (to yell and cuss and twist oneself into all manner of complicated knots, to expire, to swallow, to suffocate on one's pillow, to open fire, a very small target, to score several direct hits on each body sufficient anyway to prove fatal, killing).

Slot 3. *The fact of death* (dead, to be dead, to die, to prove to be dead).

Slot 4. *The state and actions of a person who is nearby and is a witness* (to feel too bad, to weep bitterly).

It is worth noting that 'death', both natural and unnatural, is conceptualized as something inevitable, very bad, unpleasant, undesirable and evokes feelings of fear and grief. A thematic field also comprises torment, pain, and relief.

The frame **'reflection of a person's value'** can be described by such slots as:

Slot 1. *Funeral rite* (undertaker, to bury deep / 8 hours ago / oneself, to dig smb up, a death certificate, funeral expenses, funeral parlour, a casket factory, a postgraduate school for embalmers, celebration of death, a deeply religious affair).

Slot 2. *Consequences for people after the death of relatives / strangers* (receive medals for killing robbers, become an orphan, get citations).

Slot 3. *The attitude of unfamiliar people to death and the loss of loved ones* (congratulated smb upon one's death).

We can say that the verbal representations within this frame outline some features of the concept, namely: money benefits, rewarding, religious sense, orphanhood, dishonesty, and meanness.

The frame **'eating habits of meat-eaters'** is characterised by some slots, among which are the following ones:

Slot 1. *Meat cooking process* (piece of the meat, meat of any kind being disgusting, revolting, horrible, foul, nauseating, and beastly; pig's meat, a piece of human stuff, meat of man / woman, the butcher's, a good hog to be butchered right, to butcher).

Slot 2. *Eating the meat of killed animals* (animal flesh being unhealthy, disgusting, horribly cruel; no living creature to be slaughtered, to eat dead animals, to die, to bury, to wait for animals to die, to kill, to slit their throats with a knife, to cut them up into bits and cook the bits, the meat to be all red and bloody and sticking to the bones, to eat lumps of cow's flesh with the blood oozing out of it, cows, pigs, sheep).

The aforementioned frame illustrates the dominance of interest, cruelty, bloodthirstiness, and taste.

The frame **'a process that equalizes people and animals'** covers the slot related to the slaughter:

Slot 1. *Animal and human slaughter* (a packing-house, a shackling-pen, to shackle, a steel cable with hooks on it, to bend down and quickly loop one end of the chain around one of the animal's hind legs, shrill protests, cracking noise of bones (legs / pelvis), to loop one end of a chain around the youth's own ankle, the sticker in a dark-stained yellow rubber apron, deftly slit open the boy's jugular vein with a knife, belt, the blood to pour out of one's throat and get into one's eyes, smoking cauldron of water, to drop into the boiling water, to feel very sleepy, the last drop of blood).

This frame demonstrates dream, naivety, delusion, ritual, killing, unwillingness to die, horror, the beginning of a new life, and other world.

Similarly, the idioms, allusions, and metaphors (e. g. it would kill her to be parted from him for any length of time; starving; Saint Peter at the Gates of Heaven; to pass on out of this, the best of all possible worlds, into the next) become the basis for distinguishing additional figurative characteristics of the concept DEATH like dependence on smb, Heaven and Hell, the best world, and the next world.

Thus, the frame-slot-model gets a clear illustration of the concept DEATH as 'cessation of existence, the life of the organism; the end' being described by slots within the first frame. The concept DEATH has acquired new meanings and associations as it becomes linked with 'reflection of a person's value' and 'eating habits of meat-eaters' frames and the corresponding slots. The fourth frame also activates and helps to specify a figurative symbolic meaning of 'death' as transition to another world and eternal spiritual life, the beginning of a new life, other world; personification of evil (for both people and animals), generated by people.

6. Conclusions.

As the analysis shows, the short story "Pig" by R. Dahl is qualified as a fairy tale genre according to the patterned elements: the opening formula "Once upon a time", the traditional name of the protagonist "our hero" and the main functional components of the fairy tale. In this story the writer focuses the reader's attention on the black-humorous macabre element, i. e. death, which is described tragicomically in the author's and character's speech with the help of linguistic means to indicate the hero's enthusiastic and

exciting mood and the entertaining tone of the story. Metaphors, contrast, irony, hyperbolization and allusion occupy the leading place among them.

The lexeme 'death' belongs to the author's favourite word that appears as a literary concept. The expansion of the content potential of the specified word occurs due to numerous repetitions and its use in different contexts. The linguistic representation of the concept is given in the form of building a lexical and semantic field consisting of four frames (**'**cessation of existence, the life of the organism, the end', **'**reflection of a person's value', **'**eating habits of meat-eaters', 'a process that equalizes people and animals') and corresponding slots. Contextual analysis and a figurative approach give reasons to claim that the literary text organizes a system of meanings of the lexeme 'death' in a different way. Its figurative meanings as of a symbol of transition to another world and eternal spiritual life, as well as of the personification of evil, generated by people, occupy the first (main) position in the hierarchy of dictionary definitions, thereby expanding its metaphorical meaning.

Undoubtedly, such an active appeal of the author to this lexeme cannot be accidental, and in some cases, it leads to qualitatively new semantic shifts. It seems appropriate to note that the noun 'death' in a figurative sense is a vivid component of a belles-letters text, where the accumulation of meanings occurs, as a rule, due to the complication and transformation of its own functions. The explanation of the meaning of the lexeme in our case is realized more fully at the end of the text and belongs to the narrator's discourse.

The identification, manifestation and analysis of the place and role of the key words-concepts (both universal ones and those of an individual author's character) in the structure of the text and the entire artistic world of the author's works makes it possible to compile a deeper and more adequate writer's dictionary with the aim of using it for the interpretation of prose stories by a modern reader. Conceptual analysis based on a literary text allows identifying such features that acquire symbolic meaning as part of an individual author's concept, and the cognitive level appears to be a priority in this analysis.

To sum it up, the analysis of the writer's works, thanks to the proposed method of identifying concepts, gives a possibility to form a more complete idea of the author's concept embodied in the literary work, including the following of the individual author's conceptualization of the most important concepts for the author's worldview. The perspective of the study presupposes a description of the concept DEATH in R. Dahl's literary works and in works by other writers, whose poetics is combined with the comic category. It will make possible to provide a more complete understanding of the explication of black humour in a literary prose work.

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Бібліографічний опис:

Анотація

Статтю присвячено дослідженню впливу елементів чорного гумору на оповідання Р. Даля "Свиня", кваліфікованого нами як жанр казки. Метою розвідки є опис вербалізації індивідуально-авторського концепту СМЕРТЬ (DEATH) як ключової складової для виявлення чорно-гумористичної

тональності оповіді. Охарактеризовано модель казкового дискурсу, що передбачає наявність початкової формули, словесних елементів та шаблонної композиційної структури. Розглянуто особливості творчого методу Р. Даля (відображеного в казці), чиїй поетиці властивий яскраво виражений чорно-гумористичний компонент. Надано тлумачення лексеми 'смерть' ('death') у сучасних лексикографічних джерелах англійської та української мов. Представлено концептуальну модель, засновану на компонуванні фреймів і слотів. Проаналізовано функціонування концепту СМЕРТЬ (DEATH) в індивідуальній картині світу автора.

Доведено, що у творі письменник акцентує увагу читача на чорно-гумористичному макабричному елементі – смерті, яку описано в авторському та персонажному мовленні трагікомічно за допомогою лінгвістичних засобів на позначення піднесено-захоплюваного настрою героя й розважального тону оповіді, серед яких провідне місце належить метафоризації, контрасту, іронії, гіперболізації та алюзії. Лексему 'смерть' ('death') унележнюємо до таких уподобаних автором одиниць, що постають художніми концептами. Нарощування змістового потенціалу цього слова відбувається завдяки численним наскрізним повторам і його використанню в різних контекстах.

Лінгвістичну репрезентацію концепту наведено у формі побудови лексико-семантичного поля, що складається з чотирьох фреймів ('cessation of existence, the life of the organism, the end', 'reflection of a person's value', 'eating habits of meat-eaters', 'a process that equalizes people and animals') і відповідних слотів. Контекстуальний аналіз і образний підхід дають підстави стверджувати, що художній текст інакше вибудовує систему значень слова 'смерть' ('death'). Так, його переносні значення як, по-перше, символу переходу до іншого світу та вічного духовного життя, по-друге, уособлення зла, породжене людьми, займають першу (головну) позицію в ієрархії словникових дефініцій, тим самим розширюючи своє метафоричне значення.

Ключові слова: *казка, чорний гумор, концепт, смерть, модель, фрейм, слот.*