Dream as a Basic Concept in the Novel "The Great Gatsby" by F.S. Fitzgerald

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ABSTRACT This paper addresses the procedure and results of the conceptual analysis of the concept of 'dream' in Fitzgerald's novel "The Great Gatsby". The initial stage of the conceptual analysis was presupposition. The next stage was to analyse lexical level of the text. The third step was to analyse all contexts. Then, these data were compared with dictionary definitions to show common and specific features in representing the concept. After that the researchers proceeded to model the concept sphere structure. Then, the researchers regarded syntactic positions of the lexical units implementing the concept of 'dream' in the novel and modelled its propositional structure. The author's specificity of the concept is that 'dream' in Fitzgerald's view becomes a living being, not an idea-regulator. This living being is struggling, but is defeated, because there are no conditions for its survival in the writer's reality.

INTRODUCTION

It is known that concept modelling has become one of the most productive areas of modern Russian Philology. Although there are some differences in concepts definition, methods, and techniques of their research, conceptologists acknowledge that the concept is a conditional mental unit aimed at a comprehensive study of language, mind and culture (Stepanov 2004; Chen 2019).

The concept is represented by linguistic means and when they are analysed, one can reveal content and structure of a concept and describe them. In fact, there are axiological, figurative, and notional components in the structure of a concept (Karasik and Slyshkin 2003). However, a set of concepts as the units of individual mind is formed into the conceptual sphere (a model of individual worldview), which is embodied in the work of art.

In fact, when an artist explores the world, its images are reflected in mind of the artist and influenced by his or her social, personal and cultural experiences. Then, this process results in original selection of the world images and their cultural interpretation. Thus, any literary work is a unique and perfect world image of an artist. Therefore, the researchers regard a concept in this paper as an individual image of some reality fragment, which has got historical, social, and cultural background and linguistic expression (Wang 2014; Sandler 2018).

The researchers proceeded from the premise that a literary work verbalises conceptual area of an author formed by his or her basic concepts. Then, the researchers considered conceptual sphere of the literary text as a field of quanta of individual mind, including nuclear and peripheral meanings, which can be objectively revealed in an original text. Thus, the relevance of this study was determined by permanent interest in the examination of the human mind and his or her individual worldview, which became an object of conceptual analysis.

The concept of 'dream', in fact, is a specific regulating concept in the culture of the United States, because it characterises aspirations of the nation and creates a model of behaviour, inspiring optimism of a national scale. In the American culture, 'dream' is associated with the idea of the United States as a country where everyone can get rich and successful. However, the conceptual analysis of a literary work allowed the researchers to reconstruct the individual author's ideas of dream embodied in the text (Selden 2016; Kara and Selvi 2017).

Objectives

This paper addressed the procedure and results of the conceptual analysis of the concept of 'dream' in Fitzgerald's novel "The Great Gatsby".

METHODOLOGY

According to the research design, the tasks were solved using integrated methodology, including a conceptual analysis framework developed by Babenko (2004), component analysis, interpretative approach, and modelling. Therefore, the novel by F.S. Fitzgerald (Fitzgerald 2001) was used to collect material by continuous sampling method. It should be noted that criteria for selecting the linguistic units were their frequency, polysemy, and information capacity; that is, the capacity to transform conceptual content into factual material. Moreover, it was important to take into consideration synonymic and/or antonymic series with the keywords, their specific syntagmatic, and paradigmatic and word-formation relationships (Macherey 2015).

Thus, the researchers focused on the conceptual analysis of the book as a way to better understand it. This study outlined basic concept's analysis but the conceptual analysis framework was also valid for any other concept or the text. This analysis included the following steps.

1. It is necessary to pick all keywords as carriers of conceptual content. In fact, keywords are specific signs in the textual space, which indicates the author's theme, idea, and intentions.
2. One should define syntactical positions of the keywords and model their propositional structures (PS).

According to the Russian Professor Arutyunova, conceptual analysis discovers "principles of spontaneous, and therefore not always clear, modelling of life material" (Arutyunova 1999). In the literary text, concept is verbalised in the whole complex of language means, so the researchers regarded modelling of a propositional structure of the concept as a system of author's attitudes towards a certain fragment of the world. Therefore, a proposition in this structure is a linguistic expression of a situation model, and nominal and predicate relations in it are established depending on the author's attitude to the details of the given situation. In other words, analysing each position of the PS leads to better understanding of the author's ideas.

Thus, the researchers accessed to the content of the concept as a quantum of author's mind by analysing the relations within the PS. The data of conceptual analysis gave an opportunity to see the world through the author's eyes.

As mentioned earlier, the initial stage of conceptual analysis was presupposition; that is, information about the author, conditions, and circumstances, in which the book was created. The idea of the novel arose from F.S. Fitzgerald in America in 1924. It was originally called "Trimalchio", after the name of the character of "Satyricon" by Petronius. In fact, Trimalchio was a former slave who managed to get rich and tried to win the elite's favour with magnificent feasts. Then, within the writing process, "Trimalhion" turned into "The Great Gatsby".

The title, epigraph, and bitter-ironic tone of the narrative indicated that the final version, "The Great Gatsby", was chosen by analogy with numerous significant American regalia: Great Seal of the United States (the emblem of the USA), Great Awakening (a religious movement in the 18th century), the Great Society (USA), the Great Land (Alaska), the Great Central State (North Dakota), the Great Lakes region and so forth. Thus, the novel got the title "The Great Gatsby" because it sounds so American. It should be noted that the idea of "greatness" is supported by the American national concept of 'dream'. 'Dream' becomes Gatsby's guiding star, literally (the green light) and figuratively.

The next step was to select all contexts, in which keywords were used to identify characteristic features of the concept, its attributes, predicates, associations, and senses. Then, the researchers compared the obtained data with the dictionary definitions in order to show common and specific features in the concept representation. Thus, the researchers could model conceptual area of the book taking into account which role this or that concept plays within the novel.

Conceptual analysis of "The Great Gatsby" showed that its conceptual area has a field structure. The basic concept of the novel is the concept of 'dream'. It forms the core of the conceptual sphere. 'Dream' is a specific regulative concept in the American culture, as it forms social ideals and standards, and regulates people's activity. It represents the idea that every citizen of the USA can get rich and happy.

In the book by Fitzgerald, the word 'dream' is used fifteen times and this fact may cause doubt in its representativeness as a basic concept. However, there are synonymous and antonymous series, semantic complexes, and repetitions with this word creating convergence; that is, combination of various stylistic devices, which promotes the emotional impact.

In fact, convergence is supported by the plot, in which every character has his or her dream. Therefore, Jay Gatsby wants to get rich and marry his beloved woman, Nick Carraway wants to start financial business in New York, Tom Buchanan looks forward to entertainments, Daisy dreams of love and luxury, and so forth.

There is even a symbol of a broken dream in "the valley of ashes" (the name is also symbolic). It is the rest of advertisement board with "the eyes of Doctor Eckelburg". Long ago, an oculist came there to fatten his practice but failed. Consequently, the concept of 'dream' becomes a text-forming concept.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Component analysis of the word 'dream' showed that a native English speaker associates it with a positive emotional and mental state or a state of hope for a better future and expectations of the best (Old English drçam 'joy, music') (Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged 1993). The other definition indicates it as a series of thoughts, images, and sensations occurring in a person's mind while sleeping. Therefore, this concept combines and integrates two imaginary and real worlds.

Two dictionary meanings of the noun 'dream' are actualised in Fitzgerald's novel, that, dreams and ideal, ideals, as well as its synonymous series: hope, idea, wish, fantasy, and fancy. Analysing all contexts with the word 'dream' and its synonyms showed the propositional structure of the concept. It is composed of the following positions: subject - predicate - object - attribute.

The position of subject is given to the main hero Jay Gatsby, a poor guy from the American hinterland, who dreams of getting rich and living with his beloved woman. He had been full of the idea for long, dreamed it right through to the end, waited with his teeth set, so to speak, at an inconceivable pitch of intensity.

As seen, there are five statements in the novel where the subject is the noun 'dream' and its synonyms, as well as the noun 'voice'. The position of predicate is mainly filled with phrasal verbs:

- "It had gone beyond her"
- "(This voice) couldn't be over-dreamed"
- "These reveries provided an outlet for his imagination"
- "Some idea of himself had gone into loving Daisy"
- "Only the dead dream fought on…trying to touch…struggling unhappily, undespairingly"
- "His dream must have seemed so close."

It should be noted that this sequence of predicates corresponds to that in the novel, and one can note the dynamics of image 'dream' determined by the author's selection of lexical and grammatical forms. Therefore, the reader can suggest inevitability of the tragic denouement owing to transition from the simple past tense forms (dreamed, provided, and fought) to the modal with perfect infinitive (must have seemed). The same idea is supported by lexical units fight or struggle unhappily, undespairingly, at that the last word is the author's occasionalism as well as to over-dream. It is clear that these means increase emotional intensity and narrative impact on the reader.

After analysing the object position with the word dream and others, several conceptual features were identified.

- Dream has limits (boundaries): "Beyond the dreams of Castile", "Daisy tumbled short of his dreams"
- Dream is material: "The wake of his dreams", "To carry well-forgotten dreams"
- Dream is an illusion: "The colossal vitality of his illusion; he had committed himself to the following of a grail"
- Dream is air: "Breathing dreams like air'
- Dream is a dreamland: "I tossed half-sick between grotesque reality and savage, frightening dreams"
- Dream is a mystery: "Concealing his incorruptible dream"

In practice, attribute parameters specify the author's idea of dream; that is, the dead, incorruptible, the last and greatest of all human dreams, a single dream; well-forgotten dreams;

and dreams like air. Fitzgerald is obvious to absolutise dream as the only, immaculate, necessary as air, the greatest and last dream of man. The other aspect of 'dream' as a forgotten, useless, dying creature is structured by the metaphor the dead dream.

"It passed, and he began to talk excitedly to Daisy, denying everything and defending his name against accusations that had not been made. However, with every word, she was drawing further and further into herself, so he gave that up, and only the dead dream fought on as the afternoon slipped away, trying to touch what was no longer tangible, struggling unhappily, undespairingly towards that lost voice across the room."

According to the analyses, the author's reflections reveal emotional and evaluative characteristics that all dreams are illusory, and therefore are not feasible in that society where reality is grotesque. Actually, it is the collision with reality where dreams break (Reynolds 2001).

"If that was true, then he must have felt that he had lost the old warm world and paid a high price for living too long with a single dream. He must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunlight was upon the scarcely created grass. A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts, breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about…like that ashen, fantastic figure gliding towards him through the amorphous trees."

In the passage above, the words with semantics 'dream/illusion' are accumulated; nouns include 'a dream', 'ghosts', 'dreams like air' and adjectives include 'a grotesque thing', 'material without being real' (about the world), 'fantastic figure', and 'the amorphous trees'. Consequently, these lexical units create the world image as a fantastic space inhabited by ghosts, and dreams is the air they breathe.

Therefore, analysis showed that the concept of 'dream' is a basic text-forming concept of the novel "The Great Gatsby". Of course, the main method of actualising the concept is the propositional structure, in which the word dream, its synonyms, and antonyms take the positions of subject, predicate, object, and attributes. In the American culture, the concept 'dream' represents

the idea that any citizen can get rich and happy, but this idea is specified as an illusion leading to death in the novel by F. S. Fitzgerald.

It is widely accepted that each work of art is unique and it gives the "keys" to its analysis. Therefore, the researchers took the original literary text as a starting point. The concept was selected as a unit of research due to its linguistic, sociocultural, and individual nature (Laurence and Margolis 2003). In fact, conceptual analysis of a literary text includes identification and reconstruction of its concepts; that is, the individual author's world image embodied in the book's form and content. Thus, the result of such analysis is a model of conceptual sphere, whose core is the basic concept or concepts highlighted by the author's mind (Fielder 2004; Strukova et al. 2017). This study adds to the researchers' understanding of the concepts and conceptual analysis (Gimaletdinova and Halitova 2013; Ayupova and Mukhamadiarova 2016; Nurmukhametova et al. 2017; Sibgaeva et al. 2017).

CONCLUSION

As shown, the first stage of analysis was to choose the keywords carrying conceptual content. Then, it was necessary to consider their syntactical positions as it was important if they were subjects or objects, had attributive characteristics and associations; that is, what propositional structures they formed. At the third stage of analysis, the researchers compared dictionary definitions and usage of the selected units in the novel. In American culture, the concept of 'dream' represents the idea that any citizen can get rich and happy, but in the novel by F. S. Fitzgerald, this idea is presented as an illusion that leads to death. Importantly, individual author's specificity of the concept is that 'dream' does not become an idea-regulator but a living thing. This living thing struggles, but loses and dies, because there are no conditions for it to survive in that reality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper addresses the procedure and results of the conceptual analysis of the concept of 'dream' in Fitzgerald's novel "The Great Gatsby". Other works can be studied further in fu-

ture studies, also other cultures can be studied and other methods can be used by researchers to have a more comprehensive result by comparison.

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