The role of linguistic means expressing the category of evaluation in modeling subjective perception of time in a literary text

In article the language means expressing category of an assessment in the art text are investigated. The role of these means in formation of subjective perception of time, namely, perceptions of time characters or the story-teller is studied. Research is based on the assumption that the subjective perception of time differently called by psychological time, is formed in the art text by means of various categories, including means of expression of category of an assessment. Authors come to a conclusion that language means of expression of category of an assessment play an important role in modeling of psychological time in the art text. 

Key words: linguistic means, category of evaluation, literary text, text category, subjective perception of time, psychological time.

This paper investigates the role played by the linguistic means expressing the category of evaluation in the formation of subjective perception of time in a literary text. Subjective perception of time is one of the constituents of man's psychic world. Subjective perception of time is often referred to as psychological time. It is the time in which the reflection of real temporal interrelations in an individual's consciousness is being formed. Owing to the fact that psychological time has peculiar features, the reflection of temporal relations in our consciousness is not completely identical with the real time. In contrast to the time of the objective world the time of the psychic world does not always flow at the same speed (can accelerate or decelerate), can be interrupted (can freeze or vanish altogether) and chronologically inconsequent (can turn back (in recollections) or towards the future (in dreams), then return to the present moment). It is accounted for by the fact that our sense of time and estimation of time intervals duration depend on a number of phenomena directly and indirectly involved in the process of perception.

Researchers of the literary text distinguish two ways of describing time in literary works: objective literary time including cyclic time and subjective literary time including psychological time [1; 2]. Objective literary time reflects generally valid characteristics of time — one-dimensionality, unidirectionality and continuity. Subjective literary time conveys individual peculiarities of time as perceived by an author/storyteller or characters. The most studied of the two is the objective literary time. Subjective literary time, particularly its linguistic nature, requires further investigation. Some information about language means expressing subjective time in a literary text can be found in papers devoted to literary time [1–5]. However this information gives only a hazy notion of the expression plane of the time under consideration.

The analysis presented in this article is based on the hypothesis that the category of subjective perception of time, or psychological time, expresses different concepts and is formed by means of different text categories in a literary text, including those of the category of evaluation. The hypothesis, in its turn, has been put forward on the basis of the results of literary time investigations in the study of literature, psychology and text linguistics [1–26].

The main objective of our research is to determine the role played by the linguistic means expressing the category of evaluation in modeling subjective perception of time in a literary text. To attain the posed objective we have accomplished the following tasks: using the results of literary time investigations in the study of literature, psychology and text linguistics we have defined more precisely the formal and semantic aspect (the plane of content and plane of expression) of psychological time and carried out a detailed analysis of the contexts in which linguistic means expressing the category of evaluation partake in the formation of subjective perception of time. The tasks have been accomplished by means of the following linguistic methods: the method of contextual, component and stylistic analysis and the method of classification.

Subjective perception of time, or psychological time, is a kind of text (literary) time. Along with the other categories of the literary time — the story time, the time of the author, the time of the reader, etc. — this time forms the temporal structure of a literary text [27].
Subjective perception of time as one of text categories has a formal and semantic aspect (the plane of content and plane of expression). The plane of content of psychological time is characterized by ambiguity and complexity. Subjective perception of time shows the manner in which time and action flow in a literary text and conveys a subjective evaluation of the events described. In other words, the category of psychological time expresses the notions conveyed by the category of temporality, aspectuality and evaluation [28]. This, in its turn, implies that linguistic means expressing these text categories can simultaneously convey subjective perception of time. Thus, we can infer that the expression plane of psychological time is modeled by means expressing the category of reference, literary time and space, events and processes and the category of evaluation [29].

A significant role in the formation of subjective perception of time in a literary text is played by subjective evaluative modality, namely, by sensory and emotional evaluation [30]. These types of evaluation are an integral part of every literary image as they make its contents more efficient and thus organize a reader’s perception [31].

This article discusses the contexts in which sensory and emotional evaluations serve as the primary means of expression of psychological time. Subjective perception of time presented in them is revealed indirectly through visual, auditory, thermal and other sensations and emotional experiences.

Using the words of sensory evaluation authors create visual and sound images of subjective perception of time. Emotional evaluation allows the reader to perceive the movement of psychological time or its immobility.

Sound images of psychological time are formed by the words of negative auditory evaluation.

Decelerated time is conveyed by the words and expressions containing the quantitative evaluation of a sound. Linguistic means expressing the qualitative evaluation of a sound only indirectly indicate deceleration. These are the words that express such properties of a sound as clarity, precision, brokenness, rhythm, monotony and intensity:

1. He closed his eyes in order to fix his last thoughts upon his wife and children. The water, touched to gold by the early sun, the brooding mists under the banks at some distance down the stream, the fort, the soldiers, the piece of drift — all had distracted him. And now he became conscious of a new disturbance. Striking through the thought of his dear ones was a sound which he could neither ignore nor understand, a sharp, distinct, metallic percussion like the stroke of a blacksmith’s hammer upon the anvil; it had the same ringing quality. He wondered what it was, and whether immeasurably distinct or nearby — it seemed both. Its recurrence was regular, but as slow as the tolling of a death knell. He awaited each stroke with impatience and — he knew not why — apprehension. The intervals of silence grew progressively longer; the delays became maddening. With their greater infrequency the sounds increased in strength and sharpness. They hurt his ear like the thrust of a knife; he feared he would shriek. What he heard was the ticking of his watch.

(Bierce, An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge)

2. «Don’t you want me to help?» he whispered. His father did not answer and now he heard again that stiff foot striking the hollow portico with that wooden and clocklike deliberation, that outrageous overstatement of the weight it carried. The rug, hunched, not flung (the boy could tell that even in the darkness) from his father’s shoulder struck the angle of wall and floor with a sound unbelievably loud, thunderous, then the foot again, unhurried and enormous; a light came on in the house and the boy sat, tense, breathing steadily and quietly and just a little fast, though the foot itself did not increase its beat at all, descending the steps now; now the boy could see him.

(Faulkner, Barn Burning)

Deceleration of psychological time may be indicated by the lexemes denoting the sounds that one can hear only in complete silence or the sounds that cannot be perceived by human beings at all. Perception of these sounds is possible only in a special state of consciousness — full concentration of attention on the sound, deceleration of auditory perception, distraction of consciousness from other perceptions and sensations:

3. His voice was at the bottom of a green moss well somewhere under water, secret, removed.

The grass whispered under his body. He put his arm down, feeling the sheath of fuzz on it, and, far away, below, his toes creaking in his shoes. The wind sighed over his shelled ears. The world slipped bright over the glassy round of his eyeballs, like images sparked in a crystal sphere. Flowers were sun and fiery spots of sky strewn through the woodland. Birds flickered like skipped stones across the vast inverted pond of heaven. His breath raked over his teeth, going in ice, coming out fire. Insects shocked the air with electric clearness. Ten thousand individual hairs grew a millionth of an inch on his head. He heard the twin hearts
beating in each ear, the third heart beating in his throat, the two hearts throbbing his wrists, the real heart pounding his chest. The million pores on his body opened.

I'm really alive! he thought. I never knew it before, or if I did I don't remember!

( Bradbury, Dandelion Wine)

4. He was now in full possession of his physical senses. They were indeed, preternaturally keen and alert. Something in the awful disturbance of his organic system had so exalted and refined them that they made record of things never before perceived. He felt the ripples upon his face and heard their separate sounds as they struck. He looked at the forest on the bank of the stream, saw the individual trees, the leaves and the veining of each leaf — saw the very insects upon them: the locusts, the brilliant bodied flies, the gray spiders stretching their webs from twig to twig. He noted the prismatic colors in all the dewdrops upon a million blades of grass. The humming of the gnats that danced above the eddies of the stream, the breathing, the faint, steady suspiration . He noted the prismatic colors in all the dewdrops upon a million blades of grass. The humming of the gnats that danced above the eddies of the stream, the beating of the dragonflies' wings, the strokes of the water spiders' legs, like oars which had lifted their boat — all these made audible music. A fish slid along beneath his eyes and he heard the rush of its body parting the water.

(Bierce, An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge)

If sound images are formed by the words denoting loud, staccato sounds, deceleration is conveyed by other means — the words of the category of indefiniteness indicating obscurity of a sound and the phrases creating the effect of a silent film:

5. The second shot came as he twisted the gun free from the other’s fingers. Gun in hand, he stepped back. He felt a vague amazement and horror as Harmsworth fell like a log to the floor and lay there. Even more vaguely, he was aware that a door had burst open, and that a girl was standing there, her mouth opening and shutting, making sounds. Then the door slammed. He heard a frantic dialing, and a high-pitched girl’s voice screaming something about police.

(Mayne Hull, The Wishes We Make)

Vanished or frozen time is often represented in the image of a specially emphasized silence. Words and expressions conveying turned off sounds signal a stop of time in the minds of characters. Linguistic means introducing a negative sensory evaluation emphasize the static nature of the situation depicted. These are the words and expressions denoting hushed, often continuous and monotonous sounds. On the background of complete silence these sounds are deformed in consciousness of the subject — grow (increase in volume, strength), are converted into sounds of a different kind in accordance with the nature of perceptual distortions. Not only do these metamorphoses indicate the complete lack of movement and sound in the atmosphere surrounding a character but they also show that the character is in a state of suspense:

6. One minute to twelve. The room had suddenly come to a frightening, unexpected silence and stillness, like an unexploded bomb. A clock tingled twelve in the distance. My palms were as wet as sponges. Someone coughed, and I expected the windows to rattle. With slow scraping feet that could be heard before they appeared the Secretary and the porters came solemnly down the stairs. The elder porter raised his voice.

(Gordon, Doctor in the House)

7. His father did not answer, and now for perhaps half a minute there was no sound at all save that of breathing, the faint, steady suspiration of complete and intent listening.

(Faulkner, Barn Burning)

8. For an hour he watched the sun creep up the patterned folds of the chintz curtains. In the deep quiet a trapped wasp buzzing on the inside of the window-pane assumed the proportions of a clamour. From time to time another buzzing drifted down from upstairs, resembling several more larger wasps caught on larger window-panes. He heard low footfalls, the clink of bottles, the clamour of pouring water.

(Fitzgerald, The Lees of Happiness)

9. His voice just stopped. It didn't trail off like a voice coming to a stop. One second it was there, going on, word by word, in the stillness which filled the square and the crowd in front of the courthouse and was stiller for the grinding of the July flies in the two catalpas rising above the heads of the people who had crowded up on the patch of grass roots. The voice was going there, word by word, then suddenly it was not there. There was only the sound of the July flies, which seems to be inside your head as though it were the grind and whir of the springs and cogs which are you and which will not stop no matter what you say until they are good and ready.

He stood there a half minute, not saying a word, and not moving. He didn't even seem to be noticing the crowd down there. Then he seemed, all at once, to discover them, and grinned.

(Warren, All the King’s Men)
Accelerated time is portrayed by onomatopoeic verbs denoting sharp, staccato sounds and the words indicating such properties of a sound as continuity, integrity (unbrokenness), speed, impetuosity, intensity and obscurity. Together these means create the image of a rapidly moving object or person:

10. By the time he passed four thousand feet he had reached terminal velocity, the wind was a solid beating wall of sound against which he could move no faster. He was flying now straight down, at two hundred fourteen miles per hour.
   (Bach, Jonathan Livingston Seagull)

11. An appalling plash within two yards of him was followed by a loud, rushing sound, diminuendo, which seemed to travel back through the air to the fort and died in an explosion which stirred the very river to its deeps!
   (Bierce, An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge)

12. It happened that morning, then, just after sunrise, that Jonathan Livingston Seagull fired directly through the center of Breakfast Flock, ticking off two hundred twelve miles per hour, eyes closed, in a great roaring shriek of wind and feathers. The Gull of Fortune smiled upon him this once, and no one was killed.
   (Bach, Jonathan Livingston Seagull)

13. While I gazed, this fissure rapidly widened — the entire orb of the satellite burst at once upon my sight — my brain reeled as I saw the mighty walls rushing asunder — there was a long tumultuous shouting sound like the voice of a thousand waters — and the deep and dark tarn at my feet closed sullenly and silently over the fragments of the «House of Usher».
   (Poe, The Fall of the House of Usher)

Visual images of subjective perception of time are formed by the words of negative visual evaluation. Deceleration or full stop of psychological time causes visual perception either to stop functioning or become overly bright and clear. In the latter case an individual’s consciousness captures the finest details of the surrounding world and the subtlest shades of color. The linguistic means modeling frozen and decelerated time indicate the brightness and intensity of colors — bright, crystal, sun and fiery spots, the intensity and deceleration of visual perception — saw the individual trees, the leaves and the veining of each leaf (see examples 3, 4) and the discontinuance of perception:

14. From the front window I saw my companions playing below in the street. Their cries reached me weakened and indistinct and, leaning my forehead against the cool glass, I looked over at the dark house where she lived. I may have stood there for an hour, seeing nothing but the brown-clad figure cast by my imagination, touched discreetly by the lamplight at the curved neck, at the hand upon the railings and at the border below the dress.
   (Joyce, Araby)

15. When I opened the window just now a draught of wet, cold air gushed into the room and sent my loose pages whirling. Yet the wind had sunk to a gentle soughing, and the heavy rain had diminished to a chill drizzle as the huge skirts of the storm swept northward. Looking from the lighted room into the darkness, I could see nothing and hear nothing but the muted wind. The darkness seemed to press close up to the house and to isolate it, as if there had been an unthinkable lapse of time and the earth were slowly turning in sunless and starless space where movement and non-movement are the same. I shivered; and shut and curtained the window.
   (Aldington, Now Lies She There)

Linguistic means of visual evaluation depicting accelerated time indicate such properties of colors as vagueness, obscurity, heterogeneity and also the fuzziness of vision and great speed of movement of an object or person:

16. Here he came this minute, a blurred gray shape roaring out of a dive, flashing one hundred fifty miles per hour past his instructor.
   (Bach, Jonathan Livingston Seagull)

17. He did, by pushing the tire down the sidewalk with all the force in his body. Ground, sky and houses melted into a mad palette, my ears throbbed, I was suffocating.
   (Lee, To Kill a Mockingbird)

18. Suddenly he felt himself whirled round and round-spinning like a top. The water, the banks, the forests, the now distant bridge, fort and men-all were commingled and blurred. Objects were represented by their colors only; circular horizontal streaks of color—that was all he saw. He had been caught in a vortex and was being whirled on with a velocity of advance and gyration that made him giddy and sick.
   (Bierce, An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge)
Psychological time is expressed by the words modeling negative emotional evaluation in a literary text. The words and expressions that form the emotional evaluation indicate a disturbance of perception and deformation of the flow of time in the consciousness of a subject, intensify the sense of detachment from the reality and the lack of contact with the external world.

Decelerated time is conveyed by the means describing the state of impatience caused by a tense expectation:

19. She was silent for a longer time than it usually took his valet to arrange Rohan's cravat. Rohan wasn't a patient man, but he managed to hold himself quiet. He fairly bubbled with questions, but he would be patient now. He would wait her out. Finally, spreading her dirty hands in front of her, she said, «I'm not ruined. I was never ruined.»

(Coulter, The Wild Baron)

20. November of the year 1916. A woman traveling from New York to the South West, by one of the tourist trains. On the third day the train lost time more and more. She raged with painful impatience: No good, at every station the train sat longer. They had passed the prairie lands and entered the mountain and desert region. They ought soon to arrive, soon. This was already the desert of grey-white sage and blue mountains. She ought to be there, soon, soon she ought to be there. This journey alone should be over. But the train comfortable stretched its length in the stations, and would never arrive. There was no end. It could not arrive. She could not bear it.

(Lawrence, The Wilful Woman)

Accelerated time is expressed by the words depicting the state of agitation, panic or strong shock:

21. I jumped and struggled my way to the front of the restless crowd. My pulse shot in my ears. My face was burning hot and I felt my stomach had been suddenly plucked from my body. Suddenly I found myself on top of the Secretary.

(Gordon, Doctor in the House)

22. Mrs. Carmody was aware of a harsh woman’s voice screaming. With a terrible shock, she realized it was her own. The effort to choke that wild cry was so horrible that she fell back against the seat, the blood hammering at her temples. She sagged there, sick, cold as ice, her vision blurred, her throat ash dry, every muscle in her body jumping with tiny, painful surges of nervous convulsion; and for a long moment, her mind wouldn’t hold thoughts.

(Vogt, The Ghost)

The analysis of the linguistic means expressing the category of evaluation in the descriptions of subjective perception of time confirms the thesis that psychological time is a complex phenomenon - its formation involves different types of evaluation presented in the text by means of various categories.

In this paper we investigate subjective perception of time on a particular linguistic material - extracts from English and American literary works of XIX-XX centuries. However, it appears that similar results can be obtained by studying broader material as well as by studying psychological time on the material of other languages.

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Коркем мәтіндегі ұақытты субъективті кабылдауды модельдеу бага беру категориясының білдіретін тілдік құралдарын ролі

Макалада коркем мәтіндегі ұақытты субъективті кабылдауды моделілуе бага беру категориясының білдіретін тілдік құралдары арқылы дәстүрлі, тілдік құралdarы ұақытты субъективті кабылдауды жаттығу кезінде айқындау, пәрсонал және немесе енгізмелешкен ұақытты қабылдау жоспарын зерттеді. Зерттеу ұақытты субъективті кабылдауды коркем мәтіндегі аталған категорияның түрі, құралдар әрекеті бірлікпен, сондықтан бага беру категориясының психологиалық ұақыттың тәуелділігіне негізделеді. Макалада авторлар коркем мәтіндегі ұақытты кабылдауды бага беру категориясының білдіретін құралдарының басты роль аткарады деген көркемінің жасады.

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Роль языковых средств выражения категории оценки в моделировании субъективного восприятия времени в художественном тексте

В статье исследованы языковые средства, выражающие категорию оценки в художественном тексте. Изучена роль этих средств в формировании субъективного восприятия времени, а именно восприятия времени персонажами или рассказчиком. Исследование базируется на предположении о том, что субъективное восприятие времени, иначе именуемое психологическим временем, формируется в художественном тексте средствами различных категорий, включая средства выражения категории оценки. Авторами отмечено, что языковые средства выражения категории оценки играют важную роль в моделировании психологического времени в художественном тексте.
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