АКТУАЛЬНЫЕ ПРОБЛЕМЫ ЛИНГВИСТИКИ И ЛИТЕРАТУРОВЕДЕНИЯ

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Visual code as textual enhancement based on Harry Potter novels by J. K. Rowling

The article analyzes the visual ekphrasis representation within the artistic discourse of Harry Potter novels by J. K. Rowling. It also reveals the author strategies in integrating the visual code in the novels, as well as the code main functions.

Keywords: audiovisual translations, translations of poetic incorporations, Harry Potter adaptations, J. K. Rowling

Visual code in the novels is represented by pictorial art (pictures inside Hogwarts, canvas in St. Mungo’s Hospital, headmasters’ portraits), photography (the Order of the Phoenix group picture, the Potter family photos), decorative and applied arts (tapestry, stained-glass windows) and sculpture (the statue of One-Eyed Witch, gargoyles).

People depicted on the canvas are autonomous characters, who are able to talk, think, feel, and even move. This sets the Harry Potter series apart from the previous literature, where the description of nature and an appearance of a character were static and perceived as an integral unity, which was, in fact, the portrait and landscape genres, borrowed by literature from the fine art. In the Rowling’s novels, however, the animated and a static images change over.

Visual code in the novels has four main functions, they are: sacral, aesthetic, plot-forming and spacial.

The picture of Sir Cadogan was first mentioned in the third part of the heptalogy. It hangs on the seventh floor, which was not mentioned in the previous books. Thus, the picture becomes a new orientation point in the castle space. The similar function is performed by the Troll Tapestry, which was first described in the fifth book: “Tonight, eight o’clock, seventh floor opposite that tapestry of Barnabas the Barmy being clubbed by those trolls”1. Similar to Sir Cadogan picture, the Troll Tapestry locates on the seventh floor and widens the space horizontally. This visualizes the castle and creates an illusion of a three-dimensional space. Artistic elements often mark entries. An entrance in the Dumbledore office is guarded by the Gargoyles Statue. The secret passageway to Hogsmeade is concealed by the statue of One-Eyed Witch and the entrance to the Gryffindor
common room is hidden behind the Fat Lady portrait. Each of these objects possesses magic properties. Only by uttering a password or by casting a spell, one can make the guards open the secret rooms. Consequently, ekphrastic elements personalize the castle and create an illusion of an animate organism. Mystical atmosphere inside Hogwarts is also formed by artistic elements, each of which carries a code or secret information.

The magic helper motif, initially described by V. Propp regarding Russian folk tales, fulfills a plot-forming function in the novels. In the second book Sir Cadogan shows Harry the way to the Divination class. In the fourth part, a stained window, depicting a mermaid, helps Harry do solve the riddle of the Golden Egg. In the sixth book the motif of magic helper develops more. Phineas Black, whose portrait hangs in the Headmaster’s office, travels to the picture in the house of the Blacks to inform the Order about the attack on Arthur Weasley. Later, in the seventh book, the portrait of Ariana reveals Harry a secret passage way to Hogwarts.

Visual basis also touches upon the bi-worldness issue. Here the word bi-worldness means coexistence of existential world and netherworld. Fine art and photography symbolize the presence of a dead person in the world of the living. Portraits become a representation of a human soul. This statement can be confirmed by the Dumbledore’s portrait, which appears in his office after his death: “And a new portrait had joined the ranks of the dead headmasters and headmistresses of Hogwarts: Dumbledore was slumbering in a golden frame over the desk, his half-moon spectacle perched upon his crooked nose, looking peaceful and untroubled.” Similar function is fulfilled by the ghosts — disembodied spirits of ones-living persons. Moaning Myrtle tells Harry the story of her death, which helps him to find the Serpent of Slytherin, while the ghost of Helena Rawenclaw gives Harry one of the horcruxes. Consequently, according to the functional aspect, the ghosts of the Hogwarts Castle join the category of visual code.

Family ties motif is also represented by visual elements. This can be illustrated by the description of the Black family tapestry: “The tapestry looked immensely old; it was faded and looked as though Doxys had gnawed it in places. Nevertheless, the golden thread with which it was embroidered still glinted brightly enough to show them a sprawling family tree dating back (as far as Harry could tell) to the Middle Ages. Large words at the very top of the tapestry read: The Noble and Most Ancient House of Black Toujours pur”. Such a detailed description becomes an important point in understanding the scope of a pure blood magic society. Moreover, it substitutes the story of the Black family. Parts of the tapestry are playing role of codes. The golden line represents pure blood and the faded colour of the whole tapestry symbolizes lost power of the family. The visual pieces represent not only the family ties, but also its cutting. The Blacks burn the portraits of Sirius and Tonks from the family tapestry, while on the Weasley family photograph Harry notices the absence of their son Percy. Consequently, visual elements fulfill a key motif of the novels — the family motif.
The intermedial principle in Harry Potter heptalogy functions not only as an aesthetic and entertaining, but also as a plot-element. Visual ekphrasis represents the cultural experience of the magical world, imitating diachronism, three-dimensional temporal space where visual elements function as a guide.

The novel visual basis is not a classic ekphrasis. This statement can be explained by metaphorical nature of the portrait genre as an image of soul. The canvas in Rowling’s novels function as autonomously existing characters, which become familiar not through the descriptive methods, but on the basis of their interaction with other characters of the story. This is dictated by the possibilities of the fantasy genre to implement abstract ideas literally.

The spatial marker function is also realized through visual basis. Here its main task is to visualize and expand the castle. Each first mentioned visual marker corresponds to a new storyline, the development of which, as a rule, transforms the aesthetic and spatial function of a visual maker to the function of the magic helper, thereby realizing the existential and ultramundane function.

Thus, Rowling’s novels function in a certain intersemiotic space as well as confirm the dominance of the visual arts in contemporary culture.

Endnotes


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Translation Editing as a Method of Quality Assurance

The article discusses the problem of qualified personnel searching for different postranslational stages of a translation project: revision, review, proofreading, formal quality control. Competence and requirements to the specialists are considered. The mismatch between the actual practice of translation companies and the curriculum of educational programs is identified.

Keywords: quality assurance, editing, revision, review, proofreading

Translation is a complex multistage creative activity. In addition to the knowledge of translation rules and standards of both languages, a translator has to be an expert in a specific subject area. It is very important for specialized translation, particularly technical one. Translator’s professional linguistic education belongs to humanities but the content of a technical text refers to natural sciences. This situation determines the problem of qualified personnel searching for translation companies. Additionally, today market shows a growth of requirements to translation quality and reduction of deadlines.

In case of interpretation, the final product is produced by one person (interpreter). As for translation, it is possible to process a text by several people. The