The stylistic features of the nature descriptions in the English literary novels

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the problem of the nature descriptions’ role in the English literary novels. The stylistic features of the nature descriptions in the English literary novels are found out and analyzed. The author emphasises that the identified stylistic devices help create the pervading atmosphere of the novels, transmit the characters’ feelings, give the amazing similies, endow the nature with the human traits. It is defined that the main themes and ideas of the novels are sent through the nature descriptions.

Keywords: nature descriptions, English literary novels, stylistic features, stylistic devices.

Introduction. One of the main problems linguostylistics deals with is the study of the stylistic devices and expressive means of the language, appropriate and contextually driven use of which allows to give a deeper and clearer presentation of the content of art and depict the artistic images. The study of the literature is impossible without nature studying because the literary text not only embodies the author’s vision of the world but also reflects the national identity of the people’s culture. The nature descriptions are an integral part of the classical literature’s works. The problem of studying the functions of the nature in the literary texts has attracted the attention of many researchers for a long time. There are numerous studies that reveal the role of nature in the work of some writers, as well as the attempts at a generalization and systematization of the extensive material. The nature opens the emotional and evaluative content of the text. Describing the nature the features of the described subjects usually have the author’s assessment in the form of the personifications, epithets, metaphors and similars.

Overview of the publications. The theoretical framework draws heavily on the various literary stylistic theories, such as G. Leech and M. Short, P. Simpson, and M. Toolan, which precisely illustrate how stylistics creates a bridge between literary criticism and linguistics, what prominent linguistic features in literary texts can be, and how these techniques function.

Aim of the article is to find out and analyze the stylistic features of the nature descriptions in the English literary novels.

Materials and methods. In the novels “Wuthering Heights” by Emily Brontë and “The Mill on the Floss” by George Eliot the obvious contrast is observed concerning the role of the nature’s describing and its influence on the characters.

In the novel “Wuthering Heights” by Emily Brontë nature accompanies the characters, its descriptions take place at any important event, the author often personifies the nature thereby showing its value. For instance, the nature descriptions given in a dangerous time for the characters set the tone of the narrative, create an atmosphere of mystical and at the same time real: “From the top I could see woods and fields and farms, even a darkling gleam. The sky was as black as coal dust, flashing almost constantly with internal lightnings. The air had a clear ochre glow. That sense of mystery swarmed my heart and mind” [2, cp. 32]. During the first meeting of Catherine and Heathcliff it was a wonderful summer weather as a good sign of the future events: “One fine summer morning – it was the beginning of harvest” [2, p. 56]. That fateful day when Catherine and Heathcliff escaped the house, forcing maid Nellie worry, a monotonous sound of the rain only enhances the alarm: “I, too, anxious to lie down, opened my lattice and put my head out to hearken, though it rained” [2, p. 64].

In the novel “The Mill on the Floss” by George Eliot nature serves primarily to enrich the narrative. Thus, George Eliot was a naturalist, her descriptions of nature are very detailed, unlike the Iaiconic, but no less talented descriptions by Emily Bronte. The concise descriptions of the landscapes, the precise indications of the place (Tulliver’s house) and time (five o’clock) is a more typical naturalistic manner of the nature’s presentation by George Eliot.

The nature is like the background of the events creating an atmosphere of a suspense, tragedy, premonition of an impending disaster. The nature descriptions convey the theme of darkness, disheartened by means of a semantic repetition: dull, dark, oppressive, dreary, melancholy. For instance, in the novel “Wuthering Heights” by Emily Brontë the acquaintance of Mr. Lockwood with the Wuthering Heights takes place in a rainy day and is also rather unfavorable to the owner. Coming to the estate, Mr. Lockwood exclaims: “Rough weather!” [2, p. 98] exacerbating the reader’s attention and showing the negative character’s attitude to the weather and probably to the situation. One section of the diary in the novel “Wuthering Heights” by Emily Brontë begins with a description of an awful Sunday when Catherine and Heathcliff decided to escape. This day it was pouring as if predicting the misery and ambiguity of the following events and being a symbol of some rebellion (going to rebel, flooding with rain): “An awful Sunday”, commenced the paragraph beneath. ‘I wish my father were back again. Hindley is a detestable substitute – his conduct to Heathcliff is atrocious – H. and I are going to rebel-we took our initiatory step this evening. All day had been flooding with rain”[2, p. 127]. The atmosphere of cold is present even in the manners, behavior and gestures of the characters, in the given below example Mrs. Heathcliff looks at the companion in a cool, regardless manner showing her disbelief and very cool (like the weather outdoors) attitude to the outsiders: “I stared - she stared also: at any rate, she kept her eyes on me in a cool, regardless manner, exceedingly embarrassing and disagreeable” [2, p. 222].

The mood of the characters in the novel “The Mill on the Floss” by George Eliot, compared with the novel by...
Emily Bronte, does not always correspond the nature, especially at the end of the novel. However, apart from the differences, there are some common features that unite the novels “Wuthering Heights” by Emily Brontë and “The Mill on the Floss” by George Eliot. The first is patriotism. The authors describe the nature of England with love, and although their novels often include the fictional toponyms, it is obvious that their native land is described with the soul and trembling. This is reflected in the frequent references to the heather, peat bogs, a variety of trees and shrubs typical of England.

Thus, at the beginning of the novel “Wuthering Heights” by Emily Brontë the author admires the country and compares it to the perfect misanthropist’s heaven: “This is certainly a beautiful country! In all England, I do not believe that I could have fixed on a situation so completely removed from the stir of society. A perfect misanthropist’s heaven” [2, p. 287]. The description of the Wuthering Heights is given for the first time is symbolic: “Wuthering Heights is the name of Mr. Heathcliffs dwelling. “Wuthering” being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather. Pure, bracing ventilation they must have up there at all times, indeed: one may guess the power of the north wind blowing over the edge, by the excessive slant of a few stunted firs at the end of the house; and by a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way, as if craving alms of the sun” [2, p. 32].

The realistic portrayal of the main characters, their temperaments are partly similar in the novels “Wuthering Heights” by Emily Brontë and “The Mill on the Floss” by George Eliot. Kathy and Maggie – the protagonists of the novels are bright, intelligent and outstanding personalities, but at the same time they have a rebellious spirit, they boldly protest against the society and demonstrate the social and human drawbacks of the people.

In general, the nature descriptions perform the psychological function in the both authors, emphasizing the feelings of the desperate characters. The gloomy, dull nature emphasizes a sense of melancholy and sadness often through the color. Thus, the grey color in the novel by George Eliot creates a certain emotional effect being painted in the dark tones. The category of color is also important for Emily Brontë, who draws the attention to the story and introduces a variety of shades which gives the descriptions of the nature visibility and credibility. The adjectives with a sense dark, cold are often at the same time coloristic (grey, lead, dim) and used by her to create a romantic landscape.

The stylistic features of the novels “Wuthering Heights” by Emily Brontë and “The Mill on the Floss” by George Eliot are the usage of the epithets, similes, metaphors, personification and others: depersonification, repetitions, antonomasia, alliteration, parallel structures, hyperbole that enrich the writers’ speech and make the product highly artistic. It is defined that he most frequent stylistic device used in the analyzed novels is the epithets. Both writers often use them (hot air, the soft sky, high grey clouds, etc.).

Thus, in the novel “Wuthering Heights” by Emily Brontë the epithets wild and stormy show that the nature seems to be indignant about the tragic event when Mr. Earnsho dies. He died quietly in his chair one October evening, seated by the fire-side. A high wind blustered round the house, and roared in the chimney: it sounded wild and stormy. The epithets are also used to represent a clear contrast between the two buildings where the first is the embodiment of something bright and pleasant (epithets mellow, sweet are used to characterize an estate of Skvortsov), and the second is associated with something dark and gloomy (epithets steady rain describes the Wuthering Heights). As for the Catherine’s love for Heathcliff, the author uses an epithet eternal, which means that this love is infinite. Along with the Catherine’s death clear days pass and everything is changed in the nature. Flowers are covered with snow, the birds do not sing, the leaves of the trees are fades and blackened. The used epithets describing the weather (dreary, chill, dismal) coincide with a general sad mood.

In the novel “The Mill on the Floss” by George Eliot in the description of the scene, when Maggie and Stephen float down the river passing silent sunny fields and pastures, the epithet silent reflects the silence of this place, and the personification the breath of the young, unwearied day means that their relationship is in its infancy; “they glided rapidly along, Stephen rowing, helped by the backward-flowing tide, past the Tafton trees and houses; on between the silent sunny fields and pastures, which seemed filled with a natural joy that had no reproach for theirs. The breath of the young, unwearied day, the delicious rhythmic dip of the oars, the fragmentary song of a passing bird heard now and then” [3, p. 109].

Another common devices are the similies, personification and metaphors.

It is defined that similars are used to compare Catherine’s love for Linton and Heathcliff: “My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I am Heathcliff!” [2, p. 109]. Thus, the comparison of love for Linton with the leaves underfoot (like the foliage in the woods) suggests that love is temporary. This view is supported by the another comparison time will change it as winter changes the trees, indicating a fleeting feeling. Little Kathy – the daughter of the protagonist, compared with a tree: “she grew like a larch” [2, p. 267].

In the novel “The Mill on the Floss” by George Eliot to show the lack of prospects for a good life, Tom’s future is compared with a sandbank (future before him as a tempting stretch of smooth sandy beach). In the description of the river Floss the similars swift river once rose, like an angry, destroying god, indicates the element is angry like god who takes revenge on the people. The second similar green and rocky steeps that they seem to have a natural fitness, like the mountainpine shows the contrast between the ruined houses after the flood, and ruins that look beautiful, organically and naturally, as growing on the mountain as well as pines.

Such stylistic device as personification is found in the novel “Wuthering Heights” by Emily Brontë when the day Heathcliff disappears again the described storm symbolizes his grief. “It was a very dark evening for summer: the clouds appeared inclined to thunder, and I said we had better all sit down; the approaching rain
would be certain to bring him home without further trouble . . . ” [2, p. 377]. Personification clouds appeared inclined to thunder, approaching rain, growing thunder and a phrases dark evening show the Heathcliff’s emotional state who is in an absolute despair. The next example of personification is a phrase arid wilderness of furze and whinstone which represents Heathcliff as some faceless and soulless creature. “Tell her what Heathcliff is: an unregretted creature, without refinement, without cultivation; an arid wilderness of furze and whinstone. I’d as soon put that little canary into the park on a winter’s day, as recommend you to bestow your heart on him!” [2, p. 209]. Reminding Catherine’s childhood during her illness the author adds the landscape splendor with the personification clouds had touched the swells in the following example “Bonny bird wheeling over our heads in the middle of the moor. It wanted to get to its nest, for the clouds had touched the swells, and it felt rain coming” [2, p. 321]. One more personification “frosty air that eat about her shoulders as keen as a knife” [2, p. 311] creates an ice atmosphere and reflects a deadly cold in her soul.

It is defined that the metaphors are also often used in the novel “Wuthering Heights” by Emily Brontë. In fact, Wuthering Heights seems to be rooted in metaphorical analogies. Brontë’s imagery, most of which cluster the novel “Wuthering Heights” by Emily Brontë in the below example the metaphor sky and hills mingled in one bitter whirl of wind draws in the mind the natural chaos, a metaphorical epithet suffocating emphasizes the fear and helplessness of man to the nature: “I approached a window to examine the weather. A sorrowful sight I saw: dark night coming down prematurely, and sky and hills mingled in one bitter whirl of wind and suffocating snow” [2, p. 178].

In the novel “The Mill on the Floss” by George Eliot the state of nature corresponds the mood of the characters. Maggie loves his brother and when she, being in sorrow, sees Tom, her mood changed immediately, and two metaphorical impersonation illustrate it: “The sun was really breaking out; the sound of the mill seemed cheerful again” [3, p. 178]. Metaphor mistake of nature, which is used in relation to Maggie, indicates its difference from others. The metaphor the flood of sunshine creates an image of the sun-filled rooms, giving the motives to the hero back to business.

It is defined that repetitions, alliteration and antithesis are often used in the novel “Wuthering Heights” by Emily Brontë. On closer analysis, one discovers that the most distinctive single trait in Emily Brontë’s narrative style is repetition. Everything in the novel is a kind of double. There are not only verbal repetitions, but the plot, structure, narrators, and the characters themselves form a double to each other. There are even two diary accounts, Catherine’s diary forming a kind of inner text to Lockwood’s diary which forms the outer text. Most of the repeated words in the text are content words (Noun, Verb, Adjective and their derivatives). Words repeated tend to stick longer in the mind. But repetition is confined not only to words or sentences but extends to include even ideas (images) that express the theme(s) of the novel. The repetition of the pronoun same with the nouns means that in the Heathcliff’s eyes the Skvortsov’s life is monotone: “It was the same room into which he had been ushered, as a guest, eighteen years before: the same moon shone through the window; and the same autumn landscape lay outside” [2, p. 301]. An inextricable link with the nature is perfectly reflected in the Heathcliff’s words that in every landscape he sees Catherine: “I can not look down to this floor, but her features are shaped in the flags! In every cloud, in every tree – filling the air at night, and caught by glimpses in every object by day – I am surrounded with her image!” [2, p. 213]. This idea is expressed by the repetition of words every (cloud, tree, object).

In the novel “The Mill on the Floss” by George Eliot the repetition of the words same (flowers, hips, haws, redbreasts) focuses on the details: “We could never have loved the earth so well if we had had no childhood in it, – if it were not the earth where the same flowers come up again every spring that we used to gather with our tiny fingers as we sat lisping to ourselves on the grass; the same hips and haws on the autumn’s hedgerows; the same redbreasts that we used to call "God’s birds,” because
they did no harm to the precious crops” [3, p. 145]. In the description of the town Basset the epithet poor is repeated: “Basset had a poor soil, poor roads, a poor nonresident landlord, a poor nonresident vicar, and rather less than half a curate, also poor” [3, p. 109], underlining its special emptiness.

In the novel “Wuthering Heights” by Emily Brontë the antithesis glittering moons and certainly no light indicates that the external harmony in the house of the Lyntonovs is completely opposite the inner state of its inhabitants “glancing from me up to the windows, which reflected a score of glittering moons, but showed no lights from within” [2, p. 209].

It is defined that alliteration (soft thaw, sunshine, snow) gives the opportunity to feel and hear the roar of a spring breeze, the shining sun, enjoy the atmosphere of the fields and hills. “These are the earliest flowers at the Heights, – she exclaimed. They remind me of soft thaw winds, and warm sunshine, and nearly melted snow” [2, p. 89].

Antithesis, exclamatory sentences, parallel structures, hyperbole and alliteration deep and dank, sullenly and silently are also found in the novel “The Mill on the Floss” by George Eliot but they are seldom used. The uniform definitions, parallelism and alliteration facilitate the transfer of both the intellectual and emotive information. For instance, the rain knocking on the window (rain was beating heavily against the window-personification) as a sign of something bad, changes in the weather are displayed in the antithesis: heat and drought, wind and rain. The next example is alliteration “During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day” [3, p. 176].

Conclusions. The identified stylistic devices help create the pervading atmosphere of the novels, transmit the characters’ feelings, give the amazing similies, endow the nature with the human traits. The main theme and the idea of the novel are sent through the nature. The obvious contrast is observed concerning the role of the nature descriptions in the analyzed novels. In “Wuthering Heights” nature is not necessary in isolation, it accompanies the characters, merge with them. In the novel “Wuthering Heights” by Emily Brontë the nature descriptions has an independent significance, it is the like the other characters of the novel. The most frequent stylistic devices are epithets, metaphors and personification. Repetitions, alliteration and antithesis are also widely used in the novels. In the novel “The Mill on the Floss” nature serves primarily to enrich the narrative, and because George Eliot was a naturalist, its descriptions of nature are very detailed, unlike the laconic, but no less talented descriptions Bronte. In the novel by George Elliot “The Mill on the Floss” nature descriptions takes the social motives, the image of the river Floss is one of the leading images to express the main idea of the novel. Another difference is the influence of the state of nature on the characters. In “Wuthering Heights” the nature descriptions take place at any important event, it often personifies the nature, thereby showing its value. In the novel George Elliot “The Mill on the Floss”, on the contrary, the nature does not always correspond the mood of the characters, especially at the end of the novel.

LITERATURE


Стилистические особенности описаний природы в английских литературных романах
М. Г. Шемуда

Аннотация: Статья посвящена проблеме роли описаний природы в английских литературных романах. Выявлены и проанализированы стилистические особенности описаний природы английских литературных романов. Автор подчеркивает, что выявленные стилистических средств помогает создать атмосферу всепроникающих романов, передают чувства персонажей, дают удивительные сравнения, наделяют природу человеческими чертами. Определено, что основные темы и идеи английских литературных романов раскрываются через описания природы.

Ключевые слова: описания природы, английские литературные романы, стилистические особенности, стилистические средства.