
Linguistic and stylistic features of O. Henry's stories

Fayzulloyeva Zilola Zafarovna
fajzullaevazilola566@gmail.com

Senior teacher, The department of lexicology and stylistics of the English language, Samarkand institute of foreign languages

Annotation *The article examines the linguistic and stylistic features of O. Henry's stories. By analyzing narrative techniques, lexical and syntactic constructions, figurative language devices, and discursive strategies, the study demonstrates how humorous, emotionally resonant, and structurally original stories are created. Particular attention is paid to the writer's use of irony and unusual endings.*

Keywords *Discourse analysis, surprise ending, misunderstanding, delusion, ironic, humorous, sentimental coloring, denouement, colloquial expressions, dialecticisms, slang, phonetic means, lexical means, syntactic means, dialogic insertions*

O. Genri hikoyalarining lingvistik va stilistik xususiyatlari

Fayzulloyeva Zilola Zafarovna
fajzullaevazilola566@gmail.com

Katta o'qituvchi, Ingliz tili leksikologiyasi va stilistikasi kafedrasida, Samarqand chet tillar instituti

Annotatsiya *Maqolada O.Genri hikoyalarining lingvistik va stilistik xususiyatlari ko'rib chiqiladi. Tadqiqot bayon qilish texnikasi, leksik va sintaktik konstruksiyalar, obrazli til vositalari va diskursiv strategiyalarni tahlil qilib, kulgili, emotsional rezonansli va strukturaviy jihatdan o'ziga xos hikoyalar yaratilganligini ko'rsatadi. Yozuvchining istehzo va g'ayrioddiy yakunlardan foydalanishiga alohida e'tibor beriladi.*

Kalit so'zlar *Nutq tahlili, kutilmagan yakun, noto'g'ri tushunish, aldash, istehzo, hazil, sentimental rang berish, tanbeh, so'zlashuv iboralari, dialektizmlar, jargon, fonetik vositalar, leksik vositalar, sintaktik vositalar, dialogik qo'shimchalar*

Лингвистические и стилистические особенности рассказов О. Генри

Файзуллоева Зилола Зафаровна
fajzullaevazilola566@gmail.com

Старший преподаватель, Кафедра лексикологии и стилистики английского языка, Самаркандский институт иностранных языков

Аннотация *В статье рассматриваются лингвистические и стилистические особенности рассказов О. Генри. Анализируя повествовательные приёмы, лексические и синтаксические конструкции, образные средства языка и дискурсивные стратегии, в исследовании автор демонстрирует то, как создаются юмористические, эмоционально резонансные и структурно*

оригинальные рассказы. Особое внимание уделяется использованию писателем иронии и необычных концовок.

Ключевые слова

Дискурсивный анализ, неожиданная развязка, недоразумение, заблуждение, иронический, юмористический, сентиментальная окраска, развязка, разговорные выражения, диалектизмы, сленг, фонетические средства, лексические средства, синтаксические средства, диалогические вставки

Introduction

Many people acknowledge O. Henry (William Sydney Porter) as a master of the American short story. His works from the turn of the 20th century stand out for their distinctive linguistic design in addition to their creative storylines. O. Henry's unique stylistic style, conversational language, humorous phrasing, subtle irony, and expressive narrative structures all play a part in his prose. Using techniques from stylistics, discourse analysis, and narratology, this article aims to systematize these linguistic and stylistic characteristics.

Eichenbaum, in his article "O. Henry and the Theory of the Short Story", wrote that "such a parodist, who knows his craft to the last detail and continually initiates the reader into its secrets, we seem not to have had since the time of Sterne" (Eikhenbaum, 1927; 192). In the early American literature of the 19th century, the name of O. Henry can be compared with that of Mark Twain.

The manner of O. Henry's writing is outstanding. He is a master of the short story genre in American literature. The work of O. Henry reflected his diverse life experience. He portrays the bustle of the North American capital, the vastness of Texas, and the traditions of the South American republics in his short stories.

O. Henry's humanism, commitment to independent democracy, and sharp awareness of the social realities of his era enabled him to portray New York as a complex, captivating, and sometimes harsh city, inhabited by millions of ordinary people. His stories draw readers in

and evoke sympathy for clerks, shop assistants, wanderers, struggling artists, poets, actresses, cowboys, minor adventurers, and farmers. This appeal is largely due to O. Henry's distinctive narrative charm – his unique ability to engage and enchant his audience.

A hallmark of O. Henry's style is his use of the unexpected ending. This technique relies on a sudden shift in the narrative that forces readers to reassess everything that came before. From a linguistic perspective, such twists are typically set up through the deliberate concealment of key details, the use of deceptive narrative perspective, layers of semantic ambiguity, and controlled pacing. Together, these devices produce a sense of retrospective clarity, so that the ending feels both surprising and convincingly justified.

Methods

Alexander Naumovich Luk observes that O. Henry possessed a deep understanding of life and, in many respects, could be seen as a cynic, pessimist, and fatalist. According to Luk, his worldview combines somber reflections influenced by thinkers such as Plato, the biblical text Ecclesiastes, and Omar Khayyam. This philosophical outlook is clearly mirrored in his literary works (Luk, 2007; 55).

Similarly, V.S. Borovinsky emphasizes that O. Henry's prose is characterized by a striking contrast: it combines a rich, densely detailed depiction of life with a delicate and finely constructed narrative form (Borovinsky, 2000; 77).

D.A. Zhdanova, in her article "Language, Life, and Play in O. Henry's Short Stories," points

out that O. Henry portrays a wide range of social types and patterns of behavior typical of people living at the turn of the century (Zhdanova, 2009; 52).

Within American literature, themes such as crime, vagrancy, and both minor and major forms of adventurism had long been well established. For humorists, the motif of a small-time criminal's confession served as a tool to reveal a social order that both produces and tolerates such behavior. This can be seen in works like *Diddling Considered as One of the Exact Sciences* by Edgar Allan Poe and *The Thief's Complaint* by Artemus Ward (Lukin, 1999; 99).

Many of O. Henry's stories are told from a first-person perspective, with narrators who are often unreliable or playfully biased, influencing how readers perceive events. Even when he uses third-person narration, the voice frequently remains informal and conversational. This approach aligns O. Henry with the tradition of author-centered storytelling, highlighting a sense of orality and creating a direct, engaging connection with the audience.

The research applies a qualitative linguistic approach grounded in a close reading of a selected set of O. Henry's short stories. The methodology involves several components: selecting ten texts that reflect his key stylistic modes – romantic, humorous, and ironic; conducting a linguistic examination of vocabulary, phraseology, idiomatic expressions, syntactic structures, pragmatic elements, and narrative voice; performing a stylistic analysis focused on humor, irony, narrative organization, and characterization; and using a comparative perspective to examine different stories in order to identify consistent patterns in his writing.

The image that unfolds before the reader takes on a momentary, almost illusory sense of reality, yet leaves a lasting impression in memory. In the short stories of O. Henry, a strong element of theatricality plays a crucial role, closely tied to his belief in the influence of

chance or fate. While he frees his characters from excessive reflection and deliberate choice, he never deprives them of moral principles. Within his fictional world, clear ethical and humane values persist, even when characters act inconsistently with them. At the same time, the author has a remarkable ability to reveal humor and unexpected aspects in any situation, particularly in the interaction and conflict of human personalities.

Results

The stories of O. Henry are so fascinating because they are most often built on some funny misunderstanding or delusion of the hero, which is explained only at the end of the story, thanks to which all the events described before appearing in a completely new light. The writer even talks about sad things with a cheerful smile. But the reader understands that the world depicted by the author is far from being as serene as it might seem at first glance.

O. Henry's hero is a simple person, one of many other people. The internal value of a man, a good heart, the ability to love and sympathy is most important for the writer. Love is the most precious thing that people can give to each other.

O. Henry tried not only to make laugh, but also to touch. The real Henry can be found in comic picaresque and parody novels, in novels with unexpected endings, witty dialogue and ironic remarks by the author. It should be noted that Henry's main stylistic device is the collision of words, concepts, objects, feelings that are very far from each other, as if unrelated and in this sense unexpected words, notions, subjects, feelings. He avoids consistent, conscientious descriptions and his characters sometimes speak completely incoherently, and such a set of phrases is motivated by special circumstances or reasons.

His narration is invariably ironic or humorous. The conversations of the characters in Henry's stories are always directly connected with the plot. They are rich in intonations, mobile and often in a special intricate or

ambiguous way. Sometimes a whole dialogue is based on mutual misunderstanding, which in some cases has not only stylistic, but also plot significance. The content of some of Henry's stories is the composition of the story or the discussion of related theoretical issues. These things are a kind of treatises in which Henry himself discovers his principles, criticizes all sorts of patterns.

However, even in the most ordinary things, Henry quite often comments on the course of the plot, taking every opportunity to introduce literary irony, destroy the illusion of immediacy, parody a template, give a feel for the conventions of art, or show how a story is made. The author intervenes in the events of his own story and enters into a literary conversation with the reader, turning the short story into a *feuilleton*.

Usually, all the constituent parts of the novel are accompanied or permeated with such a commentary. The story is structured in such a way that until the very end it is not even clear what, in fact, is the mystery, where, in general, the events described are heading. The end not only serves as a denouement, but also reveals the essence of the plot, the meaning of what was happening. Therefore, in Henry's works, not only the reader is often fooled, but also the heroes of his stories.

Discussion

The language of his short stories is extremely rich, associative and whimsical, full of parodies, allusions, hidden quotes and all kinds of puns, which poses extremely difficult tasks for translators.

The work of O. Henry is largely associated with the writer's collaboration with the American press, where his short stories were published. This work determined the frequency of writing short stories, their length and even themes, for example, short stories for Christmas. On the one hand, the author depended on a mass audience, a simple reader with his thinking. On the other hand, the paradoxical overcoming of stereotypes in the finale of the short stories has become a kind of

hallmark of O. Henry. In our opinion, the anomaly and the comic that appear in O. Henry's short stories are largely determined by the lifestyle of contemporary America, determine the diversity of his work, the combination of seemingly incongruous realities in it, and the variety of life scenarios.

According to Sibirtseva, the genre of the short story provides for a rapid development of events, an unexpected witty conclusion in the finale. O. Henry not only skillfully uses the genre scheme, turning the entire narrative into an expectation of the final move, but adds the author's findings, such as double denouement, double storylines that intersect at the end of the novel, mirror situations that allow you to see the true state of things. Among the components leading to a paradoxical solution of the situation at the level of composition, the inserted short stories are indicated, the plot course of which paradoxically finds a point of contact with the line of the main conflict. It is also important to build a story on the principle of a detective story in order to create an atmosphere of mystery, to find the title of the story, which deceives the reader's expectations, expositions that run counter to the subsequent narration, and the technique of switching attention from the true situation to the imaginary one (Sibirtseva, 2012).

His study employs a qualitative linguistic analysis based on a close reading of a selected corpus of O. Henry's short stories. The methodology includes textual selection: ten stories representing O. Henry's main stylistic range (romantic, humorous, and ironic narratives); linguistic analysis: examination of lexical choices, phraseology, idioms, syntactic constructions, pragmatic features, and narrative voice; stylistic analysis: identification of humor, irony, narrative framing, and characterization techniques; comparative approach: contrasting O. Henry's strategies across different stories to identify recurring patterns.

The researchers note that most of O. Henry's stories are characterized by a comic

mode, while turning the situation around in the finale of many stories, the author also changes the accents of the narrative: at first, the comic collision acquires a sentimental coloring; in short stories with an unhappy final denouement for the hero, a comic component appears, which reduces the tragic pathos. In O. Henry's short stories, both general literary vocabulary and colloquial expressions, dialecticisms, slang are used, informing the reader about the social status of the characters. These expressions are endowed with intricate wit, but at the same time give the narrative credibility, for example, *to be about to die* – *быть на грани смерти*, *a crack on a head* – *удар по голове*, *to blow in one's money* – *вдуть деньги*, *to snap one's fingers* – *щелкнуть пальцами*.

The usage of book words in contrast with colloquial vocabulary or neutral words in combination with elevated or colloquially rude ones violates the holistic content of the stories, but creates a comic effect and performs a stylistic function of influence. Here is how O. Henry describes Soapy the vagrant's attempt to get the attention of a cop.

Example: *On the sidewalk Soapy began to **yell drunken gibberish** at the top of his harsh voice. He danced, **howled**, raved, and otherwise disturbed the **welkin** ("The Cop and the Anthem")* (O. Henry, 1995; 35).

From the synonymous series *sky* – *welkin* – *heaven*, the writer chooses the poetic archaism *welkin*, which, in combination with the colloquial words *to yell*, *to hawl* and the phrase *drunken gibberish*, gives the statement an ironic intonation. Thus, the writer's choice of words is always motivated by the ideological and artistic objectives of the work.

Dialogic insertions in short stories perform not only logical and informational, but also expressive functions. This is achieved by individualization of the characters' speech, which is carried out by phonetic, lexical and syntactic means. E. Zhuk notes that the conversations of the characters in the stories of O. Henry are always directly related to the plot

and the role of a certain person. They are rich in intonations, mobile and often in a special way wise or ambiguous.

Since most often the author in the dialogues reflects the social status of the hero, his emotional state, attitude to the subject of conversation, the dialogue in O. Henry's short stories is saturated with vocabulary of different styles such as jargons, slangs, colloquialisms actively participated in the constitution of speech behavior and, thus, the linguistic portrait of characters (Zhuk, 2012).

Let's look at text examples containing stylistically charged lexical units. Thus, in the following phrase, O. Henry uses the technique of stylistic comparison, a trope that consists of likening one object to another based on a common feature (Kozhina, 2006; 459).

"The feminine nature and similitude," says I, "is as plain to my sight as the Rocky Mountains is to a blue-eyed burro. I'm onto all their little side-steps and punctual discrepancies" ("The Ransom of Mack").

Conclusion

To sum up, it can be stated that O. Henry, possessing his own idiostyle, fully utilizes in his works the techniques of prominence through a wide variety of lexical, syntactic, and phonetic stylistic devices, which once again demonstrates his mastery as a short story writer. O. Henry's stories stand out for their distinctive blend of linguistic simplicity and stylistic sophistication. His use of colloquial language, vivid imagery, and humor creates an accessible narrative voice that resonates with a wide audience. At the same time, his mastery of stylistic devices – such as irony, unexpected endings, and contrast – adds depth and emotional impact to his works. The frequent use of dialogue and expressive means enhances characterization and brings his stories closer to real-life communication. Moreover, O. Henry's narrative technique reflects a careful balance between form and content. His concise structure, combined with dynamic plot development, allows him to convey complex human experiences within a

limited space. The famous “twist ending” not only surprises the reader but also reinforces the

moral and philosophical undertones of his stories.

References:

1. Borovinsky, V. S. (2000). *O. Henry – The sad fate of a cheerful storyteller*. St. Petersburg.
2. Eikhenbaum, B. M. (1927). O. Henry and the theory of the short story. In *Literature: Theory. Criticism. Polemics*. Priboy.
3. Kozhina, M. N. (2006). *Stylistic encyclopedic dictionary of the Russian language*. Flinta; Nauka.
4. Luk, A. N. (2007). *Humor, wit, creativity*. Moscow.
5. Lukin, V. A. (1999). *Literary text: Fundamentals of linguistic theory and elements of analysis*. St. Petersburg.
6. O. Henry. (1995). *100 selected stories*. Wordsworth Editions.
7. Sibirtseva, E. I. (2012). *Poetics of the paradoxical in the work of O. Henry*. Ivanovo.
8. Zhuk, E. E. (2012). Features of the study of linguistic means of comic and their translation (on the example of the works of O. Henry and P. G. Wodehouse). Retrieved from <https://e-koncept.ru/2014/54754.htm>
9. Zhdanova, D. A. (2009). *Language, life and play in the short stories of O. Henry*. Moscow.
10. O. Henry. (n.d.). *The last leaf*. Retrieved July 28, 2016, from http://www.online-literature.com/o_henry/1040/