



Lexical-Stylistic And Contextual-Pragmatic Categories Of Contemporary English-Language Science-Fiction Prose

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ABSTRACT

This article systematizes the lexical-stylistic and contextual-pragmatic categories that organize contemporary English-language science-fiction prose. The study adopts an integrative theoretical design combining literary stylistics, cognitive poetics, discourse pragmatics, text-world theory and Uzbek linguopoetic scholarship. The analysis identifies terminology and technolexis, neologism and neosemy, metaphorical modelling, register hybridization, foregrounding and lexical cohesion as the principal lexical-stylistic categories. The contextual-pragmatic level includes deictic reorientation, chronotopic modelling, presupposition, implicature, modality, evidentiality, speech-act organization, focalization and reader inference.

KEYWORDS: Science fiction, linguopoetics, stylistics, neologism, foregrounding, context, pragmatics, text world, presupposition, chronotope.

INTRODUCTION

Science-fiction prose is distinguished by a productive tension between cognitive intelligibility and imaginative otherness. D.Suvin's definition of science fiction as the literature of cognitive estrangement indicates that the genre must simultaneously estrange the reader from empirical reality and preserve a rationally interpretable relation to it. P.Stockwell develops this position linguistically, defining the poetics of science fiction through the interaction of linguistic organization and cognitive processing; he also stresses that micro-level textual details and macro-level historical or contextual patterns are analytically separable but functionally interdependent. Consequently, the language of science fiction cannot be regarded as a decorative layer added to an already complete fictional world. It is the principal mechanism through which technological objects, alternative societies, non-human agents and unfamiliar temporal-spatial systems become conceptually accessible.

The reception-oriented dimension draws on I.V.Arnold's decoding stylistics. Arnold maintains that interpretation should be supported by objective linguistic evidence and that the text must be approached as an integral structure whose foregrounded elements guide the reader's decoding process. Her account of foregrounding is particularly useful for science fiction because unusual word formation, metaphor, inversion and statistical rarity focus attention on semantically decisive elements. At the pragmatic level, Sh.Safarov treats a speech act as an utterance produced in a concrete communicative environment and emphasizes that its content is enriched by the intentions of the speaker and the interpretive activity of the hearer.

The Uzbek linguopoetic tradition provides a further methodological bridge between linguistic description and literary interpretation. N.R.Musulmanova distinguishes a semantic stage, at which units are examined in their nominative meanings, and a metasemiotic stage, at which

their artistic functions in the text are established. M.Yo'ldoshev similarly regards linguopoetic analysis as the investigation of how a selected language unit acquires aesthetic relevance within the integrity of a literary work. These principles make it possible to move from the formal identification of a term, metaphor or syntactic pattern to an explanation of its world-building, evaluative and reader-oriented function.

Lexical-stylistic categories. The first result of the theoretical synthesis is a differentiated account of lexical-stylistic organization. The most genre-specific category is scientific and technological lexis. It includes established scientific terms, specialized professional vocabulary, abbreviations, numerical designations and projected technolexis referring to objects or procedures that do not exist in the reader's empirical world. Such vocabulary creates epistemic density and lends institutional credibility to the fictional world. Its function is not exhausted by naming: a cluster of biomedical terms may imply a technocratic model of the human body, while computational vocabulary may represent consciousness as information and thereby encode the ideological assumptions of the narrative.

A second category comprises neologisms, occasional formations and neosemes. Stockwell identifies new words as central to science-fictional effects because they participate directly in the incorporation of unfamiliar entities into new worlds. In contemporary prose, lexical novelty may arise through compounding, derivation, acronym formation, borrowing, semantic extension or the recontextualization of an ordinary word. The reader normally interprets an item such as terraforming, cryosleep, uplift or memory-editing through morphological transparency, local definition, collocation and subsequent repetition. Thus, the invented word operates as a compact hypothesis about the structure of the fictional reality.

The third group includes metaphor, analogy, metonymy and conceptual blending. These devices translate abstract scientific processes into embodied or culturally familiar schemas. They may describe data as landscape, memory as an archive, artificial intelligence as an interlocutor, or genetic intervention as editing. Figurative nomination therefore performs a double operation: it reduces cognitive difficulty while simultaneously directing evaluation. A metaphor of repair presents technological control as restorative, whereas a metaphor of contamination activates danger and moral anxiety. The stylistic analysis of such choices must account for both their local semantic structure and their contribution to the ideological model of science.

The fourth category is hybridization. Contemporary science-fiction prose frequently juxtaposes scientific exposition, bureaucratic documentation, military command, corporate language, media discourse and colloquial dialogue. This heterogeneity differentiates institutions and social groups, constructs professional identities and reveals unequal access to knowledge. It also permits irony: an ethically disturbing experiment may be narrated in neutral administrative language, producing a conflict between referential content and institutional register. Lexical cohesion, recurrent keywords, naming systems and intertextual allusions stabilize this heterogeneous discourse and enable the reader to recognize thematic networks across the narrative.

The contextual-pragmatic level explains how readers convert lexical signals into a coherent world. N.D.Arutyunova defines discourse as speech considered together with the extra-linguistic, pragmatic, social and psychological factors that make it meaningful - in other words, speech immersed in life. This view is essential for science-fiction prose because the referents of



many expressions cannot be identified through dictionary meaning alone. Their interpretation depends on who speaks, what institution authorizes the statement, which historical moment is projected, what information is shared, and which propositions are contested inside the fictional society.

Deixis and chronotopic modelling form the first pragmatic category. Personal, spatial and temporal deictics establish the centre from which the fictional world is perceived: now may refer to a remote century, here to an orbital habitat, and we to a human-machine collective. M.M.Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope defines the inseparable organization of time and space as a formal-content category of literature and emphasizes its genre-forming significance. In science fiction, deictic shifts and chronotopic markers do more than locate events; they reorganize scale, historical causality and the reader's sense of human agency.

Presupposition and implicature constitute the second category. Science-fiction narratives rarely explain every rule of an alternative world directly. Instead, definite descriptions, technical routines, institutional titles and casual references presuppose the existence of technologies, laws or species. Sh.Safarov notes that presupposition requires interlocutors to possess shared knowledge about the reality under discussion and treats it as an implicit proposition necessary for an utterance to be appropriate. In science fiction, the reader initially lacks much of this shared knowledge and must reconstruct it progressively. The controlled gap between what characters take for granted and what the reader knows is therefore a major source of curiosity, estrangement and suspense.

Speech-act organization, modality and evidentiality constitute a third pragmatic complex. J.R.Searle's formulation that the production of a sentence under specified conditions is the minimal unit of linguistic communication redirects analysis from abstract sentence meaning to communicative action. Accordingly, scientific statements in fiction may function as assertions, warnings, predictions, permissions, prohibitions or promises. Modal verbs, epistemic adverbs, conditional constructions and evidential markers indicate whether knowledge is certain, inferred, simulated, classified or institutionally imposed. These choices are particularly significant when narrators or artificial agents are unreliable, when scientific evidence is incomplete, or when competing groups claim authority over the same phenomenon.

Conclusion

The analysis demonstrates that the lexical-stylistic and contextual-pragmatic properties of contemporary English-language science-fiction prose constitute an interdependent system. Terminology, neologism, semantic innovation, metaphor, register hybridization and foregrounding provide the verbal material of fictional novelty. Deixis, chronotope, presupposition, implicature, modality, speech acts, focalization and inference transform that material into a cognitively manageable and aesthetically meaningful text world. The genre's distinctive effect arises from the controlled relation between the unfamiliar and the interpretable.

The proposed classification also clarifies the methodological value of combining English-language stylistics and cognitive poetics with Russian theories of discourse, foregrounding and chronotope, and Uzbek pragmatolinguistic and linguopoetic approaches.

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