**THE USE OF EPITHETS IN FICTION TEXT**

**(based on Harper Lee’s novel “To Kill a Mockingbird”)**

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Epithet, one of the most frequently used stylistic devices, has been in the focus of linguists’ and literary critics’ attention for many years. Such linguists as O.O. Potebnya, O.M. Morokhovskyi, I.R. Galperin, Yu.M. Skrebnev, V.A. Kukharenko and others investigated the nature, structure and functions of epithets in their works. However, some of the epithet-related problems haven’t been completely solved, among them is the approach to epithet classification, the issues of its emotive nature, its functioning in different styles of English, etc.

O.N. Veselovskyi was the first to analyze its ontological characteristics [2, 213] . L.I. Timofeyev states that any adjective can be considered to be an epithet [6, 217]. I.V. Arnold views epithet as a lexico-syntactical trope as it can perform the syntactical functions of attribute, adverbial modifier or address [1, 130]. I.R. Galperin defines epithet as a stylistic device based on the interaction of logical and contextual meanings in an attribute that can be expressed by a word, phrase or even sentence [3, 137]. According to V.A. Kukharenko an object can be modified by an epithet with a metaphorical meaning and not just with a logical one [4, 53].

The given research is aimed at analyzing the epithets in the novel by the famous American writer Harper Lee “To Kill a Mockingbird” [5] which is characterized by the use of a variety of stylistic devices, epithet being central among them.

The novel is rich in trite or fixed epithets (*a reasonable income, a serious mistake*) as well as fresh ones created by the fancy of the author (*foolhardy schemes, an asinine game*). Among syntactical patterns of epithets found in the novel we can distinguish A+N with epithet in preposition. The adjective can be simple (*a meditative pat, a hearty agreement*) and compound (*a time-honored method, an arm-waving conversation*). In one sentence there can occur a string of epithets (*a melancholy little drama, a God-fearing persevering respectable white man).* Another pattern is P+N, where the epithet is expressed by a Participle (*waning moonlight, sinking hearts*). In the pattern N(+A)+N epithets are expressed by nouns in the function of an attribute (*routine contentment, Atticus’s courtroom voice*). Adv+Adj is a two-step structure which contains an adjective modifying a noun and an adverb modifying an adjective (*graciously wide streets*). Numerous are epithets expressed by adverbs which perform the function of an adverbial modifier (*to say sweetly, to say sunnily*). Of interest are epithets expressed by hyphenated phrases (*run-of-the-mill people, our father’s last-will-and-testament diction*) created by the author for a special purpose. They are very effective and attract the reader’s attention. Harper Lee skillfully applies epithets with a transferred meaning which are based on metaphors, oxymora and similes. They are often used in descriptions of the characters’ qualities and appearances (*a minor victory, a thin leathery man, a fat cherub face*), places and buildings of the town (*a tired old town, a sad house, a square-faced store*). One of the types of metaphoric epithets is a zoonymic one which consists in ascribing to people animal features and qualities (*a chameleon lady, a snail’s pace, a big fat hen*). Some epithets help the author to create an acoustic effect (*a feral noise, fatalistic noises*).

Thus, the analysis of Harper Lee’s novel makes it possible to confirm the idea that epithet contributes to the expressiveness, figurativeness and vividness of the text, and is a typical feature of the author’s individual style.

**References**

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