FRACTAL MODEL “DOUBLE DNA MOLECULE” AS A WAY TO REPRESENT INTERDICSURSIVE RELATIONSHIPS IN EKPHRASIS

Research article

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Abstract

The aim of the article is to reveal the interdiscursive relationships in ekphrasis on the material of Ph. Larkin’s poem “The Arundel Tomb”. The fractal model “Double DNA molecule” representing the interrelations between the main part of ekphrasis (the description of an art work) and its periferia (expressing the author’s thoughts about the artefact) is described. The cognitive attractor, responsible for interdiscursive relationships, is contrast. Fractal modelling of interdiscursive relationships vividly demonstrates the mechanism of representing an art work by verbal means in the genre of ekphrasis.

Keywords: ekphrasis, fractal model, cognitive attractor, contrast, double DNA molecule.

1. The phenomenon of interdiscursivity

The text is a fraction of continuously developing human experience, an artefact or an integral and complete product of human creative activity and an accumulator of our cultural experience and cultural memory [1]. Modern literature is characterized by reality perception through the prism of already accumulated previous cultural experience which serves as a key to decoding the new literary work. A vivid example of such perception in a poetic text is ekphrasis, which is understood as a verbal description of any work of art.

A means of encoding the sense of the text by reference to another discourse is understood as the phenomenon of interdiscursivity. A.V. Kremneva underlines that the ways of reference to other discourses can be various, including quotations, allusions, images, syntactical structure of the text, its rhythmical-intonation structure, composition and the plot [2, P. 96].

2. The aim of the research

The aim of this research is to reveal interdiscursive relationships in ekphrasis, a literary text representing an art work. Ekphrasis has been known from the Antiquity and due to such verbal descriptions our history managed to preserve information about lost works of art. A.V. Kremneva considers ekphrasis as transferred interdiscursivity which means redecoding of one sign system into another [2, P. 124]. The fractal model “double DNA molecule” representing interdiscursive relationships in ekphrasis is described for the first time.

3. Methodology

Our work is based on the theory of fractal modelling of interdiscursive relationships [3]. Different fractal models of interdiscursive relationships in postmodern discourse have been introduced and described by N. S. Olimko, such as “a spiral model”, “a rhizome model”, “a tree model”, “a concentric circles model” and others. N. V. Mamonova has studied interdiscursive relationships in British fairy tale discourse and has described several fractal models representing such relationships [4].

4. Discussion

The material of our study is Philip Larkin’s poem “An Arundel Tomb”, which was written after the poet’s visit to Chichester cathedral, where there is the tomb of the Earl Arundel and his wife. The tomb sculpture of a man in the knight’s armour and his wife made a powerful impact on the poet. The knight holds his gauntlet in his right hand and in his left hand he holds his wife’s hand. The sculpture is a restored copy of the original one dating back to the Middle Ages and which was destroyed during Reforms [5, P. 34-35].

The Middle Ages were a great age for the desire to reflect the inner world of a person and his emotions in works of art. It explains the play on the light and shadow and a number of vivid details in sculptures [6]. The poet mentions the style of pre-
relationships in ekphrasis, Ph. Larkin’s poem “The Arundel Tomb”. It is a model representing the connection between a work of art and poetry. The role of the axis in the model is played by the cognitive attractor of contrast. In our opinion such model can be applied to any ekphrasis representing an art work by verbal means, though it is not the only way to study interdiscursive relationships in ekphrasis.

Similarly to the relationships of two chains in the DNA molecule interdiscursive relationships in ekphrasis are those of two discourses oiling around each other in a double spiral, that, according to N. S. Oliizko, symbolizes “a balance of opposites” [3]. The double spiral highlights the deep interdependence between both chains oiling around an axis working symmetrically in opposite directions.

The stanza is logically divided into two parts. Lines 2, 4, 6 (the main part of ekphrasis) describing the sculpture group are organically intertwined with lines 5, 3, 1 (the ekphrasis periferia) representing the lyric hero’s thoughts about the depicted tomb. The interdiscursive relationships between the main part of ekphrasis and its periferia can be represented with the fractal model “double DNA molecule” (or “double spiral”). The DNA molecule is composed of two chains coiling around each other to form a double helix. The two chains of DNA run in opposite directions to each other and are thus antiparallel. The chains of DNA molecule can be portrayed as two serpents twining in opposite directions around a common axis.

In this stanza attention is given to the contrast of what was meant and what appeared to be. Instead of being just “a history in stone”, the tomb turned out to be the “final blazon of love”. It reminds us Adam and Eva who left Paradise hand in hand. When a knight died his own death, lions were replaced by little dogs. The poet finds the combination of little dogs, a knight in the armour and a woman in a strict dress rather absurd [5, P. 35].

The poem “The Arundel Tomb” by Philip Larkin consists of seven stanzas. Let us look at the first one: (1) Side by side / their faces blurred, / (2) The earl and countess lie in stone, / (3) Their proper habits vaguely shown / (4) As jointed armour, stiffed pleat, / (5) And that faint hint of the absurd — / (6) The little dogs under their feet [7, P. 33].

5. Conclusion

To sum up, we have described the fractal model “double DNA molecule” that visually represents interdiscursive relationships in ekphrasis, Ph. Larkin’s poem “The Arundel Tomb”. It is a model representing the connection between a work of art and poetry. The role of the axis in the model is played by the cognitive attractor of contrast. In our opinion such model can be applied to any ekphrasis representing an art work by verbal means, though it is not the only way to study interdiscursive relationships in ekphrasis.

None declared.
Список литературы / References


Список литературы на английском / References in English


