

DOI: [https:// doi.org/10.18454/RULB.2019.20.4.6](https://doi.org/10.18454/RULB.2019.20.4.6)АНГЛИЙСКИЙ ЯЗЫК ПОД ВЛИЯНИЕМ РУССКОГО В ПРОИЗВЕДЕНИИ ЭНТОНИ БЁРДЖЕССА
"ЗАВОДНОЙ АПЕЛЬСИН"

Научная статья

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Аннотация

На протяжении всей истории мировой литературы писатели стремились экспериментировать с различными литературными приемами, чтобы сделать свое произведение уникальным и выдержать испытание временем таким образом, чтобы оно могло постоянно подвергаться анализу. Роман «Заводной апельсин», опубликованный в 1962 году, демонстрирует языковые эксперименты в отличие от других, в которых автор изобрел английский словарь под влиянием русского языка, Надсат, который подростковые персонажи книги используют в антиутопическом будущем английского общества. В нашей статье мы попытаемся проиллюстрировать этот аспект и проанализировать, повлиял ли какой-либо социальный или политический фон на то, что Берджесс предпринял такую задачу, или это была просто игра в слова, которую хотел сформулировать страстный лингвист. Принимая во внимание, что роман представляет собой литературное произведение без отказов, содержащее значительное количество сцен насилия, мы обсудим возможность того, что вышеупомянутый словарь может быть извлечен из порочной молодежи.

Ключевые слова: надсат, русский язык, английский язык, антиутопическое общество.

RUSSIAN-INFLUENCED ENGLISH IN ANTHONY BURGESS'S A CLOCKWORK ORANGE

Research article

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Abstract

Throughout the history of world literature, writers have strived to experiment with various literary devices to make their work unique and stand the test of time in a manner that it can continuously be subject to analysis. *A Clockwork Orange*, a novel published in 1962, displays language experimentation unlike any other, in which the author has invented a Russian-influenced English vocabulary, *Nadsat*, that the teenage characters of the book are using in a dystopian future of the English society. Our paper will try to exemplify this aspect and to analyse whether any social or political backdrop had influenced Burgess to undertake such a task or was it just a wordgame that a passionate linguist wanted to formulate. Considering that the novel represents an unexpurgated work of literature, containing a considerable amount of violent scenes, we will discuss the possibility that the aforementioned vocabulary can derive from a vicious youth.

Keywords: Nadsat, Russian language, English language, dystopian society.

Introduction

The first thing that we as readers encounter when we start reading a book is the language. It doesn't matter whether it is a Shakespearean or a largely simplified style, language is the device through which we enter the realm of storytelling. Authors are aware of this and at times they like to play with language; sometimes to make a character unique, or, at times, to teach readers a specific vocabulary. The subject of our paper is to display how Anthony Burgess uses language as a communicative device to tell his story in the novel *A Clockwork Orange*. Although not as popular when it was initially published, the book gained significant boost when it was adapted into film in 1971, from director Stanley Kubrick, who didn't change the language of the teenagers in using Nadsat vocabulary, suggesting that it gave them, and the film as whole, a unique perspective and style of expression. [6, P. 1-63] In the following pages, we will discuss the subject from different aspects in comparing the way Burgess created the language in contrast to authors such as Tolkien. An expert in linguistics, Burgess published important works on the field such as *Here Comes Everybody: An Introduction to James Joyce for the Ordinary Reader*, *Joysprick: An Introduction to the Language of James Joyce*, and *A Shorter 'Finnegans Wake,' Burgess's abridgement*. It is of interest to note that Joyce was also experimenting with vocabulary from different languages, including Russian. Additionally, Burgess contributed a very important article on the novel as a literary form for Encyclopedia Britannica [13]. All of this supports the view which regards him as a master of language.

Methodology

To make this paper as convenient as possible, we have approached it using a variety of research methods to make our point clear and concise. For a research to be appropriate and supportive to its aim, the authors need to provide enough data and analysis from various sources by exemplifying every major viewpoint regarding the topic. The research methods in this paper range from the *descriptive method* through which we have attempted to describe systematically the subject by providing information from various sources, be it books, research papers or other multimedia sources such as films. The main purpose of using this method was to describe what is important concerning the problem under study in a considerable amount of

appropriate bibliography. On the other hand, the main emphasis of the *correlational method* was to discover or establish the existence of a relationship/difference between two or more aspects of the topic. Finally, the *exploratory method* was used extensively by browsing various sites that contain material regarding Burgess in general, and *A Clockwork Orange* in specific, and books that deal with the subject of psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics.

Inside the covers

“What’s it going to be then, eh?”

There was me, that is Alex, and my three droogs, that is Pete, Georgie, and Dim. Dim being really dim, and we sat in the Korova Milkbar making up our rassoodocks what to do with the evening, a flip dark chill winter bastard though dry. The Korova Milkbar was a milk-plus mesto, and you may, O my brothers, have forgotten what these mestos were like, things changing so skorry these days and everybody very quick to forget, newspapers not being read much neither. Well, what they sold there was milk plus something else. They had no licence for selling liquor, but there was no law yet against prodding some of the new veshches which they used to put into the old moloko, so you could peet it with vellocet or synthemesc or drencom or one or two other veshches which would give you a nice quiet horrorshow fifteen minutes admiring Bog And All His Holy Angels and Saints in your left shoe with lights bursting all over your mozg [3, P. 1].

These are opening lines from *A Clockwork Orange*, and we certainly don’t need to be very attentive readers to see that there is something quite odd in the paragraph, especially if we do not have any experience in using or living in an environment where Slavic languages are spoken. Initially, we encounter the word *droogs*, followed by *korova*, *rassoodocks*, *mesto*, *skorry*, *Bog*, *mozg* and so on. So, we are faced with *Nadsat* straight from the beginning, thus making us question the author's purpose to use such a vocabulary which is unknown to the English-speaking audience. If we come from the camp of those who have first seen the film adaptation and read the book afterwards, it may seem that we are entering a psychological brainwashing experiment, similar to the one Alex, the main protagonist from the novel is put into, but if we dwell deeper between the covers, we will encounter things which are not quite obvious if we look at the work with a largely superficial approach [9, P. 1-2]. In doing so, we will get familiar with personalities who are ferociously violent and seemingly not a part of what we call “the educated” class, but who, at the same time, listen to Beethoven, thus immediately making them, especially Alex, particularly complex characters.

We should acknowledge the fact that language experimentation plays a major part in the novel just by reading its title, *A Clockwork Orange*, which is both attractive and confusing simultaneously. Burgess provided various explanations about what the title actually means, from referring to language overheard in London pubs “*as queer as a clockwork orange*”, to the suggestion that we find in his work *A Clockwork Orange: A Play with Music*, that orange represents an “*an organic entity, full of juice and sweetness and agreeable odour, being turned into a mechanism*”. However it may be, there is no doubt that the title does not exist randomly.

Burgess and Tolkien

One of the possible reasons why Burgess has approached language in such a way, as we mentioned in the abstract, was to make the work unique and stand the test of time. Language experimentation, although rare, wasn't new at the time when Burgess wrote and published his novel. J.R.R. Tolkien previously had published his extremely popular books *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, both containing invented language based on Norse mythology. Tolkien, himself an expert in linguistics, wanted to explore the history of language creation and how developments in society influenced how language fluctuated. But in dealing with the genre of high-fantasy, Tolkien’s approach is a bit classier; language such as the one spoken by the elves, who represent beings of the highest intellect and more profound experience than other creations in his Middle-Earth Legendarium, is the result of years of study of history and art [8, P. 19-85] while, on the other hand, the characters that use the Russian-influenced English vocabulary in Burgess’s work are teenagers who are prone to violence and who rebel against the established system [7, P. 1]. So, although both authors were experts in linguistics, their approach towards how language creation interpreted and presented by their characters is different. Probably the main difference is the fact that while Tolkien creates an entire language system, Burgess creates a unique vocabulary that is still encapsulated inside the English language, which in a way, makes it more accessible. It is quite obvious that Burgess had no intention to interrupt the reader to understand the novel, although he wanted to disturb him, still, that's the main reason why he incorporates the Russian-influenced words inside English so the reader can try to define them in context. He is more suggestive towards the possibility of social and political endeavours to influence how we use a given language. This is true for the slang vocabulary used by gangs in real-life environments, especially those in the English-speaking world.

Consider the following tables:

Table 1 – Actual gang slang-words [11]

Slang	Meaning
Bim	Woman
Bearcat	Fiery woman
Copper	Police
In stir	In jail
Bop	Kill
Cabbage	Money
Bangtail	Racehorse

Table 2 – Slang in A Clockwork Orange [12]

Slang	Meaning
Deng (<i>деньги</i>)	Money
Ptitsa (<i>птица</i>)	Bird (referring to girls)
Droog (<i>друг</i>)	Friend
Crasting (<i>красть</i>)	Steal, rob
Veck (<i>человек</i>)	Man
Pooshka (<i>пушка</i>)	Gun
Korova (<i>корова</i>)	Cow

Sociolinguists and psycholinguists suggest that language development is directly influenced by social and psychological experiences and context, in processing, storing and acquiring language vocabulary [5], [6, P. 12-19]. As a result, if we analyse both tables, we can see that although in the first one we are dealing with 'English' speaking slang vocabulary, still we do not understand most of them or any of them, to be more sincere, especially when taken out of context. This leads to the fact that a given vocabulary does not simply represent a bunch of words thrown here and there just to make an impression, on the contrary, it defines a character and his/her way of life and in that measure it defines a society.

It is of interest to specify that Anthony Burgess had a wartime experience, being a soldier in the Second World War, where he encountered Ann McGlenn, who was a devoted communist and whose ideas impacted Burgess in creating the totalitarian system in *A Clockwork Orange* [10]. Being aware that Russia was the most important fertile ground for communism, influencing writers, economists, politicians, etc. [1, P. 1-53, 130-171] this in some way may suggest why Burgess chose Russian as the basis for Nadsat (*'Nadsat' means 'teen' in English*), although there is no clear-cut evidence to support this claim. Nevertheless, it may transpire that the Cold War period through which Burgess lived and wrote his novel might've influenced him to formulate something of that kind. We are aware of the difference between utopian and dystopian literature; while the former tries to present an optimistic view of the future, the latter suggests a dreary future that we fear to live in. Considering the era when the work was incepted and knowing it fictionalizes a futuristic English society, we can consider it as an indication to represent England invaded by Russian influences, which the English society feared and regarded as a threat.

Conclusion

Quality literature needs to express issues upon which society ruminates, and strive to provide a unique literary voice through which the author will build a bridge of words upon which people of that society will reflect and resonate towards future generations. Language is an invaluable tool to use for social analysis and interpretation. We are aware that Shakespeare's language is different from Dickens's, which in return is different from Burgess's, alluding to the fact that language is a phenomenon always in motion and continuously in evolution, adapting to different times and needs. From this perspective, we can conclude that *A Clockwork Orange* represents an exemplary social analysis where language experimentation plays a significant role in clarifying how social entanglements influence people how they use this highly important tool of communication. We have emphasized the word *communication* because many problems that derive in any particular social or political system are a direct result of misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the truth.

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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