

УДК 811.111:81'42  
ББК 81.2 Англ-5:81.0

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**ON THE ISSUE  
OF CONCEPT «FREEDOM»  
OBJECTIVIZATION  
IN CONTEMPORARY  
ENGLISH  
FEMALE FICTIONAL  
DISCOURSE**

Предлагается анализ современного англоязычного художественного дискурса, созданного известными авторами – К. Свон, Э. Гилберт и С. Таунсенд – в аспекте нарративного отражения содержания и структуры такого многомерного и сложного для описания феномена, как феномен свободы, с позиций прагма- и когнитивной лингвистики. Устанавливаются контекстуальные случаи прямой и косвенной репрезентации данного концепта наряду с анализом спектра средств различных языковых уровней его объективации.

**Ключевые слова:** *концепт, художественный дискурс, ментальный конструкт, экспликация, лингвокультура.*

DOI 10.23683/1995-0640-2019-4-89-97

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The concept of «freedom» is a multifaceted and multidimensional phenomenon that has been investigated by various sciences suggesting different definitions and theories of it. Freedom initially being a subject of philosophical study is the prerogative of both theoretical and everyday consciousness.

Supposing the communication process to be closely connected with the intentions of its participants, the concept «freedom», being the part of the conceptual sphere of each communicant of any communicative community, is inevitably a component of communication that receives verbal explication. The peculiarity of this concept is the difference in its perception and interpretation in different linguocultures.

The concept “freedom” reflects a complex system of spiritual-moral and moral-ethical dimensions of the linguistic picture of the world and the inner, spiritual life of a person. At the same time, he has not yet received sufficiently wide and detailed coverage in the framework of the theory of language and linguocultural studies and, as we believe, needs further multidimensional description. This largely determines the choice of the topic of this work.

We are targeted at identifying features and determining the mechanisms of the concept's «freedom» objectivization on the example of the fictional discourse, as well as to establish the range of language means of its representation in modern English and American female prose. For achieving these aims we resorted to the descriptive method, the method of comparative analysis, as well as the method of contextual analysis of

fictional discourse created by modern English and American women-writers – K. Swan, E. Gilbert, S. Townsend.

Fictional discourse occupies an important place in the discursive practice of a man and society, since it reflects the whole variety of forms and types of speech interaction. That is why the identification and description of the models of fictional discourse is of great interest to linguistics.

In modern linguistics, the term «discourse» is close in correlation to the notion of “text”, but emphasizes the dynamic, time-unfolding nature of linguistic communication; in contrast, the text is regarded to as a static object, the result of linguistic activity. Sometimes «discourse» is understood as consisting of two components: the dynamic process of linguistic activity, put in its social context, and its result (text); it is this understanding that is preferred. At the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> century the works on differences in discourse due to gender, age, and social status of a speaker started to appear. Gender studies in the framework of socio- and psycholinguistics, pragmalinguistics and pragmatics of speech, the theory of discourse and communication showed that a woman focuses more on her inner world, that results in introduction to speech of great number of lexemes describing feelings, emotions, in the use of verbs expressing the emotional and psychological states of a person. The high level of emotionality in women predetermines a frequent occurrence of elliptical and inverted constructions.

Despite the variety of approaches to deciphering the meaning of the term «concept», scholars agree that the concept is a mental structure (Kubryakova E.S., Popova Z.D., Sternin I.A. etc) marked by its cognitive nature and not existing outside the thinking. As the categories of consciousness are realized in language categories and are simultaneously determined by them with the culture determining the concept, we can conclude that the concept is a mental projection of the elements of culture. The main thing in the concept is the multidimensionality and integrity of meaning that exists in a continuous cultural and historical space and therefore has a cultural translation from one subject area to another, which allows us to call the concept the main way of cultural translation. A concept plays the role of a mediator between culture and a person, being realized in a language that is the environment in which the conceptual representation of general cultural concepts takes place [Дарамилова, 2008, с. 161].

The concept of «freedom» is deeply rooted in both philosophical and everyday consciousness. Freedom is a universal, general philosophical idea, like time, space, movement, change. It is reflected in different languages, at least in all European languages (freedom as «the ability to act according to one's will»). The problem of freedom occupies one of the main positions in the entire history of world philosophical thought. Since the time of Antiquity, people have tried to understand what constitutes a state of freedom, to explain its essence and characteristics.

In the most general sense, freedom is the availability of a choice, options for the outcome of an event. Their absence equals a lack of freedom. The latter is one of the types of manifestation of randomness, guided by free will

(intentional will, conscious freedom) or by stochastic law (unpredictability of the outcome of an event, unconscious freedom). In this sense, the concept of freedom is opposed to the concept of necessity. Freedom involves certain relationships between people: in a prototype case, the subject can do what he wants, because no one limits him and he does not depend on anyone. This is the so-called «social» component of freedom. In addition, in this prototypical situation, the subject usually experiences a particularly highly pleasant feeling – the «emotional» component. Based on this, the following interpretation of the central meaning of the concept «freedom» can be suggested: freedom is «a state of affairs in which a person can do what he wants, because no one limits him, so the subject usually experiences a very pleasant feeling» [Урысон, 2004, с. 684].

The classical philosophical principle affirms freedom as an act of choice. Through such interpretation, one can imagine the act of freedom «mechanically», i.e. how freedom is realized, what it consists of and how it happens. The philosophers who accept this approach as the main one tried to decipher the ontological meaning of choice as the main category of this interpretation through its application to various aspects of freedom. So, in the era of antiquity, the main applications were problems of morality in this context. The modern treatment of this principle is defined only as the first step of freedom, limited by certain conditions of the choice itself, i.e. alternatives. The alternative itself as a condition is possible in two versions: «narrow» (when the choice comes from two possibilities) and «wide» (from many possibilities). As a rule, the «narrow» alternative is more appropriate to necessity, as the opposition of freedom. Necessity that is underlined by the second type of alternative even if perceived and understood cannot serve as an essential expression of freedom [Комаров, 2012, с. 6].

N.A. Berdyaev argued that the source of freedom was laid in the spiritual, not active sphere, where the choice prevails, where the external sets the alternative and thereby creates the rules of the game, giving freedom an illusory spirit: «Freedom is not rooted in will, but in spirit, and freed man is not an effort of abstract will, but an effort of holistic consciousness» [Бердяев, 1994, с. 162].

The concept under consideration is often a symbol, its essence is the binary opposition of freedom and non-freedom, which is actualized in situations when a person passes from a state of freedom to a state of non-freedom (or from a state of greater freedom to a state of less freedom), and vice versa.

The most important linguistic and cultural differences of the concept of “freedom” in the English language culture are incorporated in the following features: the correlation of the concepts of «freedom» and «right», the opposition to the concept of «slavery», the priority of personal efforts as one of the ways to achieve freedom, in the Russian mentality – the correlation of the concepts of «freedom» and «happiness», the opposition with the concept of «imprisonment», the priority of freedom as a gift.

The Collins English Dictionary offers the broadest interpretation of the discussed phenomenon:

freedom (BrE) – 1. personal liberty, as from slavery, bondage, serfdom, etc; 2. liberation or deliverance, as from confinement or bondage; 3. the quality or state of being free, esp to enjoy political and civil liberties; 4. (usually followed by from) the state of being without something unpleasant or bad; exemption or immunity; freedom (AmE) – 1. the state or quality of being free; 2. exemption or liberation from the control of some other person or some arbitrary power; liberty independence; 3. exemption from arbitrary restrictions on a specified civil right; civil or political liberty; 4. exemption or immunity from a specified obligation, discomfort, etc.; 5. exemption or release from imprisonment; 6. a being able to act, move, use, etc. without hindrance or restraint [<http://www.collinsdictionary.com>].

A general systematic approach to the analysis of definitions led us to the conclusion that we need to adhere to an understanding of freedom as will, space, the ability to act in our own way; lack of shyness, bondage, slavery, submission to another's will. The core of the concept «freedom» is formed by a set of lexemes that make up the word-formation series – freedom, free, to free, to befree. These units are found in 73 % of cases of all contextual realizations in the female fictional discourse by K. Swan, S. Townsend and E. Gilbert. The perinuclear zone is constituted by such lexemes as independent, independence; to release, released, release; liberal, liberty, liberate; escape, escaped, to escape.

Our investigation showed that indirect representation of freedom prevails over the direct one in the abovementioned female fictional discourse. Direct representation is expressed by such units as: freedom 37.5 %, free 27.5 %, release 17.5 %, independence / independent 10 %, escape 5 %, liberty 2.5 %.

The direct representation in most implementations is related to freedom from stormy relationships or addictions of different types: *Or, rather - here I am. I am in Rome, and I am in trouble. The goons of Depression and Loneliness have barged into my life again, and I just took my last Wellbutrin three days ago. There are more pills in my bottom drawer, but I don't want them. I want to be free of them forever* [Gilbert, 2006, p. 34].

Occasionally, realization is found as freedom from imprisonment: *The door closed again and Charles struggled with his feelings. His cellmates Lee, Carlton and Fat Oswald looked at him and were silent. Some minutes later Lee said, "If I was let out I'd do a runner." Charles stared out of the cell window at the top branches of the sycamore tree and longed for freedom* [Townsend, 2002, p. 107].

The indirect implementation in the text of the constituents of the studied concept is often accompanied by the creation in the speech of the opposition of freedom – non-freedom:

1) conscious restriction of freedom; 2) lack of choice and freedom or 3) lack of freedom due to devotion to a place or people: In order to regain herself and find a new meaning to her life after the betrayal of her beloved, the female character agrees to obediently follow all the advice of her friends: *So that was the plan – a city with a friend in it, a bed to sleep on and a temporary job. The girls would rebuild her from scratch, and each friend would get her turn to*

*exercise her own influence. Cassie had agreed to give herself up to them completely, and had promised she wouldn't protest or refuse any of their ideas for her. After the year's end, she would know which was the real Cassie and how she was going to live; her life would be up to her again, but she would be a new Cassie by then - confident, sexy, worldly and full of purpose* [Swan, 2011, p. 10].

Freedom of choice is of great importance in female fictional discourse and it is expressed in the following meanings: 1) a release from duties and generally accepted standards; 2) the choice of one's life path and behavior model.

The associative content of the concept "freedom" in female fictional discourse is embodied in the images of nature and travelling. The desire for freedom is a characteristic feature of protagonists, it is often associated with wind or breath: *I am certainly in the vicinity... A new life calls me. I need to feel the wind on my face and to hear the shriek of small animals as they are captured by winged predators. Dearest Mummy, I send you my love* [Townsend, 2002, p. 28].

The protagonist still lives in the past and cannot «breathe» freely until she figures it out in full: *«Okay, now let's try that again. How are you?» Cassie gave a sigh that said everything. 'Truthfully? Well, I want... I want to be able to sleep through the night. And when I am awake, not to have a heart rate that's constantly in high revs. I feel like a car doing a hundred and forty miles an hour in first gear. 'She stared at the back of her hands and was shocked to see that the skin looked thin and gray. 'I want to be able to breathe without feeling like someone's kneeling on my chest. I want to be able to think about the past decade of my life without feeling winded'* [Swan, 2011, p. 462].

If to analyze the linguistic ways of 'freedom' representation in the fictional discourse created by modern women-writers it should be pointed out that the means of phonetic level are least involved in the representation of the concept, its share is just 8%. It is represented mostly by alliteration. The sound «r» reinforces the protagonist's idea and the impression of her words about true inner beauty: *«Four hours. It cannot be rushed,» Anouk said, stretching her arms above her head. 'That's what I was trying to explain to you just now – you cannot paper over the cracks with brash make-up or trendy clothes. Over here, chérie, beauty starts from the inside* [Swan, 2011, p. 172].

The concept 'freedom' is realized in female discourse by means of a wide variety of lexical means. The share of this language level in the representation of the concept is 50%. Allusion is the most common lexical means – 37%. In the texts, it takes different forms: 1) freedom is perceived through religion, harmony in the soul, the search for oneself through God: *Life's metaphors are God's instructions... Your wish for resolution was a prayer. Your being here is God's response. Let go, and watch the stars come out-on the outside and on the inside* [Gilbert, 2006, p. 217]; 2) freedom of travel, association with any particular location; 3) the association of freedom with its material symbol: *The plane circled the Statue of Liberty - tall and proud and as green as a peppermint - twice, as though making a heavy-handed point to her* [Swan, 2011, p. 16].

One of the common lexical means is the opposition (antithesis) – 25%. Here we see a contrast between completely different lifestyles. Both girls have a prestigious job and stable relationships, but one preferred complete



independence, and the other easily shared her life with a friend: *They fell into silence and Cassie ruminated on how different it was living with Anouk. In New York, Kelly had practically merged them into one person - same job, same clothes, same bedroom, same lives. But Anouk was different – very independent, and she compartmentalized her life. She had found Cassie a job, but with someone else, as she preferred to work alone. And although things were clearly intense between her and Pierre, she only ever met up with him on a rigidly observed timetable* [Swan, 2011, p. 409].

A comparison and simile (15%) emphasizes the emotional state of protagonists when they are either enjoying freedom or feel the lack of it: *<...> I am so grateful to be free tonight from the depression that had been gnawing at me like a rat over the years, a depression that had chewed such perforations in my soul that I would not, at one time, have been able to enjoy even such a lovely night as this* [Gilbert, 2006, p. 56].

Repetitions are infrequent (10%); they enhance the emotions and experiences of the characters. In this example, this lexical means makes us understand how much the character was eager to get a divorce and become free: *Months passed. My life hung in limbo as I waited to be released, waited to see what the terms would be* [Gilbert, 2006, p. 204].

Contextual synonyms (8%) express the associations of characters with freedom, showing their perception and understanding of it: *When I look back at the four years that elapsed between my marriage starting to fall apart and the day I was finally divorced and free, I see a detailed chronicle of total pain. And the moment when I came to this tiny island all by myself was the very worst of that entire dark journey* [Gilbert, 2006, p. 138].

The syntax level occupies 28% when compared to other levels' frequency in the discourse. Among syntactic means, quite often parcelling is represented – 42%. For instance, parcelling can be represented by a set of synonyms meaning freedom, which the protagonist is meditating about: *Liberty Freedom. Independence It's all good here* [Swan, 2011, p. 16].

Anaphora is found in 23% of all syntactic realizations. In this example, through anaphora, a friend tries to convince the protagonist that she can do whatever she wants: *I think you have every right to cherry-pick when it comes to moving your spirit and finding peace in God. I think you are free to search for any metaphor whatsoever which will take you across the worldly divide whenever you need to be transported or comforted* [Gilbert, 2006, p. 234].

Parallel constructions also function in various contexts – 20%. In this example, such a construction emphasizes the protagonist's strong emotional experiences: *Since Claude's death – and especially after the aborted Dîner en Blanc – she had stopped drinking wine in the evenings, preferring to sit alone in the dark in her room, suffering a punishing asceticism that seemed to satisfy her guilt at not having picked up... But tonight she felt an overwhelming urge to let go – of her sobriety, her dreams, her inhibitions. Tomorrow was supposed to have been the first day of the rest of her life proper, the life she had chosen for herself: living in Paris, following her dream with Claude* [Swan, 2011, p. 462].

Polysyndeton occurs infrequently 7%). In some contexts it can emphasize the character's joy of realizing her freedom of action and choice: *I can decide how I spend my time, whom I interact with, whom I share my body and life and money and energy with. I can select what I eat and read and study* [Gilbert, 2006, p. 482].

Rhetorical questions are found mainly in the internal monologue of characters 8%). For example, here the protagonist is worried of her being unable to get rid of the influence of the potent drugs: *I'd started taking the medication in January of 2003. By May, I was already diminishing my dosage significantly. Those had been the toughest months, anyhow – the last months of the divorce, the last ragged months with David. Could I have endured that time without the drugs, if I'd just held out a little longer? Could I have survived myself, by myself? I don't know* [Gilbert, 2002, p. 182].

Phraseological units are not common in female fictional discourse, their share is 14%. We can find them when the description of the new free life of characters is introduced into the narration: *The girls hadn't wanted to leave her alone for a minute, but Cassie had insisted that she needed a few hours to herself before this new chapter in her life began, and they had reluctantly booked her into a drab airport hotel room with a hard bed and a well-stocked minibar* [Swan, 2011, p. 17].

The study of peculiarities of representing the concept "freedom" in modern female fictional discourse created by K. Swan, E. Gilbert and S. Townsend has revealed a tendency to interpret this phenomenon in the correlation with will, space, the ability to act in one's own way; lack of shyness, bondage, slavery, submission to another's will. Most images of freedom carry a positive emotional connotation. The figurative representation of freedom is quite diverse and includes both dynamic and static images.

In female fictional discourse indirect representation predominates, which, we believe, is due to gender specifics. Indirect realization is accompanied by the creation of the opposition of freedom – non-freedom in the contexts: power as the absence of freedom and choice, conscious restriction of freedom; lack of choice and freedom; lack of freedom due to devotion to a place or certain people. What concerns direct one, it is carried out through the means of all levels of the language with the means of lexical level dominating 50%) over the syntactical 28%), the phraseological 14%) and phonetic 8%) ones.

The basic understanding of freedom in female fictional discourse by K. Swan, E. Gilbert and S. Townsend lies in the ability to act as one wishes, enjoying absolute, unlimited freedom of action, as well as freedom of choice and the striving for independence.

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### **On the Issue of Concept «Freedom» Objectivization in Contemporary English Female Fictional Discourse**

The article offers an analysis of contemporary English-language fictional discourse created by famous authors K. Swan, E. Gilbert and S. Townsend in the aspect of narrative reflection of the content and structure of such a multidimensional and difficult to describe phenomenon as freedom. The investigation is carried out from the standpoint of pragmatic and cognitive linguistics. The author establishes contextual cases of direct and indirect representation of this concept along with an analysis of the spectrum of means belonging to various language levels of its objectification – from phonetic to phraseological one. Indirect realization is accompanied by the creation of the opposition of “freedom – non-freedom”: power as the absence of freedom and choice, freedom as an imprisonment; conscious restriction of freedom; lack of choice and freedom; lack of freedom due to devotion to a place or certain people. Direct representation, in its turn, in most cases is associated with freedom from relationships that limit freedom of will and action. The basic



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understanding of freedom in female fictional discourse lies in the ability to act at will, in absolute, unlimited freedom of action, as well as freedom of choice and the striving for independence. Traveling and associations with a particular place also give the characters a sense of freedom.

**Key words:** *concept, fictional discourse, mental construct, explication, linguoculture.*

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