

SUSPENSE AND ITS CLASSIFICATION IN MODERN ENGLISH LINGUISTICS

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Abstract:

Text analysis, especially linguo-stylistic analysis of a text is one of the most important issues in modern linguistics. It is a well-known fact that stylistic devices play the greatest role in text analysis. Among other figures of speech, suspense is one of the widely used syntactic stylistic devices. The given article discusses peculiarities of suspense and identifies the classes of this very interesting stylistic device in modern English linguistics.

Key Words: Suspense, Modern English

Introduction

Text analysis, especially linguo-stylistic analysis of a text is one of the most important issues in modern linguistics. It is a well-known fact that stylistic devices play the greatest role in text analysis. To be more precise without stylistic devices linguo – stylistic analysis of a text is not complete. Among other figures of speech, suspense is one of the widely used syntactic stylistic devices.

The aim of the given article is to investigate namely suspense, to give brief overview of this very interesting stylistic device, discuss its peculiarities and identify those classes which were revealed after processing the material under investigation. Namely these classes are the novelty that the given article discusses.

Types of Suspense

According to the definitions found in different dictionaries, suspense is “A state or condition of uncertainty and excitement, with some anxiety, as the outcome of something is unknown”; “The state or quality of being undecided, uncertain, or doubtful”; “A feeling of tension, worry, etc. what may happen”. But in literature it can be considered as an element that is used to leave a reader or audience wait in excitement trying to figure out what is going to happen next, the quality of a literary work that makes the reader or audience uncertain or tense about the outcome of events. Suspense makes the reader ask “What will happen next?” Thus, suspense is a feeling of uncertainty and anxiety about the outcome of certain actions, an element of excitement producing a situation which breathes something untoward or ominous to happen.

Suspense comes from the ancient period. Even Aristotle referred to suspense as an element of drama. But suspense is not confined to drama; it can be found in a novel or a short story or a poem. Suspense inherent in a situation enhances the interest of the plot and contributes to the atmosphere. Suspense is a crucial plot element in literature. The plot is the arrangement of the ideas or events that make up a story and its elements determine the reader's experience. Its primary elements include not only plot but causality, foreshadowing, conflict, exposition, rising action, crisis and denouement as well. Suspense is the sense of anticipation or worry that the author instills in readers.

Thus, the aim of suspense is to keep a reader in constant interest, feelings of tension and anxiety, in the state of uncertainty and expectation and somehow prepare the reader for the logical conclusion of the utterance. It can also be said that this stylistic device causes psychological effect.

The classical example of suspense is Rudyard Kipling's poem "If":

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too:
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream---and not make dreams your master;
If you can think---and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same:
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings,
And never breathe a word about your loss:
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings---nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much:
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And---which is more---you'll be a Man, my son!

It is clear that the whole poem is built on the stylistic device – suspense, as only the last two lines, which are the principle clause of the poem, convey the main idea and all *if*-clauses keep the reader in constant interest. Namely this is the aim of suspense; the reader is eager to read the whole text, in this particular case the whole poem, in one breath in order to learn what the writer wants to say, what is his/her intention. Suspense is that element that keeps a reader turning and turning pages. It is a vital ingredient in almost any text - be it a story, a novel, a fairy-tale, or a poem. Some readers think that suspense belongs to mysteries and thrillers, but suspense is vital to all genres.

Suspense as a compositional device consists of arranging the matter of a communication in such a way that the less important, descriptive or subordinate parts are amassed at the beginning and the main idea is withheld till the end of the sentence/paragraph/chapter/the whole text. Thus the reader's attention is held and his/her interest is kept up.

"Mankind, says a Chinese manuscript, which my friend M. was obliging enough to read and explain to me, for the first seventy thousand ages ate their mean raw."

(Charles Lamb)

In the given sentence the main clause is "Mankind for the first seventy thousand ages ate their mean raw" and the phrase "says a Chinese manuscript, which my friend M. was obliging enough to

read and explain to me” is suspense which prolongs the sentence and causes a reader’s interest. This sentence can serve as a good example to show that suspense can be included even in one sentence.

As it has already been shown suspense can comprise the whole text and even one sentence. Besides the above mentioned examples, suspense can consist of one paragraph, one page, one chapter (in case a text consists of several chapters). The longer the suspense is the more interest is caused.

Suspense can start at any place of the text:

- From the very title
- At the beginning of the text
- In the middle of the text
- At the end of the text

Suspense can end:

- In the middle of the text
- At the end of the text
- And generally anywhere throughout the text

As all other stylistic devices, suspense can also be classified according to its strength. It is obvious that the strongest will be suspense which starts from the title, grows throughout the text and ends at the end of the text. We believe that the weakest will be that suspense which comprises one sentence or one paragraph.

The major point of this article is to show the classification of suspense into different types. Besides the type of suspense described above, the material under investigation enabled us to distinguish the following types of suspense:

- Hidden suspense
- Macro suspense
- Micro suspense

Hidden suspense

Suspense can be considered as hidden if it is not perceived without aided eye. As an example we can bring Elizabeth Bowen’s story “Tears, Idle Tears”. If a reader is not extremely attentive and does not penetrate deeply into the story, he/she will never be able to notice suspense and consequently, will never understand the essence of the story (the reason why the main hero – a little boy- was systematically crying in the presence of his mother).

Macro and Micro Suspense

These types of suspense are somehow interrelated with each other. They cannot exist without each other. James Salinger’s story “A Perfect Day for Bananafish” can serve as a good example of these two kinds of suspense. Suspense starts from the very title and ends in the last paragraph of the story. But besides, there is noticed another suspense in the text that starts from the second page and lasts for a while, i.e. comprises a couple of pages. Namely this story made us think about distinguishing macro and micro suspense. Thus, we call the first suspense macro suspense as it comprises the whole text and the second one – micro suspense which is included in the macro suspense.

Conclusion

In conclusion it can be said that suspense is a stylistic device of delay of a direct plot narration in the literary work by using parenthetical sentences, inserting descriptions of the nature, past of the heroes, philosophical discourses, lyrical digressions, etc.

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