

COMPOSITIONAL MEANING STRUCTURE VIA METACHORIC SCHEMAS
(CASE STUDY OF ENGLISH FAIRY TALES)

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У статті запропоновано тлумачення мегаметафори LIFE IS A QUIZ як стрижневого компоненту побудови сюжетно композиційної структури англійської казки.

Ключові слова: мегаметафора, казка, композиція, сюжетно-композиційна структура.

The article deals with the megametaphor LIFE IS A QUIZ as a basic conceptual element in the formation of compositional plot blocks of English fairy tales.

Keywords: megametaphor, fairy tale, composition, plot-compositional structure.

A fairy tale is a children's story about magical and imaginary beings and lands, a story in which magic things happen [12, p. 249 ; 13, p. 319-320]. A fairy tale often tells the story of an individual. It takes into account the entire life of the hero or heroine, but focuses on a single event. Fairy tales mostly have a happy end. Goodness is rewarded, and evil is punished. As the origin of the word *fairy* demonstrates, it deals with enchantment and miraculous events. The elements of traditional fairy tales are: flatness (fairy tale characters are silhouettes, mentioned simply because they are there), abstraction (not many particular, illustrative details are given, the things in fairy tales are described with open language: Lovely. Dead. Beautiful), intuitive logic (nonsensical sense) and normalized magic (the natural world in a fairy tale is a magical world. The day to day is collapsed with the wondrous. In a traditional fairy tale there is no need for a portal. Enchantment is not astounding. Magic is normal [1, p. 64-70].

Metaphorical concepts are seen as general mental mappings from a (typically concrete) source domain to a (typically abstract) target domains ('projections' of 'secondary subjects' onto 'primary subjects') [11]. Individual metaphorical expressions are taken to instantiate these general mappings. For example, the metaphorical expressions in (1) instantiate the general metaphorical concept in (2) [9;10;14].

The linguistic approach to metaphor provides sentence-level account of the phenomenon. There is text-world account of metaphor to deal with the "undercurrent" of discourse meaning and the extended use of metaphor (mega-metaphor) within a text, based on data from literary texts. Such metaphor provides a certain "undercurrent" to the micrometaphors that appear on the surface of the text, run through entire literary texts without necessarily "surfacing". [7, p. 51-53; 8].

The research is focused on revealing compositional meaning structure via reconstruction of the conceptual metaphoric schemas embodied in compositional plot blocks. The key meaning is represented by the megametaphor (Paul Werth) LIFE IS A QUIZ, which is reconstructed by means of the complex analysis focused on investigation linguistic and cognitive properties of English fairy tales.

The **object** of the research is the plot-compositional structure of English fairy tales. The **subject** is conceptual metaphoric schema LIFE IS A QUIZ as the key of building compositional meaning structure.

The megametaphor LIFE IS A QUIZ is a conceptual background of the composition of the fairy tales, it unfolds into a number of conceptual metaphors, actualized in the text. A *quiz* is "a test, a game or competition in which you answer questions". In fairy tales there is always a task to be done, a secret to be discovered, a riddle to be solved or a thing\person to be found.

The world of a fairy tale is the world created by adult writers for children under 18. There is a huge gap in the age between the author and his little reader. The author operates with his own memories about the childhood, his own adult experience, his creativity and cultural specifics. The metaphors the author lives by may not interrelate with the metaphors children operate with. The main is to transform, adopt

the mental schemas of an adult for childish audience. The conceptual substance of a fairy tale is a blend of the mental construal of an adult and a child. A fairy tale teaches, advertises, educates and motivates. It is not an instruction or a story about real life. It is an imaginary world that has a close connection with the reality. In the fairy tale the magical and the real coexist— this is a technical element.

A fairy tale “Tim Tot Tot” is about a young girl who marries a man she doesn’t know. The decision of a girl is motivated by his promise to provide a perfect life for her. For eleven months the girl is free to do what she wants, but when the twelfth month comes the girl must spin five skeins every day, and if she doesn’t her husband shall kill her. The girl is upset because she knows she can’t spin so many skeins. A strange black creature comes to help a girl with this hard task, but there is a pay, she must **guess** its name: *“I’ll give you three **guesses** every night to **guess** my name, and if you haven’t **guessed** it before the month’s up you shall be mine”* (EFT, p. 9 “Tim Tot Tot”). The girl tries to guess and succeeds in it – as a result, she got the necessary help and a free life.

The wish **to find** someone sillier than his future wife and her parents is the main wish of the a boy in a fairy tale “The three Sillies” : *“I’ve travelled many miles, and I never met three such big sillies as you three before; and now I shall **start out on my travels** again, and when I can **find** three bigger sillies than you three, then I’ll come back and marry your daughter ”* (EFT, p. 13 “The three Sillies”). At last he finds three sillier persons and returns to his fiancée . The composition of the plot is based on a search for something that is urgent for the future life.

As a rule, the main character involves in a quiz himself, it becomes his own choice to find and discover something: *“Once on a time there was a boy named Jack, and one morning **he started to go and seek his fortune**”* (EFT, p. 21 “How Jack decided to seek his fortune”). Jack decides to search for his fortune and this adventure becomes so interesting that others want to take part in this search. Jack starts his way himself, but one by one different animals (a cat, a dog, a goat, a bull, a rooster) accompany him. They succeed in their quiz and get what they wanted.

A desire to investigate and experience something new becomes a target of the whole life: *“And their son never saw any other people in his life, but he knew that there was some more in the world besides his own father and mother, because he had lots of books, and he used to read every day about them. And when he read about some pretty young women, he used to go mad to see some of them; till one day, when his father was out cutting wood, he told his mother that he wished to go away **to look for** his living in some other country, and to see some other people besides them two”* (EFT, p. 21). Jack feels he can’t go on without knowing pretty young women he read about in the books. He starts for his journey.

But such search can sometimes disappoint. Mr. Vinegar in a fairy tale “Mr. Vinegar” also starts for his fortune: *“My dear, let us see what can be done. Here is the door; I will take it on my back, and we will go forth **to seek our fortune**”* (EFT, p. 23 “Mr. Vinegar”). He finds some money in the forest and goes to the fair to buy a cow. This cow could bring their family profits, because Mrs. Vinegar could make butter and cheese for sale. On his way home Mr. Vinegar buys a cow but exchanges it for bagpipes, bagpipes he changes for a pair of gloves, a pair of gloves for a stick and throws this stick into a bird. He comes back without any purchase.

The thematic words *to seek, to look for, to find, to guess* are the word-markers to find the fragments of the text where the megametaphor LIFE IS A QUIZ actualizes: *“There was an old sow with three little pigs, and as she had not enough to keep them, she sent them out **to seek their fortune**”* (EFT, p. 46 “The story of the three little pigs”); *THERE WAS ONCE A WIDOW* that lived on a small bit of ground, which she rented from a farmer. And she had two sons; and by-and-by it was time for the wife to send them away **to seek their fortune**” (EFT, p. 83 “The Red Ettin”).

Sometimes the task to guess a riddle can be determinant: if you guess – you live, if you don’t – you die. Red Ettin, a terrible beast with three heads, in a fairy tale “The Red Ettin” asks a young man three questions: *“The monster soon found the poor young man, and pulled him from his hole. And when he had got him out, he told him that if he could **answer him three questions his life should be spared**”* (EFT, p. 83 “The Red Ettin”). These riddles are very difficult to guess for a human without

magic, so the young man fails and dies. His younger brother, being wiser and kinder, gets some help from a fairy and copes with the beast's riddles. Red Ettin loses his power and becomes mortal. The guess of a riddle lets a younger brother save his elder brother and other imprisoned people.

To seek the fortune becomes the only way out in cruelties of life and is a saving boat for Jack: "A LAD NAMED JACK was once so *unhappy at home* through his father's *ill-treatment*, that he made up his mind to run away and seek his fortune in the wide world " (EFT, p. 129 "*The ass, the table and the stick*"). Jack meets an old woman who asks him to be her servant for a year and one day. The wage Jack is given for his job is really good: the ass that gives silver sixpences from his mouth. But Jack is cheated by a man in the inn and returns home without any money. Jack goes to seek his fortune for the second time. This time he serves the carpenter and gets a table that covers itself for his job. Unfortunately, the same man from the inn deceives Jack again. For the third time Jack seeks his fortune and gets a magic stick which beats anyone he wants. Jack revenges upon the host of the inn, returns home, finds his cruel father dead and marries the girl he loved. The search for a better life brings luck.

The compositional plot blocks of English fairy tales are embodied in the conceptual megametaphor LIFE IS A QUIZ. The adventures, trips and routes are motivated by a wish/necessity to find or guess something. In a fairy tale no one is afraid of obscurity, vice-versa, a quiz becomes the main purpose or task of life.

In further researches semiotic and synergetic aspects of English fairy tales can be investigated.

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ВІДОМОСТІ ПРО АВТОРА

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