Lexical combinations of contemporary British military fiction: lexical-semantic and stylistic features

Лексичні сполучення у текстах сучасної британської військової прози: лексико-семантичні та стилістичні особливості

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Abstract

This article focuses on the lexical-semantic features of the language means of contemporary British military fiction. Despite the sustained philological attention to fictional texts of different genres, the relative disregard of the lexical patterning in fiction on military themes stands in need of scrutiny. In order to account for all the lingual and extralingual factors influencing the process of fictional text composition, this article takes a philological approach and conducts an integrated analysis – combining linguistic and literary-theoretical perspectives – of the lexical patterning of contemporary military fiction. Our aim is to establish the main lexical-semantic and stylistic peculiarities of the dominant lexical combinations in contemporary British fiction with macro-, meso- and micro-inclusions of military themes. Functions of the thematic lexicon connected with the war topic are more obvious in the literary texts with macro- and meso-inclusions of military themes. However,

Анотація

Статтю зосереджено на лексико-семантичних особливостях мовних засобів у текстах сучасної британської воєнної прози. Незважаючи на постійну увагу філологів до художніх текстів різних жанрів, недостатньо уваги приділено лексичному моделюванню у художніх творах на воєнну тематику, що потребує ретельного вивчення. З метою врахування усіх лінгвальних та позалінгвальних чинників, що впливають на процес творення художнього тексту, у цій статті застосовано філологічний підхід і проведено комплексний аналіз – поєднання лінгвістичних та літературно-теоретичних засад – лексичних моделей сучасної воєнної художньої прози. Мета дослідження – встановити основні лексико-семантичні та стилістичні особливості домінантних лексичних сполучень у сучасній британській художній прозі з макро-, мезо- та мікровкрапленнями воєнної тематики. Функції тематичної лексики, пов'язаної з темою війни,

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their role in the texts with micro-inclusions of military themes is quite significant as well: the details of the military environment and phenomena serve as a means of establishing a close connection between the reader and the storyworld; recollections of the war period echo in the plot line of the characters, reflecting its destructive consequences even long afterwards.

Keywords: interpretation, lexical combinations, lexical-semantic space (LSS), literary and pragmatic stylistics, military fiction (MF), thematic lexicon.

чіткіше виявляються у художніх текстах із макро- та мезовкрапленнями воєнної тематики. Проте їхня роль у текстах із мікровкрапленнями військової тематики є не менш значущою: деталі воєнної дійсності та явищ слугують засобом встановлення тісного взаємозв'язку між читачем і художнім світом; спогади про воєнний час відлунюють у сюжетній лінії персонажів, відображаючи її руйнівні наслідки навіть довго після завершення.

Ключові слова: інтерпретація, лексичні структури, лексико-семантичний простір (ЛСП), літературна та прагматична стилістика, воєнна проза (ВП), тематична лексика.

Introduction

The use of lexical units and their combinations is highly dependent on lingual and extralingual (historical, cultural, social, political) factors. Since such units, thoroughly selected by the author, influence interpretation of the literary text, most scholars agree on the relevance of conducting a deep study of lexical-semantic and lexical-stylistic peculiarities, as well as pragmatic orientation of literary texts (Al-Hindawi and Saffah, 2019; Angermuller, 2014; Black, 2006; Chapman and Clark, 2014; Hickey, 1993; Warner, 2014).

The popularity and actualization of war themes in literary genres of the beginning of the 21st century is predetermined by urgent global problems of the recent decades. Offering mediated, symbolic reactions to concrete social pressures, military plots in fiction are enormously popular among contemporary authors and, consequently, in scholarship (Barlow, 2000; Bergonzi, 1993; Cobley, 1995; Kaiter, 2016; Sarma, 2001; Smith, 2000). This article contributes to the study of means of explication of military topics in fiction (including different levels of their realization). It offers a complex analysis of lexical combinations in the lexical-semantic texture (which is often referred to as the lexical-semantic space of the text in the Eastern European school of linguistics) of the contemporary British military fiction (hereafter *MF*) and their lexical-semantic peculiarities, defining the literary text as a highly organized semantic unity. It should be noted that by contemporary British military fiction here we understand the texts written at the beginning of the 21st century (2000-2021), whereas Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 is definitely going to have a peculiar impact on

further works of fiction and will need to be analyzed as a separate group of texts.

Questions of the Study

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1) What are the main lexical-semantic and stylistic peculiarities of the dominant lexical combinations in contemporary British military fiction?
2) What is their role in the texts with macro-, meso- and micro-inclusions of military themes?

The scientific novelty of the work lies in the systematization and generalizing of the dominant lexical combinations and their features in the lexical-semantic space of the contemporary British military fiction in terms of complex linguistic and literary tradition understanding.

The study would hopefully add to the literature by shedding light on further study of the latest British military fiction, in particular: new peculiarities of the British military fiction influenced by the recent Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine; scientific comparison of the British military fiction texts of the beginning of the 21st century and the texts written after the dramatic events of February 24th, 2022. Findings of this research are likely to be useful for the deeper study of the lexical-semantic space of the text, its threefold expansion (semantic, thematic and associative) from the complex approach which includes both linguistic and literary-theoretical perspectives.

Theoretical Framework

Lexical-semantic space of the text and interpretation of its lexical units

The lexical-semantic organization of the text structure has been under close scrutiny in numerous philological approaches: text linguistics (Halliday and Hasan, 1976), lexical semantics (Geeraerts, 2009; Jeffries, 2014; Mills, 2005), communicative linguistics (Gee, 2010a; 2010b), literary stylistics (Hope and Wright, 2005; Shen, 2014; Toolan, 2013), pragmatic stylistics (Black, 2006; Warner, 2014).

In contemporary Anglophone theory, philological studies are increasingly focusing on the problems of semantic structure, lexical-semantic content and interpretation of the encoded meaning of the text (Angermuller, 2014; Geeraerts, 2009). In Eastern European theoretical tradition, these issues are often referred to as the lexical-semantic space of the text, which can be defined as an organized system of lexical units and their combinations, united on the basis of a common theme and conceptual meaning and representing a certain conceptual sphere (Antipina, 2015, p.4; Popova, 2011, p.115). Within the lexical-semantic approach, analysis of the structure in which the word is contextualized is highly important for the interpretation of its meaning (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer, 2008, p.21).

One of the main tasks of linguistics is to analyse how the meaning is encoded in language, investigating to this end the peculiarities and models of lexical combinations (Fischer-Starcke, 2010, p. 34). Language of the fictional text constitutes a distinct area of linguistic study because lexical means of a fictional text construct a storyworld as a frame of reference and thus usually carry an implicit significance, not peculiar to them in other spheres of language use (Black 2006, p. 152). Thus, the notion of meaning of lexical combinations is closely related to the notion of context and the process of interpretation. Meaning of a fictional text and of its separate lexical combinations is actualized only in the context: "Conversational implicatures … are rooted in the situation in which they occur, and must be interpreted taking the context into account" (Black, 2006, p. 25). Context, as we stress in this article, also includes the author and the reader who, in their distinct pragmatic positions, are active participants in construction of meanings arising from the situation.

We agree with J. P. Gee (2010a, p. 67) that no matter which part of the context influenced our interpretation of the text, "there is always the possibility of considering other and additional aspects of the context, and these new considerations may change how we interpret the utterance". The same piece of the text can be interpreted differently by different people, and even by one person while re-reading the same text. Furthermore, a typical interpretation of lexical combinations, or "figured world" (Gee, 2010a), varies depending on different social and cultural experiences of readers involved (Black, 2006, p. 153; Fischer-Starcke, 2010, p. 35; Gee, 2010a, pp. 70-71; Geeraerts, 2009, p. 220; Jeffries, 2014, p. 79; Mills, 2005, p. 123; Tanskanen, 2006, p. 21).

Thus, a reader is an active participant in the process of cocreation of text's meaning: "As texts are contextually underspecified, they need a practical instance – the reader – whose interpretive capacities and contextual knowledge need to be mobilized in the production of meaning" (Angermuller, 2014, p. 140). In this way, the reader deals with a complex heterogeneous phenomenon, namely, discourse. We follow M. Hoey's (2001, p. 11) definition of the text as a result of a purposeful interaction between a writer and a reader, and the process of this interaction is called discourse.

As follows, the lexical-semantic space (hereafter, LSS) is a unique form of the text comprehension, which evokes a continuous contest between the author's and the reader's meanings due to which it is frequently modified. Analysis of the LSS in the semantic structure of the fictional text contributes to a detailed understanding of lexical combinations used by the author, their semantic content and pragmatic effects on the reader.

British military fiction of the beginning of the 21st century

A work of fiction is an excellent way of representing reality by language means. Created in the author's consciousness, it is a unique phenomenon reflecting the author's points of view, ideas and individual style. Today British literature involves variety of trends, a significant part of which is still postmodernism. The lexical-semantic structure of a postmodernist text has been studied by Alegre, 2001; Head, 2002; Hidalgo, 2005; Lindas, 2013; Malcolm, 2002.

In the context of conflicts and social upheavals in the recent decades across the world, war remains one of the most popular themes in fiction of the

beginning of the 21st century. Consequently, the British MF as a manifestation of an individual author's vision and outlook becomes an object of interest of different linguists (Barlow, 2000; Cobley, 1995; Hart, 2015; Kaiter, 2016; Sarma, 2001; Smith, 2000).

Methodology

The notion of lexical-semantic space enables analyzing of the lexical units and combinations of the text as a complex arranged system. All the lexical units compose a single semantic entity and are selected by the author in order to achieve his / her intention and create specific effects on the reader. This choice influences the reader's reception and interpretation of the literary text. Therefore, a philological approach is necessary if we are to account for a wider context (discourse) of a fictional text under research, as well as analytically integrate lingual and extralingual factors influencing the process of its creation (Gavins and Lahey, 2016; Geeraerts, 2009; Jeffries, 2014; Mills, 2005; Paltridge, 2006; Salkie, 2001).

This research includes some elements of pragmatic-stylistic analysis. Since all the lexical units and strategies are used by the author with a definite aim, pragmatic-stylistic approach enables a deeper analysis of the fictional discourse than literary stylistics or pragmatics taken separately (Black, 2006; Caink, 2014; Chapman and Clark, 2014; Hickey, 1993; Hoey, 2001; Warner, 2014). In its anthropocentric orientation, pragmatic stylystics focuses on the strategies and techniques of the author who uses peculiar stylistic devices, on their effect on the reader, taking into account the extralingual context and on the reader's interpretation of the meaning of the fictional text as well as separate lexical-stylistic means and structures (Chapman and Clark, 2014, p. 6; Warner, 2014, p. 364). Thus, pragmatic stylistics opens up new insights into the processes of composing of fictional texts, the author's choice of certain lexical means and the effect they produce on the reader.

However, besides pragmatic orientation (understood here in a broad sense as a necessary attention to the text's contexts of production and reception), a philological approach remains a guiding one throughout the analyses that follow. While the linguistic analysis of lexical combinations in fictional texts yields incomplete or one-sided results, the philological approach integrates linguistic and literary-theoretical perspectives which enables us to study lexical combinations in a fictional text as inseparable from its social and historical bases as well as author's intentions as highly influenced by the social, extralingual context. Benefits of such approach are quite obvious in fiction on military themes, since their micro-inclusions frequently penetrate the texts of other genres and themes. The philological approach contributes to a deeper immersion into the literary discourse, taking into consideration the whole context and extralingual factors.

Results and Discussion

Contemporary British fiction

In this research talking about contemporary British fiction we aim first of all at studying lexical-semantic and stylistic peculiarities in the texts of postmodernist character. Postmodernist fiction of the end of the twentieth century and at the beginning of the twenty-first organically emerges from the philosophic modernist fiction, which is reflected in the works by P. Ackroyd (1993; 1997), J. Barnes (1990a; 1990b), J. Fowles (1985; 1997), I. McEwan (2002; 2004). Consequently, its peculiarity is philosophical overtones and reliance on literary tradition. A distinct feature of British postmodernism is its sustained interest in history, both of Britain and the world in general (Alegre, 2001, p. 18; Hidalgo, 2005, p. 82; Kaiter, 2016, p. 204; Lindas, 2013, p. 30; Malcolm, 2002, p. 6). This partly accounts for the frequent appearance of the war theme in contemporary novelistic prose. D. Malcolm identifies such distinct features of fiction of the 1980s and 1990s:

a fascination with history, with historical events and processes both in the distant past and more immediate (sometimes very immediate) past; an interest in settings abroad, outside the British Isles, or in characters and experiences from outside that geographical area; a considerable prominence of genre mixture; and metafictional interests (Malcolm, 2002, p.6).

For as long as war existed, writers have been trying to understand it, to transfer its horrors from the battlefield into the narrative. Contemporary British MF, in particular, focuses on the recent wars. The recent research of the winners of the Walter Scott prize (an award for historical fiction) found out that the events of World War II became "the most fertile ground" (Barry, 2017) for the novels. Analysis of the whole range of texts, submitted for the award during 8 years of its operation (650 texts in total), demonstrated that the events of 38% of these texts took place in the 20th century. World War II was chosen as

the setting for 14%, while World War I – for 9% of the submitted texts. I. Robertson (British writer and chair of Historical Writers' Association) describes war as "rich dramatic territory": "Aside from the massive all-consuming drama of the war itself, it also put everything into flux. Individuals were confronted with complex moral questions while the world shifted and spasmed around them" (Barry, 2017). What exactly forces contemporary authors to appeal to the past and the theme of war in particular?
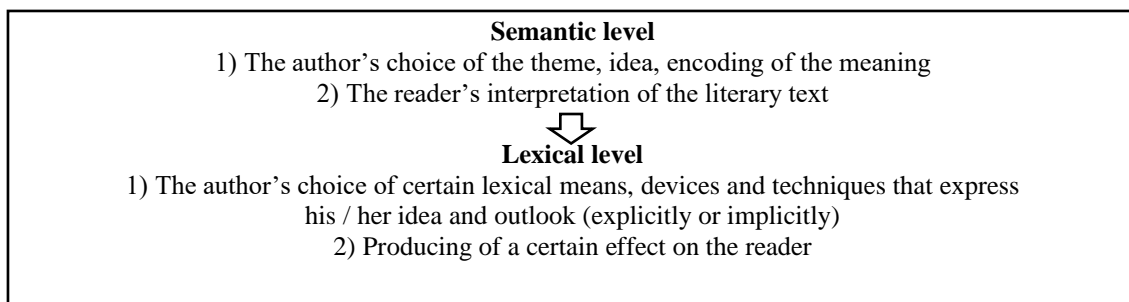
Lexical-semantic space and stylistic features of contemporary British military fiction

Certainly, such pressing problems as global warming and international conflicts catch the writers' attention, but interest in the past remains strong both on the thematic and formal levels. For instance, D. S. Mitchell in his *Cloud Atlas* (2004) uses typical for the 21st century imitation of the previous literary styles and devices (Kemp, 2007). A distinct feature of the contemporary British novel is its ambiguity and polysemy of meaning (Kaiter, 2016, p. 206; Lindas, 2013, p. 30). Due to such flexibility, contemporary fiction can combine experiences of different social classes, generations, nationalities and literary projects – from realism to experimentalism (Alegre, 2001). Use in the literary text of such elements as letters, diaries, photos affirms the author's desire to convince the reader in the accuracy of the depicted events (Cobley, 1995, p. 107).

The storyworld is composed by the author according to his / her imagination and views and is supposed to produce a certain effect on the reader. Fictional text is thus a manifestation of the individual author's style, the reflection of reality and, at the same time, of the fictitious, imaginative world of the author (Gavins and Lahey, 2016; Gee, 2010b). Y. Ho (2011, pp. 118-141), studying the possible implicit meanings and the effect of the dominant lexical-semantic combinations in a fictional text, focuses his / her attention on the excessive or deliberately diminished use of certain lexical units.
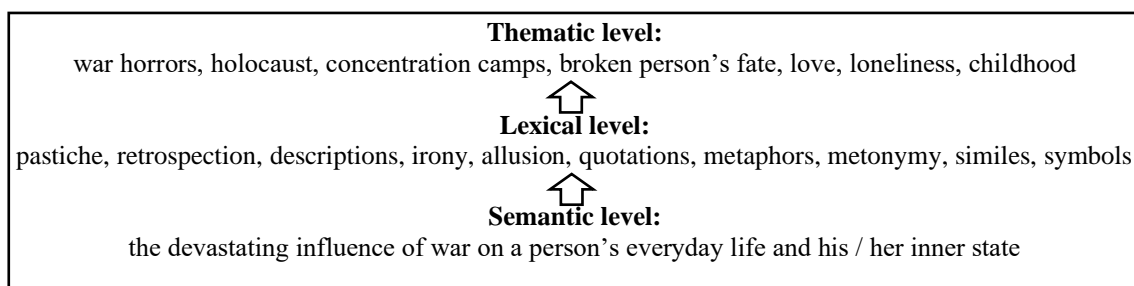
The lexical units are arranged in the textual space in such a way that, taken together, they ensure its compositional unity. On the whole, the lingual organization of the lexical-semantic space of the fictional text is observed on two levels: lexical (surface) and semantic (deep) levels. The same meaning can be amplified with the help of different lexical means and combinations. The semantic level covers the sense encoded by the author, which is the materialization of the individual author's conception of the world, and the reader's interpretation of the text. It can be represented in the Fig. 1:

Semantic level
1) The author's choice of the theme, idea, encoding of the meaning
2) The reader's interpretation of the literary text

⇩

Lexical level
1) The author's choice of certain lexical means, devices and techniques that express his / her idea and outlook (explicitly or implicitly)
2) Producing of a certain effect on the reader

Figure 1. The structure of the lexical-semantic space of the literary text. Source: own.

Postmodernist outlook is characterized by the wide use of such lexical stylistic devices as irony, allusions, quotations, epigraphs, metaphors, metonymy, similes (Clayton, 2012; Cobley, 1995; Head, 2002; Hidalgo, 2005; Lindas, 2013; Shapoval, Bakhov, Mosiichuk, Kozachyshyna, Pradivlianna and Malashchuk-Vyshnevska, 2022; Wagner, 2010; Wells, 2008). Their use in the text aims at producing of a special effect on the reader. The reader in a postmodernist epoch becomes an active co-author of the meaning of the text (Hoey, 2001, p. 24; Jeffries, 2014, p. 55; Levchenko, Lubov, Varenikova and Torkut, 2021, p. 104-105; Lindas, 2013, p. 16), as the text becomes oriented towards an intellectual reader who will be able to read between the lines and to perceive the hidden ideas and motifs. As E. Black states: "Literature exists to interest us; if it fails in that, we have no motivation to read" (2006, p. 157). Thus, the lexical-semantic space of the contemporary British MF can be generalized in the Fig. 2:

> **Thematic level:**
> war horrors, holocaust, concentration camps, broken person's fate, love, loneliness, childhood
>
> ⇧
>
> **Lexical level:**
> pastiche, retrospection, descriptions, irony, allusion, quotations, metaphors, metonymy, similes, symbols
>
> ⇧
>
> **Semantic level:**
> the devastating influence of war on a person's everyday life and his / her inner state

Figure 2. The lexical-semantic space of the contemporary British military fiction. Source: own.

Hense, the distinct feature of the British MF of the beginning of the 21st century is considerable attention to the past. By depicting (or simply mentioning) war, today's authors induce us to think about its influence on a person's everyday life and propose the ways of overcoming its consequences. The popularity of military themes in the latest fiction texts is predetermined by the war and conflict actions taking place nowadays. Besides, the interest of readers towards military themes is rapidly growing as the result of Russian cruelty which simply overwhelmed every conscious person all over the world. Thus, from the pragmatic-discourse and anthropocentric points of view, the study of these fictional prose texts is extremely relevant given their lexical-semantic peculiarities. A complex philological approach makes it possible to conduct an integrated analysis of the lexical-semantic space of contemporary MF, taking into account all the extralingual factors influencing the process of a literary text production.

Dominant lexical combinations and their lexical-semantic features in contemporary British military fiction

Contemporary fiction is characterized by the phenomenon of genre diffusion – "the coexistence of widely diverging novelistic genres" (Alegre, 2001, p. 18). Similarly, MF usually combines elements of different genres and the war theme is observed on different levels: from being the text's dominant theme to its micro-inclusions via simple mentions or references in passing.

A common theme is the basis for the general classification of the texts which may differ significantly in many other aspects (Brinker, 1993, p. 22). Thus, in this article we generalize the contemporary British MF into 3 main groups: fictional texts with the dominant war theme (macro-inclusions of war theme), with partial inclusion of war theme (meso-inclusions) and with micro-inclusions of war theme.

The first group consists of the texts focused mainly on the horrors of war itself, such as holocaust, concentration camps, person's fate broken by war: for instance, J. Boyne's *The Absolutist* (2011), J. Boyne's *The Boy at the Top of the Mountain* (2015), J. Boyne's*, The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (2006), K. Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant* (2016). The second group of texts only partially raises the topic of war and is to a great extent a combination of different genres, such as historical and philosophic novel (I. McEwan *Atonement* (2002)), social-psychological (J. Harris *Five Quarters of the Orange* (2002)), family-social (K. Atkinson *Life After Life* (2013)), A. S. Byatt *The Children's Book* (2010)), fantastic war novel and so on. They are frequently characterized by a retrospective element: the recollections of the past, of war and people lost in it, as in J. Harris's *Five Quarters of the Orange*. Lack of seriousness and use of irony (peculiar to postmodernism) can be found in *Atonement*:

'What I did was terrible. I don't expect you to forgive me.'[Cecilia:] 'Don't worry about that,' she said soothingly, and in the second or two during which she drew deeply on her cigarette, Briony flinched as her hopes lifted unreal. 'Don't worry,' her sister resumed. 'I won't ever forgive you' (McEwan, 2002, p. 261).

This novel is also characterized by orientation towards historiographic metaliterature, relativity, polysemy, proposing several perspectives on one event. Contemporary authors tend to use the technique of description (Cobley, 1995, p. 99), for instance the description of London life during World War II (K. Atkinson *Life After Life* (2013)). Fictional texts with the micro-inclusions of war theme are concentrated on other topics, such as relations between people or having the courage to face the past (D. S. Mitchell *Cloud Atlas* (2004), S. Waters *The Little Stranger* (2009)). The recollections of war, subordinated to other, major textual themes, demonstrate the way war penetrates into our life and becomes

invisibly present in it, as, for example, in the following passage:

Food was her nostalgia, her celebration, its nurture and preparation the sole outlet for her creativity. The first page is given to my father's death – the ribbon of his Légion d'Honneur pasted thickly to the paper beneath a blurry photograph and a neat recipe for black-wheat pancakes – and carries a kind of gruesome humour (Harris, 2002, p. 14).

These texts are characterized by a great number of metaphors. *Cloud Atlas* by D. S. Mitchell, being extremely symbolic, would be one striking example of this group of fictional text relating to war.

A peculiar feature of postmodernism, particularly in the last two decades, is its deep attention to the history and the past. The 'new historical novels' of postmodernism, despite using historically accurate toponyms, often change historical figures or the events themselves drawing attention to the fiction as artifice (Han and Wang, 2014, p. 135; Lindas, 2013, p. 27). Since contemporary literature is characterized by the mixture of different styles, genres, points of view, temporal distortion (Alegre, 2001, p. 18; Lindas, 2013, p. 19), the authors often rely on the technique of collage to ensure the cohesion of narrative and compositional structure. They destroy the linearity of the narrative creating the effect of plurality and relativity of the world comprehension (Nicol, 2015, p. 69).

These writers, demonstrating their own author's figured world, frequently tend to enter into a dialogue with the reader, to address him / her personally. Such a dialogue usually has a form of a game (Clayton, 2012, pp. 2-4; Ward, 2003, p. 31). The author chooses this strategy in order to involve the reader into the process of co-imagining of the events or their foreseeing in the narrative, as in:

I know what you're thinking. You wish I'd get on with the story. It's the only story about the old days that interests you now; the only thread in this tattered flag of mine that still catches the light. You want to hear about Tomas Leibniz. To have it clear, categorized, ended. Well, it isn't as easy as that (Harris, 2002, p. 17).

The multiple use of irony in the text also appeals to the reader and focuses his / her attention on the problem emphasized by the author (Lindas, 2013, p. 26), for instance: "And that's the end of the story about Bruno and his family. Of course, all this happened a long time ago and nothing like that could ever happen again. Not in this day and age" (Boyne, 2006, p. 215).

Irony in the narration about war can be frequently observed in the contemporary British MF. In this way the author accentuates its absurdity (Sarma, 2001, p. 212), or the absurdity of treating war only as something elevated and patriotic by young people, who did not completely understand what exactly it was going to bring into their lives. Parody in contemporary literary text is often connected with the technique of pastiche, i.e. the combination of different styles, genres, narratives and stylistic devices, each of which is of great significance in the text production (Clayton, 2012, pp. 6-7; Morey, 2015, p. 82). Parody and pastiche often can be tightly interlaced in the text, making it impossible to draw a distinct boundary between them.

The lexical combinations and strategies used in British MF, their lexical-semantic features and effects on the reader can be summarized in the following way (see Table 1):

Table 1.
Lexical combinations and their lexical-semantic features in contemporary British military fiction. Source: own.

Lexical combinations and strategies	Their lexical-semantic features
the choice of war theme	is connected with the instability in the modern world; induces to fall into thinking, to ponder over the influence of war on a person's everyday life
micro-inclusions of the war theme in the text	demonstrate the way war penetrates into our life and remains invisibly present in it
orientation towards historiographic metaliterature; parody	induce to reinterpret a well-known plot
irony	emphasizes the absurdity of war
dialogue with the reader (often in a playful way)	involves the reader into the process of co-imagining of the events or their foreseeing in the narrative
proposing several perspectives on one event	gives the reader the possibility to analyse the situation by him- / herself and to decide which side to take
temporal distortion, collage, retrospection	create the effect of plurality and relativity in the world comprehension
fragmentation, pastiche	undermine the author's 'authority'; create the feeling of relativity
photographic models, descriptions, detalisation	create the effect of accuracy of the narrative
mystery or a secret	intrigues and induces to search for the truth
prompts and hints	enable the reader to investigate the numerous secrets of the heroes by him- / herself
symbolism	induces the reader to fall into thinking
open ending	induces to imagine the possible variants of the plot development
allusions, quotations	create the feeling that everything in our life constantly circulates and repeats
epigraphs	create the associative background, express the main theme or idea of the text
original metaphors, metonymy, similes	render the horrors of war to the full extent, induce to prevent similar disasters in the future
repetitions	emphasize a certain problem or idea of the author
stylistic convergence	creates the expressiveness, accentuates the author's opinion

On the whole, the choice of the war theme by the author is usually determined by the war events (contemporary or past). The way of its verbal explication in the literary text expresses the author's world perception, his / her attitude to the instability in the world. The choice of the lexical means is predetermined by social factors: the potential reader, social context of interaction, theme of the literary text and the author's aim. Thus, in MF lexical combinations are thoroughly selected according to the author's intention to create a powerful effect on the reader: to render to the full extent the horrors of war and to appeal to the mankind for peace and harmony in society. Since the text is always something more than simply linear sequence of phrases, it is essential to define it as a structural entity. The unity of the LSS of the contemporary British MF is ensured by lexical and stylistic means that manage to create one semantic entity.

Conclusions

To sum up, the peculiarity of British military fiction of the beginning of the 21st century is a different degree of the war theme representation, which can be observed at the levels of macro-, meso- and micro-inclusions in the outline of a literary text. The popularity of military themes in the latest fictional texts is predetermined by the military and conflict actions taking place nowadays. Interpretation of the literary texts and their general influence on readers are highly dependent on the lexical units, thoroughly selected by the author in accordance with his / her intention. Thus, a philological approach made it

possible to take a new look on the contemporary literary text and the processes connected with its production, in particular: to establish the main tendencies of lexical-semantic actualisation of the war theme in contemporary British MF with macro-, meso- and micro-inclusions of military themes; to conduct an integrated analysis of the lexical combinations in the lexical-semantic space of contemporary MF, their lexical-semantic features and effect on the reader, taking into account all the extralingual factors influencing the complex process of a literary text construction.

The use of the lexical combinations nominating military realia and actions aims at the reproduction of the distinct picture of the war and post-war period. By depicting war, or simply mentioning it, contemporary authors induce us to ponder over the influence of war on the everyday life, offering ways of addressing a psychological trauma. The author's choice of the war theme is characterized by a few prominent leitfmotifs: to provide a reflection on the perniciousness and absurdity of any war, to make an appeal to the mankind to prevent a similar disaster in the future, demonstrating vivid examples of the past. The use of the philological approach in the analysis of the lexical-semantic structure of the text opens new horizons for further examination of the contemporary British military fiction. Since the war theme is extremely growing in its popularity nowadays this research seems to be useful in the further study of the fictional texts with elements of military themes written after the Russian full-scale war on the European continent started.

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