

**LATIP 2021**  
**International Conference on Language and Technology in the Interdisciplinary Paradigm**

**TALE OF THE TROYKA BY A. AND B. STRUGATSKY:  
A DISCOURSE INTERACTION**

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**Abstract**

The article is devoted to one of the central problems in discourse studies – cross-discourse analysis. It studies the interaction of academic and official discourse with the discourse of fiction literature. The novel *Tale of the Troyka* by A. and B. Strugatsky shows the interaction of two discourse types as two different processes. Firstly, the text reveals the loss of the typical features for academic and official discourse (these discourses turn to have no regular features). Secondly, these types of discourses turn to get new characteristics, not regular for them. The term “literaturization” can be suggested to describe this process. There can be seen three levels of literaturization: level of interaction between a narrator and a reader, level of interaction between the characters of the novel and a level of interaction between an author and a reader. If we speak about the interaction between characters the non-fiction types of discourse are used as a mean of establishing a contact, euphemisation and manipulation. The level of interaction between a narrator and a reader focuses non-fiction discourses on the description of a character’s appearance, plot actions and circumstances for the characters – all these add a note of parody to the text. The level of the interaction between an author and a reader reveals non-fiction discourses as a mean to create a personal character for the heroes. Non-fiction discourses become an integral part of the novel’s image system, they can mark the characters in terms of their positions and roles in a conflict.

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*Keywords:* Academic discourse, cross-discourse interaction, fiction discourse, official discourse



## 1. Introduction

One of the main problems for the discourse analysis is a problem of cross-discourse interaction. The relevance of a problem draws the attention to the term “interdiscursivity” – “the co-existence, the interlacing of several special discourses in one text” (Beloglazova, 2019, p. 65). The different aspects of the concept “discourse” were investigated in numerous works of foreign and Russian linguists, but still there are many obstacles in shaping the limits of this concept and giving a solid definition for it. These obstacles can be concerned due to the interdisciplinary nature of this term and different theoretical views on this concept, even within a particular national research school. As it is said by Makarov (2003), “now linguistic literature more often explores wide usage of the term “discourse” as an integral category for such concepts as speech, text, dialogue” (p. 50). Discourse can be studied as a process of speech activity or as a result of this activity, a text. For both of these views there is one common feature for the term discourse: that is “understanding the role of extra linguistic factors in the organization of formal and meaning structure of the text” (Denisova, 2008, p. 56). According to Shcherba (1974), text is “a form of the language material”, but discourse is a form of a speech activity. Text represents an objectified discourse, since discourse has a meaning of a process with all attributes of a process reflecting in a text – specifics of the author and the recipient, their goals and intentions, conditions of the developing etc. The current paper implies that both text and discourse are the integral system. The system determines the quality features of the speech for the heroes and the stereotypes of their speech behaviour. Discourse interaction is mostly the interaction of systems: source system and recipient system.

The problem of interaction of different types’ discourses is recently new in the research paradigms. The modern researchers focus on the journalism discourse and advertisement discourse (Sabyanin, 2010), educational and media discourses (Bulavina, 2009), humorous discourse and institutional discourse (Lavrova & Bochkareva, 2012, p. 90), various discourses within the journalism (Silantiev, 2006). There are studies in interdiscursivity of the academic and fiction texts (Danilevskaya, 2009; Pelevina, 2008). Golev et al. (2011) study the transformation of academic discourse and advertisement text in the theoretic aspects of language cognition and language personality, Chernyavskaya (2004) analyzes the change in discourse types in the horoscope texts of popular mass-media in English.

As we can see, there are not a lot of papers about the interaction of fiction discourse with the discourses of other types, although fiction literature interdiscursive by nature can give a lot of examples of discourse interaction.

The problem of interaction of fiction discourse with non-fiction types of discourses is in the focus of studies for many researchers, such as Silantiev, Barkovskaya, Beloglazova, Guliaeva, Karasyova, and Shevchenko. Most of these studies are of a literature tradition of discourse interaction study. The publicistic discourse of Jerome novels, for example, can be a mean to create a comic atmosphere of novels, but its role in fiction literature can be explained through the search of a new literature tradition (Karasyova, 2012). The formal discourse in the poetry of Gugolev leads reader’s interpretation of a text, giving the evidence that this poetry is a “fact of reality”, not a fiction text (Barkovskaya, 2013). At the side of the main research trends there are linguistic investigations of discourse interaction: as an example several researches can be mentioned. Beloglazova (2019) studies the mechanism for cognitive mapping of

medical discourse in the novels for children, Shevchenko (2009) devoted his work to the introducing fiction discourse into non-fiction ones. The work by Guliaeva (2009) has comparative aspect: the author made an attempt to find the crossing points between fiction and political discourse, noting the vocative power of political discourse in fiction and following the rules of fiction discourse in a political discourse. Special attention should be drawn to the paper by Silantiev (2006), who studies the rhetoric of discourse crossings in a novel and in a news-paper on the material of Generation P by Pelevin. This fiction book gives evidence for analyzing “the phenomenon of discourse blending as a principle for creating a text nowadays” (p. 3).

Recently we can observe the growth of the research interest to the functioning of scientific terminology in fiction discourse. The researchers in this case take mostly the English-speaking authors’ texts as a material for analysis; the discourse interaction is viewed here in terms of cognitive linguistics or lexicography. Some studies note that the including the elements the other discourse in the fiction text:

Enable the author to give characteristics to the heroes and the situation for the plot development, can serve as a background of the story depicted, organize the plot of the text and immerse the reader into the reality of fiction. (Lutseva, 2008, p. 28)

## **2. Problem Statement**

The current study is focused on the problem of cross-discourse interaction in the fiction text. Such interaction can be described considering the mutual influence between fiction and non-fiction systems. The relevance of this problem draws the attention to interdiscursivity, co-existence of different discourse types. The concept of interdiscursivity enables to consider the essential changes of discourse types due to the esthetic function and lead to the description of the modified discourse types, their elements and functions for author’s text. Moreover, setting interdiscursivity as a research problem determines a new approach to the description of the characters’ roles and the positions, authors’ attitude to the reality and the plot development.

## **3. Research Questions**

There are several research questions relevant for the current study: 1) to determine the levels of discourse interaction within the text; 2) to elicit the characteristics of literaturization at each level of discourse interaction; 3) to analyse the specific features of discourse interaction for each level.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

We can see the cross-discourse interaction in fiction as a study object for many current works, there’s no evidence of any reasonable interest to the mutual influence between fiction and non-fiction systems. The current article attempts to fill this research gap.

## 5. Research Methods

The current study was conducted on the basis of the following methods.

Firstly, the comparative analysis of different discourse types was used to reveal the language units of different levels (lexical, word formation, syntax) in the process of discourse interaction. Secondly, we used the methods of literary text analysis, accepted for literature studies: such methods include structuring the positions of the author, the narrator, the reader, and the text characters, eliciting the language means tracing these positions, describing the discourse means of character image building.

## 6. Findings

The analysis conducted in the research can be presented in the following.

The material of the novel confirmed the process of literaturization that occurs at three levels: a level of interaction between a narrator and a reader, a level of interaction between the characters of the novel and a level of interaction between an author and a reader.

The process of discourse interaction results in losing the embedded discourse features of particular discourse types and getting the new essential discourse features. Such mutual interchange concerns fiction, academic and official discourse, overlapping in the text structure. Discourse interaction can be traced in the new modified language means at the lexical level, level of word-building and syntactic level. Interaction of different discourse types has a crucial role in the development of the text narration, expression the text ideas and building the image system of the novel. .

The novel by Strugatsky and Strugatsky (1997) *Tale of the Troyka* includes academic and official discourses interacting with each other that can be described as two different processes.

On the one hand, the process of losing the embedded features by non-fiction discourses can be found in the text: the official and academic discourses do not tend to be official and academic any more. On the other hand, we can speak of *literaturization* of these non-fiction discourses with getting new, not typical features by them due to the new aesthetic function. The *literaturization* occurs at three levels: a level of interaction between a narrator and a reader, a level of interaction between the characters of the novel and a level of interaction between an author and a reader. First two levels are united by the figure of a narrator: a character named Privalov.

The level of interaction of characters reveals that non-fiction types of discourse can be used as a mean of establishing a contact, euphemisation and manipulation. All these effects demonstrate the meaningful parts of the plot: how the characters of the novel make appropriate attraction, make some offensive or criminal events vague and force the officials to come to the “right” decision. The quote below shows the situation with the alien Konstantinov:

<...> обычай сплевывать на землю избыток жидкости определенного химического состава, образующейся в ротовой полости, обычай, означающий у некоторых народов Земли неудовольствие, раздражение или стремление оскорбить собеседника, может и должен у инопланетного существа выражать нечто совершенно иное, в том числе и глубокую благодарность за внимание. Так называемый плевок товарища Константинова мог представлять собой и чисто нейтральную акцию, связанную со спецификой физиологического функционирования его

организма... Наконец, нельзя упускать из виду возможности интерпретировать упомянутое физиологическое отправление товарища Константинова как действие, связанное с его способом молниеносного передвижения в пространстве <...>.

<...> the custom of spitting out a liquid of a certain chemical composition that forms in the oral cavity, a custom that among several peoples of the earth signifies dissatisfaction, irritation, or the desire to insult one's interlocutor, might and must mean completely the opposite for an extraterrestrial creature, including gratitude for your attention. The so-called spitting of Comrade Konstantinov could also have been a purely neutral act, related to the physiological functioning of his organism... we must not rule out the possibility that the above-mentioned physiological act of Comrade Konstantinov might have been an action connected with his lightning-like movement through space<sup>1</sup>.

The academic discourse of this passage, shown in vocabulary (terminology for basic physical actions) and syntax (tracing non-existing cause-result relationships) make it possible for the hero to camouflage the fact of offence and escape the visit of police guards. Such speech strategy of one novel hero (Privalov) was suggested firstly by another hero (Mashkin), who used the complex and not even clear scientific terms to persuade the officials that his invention was that of a genius, as it can be seen from the next text passage:

– Высочайшие достижения нейтронной мегалоплазмы! – провозгласил он. – Ротор поля наподобие дивергенции градуирует себя вдоль спина и там, внутри, обращает материю вопроса в спиритуальные электрические вихри, из коих и возникает синекдоха ответа...

"The highest achievements of neutron megaloplasm!" he thundered. "The rotor of the field of divergence gradates along the back and there, inside, turns the matter of the question into spiritual electrical whirlwinds, from which the synecdoche of the answering arises..."

The heroes of the studied text combine academic, formal and general discourse elements in their speech that help them resolve the conflicts. This discourse combination moves the plot development and turns the language of the novel into the relevant object of narration.

The level of interaction between the narrator and the reader demonstrate non-fiction discourses as a way to describe character's appearance, plot actions and circumstances for the official characters – all these creates a parody nature of the text, as in the following example:

Фарфуркис ... продемонстрировал Лавру Федотовичу форму и с его согласия принялся было составлять акт, но тут обнаружилось, что при составлении акта исходным материалом должны служить: а) необъясненное явление в его настоящем виде и б) цветная его фотография (кинолента) в первоначальном виде. Поскольку запуганный комендант пребывал в полубморочном состоянии, Фарфуркис сам полез в дело за фотографией (кинолентой) и немедленно обнаружил, что фотографии (киноленты) в деле нет.

Farfurkis ... showed Lavr Fedotovich the form and, with his consent, began to draw up the act, but then it turned out that when drawing up the act, the source material should be: a) an unexplained phenomenon in its present form and b) its color photograph (film strip) in its original form. Since the

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<sup>1</sup> This and next fragment: <https://archive.org/details/ArkadyBorisStrugatskyTaleOfTheTroika>

frightened commandant was in a semi-faint state, Farfurkis himself got into the case for a photograph (film) and immediately discovered that there was no photograph (film) in the file.<sup>2</sup>

The level of interaction between the author and the reader shows non-fiction discourses as one of the central means to create the characters of the novel. Each character has preferences to use the particular type of discourse according to his professional or social role and the way to use the discourse is very personal for each character. For example, the speech of the Troyka chairman Vunyukov is very close to the protocol:

Коменданту Колонии тов. Зубо за безответственное содержание в Колонии иррационального, трансцендентного, а следовательно, реально не существующего болота Коровье Вязло, а также за необеспечение безопасности работы Тройки объявить строгий выговор, но без занесения.

To Colony Commandant Comrade Zubo for irresponsibility, harboring the irrational, transcendent, and therefore nonexistent Cow's Muck Swamp, for not ensuring the safety of the Troika's work, and also for displaying heroism at the swamp, we announce our gratitude and enter it in the record<sup>3</sup>.

The character Vunyukov faces the situation needed to use non-official vocabulary; in this case he tries to make his words more official-looking, using short forms of adjectives:

Гррм, – произнес Лавр Федотович. – Народ не располагает излишками бумаги для заведения переписки с необъясненными явлениями. С другой стороны, народ гостеприимен и хлебосолен.

Harrumph, Lavr Fedotovich said. The people do not have a surplus of paper for the establishment of correspondence with unexplained phenomena. On the other hand, the people are hospitable<sup>4</sup>.

The scientists in this novel (especially Privalov) use different discourse forms from those of officials, having much more freedom. This speech freedom helps them to reach some practical life goals, to manipulate Troyka and to make parody of Troyka speech style:

– Гррм, – сказал я. – Выражая общее мнение, предлагаю рационализировать дело номер девяносто семь, именуемое Черный Ящик, и передать его присутствующему здесь Привалову А.И. Другие предложения есть? Нет предложений. Принято. Протокол!

Harrumph, I said. - Expressing the general opinion, I propose to rationalize the case number ninety-seven, called the Black Box, and hand it over to A.I.Privalov, who is present here. Any other suggestions? No offers. Accepted. Protocol!

Moreover, academic and official discourses are the central mean to convey the theme of the novel, to set the problem and to express the main text idea of the fighting with the bureaucracy system.

## 7. Conclusion

Thus, the discourses of different types interact with the fiction discourse and get essential changes due to the aesthetic function of the text. This process can be called *literaturization*: non-fiction types of discourses become an integral part of the image system of the novel. These discourses determine the roles

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<sup>2</sup> Translated by the author.

<sup>3</sup> <https://archive.org/details/ArkadyBorisStrugatskyTaleOfTheTroika>

<sup>4</sup> This and next fragment translated by the author.

and the positions of the conflicting characters, create the character and make the language of the novel one of the main plot agents expressing the literary idea of the text. The elements of academic and formal discourses in their combination enable the heroes of the text to reach the goals in different situations, as well as let the authors of the novel to express the attitude to the reality.

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