

Semiolinguistics of landscape design discourse

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Abstract — The article analyzes semiolinguistic system of landscape design discourse in English. The system represents the ways of changing human habitat in accordance with aesthetic and ethical standards of a particular historical period and ethnical region. Linguistic and semiotic aspects of the above-mentioned polycode discourse are being investigated: genres and their specificity, nominative groups and syntactic constructions, values and systems of signs (verbal, non-verbal and mixed). The authors pay special attention to the analysis of creolized texts and make an attempt to distinguish their genres (emblems, warning signs, etc.).

Keywords — *semiolinguistics, landscape design discourse, verbal signs, non-verbal signs, mixed signs, creolized texts.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Landscape design is an art which integrates three directions: 1) botany and plant growing, 2) construction and architecture 3) history of culture and philosophy [2]. The main task of landscape design is to improve human habitat and create harmonious and aesthetic landscape, skillfully combining achievements of technological progress and pristine nature. Gardening and construction technologies, natural elements and artificial materials, classical and fashionable trends in landscape design are closely intertwined there, creating the ideal world of human relations with nature, through plants, stones and garden architecture. Cultural and ethnic originality of landscape design is expressed in color and style solutions, in the structure of the semiotic space of the garden and garden styles as manifestation of aesthetic beliefs of a certain era and country [3, p.11].

Historical and geographical conditions of natural and social habitat, attempts of its cognitive development had a decisive impact on development of ethno-cultural specificity of landscape design, socially significant rules of coexistence with the natural world in a separate country and, particularly, in England. The architectonics of natural space closely interacts with the world view and ideology of a historical period and personal aspirations of an individual, implements in a variety of garden design styles:

– the most famous ancient ones are Egyptian, Assyrian-Babylonian, Spanish-Moorish, Indian, Chinese and Japanese styles;

– the most famous modern styles of garden design are regular (France), scenery (UK), colonial (America), rural and modern (Europe and America).

English landscape culture combines people's love for rural expanses, home, history, traditions, historically changing political beliefs and mentality of the British, which is reflected in two styles of scenery design art: regular and natural landscape. The regular style of garden and park design has developed in the country since the Roman conquest and dominated up to the end of the XVII century: regular space with strict lines, rhythm and symmetrical geometric shapes.

Revolution in landscape architecture of England occurred in the 17-18th centuries and was connected with the philosophical idea of "unity with nature", which dominates in landscape design of England up to the present time: regular space was replaced by natural space with winding lines, hilly relief, asymmetrical and free elements of scenery.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS (MODEL)

Landscape design discourse is a polycode discourse that operates in institutional and personal types of communication. It has the following characteristics: participants are an agent (designer) and a client; the chronotope denotes the time frame of landscape works, the locus of activity are private gardens, public parks, landscape gardening ensembles and architectural landscape objects. The aim of landscape design is to transform natural object through cooperation of discourse participants in active communicative and practical activities on arrangement of human habitat on the bases of ethno-cultural, religious, moral, social and political values [1].

The most frequent genre of institutional landscape design is instruction on arranging a garden plot and tree or plant care. Instruction includes five subtypes, differing in the amount of information, target groups, terminological complexity and details of actions:

– *practical advice* on design of landscape area ("how-to" information) are brief answers to typical questions of novice gardeners;

– *memo* on planting and plant care (instruction sheet) is intended for experienced gardeners, gives brief recommendations on selection of plant species for certain types of soil and features of flower care, as English home gardens are buried in greenery and flowers;

– *handbook* of landscape arrangement (guide) offers a concise and systematic material on main sections of landscape arrangement for non-professionals in this field;

– *algorithm* for landscape planning (step-by-step actions) describes a detailed sequence of actions of novice gardeners seeking to arrange their gardens, preserving naturalness of lines and compositions as much as possible; to fulfill this task detailed information on features of local plants and recommendations on their ennobling, proceeding from feeling of measure and taste are offered;

– *professional guide* (manual) on designing public gardens and park territory is intended for experts in the field of garden and park design, combining beauty with use, simplicity with grandeur, that is unity of art and nature, adapted for the benefit of man, because Park should bring harmony to the mind and soul of a man who will love everything around him.

Lexical saturation of instruction is determined by special nominations, international landscape terms (landscape design, divide, install, distribute, fertilize, illuminate, absorb, control, etc.), specific terms of English landscape design (vertical gardening, eye-catcher, green wall, purple patch garden, etc.), units of measurement (inch, foot, acre, etc.), abbreviations, acronyms and compound acronyms: EMT (electric wiring pipes); UF cable (cable for underground installation), etc. The most active parts of speech are the verb and the noun denoting basic methods of building, laying material or preparing the ground for planting (measure, chip, joint, broom, trowel, finish, plant, water, etc.).

Syntactic features of instructions on landscape design are manifested in the use of simple expanded and compound sentences, grammatical constructions (infinitive and participle phrases), modal verbs and their equivalents, verbs in the imperative mood. Syntax of instruction is characterized by simplified sentence structure, patterns and low variability of syntactic constructions; structural composition differs by brevity and laconism, since information is verbalized in clear to all recipients texts that explicitly fulfill the function of developing aesthetic taste in landscape design.

Ethno-cultural tastes and preferences in garden design reflect the worldview of Englishmen, existing as a system of value orientations, presented in texts of fiction in the personal type of landscape design discourse:

– ethno-cultural values: *Our England is a garden, and such gardens are not made by singing, 'Oh, how beautiful!' and sitting in the shade*”(metaphor);

– religious values: *We must cultivate our own garden. When man was put in the garden of Eden he was put there so that he should work, which proves that man was not born to rest* (allusion);

– moral values: *I think the true gardener is a lover of his flowers, not a critic of them. I think the true gardener is the*

reverent servant of Nature, not her truculent, wife-beating master. I think the true gardener, the older he grows, should more & more develop a humble, grateful and uncertain spirit (anaphora and metaphor);

– social values: *A garden is always a series of losses set against a few triumphs, like life itself* (metaphor). *Earth is here so kind, that just tickle her with a hoe and she laughs with a harvest* (personification);

– political values: *Certain gardens are described as retreats when they are really attacks* (antithesis).

Semiotic aspect of landscape design discourse

Discourse of landscape design is a semio-linguistic system that verbalizes one of the most extensive areas of human existence associated with humanization of man habitat in accordance with aesthetic and ethical standards of a certain historical period and cultural region. Semio-linguistic system of Anglo-Saxon discourse of landscape design is presented by:

– nominating agents, objects, natural and artificial, material and non-material resources and processes;

– non-verbal signs (colormorphic and topomorphic);

– mixed signs, integrating graphical, verbal and colormorphic components, which are presented in logos, posters, memorial plaques, memorial stones, etc.

Verbal signs are represented by the following nominal groups:

1. *Personality signs* nominate specialists involved in measuring, designing and construction work: *surveyor, topographer, designer, landscape architect, etc.*

2. *Locus signs* include objects of:

– social significance (*Royal park, Royal Botanic Gardens, Arboretum, etc.*);

– private property (*garden, front garden, back garden, window garden, etc.*);

– different design style (*Chinese garden, landscape garden, kitchen garden, rural garden, colonial garden, etc.*) and plant type (*orchard, potage, vineyard, etc.*);

– prevailing color scale (*polychromatic garden, monochromatic garden, etc.*).

3. *Resource signs* nominate:

– natural (*surface waters, subterranean waters, sod, mulch, topsoil, leaf-bearing trees, etc.*) and artificial (*ornamental iron, fiberglass, brick, gypsum, stone sets, concrete, etc.*) resources;

– material (*rock, granite, stone, sandstone, etc.*) resources.

4. *Instrumental signs* nominate tools used in constructing, fastening, installation, planting works: *drainage pipe, lawn sprinkler, mortar box, bricklayer's hammer, circular saw, power drill, power tiller, floodlight, etc.*

5. *Locus signs* include:

- names of paths and steps (*brick path, crushed stone paths, masonry steps, colored stone walkway, etc.*);
- water constructions (*fountain, horsetail waterfall, multi-step waterfall, stream, swim spa, pond, in-ground pool, fiberglass pool, lap pool, etc.*);
- recreation locus intended for rest (*arbors with gates, teahouse, pergola, lath house, portico, garden house, summer-house, etc.*);
- floranimic locus (*rosary, flowerpot, flowerbed, rockery, raised bed, flower garden, etc.*) [8].

To **non-verbal signs** in the discourse of landscape design we refer colormorphic, and topomorphic signs. *Colormorphic* signs play an important role in semio-linguistic space of landscape design. Red is symbolic color for the English: scarlet rose is the floral symbol of the country. Among dominant colors of English garden there are a lot of red plants: tulips and pelargonium, poppies and carnations, petunias and cannas. A colormorph “green” in phraseological unit “green fingers” (skilled gardener) allows the British to proudly display their talents as landscape designers; the colormorph “white” became popular after creating famous The White Garden, where originally all flowers and shrubs were white. The White Garden is the only representative of monochrome gardens known in England (Sissinghurst Castle Garden, Kent). Later, the color scheme of this garden expanded to soft shades of pink and yellow [7]. Popularity of the colormorph “purple” is connected with Purple Patch Garden phenomenon – flowerbed decorated with flowers of all shades of purple (lilac, violet, mauve), which stands out from the whole garden site [6].

Basic semantic component of colormorphic signs is “color” and it is registered in many elements of landscape design, particularly in the names of plants: “yellow” (yellow lady's slipper); “white” (geranium white); “blue” (geranium blue); “black” (black currant); “golden” (golden rhododendron); “brown” (brownish tulotis).

Topomorphic signs of landscape design are represented by nominations of places around which landscape objects are created: manor / estate = housing construction; castle = a large fortified building or group of buildings with thick walls, usually dominating the surrounding country; country / rural house = residence in the country, especially a mansion or other large dwelling on the estate; arboretum = a place where a large variety of woody plants are grown for scientific, educational, and decorative purposes. Topomorphs also denote locations associated with monuments of landscape design: Chiswick House, Rousham Estate, Stowe House, Stourhead Manor, Sissinghurst Castle. Functional significance of such manors and estates makes them semiotically symbolic because their mental image is fixed in collective consciousness of ethnic group as a sign of specific event, which makes a topomorphic sign an important element of semiotic space of landscape design.

Integration of semiotically heterogeneous components – verbal and non-verbal signs – gave rise to a special type of *mixed* text, “the texture of which consists of inhomogeneous parts: verbal (language / speech) and non-verbal (belonging to other sign systems than natural language)” [4, p. 180]. **The mixed** signs of landscape design discourse include

emblems, posters, warnings and memorial signs. Emblem is an idea explicated by means of an image of an object or figure, in the meaning of which its conventional semantics is fixed. Emblem is also interpreted as a way of transition from natural language into graphic one, which allows considering emblem as the symbol and graphically-imagery sign. In the emblem of the Dalkeith Country Park garden, visual component has a weak connection with semantics of words nominating this garden complex. The triple Celtic knot (triquetra) symbolizes the endless cycle of life and death and is used as Celts amulet against evil forces, as well as decoration of handwritten Bibles, monuments and jewelry. Triquetra, intertwined with the circle, is also a symbol of Christian Trinity (“Trinity Knot”). In the stylized emblem a circle is often depicted in the form of a ring from vines. The emblem transmits religious attitude to nature and unity with it. The verbal component of *Dalkeith* means a Scottish town on the river Esk with a famous garden and park complex. Thus, this sign is characterized by ethno-cultural specificity, which religious and social elements are easily perceived by residents of the United Kingdom but are difficult to be decoded by members of other ethno-cultures.

Creolized text of poster and placard is decoded more easily and includes text and graphic elements, though it can be made either in exclusively graphic or text format. Representation of verbal component of poster varies not only in color, but also in font performance, thanks to elements of paragraph (font, color, discharge, means of iconic language: caricature, drawing, collage, etc.); supra-graphics (change and variety of typeface); topography (variation of image methods of the text) and pictography (type of pre-letter writing system, which means are drawings, replacing entire texts [5].

The diverse signs of landscape design discourse are represented in the following diagram (Figure 1).

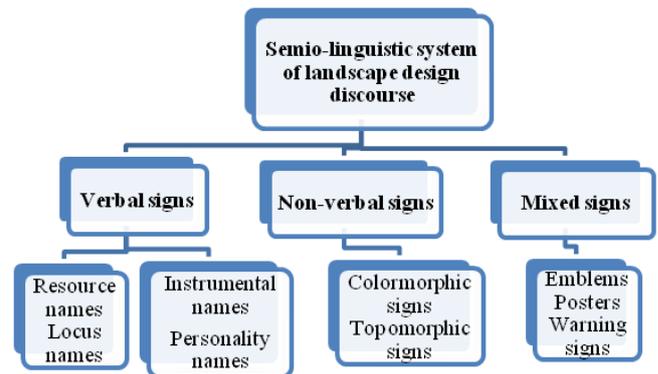


Fig. 1. The semio-linguistic system of landscape design discourse

In addition to posters, landscape design discourse includes warning signs which are found in landscape gardening complexes and include verbal and non-verbal components. The non-verbal component performs a semantic function with respect to meaning transmitted in the iconic sign of image. Warning sign “Please don’t feed the birds - They bite!” is a combination of a verbal line, comment and iconic sign. Iconic component of a mixed sign is a caricature of tragic consequences for visitors who violate the rules of conduct. As part of this mixed sign, the caricature complements the verbal comment and is used as

disapproval of inappropriate behavior of visitors and a warning of consequences.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Thus, the semiolinguistic system and the developed typology of signs of different nature - verbal, non-verbal, mixed – are multifunctional tools of linguistic culture, serving communication of individuals and transmitting axiological connotations of landscape design discourse in English.

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