

THE KEY NOTIONS AND INTERDISCIPLINARY CHARACTER OF COGNITIVE STYLISTICS

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Abstract. This article explores the theoretical foundations and interdisciplinary nature of cognitive stylistics. It provides an overview of key theoretical approaches within cognitive stylistics, with particular emphasis on the conceptual metaphor theory and the theory of foregrounding. Special attention is given to the role of cognitive processes in shaping the meaning and interpretation of literary texts. The discussion also addresses issues such as conceptual integration, attention allocation during the reader's interaction with the text, and, more broadly, how the stylistic features of a text influence the reader's perception, comprehension, and emotional engagement.

Key words: cognitive stylistics, conceptual metaphor, foregrounding, conceptual integration, text.

Cognitive Stylistics is one of the three main sub-branches of Cognitive Linguistics, alongside Cognitive Semantics and Cognitive Grammar. Cognitive stylistics is highly discussed and investigated field of study because of its interdisciplinary nature and the ability to provide deeper understanding of how readers process and interpret literary texts. Scholars (Lakoff G., Johnson M. [8], Turner M. [13], Leech, G.N. [9], Ashurova D.U. [1] and others) are considered as the pioneers who paid the way to Cognitive Stylistics and made a great contribution to the development of this field.

Cognitive Stylistics has interdisciplinary character and interconnects with many other disciplines. It is directly connected with Cognitive Linguistics as they share many notions and problems however it also has close links with psychology, neuroscience, philosophy and literary studies. The integration with these fields of studies help Cognitive Stylistics to achieve its aim in interpreting and comprehending how readers engage with and derive meaning from literary texts. (Maslova, V.A. [10]).

Regarding how to define the scientific status of Cognitive Stylistics there have been disputes over its nomination. According to Dzhusupov N.M. [3], the terms "Cognitive Stylistics" and "Cognitive Poetics" which are employed in works on stylistic analysis of the text are interchangeable (for instance, terms on cognitive stylistics can be used selectively based on the author's preferences within the same collection of works). However, Dzhusupov N.M. [3] inclines to the term "Cognitive Stylistics" because of the broad scope of its scientific content. Since poetics was originally a branch of literary criticism, it is restricted to the content of literary texts and does not consider the analysis of texts of different functional styles. As a result, the term "cognitive poetics" limits the scope of cognitive research on the stylistic nature of language.

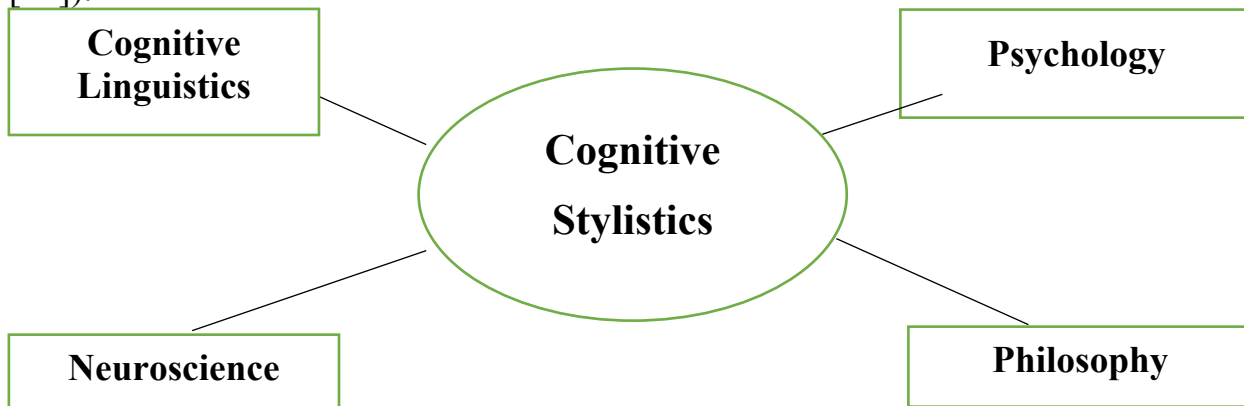
According to Ashurova D.U. and Galieva M.R. [2], who in their book “Cognitive Linguistics” state that Cognitive Stylistics and Cognitive Linguistics share similar theoretical assumptions which make them interconnected. They differentiate some common features:

- language is regarded as a means of communication and cognition;
- both cognitive linguistics and stylistics focus on the processes of conceptualization, categorization and interpretation of textual information;
- language is characterized by creative and imaginative capabilities;
- both disciplines are based on the methodological principles of anthropocentrism and interdisciplinarity;
- the main object of investigation in both sciences is text as a complex communicative-cognitive phenomenon;
- both sciences postulate the necessity to consider linguistic expressions in the relation to non-linguistic factors (knowledge about the world, sociocultural context, communicative and aesthetic intentions).

Neuroscience is another discipline that has close links with Literary analysis and Cognitive Stylistics. These fields are connected because both explore the cognitive processes involved in reading and interpreting literature. According to Hagoort P. [5], neuroscience provides insights into the neural mechanisms activated during these processes while Cognitive Stylistics applies these insights to understand how stylistic choices in texts affect readers’ perception and interpretation. The integration of neuroscientific findings into Cognitive Stylistics improves the analysis of how readers construct meaning from texts.

The next field which is considered as a fundamental layer for Cognitive Stylistics is psychology. Psychology plays a vital role in Cognitive Stylistics by examining how individual experiences, emotions, and cognitive biases that influence reading. *Reader response theory*, established by scholar like Iser [6], who claim that meaning is co-constructed by the reader and the text.

Philosophy is one more field of study that is interrelated with Cognitive Stylistics. According to philosophical view, meaning is constructed through the interaction between the text and the reader’s consciousness. (Merleau-Ponty, M. [11]).



Another central and most discussed notion in Cognitive Stylistics is the theory of *Foregrounding*. Foregrounding is the use of unusual or deviant language, is a key concept in cognitive stylistics, supposed to draw readers' attention and enhance meaning. (Leech [9]). Cognitive stylistics investigates foregrounding as a cognitive phenomenon, exploring how deviations and repetitions activate specific cognitive processes, such as attention allocation, schema disruption, and emotional engagement. (Semino E. [12]).

According to Ashurova D.U. [1], at the level of the entire text it is also possible to note certain ways of foregrounding. She highlights 3 main features: author's reflections, inner speech of the character and stream of consciousness. It is difficult to overestimate the conceptual significance of these methods of foregrounding, since they perform the function of representing author's individual conceptual world picture.

However, the theory of Conceptual Metaphor has the most prominent place in the development of Cognitive Stylistics. Conceptual Metaphor Theory proposed by Lakoff & Johnson [8], argues that metaphors aren't just linguistic units but reflect how we understand abstract ideas through concrete ones. In their book "Metaphors we live by" they state "Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature" which means while speaking we produce complex cognitive processes that happen on unconscious level and are automatized.

According to Mark Turner [13], cognitive mechanisms, such as metaphor and mental imagery, shape our reading experience. He posits that narrative structures in literature correlate with innate cognitive frameworks, allowing readers to engage more deeply with texts. By examining how stories reflect cognitive processes, Turner states that the reader's interaction with narrative can be understood, suggesting that literary engagement is not only a passive reception but an active construction of meaning.

The idea of mental spaces and conceptual blending is regarded as one of central themes in Cognitive Stylistics. According to Fauconnier and Turner [4], who in their book "*The way we think: Conceptual blending and the mind's hidden complexities*" discuss how humans use their existing knowledge to create new ideas. These processes refer to the mental constructions that readers create as they interact with a text, blending elements from the text with their prior knowledge and experiences. This interaction is not passive as readers actively simulate events, characters, and situations in their minds, creating a personalized experience of the narrative. For example, when reading a novel, the reader constructs a mental model of the story world, continuously updating it as new information is revealed in the text.

Another essential notion in Cognitive Stylistics is *embodied cognition*, which emphasizes the role of sensory and motor experiences in shaping cognitive processes. In literary analysis, embodied cognition can explain how metaphors, descriptions of bodily movements, or sensory imagery trigger physical and emotional responses in readers. The embodied experience of reading, such as feeling the tension in a suspenseful passage or experiencing the warmth of a description of

sunlight, helps readers connect with the narrative on a deeper, affective level. (Johnson, M. [7]).

Cognitive Stylistics is an essential part of Cognitive Linguistics that explores human's mental processes that occur while making stylistic choices in language use and how these factors influence on our perception and interpretation. Theories like foregrounding, conceptual metaphor, and embodied cognition help us explore Cognitive Stylistics. The correlation of Cognitive Stylistics with other disciplines allow researchers move beyond traditional analysis and enriches our understanding of the reader-text-mind interaction.

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