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## Interpretation of an Epoch in the Novel "the Big Green Tent" by L. Ulitskaya: Linguistic-Cultural Analysis of Verbal Lexicon

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### Abstract

This article is the verbal lexicon analysis based on the text of the novel "The Big Green Tent" by L. Ulitskaya. The creative manner of the contemporary writer attracts the attention of researchers, her writings describe the emotional experiences of the heroes and also give a generalized image of time full of historical details and features. The language of her stories and short stories is characterized by a special style in the description of time realities. A verb in the text allows the author to express the events and the circumstances that characterize an action in its dynamics due to the fact that verbal categories reflect the real reality in our consciousness. The method of linguistic cultural analysis of verbal lexicon in the novel "The Big Green Tent" made it possible to single out exactly those language units that the writer carefully selects for the creation and interpretation of the era. A special emphasis in the study is made on the creation of an expressive-emotional style of narration using the stylistic capabilities of the Russian verb. The individual author's methods of narration expressiveness creation are singled out: synonymous series, euphemisms, colloquial lexicon, etc. The conducted study and a careful analysis of the selected factual material testifies that, recreating an epoch, the master of the word invariably uses that language arsenal that brightly and fully conveys the color of time. L. Ulitskaya is able to be not only an indifferent witness of the epoch, but also her tenacious observer and interpreter. The analyzed factual material and the main points of this research can be used in the courses on stylistics and linguistic culturology, and also as an illustrative material during the classes on the linguistic analysis of a literary text.

**Keywords:** Text stylistics, Linguistic culturology, Verbal lexicon.

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## **Introduction**

All the works by L. Ulitskaya are distinguished first of all by the attentive attitude of the word master to the transfer of the brightest emotional experiences of the characters, the accuracy of the description and the thoroughness of linguistic material selection. L. Ulitskaya's creativity with the appearance of her first novel "Sonechka", published in the journal "New World" in 1992, and to this day does not cease to be an object of lively interest for researchers both in terms of an ideological focus of her works comprehension, the interpretation of story lines, the understanding of her creativity place in contemporary literature, and in terms of the linguistic features of her works analysis and the writer's idiosyncrasy. L. Ulitskaya's creative manner is purely individual. One can note her difference from the contemporary authors of both Russian and national literature in the conveying of the relation to time and its interpretation (Murzina et al., 2016; Prokhorova et al., 2015; Kolosova, 2016; Safarova et al., 2016).

The book "The Big Green Tent" appeared in 2011 and was differently accepted by critics and readers. Some researchers blame the writer that she confused "a writer's impartiality with testimony" when she wanted to write the truth and nothing but the truth (<http://magazines.russ.ru/bereg/2013/40/18ku.html>). The novel does not have a clear story and seems to be a collection of biographies, each hero has his own story, his ups and downs, but they are all united by a thin thread: they are the children who grew up in the Soviet Union and experienced all the "charms" of that difficult era. The time in the novel is defined by a clear historical framework: it begins with Stalin's death and ends with Brodsky's death, that is, it covers the period from 1953 to 1996. Thus, this is the novel about time and people of the last century, whose fates are both unique and typical. Everyone will find in the novel something that corresponds to his idea of the time in which he lived and developed or who knows only hearsay from textbooks and fiction.

## **Materials and methods**

The material for analysis was the language of stories and short stories by L. Ulitskaya, which is characterized by a special style in the description of the realities of time. A particular attention was paid to the use of verbal lexicon by the writer. It is known that the verb in the text allows the author to express the events and circumstances that characterize an action in their dynamics due to the fact that verbal categories reflect the real reality in our consciousness. Besides, "the abundance of semantic nuances and stylistic variants of Russian verbs allows masters of the word to use these possibilities in their works to create artistic expressiveness" (Kolosova, 2010). The main trend of the study was linguistic cultural analysis, the linguistic units were selected by the method of continuous sampling within this analysis. A descriptive method was used for commenting and generalization, and in some cases contextual and component types of analysis were used.

## **Results and discussion**

The linguistic and cultural analysis of the verbal lexicon in the text of the novel "The Big Green Tent" by L. Ulitskaya was carried out within the framework of this study and it shows that the master of the word necessarily uses that language arsenal that must convey the color of time when he recreates the epoch.

First of all, the attention is drawn to the different transmission of emotional saturation and the interpretation of the significant event, from which the novel begins - Stalin death.

In this case, the very use of synonymous expressions creates an idea of the hero relationship to the accomplished fact, moreover, this relation characterizes the heroes (their social status, nationality, etc.): I do think that Samekh died (Ulitskaya, 2016). So this event is interpreted in Tamara's family, a crude

dismissive expression sounds. According to the Great modern explanatory dictionary of Russian language: To die. To pass away. The cow, the horse died. Rough. About a human. Died from hunger, from lack of fodder. I will say something that you will die (about a strong impression). I wish you to die (the wish of death) (<https://slovar.cc/rus/tolk.html>).

This event is interpreted in a completely different way in Galya's family: They said, he fell ill. But he died, I swear, he died! My heart feels so! (Ulitskaya, 2016). From Ozhegov's dictionary: To die, will die, died; dead; The same as to die (1st meaning). You can die with laughter (very funny). || Imperf. To die. I want to lie and die (about a desperate, difficult situation). To die with the music (joke). I die from boredom (I really miss) (<http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/ogegova>).

In our opinion, the use of the common verb indicates the social status and at the same time shows the attitude of the talking woman - Galya's mother - fear, worry, readiness to mourn the impending death of the leader as a native person.

A careful, concise use of a neutral verb in the utterance of Olga's family "Stalin is dead!" (Ulitskaya, 2016) shows the same neutral attitude, the statement of a fact, a willingness to accept everything as is.

It is worth comparing two utterances within the dialogue of one of the main characters in the novel by Viktor Yulievich, who are very emotionally colored: He died. Exactly. Exactly. We will be fooled for a week, and then they will announce. ... Put on your face, madam, portray sorrow. The changes are coming! (The utterance within the dialogue). And a little further reasoning: The tyrant died. The titan died. The essence of the ancient breed, from the underworld, terrible, with hundred of hands and heads. With a mustache (Ulitskaya, 2016).

And this, without any doubt, enables a reader to understand the attitude and deep philosophical understanding of the inevitability of all that happened and happening to the country, and, possibly, will happen. In this case, the attention is drawn not so much to the coarse euphemism, the stable expression with the sense to die, but also the following steady expression to fool the head. In the Phraseological Dictionary we find: To whip the head. Colloq.

1. To whom. To mislead intentionally mislead, to fool someone. 2. To bother someone with stupid things; To pester someone with trifles. 3. About whom, about what. Colloq. To think, to think about someone or something with some worry (Astrel, 2008).

The verbs in imperative: Wear, portray show the ability to pretend, the habit of hiding their true feelings. And only in the arguments of the hero there is the comprehension of what kind of resonance this event will have. A stylistically neutral verb to die in this case adjoins a series of revealing lexemes (a tyrant, a titan, a creature, a terrible one, a hundred-handed, a hundred-headed), so the verb itself does not require an additional emotional saturation, but it is a statement, a testimony of the thing that happened.

In our opinion, through the remarks and the reflections of their heroes, L. Ulitskaya shows a different level of Soviet society culture. If we talk about the linguistic and cultural aspect of verb analysis in the novel, it is worth turning to those lexemes that are obsolete at the present stage, but were used by the author for the Soviet era description. For example, in the following context: Igor Chetverikov was beaten severely in the schoolyard; ... the supernaturally shrewd petty hooligans did not shake this future dissident in vain. The verb to beat not included in the explanatory dictionaries of the literary Russian language, there is some mention in the large modern Russian explanatory dictionary. To beat. Colloquially-reduced version of 'to strike' (<https://slovar.cc/rus/tolk.html>). It is interesting that the verb with the prefix is still used by the older generation of our country inhabitants in a speech, for example, in Valentin Gafit's epigram on himself, where the lexical meaning of this verb is revealed: Gafit beat many people // And in the following

epigrams: he ate alive. // He became experienced in this case, // and the rest we will gain (<http://www.kino-teatr.ru/kino/acter/m/ros/950/bio/print>).

The verb to tear in this regard also enters into a series of synonyms with the general meaning of 'to inflict damage, to damage' (see meaning 1), according to the Large Modern Dictionary of Russian language: To fray; fray; will fray; Shabby, Colloq.

1. To fray, to spoil; To disable or damage. All the clothes on him was tattered. Without. The ships were pretty battered by the storm. We were shagged in battle. The equipment was patted on the road.

2. To cause trouble, to deliver many sorrows, adversity (usually about life, fate). Life patted him thoroughly. They patted my nerves! To make nervous. Impers. He was so patted!

3. To pat for a while or a little, lightly. To pat flax. P. To pat by hair. To pat a boy by hair. The dog patted shoe with its teeth and left it. He loves to chat. Impers. Sails were patted a little.

One can not help noting the use of verbs (verbal phrases) that draw a picture of the political and social life of the country, cf.: Colonel Chibikov was hardly aware of this; But no voice was needed - the failed leader was pushed around the neck for sycophancy before the West and cosmopolitanism, and after some time he was put in prison ...; Time was silent, without frankness. Several years later the conversation began.

Quite often a verbal phrase in the text of the novel is constructed according to the model of V. + N., it creates the general picture of the Soviet people life through everyday trifles and details. They started records with old songs, which could be danced only by trained circus bears. At the present stage of technical progress development, the younger generation will have to comment on this action most likely, which was closely related to the culture of such a recent past (60s of the 20th century): to turn on a gramophone, to put a record on, to start a song.

It seems to us that the following context also represents a vivid interpretation of the Soviet era: ... both dreamed of a musical career, but both had to give up training - the time was completely unmusical, the pipes chirped, the kettledrums thundered, marches and hymns sounded disguised as street songs (Ulitskaya, 2016). The author's irony sounds clearly, the enumeration of musical instruments and everything accompanying the sound (pipes, timpani, marches-hymns) is given, but it is emphasized that the time was completely unmusical. Thus, in L. Ulitskaya's opinion, the listed musical instruments are not the means for music extraction, but the propaganda of the Soviet political regime, the Lenin-Stalin regime, in which there is no place for classical music, so the musical career of these heroines has remained in past dreams. The last context in this series contains the phrases with the verb as the main word and with a dependent component expanding the structure V. + Adj. and noun: They drank tea and vodka in the kitchen, rustled criminal papers, rustled by the tapes with Galich and young Vysotsky, new sounds and new meanings were also born there (Ulitskaya, 2016) and others. A household sketch is required to understand that time, that culture. It is used by the writer. The main place of a house is a kitchen - it's not just for drinking tea or vodka, but also for communication, to share secret information, to listen and publish everything new and prohibited (songs, poems, stories, etc.) (Fedorova & Fattakhova, 2015; Erofeeva & Rakhimova, 2015). All the most important things took place there for the development of a future coup in the minds of Russian people realizing the proximity of change during the era of stagnation.

## Conclusions

Many researchers note L. Ulitskaya's skill in creation of everyday life picture, but at the same time emphasize that the writer only records what is happening in some detached manner. Thus, G. Yermoshina expresses the idea that "Ulitskaya is a master of everyday life description. Her epics trace the life of a

main character consistently and in detail and along with it - the history of the whole kind of this individual" (Yermoshina, 2000). At that she believes that Ulitskaya acts as an outside observer, like a "dispassionate protocolist, a chronograph, a chronicler", insofar as the writer records the events, but does not interpret them (Yermoshina, 2004). In our opinion, this statement is not entirely true. If, for example, we analyze the linguistic aspect of the writer's works, particularly in the use of verbal lexicon, which so brightly conveys the nuances of time (cf.: What a trouble! Fascist hordes trample on our sacred ground. Igor Chetverikov was severely beaten on the school yard; Colonel Chibikov was hardly aware of this, etc.) then it's worth noting that L. Ulitskaya is able to be not only an indifferent witness of the epoch, but also its tenacious observer and interpreter. At that she uses all stylistic possibilities of the Russian verb to create the maximum expressiveness, in particular, such authoring techniques as synonymous series, euphemisms, colloquial lexicon etc. were singled out.

Thus, the conducted study and a careful analysis of the selected factual material testifies that, recreating the epoch, the master of the word certainly uses the language arsenal that conveys the color of time brightly and fully. The stories and short stories from L. Ulitskaya are characterized by a special world view, which is close to many people. Through the fate of her heroes, so carefully described by the writer in all the details of their life stories, one can see the history of a whole generation and the whole country.

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