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Linguistic creativity of occasionalisms in Brandon Sanderson's works

This paper investigates the linguistic creativity of authorial occasionalisms of American fantasy writer Brandon Sanderson on the material of his series of works "The Stormlight Archive". The captivating phenomenon of occasionalisms is examined in the terms of linguistic creativity and measured according to the criteria we have derived. The study focuses on word formation, a linguistic tool that is the creative act of inventing new words. The art of word creation has long been a hallmark of human linguistic ingenuity, allowing us to create new concepts and give them appropriate denotations and connotations. As part of our study, we observe the way Brandon Sanderson, as a linguistic personality, gives semantics to the concepts and terms he has created, and "surrounds" them with pragmatics in the context of sentences and the overall narrative text. We hope to shed light on the understudied synergy between author and language/author and speech, thereby contributing to our understanding of how writers devote to the linguistic innovation, and shape the future of language itself. This research has implications not only for linguistics, but also for the development of understanding the potential of fiction to enrich speech, creative writing, and the evolution of language in our dynamic age.

Keywords: occasionalism, linguistic creativity, authorial words, language, speech, linguistic personality, individual fictional world.

Introduction

In order to give originality and creative factor to their works, whether it is the ancient thinker Socrates, or the founder of the modern Russian literary language A.S. Pushkin or the founder of the genre of high fantasy John R.R. Tolkien, authors throughout centuries had been refining their works by introducing intriguing, embellished plots, or giving their characters bright distinctive features, or even inventing completely new words. These words are called occasionalisms (see "occasional"). They are often given other names: author's neologism, "writer's neologisms", "artistic neologisms", "novel-words", "creative neologisms", "self-made words", "words-novelties", "works of individual speech creation", "poetonym", "nonce" (no one's) words, etc.

The use of occasionalisms in fantasy literature is a common practice that helps authors to create deeper and more unique worlds, making them more compelling and interesting to readers. Occasionalisms can include fictional place names (toponyms), created languages (conlangs), magical terms, and more.

The advantage of using them is that they add authenticity to the text, making the individual fictional world more unlike the real world, and different from the works of other writers. It also allows wordsmiths to introduce unique rules (conventionalities) and laws for their world, which helps to immerse the reader more deeply into the author's fiction. This reveals their linguistic personality — the inner world of a person, the pattern of their language [1].

Another motivation to form new words is the need to purify the vocabulary and remove the semantic burden of a language when writing the original story [2].

Hereby, occasionalisms are masterfully used by Brandon Sanderson, an American writer in the genres of fantasy and science fiction, best known for the fictional universe of Cosmere, in which the majority of his fantasy novels take place. Primarily, the first novel of "The Stormlight Archive" cycle, which is the material of our study.

He teaches creative writing at BYU and studied biochemistry as well as served a missionary. His works are analyzed worldwide, especially in comparative aspect of the various translations of his authorial occasionalisms. That way, J. Procházka studied the translations of B. Sanderson's occasionalisms in Czech [3], and A. Boismenu-Lavoie in French [4].

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A common feature of fantasy literature from all over the world is that the worlds described in there are not of our reality [5]. A unique own language acts as an identifier and a kind of password [6], so in order of preventing these occasional words from towering a barrier to reader's understanding of the text and letting them easily perceive new terms and context without losing interest in the work, authors are looking for a balance between the uniqueness of their world (and words) and accessibility for the audience. To this end, the creators take care of the semantics and pragmatics of their novel-words.

In this regard, we face several objectives:

- 1) Identifying B. Sanderson authorial words;
- 2) Characterize their semantics and pragmatics;
- 3) Evaluate the linguistic creativity of the author and the occasional words according to F (fixed) and E (expanding) creativity.

Methods and materials

The subject of our study is the phenomenon of occasionalisms in the Brandon Sanderson's series "The Stormlight Archive". This cycle occupies the first lines among the bestsellers of the 10–20th years of this century and attracts the attention of thousands of critics and millions of readers around the world.

The following methods were used as the main research methods: the method of component analysis to identify various criteria for assessing the linguistic creativity of the author's speech creation; lexicographic analysis in the framework of the study of vocabulary and lexical features of occasional words: determination of their lexical structures, semantics and pragmatics; analytical method to describe and discuss the theoretical material; the method of contextual analysis to determine the context in which the occasional words are realized in the works of B. Sanderson.

Results and discussion

In order to identify occasionalisms in B. Sanderson's texts, firstly, we should understand what we are looking for. Let us turn our eye to the linguists who actively studied this topic.

"Occasionalism is a word formed by the unproductive (E. Khanpira) or even unknown to the language (occasional) (D. Crystal) word-formation model. Their formation violates the laws of the language (E.A. Zemskaya), and therefore they are not intended for a long life in the language, and are suitable only for use at the moment of speech" (T.V. Popova, L.V. Ratsiburskaya & D.V. Gugunava). Occasionalism is an ideal tool for expressing creative thought and originality, as well as conveying emotionality in artistic texts. These new formations are characterized by individual-creative author's style, as a result of which the meaning of these words can be revealed only in the context of author's speech (F. de Saussure), but not in the language [7].

Unlike neologisms, "words or figures of speech created to denote a new subject or express a new concept recently entered into the dictionary" [8], which actively adapt by means of the most productive word-formation models of the language and replenish other conceptual spheres [9], occasionalisms are formed by a low-productive/unproductive word-formation model [7]. Thus, a neologism, due to its entry into the language, is a fact of language; and an occasionalism remaining inside the author's context is a fact of speech.

V. Greshchuk noticed that the formation of occasionalisms is based on the realization of non-normative derivational combinability; such derivatives can be created with the help of any word-formant. Thus, these properties determine the constructiveness and range of use of occasional formations (words and word combinations) in the role of expressive means of the text [10].

N. Vasiliev distinguished four types of occasionalisms [11]:

- Lexical – new, non-usual lexical unit;
- Syntactic (grammatical) – word association disorder;
- Phonetic – a modified sound complex of phonetic meanings containing new semantics;
- Semantic – a usual word is endowed with a meaning not peculiar to it.

The occasional type of word combination identified by N.G. Babenko is noteworthy as well. This type of occasionalisms combines lexemes combinability in usus of which is impossible to imagine as due to the contradiction to the law of semantic agreement as their lexical meanings lack common semes [12; 8].

Sanderson's "The Stormlight Archive" series currently consists of four main and two minor novellas on 5,087 pages that are counted in more than two million words in total. At this point, through a method of con-

tinuous sampling within the first novel “The way of kings” that contains 1001 pages and 383,389 words, we have discovered 171 occasionalisms (the detailed data are shown in Table 1), excluding personal names (onims) and place names (toponyms) which will be studied separately in the next works.

This is not surprising when taking into account a fact that the action takes place on one of the planets of Sanderson's “Cosmere” universe, Roshar. In this world of Great Storms, hurricanes are constantly coming over the continent from east to west. The flora and fauna of Roshar have had to adapt to these conditions, the consequence of which is that plants and animals have adapted to defend themselves from the storms through the evolutionary build-up protective shells. For example, the lexical occasionalisms *rockbuds* (plant) and *greatshell* (animal) have a very hard surface. The phonetic occasionalism *crem* is formed as a result of hurricanes and continuous raining periods called *weeping* (semantic occasionalism). We have counted the amount of each occasionalisms’ types and marked them F or E creative according to their formation method.

Table 1

Types of occasionalisms and their quantity

№	Type of occasionalisms	Creativity type	Examples	Quantity
1	Phonetic	F	Crem, lait, Hierocracy, cort, curnip	26
2	Lexical	F	Palafruit, pilevine, shallowcrab, skyeel, stonewalkers	118
3	Syntactic	F	Almighty, ardent, devotary, ridden, rasping, radiants	7
4	Semantic	F	Shard, pairing, kurp, gancho, lash, weeping	12
5	Occasional	E	Spren, gerontarch, Kadasix	8
Total				171

Such linguists as E. Zenner, L. Rosseel, & A. Simona Calude [13] consider word formation, ellipsis, semantic extension or the creation of new roots as the language-internal procedures of lexicogenesis. As we can see, it extols a huge influence on the authorial writing style as the Figure 1 demonstrates below:

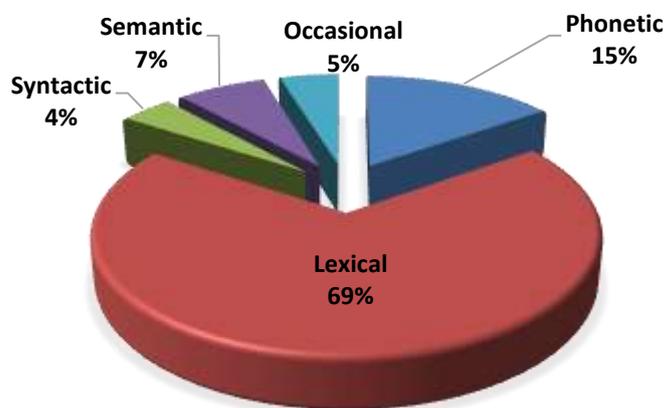


Figure 1. A diagram of occasionalism types

Being a fact of speech, occasionalisms are nevertheless created with the help of language. This means that the one who creates them must first of all master the language in order to subsequently bring the given novelty of words into speech. This ability to create within speech with the help of language is called linguistic creativity.

Currently, there are two approaches of modern science to linguistic creativity [14]:

1) Associative approach considers creativity as a cognitive process going “from bottom up to the top”.

2) Functional approach considers creativity in the “from top down to bottom” direction, as a cognitive process related to executive functions, the ability to control attention and cognition.

According to V. Zobotkina, a highly creative personality has a more flexible semantic network, which allows for more efficient associative connections in information processing [15]. In other words, in the pro-

cess of word creation, language manifests itself as a tool of cognitive interpretation, reflection on the surrounding world [16].

H. Chomsky believes that all languages of the world have a creative aspect. Language provides means for expressing an infinite number of thoughts and, although its laws and principles are fixed, the ways of using them in the process of generating the new are infinitely diverse [17].

G. Sampson distinguishes two kinds of creativity:

- F-creativity (fixed), concepts of which are created and consist of a fixed and known, albeit infinitely large, range of linguistic norms;
- E-creativity (extending/expanding), where the concepts that expand our understanding are born [18].

For the best result, their deep structure should reveal a close interaction between concept and notion [19].

In the course of our research, authorial formations of novel-words that we considered E-creative were identified in total number of 8. These are the B. Sanderson's authorial occasionalisms, which were created by the fifth, occasional type of formation, expand language and speech in the reader's understanding, as well as they are unique and belong directly to the author [20].

Onwards, we present these occasional words, their semantics, as well as examples of pragmatic use of them in B. Sanderson's works. It is not only about their denotational correctness, but also their functionality at the level of a sentence (context). Additionally, we demonstrate the frequency of usage of these words to underline their importance for a text in Table 2.

Table 2

The E-creative occasionalisms

№	Occasionalism	Part of speech	Terminology	Context	Frequency
1	Vorin	adj.	people who follow the primary religion of <i>Vorinism</i>	"Szeth brushed by, continuing past a line of statues depicting the Ten Heralds from ancient <i>Vorin</i> theology." (The Way of Kings, 30)	52
2	Spren	noun	the fragments of the powers of creation that have gained sentience through the influence of sapient beings	"Szeth stayed far from the heir, ..., passing the drummers. <i>Musicspren</i> zipped through the air ... taking the form of spinning translucent ribbons." (The Way of Kings, 29). "Torches burned on the walls, ... Tiny <i>flamespren</i> danced around them, like insects made solely of congealed light." (The Way of Kings, 31).	252
3	Chull	noun	a species of crustacean useful for labor intensive jobs	"It was the same hatred Cenn's father had shown when he'd spoken of <i>chull</i> rustlers ..." (The Way of Kings, 54)	55
4	Havah	noun	a traditional <i>Vorin</i> dress	"A woman stood behind a counter at the back of the room. She wore an embroidered skirt and blouse, rather than the sleek, silk, one-piece <i>havah</i> that Shalan wore." (The Way of Kings, 157)	1
5	Fabrial	noun	a Light-powered mechanical device that uses <i>spre</i> to perform a particular supernatural task	"Renarin knelt beside the hearth, inspecting the <i>fabrial</i> that had been installed there to warm the room." (The Way of Kings, 955).	96
6	Gerontarch	noun	a leader of some sort in few regions of Roshar	"... "These are some of the most powerful people in the world! Six highprinces? A Selay <i>gerontarch</i> ? The king of Jah Keved?" ..."	1
7	Kadasix	noun	a 'Herald' in Azish (in-universe) language	"This was the Hallowed Hall, the place where a wealthy man placed images of his <i>Kadasix</i> for reverence."	3
8	larmic	adj.	a substance with antiseptic properties	"Kaladin picked up the small bottle and undid the cork, smelling what was inside. " <i>Larmic</i> mucus?" He grimaced at the foul smell."	1

The above presented examples were formed in an absolutely new, unknown way. They are not phonetic borrowings from other languages, have not undergone semantic increments and are not found anywhere except the B. Sanderson's works. This is proved by a) entering a request into Google — we could not find anything except Sanderson's works; b) translations from the original language into Russian and other languages, including French. All the listed author's words remained unchanged as A. Boismenu-Lavoie [4] concluded in her study of “The Stormlight Archieve” translation into French. This proves their linguistic creativity extending beyond the original language.

When considering these words in pragmatic aspect, we can assert that the author has perfectly coped with the task of giving them a context. In the structure of the sentences, one can easily see the interaction of the concept with its notion. For example, the word *spren* occurs 3200 times in overall six works and represents one of the leading concepts of this cycle.

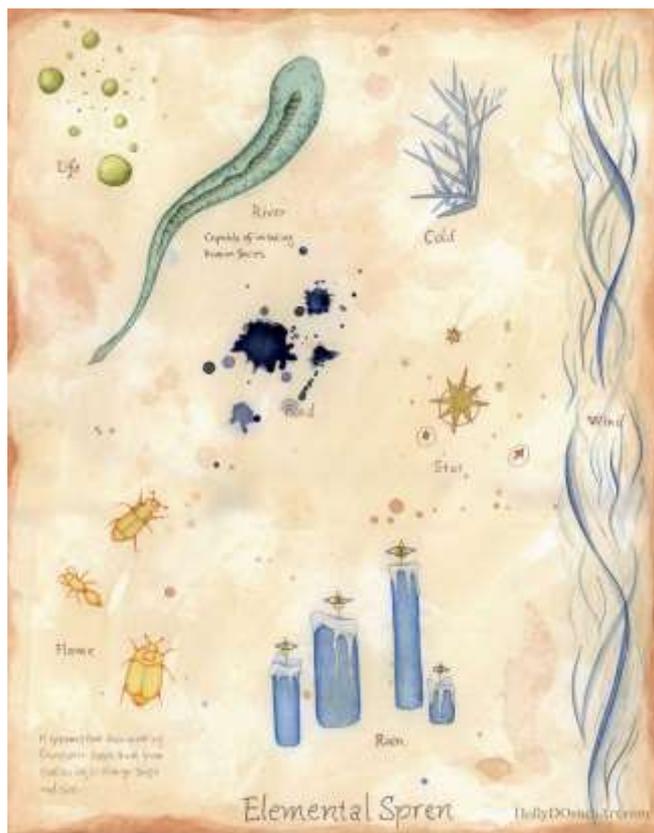


Figure 2. The spren types

They are vastly varied in their appearances, characteristics, and levels of intelligence. Brandon Sanderson creates new complex occasionalisms on the base of the made-up ones. For example, the word *Spren* further becomes a productive derivate when author extends his fictional world by creating their types (*flamespren, angerspren, etc.*).

It shows how important the concept of *Spren* for the fictional world (as long as for text). However, other occasionalisms are granted by derivatives too. It is demonstrated in the Figure 3 which we provide in a form of bubble chart of E-creative occasionalisms that displays the usage of a word. The bigger a bubble the more important it is for a text. Additionally, the frequency of usage is shown under each word-bubble and scheme of derivate-derivatives relation is presented.

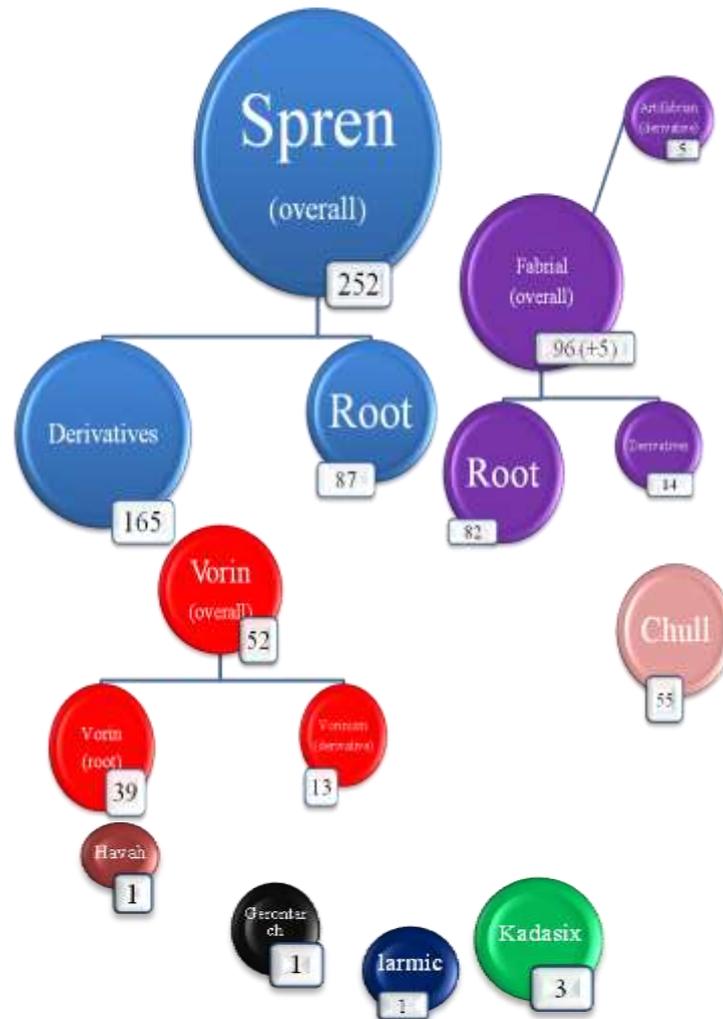


Figure 3. The E-creative occasionalisms' usage in a text

These words are used for fulfilling the authorial world portrait according to certain rules that he has set in it. Each of the occasionalism we face in the text bears a significant meaning and helps a reader dive deep into the fictional universe of Sanderson's books.

We also highlighted the morphological constraint in the creation of authorial occasionalisms by B. Sanderson. However, it is worth considering that the representation of occasionalisms mainly by nouns is justified by the context of the works. Occasional words in this case serve as important concepts, subjects or ideas that the author focuses on. This was done in order to emphasize key elements of the world, plot or symbolism.

Conclusion

Having analyzed B. Sanderson's fiction texts, we have identified a large number of occasionalisms and focused on those that are units of E-creativity — they are formed in an unknown way, are not borrowed from other languages, and occur only in B. Sanderson. These word formations expand the language and bring new concepts into it.

In this regard, we have made the following conclusions:

Occasionalisms created by B. Sanderson have no phonetic analogs in other languages, have not undergone semantic changes and represent a completely new lexical layer. This emphasizes the uniqueness and novelty of these terms. Internet search results, including the use of Google, did not reveal the presence of these words outside of Sanderson's works. The lack of analogies emphasizes that these terms were indeed created by the author and remain unique to his literary world.

Studies of translations of his works into other languages confirm the stability and preservation of author's occasionalisms without changes. This indicates that these terms have a high degree of linguistic crea-

tivity and uniqueness, which is preserved when adapted to other languages. The fact that these words retain their uniqueness in translations confirms Sanderson's linguistic creativity that extends beyond the original language. Thus, one cannot help but appreciate the impact of his literature on world culture and literary heritage.

It is important to highlight that the occasionalisms explored in the texts of "The Stormlight Archive" cycle are not just new words, but also represent an innovation in the field of linguistics, as they are formed according to new, unknown linguistic patterns. These observations highlight not only Sanderson's creative approach to language, but also show how his linguistic creativity remains unique and resilient as he adapts his works to different languages and cultural contexts.

At the same time, the morphologically-restricted framing of the author's occasionalisms with nouns is due to the author's desire to focus the reader's attention on key elements of the world, plot, and symbolism of the works. This stylistic and linguistic decision of the author emphasizes their importance within the created literary context, presents them as key units for understanding and interpreting the artistic world of Brandon Sanderson.

The study of occasionalisms and their role in linguistic creativity has several important applications for future philologists, journalists, and writers:

1) Understanding linguistic creativity and the use of occasionalisms can assist journalists in crafting more original and appealing headlines for articles and news stories.

2) For writers and literary researchers, understanding how authors create and use occasionalisms can be a tool for creating their own deep and compelling literary worlds. It can also help to shape unique style and linguistic features.

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Брэндон Сандерсон шығармаларындағы авторлық қолданыстардың лингвистикалық креативтілігі

Мақалада американдық фантаст-жазушы Брэндон Сандерсонның «The Stormlight Archive» шығармалар циклі негізінде авторлық окказионализмдердің лингвистикалық креативтілігі зерттелген. Өз алдына қызықты құбылыс болып табылатын окказионализмдер лингвистикалық креативтілік тұрғысынан қарастырылып, біз шығарған критерийлер бойынша өлшенді. Зерттеуде аясында, сөзжасамға, яғни жаңа сөздерді ойлап шығарудың шығармашылық әрекеті болып табылатын лингвистикалық құралға назар аударылды. Сөз жасау өнері ұзақ уақыт бойы адамның лингвистикалық тапқырлығының айрықша белгісі болып, жаңа ұғымдар жасауға және оларға тиісті денотация мен коннотация беруге мүмкіндік береді. Зерттеу жұмысымыздың бір бөлігі ретінде Б. Сандерсонның тілдік тұлға ретінде өзі жасаған ұғымдары мен терминдері қалай семантика беретінін, сонымен қатар сөйлемдер мен жалпы баяндау мәтіні аясында оларды прагматикалық компонентпен «қоршап» жатқанын байқаймыз. Біз автор мен тіл/автор және сөйлеу арасындағы аз зерттелген синергияны анықтай түстік деген үміттеміз, осылайша жазушылардың лингвистикалық инновацияларға қалай қатысатыны және тілдің болашағын қалай жасайтыны туралы түсінігімізді жетілдіреміз. Бұл зерттеу тек тіл білімі үшін ғана емес, сонымен қатар көркем әдебиеттің сөйлеуді, шығармашылық жазуды және біздің динамикалық дәуірдегі тілдің эволюциясын байыту мүмкіндігі туралы түсінік береді.

Кілт сөздер: окказионализм, лингвистикалық креативтілігі, авторлық сөздер, тіл, сөйлеу, тілдік тұлға, жеке авторлық элем бейнесі.

А.М. Алтынбеков, Ш. Мажитаева, Ф.А. Какжанова, Д. Веселинов

Лингвистическая креативность окказионализмов в произведениях Брендона Сандерсона

В статье исследована лингвистическая креативность авторских окказионализмов американского фантаста писателя Брендона Сандерсона на материале цикла его произведений «The Stormlight archive». Окказионализмы — явление само по себе интересное, рассматривается со стороны лингвистической креативности и измеряется по выведенным нами критериям. В рамках исследования особое внимание уделено словообразованию — лингвистическому инструменту, являющим собой творческий акт изобретения новых слов. Искусство создания слов уже давно стало отличительной чертой человеческой лингвистической изобретательности, позволяющей создавать новые понятия и придавать им соответствующие денотации и коннотации. В рамках нашего исследования мы наблюдаем, как Б. Сандерсон, как языковая личность, придает семантику сотворенным им понятиям и терминам, а также «окружает» их прагматической составляющей в контексте предложений и общего повествовательного текста. Мы надеемся пролить свет на мало изученную синергию между автором и языком/автором и речью, тем самым способствуя нашему пониманию того, как писатели участвуют в лингвистических инновациях и формируют будущее самого языка. Это исследование имеет значение не только для лингвистики, но и позволяет понять потенциал художественной литературы для обогащения речи, творческого письма и эволюции языка в наш динамичный век.

Ключевые слова: окказионализм, лингвистическая креативность, авторские слова, язык, речь, языковая личность, индивидуально-авторская картина мира.

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