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## LINGUISTIC STYLISTIC PECULIARITIES OF THE PLAY "BETRAYAL" BY HAROLD PINTER

*The article deals with detailed linguistic stylistic analysis of one of Harold Pinter's "memory plays" Betrayal. The object of our investigation is the text of the play and the subject is its linguistic stylistic peculiarities. This literary work stands out from the rest of the plays due to its autobiographical element – the prototypes of main characters of Betrayal are Pinter himself, his lover Joan Bakewell and her husband. The central motif, as the title suggests, is betrayal which incorporates two types of this phenomenon – a betrayal of a spouse and a betrayal of a friend. We have studied the motif of betrayal realized both in author's remark and characters' dialogue at all language levels. It is noticeable that incomplete, elliptical sentences together with aposiopesis prevail – their purpose is to reflect emotional tension presented in characters' utterances. Among other dominant figures of speech are repetition of different type (alliteration, morphological and lexical repetition, anaphora, epiphora and parallel construction), semantic associative group of words denoting human relationship and marriage, words denoting emotions (mostly adjectives), numerous intensifiers, words with strong emotional connotations and verbal irony. Also, author's remarks "pause" and "silence", performing various functions, are conspicuous.*

**Key words:** memory play, betrayal, autobiographical element, retrospective, linguistic stylistic peculiarities, characters' dialogue, author's remark.

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## ЛІНГВОСТИЛІСТИЧНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ П'ЄСИ «ЗРАДА» ГАРОЛЬДА ПІНТЕРА

*У статті проведено детальний лінгвостилістичний аналіз однієї із найкращих п'єс Гарольда Пінтера «Зрада». Ця п'єса відрізняється з-поміж інших п'єс завдяки своєму автобіографічному елементу – прототипами головних персонажів стали сам Гарольд Пінтер, його коханка Джоан Бейквел та її чоловік. Центральним мотивом є зрада, яка об'єднує зраду коханої людини та зраду друга. Ми дослідили мотив зради, реалізований у діалозі персонажів та авторській ремарці на усіх мовних рівнях. Читач помічає, що у п'єсі преважують прості, неповні, еліптичні речення разом з апосіопезою, і саме це відображає емоційну напругу, присутню у висловлюваннях персонажів. Окрім цього, серед домінують стилістичних прийомів, використаних драматургом, є повтор (алітерація, морфологічний і лексичний повтори, анафора, епіфора та паралельні конструкції), семантико-асоціативна група слів, що позначає стосунки людей та шлюб, численні інтенсифікатори, слова із сильною емоційною конотацією та іронія.*

**Ключові слова:** п'єса-спогад, зрада, автобіографічний елемент, ретроспективний, лінгвостилістичні особливості, діалог персонажів, авторська ремарка.

After receiving the Nobel Prize in 2005 the audience of Harold Pinter enlarged and all his literary works became much more recognizable. Although he continued Samuel Beckett's tradition, being a representative of Drama of Absurd, he developed his unique idiosyncrasy realized in all his plays.

In this article we are going to perform a thorough linguistic stylistic analysis of one of Harold Pinter's "memory plays" – *Betrayal* written in 1978. Both characters' dialogue and the author's remark will be taken into consideration. Our aim is to study the play at all language levels and give a deep insight into the hidden meaning of the title. The object of the research is the text of the play *Betrayal* while the subject of our article is linguistic stylistic peculiarities of this literary work.

Harold Pinter's play *Betrayal* has been an object of various investigations: Anna Kuchta compares the text of the play with its new adaptation [3]; Nabamita Das analyses its concepts of time and memory [4]; Prabha Lama studies identity and selfhood presented in the play [5]; Andrew David Clarke focuses on absurd representation of women in Pinter's plays in general and in the play *Betrayal* in particular [6]; Colette Barbara Stoeber examines Pinter's manipulation of form and content through adaptation [7]; Johanna Alida Krüger interprets the play through the prism of postmodern and poststructuralist theories focusing on the concept of authenticity within art and language [8]. The novelty of our investigation consists in analyzing the language of the play focusing on dominant figures of speech. In our article, we have used lexical-semantic, descriptive and sampling methods. The topicality of the research lies in absence of studies of *Betrayal* from the point of view of stylistics.

*Betrayal* is one of few Pinter's works containing an autobiographical element. Main characters of the play Jerry and Emma have a seven-year affair, and the twist in the tale is that for the last two years of the affair, Robert knew about it. But neither Robert nor Emma told Jerry this fact until two years after the affair had ended. When *Betrayal* first opened, some critics dismissed it as a plot from a story in a women's magazine. Some called it trite, others called it lightweight, but what most critics did not know at the time was that the origins of *Betrayal* had their roots firmly in reality. Harold Pinter had had a seven-year affair with Joan Bakewell, whose husband had discovered the affair, but concealed this fact from Pinter. Bakewell did not reveal this to him until the affair was over. The experience inspired Pinter to write *Betrayal*, but in doing so, he opened up his life in a way that seemed inconceivable for a person who was normally so protective of his private life, and who often gave little information about the characters in his plays. This is what makes *Betrayal* unique in Pinter's canon of work [2].

Harold Pinter's play, entitled *Betrayal*, is structured in an unusual way – retrospectively. Scene One depicts events of spring of 1977 while Scene Eight describes events of summer of 1971. Thus, a playwright enables a reader to trace back all the events leading to the outcome given at the beginning of the play. At the beginning of the play, a reader cannot understand everything – two main characters, Jerry and Emma, meet up in a pub and recall the past. The situation seems ordinary but their dialogue is rather strange – incomplete and full of aposiopesis. Main characters do not finish their utterances because of fear – fear to tell each other the truth and return to their relationship which is impossible as each of them has a family:

Jerry: Well... [9, p. 157] // Jerry: Uuh... [9, p. 159] // Emma: Sam must be ... tall [9, p. 162]. // Jerry: Oh ... yes, sure [9, p. 163].  
// Emma: Yes. She's very ... She's smashing. She's thirteen [9, p. 165]. // Jerry: She doesn't know... about us, does she? [9, p. 166] // Emma: It all ... [9, p. 167] // Jerry: Oh ... people ... talking [9, p. 169].

Emma: Well ... I think we're going to separate. We had a long talk ... last night [9, p. 171]. // Emma: You know what I found out ... last night? He's betrayed me for years. He's had ... other women for years [9, p. 171]. // Jerry: ... all the lunches ... we had together, I never even gleaned ... I never suspected ... that there was anyone else ... in his life but you [9, p. 172]. // Jerry: I just – [9, p. 173]. // Jerry: Well, look, I'm happy to see you. I am. I'm sorry ... about ... [9, p. 174]. Emma: He told me everything. I told him everything. We were up ... all night. At one point Ned came down. I had to take him up to bed, had to put him back to bed. Then I went down again. I think it was the voices woke him up. You know ... [9, p. 175].

Numerous repetitions make conversation of Jerry and Emma clichéd, artificial and senseless:

Emma: How are you? – Jerry: All right [9, p. 157].

Jerry: How are you? – Emma: I'm fine [9, p. 158].

Jerry: How's everything? – Emma: Oh, not too bad [9, p. 159].

Jerry: Anyway I'm all right. How are you? – Emma: Fine, really. All right [9, p. 163].

It seems as if both characters try to persuade each other, and themselves at the same time, that their life is complete, without any problems and they are happy.

Emma twice repeats the phrase “*I thought of you the other day*” [9, pp. 158, 167] which is followed by a pause and immediate change of the subject of conversation. However, Jerry reminds Emma about the format of their conversation:

Jerry: You remember the form. I ask about your husband, you ask about my wife [9, p. 161].

Both Jerry and Emma make frequent references to their past: “*Just like old times*” [9, p. 158]; “*Mmn. It's been a long time*” [9, p. 158]; “*Do you remember that time..?*” [9, p. 165]; “*Seems such a long time ago*” [9, p. 167]; “*those days – just you and me*” [9, p. 169]; “*Do you remember? I mean, you do remember?*” – “*I remember*” [9, p. 174]. The playwright expresses it through lexical repetition. In this context, the key word “*remember*” is repeated 18 times revealing main characters' subconscious desire to recall their past.

It is Scene Six that describes the time when Jerry and Emma were lovers and rented a flat – the time when they used to be happy and carefree. A reader feels the atmosphere of love and tenderness:

Emma: ...Miss me?

Jerry: Yes...

She kisses him.

Emma: I missed you...

Jerry: It's marvelous not to have a telephone.

Emma: And marvellous to have me?

Jerry: You're right...

He takes her hand. They stand. They go to the bed and lie down. She caresses him. They embrace [9, pp. 230-237].

Like a usual happy couple they discuss their leisure, plan a trip, buy all the furniture and crockery necessary for their dwelling and share their emotions.

While recalling the happy past both characters repeat each other's utterances sounding like an echo – in such a way the author shows that they both understand that everything is gone, their relationship is in the past:

Jerry: When I threw her up. It was in your kitchen.

Emma: It was in your kitchen [9, p. 166];

Emma: You think of me sometimes?

Jerry: I think of you sometimes [9, p. 164];

Jerry: That's because we're not there any more. We haven't been there for years.

Emma: No, we haven't [9, p. 168].

Once Emma, talking to Jerry, sensibly characterizes their relationship: “*It doesn't matter. It's all gone... It's all all over*” [9, pp. 175–176].

A reader feels how overwhelmed with anxiety the characters are. Harold Pinter shows their emotional state through a variety of stylistic devices – nominal sentences, detachment, elliptical sentences, aposiopesis and repetition (mostly grammatical – anaphora, epiphora and parallel constructions and sometimes lexical – personal pronouns “I” and “you” are repeated):

Jerry: **This evening. Just now. Wondering whether to phone you. I had to phone you.** It took me... two hours to phone you. And then you were with the kids... **I thought I wasn't going to be able to see you... I thought I'd go mad. I'm very grateful to you... for coming** [9, p. 180].

Emma: **I just phoned you this morning, you know, that's all, because I ... because we're old friends ... I've been up all night ... the whole thing's finished ... I suddenly felt I wanted to see you** [9, p. 173].

As the play is dedicated to a problem of human relationship and marriage, one can single out a semantic associative group of words and phrases [1] denoting these issues: *husband, wife, have an affair, jealous, divorce, separate, betray, kids, children, babies, marriage, family, home, leave a wife, dishonesty, betrayal, relation, Mr and Mrs, love, lovers, kiss, miss, caress, embrace, pregnant, ring*. As in the centre of the play we see a love triangle, the dominant words are *husband, wife* and *betray*. Even the play is entitled "Betrayal" giving a reader in such a way a hint what it is going to be about.

Emma and Jerry mostly exchange short, simple, elliptical sentences like: "They are not at all funny" [9, p. 160]. // "I saw Charlotte the other day" [9, p. 164]. // "Seems such a long time ago" [9, p. 167]. // "We have the occasional drink" [9, p. 170]. // "I bought the curtains" [9, p. 174]. // "It's pretty cold now" [9, p. 192]. // "We can meet for lunch" [9, p. 194]. But sometimes forgetting about all the circumstances and the new format of their conversation (as each of them is married) both Jerry and Emma plunge into their memories and subconscious wishes, and we see that their cues change – they become much longer containing complex and compound sentences:

Emma: *I thought of you the other day. Pause. I was driving through Kilburn. Suddenly I saw where I was. I just stopped, and then I turned down Kinsale Drive and drove into Wessex Grove. I drove past the house and then stopped about fifty yards further on, like we used to do, do you remember?* [9, p. 167].

Jerry: *The funny thing was that the only thing I really felt was irritation, I mean irritation that nobody gossiped about us like that, in the old days. I nearly said, now look, she may be having the occasional drink with Casey, who cares, but she and I had an affair for seven years and none of you bastards had the faintest idea it was happening* [9, p. 169].

They cannot hide their emotions, and only in these utterances Jerry and Emma are sincere and open – a reader understands that they are still in love and regret splitting up.

The dialogue of characters is full of adjectives (which prevail), verbs and nouns denoting a range of characters' emotions/reactions: *glad, jealous, amazed, dishonest, anxious, inspired, mad, grateful, happy, sorry, ridiculous, irritation, irritating, admire, marvelous, violent, proud, respect, love, thrill, adore, crazy about, dazzle, stirring, incredible, overwhelm, awkward, panic, desolation, blush, bowled over, knocked out* etc. Characters' dialogue is often abundant in intensifiers, exclamations and words with strong lexical connotation: *your eyes kill me* [9, p. 267]; *they really don't give a fuck there* [9, p. 250]; *madly in love* [9, p. 248]; *pretty good* [9, p. 243]; *damn contract* [9, p. 235]; *quite like this, actually* [9, p. 233]; ... *I was quite ignorant* [9, p. 222]; ... *I could very easily be a total stranger* [9, p. 218]; *is that absolutely necessary?* [9, p. 215]; *bloody dishonest* [9, p. 206]; *I think we've made absolutely the right decision* [9, p. 200]; *can't bear to think* [9, p. 196]; *not many night anywhere, really* [9, p. 196]; *I know that perfectly well* [9, p. 194]; *bastard* [9, p. 185]; *a damn good game* [9, p. 187]; *are you quite sure* [9, p. 185]; *You bastard* [9, p. 184]; *for God's sake!* [9, p. 180]; *a bloody long time ago* [9, p. 170]; *you look quite rough* [9, p. 179]; *Good Lord* [9, p. 171]; *none of you bastards* [9, p. 169]; *Good God* [9, p. 158]; *I'm not all that well, really* [9, p. 157].

Adverb "never" acquires additional implicit meaning in a characters' dialogue – personages make emotional, sincere revelation with the help of it: *I never knew* [9, p. 171]; *I never gleaned...* [9, p. 172]; *I never suspected...* [9, p. 172]; *he never made...* [9, p. 172]; *we never played...* [9, p. 183]; *she never knew...* [9, p. 185]; *she never knew...* [9, p. 186]; *you're never here...* [p. 193]; *we can never meet...* [9, p. 193]; *it could never be...* [9, p. 196]; *it was never intended...* [9, p. 197]; *it could never happen...* [9, p. 218]; *you would never have received...* [9, p. 218]; *they've never been said...* [9, p. 265]; *they'll never know...* [9, p. 266]; *they'll never know...* [9, p. 266]. Throughout the play they mention what they have never done or will never do, regretting, of course.

Besides, it is noticeable that H. Pinter frequently uses negative prefixes (affix repetition) in a dialogue of his characters: **impossible** [9, pp. 194, 260]; **dishonest** [9, pp. 206, 207]; **dishonesty** [9, p. 207]; **unfortunately** [9, p. 207]; **improper** [9, p. 210]; **unsolicited** [9, p. 214]; **inefficient** [9, p. 218]; **uncovering** [9, p. 222]; **misunderstand** [9, p. 231]; **unfused** [9, p. 233]; **unfaithful** [9, p. 260]; **unalloyed** [9, p. 267]. The playwright applies this morphological stylistic device in order to show that the personages of his play are dissatisfied with everything.

Scene Seven depicts Jerry and Robert being in Italy and eating in a small restaurant. Pinter, aiming at providing local colour as a background, uses foreign words. Among numerous foreignisms, one can find: *signore, menus, melone, Piccata al limone, insalate verde, prosciutto, scampi, spinaci, grazie, molte grazie, Corvo Bianco, traffico, buon appetito, gondola* which refer to Italian cuisine as well as traffic and means of transport.

The author's remark is also of great interest. Pinter, in his turn, hints that Jerry and Emma feel uneasy in this situation not knowing what to say and concealing their true feelings. He does it through numerous repetitions of "pause" and "silence". Throughout the play "pause" is repeated 131 times and "silence" is used 18 times. *Pause* is used in two ways. Firstly, it is used within a cue of a character expressing his/her agitation, an attempt to recall the past or an inconvenient moment immediately followed by a question:

1) Jerry: *Mmn. It's been a long time.*

Emma: *Yes. Pause. I thought of you the other day* [9, p. 158]. (Emma's agitation)

2) Jerry: *I saw Charlotte the other day.*

Emma: *Yes. She's very ... She's smashing. She's thirteen. Pause. Do you remember that time... oh god it was... when you picked her up and threw her up and caught her?* [9, pp. 164-165]. (Emma's attempt to recall the past)

3) Emma: *Ever think of me?*

Jerry: *I don't need to think of you. Pause. Anyway I'm all right. How are you?* [9, p. 163]. (Jerry's question)

Also, pause is used between characters' utterances signifying an abrupt end of the utterance followed by instant change of conversation topic:

Emma: *How is your wife?*

Jerry: *All right.*

**Pause.**

*Emma: Sam must be ... tall* [9, pp. 161-162]. (shift from one subject of conversation to the other)

Except the remark “silence”, Harold Pinter uses other phrases to denote stillness:

*They smile, toast each other silently, drink* [9, p. 157].

*She sits still. He returns, with the drinks, sits* [9, p. 167].

*She remains still* [9, p. 211].

*She breaks away, puts her head on his shoulder, cries quietly...* [9, p. 211].

*They stand still, looking at each other* [9, p. 268].

*She stops still.* [9, p. 268].

In addition, alliteration is frequently found in author's remark. H. Pinter often employs repetition of voiceless consonant sound s which creates a mood of suspicious stillness before an oncoming conflict or some kind of unexpected news:

*He sits. They smile, toast each other silently, drink. He sits back and looks at her.* [9, p. 157]

*He takes the glasses, goes to the bar. She sits still. He returns, with the drinks, sits.* [9, p. 167]

*Jerry sitting, Robert standing, with glass* [9, p. 177]

This author's remark precedes all the revelations and confessions made later in the play. For example, paradoxical as it may seem, Emma, who has been betraying her husband Robert for many years, finds out about his betrayal and she is shocked and hurt:

*Emma: You know what I found out... last night? He's betrayed me for years. He's had ... other women for years.*

*Jerry: No? Good Lord. Pause. But we betrayed him for years.*

*Emma: And he betrayed me for years* [9, p. 171].

One more paradox is that Jerry, being a best man at Robert's wedding and his closest friend afterwards, has a love affair with his wife Emma. But it seems it does not bother him or Emma at all:

*Jerry: ...I love you.*

*Emma: My husband is at the other side of that door.*

*Jerry: ...I adore you. I'm madly in love with you... Your eyes kill me. I'm lost. You're wonderful...*

*He kisses her.* [9, pp. 266-267];

*Emma: I wonder. I wonder if everyone knew, all the time.*

*Jerry: Don't be silly. We were brilliant. Nobody knew. Who ever went to Kilburn in those days? Just you and me* [9, p. 169].

Moreover, in all his cues, Jerry emphasizes that he is the closest friend of Robert's which sounds rather ironic. Jerry uses a phrase “my best and oldest friend” or “a close friend” relating to Robert ten times [9, pp. 172, 173, 175, 183, 194, 221, 265, 267, 268]. The playwright expresses Jerry's mockery at Robert through verbal irony.

Thus, in this article, we have analyzed Pinter's play *Betrayal* from stylistic point of view. The central motif – betrayal – is shown with the help of various stylistic devices. The perspective of further investigation lies in comparing a few plays of the same kind (for example, memory plays or plays of menace) and singling out typical dominant stylistic peculiarities.

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