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**CONSTRUCTING CHARACTERS MULTIMODALLY:  
A FOCUS ON PRAGMATICS OF FILM DIALOGUE**

**МУЛЬТИМОДАЛЬНЕ КОНСТРУЮВАННЯ ПЕРСОНАЖЕЙ:  
ПРАГМАТИКА КІНЕМАТОГРАФІЧНОГО ДІАЛОГУ**

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Traditionally, pragmatics is viewed as “the study of all aspects of linguistic behaviour” [1, p. v]. Besides, it covers semiotic behaviours in all their multimodality [2, p. 96]. Pragmatics concerned with the production and consumption of literary texts is termed as literary pragmatics [3, p. 511]. It primarily focuses on “what readers infer” from the language and behaviours, and the way in which those will “predetermine to a certain degree” interpretation [2, p. 96].

This paper sets out to specify pragmatic effects brought about by the multimodal presentation of characters in cinematic discourse. In cognitive narratology, characters are defined as “multimodal (semiotic) constructs in the service of a narrative aimed at a target audience, and therefore exist in the minds of that audience as cognitive constructs [4, p. 2022]. This research offers a landscape modal [5] for construing characters in film discourse. Specifically, a film character is viewed as a cognitive construct which incorporates three landscapes – emotional, behavioural (actional), and cognitive, each of them is represented multimodally.

Bednarek distinguishes two kinds of multimodality in TV discourse – multimodality in character presentation and multimodality in the film in general. The former is about various semiotic dimensions of character performance, i. e. gestures, gaze, facial expression, etc.; whereas the latter refers to “the meaning potential of the moving image itself” [6, p. 20] and includes such aspects as camera, editing, lightning, and sound.

Thus, the multimodal analysis of characters in film encompasses three procedures: 1) a linguostylistic analysis of film dialogue in terms of key

words and expressions [4] which elicit the characters' verbal behaviour; 2) a pragma-stylistic analysis of characters' non-verbal behaviour revealed through visual, kinetic and auditory codes; 3) a pragma-stylistic analysis of various filmic techniques employed in character presentation.

Traditionally, the film dialogue is defined as a verbal text performed by actors and integrated with other thematic elements [7, p. 69]. It should be emphasized that unlike the dialogue in the novels, film dialogue is characterized by the absence of the literary narrator who could explicitly summarize or interpret the character's speech or even render interior views of the characters' minds and emotions [ibid., p. 16].

This thesis focuses on the first two aspects of character presentation in film discourse. The case study of this paper is *Gone Girl* – a film adaptation of Flynn's 2012 psychological thriller of the same name. The movie centers around a mysterious disappearance of Nick Dunne's wife Amy and the investigation of this case by the police. *Gone Girl* follows Nick Dunne who may or may not have been involved in the disappearance of his wife and is subsequently hounded by the police and media.

As functions of film dialogues significantly depend on the genre conventions of a film, we can state that in *Gone Girl* the dialogues are used (i) to develop the characters' psychology, (ii) to create suspense in the film narrative, (iii) to guide the recipient's interpretation, (iiii) to reveal the theme(s) of the film. Let us analyze the following extracts from *Gone Girl* in terms of pragmatic effects brought about by the multimodal characterisation.

1) SHARON: I'm just trying to get clear.

NICK: Let me be clear. Just because I am not a murderer doesn't make me a good guy. I'm not a good guy. I was a bad husband to a great wife. I broke the vow that I made to her.

SHARON: Those are pretty words, Nick. But what does that really mean to you?

NICK: It basically means that I was a con artist. I met Amy Elliot seven years ago. I was completely transfixed. Amy can do that to you. I was this average guy from an average place with mediocre aspirations. And I met a woman who dazzled me. And I wanted her to love me, so I pretended to be better than I was. When we got married, I promised to be that guy. The guy who works harder, who lives and acts, and loves with much passion as she does. But I failed her. Instead of doing what was right, I was doing what was easy [8].

2)



**Fig. 1. Close-up of Amy (reaction shot)**

This dialogue (the first passage) is an extract from Nick's interview arranged by the lawyer in order to somehow justify him in the eyes of Amy's parents, friends, and all other people who love Amy. The verbal signals of Nick's characterization are manifested by stylistically salient words and expressions most of which are based on the cognitive mechanism of opposition: *antithesis* (a bad husband :: good wife), some cases of *contrast* (a murderer :: a good guy; what was right :: what was easy), a *contrast* created by a set of epithets and the metaphor (average (man), average (place), mediocre (aspiration) :: the woman who dazzles. Nick is also represented via the non-verbal behaviour of Amy (the second extract) who is watching this interview on TV. Specifically, her controversial attitude towards Nick and his speech about their relations is revealed through her close-up facial expression which renders surprise and puzzling.

Thus, the verbal behaviour of Nick together with Amy's non-verbal behaviour (meta-multimodality) generate the effect of incredibility on the part of the reader, thus creating the scene's tension and unveiling the psychology of both characters.

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## CODIFICATION AND FEATURES OF AUSTRIAN GERMAN

### КОДИФІКАЦІЯ ТА ОСОБЛИВОСТІ АВСТРІЙСЬКОГО ВАРІАНТА НІМЕЦЬКОЇ МОВИ

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Важливим аспектом визнання суверенності національного варіанта літературної мови є його фіксація, тобто вияв та кодифікація національної норми літературної мови – в першу чергу, шляхом лексикографічного відображення норми літературної мови в умовах певного соціуму [1, с. 409].

Окрім кодифікації, У. Аммон увиразнює ще інші «соціальні сили», важливі для існування та визнання національного варіанта, що