

Andrey D. Kaksin
Katanov Khakass State University
Abakan, Russian Federation
adkaksin@yandex.ru

Comments, instructions, inquiries: Variety of speech genres in the poem of N. V. Gogol “Dead souls”

Abstract

The article is based on one of the modifications of the widely known theory of speech acts in linguistics – the classification of genre forms in the aspect of pragmatics. The research aimed to reveal the possibilities for reflecting various speech acts in a single work of fiction. The hypothesis was that in a single work of fiction, a considerable amount of speech practices genres can be brightly represented. The source of the material for the study was N. V. Gogol’s poem “Dead souls” – one of the outstanding works of Russian classical literature. Continuous sampling was used to select the characters’ utterances and the author’s remarks containing speech practices that verbalize ethnic Russian character traits. During contextual analysis, 9 traits were identified, each characterized by corresponding practices: 1) religiousness (preaching, penance, prayer, confession, repentance, blasphemy, thanksgiving), 2) a desire to complain (cry), 3) inquisitiveness (questions, comments), 4) landowners’ passion for gambling (gamblers’ shouts, hot discussions, inquiry, persuasion), 5) desire to attract attention («friendly» talk), 6) intractability (silence), 7) strictness to servants and children (guidance, command, order, demand), 8) emotionality (repetition, shout), 9) impossibility to understand (unuttered thought, song). These practices are characterized by the use of verbs, adverbs and adverbial participles, nouns, adjectives and participles, clichés and stylistically colored patterns that verbalize the traits.

Keywords: pragmatics, speech act, speech practice genre, verbalization, lexical unit, cliché, stylistically colored pattern

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