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LITERATURE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AS REFLECTION OF DRUG ABUSE PROLIFERATION IN MODERN SOCIETY

The article focuses on the use of drug names in contemporary fiction which is regarded as the source of scientific information and a mirror of public opinion. With the application of the British National Corpus (BNC) and the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA), it is established that works of fiction reveal the proliferation of drug abuse problem in the twentieth century which has reached an unprecedented scale and become a global epidemic.
Key words: contemporary fiction, XX century, drug names, drug abuse, corpus.

Articolul se concentrează pe utilizărea denumirilor de droguri în literatura artistică, considerată sursă a informațiilor științifice și oglindă a opiniei publice. Prin aplicarea British National Corpus (BNC) și a Corpus of Historical American English (COHA), se constată că lucrările de ficțiune relevă proliferarea problemei abuzului de droguri în secolul al XX-lea, care a atins o amploare fără precedent și a devenit o epidemie globală.
Cuvinte cheie: literatură contemporană, secolul XX, nume de droguri, abuz de droguri, corpus.

During the twentieth century, drug abuse has turned into an acute social problem throughout the world. Gradual spread of narcotic substances among society and their consumption by individuals of different backgrounds, age groups and social status have caused researchers' particular interest. Drugs have been studied by specialists of various fields of science, such ashistory, medicine, law, sociology, linguistics, and philology.

Linguistic analysis of drug names represents significance as it throws light at systemic relations within a language, and reflects public attitude towards the use of narcotic substances. Diachronic research of the semantic field in question reveals not only its internal transformation within the language system across the centuries,but also the changes in social evaluation of drug consumption for various purposes and the causes behind its proliferation which by now has reached the scale of social epidemic [1, p. 16].

According to the research conducted under the supervision of professor N. Srebryanskaya, the first lexical items denoting narcotic substances appeared in the English language in the IX century, their use was restricted by medical texts [1, p. 74]. The further development of this group of words is characterised by its significant increase and stylistic variation. Starting from nine lexemes in Old English, the semantic field of drug names has grown into a lexical microsystem accounting for estimated 7836 elements in Modern English. However, the extension of the field lacks stability: the XX century witnessed

the exponential growth of its components the number of which soared from 80 to nearly 8000 [1, p. 149]. Clearly, this fact has social implications.

The semantic field of drug names also underwent qualitative changes. The major transformation refers to the key lexeme, the word '*drug'*, which acquired the second meaning of '*narcoticsubstance'* in the XIX century [1, p. 122]. Another important factor consists in the connotation change of drug names from mostly neutral to negative, which was caused by increasing cases of recreational drug consumption. Both facts prove the development of drug abuse problem in the XIX century which peaked in the second half of the previous century [1, p. 142].

It is commonly known that works of fiction mirrorthe epoch in which they were created. Novels, short stories, poems, and other forms of imaginative writing contain multiple details about people's way of life, their clothing, manners, food, and entertainment.More importantly, they reflect what society valued and condemned, what was considered to be a virtue or a vice in different periods of history. Narratives provide a glimpse of contemporaries' opinion which cannot be captured from figures. Therefore, it is essential to examine works of fiction for establishing or confirming social facts as they are powerful viewpoint formers capable of generating perception that last over generations.

Nowadays, it is also acknowledged that fiction is a crucial source of scientific data. As Negrete &Lartigue discovered through their study, "narratives constitute an important means for science communication to transmit information in an accurate, memorable, and enjoyable way" [2, p. 104]. This means that works of fiction are a valid foundation for a scientific research and a rich source of valuable information for various sciences including linguistics and philology.

Due to the advance in information technology and computing, humanities have received an opportunity to significantly accelerate research, especially if it requires examination of a large number of texts. Corpora created in the recent decades, for instance, British National Corpus (BNC) and Corpus of Historical American English (COHA), give access to millions of texts and offer an unparalleled insight into the English language. Using such databases simplifies the way scientific data can be collected and provides researchers with a possibility of thorough, plausible and fundamental linguistic analysis.

Thus, the aim of this article is to demonstrate that fiction of the twentieth century reflects the proliferation of drug abuse in the last hundred years. Examples of works of fiction extracted from the above mentioned English language corpora aim to show how this social evil has reached an unprecedented scale.

First of all, works of modern fiction describe multiple cases of addiction to various narcotic substances. Those include hallucinogens, opiates, stimulants, and other drug types. Consider the following extract from the novel "*Payback*" written by the British writer Russell James:

"You think I never see junkies in the wards? Every weekend I see kids stoned." I'm going upstairs." I was wrong about one thing." Tamsin pauses at the door to hear what Suzie has to say."You weren't on ***cocaine****. It was some kind of* ***hallucinogen****, wasn't it? What's in fashion now – one of those with letters instead of a name:* ***MDA, PCP****,* ***LSD****?' Tamsin tosses her head. "****XTC****.* ***Ecstasy****."* [3].

The lexical items in the above example name different kinds of narcotic substances, some of which became fashionable at a certain period of time. The line '*Every weekend I see kids stoned'* unambiguously shows the scale of drug abuse problem which involves even young adults.

Authors of contemporary literature in a rather detailed way describe how narcotics are taken and what effects they cause. See the description below from the novel '*The Ladykiller*' by Martina Cole:

Then JoJo offered her a tab of ***LSD****. She took the proffered tiny scrap of blotting paper and wiped it on to her tongue. Joey did the same. An hour later she was floating somewhere between reality and the fifth dimension* [3].

Works of the best-selling author, English novelist Bernard Cornwell are particularly representative for the analysis of drug culture in the twentieth century. In hisnovel '*Crackdown'*, he masterly depicts a character named Rickie whose life is being ruined under the destructive influence of drugs. The writer also displays the fact that it is a common practice to mix different narcotic substances and take them with alcohol and cigarettes. Consider the extract below:

"Your son is dying?" I responded inadequately. "Rickie is a drug addict," he explained gently…."Specifically Rickie is addicted to ***cocaine****," the senator continued, "but I can't say he's particular in his tastes. He uses* ***crack*** *and* ***cocaine*** *and* ***amphetamines****, then more* ***crack*** *and more* ***cocaine*** *and perhaps even a* ***speedball*** *to round things off. You know what a* ***speedball*** *is, Nick?" –"No." – "It's* ***an injection of cocaine mixed with heroin****. It's real big boy stuff" – the senator's voice was very bitter – "and all of that garbage is washed down with alcohol and pickled in nicotine. My son is a dying junkie, but he doesn't want to die alone so he's encouraging Robin-Anne to keep him company and now she's become addicted to* ***cocaine****and it won't be very long before she's smoking* ***crack*** *and trying* ***speed balls****."* [3]

The given example reflects the disastrous impact of drug abuse on other people's lives. Drug addicts tend to involve their friends and relatives into the harmful experience. Cornwell's novel describes more than one life story of the sort. For instance:

"I knew a girl who got hooked on ***cocaine****. She taught in a health club; aerobics, that kind of thing, and the next we knew she was wearing hot pants on a street corner in New York and strutting her* ***stuff*** *at the cars. Jesus, if you knew how hard we tried to get her off that* ***damne dpowder****." – "Did you succeed?" He paused, and finally shook his head* [3].

The passage confirms the inability of younger individuals to get rid of the harmful addiction and return to a normal life.

Examples from works of fiction reveal the bitter fact that it is predominantly young people who fall victims of the drug addiction. This addiction swiftly turns into obsession that clouds an individual's mind and forces them to act irrationally. Consider another example from Magdalen Nabb's novel '*Death in springtime: a Florentine mystery*':

"Have you ever looked at his arms? If your boy's on ***heroin*** *he's not your son any longer. He belongs to the* ***drug*** *he's hooked on and he'll do anything to get it. Anything..."* [3].

Another representative piece of recent fiction on the topic of drug use is '*Deliria'* written by an American author Albyn Leah Hall. Through an American narrator Claudia, A. Hall describes challenges a typical drug addict of the twentieth century has to face. This includes having a second trimester abortion because she was too stoned to notice her pregnancy, attending Narcotics Anonymous meetings and going to therapy, taking an AIDS test. The extract below displays the main characters' involvement into crime:

We have arrested your boyfriend, Brendan McNally, for possession of ***hashish and two tabs of LSD****, found on his person on Camden Lock, NW1. Subsequently we have reason to believe that he is keeping additional* ***narcotics*** *on the premises and we have a right to search your home without a warrant* [3].

The same novel reveals the fact that recreational consumption of narcotic substances covers vast society strata. The problem has become deep-rooted and proliferated into different social groups, for example:

"Do you smoke ***hashish****?" –"No." He leans down, squatting before me.' You can tell me,' he says confidentially. '****Hash*** *isn't such a big deal. We've even tried it; the lads and 1. Everyone does it."* [3]

Contextual analysis demonstrates that in works of fiction drug names are used alongside lexemes which have a strong negative connotation, namely: *death, die, abuse, overdose, depression, misery, fatality, violence,* and others. Consider the examples below from B. Cornwell's '*Crackdown'* and Kim Newman's '*Bad dreams*' respectively:

The worst thing about ***cocaine*** *is that once it has exhausted all the dopamine from the brain, then what's left is a black hole of* ***depression*** *so big and so awful that not all the* ***misery*** *in the world can fill it. People try to beat that* ***misery*** *with* ***barbiturates****, but nothing can cure it because you've taken away from yourself all chance of feeling pleasure* [3].

Clive drew the ***heroin*** *into the syringe, filling it to capacity.' She'll* ***overdose****,' he warned* [3].

Gradual spread of drug addiction among different social groups led to the development of a certain category of illegal business which implies crime such as murder, trafficking, illegal drug production and trade and, consequently, police involvement. Description of such activity can also be found in

contemporary fiction. For instance, see extracts from K. Newman's '*Bad dreams*' and G. Butler's '*Coffin in fashion*':

Clive ... collected on a small ***cocaine deal*** *with a Senior Lecturer in Romance Languages. There were some people you could trust, after all. There was another staple seller. Like Moet et Chandon or Chanel No. 5. The preferred* ***drug*** *of old money, and, by extension, of the nouveau mob. His most* ***loyal cocaine customers*** *were in the City, Whitehall and the Palace of Westminster* [3].

Drugs *did come into this story, that had to be recognized, and no doubt the police investigating team knew more about that than he did. But he knew enough, because he knew about Rose and Joe Landau.* ***Drugs*** *were floating around this case. It was something about the times that* ***drugs*** *should be so easily come by.* ***LSD*** *was the new one. All you seemed to need was the right ingredients and a competent chemist. Make it in your own backyard* [3].

Contemporary authorscreate images of notorious characters who thrive on distributing and selling drugs. See the extracts below from Simon Gandolfi's novel '*Alistair MacLean's golden girl':*

Nothing but the best for the ***murderous pigs of the cocaine trade****, Trent thought, anger and fear sour in his throat.* ***Drug barons****, the newspapers called them, giving the pigs a glamour in which to revel* [3].

Another British writer Frederick Forsyth, master of the international thriller, depicts 'a heroin tsar' in his crime novel '*The negotiator*':

The man they wanted was a ***New Zealand-born heroin tsar****, sought in a dozen countries but slippery as an eel. The good news was he was expected to show up with a large coke consignment for processing, cutting and distributing* [3].

Besides common literary words modern English fiction contains various slang items naming narcotic substances. This manifestation of the drug culture is well reflected in the novel "*Junkie: Confessions of an Unredeemed Drug Addict*" by American beat generation writer William S. Burroughs published in 1953. For example, in the novel lexemes *nembies,benny*and *goof balls* are slang terms for *barbiturates*:

This night Herman was knocked out on ***nembies*** *and his head kept fallingdown onto the bar* [4].

Or take two strips of ***benny*** *and two* ***goof balls****. They get down there andhave a fight. It's a good drive* [4].

For an accurate description of actions and characters in the criminal fringe in New York, Kentucky, New Orleans and Mexico City, the author uses such words as *weed, tea, hash* to name marihuana, for instance:

Pushing ***weed*** *looks good on paper, like fur farming or raising frogs* [4].

I can smoke a stick of ***tea*** *and enjoy a glass of California sherry and a* ***hash*** [4].

Other slang terms that can be found in the novel include *stuff, junk, Henry, Charly*, and others which are all used in the negative context:

*I was learning to hide my **stuff** carefully – 'stash it,' as they say in thetrade – so Roy and Herman couldn't find it and take some* [4].

*All that good **Henry and Charly**. When you shoot **Henry and Charly**,you can smell it going in* [4].

Frequency of drug names in corpora is an important factor to describe the spread of drug abuse in the previous century. To specify, data provided by Corpus of Historical American English indicate in which decade specificnarcotic substances were more or lessused. For instance, frequency of the word '*cocaine'* shows that the use of the drug peaked in the 1980s: 575 cases which is nearly twice as high as in the 1990s with 272 cases. For *heroin* the figures are 665 hits in the 1970s and 274 in the 1980s. *LSD* – 145 uses in 1960s, 86 in the 1970s. *Hashish*: 48 – in 1970s, 26 – in the 1960s, *marihuana*: 399 hits in the 1980s, 319 in the 1970s, *amphetamine*: 76 uses in the 1990s, 20 in the 1970s [4].

To conclude, drug use has become a popular topic of modern-day fiction which contains multiple evidence of this acute problem of the twentieth century. The scale of narcotic addiction in contemporary societyis reflected in the works of British and American authors who depict lives of those who take, distribute and produce illegal substances. Literary characters are involved into drug business and lack strength to resist the harmful habit. Significant assistance is provided by contemporary and historic English language corpora which accelerate the collection of representative material for literary and linguistic analysis.

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