

Occasional Word-Formation in Postfeminist Fiction: Cognitive Approach

Authors : Kateryna Nykytchenko

Abstract : Modern fiction and non-fiction writers commonly use their own lexical and stylistic devices to capture a reader's attention and bring certain thoughts and feelings to his reader. Among such devices is the appearance of one of the neologic notions - individual author's formations: occasionalisms or nonce words. To a significant extent, the host of examples of new words occurs in chick lit genre which has experienced exponential growth in recent years. Chick Lit is a new-millennial postfeminist fiction which focuses primarily on twenty- to thirtysomething middle-class women. It brings into focus the image of 'a new woman' of the 21st century who is always fallible, funny. This paper aims to investigate different types of occasional word-formation which reflect cognitive mechanisms of conveying women's perception of the world. Chick lit novels of Irish author Marian Keyes present genuinely innovative mixture of forms, both literary and nonliterary which is displayed in different types of occasional word-formation processes such as blending, compounding, creative respelling, etc. Crossing existing mental and linguistic boundaries, adopting herself to new and overlapping linguistic spaces, chick lit author creates new words which demonstrate the result of development and progress of language and the relationship between language, thought and new reality, ultimately resulting in hybrid word-formation (e.g. affixation or pseudoborrowing). Moreover, this article attempts to present the main characteristics of chick-lit fiction genre with the help of the Marian Keyes's novels and their influence on occasionalisms. There has been a lack of research concerning cognitive nature of occasionalisms. The current paper intends to account for occasional word-formation as a set of interconnected cognitive mechanisms, operations and procedures meld together to create a new word. The results of the generalized analysis solidify arguments that the kind of new knowledge an occasionalism manifests is inextricably linked with cognitive procedure underlying it, which results in corresponding type of word-formation processes. In addition, the findings of the study reveal that the necessity of creating occasionalisms in postmodern fiction novels arises from the need to write in a new way keeping up with a perpetually developing world, and thus the evolution of the speaker herself and her perception of the world.

Keywords : Chick Lit, occasionalism, occasional word-formation, cognitive linguistics

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