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## Sensory Means of Expressing the Category of Health in the Novel “Ugly Swans” by A. and B. Strugatsky in English

Aleksandr S. Ptashkin

National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University, *Tomsk, Russian Federation*✉ [cognitionscience@tpu.ru](mailto:cognitionscience@tpu.ru)

**Abstract.** The sensory linguistic means of expressing the category of health in the novel “Ugly Swans” by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky in the translation of Alice Stone Nakhimovsky and Alexander Nakhimovsky in English, are the subject of the study. The relevance of the research is determined by the rising interest of linguists and translators to the approaches of description of sensory means of expressing the semantic categories in the target language and a great demand of results for further systematization of lexical units of perceptual origin in the language under analysis. The aim of this article is to define the peculiarities of linguistic expression of sensory space of *health* in English. The source of material in the study was the novel “Ugly Swans” in the translation of A.S. Nakhimovsky and A. Nakhimovsky. Contextual and semantic analyses with the dictemic text theory are proposed to reveal visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory images in the translation of this work. The following results were received. The semantic structure of *health* implies the existence of two components: mental and physiological ones, each of them is given as the sensory space with a core, consisting of linguistic means in a neutral-bookish style, and peripheries of different origin: near periphery, including lexical units of informal style, and the interpretative one, consisting of the dictemes with the sensory health reference. The text of this work reveals the examples of a sensory tension and a shifting from one signal to another. The main sensory signals, which are frequently combined in text, are vision and hearing. These sensory images, which differ from the signals in the source text, are presented in the individual linguistic world-images of these translators.

**Keywords:** sensory space, dicteme, lexeme, collocation, phraseological unit

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## Сенсорные средства выражения категории HEALTH в повести «Гадкие Лебеди» А. и Б. Стругацких в английском языке

А.С. Пташкин 

Национальный исследовательский Томский политехнический университет, Томск,  
Российская Федерация  
✉ [cognitionscience@tpu.ru](mailto:cognitionscience@tpu.ru)

**Аннотация.** Сенсорные средства выражения категории health в переводе романа Аркадия и Бориса Стругацких «Гадкие лебеди» на английский язык, выполненного Алисой Стоун Нахимовской и Александром Нахимовским, является предметом исследования. Актуальность работы обусловлена возрастающим интересом лингвистов и переводчиков к подходам описания сенсорных средств выражения семантических категорий в языке перевода и большой востребованностью результатов для дальнейшей систематизации сенсорных лексических единиц в изучаемом языке. Цель данной статьи — выявить особенности языкового выражения сенсорного пространства категории health в английском языке. Источником материала исследования послужил роман «Гадкие лебеди» в переводе А.С. Нахимовской и А. Нахимовского. Предлагаются контекстуальный и семантический анализы с учетом диктемной теории текста для выявления зрительных, слуховых, тактильных, вкусовых образов при переводе данного произведения. В ходе исследования были получены следующие результаты. Семантическая структура категории health предполагает наличие двух компонентов: ментального и физиологического, каждый из которых представлен как сенсорное пространство с ядром, состоящим из лексических единиц нейтрально-книжного стиля, и периферией различного типа: ближней периферии, включающей лексические единицы неформального стиля, и интерпретационной, состоящей из диктем с указанием на сенсорное пространство категории health. В тексте произведения выявлены примеры сенсорного напряжения и переключения с одного сигнала на другой. Основными сенсорными сигналами, которые часто сочетаются в тексте, являются зрение и слух. Эти сенсорные образы, отличающиеся от сигналов исходного текста, представлены в индивидуальных языковых картинах мира данных переводчиков.

**Ключевые слова:** сенсорное пространство, диктема, лексема, словосочетание, фразеологическая единица

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## Introduction

Categories possess the perceptual basis with their features, structure and reference to objects [1. P. 29]. The perception is fundamental for both cognition and emotion, representing Abstract categories by key metaphors in language and etymology of naming basic emotions [2. P. 14]. Thus, the perceptual linguistics, as a separate discipline or in the boundaries of cognitive linguistics, is focused on the lexis, representing olfaction, vision, taste, hearing, taction; their sensory tension and shifting. Such lexical units reflect emotions [3. P. 53–55]. These linguistic means are lexical units that have perceptual prototypes [4. P. 35; 5]. Moreover, they mean the so-called “triad”: concept — emotion — perception in the same proposition [2. P. 14; 5]. The multitude of lexical units with perception semantics of health is defined as “sensory space” similarly to “metaphorical space” offered by L.G. Babenko [6. P. 18]. Sensory meanings within the revealed thematic areas are considered as the components of the above-mentioned space, which is included into the cognitive structure of *health* in the novel “The Ugly Swans” by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky translated by Alice Stone Nakhimovsky and Alexander Nakhimovsky in English<sup>1</sup>. The propositions with reference to the sensory space of *health* in the framework of the dictemic theory are analyzed [7. P. 77; 8. P. 65]. The theme of sensory linguistic expression of *health* has not been **covered** enough and it defined the **relevance** of this work. Thus, the **goal** of this work is to define the peculiarities of linguistic expression of sensory images within the category of health in the novel “Ugly Swans” by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky in the translation of Alice Stone Nakhimovsky and Alexander Nakhimovsky in English. The original of the text is also taken into account for the revealing of differences in the personal world-images of translators and writers<sup>2</sup> (ГЛ). The **object** of the study is the lexical units, which form the sensory space of *health* in this literary work. The **subject** of this study is the semantics of lexical units, expressing the category of health in this novel.

## Materials and methods

The sensory lexical units, actualizing the meanings with reference to mental and physiological health, derived from the novel “Ugly Swans” by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky in the translation of Alice Stone Nakhimovsky and Alexander Nakhimovsky, were chosen as the **material** of this study (US). Contextual and semantic methods were used to identify the structural characteristics of the mental unit under study, forms and sensory linguistic means in the novel “The Ugly Swans” by A. and B. Strugatsky in English. Moreover, the dictemic theory was also applied. The dicteme is “the elementary unit of studying the speech expression

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<sup>1</sup> hereinafter (US) — *Strugatsky A., Strugatsky B. The Ugly Swans. N.Y. : Collier Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1980.*

<sup>2</sup> hereinafter (ГЛ) — *Стругацкий А., Стругацкий Б. Гадкие лебеди. М. : АСТ, 2021.*

of concepts in language” [9. P. 17]. Any proposition is a dicteme at the level of the text. Our cognition operates with propositions, which might be expressed by lexemes, collocations, several sentences or even a whole text. The sensory space of *health* in this novel is defined as the collection of dictemes, characterizing mental and physiological aberrations from the perceptual point of view [10. P. 484]. The structure of such space is analyzed as fields with the corresponding spheres, where the core and peripheries are distinguished [11. P. 10–34; 12; 13. P. 3].

The analysis of the material in this study presupposes the following stages: a. revealing the lexical units with reference to the sensory space of *health* in the text “The Ugly Swans” in English; b. distinguishing the components of the sensory space of *health* in English in this literary work.

### Findings and Discussion

Categorization implies horizontal and vertical aspects [14. P. 132; 15. P. 101–111]. The vertical aspect includes various levels of categorization [16. P. 573]. The category of health has its own complex semantic structure where the core and peripheries are distinguished. Categories have the system of connections between each other [17. P. 35–36]. The category of health is included into the more Abstract category *deviation* [18. P. 49]. Mental and physiological components that characterize the sensory space of *health* are revealed. The fields of both components are polycentric. The core of the mental component includes linguistic means that belong to neutral-bookish style. They actualize the meanings that help to refer to the sensory space of *genius* and *anger*. Lexical units of neutral-bookish style, meaning *trauma*, *acquired disease*, *inborn anomaly* and *medical terms denoting physiological pathologies* form the sensory space of the physiological component. The near periphery includes the lexical units of informal style, denoting *inborn anomaly*. The interpretative sensory spaces of *genius*, *trauma*, *inborn anomaly* within these components of *health* are also defined. Thus, the sensory space implies mental and physiological components. It also contains the title of this literary work.

The title of this novel is the hyperdicteme, which implies the sensory motives from various perspectives. The adjective “ugly” refers more to the moral-ethical component here but it also includes the visual accent in the collocation “ugly swans”. This title generalizes the meaning that the so called mutant intellectuals or “slimies” try to educate children to understand the reality in a new way. As a result, it is also given with the visual-tactile signal because these “ugly swans” dealt with slimies constantly. Moreover, it actualizes the meaning “infant prodigies” within this context and relates to the positive deviation in mind — *genius*, but, on the other hand, it highlights the absence of respect among children for previous generations. It presupposes moral-ethical aspects. The collocation *ugly swans* refers to the sensory space of *genius* within the mental component of *health*.

The whole work is focused on the revelation of sensory images within the large dictemes fulfilled with emotions. For instance, Victor, the main character of the

story, and his ex-wife, Lola, are stunned by the behavior of their daughter, Irma, who is among that children of genius. Irma is always calm, she doesn't express her emotions but her words are cruel but extremely logical ones. The following dicteme reflects the idea of that specific genius of the child. She is callous and behaves like a computer: ... *Children don't talk like that. It's not even rudeness, it's cruelty, no, not even cruelty — she simply doesn't care... She made her calculations, completed her analysis, and duly communicated the results* (US). The whole dicteme refers to the interpretative sensory space of *genius*.

Lola made great efforts not to show her anger about the behavior of her daughter: ***Her face had broken out in red spots. Her red lips trembled as if she were about to cry, but of course she had no intention of crying; she was furious*** (US). This dicteme and the previous one refer to the visual accent, defining the inner emotions and the borderline condition of Lola about the changed behavior of her daughter: an anger and a strain on the nerves. The parts of the dicteme *her face had broken out in red spots, her red lips trembled, she was furious* and the verb *cry* refer to the sensory space of *anger*.

Victor called Irma a very strange child, analyzing her possibilities of thinking and saying like an adult. The lexeme *strange* includes the visual and auditory signals due to this context and refers to the sensory space of *genius*. Lola concludes that intellectuals, who are living in this town, are closer to Irma than anyone: ... *any slimy is a hundred times more important to her than I am* (US). In the translation by Alice Stone Nakhimovsky and Alexander Nakhimovsky the intellectuals, who settled in this town, are called slimies. The lexeme *slimy* is closer to the meanings of “clammy” or “oozy”: “covered with or look like a slime”. Such an idea is not observed in the original text, where these characters are more related to “wet” or “soggy” ones (ГЛ). Thus, the intellectuals are depicted in the target text due to the own world-image of translators in English. Sensory accents also change. The visual-tactile image was enriched with the sense of slime in the translation. The lexeme *slimy* is in the borderline position, referring to the sensory space of *inborn anomaly* — “clammy” — and *genius* — “intellectual”.

Visual accent predominates in the narration but there is specific case of such image. Victor compares Irma with any girl of his childhood. He revises the visual image of the standard girl at the age of twelve, who is a light-hearted person with sweets and tooth cavities caused by that sweets: ... *bad teeth* (US). The collocation *bad teeth* actualizes its direct meaning and refers to the sensory space of *acquired disease*. Even slight injuries are associated with the childhood of the young lady in the eyes of Victor: ... *scraped knees* (US). The collocation *scraped knees* includes the visual image and refers to the sensory space of *trauma*. He supposes that his kid is of high intelligence: ... *I've got a prodigy on my hands* (US). The lexeme *prodigy* was included into the sensory space of *genius* as the bright example, synonym to the primary word — *genius*. Leaving Lola alone, Victor chose the alley, lit a bit. It was pouring: ... *Rain drummed on his shoulders and the hood of his raincoat* (US).

The visual image is supported by the auditory-tactile signals through the verb *drum* in this dicteme. It is related to the general atmosphere of sensory tension in this dicteme, where Victor collides with the slimies. It is peculiar to note that these strangers influence the weather greatly. Since their arrival, the town changes. It rains every day because slimies can't live without it at all. Victor meets them by coincidence, noticing a skirmish in the alley. He saw the victim of that fight. The visual signal is the main one here. Victor identifies the slimy at once because the stranger looked like the *patient*: *It was a patient from the leprosarium* (US). The lexeme *leprosarium* also refers to the visual image included into the sensory space of *medical terms denoting physiological pathologies*. The lexeme *four-eyes* is an insulting one and belongs to informal style, denoting *inborn anomaly* because that intellectuals were slimy mutants from their childhood: *a "slimy," or "four-eyes" as they were sometimes called* (US). The rest of the dicteme is considered as the interpretative sensory space of *inborn anomaly* with the visual accent with metaphorical reference to the appearance of the person, who was probably sick: *... because of the yellow circles that rimmed their eyes like eyeglasses* (US). This slimy suffered from a certain disease: *The lower half of his face was completely covered by a black bandage* (US). This part of the dicteme with the visual signal was also included into the interpretative sensory space *inborn anomaly*.

Some of the contextual environments within this novel consist of the dictemes, where the sensory shifting is observed. For instance: *He was breathing heavily and painfully; vestiges of eyebrows were raised in a look of suffering* (US). The auditory signal is expressed by the collocation "breathing heavily and painfully", which indicates grave condition of the slimy and refers to the sensory space of *inborn anomaly*. This auditory accent shifts to the visual image. We observe that the slimy almost lost his eyebrows: *vestiges of ...* The lexeme *vestige* also refers to the sensory space of *inborn anomaly*. The verb *look* intensifies this visual signal and actualizes the meaning "an anguish of body." Moreover, this unknown slimy lost his hairs: *Water streamed down his bald head* (US). The collocation *bald head* has its direct meaning, refers to the sensory space of *inborn anomaly* with visual accent.

The following dicteme characterizes the semantic structure of *health* in the light of *traumas*. Someone attacked Victor from behind: *... something hit him in the back of the head* (US). The translators introduce the lexeme *hit*, which actualizes the meaning "strike with a blow." The source text includes an visual-auditory signals (*with crunch*), whereas the translation has only a visual image (*hit*). The next part of the dicteme is represented by the visual accent: *When he came to, he found himself lying face up under a drain pipe* (US). The phrase *come to* actualizes the meaning "come to consciousness." The sensory tension is included into this dicteme in order to highlight an unexpected attack and the bad condition of Victor: *Water was gushing into his mouth; it was warm and tasted rusty* (US). The left part of this dicteme includes visual, tactile signals (*gush into*). The right part implies tactile (*warm*) and gustatory (*tasted rusty*) accents.

The sensory tension coincides with emotional one, when the character comes to his life. The visual-auditory accent is occurred: *Spluttering and coughing, he moved away...* (US). The auditory signals are used to demonstrate the acquired trauma of Victor's head: *Bells, horns, and drums reverberated in his head* (US). The accent of hearing is limited by the verb *reverberate* in the translation of Alice Stone Nakhimovsky and Alexander Nakhimovsky, whereas the source text includes such verbs as *зудели и звенели* (ГЛ) (about the bells: here and further the translation of A.S. Ptashkin: bells tolled and rang), *трубили* (about the horns: horns blew), *били* (about the drums: drums beat). Suffering from that sounds, Victor noticed a face in front of him: *Through the noise, Victor...* (US). In the inner hierarchy of the sensory space of *trauma* within the category of health the lexeme *noise* is considered as the basic auditory mean of expressing it. Then Victor tried to identify that face; it was a well-known face of a kid. He knew him before the assault: *Before my jaws got smashed together* (US). The visual-auditory accent occurs, identifying the injury Victor suffered. The dicteme actualizes the meaning “get a head injury as a result of a vigorous blow”, referring to the sensory space of *trauma*. The auditory accent predominates in the source text — *лязгнули челюсти* (ГЛ), which is closer to the meaning of the verb *clank*. The boy asked Victor about his condition: *I thought that you still hadn't regained consciousness* (US). The phraseological unit *regain consciousness* actualizes its direct meaning here; it also focuses on the idea that the kid didn't notice Victor being recovered from the blow. It can mean the absence of the sensory signal from the sight of the boy for a moment. The next dicteme presupposes the sensory shifting from the tactile signal (*felt the back of his head, a lump*) to the visual ones (*no shattered bones, not even any blood*) through the logical conclusions of the character: *... felt the back of his head. There was a lump — nothing terrible, no shattered bones, not even any blood* (US). This trauma theme is also obvious in the dialogue between Victor and the boy: *Who got me? he asked, thoughtfully. Not you, I hope* (US). The verb *get* in this context actualizes the meaning “hit” and implies the tactile-visual accent.

The boy, named Bol-Kunats, asks Victor about his ability to control his body after this *trauma*: *Will you be able to walk by yourself, Mr. Banev?* (US). The visual image, including the modal phrase *be able to* and the verb *walk*, characterizes the whole dicteme and defines the visual expectations of Bol-Kunats. He doubts that Banev can move.

Mr. Banev offers to take a breath after the attack: *... pull ourselves together* (US). The phraseological unit *pull together* is given with the meaning “get control of one's feelings”; it refers to the visual signal of the sensory space of *trauma*.

The next dicteme shows us that Bol-Kunats was also drubbed: *Bol-Kunats wasn't completely all right either. There was a fresh gash on his cheek, and his upper lip was swollen and bleeding* (US). The lexical units of this dicteme fully refer to the sensory space of *trauma*. The first part of the above-mentioned dicteme

belongs to the interpretative sensory space of the same semantic origin. All of them are supported by the visual images.

Bol-Kunats notices that something is wrong with the face of Banev: ... *I don't like the way your face is twitching* (US). The lexeme *twitch* is presented by the meaning “make an uncontrolled movement.” This verb includes the tactile signal, which was caught not by the injured person but by his companion; it also refers to the sensory space of *trauma*. Victor doesn't believe and starts touching his face: *It wasn't twitching* (US). Then Victor decides to rise; his body doesn't want to work properly: *He pulled in his feet, which did not quite seem to belong to him* (US). The visual accent in this dicteme supports the idea of the physiological weakness of Banev after trauma. The second part of this dicteme intensifies the impression that he is thick at that moment: *He couldn't manage to shift his center of gravity; something was holding him back* (US). It also includes the visual image. Victor confirms that the hit was quite strong: *How did they do it? he thought. A good job, really* (US). He tries to define his condition and manages to control his body: *Victor had already unraveled the mysteries of his arms, his legs, his raincoat, and the orchestra under his skull* (US). The phraseological unit *unravel the mystery* actualizes the meaning “recover” and refers to the sensory space of *trauma*. The metaphor *mysteries of his arms, his legs, his raincoat* mostly defines the physiological component, whereas the second part *the orchestra under his skull* characterizes the mental one. The next fragment of the dicteme concludes that Victor doesn't feel well, he needs time to recover to the full extend: *At first he had to support himself against the wall...* (US). The main sensory signal now is the visual one; it is under the support of the tactile image. The whole dicteme refers to the interpretative sensory space of *trauma*.

The dicteme with the direct speech of Banev reveals that he was dragged, being unconscious: *So you pulled me over here...* (US). The phrasal verb *pull over* includes the visual accent accompanied by the tactile image. This verb belongs to neutral-bookish style. As mentioned above, the boy also got injuries in this fight: *Bol-Kunats was carefully stroking his cut with a wet hand* (US). The tactile accent is included into the verb *stroke*, the adverb *carefully*, and the collocation *wet hand*. The visual image is also observed in the whole dicteme. The noun *cut* has its direct meaning “scratch” and can be included into the sensory space: *trauma*. The visual accent is also supported in this dialogue, denoting the loss of consciousness: *Was I here by myself?* (US). The primary verb *hit* is accompanied by the verb *get* with the meaning “suffer an injury” in the following dicteme: *I saw someone hit you... I was lying there because they got me even before they got you* (US). The verbs *see*, *hit*, *lie*, *get* refer to the visual signal in the sensory space of *trauma* of the category of health.

Thus, the sensory space possesses the complex semantic structure with the corresponding central and peripheral elements within the category of health in the



novel “The Ugly Swans” by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky translated by Alice Stone Nakhimovsky and Alexander Nakhimovsky in English. Visual and auditory signals dominate among sensory images within this narration.

### Conclusions

The sensory space of *health* is mostly characterized by the presence of linguistic means of neutral-bookish style, which form the core of this mental unit. The sensory space of mental health was considered as the combination of two elements: *genius, anger*; the sensory space of the physiological component was defined as the complex with: a. lexical units in neutral-bookish style, meaning *trauma, acquired disease, inborn anomaly*, and b. *medical terms denoting physiological pathologies*. The lexis of informal style is occurred in the direct speech between the characters. As mentioned above, such means form the near periphery within the sensory space of *inborn anomaly*. The interpretative sensory space was revealed within the context of this novel and defined both components in the category of health: *genius, trauma, inborn anomaly*. Most of dictemes, characterizing the interpretative sensory space of health, are represented by metaphors with the corresponding sensory signals.

The main sensory images in this narration are visual accents. The peculiarity of the text “Ugly Swans” is the presence of sensory tension and shifting, where tactile, auditory, gustatory signals are observed. The tactile image is combined with the visual accent and functions as the secondary nomination in most examples, for instance, the sensory tension: auditory-tactile signals. It is the central accent in the combination of tactile-gustatory images in the revealed context. Nevertheless, the sensory shifting from the tactile image to the visual one was detected (*felt the back of his head...*). One of the main sensory signals after the visual one is an auditory image. It can function as the secondary or the first accent, meaning the perceptual shifting. It is also combined with the tactile ones. Gustatory signals were only defined in the context with the tactile accents. The olfactory images were not revealed.

Defining the differences between the source and target texts in reflecting the sensory signals was not the main task of this work but it highlighted the peculiarities of the linguistic worldview of translators.

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#### Information about the author:

**Aleksandr S. Ptashkin**, PhD in Philology, Associate Professor, Associate Professor of the Department of Foreign Languages School of Social Sciences, National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University (30, Lenin Ave., Tomsk, Russian Federation, 634050); *Research interests*: cognitive studies, pragmatics and semantics; *e-mail*: [cognitionscience@tpu.ru](mailto:cognitionscience@tpu.ru)  
ORCID: 0000-0002-5668-2384, ResearchID: I-6904-2015; Scopus Author ID: 55938985600, SPIN- code: 7764–5243, AuthorID: 514594.

#### Сведения об авторе:

**Пташкин Александр Сергеевич**, кандидат филологических наук, доцент, доцент отделения иностранных языков (ОИЯ) Школы общественных наук, Национальный исследовательский Томский политехнический университет (634050, Российская Федерация, г. Томск, Проспект Ленина, д. 30); *научные интересы*: когнитивные исследования, семантика и прагматика; *e-mail*: [cognitionscience@tpu.ru](mailto:cognitionscience@tpu.ru)  
ORCID: 0000-0002-5668-2384, ResearchID: I-6904-2015; Scopus Author ID: 55938985600, SPIN-код: 7764-5243, AuthorID: 514594.