Ludic Linguistic Challenges in the Transtextual Dimensions of David Lodge's *Deaf Sentence*

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Abstract

The article highlights the issue of structural heterogeneity and linguistic creativity in David Lodge's *Deaf Sentence*. The novel features the life of a retired professor of linguistics who struggles with the hearing loss and problematizes diverse transtextual dimensions and experiments with narrative patterns. The purpose of this article is to explore the correlation between the diverse textual dimensions and the ludic linguistic challenges in Lodge's *Deaf Sentence*. The study foregrounds ludic linguistic challenges – stylistic manifestations of ludic concept of postmodernist fiction that facilitate a playful interaction in the triad "author-text-reader". The study shows how a postmodernist text undermines the conventions of genre, networks intertextual inclusions, exploits metanarrative, forges new modes of literary communication that enhance multitude of interpretations. Self-reflective literary text of the novel also celebrates its pluralistic, yet cohesive status, embracing its intertextual, metatextual, paratextual, architextual dimensions. As the narrative about the academia unfolds, the reader encounters numerous playful linguistic means, such as puns, allusions and quotations that engage him into generating multiple perspectives of the fiction text.

Keywords: transtextuality, paratextuality, architextuality, metatextuality, David Lodge, Deaf Sentence

Introduction

There has been a dramatic shift in Anglophone literary studies towards viewing a fictional text as a construct of diverse transtextual interrelations. From this perspective, such a text, representing a succession of events narrated in verbal medium, is no longer a product of textual vacuum, but the intertextual canvas that nourishes a playful ground for generating various meanings and textual interactions between a writer and a reader, where "the reader has as much power as the writer" (Hoey, 2013). Thus, complex structural frame of textual dimensions of modern fiction enhances linguistic creativity and ludic stylistic challenges.

Studying the internal development of a text and the relationship with other intertexts lies at the core of modern text linguistics. The methodological approach taken in this study is a mixed methodology based on theories of postmodernist narrative discourse, text linguistics and discourse stylistics. Discourse stylistics seeks to analyze the ideologies underlying fictional texts. It is based on the theory of language which is socially, functionally and pragmatically oriented. The reading process is an inferential process of meaning construction. The reader constructs the meaning of the text (the author's, the narrator's, the characters' ideologies) relying on his/her ideological assumptions. It is argued that "since readers often use different assumptions in their inferential processing of one and the same text, there is a possibility of divergence in interpretation" (Weber, 1992, p. 13). The present research employs descriptive qualitative method of analyzing ludic linguistic challenges in the transtextual dimensions that involves interpretative approach to the subject matter of the study. Retaining the postmodernist framework with stance of discourse stylistics enables us to analyze a fictional narrative text from two perspectives: structural heteregeinity and ludic stylistic ambience being unfolded from it.

Theoretical background: Transtextuality of postmodentist fiction

The poststructuralist theory altered the concept of writing aesthetics and text interpretation. Text is now considered a product of language that has already been used in other texts and contexts (Taylor & Winquist, 2003).

The last century witnessed loads of research on postmodernist fiction and intertextual relationships. These studies include works by Robert de Beaugrande, Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva, Roland Barthes, Douwe Fokkema, Linda Hutcheon, Ihab Hassan, Gérard Genette, Mikhail Bakhtin. The concept of text and textuality emerged due to the epistemological shift. A text is now viewed as a literary communication. The author uses a variety of intertextual relations, giving rise to numerous interpretations of the text. The artistic work acquires coherence when all its elements interact. Fiction texts of postmodern era deploy various writing modes including intertextuality, collage, and pastiche. This creates a dialogue and interaction between the reader, the author and the text.

Poststructualist theory cultivated a multitude of alternative text interpretations. Jacques Derrida's (1979) definition of text that it is "no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a different network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces" (pp. 81-82) is considered fundamental in the area of modern text linguistics.

The introduction of the semiotic idea of intertextuality is attributed to Julia Kristeva, who stressed upon the dynamics of interrelations within a text. She (1986) introduced the term intertextuality (a poststructuralist construct), referring to any relation between different texts and defined a text as "a mosaic of quotations where every text is the absorption and transformation of another text" (p. 37). Thus, the creating of meanings is shaped by other voices, texts, and understandings (Kristeva, 1986).

Roland Barthes (1977), rebelling against structuralist reading of a text, gives a powerful role to a reader to play – "the reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination" (p. 148). The reader is free to interpret the text from any perspective and generate multiple meanings. The meaning of the text lies in the play between the text and the reader. Roland Barthes perceives text as "a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" (p. 148). Text is experienced as an activity, or in production and is open to an infinitude of play (Taylor & Winquist, 2003, p. 394).

Studying the nature of narrative discourse and semiotics, Gérard Genette (1997), a representative of structuralism, broadened Kristeva's theory and introduced a coherent theory of transtextuality or textual transcendence that we draw upon in our research. Transtextuality is "all that sets the text in relationship, whether obvious or concealed with other texts" (p. 1). Genette distinguished 5 types of transtextual relations:

Intertextuality is "a relationship of co-presence between two texts or among several texts" and as "the actual presence of one text within another" (Genette, 1997, p. 1-2). Intertextuality in Genette's concept is repserented by quotation, plagiarism, and allusion and provides pragmatic approach to study relationship between specific elements within fictional texts. Paratextuality is the interrelations that bind a text: the relation between the text and its title, subtitle, notes, references, preface, motto, forewords (Genette, 1997, p. 3). Metatextuality involves explicit or implicit references to the text. According to Genette "it unites a given text to another, of which it speaks without necessarily citing it (without summoning it), in fact sometimes even without naming it" (Genette, 1997, p. 4). Architextuality refers to the fact that texts belong to certain literary genres and denotes the text's relation to grammar pattern. Here Genette states the importance of "the reader's expectations, and thus their reception of the work" (Genette, 1997, p. 5). Hypertextuality is defined as "any relationship uniting a text B (hypertext) to an earlier text A (hypotext), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary" (Genette, 1997, p. 5). Hypertextuality represents the text's transformation or modification of the hypotest it is based on. Hypertextuality includes parody, spoof or sequel.

Together these studies provide important insights into the nature of a modern fictional text and its various transtextual relations. The concept of transtextuality denied the perception of text as a homogeneous structure; on the contrary, it celebrates the interpretation of the text as a heterogeneous essence. Furthermore, the transtextual model is coterminous with the postmodernist vision of a text as ludic. Amalgamating other texts in a juxtapositional or intertextual relation, modern fiction writing exploits elaborate transtextual frame to add some new narrative twists, and playful interactions.

Language play and ludic nature of contemporary fiction

Play and ludic aspect of human activity have been subjects of anthropological, philosophical, literary and linguistic enquiries. Cultural and literary studies play can be traced back to the works of Johan Huizinga, Roger Caillois, Bernard Suits and James Hans.

Johann Huizinga (1949) in his ground-breaking work *Homo Ludens* introduced the theory of the playful genesis of culture – play is preceded the culture, the play creates a culture. Play in Huizinga's anthropological study is a cultural phenomenon, a social impulse. He defines humans as playful beings. Huizinga believed that play is deeply embedded in every human activity, that is why he stressed that play is "a distinct and highly important factor in the world's life and doings" (foreword).

Later on Ludwig Wittgenstein (as cited in Ryall, Russel & MacLean, 2013) coined the term "language game", viewing the language as a rule-structured system. But language game does not require strict or definite rules – "one can also imagine someone's having learnt the game without ever leaning or formulating rules" (p. 56). Wittgenstein (as cited in Ellenbogen, 2012) argues that it is a part of human activity – "the term 'language game' is meant to bring into prominence that the speaking of language is an important activity or a form of life" (p. 117).

Deconstruction as the critical theory made the biggest contribution to understanding of language play and textual play. Play is defined as "the principle of energy and difference which unsettles

arrangements, promotes change and resists closure" (Edwards, 2013, p. 13). For Derrida (as cited in Taylor & Winquist, 2003) play signals the "destruction of ontotheology and the metaphysics of presence" (p. 200).

A broader perspective has been adopted by Roland Barthes, whose essay "From Work to Text" (as cited in in Simpkins, 2001) is quintessential in the poststructuralist textual theory of play. "Text itself plays", and what the reader does, is he/she "plays twice over, playing the Text as one plays a game" (p. 181). Readers gain the role of active shapers of meanings in texts (Edwards, 2013).

In the same vein, Charles Bernstein (2001) gave the reader the unique responsibility of meaning creation. The text encourages the reader to be actively involved in the process of constituting its meaning. Thus, the reader becomes a neutral observer neither to a described exteriority nor to an enacted interiority. The text involves the process of response/interpretation and in this way makes the reader aware of herself or himself as producer as well as consumer of meaning. "It calls the reader to action, questioning, self-examination: to reconsideration and remaking of the habits, automatisms, conventions, beliefs through which, and only through which, we see and interpret the world" (p. 233).

This view is also supported by Robert Detweiler (1976), who, by working extensively on the intersection of religion, literature and culture, emphasized the reading strategies for analyzing play within a text. He (as cited in Ensslin, 2014) suggests 3 different types of literary phenomena where play and literature intersect: 1) playful fiction, which is characterized by "exuberance and exaggeration, that appears spontaneous and casually composed, and that does not portray a particular game, or play a game with the reader"; 2) fiction that features games of various types, mostly to provide an allusion to or allegory of the main plot, character(s), imagery; 3) authors play with readers through puzzles or jokes (pp. 29-30).

Similarly, Wolfgang Iser, one of the famous advocates of Reception Theory in contemporary literary field, points out three different levels of the playground between the author and the reader: structural, functional, and interpretive. A structural description maps out the playground, functional – explains the goal, and the interpretative asks why we play and why we need to play. The interpretative level is vital here as since is built into our anthropological essence (Budick & Iser, 1989, p. 329).

Overall, these studies highlight the need for scrutinizing the correlation of expressive potential of ludic stylistic challenges of a fictional narrative text with its transtextual dimension.

Textual, Metatextual and Paratextual Elements from David Lodge's Perspective

David Lodge is an English novelist and literary critic. He is famous for his ironic campus novels about academia. His novel *Deaf Sentence* (2008) features the live of Desmond Bates, a retired professor of linguistics who suffers from hearing loss and all kinds of embarrassment and confusion it causes in his professional and private life. It also draws upon Lodge's own experience of hearing problems. Loaded with comic and witty potential, Lodge's particular constructions of the novels are aimed at satisfying the readers' textual pleasure and it makes him a key figure in British university fiction (Shaffer, 2011, p. 56).

The paratextual dimension of the novel *Deaf Sentence* consists of the author's name, title, dedications and dictionary notes. Among the various components of the paratext, the title takes the main place. The title is a formal minimal structure that provides hints for further reading.

The title appeals to the reader's previous experience and background knowledge. The name of the work performs a prognostic function, the recipient can predict, imagine how the plot can unwind throughout the novel. The reader usually has certain narrative forecasts. However, when the events in the text do not meet the reader's expectations, he might experience such aesthetic reactions as surprise, uncertainty, disappointment, frustration.

The title of the Lodge's novel exploits the polysemantics of a lexeme "sentence". The split signifier that is both denotative and figurative invokes something that is not pre-given for text, but is created by the text (Budick & Iser, 1989, p. 330) and is comprehensible for the reader as the narrative unfolds. The play of words in the title encourages the reader to be involved in the interaction throughout the novel. The word "sentence" is polysemantic. As indicated in the note of the novel, it may have the following meanings:

> 1. Way of thinking, opinion, mind ...
> 2b. The declaration in a criminal court of the punishment imposed on a   person pleading guilty of a found guilty ...
> 5. A pithy or memorable saying, a maxim or aphorism ...
> 7 ... A piece of writing or speech between two full stops or equivalent pauses
> (Lodge 2008, p. 13).

The paratextual element leads the recipient to a certain perception of the literary work with its multiple interpretations. The title of the novel presents an abstract concept – deafness as a sentence. The title conveys a hidden connection with the content of the text. The author refers to the reader as an interlocutor. So the title explicitly transmits the purpose of the message, establishes contact with the reader, attracts his attention, makes him predict the plot.

Another paratextual element is dedication. The dedication of the novel is addressed to translators who have spent a lot of effort and patience while translating the works of Lodge: "Conscious that this novel, from its English title onwards, presents special problems for translators" (Lodge, 2008, p. 12).

The author expresses gratitude and respect for the troublesome work of translators, especially the writer owes to those people who have already become his friends.

The paratextual dimension of *Deaf Sentence* also includes the subtitles. Interestingly, Chapter 16 is entitled "Deaf in the Afternoon", that is allusion to E. Hemingway's work *Death in the Afternoon*. This non-fiction book tells about bullfighting. In this way the paratext builds up extra intertextual associations with the source work. We can assert that the title, subtitles, dedication and epigraph build up the single coherent semantic, stylistic, associative complex of the novel.

Architextual dimension in the novel *Deaf Sentence* is enhanced by the principles of postmodern aesthetics – blurring the boarders of traditional genres, genre overlapping, neo-genres creation. The biggest capacity of the novel as a genre within literary discourse is to resist the singularity and exploit plurality. M. Bakhtin (1981) argued that "the novel as a whole is a phenomenon multiform in style and variform in speech and voice" (p. 261).

Genre can function as an intertextual device and is a matrix within which we interpret the text in the first instance. Genre is schemata that affects our initial interpretation of a text, influences what we look for and what we expect to find" (Black, 2005, p. 38). The choice of genre implies knowledge of a particular communicative code that is shared by the participants in the situation: in this case, author and readers (Black, 2005, p. 49).

In the talk between two professors we even come across an explicit genre reference:

> It wouldn't surprise me if we both turn up lightly disguised in a campus novel one of these days (Lodge, 2008, p. 204).

> The author playfully reveals genre diversity of his novel, stating in the post-text note that it has features of autobiography and fiction.

> The narrator's deafness and his Dad have their sources in my own experience, but the other characters in this novel are fictional creations, as is the nameless northern city where most of the story is set, and its university (Lodge, 2008, p. 208).

Architextual dimension of the novel *Deaf Sentence* incorporates diary entries. Diary is an artistic and literary way of reflecting reality; its main feature is the principle of chronological and periodic reproduction of events. Using a regular, frequent, daily account of what is happening, striving for the certainty and completeness of the story, the author exploits various playful techniques. The diary narrative is not quite traditional. Here the author combines first and third person narration. The recipient, by reading the first-person work, can see the inside of the character, sympathize with him, and better understand him. Switching from the intimacy of the traditional diary narration to a third person frame adds more objective reliability. Third person narration helps to evaluate the situation from a different perception. He-narration creates the effect of contemplating the situation from the side. We only see the outside picture, a description of the character's actions. All emotions, thoughts, experiences of the hero remain a mystery to us:

> 30th November. I had my first lip-reading class today. The experience evoked dim memories of my first day at primary school, which I joined halfway through the school year because of illness: there was the same sense of being a new boy, uncertain and self-conscious, in a group that was already bonded and familiar with the routine. As Bethany Brooks had intimated in advance, most of the participants, about fifteen of them in all, have been coming regularly for years. They are mostly women, middle-aged or elderly (Lodge, 2008, p. 104).

> It was the weight as much as the temperature of the mass of water that shocked him first, as if a small glacier had shattered on his head, blinding his vision and making him stagger; then the cold enveloped him as if he had fallen through a hole in the Arctic ice, and he sucked it into his lungs and held it there, unable to expel it in the form of a cry for (it seemed) minutes; then, as the ability to breathe returned, he gasped, he yelled, he blasphemed, he hopped from one foot to another, he grabbed his towel and tried in vain to swaddle himself in its folds. Someone drew back the curtain inside the room, light flooded out across the deck, and Jakki's grinning face appeared behind the glass. He begged her to open the door and, barely preserving his modesty with the towel, stumbled over the lintel into the living room (Lodge, 2008, p.163).

Considering that metafiction is defined by Patricia Waugh (1984) as "a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to question the relationship between fiction and reality" (p. 2) as Lodge (1992) himself practiced in the novel and supports his own idea that metafiction is "fiction about fiction: novels and stories that all attention to their functional status and their own compositional procedures" (p. 206). The novel also represents metafiction in that it "flatters the reader by treating him or her as an intellectual equal, sophisticated enough not to be thrown by the admission that a work of fiction is a verbal construction rather than a slice of life" (p. 207). Self-reflective fiction about fiction-making is called metafiction or narcissistic narrative according to Hutcheon. Metafiction is fiction that includes within itself a commentary on its own narrative and/or linguistic identity.

Hutcheon (2013) points out that "what narcissistic narrative does in flaunting, in baring its fictional and linguistic systems to the reader's view is to transform the process of making, of poiesis, into part of the shared pleasure of reading" (introduction). Sometimes the author under the narrator's mask is not aware how to appoint his narrative. The remarkable examples are as follow:

> That's seems to be turning into some kind of journal, or notes for an autobiography, or perhaps some occupational therapy (Lodge, 2008, p. 37).

> Maybe that why I started writing this journal; maybe that's why it is a testament. The Rectory Road Testament (Lodge, 2008, p.113).

> I haven't had time to keep up this journal for the past week (Lodge, 2008, p. 181).

As we can see, the author mostly uses the term *journal* meaning a diary, where he can record the most significant events that take place in his life, express his thoughts and anxieties on paper. *Notes for an autobiography*, as a piece of writing in the form of memoirs, is also quite comprehensive and clearly reflects the nature and purpose of the diary. *Group therapy* is somewhat personal by nature, the author conveys that the diary is directly related to his former work, because he creates, thinks, works on something important and does not allow himself to be disturbed, brings relief, even treats the obsessive thoughts. While identifying the narrative as the *testament*, the narrator gives it the meaning of a sacred book, something unique, one-of-a-kind. Hence, in the novel *Deaf Sentence* embedded literary forms undergo a creative reevaluation. In this regard, the novel cannot be attributed to any particular genre, because it presents genre overlapping. The heterogeneous genre layers are one of the characteristics of the playful essence of postmodernist poetics that promotes various transtextual interrelations.

Moreover, Lodge employs certain paratextual elements. Paratextuality is the so-called "preparation" before reading a novel; it draws attention to important elements of the text, helps to cover it holistically. Para and architexts are key elements of the author's literary communication strategy. In order to engage the reader, Lodge resorts to a variety of playful interactive techniques, among which a particular prominence is given to metatextuality. This is very well observed his academic references. *Deaf Sentence* is considered an academic or campus novel with satirical and comic features. As it tells the story of a professor of linguistics, there are plenty of theoretical linguistic reflections. In his attempt to comprehend the pragmatic potential of suicide notes that his PhD student researches, Professor Bates indulges into metanarrative.

> What kind of a speech act is a suicide note? It depends of course on what classification system you're using. In the classic Austin scheme there are three possible types of speech act entailed in any utterance, spoken or written: the locutionary (which is to say what you say, the propositional meaning), the illocutionary (which is the effect the utterance is intended to have on others) and the perlocutionary (which is the effect it actually has). But there are lots of further distinctions and subcategories, and alternative typologies like Searle's commissive, declarative, directive, expressive and representative, indirect speech acts and on. Most utterances have both locutionary meaning and illocutionary force. The hazy area is the line between the illocutionary and the perlocutionary. Is the perlocutionary properly speaking a linguistic act at all? Austin gives the example of a man who says 'Shoot her!' (a rather odd example to invent, when you think about it, a symptom of male chauvinism and misogyny among Oxford dons perhaps). Locution: He said to me 'Shoot her' meaning by 'shoot' shoot and by 'her' her. Illocution: he urged (or advised, ordered, etc.) me to shoot her. Perlocution: he persuaded me to shoot her. The interesting level is the illocutionary: even in this example you can see how the same words can have quite different illocutionary force in different contexts (Lodge, 2008, p. 76).

Exploiting the diary form, the author sometimes mockingly comments on the writing process. The following passage functions as a metanarrative. The author seems to step off his fiction to add his own voice.

> 28th November. I went to London yesterday to see Dad. Those last three words are re-dundant. Why else do I go to London now? Gone are the days when I would travel down on business, expenses paid, to attend a committee meeting or examine a PhD, or to meet a publisher, paying my own fare but getting a bibulous free lunch, with time to spare afterwards to catch a film, see an exhibition, or browse in the Charing Cross Road bookshops before taking the train back home (Lodge, 2008, p. 100).

We first encounter the main character when he is in the art gallery. Even an ordinary person finds it difficult to communicate in such circumstances, full of noise, not to mention a person with hearing problems. Such a person is not able to distinguish between individual words and capture their meaning, everything turns into a solid echo of muttering and communication in such circumstances becomes a challenge for the deaf. In this episode the narrator mentions the Lombard reflex.

> The reason for his stance is that the room is full of noise, a conversational hubbub which bounces off the hard surfaces of the ceiling, walls and floor, and swirls around the heads of the guests, causing them to shout even louder to make themselves heard. This is known to linguists as the Lombard Reflex, named after Etienne Lombard, who established early in the twentieth century that speakers increase their vocal effort in the presence of noise in the environment in order to resist degradation of the intelligibility of their messages (Lodge, 2008, p.14).

It means that a person raises his voice in a similar situation to make the utterances sound clearer. As a result, people themselves generate noise by raising their voice. Parodying the Lombard reflex, the professor creates the Desmond Bates reflex.

> There must be a kink in my neural pathways which makes me unconsciously switch them on again after consciously switching them off, a reflex motion of the thumb which slides the battery covers into the 'On' position even as I place them in their little nests of syn-thetic foam to sleep. The Bates Reflex, named after Desmond Bates, who established early in the twenty-first century that users develop an unconscious hostility towards their hearing aids which causes them to 'punish' these devices by carelessly allowing the batteries to run down (Lodge, 2008, p. 18).

The hero blames himself for forgetting to turn off his hearing aid before going to bed, and because of that the batteries quickly die. According to the so-called Bates reflex, people suffering from deafness have an unconscious hostility to hearing aids and they punish "their assistants" by allowing batteries to fail.

Thus, Lodge's *Deaf Sentence* undermines embedded genre conventions and validates transtextual frame that comprises intertextual, metatextual, paratextual and achitextual dimensions. This results in the abundance of linguistic challenges and stylistic manoeuvres that establish the playful literary communication with the reader.

Ludic stylistic challenges in David Lodge's *Deaf Sentence*

New forms of literary communication have given rise to new stylistic experiments in the novel and forging a new fictional language. The modern British novel has become more variegated, self-conscious and linguistically playful (Shaffer, 2011, p. 92). David Crystal (1998) argues in

Language Play that linguistic creativity if a form of ludic play and a source of human enjoyment: "We play with language when we manipulate it as a source of enjoyment either for ourselves or for the benefit of others. I mean "manipulate" literally: we take some linguistic feature – such as a word, a phrase, a sentence, a part of a word, a group of sounds, a series of letters – and make it do things it does not normally do. We are, in effect, bending and breaking the rules of language. And if someone were to ask why we do it, the answer is simply: for fun" (p. 1).

Phonetic level

Throughout the novel *Deaf Sentence*, we encounter puns-homophones, which reflect the main character's hearing problems. Phonetic wordplay is created to achieve comic effect. Due to health problems, Desmond Bates is often misunderstood in everyday life.

> She came closer and said, 'Saucepan. Long-stick saucepan. "What's a long-stick saucepan?" I said. You mean a long-handled saucepan? 'She raised her eyes to the heavens in despair, and went back to the stove. I thought about it for a minute or two, and then the penny dropped. 'Oh, you mean non-stick saucepan (Lodge, 2008, p.63).

The author applies playful techniques not only to single lexemes, but also to the whole dialogue. At the party, arranged by his wife, Professor Bates has to communicate with the guests and bumps into the wife of the former head of the History Department. The following example is full of communicative pratfalls as refined conversations of academia eventually turn into a mocking nonsense.

> "The pastime of the dance went to pot," Sylvia Cooper seemed to say, "so we spent most of the time in our shit, the cows' in-laws finding they stuttered."
> "What?" I said.
> "I said, the last time we went to France it was so hot we spent most of the time in our gîte, cowering indoors behind the shutters."
> "Oh, hot, was it?" I said. "That must have been the summer of 2003."
> "Yes, we seared our asses on bits of plate, but soiled my cubism, I'm afraid."
> "I'm sorry?"
> 'We were near Carcasonne. A pretty place, but spoiled by tourism, I'm afraid. "
> Ah, yes, it's the same everywhere these days, "I said sagely.
> 'But I do mend sherry. Crap and Sargasso pained there, you know. There's a lovely little mum of modern tart."
> "Sherry?" I said hesitantly.
> "Céret, it's a little town in the foothills of the Pyrenees," said Mrs. Cooper with a certain impatience. 'Braque and Picasso painted there. I recommend it. "
> "Oh yes, I've been there," I said hastily. "It has a rather nice art gallery."
> "The mum of modern tart."
> "Quite so," I said. I looked at my glass. 'I seem to need a refill. Can I get you one? '(Lodge, 2008, p.83).

As we can see, the professor's guesses are meaningless and illogical. The humor arises from the inconsistency of Bates' interpretation and Sylvia's statements. The professor, without knowing what his interlocutor is talking about, can only reproduce what he hears, which creates playful homophones and puns.

In this next example, there is also a play of words based on homophones, which creates a comic effect and represents common for Desmond Bates miscommunications.

> So what did Father Christmas bring you, Dauphin Daniel?" I asked him, crouching down to bring myself to his level. "Father Christmas bringed Daniel an icicle," he said. "An   icicle? That doesn't sound like much of a present," I said. "A tricycle, Desmond," Marcia said, and everybody around us laughed (Lodge, 2008, p. 131).

Onomatopoeia, "the lexical process of creating words which actually sound like their referent", (Wales, 2001, p. 277) is another stylistic device, and a convenient tool, as by its nature it is highly descriptive, creative, and suitable for sensory communication even though it represents the deaf person's hardships of intercourse.

> Fred: Murr murr murr.
> Me: What?
> Fred: Murr murr murr.
> Me: (playing for time) Uh huh.
> Fred: Murr murr murr.
> Me: (making a guess at the content of the message) All right.
> Fred: (surprised) What?
> Me: What did you say?
> Fred: Why did you say 'All right' if you didn't hear what I said?
> Me: Let me get my hearing aid.
> Fred: No, don't bother. It's not important (Lodge, 2008, p. 17).

It is quite a challenge for Professor Bates to communicate with others, especially if he is without his hearing aid. While talking to his wife, he cannot hear a single word and all he grasp merges into this "Murr murr murr" sound. In this example onomatopoeia comes as a stylistically expressive means of displaying harsh reality of a physically challenged person.

Lexical stylistic means

The novel also features stylistic intertextual encounters. A stylistic means that represents intertextual connections in the novel is allusion. Allusion is a hint of well-known cultural, historical, artistic events, images or characters. Allusions reflect the socio-cultural worldview of the author and serve as a means of creating a specific allusive play.

Professor Bates' name itself alludes to a character with hearing problems in Jane Austen's "Emma".

> My mother's deafness is very trifling you see - just nothing at all. By only raising my voice and saying anything two or three times over, she is sure to hear; but then she is used to my voice, 'says Miss Bates in Emma. How subtly Jane Austen hints at the politely disguised frustration and irritation of the company at having to bear the repetition of every banal remark in louder and louder tones for the benefit of old Mrs. Bates. I must be in a worse state than my fictional name-sake, because I'm used to Fred's voice, but I still can't hear what she's saying without a hearing aid (Lodge, 2008, p. 64).

Metatextual comment on the invention of a fictional name enhances ironic mode of the narrative and its playful disposition.

The reader comes across mythological allusions. It is known that Tiresias is a Theban magician who got blind because he revealed the will of gods to people. In ancient Greece, the Sibyls were oracles, wandering prophets who were famous for their fortunetelling. Going into allusive play, the author encourages the reader to think, urging to invent another version of the myth: not

blind prophets, but deaf, which, of course, would be completely absurd, since it would not be possible to predict somebody's fate.

> Well, only a sadist would deliberately trip up a blind person, but even Fred lets out the occasional 'Bloody hell!' when she can't get through to me. Prophets and seers are sometimes blind – Tiresias for instance – but never deaf. Imagine putting your question to the Sybil and getting an irritable 'What? What?' in reply (Lodge, 2008, p. 21).

The narrator, thinking a lot about his deafness, mentions famous people who encountered this problem. Francisco Jose de Goya was a Spanish painter and engraver who had also suffered from hearing loss.

> Is there anything to be said in favor of deafness? Any saving grace? Any enhancement of the other senses? I don't think so - not in my case anyway. Maybe in Goya. I read a book about Goya which said it was his deafness that made him into a major artist (Lodge, 2008, p.64).

The following example alludes to the poem by the English poet Percy Shelley – "Ode to a Skylark". The allusion functions as a tool for enhancing the meaning of the text due to the associations with the source work.

> Philip Larkin first discovered he was going deaf when he was walking in the Shetlands with Monica Jones and she remarked how beautiful the larks sounded singing overhead, and he stopped and listened but he couldn't hear them. Rather poignant, a poet finding out he's deaf in that way, especially when you think of Shelley's "Ode to a Skylark", "*Hail to thee, blithe Spirit*!" one of the poems everybody learns by heart at school, or did before educational theory turned against memorising verse (Lodge, 2008, p. 20).

Ludwig van Beethoven's fate is close to that of Professor Bates. The narrator writes that he is extremely interested in the lives of famous deaf people. In particular, Beethoven's story intrigued the professor because he became deaf at the age of twenty-eight and, despite this, was able to become a great composer. The professor is surprised by the fact that a person deprived of the opportunity to hear the magical sounds of nature, to create such a masterpiece – Symphony No. 6 or "Pastoral Symphony". The peculiarity of this symphony is that it presents a world of nature full of dynamic harmony. Reflecting on the amazing talent of the composer, the narrator asks the imaginary interlocutor "I suppose he heard something – but what?" Rhetoric questions are used to attract the reader's attention, to establish contact with him/her, create the illusion of dialogue. In this case, the intertextual inclusions are efficient for the character portraying, and present artistic merits of the narrative.

> They also evoke the Pastoral Symphony, which Beethoven composed six years later, a supreme musical evocation of sounds that he himself hadn't heard for more than a decade. Nor could he hear the music itself when it was performed. I suppose he heard something - but what? (Lodge, 2008, p.65).

A postmodernist text, *Deaf Sentence* in particular, is arranged as network of quotations. A quotation is a stylistic technique that best presents postmodern hyper-receptiveness. This is a literal reproduction of an extract of any text, with an optional reference to the source. Functioning in two contexts at the same time, the quotation introduces some meaningful and associative content from the source text to the target text. Lodge surrenders his narrative to a canvas of quotations to furnish the information about the main character's struggles.

> Often only the context allows me to distinguish between deaf 'and death' or dead ', and sometimes the words seem interchangeable. Deafness is a kind of pre-death, a drawn-out introduction to the long silence into which we will all eventually lapse. 'To every man upon this earth, / Deaf cometh soon or late, 'Macaulay might have written. But not Dylan Thomas, 'After the first deaf, there is no other (Lodge, 2008, p.24).

The narrator cites lines from a poem from the collection of "Songs of Ancient Rome" by British poet Thomas Macaulay and Welsh writer Dylan Thomas. He seeks out the like-minded writers in the world of literature to share his thoughts about the illness. The professor reflects on his hopelessness. He practically draws a parallel between the words "deaf" "death" and "dead". The narrator then points to the synonymy of these concepts, and finds it absurd to compare them. In the example given, in order to convey all the fatality of deafness, the narrator uses the extended metaphor "Deafness is a kind of pre-death", a drawn-out introduction to the long silence into which we will all eventually lapse." For him deafness is just another stage before death, the inevitable silence that awaits us sooner or later.

Another vivid example of a quotation comes from Tony Harrison's poem:

> I felt a wave of sadness flood through me, at the fragility of our grip on life, the ease with which the marks we leave on the surface of the earth are erased. Tony Harrison said it all, in a few lines:

> The ambulance, the hearse, the auctioneers

> clear all the life of that loved house away.

> The hard-earned treasures of some 50 years

> sized up as, and shifted in a day (Lodge, 2008, p.205).

After his father's death, the main character decided to sell the house. It was full of unnecessary things, and the building itself was quite old. However, when he had a last look at it, the narration got deeply upset, experienced "a wave of sadness" because that was the house where he was born and raised. Tony Harrison was able to describe this state in several lines. Using the opposition of "treasures – junk", "50 years – a day", the author emphasizes on the transiency of life and how everything can change dramatically at one moment.

The lyrics of "Down Among the Dead Men" song, published in 1728, served as another quotation in the novel:

There are lots of others, stages of auricular decay, like a long staircase leading down into the grave.

> Down among the deaf men, down among the deaf men,
> Down, down, down, down;
> Down among the deaf men let him lie (Lodge, 2008, p. 25)!

> The narrator compares the aging with the stairs that lead to the grave. The repetition of "down" emphasizes this inevitable process.

> In his attempt to understand his condition and get adapted, Desmond seeks an explanation in the Bible: "'Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind,' says the Bible (Leviticus, 19.14)" (Lodge, 2008, p. 21).

Quotation does not only include "a single (isotopic), but two or more (poly-isotopic) levels of meaning that need to be interrelated by the recipient. This interrelationship extends well beyond the quoted element and covers its primary and secondary contexts as well". Knowledge of the

quoted text (primary context) and perception of deformation in other text (secondary context) are prerequisites for the reader to perceive the quotation as a borrowed element (Muller, 1996, c. 49).

Displaying intertextual encounters (quotation, allusion), various means of phonetic and lexical stylistic playfulness, the novel reflects metalinguistically on its transtextual exposure. By the undermining the validity of conventional narrative, the novel *Deaf Sentence* is heavily reliant upon exploiting ludic stylistic challenges that serve as an embodiment of experiments with diverse transtextual dimensions.

Conclusion

This paper has made an attempt to delve into the various linguistic challenges of phonetic and lexico-grammatical levels within the transtextual structure that is a distinguishing attribute of Lodge's *Deaf Sentence*. Textuality is innate of the modern fiction writing. It is a complex concept that covers multiple contexts within the literary discourse. It is a form of text production that enhances ludic linguistic challenges of various language levels. Navigating through diverse textual dimensions of the novel *Deaf Sentence*, reading of the text changes from a passive synthesis to co-writing process and generating new meanings. The author, the text and the reader are engaged in the relationship of decoding multitude of meanings conveyed by the text. Depiction of academic life of a distinguished linguist and his fellows, his private affairs as well as health issues with all the drama going on behind the scenes becomes a breeding ground for linguistic creativity and stylistic tricks. The abundance of phonetic puns, allusions and quotations is aimed at establishing ludic relationships with that reader. These stylistic effects promote playful interaction and are heavily dependent on the reader's background knowledge and intention to interact with both, the author and the text. The reader's encounters with various linguistic experiments create stylistic effect and contribute to unraveling of the plot.

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