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Henry Fielding's linguistic games

The article focuses on the playful character of Fielding's world perception and narrative manner in its polysemanticity and polyfunctionality.

The main object of the analysis is not quite fictional work of the author – “A Modern Glossary” (1752) which embodies in itself Fielding's ironical-satirical response both to the purely linguistic phenomenon – an obvious necessity to normalize the literary English language and to the social-cultural problems reflected in the language. That concerns the topical issues of vagueness and relativity of social “norms” and “rules”.

Linguistic anomalies, which should be treated with tolerance, were obvious to Fielding. But being the creator of the comic epic, these anomalies were the reason to think over a lot of issues like imperfection and diversity of human nature reflected in the imperfection and diversity of language.

Being a common problem, spelling confusion that S. Johnson is deeply concerned about is shown and comprehended by Fielding in his romance philology. In the paper a classic example, i.e. love epistolary by Jonathan Wild, is under consideration.

Fielding's paradoxes are based on the principle of other optics, which rejects the point of view limited by rules and regulations.

The fact that all these linguistic oddities and comic curiosities are not random is proved by the author's comment, in which Fielding expressed a mismatch of scholasticism and life.

In the paper A. Livergant's statement about "special motivation" of Fielding's mock-ironic manner described in "Modern Dictionary" is rejected. Fielding's work “A Modern Glossary” is another proof of multidirectional literature of the 18th century, which can hardly be restricted. “A Modern Glossary” written by the creator of "comic epos" in lexicography was a refutation of the main concept of Samuel Johnson's linguistic research.

Key words: glossary, irony, Rococo, world perception, Enlightenment, norm, rule.