

УДК 81+811.111

The Foundations of 3D Analysis: 3D Model of the Avada Kedavra Curse in Potteriana

Arsentiy I. Bochkarev*

*Novosibirsk State Technical University
20 K. Marx Str., Novosibirsk, 630073, Russia*

Received 05.06.2016, received in revised form 29.08.2016, accepted 09.09.2016

This article develops 3D analysis on the example of the Avada Kedavra curse which is a central linguistic means of the violent death leitmotif in Potteriana. The author considers three dimensions of the analyzed object: semantics, syntactics and pragmatics. The 3D model of the curse is based upon text analysis. Moreover, the author introduced the cognitive structure of the violent death leitmotif being a form and a shape for the curse realization.

Keywords: semantics, syntactics, pragmatics, narrative scenario.

DOI: 10.17516/1997-1370-2016-9-10-2365-2373.

Research area: philology.

Introduction

The term “3D space of linguistics” was firstly used by Stepanov (1985). He defined the language as 3D space which includes three dimensions: semantics, syntactics and pragmatics. These three dimensions were introduced by Morris (1970) who defined them as three sides of a sign. Semantics takes into account the relation between a sign and a denoting object; syntactics deals with the relation between signs; pragmatics is connected with the relation between a sign and a sign user. Stepanov (1985) noted that these three dimensions are closely connected with each other. He mentioned that semantics is not a mere relation between a sign and a denoting object but rather their relation through syntactics and

pragmatics. This very point concerns the two other dimensions. Stepanov’s explanation is very specific that is why in this paper the different explanation will be given.

I will try to explain how it basically works with words. The pragmatic influence on the semantic dimension of a word can be represented in the following way. There is no pure connection between a word and an object, it always depends on a definite person in a certain position. This relation is always user-oriented. What I mean is that any identifying act exploits connections linking the language user to an object. These connections are different for different people. Even when the same user identifies a single object on different occasions, the connections he/

she exploits may be different. It is how existing words get new meanings. As for the syntactic influence on the semantic dimension of a word it is also quite obvious. There are a lot of words that refer to the same object. They all have different connotations. It is possible only because they are connected in a system. If an object has only one corresponding word it is always neutral, i.e. it has “zero” connotation.

Now, let us consider the semantic influence on the pragmatic dimension of a word. It is really simple. In most cases it is an object and not a word to which a speaker has a positive or a negative attitude. It was already mentioned that synonyms refer to the same object. But strictly speaking it is not really the same object. What I want to say is that synonyms can mean different states or characteristics of the object and while one state can be treated positively by a speaker the other state is treated negatively. But a word gets its connotation on the basis of the speaker’s attitude towards an object. It is really difficult (but maybe possible) to imagine that a speaker has an attitude to an object which is based on his/her attitude to a word. The syntactic influence on the pragmatic dimension of a word is connected with the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis. Words help a speaker to differentiate different states or characteristics of the object or even different objects. For example, Berlin and Kay (1969) show that ancient Japanese did not differentiate green and blue colours because there was only one word for these two colours. It means that only through the opposition of a blue colour to a green color, a speaker can differentiate, for example, green.

Now, let us examine the pragmatic influence on the syntactic dimension of a word. It really can be different. I will provide just one example. If language users of one social group use the word extensively but representatives of other groups do not, this word can become a marker of this group (a professionalism, a jargon word, a slang word,

etc). Especially, it concerns the cases when a word gets a new meaning with a certain connotation. In such cases while realizing this meaning the word starts to belong to a certain register. But it is, of course, possible only if there are some other words which denote the same object, i.e. a word can get a connotation only in a system of words with the same meaning. The semantic influence on the syntactic dimension of a word is enormous. It is an object which possesses certain features that distinguish it from other similar objects. A corresponding word is merely associated with this feature. That distinguishes one word from the other.

The same semiotic net can be applied to any other sign, including a sentence. Moreover, I am sure that much more information about the influence of a certain dimension on the others can and should be added, but my purpose is just to show the way how every semiotic relation is realized through other two relations. The full analysis of relations will be considered in the future papers. Besides, this analysis enables us to conclude that it is impossible to build an adequate “pure” semantic, syntactic or pragmatic theory. Any adequate theory is impure even if it pretends to be pure.

It should be noted that Stepanov studied only general questions concerning “3D space of linguistics”. I suggest studying concrete linguistic objects as a particular part of this space. I’d rather say that every object should be treated from this point. The unity of these objects forms 3D space of linguistics. “3D space of linguistics” cannot be treated in an abstract way because a space without objects is vacuum.

Method and material

In this paper I will apply the 3D analysis. This analysis incorporates semantic, syntactic and pragmatic information. The very idea that these three types of information should be taken

into account is not new. For example, Kearns (1994) made quite a good try in combining semantic and syntactic approaches. He relied on the Montague's idea that syntax and semantics must be developed "hand in hand" (Montague 1974: 210). Posner (1980) tried to take into account semantic and pragmatic information while analyzing sentence connectives. Syntactic and pragmatic information has been combined by Asher and Lascarides (2001) in attempts to solve the problem of indirect speech acts formation. So, there are some works (though very little in number) combining two different kinds of semiotic information which consider particular cases. But there is not any formed approach and there are no works which try to combine all three kinds of information. Why has it happened that so prospective direction has not been developed by scientists? "In the 20th century (*as well as at the beginning of the 21st – author's note*), rather specialized ideals have been provided for theories of all kinds" (Kearns 1994: 70). So, in this article I will analyze the Avada Kedavra curse in 3D space. The object is merely chosen by chance. It is not better or worse than any other object.

The series of novels by J.K. Rowling about Harry Potter can be divided into two parts. The first part consists of the first three novels. Its target audience is primarily pre-teens. The second part consists of the last four novels which are written for teenagers. The novels of the second group are essentially different from the first three novels by including two new leitmotifs: sexual intimacy and violent death. In this article I will consider only the second one.

The central means of the violent death expression is the Avada Kedavra curse. Moreover, it is only one known magic way to kill people in Potteriana. That is why the curse analysis is crucial for violent death leitmotif understanding.

To represent the Avada Kedavra curse as a three dimensional object, first of all, I should

analyze the text fragments which include this curse. Before analyzing the text fragments some words should be said about the text structure of the novels. The macrostructure of every novel of the series is narrative. It can be represented in the following way: exposition – rising action – climax – falling action – resolution. Moreover, the whole Potteriana has the same structure. The first novel *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* is the exposition of Potteriana; the second novel *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, the third novel *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, the fourth novel *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* and the fifth novel *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* are the rising action; the sixth novel *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* is the climax; the last novel *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* is the falling action and the resolution.

The Avada Kedavra curse is firstly mentioned in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. It is Hermione, one of the best Harry's friends, who names it during the Defence Against the Dark Arts lesson.

(1) "Right... anyone know any others?"

Harry looked around. From the looks on everyone's faces, he guessed they were all wondering what was going to happen to the last spider. Hermione's hand shook slightly as, for the third time, she raised it into the air.

"Yes?" said Moody, looking at her.

"Avada Kedavra," Hermione whispered.

Several people looked uneasily around at her, including Ron.

"Ah," said Moody, another slight smile twisting his lopsided mouth. "Yes, the last and worst. Avada Kedavra... the Killing Curse."

In this context the curse is not a declarative. It is used as a representative functioning as an answer. Hermione names the last of the three unforgiveable curses. It is a killing curse.

Then Barty Crouch Jr., disguised as Alastor Moody, the Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher, kills the spider with this curse and gives a short remark after which it is told that Harry's parents were killed this way while Harry was able to survive. Next we have the description of the curse.

(2) *Moody raised his wand, and Harry felt a sudden thrill of foreboding.*

"Avada Kedavra!" Moody roared.

There was a flash of blinding green light and a rushing sound, as though a vast, invisible something was soaring through the air – instantaneously the spider rolled over onto its back, unmarked, but unmistakably dead.

.....

So that was how his parents had died... exactly like that spider. Had they been unblemished and unmarked too? Had they simply seen the flash of green light and heard the rush of speeding death, before life was wiped from their bodies?

.....

Avada Kedavra's a curse that needs a powerful bit of magic behind it – you could all get your wands out now and point them at me and say the words, and I doubt I'd get so much as a nosebleed. But that doesn't matter. I'm not here to teach you how to do it.

So from this context we know that: 1) this curse cannot be blocked; 2) this curse is provided by a flash of green light and a rushing sound; 3) this curse needs a great magic power; 4) this curse is prohibited to use.

At the beginning of the novel the author gives readers a hint at this curse. Voldemort kills the gardener and the latter does not hear what Voldemort is saying. The gardener only sees a flash of green light and hears a rushing sound which helps us to identify Avada Kedavra post factum when we get to the description later.

(3) *And then the chair was facing Frank, and he saw what was sitting in it. His walking stick fell*

to the floor with a clatter. He opened his mouth and let out a scream. He was screaming so loudly that he never heard the words the thing in the chair spoke as it raised a wand. There was a flash of green light, a rushing sound, and Frank Bryce crumpled. He was dead before he hit the floor.

Then we face the curse in the text fragment when Peter Pettigrew, Voldemort's servant, kills Cedric Diggory, the Hogwarts champion for the Triwizard Tournament.

(4) *A swishing noise and a second voice, which screeched the words to the night:*

"Avada Kedavra!"

A blast of green light blazed through Harry's eyelids, and he heard something heavy fall to the ground beside him; the pain in his scar reached such a pitch that he retched, and then it diminished; terrified of what he was about to see, he opened his stinging eyes. Cedric was lying spread-eagled on the ground beside him. He was dead.

This text fragment is followed by the climax of this novel, Voldemort's return. Later Voldemort tries to kill Harry with the curse. But Harry managed to block it.

(5) *Voldemort was ready. As Harry shouted, "Expelliarmus!" Voldemort cried, "Avada Kedavra!"*

A jet of green light issued from Voldemorts wand just as a jet of red light blasted from Harry's – they met in midair – and suddenly Harry's wand was vibrating as though an electric charge were surging through it; his hand seized up around it; he couldn't have released it if he'd wanted to - and a narrow beam of light connected the two wands, neither red nor green, but bright, deep gold. Harry, following the beam with his astonished gaze, saw that Voldemort's long white fingers too were gripping a wand that was shaking and vibrating.

From this text fragment it becomes obvious that Avada Kedavra can be blocked. Moreover,

it is obvious that the death cause is the touch of a green bolt. Saying the curse does not cause the death itself even if it is successful.

Thus, Avada Kedavra is followed by and follows the climax. It creates the dark atmosphere which corresponds to the climax event. It should be said that Cedric Diggory is a supporting character and he appears only in this novel. It means that his death is not too significant for readers.

In the novel *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* this curse is used as declarative only once when Voldemort tries to kill Harry which is again unsuccessful.

(6) *Voldemort paid no attention.*

“I have nothing more to say to you, Potter,” he said quietly. “You have irked me too often, for too long. AVADA KEDAVRA!”

Harry had not even opened his mouth to resist; his mind was blank, his wand pointing uselessly at the floor. But the headless golden statue of the wizard in the fountain had sprung alive, leaping from its plinth to land with a crash on the floor between Harry and Voldemort. The spell merely glanced off its chest as the statue flung out its arms to protect Harry.

“What-?” cried Voldemort, staring around. And then he breathed, “Dumbledore!”

This fragment follows the novel’s climax where Bellatrix LeStrange, the most faithful Voldemort’s servant, kills Sirius Black, Harry’s Godfather, by throwing him into a mysterious arch. Sirius Black is one of the main supporting characters. He appears in the third novel and his death is quite significant for readers. The authors of the screen version have changed the plot and the curse is used in the climax. So Bellatrix kills Sirius with the Avada Kedavra curse while Voldemort does not use it at all. I think that this change is reasonable. Firstly, the crucial role of this spell is accentuated for the violent death leitmotif. Secondly, one more unsuccessful

attempt to kill Harry with this curse devaluates its role and power to a certain degree.

The curse is used in the climax of the novel *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. In this novel the curse is used only once when Severus Snape, Harry’s quasi-antagonist, kills Albus Dumbledore, the headmaster of the wizarding school Hogwarts.

(7) *Snape raised his wand and pointed it directly at Dumbledore.*

“Avada Kedavra!”

A jet of green light shot from the end of Snape’s wand and hit Dumbledore squarely in the chest. Harry’s scream of horror never left him; silent and unmoving, he was forced to watch as Dumbledore was blasted into the air.

Dumbledore is one of the major characters in Potteriana. He appears at the beginning of the first novel. Thus, this text fragment is central for the violent death leitmotif in Potteriana. The last book reveals the truth about Severus Snape. He killed Dumbledore because the latter had asked him to do it. So, we can come to the following conclusion: it is not necessarily for the addressant to have any negative feelings towards the addressee to use the curse.

The last novel *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* is the falling action and the resolution. It means that all plot strands come to an end. In this novel a lot of characters are killed. But Avada Kedavra is used explicitly only several times. So Voldemort kills one of the Hogwarts teachers at the beginning of the novel, and it helps to create a gloomy atmosphere for the whole novel.

(8) *For the third time, Charity Burbage revolved to face Snape. Tears were pouring from her eyes into her hair. Snape looked back at her, quite impassive, as she turned slowly away from his again.*

“Avada Kedavra.”

The flash of green light illuminated every corner of the room. Charity fell, with a resounding crash, onto the table below.

Then Avada Kedavra is used in the text fragment when Harry's parents were killed by Voldemort. This is a retrospection of the events which happened just before the beginning of the first book.

(9) *"Lily, take Harry and go! It's him! Go! Run! I'll hold him off!"*

Hold him off, without a wand in his hand?... He laughed before casting the curse...

"Avada Kedavra!"

He could have forced her away from the crib, but it seemed more prudent to finish them all... The green light flashed around the room and she dropped like her husband.

The child began to cry. It had seen that he was not James. He did not like it crying, he had never been able to stomach the small ones whining in the orphanage.

"Avada Kedavra!"

And then he broke; He was nothing, nothing but pain and terror, and he must hide himself, not here in the rubble of the ruined house, where the child was trapped and screaming, but far away... far away...

This text fragment is Voldemort's narration. So, Avada Kedavra is explicated when Voldemort kills Harry's father. Harry's mother is also killed with Avada Kedavra but it is not verbalized. Then Voldemort uses the curse against Harry and it is the first time when it does not work in a proper way.

In the next text fragment containing the curse Crabb, Malfoy's friend, uses the curse against Hermione and then against Ron. Both are able to escape from the green bolt.

(10) *Hermione had run around the corner behind him and sent a Stunning Spell straight at Crabbe's head. It only missed because Malfoy pulled him out of the way.*

"It's that Mudblood! Avada Kedavra!"

Harry saw Hermione dive aside, and his fury that Crabbe had aimed to kill wiped all else from his mind.

Malfoy jumped out of range of Hermione's second Stunning Spell, and Ron, appearing suddenly at the end of the aisle, shot a full Body-Bind Curse at Crabbe, which narrowly missed. Crabbe wheeled around and screamed, "Avada Kedavra!" again. Ron leapt out of sight to avoid the jet of green light.

This text fragment is symbolic by the fact that Avada Kedavra is firstly used by Hogwarts' students. Hogwarts is the world which has not been associated with the killing curse until this moment. Moreover, taking into account this text fragment we can conclude that Avada Kedavra can be not only blocked but also to be escaped from by moving from the direction of a green bolt. One more thing concerning the importance of magic power can be suggested. Hermione and Ron were able to escape Crabb's curse, so it means that the bolts were not fast enough. At the same time we know that nobody has been able to avoid Voldemort's curse. It can mean that the speed can be different. So, more magic power you possess the faster the bolt is.

Then the curse is used by Voldemort in the final battle and directed at Harry. As it was in all previous cases it does not kill Harry, it is reflected to Voldemort and kills him.

(11) *The light hit both of their faces at the same time, so that Voldemort's was suddenly a flaming blur. Harry heard the high voice shriek as he too yelled his best hope to the heavens, pointing Draco's wand:*

"Avada Kedavra!"

"Expelliarmus!"

The bang was like a cannon blast, and the golden flames that erupted between them, at the dead center of the circle they had been treading, marked the point where the spells collided. Harry

saw Voldemort's green jet meet his own spell, saw the Elder Wand fly high, dark against the sunrise, spinning across the enchanted ceiling like the head of Nagini, spinning through the air toward the master it would not kill, who had come to take full possession of it at last. And Harry, with the unerring skill of a Seeker, caught the wand in his free hand as Voldemort fell backward, arms splayed, the slit pupils of the scarlet eyes rolling upward.

The authors of the film version make the curse explicit in the fragment when Harry comes to Voldemort to be killed as he has known that he is Voldemort's Horcrux himself. J. K. Rowling describes the using of the curse implicitly. She mentions that Harry sees a flash of green light.

(12) *Voldemort had raised his wand. His head was still tilted to one side, like a curious child, wondering what would happen if he proceeded. Harry looked back into the red eyes, and wanted it to happen now, quickly, while he could still stand, before he lost control, before he betrayed fear – He saw the mouth move and a flash of green light, and everything was gone.*

It's obvious that Avada Kedavra's explication in both fragments is excessive because two unsuccessful attempts to use the curse reduce its value. From the first sight, J.K. Rowling's choice is quite obvious because the curse is explicated in the situation of Voldemort's death. But I think that the choice of the screen version authors is more reasonable. They have changed the plot a bit. Voldemort dies not because of his own curse, but because of his last Horcrux has been destroyed. This solution enriches the compositional and semantic novel structures. In the novel the events are duplicated, i.e. the Elder Wand firstly destroys the Horcrux in Harry Potter and in the final battle it kills Voldemort. Both times the wand works against Voldemort the same way.

Results and discussion

Thus, the basic 3D model of the Avada Kedavra curse can be represented in the following way.

Semantic dimension of Avada Kedavra

Avada Kedavra is a curse speech act. Such acts belong to declaratives which are institutional speech acts (Bogdanov 1989). They map the propositional content to the reality (Searle 1969) i.e. a person performs an action merely by pronouncing a corresponding speech act. So, by saying "Avada Kedavra" an addressant kills an addressee. The curse is provided by a green bolt and a rushing sound. In case if the bolt does not hit a person, he/she does not die. So, the exact definition of the Avada Kedavra curse is following: Avada Kedavra is the killing curse which is provided by a rushing sound and a green bolt which hits the person and kills him/her without visible injuries. It is very difficult (but still possible) to escape from or block a bolt. This curse is prohibited and belongs to the Black Art.

Syntactic dimension of Avada Kedavra

This curse is a central curse against the background of other unforgiveable curses because it results in the addressee's death. A hero uses it only once (Snape kills Dumbledore). It is possible that there exist other magic ways to kill people. It especially concerns the cases when heroes kill villains, for example, Molly Weasley somehow kills Bellatrix Lestrange. But the author has not revealed these ways which make Avada Kedavra the only known magic way to kill people. It makes Avada Kedavra the central means of the violent death leitmotif expression. In comparison to other types of murder Avada Kedavra is very close to firearms. The main difference is that

Avada Kedavra does not have any evidence of violent murder and has a varied speed.

Pragmatic dimension of Avada Kedavra

According to the institutional speech act definition, the addressant should have certain authority to use this speech act. Every curse or spell needs certain conditions to be realized. But Avada Kedavra needs some extra conditions. The following pragmatic characteristics must be accomplished to realize Avada Kedavra:

Addressant's characteristics: a) his/her purpose is to kill the addressee, b) the addressant is a wizard or a witch, c) the addressant has a magic wand in his hands, d) the more powerful the addressant is the better he/she can perform the curse.

Addressee's characteristics: a) the addressee is a living being.

Place's characteristics: a) Potteriana's world.

Cognitive structure of the violent death leitmotif

This model needs sharpening in at least one respect before it is ready to be sent out in the world. The cognitive structure of the violent death leitmotif should be given because it is a form and a shape inside which the curse is realized. At the beginning of the article I have mentioned that the Avada Kedavra curse is the central means of violent death leitmotif in Potteriana. The analysis of the text fragments enables me to say that violent death leitmotif belongs to a cognitive scenario, i.e. a dynamic frame. The structure of this cognitive scenario coincides with the Potteriana structure, i.e. it has the narrative structure. The exposition

is gardener's and spider's murders; the rising action is Cedric Diggory's, Sirius Black's murders and attempts to kill Harry Potter; the climax is Dumbledore's murder; the falling action is Moody's murder, deaths of people during Hogwarts battle; the resolution is Voldemort's suicide.

Conclusion

In the present paper I have given the 3D analysis of the Avada Kedavra curse. I think that this analysis is very prospective because it gives the full view of a linguistic phenomenon. Moreover, many interesting things appear at the border of the dimensions. Many linguistic phenomena are studied in every dimension separately. Many achievements of one dimension are not taken into account in the two others which impedes the solution of many problems because only a complex analysis yields full answers. For example, indirect speech acts are mainly studied in pragmalinguistics, yet, it does not enable us to have the full view of this phenomenon. So, in my previous papers, for example, *Indirect Speech Acts in Argumentative Text Segments*, I have tried to take into account not only pragmatic aspects of the phenomenon, but also semantic and syntactic aspects that helped me to advance into identifying the ways of indirect speech acts formation. I did not use the terminology of 3D space of linguistics at that time. But it is obvious that the solution of the problem which I have given is implicitly based on the ideas which I have formulated in this article.

To sum up, it is obvious that the 3D analysis needs further development and much more should be done further to make it a real helpful linguistic tool. But, anyway, it is the first step and without the first step the other steps cannot be performed.

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Основы трехмерного анализа: трехмерная модель проклятия Авада Кедавра в Поттериане

А.И. Бочкарев
*Новосибирский государственный
технический университет,
Россия, 630073, Новосибирск, К. Маркса, 20*

В данной статье разрабатывается метод трехмерного анализа на примере проклятия Авада Кедавра, которое является основным лингвистическим средством выражения лейтмотива насильственной смерти в Поттериане. Рассматриваются три измерения анализируемого объекта: семантика, синтактика и прагматика. Трехмерная модель проклятия основана на текстовом анализе. Кроме того, мы представляем когнитивную структуру лейтмотива насильственной смерти.

Ключевые слова: семантика, синтактика, прагматика, нарративный сценарий.

Научная специальность: 10.00.00 – филологические науки.
