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## **LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF TRAUMA POETRY IN DISPLACEMENT: THE CASE OF UKRAINIAN POETS**

**Introduction.** War and forced displacement profoundly influence linguistic expression and artistic representation. Since the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2014 and particularly after the full-scale invasion of 2022, Ukrainian poetry has increasingly functioned as a medium for documenting traumatic experience and reflecting the emotional realities of wartime life [2].

Within the framework of trauma studies, extreme experiences are understood to disrupt conventional narrative structures and affect the processes through which individuals interpret and verbalize memory. According to C. Caruth, traumatic memory is frequently fragmented, indirect, and resistant to coherent narration [1]. These characteristics are reflected in literary texts that attempt to articulate experiences of violence, loss, and displacement.

The present study examines linguistic manifestations of trauma in contemporary Ukrainian poetry through the works of Serhiy Zhadan, one of the most prominent voices in modern Ukrainian literature, and Daria Lisich, whose poetry reflects the everyday emotional experience of wartime reality. The analysis focuses on three central linguistic features characteristic of trauma poetry: fragmentation, metaphorical representation, and silence.

**Fragmentation as a Linguistic Representation of Trauma.** Fragmentation represents one of the most characteristic linguistic strategies used in trauma-related poetic discourse. Psychological research indicates that traumatic experience often disrupts the continuity of memory and undermines linear narrative organization [1]. In poetic texts, this disruption is reflected through syntactic brevity, abrupt transitions, and image-based narration.

In the poetry of Serhiy Zhadan, fragmentation is realized through minimalistic structures and sequences of isolated images. Rather than constructing a coherent narrative, Zhadan frequently presents separate visual impressions that resemble fragments of memory. For example: “*the sky burns above the city, and the streets remember every step we took.*” [7]

These lines illustrate how the poet concentrates on symbolic visual elements rather than narrative explanation. The city becomes a space of memory, while the fragmented imagery reflects the disrupted perception of wartime reality.

A similar tendency toward fragmentation can be observed in the poetry of Daria Lisich, whose texts frequently rely on short syntactic constructions and repetition. For instance: “*я війни не хочу. рано ще вмирати. просто будь живим. просто не вмирай.*” [8]

The repetitive structure emphasizes emotional urgency and conveys the psychological state of individuals living in conditions of constant uncertainty. Such linguistic economy reflects the reduction of expression typical of situations of extreme stress.

**Metaphorical Representation of Traumatic Experience.** Metaphor functions as a key linguistic mechanism that enables poets to express traumatic experience indirectly. Direct description of violence often proves insufficient or emotionally overwhelming; metaphorical language, therefore, provides a symbolic framework through which complex emotional states can be communicated.

In the works of Serhiy Zhadan, metaphors frequently emerge from natural phenomena and elements of the urban landscape. These images transform physical surroundings into symbolic reflections of collective experience. For example: “*snow falls over the city like ash, covering the silence of abandoned streets.*” [7] The comparison between snow and ash transforms a natural phenomenon into a metaphor of destruction. Through such imagery, the poet constructs a symbolic representation of loss and devastation associated with wartime environments.

Metaphorical strategies are also evident in the poetry of Daria Lisich, where everyday experiences are reinterpreted through symbolic associations. One poem juxtaposes the sound of thunder with the threat of shelling: “*ти казав: не бійся, це лиш звук — це точно не прильот, це березнева злива.*” [8]

Here, the metaphorical reinterpretation of danger serves as a psychological strategy for coping with fear by associating destructive events with natural phenomena. Another poem develops a metaphor of solidarity in a city experiencing a blackout: “*всі ми світло, доки світло є у нас.*” [8]

The metaphor suggests that individuals themselves become sources of emotional support and resilience during periods of collective crisis.

**Silence as a Marker of the Limits of Language.** Silence constitutes another important linguistic dimension of trauma poetry. Experiences of violence and loss frequently exceed the expressive capacity of language, leading poets to employ pauses, minimalist phrasing, and textual gaps as meaningful structural elements [3].

In the poetry of Daria Lisich, silence often appears in contrast with external sounds associated with danger. For example: “*гримить суроро грім, а у кімнаті — тиша.*” [8]

The pause created by the dash accentuates the fragile boundary between the threatening external environment and the temporary safety of the interior space. In the poetic discourse of Serhiy Zhadan, silence often functions as a transitional moment preceding testimony. Rather than representing an absence of speech, silence becomes a reflective pause that prepares the emergence of articulation and memory. Consequently, silence operates simultaneously as a marker of trauma and as a potential point of linguistic reconstruction.

**Conclusion.** The analysis demonstrates that contemporary Ukrainian trauma poetry employs specific linguistic strategies to represent experiences of war and displacement.

Fragmentation reflects the disruption of narrative continuity characteristic of traumatic memory. Metaphorical imagery enables indirect representation of violence and emotional suffering. Silence, in turn, marks the limits of linguistic expression while simultaneously indicating the possibility of testimony and remembrance.

The poetry of Serhiy Zhadan illustrates how minimalistic imagery and symbolic language can articulate collective wartime experience. The works of Daria Lisich demonstrate how contemporary poetic discourse integrates everyday realities of war into accessible yet emotionally powerful lyrical expression.

Thus, Ukrainian trauma poetry functions not only as an artistic response to war but also as a linguistic form of cultural testimony that preserves collective memory and articulates resilience in the face of displacement and uncertainty.

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