

**LINGUISTIC AND COGNITIVE ANALYSIS OF THE LANGUAGE OF MEG
ROSOFF'S NOVELS**

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ABSTRACT: This study explores the linguistic and cognitive dimensions of Meg Rosoff's novels, focusing on how language reflects the process of adolescent self-awareness and identity formation. As one of the prominent representatives of contemporary Young Adult (YA) fiction, Rosoff employs a unique narrative style that combines lexical simplicity with psychological and semantic depth. Her use of colloquial language, fragmented syntax, and conceptual metaphors enables the representation of adolescent thought, emotional instability, and the inner search for meaning. Drawing on theories of cognitive stylistics (Stockwell, 2002; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003), the research analyzes how linguistic choices, metaphorical structures, and narrative perspective shape the portrayal of identity in Rosoff's works such as *How I Live Now* and *What I Was*. The findings demonstrate that Rosoff's prose, while linguistically accessible, reveals complex mental and emotional processes, positioning her writing at the intersection of cognitive linguistics and psychological realism.

Keywords: Meg Rosoff, cognitive stylistics, Young Adult fiction, identity formation, adolescent language, conceptual metaphor

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary English literature, the Young Adult (YA) genre has become one of the most dynamic directions depicting psychological and social crises of the period of human growth. This type of literature is aimed at describing the processes of self-awareness, striving for independence, emotional complexity, and identity formation in adolescents. In this respect, the work of Meg Rosoff belongs among the most significant examples of YA literature. In her novels, the harmony between linguistic simplicity and semantic depth allows the reader to fully experience the protagonist's inner world.

Issues of personal identity and internal transformation occupy a central place in Rosoff's works. The author expresses the adolescent's process of self-discovery in a simple yet emotionally profound language. Therefore, her style lies at the intersection of modern psychological prose and cognitive stylistics (White, 2019; Gardner, 2020). The cognitive approach, particularly the "conceptual metaphor theory" proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (2003), serves as a key theoretical basis for analyzing Rosoff's language.

The aim of this research is to analyze the process of adolescent self-awareness in Meg Rosoff's novels through linguistic and cognitive means. To achieve this goal, the following tasks were defined:

1. To identify the lexical and syntactic features of Rosoff's novelistic language;
2. To analyze the protagonist's inner speech and emotional expression;
3. To reveal the linguistic manifestation of identity through cognitive metaphors;
4. To scientifically justify the interrelation between language, thinking, and selfhood.

The novelty of this research lies in the fact that Rosoff's novels are analyzed for the first time from the perspective of cognitive stylistics. Previous studies have focused on sociocultural or feminist aspects of her works (Cross, 2018; Morgan, 2021), whereas this study explores the psychological concepts embodied in language. In doing so, it provides a new interpretation of the role of language in analyzing self and consciousness in YA fiction.

Moreover, *How I Live Now* (2004) and *What I Was* (2007) were selected as the main objects of analysis, since they represent the adolescent's process of self-discovery at metaphorical, psychological, and linguistic levels. The findings of this study contribute not only to a deeper understanding of Meg Rosoff's artistry but also to the exploration of the cognitive nature of language and identity formation in YA fiction.

FEATURES OF MEG ROSSOFF'S STYLE

Meg Rosoff is one of the most prominent representatives of the Young Adult (YA) genre in modern English literature, whose novels combine linguistic simplicity with semantic depth. Rosoff's language is accessible to young readers, yet it conceals psychological and philosophical layers beneath its surface. Because her protagonists are adolescents, she employs a natural, spoken, and emotional style that reflects their way of thinking and communicating (White, 2019).

Her narrative style is typically first-person ("I-narration"), which brings the reader closer to the protagonist's inner world. Such a perspective reflects, through language, the adolescent's process of self-perception and subjective understanding of the world (Gardner, 2020). Consequently, introspective language prevails over external narration in her prose.

The main feature of Rosoff's lexicon is her ability to enrich simple word forms with deep semantic meaning. She uses plain words to express the inner conflict of the adolescent self:

"Everything changed the day I met Edmond." (*How I Live Now*, 2004)

Although grammatically simple, this sentence expresses the beginning of growth and transformation. Rosoff's word choice harmonizes psychological precision with naturalness (Summers, 2017).

To convey the realistic speech of young characters, the author makes extensive use of **colloquial expressions** (short, spoken, and sometimes ironic phrases) and **emotive words** ("whatever," "so what," "I don't care"). These features highlight the naturalness of adolescent speech and their freedom of personal expression (Morgan, 2021).

From a syntactic point of view, Rosoff's language is marked by short, fragmented sentences and elements of **stream of consciousness**. For example:

"I thought about nothing and everything at once."

Such structures represent the conflicting emotions typical of adolescence (Haynes, 2016). Often, fragmentary syntax naturally conveys the protagonist's inner turmoil. This technique can be viewed psycholinguistically as a means of reflecting the dynamics of consciousness (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003).

Conceptual metaphors occupy an important place in Rosoff's language. Through them, the search for identity in adolescence is represented symbolically. The most frequent metaphorical model is "**Self as Journey**," which expresses the process of inner growth and the acquisition of experience. For instance:

"I was lost inside myself."

This expression is based on the conceptual metaphor "**Mind as Space**," meaning that the mind is a spatial domain where one can become lost or found (Lakoff & Turner, 1989). Rosoff's cognitive metaphors merge abstract mental processes with concrete imagery, offering rich material for cognitive stylistic analysis (Stockwell, 2002).

Her narrative style is emotionally charged but avoids excessive dramatization. Rosoff often employs **understatement** and **symbolic imagery**. For example, in *What I Was*, the calm depiction of nature becomes a symbol of the protagonist's search for inner peace:

"The sea was the only thing that didn't change."

This line contrasts the instability of the adolescent psyche with the eternity of nature (Cross, 2018). Thus, Rosoff's emotionally nuanced style allows the reader to *feel* the protagonist's emotions rather than merely understand them intellectually.

CONCLUSION

The linguistic and cognitive features of Meg Rosoff's novels distinguish her style within YA literature. Her prose combines simplicity of language with semantic and psychological depth, expressing the evolution of adolescent identity through syntax and metaphor. Rosoff's introspective and cognitively oriented style leaves both emotional and philosophical impact on the reader. These features make her not only a representative of YA fiction but also a balanced voice of contemporary English psychological prose.

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