Multilevel Accentuation and its Role in the Memorization of Narrative*

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──── **Abstract** ────

The paper is dedicated to the phenomenon of accentuation on multiple narrative levels. Accentuation is a textual device that indicates the elements of narrative that have to be memorized by readers. It is different from the well known notion of foregrounding, as accentuation does not violate the norm, but, on the contrary, is in itself conventional. While foregrounding draws readers' attention involuntarily, the accentuation is a way of facilitating the work of voluntary attention. In this latter case a text as if takes on itself a part of the unpleasant burden of purposeful concentrating of attention, so that the reading process becomes more comfortable. The paper describes the general principles of accentuation and also presents a typology of accentuation devices, based on a six-level model of narrative. It encompasses five main types (three syntactic ones and two semantic ones), including numerous subcategories.

1 Introduction

The aim of the present work is to describe a specific system of indicators that I call *textual accentuations*. The notion to be described is quite similar to the notion of accentuation (or stress) in linguistics, where it is defined as "the degree of force used in producing a syllable" [3, p. 454]. One of the types of accentuation, the closest one to textual accentuation, is sentence stress, in case of which a word or word combination is made to stand out in a sentence by means of the increase in loudness, length or pitch. This type of stress already contains several important components that will be included in the definition of textual accentuation. First, in the case of sentence stress one of the units of a message is made different from the rest of units. Second, this different position has a conventional meaning of importance. Third, the choice of which word should be stressed is made by the speaker, not by someone else (i.e. the distinction between important and unimportant words of a sentence is already a structural feature of the sentence). Fourth, there may be nothing atypical about the word under stress, so that it is not extraordinary in itself, but is made extraordinary by means of accentuation.

One of the main claims of this article is that accentuation can be performed not only by phonological devices, but also by numerous other means. Many of them can be noticed only if we shift from the narrow perspective of sentence to the broader perspective of the text as

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whole. Some of these textual accentuations are well-known, such as italics or underlining, but, at the same time, there are lots of other types of accentuation,[1] which are much more widespread, though being much less noticeable. In what follows I will make an attempt to demonstrate the variety of these devices and their important role in text comprehension. In particular, I will claim that accentuation has the important function of attracting readers' attention to certain textual elements, and therefore influencing their memorization of the text.

From the beginning a principal distinction should be made: accentuation is different from another type of attracting readers' attention, typically called *foregrounding* (or *defamiliarization* [25, 39]). Certain elements of a text may be called foregrounded if they capture attention by being unusual. Leech defines foregrounding as "motivated deviation from linguistic, or other socially accepted norms" [20, p. 30]. Researchers from the field of "empirical literary studies" have showed that atypical, foregrounded text elements are more memorable than the ordinary, not defamiliarized ones [38]. Despite the fact that both foregrounding and accentuation capture attention, there are important reasons to distinguish between these two notions. We pay attention to the foregrounded elements automatically, as they are interesting, atypical, extraordinary. The human brain is wired to pay attention to unusual things and to memorize them, and this psychological feature is effectively exploited by foregrounding devices. Accentuation, on the contrary, captures readers' attention by convention. For example, there is nothing particularly interesting about the fact that a word is italicized. Italics are not an unusual thing, and the reason why they may capture someone's attention is completely different. There exists a linguistic convention that if a word is italicized (or underlined, colored, etc.) it is considered important by the author of the text, and therefore it would be reasonable to pay attention to this word and to memorize it.[2] Being explicated, the meaning of accentuation roughly corresponds to the phrase: "Pay attention to this text unit!" In the case of accentuation attention is produced by our purposeful effort (though, purposeful does not necessarily mean conscious).[3]

The opposition between foregrounding and accentuation is an example of a more general opposition between involuntary and voluntary attention (and remembering), well described in the classical works of Soviet psychologists such as Lev Vygotsky [40] and Alexander Luria [23]. Luria defines this opposition in the following way:

1. *involuntary* attention takes place "when the attention of a person is attracted directly by certain either strong, either new or interesting (according to the need) stimulus" [23, p. 25];
2. *voluntary* attention is typical only for humans. It happens when "a person voluntarily can concentrate his or her attention on one or another object, even if there is nothing changing in his surroundings" [23, p. 26].

As it seems, such poetic devices as metaphor or intrigue capture our attention involuntarily.

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[1] For the sake of simplicity in what follows I will use the terms "textual accentuation" and simply "accentuation" interchangeably.

[2] However, sometimes it may not be reasonable to completely rely on the narrator's use of accentuation and foregrounding. Improper accentuation seems to be a common technique in so-called "unreliable narration," often encountered, for instance, in detective fiction [9].

[3] At the same time, there exists the possibility that defamiliarization may be used as a tool for facilitating accentuation. For instance, informing readers about an interesting (i.e. foregrounded) detail of a character's appearance may convey an implicit message of this character's importance for further plot development. This interplay between foregrounding and accentuation seems to be a rather complicated and broad topic itself and thus will not be addressed in the present article.

For example, in the case of intrigue, you want (that is, you feel desire) to know the rest of information, which is given only partially. Here we face the functioning of a relatively simple neurobiological mechanism. On the contrary, in the case of voluntary attention you may not feel any pleasure triggered by the objects that capture your attention. In this case, it is a kind of work to concentrate on something. This work may be not very pleasant, but it is expected that the benefits of concentrating attention and memorizing will overbalance the amount of unpleasant effort. Accentuation may be regarded as a technique of facilitating the work of voluntary memorizing. In the case of accentuation the difficult task of deciding what is important to pay attention to becomes partially conveyed by the text itself. Accentuations are indices that inform readers about those characters, locations, phrases and other textual elements they should pay attention to first of all. These indices simplify memorization and make the comprehension process simpler: readers lose less information, and therefore are better prepared to receive further information provided by the text.

I believe that various accentuation devices are very widespread and can be found in almost any type of text. However, the present article does not contain any evidence to support this belief. Its aim is more modest – to analyze the functioning of accentuation in just one type of text, that of literary narrative. Literary narrative seems to be very rich in accentuation devices, and, thus, it is a convenient material for the assigned task.

2   Basic principles of accentuation

As I will show further, accentuation mechanisms are tightly connected to the levels they function at. That is why a clear and well structured model of narrative levels is the necessary basis upon which a coherent model of accentuation types can be constructed. The model of levels that will be used in the present research is a new one, though being partially based on already existing multi-level models developed in the field of discourse psychology [16, 36, 37] and, to a lesser extent, on the models introduced by literary narratologists.

The model to be used consists of three main levels:

1. the level of *surface structure*;
2. the level of *narrative structure*;
3. the level of *thematic structure*.

Surface structure corresponds to the medium by means of which a narrative is represented: natural language, film, comic strip, etc. The minimal elements of surface structure are the same as the minimal elements of the medium. For example, in the case of natural language these are words. Narrative structure corresponds to the common understanding of narrative with events and facts as its minimal elements. Thematic structure is equivalent to macrostructure, the notion coined by van Dijk [35, 36], i.e. a specific "shortened" version of text, its semantic core which conveys the main meaning of a story.[4] The basic units of thematic structure are thematic events and thematic facts. They should be considered separately from the regular events and facts of narrative structure because of the difference in importance – thematic units have a more important structural and mnemonic role than narrative ones. Thematic elements form the gist of the story, which can be retained in

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[4] I use the term "thematic structure" instead of "macrostructure" for two reasons. First, the latter notion logically requires the use of its counterpart – "microstructure," however the introduction of one more term would make the proposed model even more complicated. Second, the term "theme" is widely used in discourse psychology to indicate a concept very similar to macrostructure, while at the same time being more intuitively understandable.

memory for a long time, much longer than the elements of narrative structure (for a more detailed explanation of thematic units see subsection 2.4).

Each of these three main levels is divided into two sublevels: *semantic* and *syntactic*. Every semantic sublevel encompasses the sum of units of a certain level, and every syntactic sublevel encompasses the sum of syntactic relations between them. For example, the semantic sublevel of surface structure conveys information about the semantic units of this level, i.e. about words and word combinations, while the syntactic sublevel of the same level represents the syntactic relations between them in a sentence, as well as their "graphic" specificities, such as being italicized or underlined. At the level of narrative structure, the distinction between semantic and syntactic sublevels roughly corresponds to the distinction between story and plot. The latter encompasses the principles of distortion (narrative frequency, anachronies, etc.) of the simple chronological organization of the former. The syntactic sublevel of thematic structure includes some very general principles of the organization of thematic units, such as the well-known notion of narrative schema that may include such elements as "setting," "change of state," "ending," etc. [8, 28, 34].

The main principles of accentuation are shown in Figure 1. The arrows indicate which levels of a story can be linked together by the relation of accentuation. According to the direction of the arrows, some elements of the higher levels can function as *accentuators* of some elements of the lower levels (*accentuated* elements). It should be stressed that these are not levels accentuating other levels, but units of these levels accentuating each other. Moreover, not all the elements of a certain level can be used for accentuation, only specific kinds of them can perform this function. Taking this into account, the first principle of accentuation can be formulated in the following way:

1. Elements of higher text levels can be used to accentuate the elements of lower levels.

What does it mean for a text element to be an accentuator? Each accentuating unit conveys a specific message with respect to an accentuated element of a lower level. Accentuators transfer a message about the *importance* of an accentuated element. Simply stated, it tells the reader: "Pay attention to element x!" The system of accentuation can be compared to the system of red flags indicating some principal locations on a topographic map.

Obviously, the elements of the lowest level of the model cannot function as accentuators because there is nothing to accentuate below. Similarly, the highest level cannot be accentuated. At the same time, there are some other reasons why the highest level, i.e. the syntactic sublevel of surface structure, can only function as an accentuator and cannot be accentuated. Here we come to the second important principle of accentuation:

2. Elements of syntactic sublevels typically cannot be accentuated. Only the elements of semantic sublevels can perform the roles of both accentuated and accentuator.

Of course, this does not mean that the latter claim applies to the same elements of semantic sublevels. I am not stating that, for example, one and the same word is both accentuated and accentuator. Rather, words can play both the roles of accentuator and accentuated, while syntactic structures, e.g., focalization, usually can be used for accentuating some narrative facts, but they cannot be accentuated.

An important specification should be made here. The second principle of accentuation does not mean that syntactic sublevels cannot be accentuated at all. It rather means that such accentuations are extremely rare (and that is the reason why they will not be taken into account in this study). In fact, in literary narratives there are no specific mechanisms of
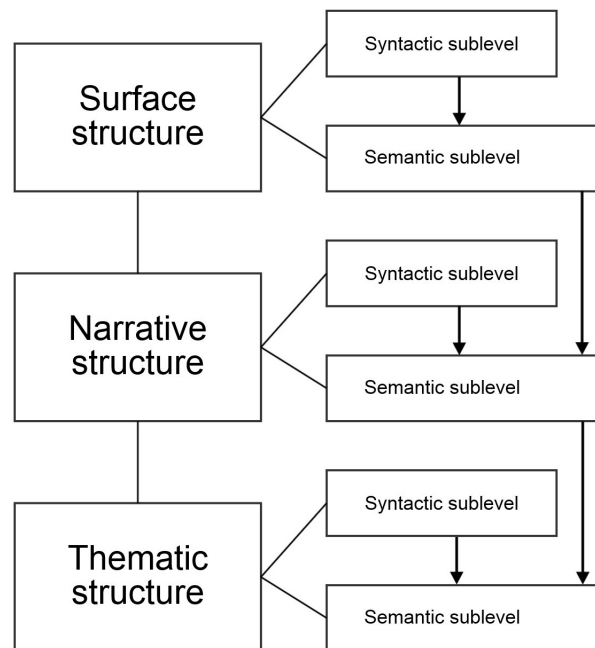
Figure 1 Levels of accentuation in a narrative.

stressing syntactic sublevels, except for the most flexible sublevel of text, that of semantic sublevel of surface structure, which can be used as a means of such accentuation. Of course, with the words of natural language we may accentuate almost everything, and sometimes authors do employ such stress. For example, a narrator in principle may stress some syntactic units, such as focalization, by saying: "Pay attention to the focalization used." This type of stress on syntactic constructions was described by the Russian formalists under the term "laying bare of the device" (obnazhenie prijoma) [12, p. 63]. For example, Shklovsky showed how Laurence Sterne extensively laid bare some plot constructions in his novels [32].

Having established the main principles of accentuation, I will proceed to develop the typology of accentuation forms. This taxonomy will be based on the level model of text described above. Each type of accentuation will correspond to one of the arrows in Figure 1.

3   Types of accentuation

3.1   Syntactic sublevel of surface structure → Semantic sublevel of surface structure

At present, the most thoroughly studied type of accentuation is that in which some elements of the syntactic sublevel of the surface structure are used to stress certain words, i.e., semantic units of the same level. In particular, important experimental studies of this kind of accentuation were conducted by the research group headed by Catherine Emmott and Anthony J. Sanford [10, 11, 29, 30]. These scholars have found solid empirical arguments to confirm the intuitively understandable fact that such devices as italics or cleft structure do capture readers' attention. Thus, there is no reason to discuss these narrative devices extensively. However, I should mention that the most convenient and, perhaps, most ontologically grounded approach to the typology of syntactic accentuations would be to divide them into

two categories: graphical and grammatical devices.

A. Graphical devices
- *Italics*
- *Coloured type*
- *Capital letters*, etc.

B. Grammatical devices
- *Clefting*

E.g.: It was Leo Tolstoy who loved children very much.

Such cleft structure makes readers pay much more attention to the name Leo Tolstoy than the usual construction: Leo Tolstoy loved children very much.

- *Indefinite "this"*

As Givon explains it, "there is a strong statistical association in spoken American English between the use of the indefinite 'this' and the topic-persistence (TP measure) of the referent" [15]. That is, usually to stress the importance of a word indefinite "this" will be used instead of indefinite "a." If there are two sentences: "Then he approached a house." and "Then he approached this house," the word "house" will be better recalled in the second case.

3.2 Semantic sublevel of surface structure → Semantic sublevel of narrative structure

Words can accentuate the importance of certain events and facts of the storyworld. I assume that some words convey not only their usual meaning, but also an additional meaning of importance. This second meaning (that of accentuation) can be more or less explicit. It may be given directly: "This character is important." Or it may be put in a more implicit way: "This character is an extraordinary personality," which attracts our attention because we know that unique, exceptional characters often have important plot roles. Some types of accentuation by means of the semantic sublevel of surface structure are even more implicit. What follows is a short categorization of this type of accentuation.

A. Direct indication of the importance of a fact

In the accompanying diagram this arrangement of the ground floor can be easily visualized, and *I suggest that the reader fix it in his mind*; for I doubt if ever before so simple and obvious an architectural design played such an *important part* in a criminal mystery. [6, p. 24, my emphasis]

- *indication that a fact is strange*

About two o'clock the mist cleared away, and we beheld, stretched out in every direction, vast and irregular plains of ice, which seemed to have no end. Some of my comrades groaned, and my own mind began to grow watchful with anxious thoughts, when a *strange sight* suddenly attracted our attention, and diverted our solicitude from our own situation. We perceived a low carriage, fixed on a sledge and drawn by dogs, pass on towards the north, at the distance of half a mile: a being which had the shape of a man, but apparently of gigantic stature, sat in the sledge, and guided the dogs. [31, my emphasis]

▬ *indication that a fact is unique*

I never saw a more interesting creature: his eyes have generally an expression of wildness, and even madness; but there are moments when, if any one performs an act of kindness towards him, or does him any the most trifling service, his whole countenance is lighted up, as it were, with a beam of benevolence and sweetness that *I never saw* equalled. But he is generally melancholy and despairing; and sometimes he gnashes his teeth, as if impatient of the weight of woes that oppresses him. [31, my emphasis]

▬ *indication that a fact is unbelievable/fantastic*

You will hear of powers and occurrences, such as you have been accustomed to believe *impossible*: but I do not doubt that my tale conveys in its series internal evidence of the truth of the events of which it is composed. [31, my emphasis]

C. Indication of the interestingness of a fact

If I should be engaged, I will at least make notes. *This manuscript will doubtless afford you the greatest pleasure*: but to me, who know him, and who hear it from his own lips, with what *interest and sympathy* shall I read it in some future day! [31, my emphasis]

D. Indication of the suddenness of a fact   (i.e. unexpectedness, which, in a certain sense, is a synonym of interestingness)

As I said this I *suddenly* beheld the figure of a man, at some distance, advancing towards me with superhuman speed. He bounded over the crevices in the ice, among which I had walked with caution; his stature, also, as he approached, seemed to exceed that of man. I was troubled; a mist came over my eyes, and I felt a faintness seize me, but I was quickly restored by the cold gale of the mountains. [31, my emphasis]

Interestingly, this excerpt is a good illustration of the fact that accentuations of different types are often put together to make the emphasis stronger. In this short text the indication of the suddenness is accompanied by accentuation via utmost qualities ("superhuman speed," "his stature [. . .] exceed that of man").

E. Usage of the words indicating utmost qualities

We were at the bottom of one of these abysses, when a quick scream from my companion broke fearfully upon the night. "See! see!" cried he, shrieking in my ears, "Almighty God! see! see!" As he spoke, I became aware of a dull, sullen glare of red light which streamed down the sides of the vast chasm where we lay, and threw a fitful brilliancy upon our deck. Casting my eyes upwards, I beheld *a spectacle which froze the current of my blood.* At *a terrific height* directly above us, and upon the very verge of the precipitous descent, hovered *a gigantic ship of, perhaps, four thousand tons.* Although upreared upon the summit of a wave more than a hundred times her own altitude, *her apparent size exceeded that of any ship of the line or East Indiaman in existence.* [26, my emphasis]

This example demonstrates not only the use of a specific type of accentuation, but also the fact that similar types of accentuation can be situated in a text closely to each other. In this case the use of words indicating the utmost qualities is not singular but repeats several times. Similarly, a quite direct indication of importance is used ("'See! see!' cried he, shrieking in my ears, 'Almighty God! see! see!'").

F. Usage of proper names. The research of Garrod and Sanford [13] showed that in cases where a character is introduced with a proper name, the chances that readers will create a retrieval cue for this character in their memory are much higher than in cases where the characters are introduced with a common name. Thus, it is logical to assume that the usage of proper names performs the function of accentuation conveying the message: "This character is important!" The logic is very simple here: the remembering of a proper name demands some extra efforts (because proper names are the extreme case of conventional signs, usually having nothing in common with the designated person[5]), and therefore readers assume that such additional work is proposed to be done not in vain. The memorization of the proper name of a character should somehow simplify further reading. So, it is expected by readers that the mention of a proper name means that the character will remain active in further parts of the narrative text. It would be quite interesting to compare the role of proper names in two excerpts taken from different literary narratives – Shelley's *Frankenstein* and R. L. Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. The following situations are very similar: a protagonist wants to choose a crew for his ship and in both excerpts one of the candidates for entering the crew is described. However, in the first case this sailor is not an important character, as he will not participate in further plot development. The second case is very different – this sailor will become one of the principal actors in the storyworld.

(1) I shall certainly find no friend on the wide ocean, nor even here in Archangel, among merchants and seamen. Yet some feelings, unallied to the dross of human nature, beat even in these rugged bosoms. *My lieutenant*, for instance, is a man of wonderful courage and enterprise; he is madly desirous of glory. He is an Englishman, and in the midst of national and professional prejudices, unsoftened by cultivation, retains some of the noblest endowments of humanity. I first became acquainted with him on board a whale vessel: finding that he was unemployed in this city, I easily engaged him to assist in my enterprise. [31, my emphasis]

(2) I wished a round score of men – in case of natives, buccaneers, or the odious French – and I had the worry of the deuce itself to find so much as half a dozen, till the most remarkable stroke of fortune brought me the very man that I required.
I was standing on the dock, when, by the merest accident, I fell in talk with him. [...]
He had hobbled down there that morning, he said, to get a smell of the salt.
I was monstrously touched – so would you have been – and, out of pure pity, I engaged him on the spot to be ship's cook. *Long John Silver, he is called*, and has lost a leg; but that I regarded as a recommendation, since he lost it in his country's service,

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[5] However, there exists a category of "meaningful names" in literature, the signifiers of which are not fully conventional, indicating some traits of the character's personality. For example, in the novel *Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes [19], the sister of a mentally retarded main character is called Norma. Personal names like this, having clear semantics, not only help to better characterize an actor in a storyworld, but also facilitate the reader's task of remembering these names, which may be quite useful in cases of long novels loaded with characters.

under the immortal Hawke. He has no pension, Livesey. Imagine the abominable age we live in! [33, my emphasis]

What is interesting about these two examples is not only the important role of proper names, but, in fact, the crucial role of proper names in the reader's decision about whether to memorize a character or not. Both characters – the nameless lieutenant and John Silver – are introduced not just by a common word or a proper name, but their introductions are supplemented with short descriptions. However, in the first case this description is a secondary element, not an important unit of the plot (at least, from the cognitive perspective, i.e. this description of the nameless lieutenant may be forgotten without any detriment to the further comprehension of the text). But in the second case the description of John Silver is not simply an interesting detail. It contains some facts that will remain important and, moreover, will essentially alter their meaning. For instance, the evaluation of the fact that Silver has lost his leg will be crucially different when readers get to know that he is a pirate, which makes his injury a typical trait of the image of a sea bandit. Thus, neither in the first nor second example does the presence of a short description help readers finally decide if the character described is important or not. And it seems logical that, in fact, such decisive role is performed by the presence or absence of a proper name. The given list is by no means complete – the types of accentuation via the semantic sublevel of the surface structure are much more diverse, and a more or less exhaustive description of them would demand a separate study. Moreover, it would be rewarding to study how these devices have changed throughout the history of narrative literature. Perhaps some regularities might be found. Also, there may be significant differences between the types of accentuation at this level in different cultural traditions. The aim of the given overview has been only to provide a general impression of how diverse this means of accentuation may be.

3.3 Syntactic sublevel of narrative structure → Semantic sublevel of narrative structure

This subsection will analyze those syntactical (or plot) devices that may be used to accentuate some elements of the storyworld. Of course, plot devices are numerous, and only some of them can be used to stress the importance of certain events and facts. It could be that the majority of plot devices are neutral from the perspective of accentuation. For example, it is unlikely that focalization can be used as an accentuator. At the same time, there are certain cases when formal aspects of storytelling may accentuate certain facts of the storyworld. Below I will examine three of these, which are widely used in narrative literature.

A. Repetition. It is logical to assume that if a fact is repeated several times it must be regarded as important, and therefore should be memorized. However, at first I will explain what type of repetition is meant, as there are several of them. For example, Jean Cohen has distinguished between three types of repetition in literature: repetition of the sign, of the signifier, and of the signified. In the first case there is a complete repetition of a word or some larger part of the text. The second case encompasses such poetic devices as alliteration, assonance, rhyme or meter. The third case includes synonymy and pleonasm [27, p. 152]. I will consider predominately repetition of the third kind, i.e., repetition of the signified. These signified elements will be events and facts in a certain storyworld, which can be repeated by means of different word combinations. However, in some cases an event can be repeated via one and the same word combination, though such occurrences seem to be rare.

To illustrate how extensively this accentuation device may be used in narrative literature, I will analyze several paragraphs from the beginning of *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. The first two paragraphs of the text contain several repetitions of the fact that Marley, one of the principal characters of the story, is dead (I have italicized several quite similar ways in which this fact is mentioned):

> *Marley was dead*: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge's name was good upon 'Change, for anything he chose to put his hand to. *Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail.*
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> Mind! I don't mean to say that I know, of my own knowledge, what there is particularly dead about a door-nail. I might have been inclined, myself, to regard a coffin-nail as the deadest piece of ironmongery in the trade. But the wisdom of our ancestors is in the simile; and my unhallowed hands shall not disturb it, or the Country's done for. You will therefore permit me to repeat, emphatically, that *Marley was as dead as a door-nail.* [5, my emphasis]

In these two paragraphs there are at least three mentions of the fact that some character called Marley died. These repetitions, I assume, stress the importance of the character, or at least the importance of the fact of his death. Marley's death will be also mentioned in several neighboring paragraphs, though with less persistence. Incidentally, the importance of Marley is also stressed by him being introduced with a proper name, which is one more type of accentuation described above. The reason for such strong accentuation is quite obvious. The death of Marley is one of the keystones of the plot, and further on readers will see that Marley is not fully dead. He will become a ghost, and to have the possibility of noting how amazing this fact is, readers should first memorize the fact that Marley is not alive.

The main characteristics of the protagonist of the story, Scrooge, are also stressed with intensive repetition:

> Oh! But *he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner!* Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. *The cold within him* froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. *A frosty rime* was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; *he iced his office* in the dog-days; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas. [5, my emphasis]

I have italicized only several expressions, which are the most obvious cases of repetition, but the whole paragraph might have been italicized, being one large accentuation by means of this device. It may be interesting to follow the structure of the repetitions in this paragraph. It begins with the explicit statement of the main trait of Scrooge, i.e. that he was tight-fisted. Then several quite concrete synonyms are given ("squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous"). The paragraph ends with a metaphorical representation of the same idea ("he iced his office in the dog-days"). Thus, the most concrete representation of the fact goes first and the least concrete one is situated at the very end. The aim of such structure, apparently, is to facilitate comprehension of the paragraph.

As well as in the case of Marley's death, the given paragraph is not the only one accentuating the negative personal qualities of Scrooge. They will be strongly stressed in the following several paragraphs, and a bit less intensively – throughout almost the whole story. The reason for such strong stress is quite obvious. The transformation of Scrooge from a terrible misanthrope into a nice person is a main causal axis of the narrative. This transformation is present on the thematic level of the text. That is the reason why it is accentuated so intensively, and not simply by means of repetition, but via other devices as well. One of them will be described in the following subsection.

B. Moral of a micro-story.   Repetition is quite an explicit type of accentuation. One of the more implicit types is stress by means of a micro-story embedded in the larger body of narrative. These micro-stories should not be confused with the well-known notion of the text within a text [21] or a framed narrative. A micro-story in the sense used here is not a narrative situated on another diegetic level [2]. It is a story which functions as a parable, i.e. having a visible primary meaning, a moral, which could have been told in a more explicit way as well. A micro-story functions as an accentuation of this moral. See an example from *A Christmas Carol*:

> The door of Scrooge's counting-house was open that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who in a dismal little cell beyond, a sort of tank, was copying letters. Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal. But he couldn't replenish it, for Scrooge kept the coal-box in his own room; and so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel, the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part. Wherefore the clerk put on his white comforter, and tried to warm himself at the candle; in which effort, not being a man of a strong imagination, he failed. [5]

This micro-story should be regarded as one more way to say: "But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge!" However, here this message is implicit, and readers have to make the inference about the miserliness of Scrooge for themselves. In the given example the task of making the inference from the micro-story is unusually easy, because this story appears right after several paragraphs asserting the miserliness of Scrooge in a more explicit way.

C. Change of narrative movement.   Genette introduced a distinction between four types of narrative movements, each of which is defined by the correlation between story time and plot time[6]: pause, scene, summary and ellipsis [14, p. 95]. In the case of pause the story time "stops" and the plot describes the static storyworld. In the case of scene the plot time is equal to the time of the story (e.g., it happens in the dialogues). In the case of summary the plot time is shorter than the time of the story; an extreme example would be a short passage that tells the whole life story of a character. In the case of ellipsis some parts of the story are omitted, and thus the time of plot becomes equal to zero, while the time of the story may by indefinitely long. Usually in narratives these four movements are combined, changing each other, however we can also find some texts fully told via one of these movements (with the exception of ellipsis, of course).

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[6] In the English translation of Genette's *Narrative Discourse* [14] the terms "story time" and "narrative time" are used. However, in the present article the latter term is substituted by its synonym "plot time" for the sake of terminological uniformity throughout the article.

Two of these changes in narrative tempo – pause and scene – can be used as means of accentuation. In these cases narration becomes more detailed, signifying that the narrated facts may be important and therefore should be memorized. However, accentuation by means of pause or scene cannot happen if the whole text is written in this tempo. In such case pause or scene would be neutral, not conveying any additional meaning. What makes them meaningful is the shift of narrative tempo, that is the situation when, for instance, summary is changed into scene, or when scene is changed into pause.

This accentuation via change from a faster narrative tempo to a slower one can be illustrated by the following example from *Frankenstein*. This excerpt tells how Frankenstein, who has just run away from his apartment (being afraid of his own monstrous creature), now attempts to return. This episode contains a shift in narrative tempo – from summary to scene – indicating the importance of Frankenstein's fear. The creator's fear of his own creation is one of the important facts of the storyworld, accentuated in the novel by other means as well. The sentences told via scene tempo are italicized:

> I trembled excessively; I could not endure to think of, and far less to allude to, the occurrences of the preceding night. I walked with a quick pace, and we soon arrived at my college. I then reflected, and the thought made me shiver, that the creature whom I had left in my apartment might still be there, alive and walking about. I dreaded to behold this monster, but I feared still more that Henry should see him. Entreating him, therefore, to remain a few minutes at the bottom of the stairs, I darted up towards my own room. *My hand was already on the lock of the door before I recollected myself. I then paused, and a cold shivering came over me. I threw the door forcibly open, as children are accustomed to do when they expect a spectre to stand in waiting for them on the other side; but nothing appeared. I stepped fearfully in: the apartment was empty, and my bedroom was also freed from its hideous guest.* I could hardly believe that so great a good fortune could have befallen me, but when I became assured that my enemy had indeed fled, I clapped my hands for joy and ran down to Clerval. [31, my emphasis]

3.4 Semantic sublevel of narrative structure → Semantic sublevel of thematic structure

This section will describe the situation in which some elements of a storyworld, i.e. certain events and facts, can be used to accentuate some elements of the thematic structure, i.e. certain thematic events and facts. However, this type of accentuation is less apparent and therefore some general theoretical premises of it should first be explicated.

The first thing to be done is to make a clear distinction between facts and thematic facts. This distinction is similar to the distinction between words (elements of the semantic sublevel of surface structure) and facts (elements of the semantic sublevel of narrative structure). At first sight, it may appear that there is no difference between the sentence "Leo Tolstoy loved children very much" and the fact of Leo Tolstoy loving children. However, such a difference does exist, because the sentence contains more information than the fact: not just information about the fact of the (story)world, but also about its linguistic representation, i.e. about the words chosen to transmit the message and their syntactic organization. The same logic applies to the distinction between facts and thematic facts. Thematic facts contain much less specific information, i.e. only certain very general ideas about characters, their relationships, the nature of the conflict, etc. In some sense, this may be called the most important information of the text.

As well as words, certain facts can convey the message "Pay attention! This is important!" However, in the case of events this semantics is fuzzier. The accentuating potential of the facts in a storyworld is similar to the importance of certain events in the real world. For example, it seems reasonable to expect that in ordinary everyday conversation, information about a plane crash and the subsequent adventures of the survivors in Amazonia will attract more attention than information about a safe trip home. Of course, the semantics of everyday facts depend on their context, and therefore it would be thoughtless to assume the existence of some general rule which would help to detect, once and for all, facts-accentuators. I would rather prefer to speak about the higher probability of some group of facts to attract attention.

In fictional worlds the semantics of events and facts can be much more precise. This is especially true with respect to the generic types of narratives, such as detective, western, superhero comics, etc. Not only are their plots constructed according to certain formulas, but also their storyworlds. They are repetitive and therefore predictable. In such narratives it is much easier to say beforehand what events or characters will become important. For example, the detective genre has very clear distinction between important and unimportant elements of the semantic sublevel of narrative structure. Such elements as murder, robbery, sleuthing, evidence, testimony, court and so on, obviously, belong to the category of potentially important narrative units, and readers are expected to pay additional attention to them, assuming that many of them may belong to the thematic structure. At the same time, in the detective novel such facts as romantic love or war are expected to have smaller accentuating potential. However, they may have strong accentuation meaning in some other genres, such as the romantic story or historical novel.

3.5   Syntactic sublevel of thematic structure → Semantic sublevel of thematic structure

Thematic facts can also be accentuated by means of the syntactic organization of thematic structure, by a specific "thematic syntax." The most thoroughly studied aspect of thematic syntax is "*story grammar*," studied by Rumelhart [28], Thorndyke [34] and others. Story grammar is an abstract formula implicitly present in a narrative text, the role of which is to simplify the process of text memorization and retrieval. For example, here is one part of a larger grammar proposed by Thorndyke (an arrow stands for "consists of" and an asterisk indicates that an element may be repeated):

1. STORY → SETTING + THEME + PLOT + RESOLUTION
2. SETTING → CHARACTERS + LOCATION + TIME
3. THEME → (EVENT)* + GOAL

One of the important elements of such structures is GOAL, i.e. a task that needs to be fulfilled by a character. Numerous experimental studies [7, 18, 24] came to the conclusion that the goals of characters are regarded as important by readers during text comprehension, and they pay additional attention to these goals. Thus, it could be assumed that GOAL is a syntactically accentuated narrative element, and a thematic fact attributed to the category of GOAL will be memorized better than the one attributed to the regular EVENT category. Also, it was shown by Lutz and Radvansky [24] that, although completed goals are less accessible in readers' memory compared to failed goals, they are still better remembered than neutral information.

Similarly, Greimas's *actantial model* [17] implies the distinction between accentuated and not accentuated units. This model consists of six elements:

1. subject,
2. object,
3. sender,
4. receiver,
5. helper,
6. opponent.

Subject and object form the main axis of the model, being the most important elements. However, such elements as sender or helper seem to correspond to the "less important" part of the scheme. (Of course, the importance of certain elements of the model is genre-dependent, so we should beware of too broad generalizations.) The opposition of "subject vs. helper," perhaps, is the most apparent example of the opposition "more important vs. less important," which may be translated into more traditional terms as "protagonist vs. secondary character." It should be stressed that this opposition is a completely formal structure: the thematic fact of a character being a protagonist is not something "natural," but merely a formal construction. For instance, in *Treasure Island* by R. L. Stevenson [35], Ben Gunn is a minor character in comparison to Jim Hawkins or John Silver. But in R. F. Delderfield's novel *The Adventures of Ben Gunn* [4], which is a prequel to Treasure Island, he becomes a major character. In other words, Delderfield in his novel organizes the syntactic structure of accentuation of the thematic level in a way different from Stevenson's, changing the importance of the roles of characters. In this case Ben Gunn is stressed much more strongly than in Stevenson's novel and therefore is expected to be much better remembered.

Another thematic syntactic structure of a similar kind is "*beginning – middle – end,*" in which both beginning and end are marked as important, and the middle is not marked as such. I do not have experimental evidence to support this idea, but I can refer to some theoretical ideas of Yuri Lotman, who asserted that the beginning and ending are very important structural elements of the composition of an artistic text [22, p. 427]. A similar assumption was made in passing by Emmott, Sanford, and Dawydiak: "It may be the case that information embedded in the middle of a paragraph has less impact than information at the beginning or end of a paragraph, and likewise, it may be the case that information is handled differently depending on whether it comes at the beginning, middle or end of a whole story" [10, p. 217]. Unfortunately, this idea was not developed by these researchers, but the recurrence of this theoretical prediction is worth noting.

These are just three of the thematic syntactic structures that may be used for the accentuation of certain thematic facts. However, two aspects make me treat this topic very carefully. First of all, it should be mentioned that the accentuation of thematic facts is not very well studied; in particular, there currently exists not enough experimental support (although some claims, such as the one about the formal opposition "subject vs. helper," seem to be self-evident). Second, it is very important not to restrict oneself to the analysis of one text when studying the memorization of the elements of thematic structure. Thematic structure does not belong to the text itself; its elements may be accentuated in many different ways, and the text of a narrative itself is just one of the possible accentuators of it. The thematic structure of *Treasure Island* is accentuated not only by the numerous devices "inside" the narrative text, but also by means of some other texts functioning in the space of culture, such as film adaptations, cartoons, toys, etc. Thus, thematic structure should be studied already from the perspective of collective or cultural memory [1, 21].

Such accentuation by other texts in the body of culture may drastically change the thematic structure of a text. Perhaps, not many of those who have read Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* recall that this novel contains not only the story of a man who tried to survive on a

desert island, but also quite a long narrative (first five chapters of the book) concerning how Robinson ran away from home, made a journey to Brazil, became a slave, and had some marine adventures which finally led him to the desert island. However, these events are properly accentuated in the text itself. Such irregularity of recall can be explained by the fact that the cultural accentuation of the thematic structure of the novel is quite different from the accentuation exclusively by means of the novel itself. Different cultural texts concerning the story of Robinson (film adaptations, illustrations, retellings, etc.) usually accentuate only the part of the novel describing his life on the island. Perhaps, if the process of memorization was not influenced by all the additional texts, the thematic structure of the novel might have been quite different.

4   Conclusion

The current work represents an attempt to clarify some features of narrative structure that are interrelated with some specificities of the memorization of literary narrative texts. I have tried to show that there exist specific linguistic devices indicating to readers which elements of a text are important and should thus be memorized, and which of them are not. These devices may be called textual accentuations. Textual accentuations should be distinguished from the foregrounded text elements that also capture readers' attention. The former utilize the mechanisms of voluntary attention while the latter are based on the use of involuntary attention. The main goal of this article has been to describe the main principles of accentuation and construct a rough typology of accentuation forms.

At the present moment this typology is not very detailed and it may be rewarding to further develop it. Such development can go in two different directions. The first is investigation in depth – the search for further subcategories of the accentuation types presented in this article. The second direction would be in breadth – the search for accentuation mechanisms not only in literary narratives, but also in many other types of media, which were not covered in the present study. Logically, these other media should possess their own techniques for capturing the attention of readers/viewers/listeners.

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