The article deals with analysis of linguistic and structural peculiarities of dialogue in «Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead» by Tom Stoppard. Such features of dialogue as repetition, clichés, music-hall passages, ready-made language, play of words and verbal byplay have been singled out. It has been discovered that the play under study is structurally close to the play «Waiting for Godot» by Samuel Beckett. Some of the music-hall exchanges in «Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead» seem to be direct parallels to those in «Waiting for Godot». In the play under analysis the music-hall talk consists of ready-made stock sentences. There are passages where the order of the lines is not the only possible one, but could be changed without affecting the « intelligibility » of the dialogue. In such passages the sentences have become almost interchangeable building blocks and speech merely a game. One more peculiarity concerns the cohesive relations within music-hall passages. The bulk of the passage forms one logical and associative entity. There is a tendency in «Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead» towards considerable logical and associative cohesion within music-hall passages. Stoppard strives for smooth transitions from one scene to the next, providing associative and logical links between topical units. The associative and logical links can, however, be somewhat artificial, contrived through verbal trickery.

Key words: dialogue, absurdist, cliché, repetition, music-hall, ready-made language.

**DIALOGUE IN TOM STOPPARD’S «ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD»**

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most respectable way of contradicting myself’. The play, Stoppard affirmed, ‘had nothing to do with the condition of modern man or the decline of metaphysics’ [3, c. 95–99].

Music-hall talk is an essential part of the dialogue in «Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead». Some of the music-hall exchanges in «Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead» seem to be direct parallels to those in «Waiting for Godot». «That’s the idea, let’s ask each other questions», says Estragon; in «Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead» the asking of questions takes the form of a question game, played on an extensive scale [11, c. 30–36]. In «Waiting for Godot» Vladimir and Estragon take considerable pains trying to find out the date and determine the location; in «Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead» the heroes are worried about the points of the compass and whether they are witnessing a sunrise or sunset [11, c. 41–42, 62]. In the play under study the music-hall talk consists of ready-made stock sentences. There are also passages where the order of the lines is not the only possible one, but could be changed without affecting the «intelligibility» of the dialogue [4, c. 60–61]:

Ros: – Where’s it going to end?
Guil: That’s the question.
Ros: It’s all questions.
Guil: Do you think it matters?
Ros: Doesn’t it matter to you?
Guil: Why should it matter?
Ros: What does it matter why?
Guil (teasing gently): Doesn’t it matter why it matters?
Ros(rounding on him): What’s the matter with you? Pause
Guil: It doesn’t matter.
Ros (voice in the wilderness):...What’s the game?
Guil: What are the rules? [11, c. 32]

In passages like the above the sentences have become almost interchangeable building blocks and speech merely a game. Stoppard seems to have an irresistible urge towards verbal showmanship as the above virtuoso performance, based on simple variations on simple everyday sentences like «It doesn’t matter» testifies. One more peculiarity concerns the cohesive relations within music-hall passages. Even if the above passage evinces some discontinuity in the flow of the dialogue (e.g., the beginning and the end), the bulk of the passage forms one logical and associative entity. All in all there is a tendency in «Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead» towards considerable logical and associative cohesion within music-hall passages. The following excerpts built largely of ready-made sentences may provide illustration [4, c. 61–62]:

Ros: We’re on a boat. (Pause). Dark isn’t it?
Guil: Not for night.
Ros: No, not for night.
Guil: Dark for day. Pause.
Ros: Oh yes, it’s dark for day.
Guil: We must have gone north, of course.
Ros: Off course?
Guil: Land of the midnight sun, that is.
Ros: Of course. [11, c. 71]

Each step of this plodding game of deduction, starting from «dark» and leading to the «land of the midnight sun», is patiently laid bare, the very insistence of the characters on discussing obvious facts in itself creating rich possibilities for comedy. «Dark» leads first to the contemplation of the period of time with which it is associated, «night», and then to the spatial and geographical considerations which affect the phenomenon of dark: «north», «the land of the midnight sun». The sound pattern of «of course» is reflected in «off course», which, at the same time, gives vent to Ros’s anxiety about the navigational success of their expedition. The second part of the passage repeats and sums up the ingredients of the first part in a speeded-up succession [4, c. 62]:

Ros: I think it’s getting light.
Guil: Not for night.
Ros: This far north.
Guil: Unless we’re off course.
Ros (small pause): Of course.

In the following passage tight associative coherence is gained through the fact that the verbs all denote functions of sensory and other bodily organs [4, c. 62]:

Ros: – I can’t see a thing
Guil: You can still think, can’t you?
Ros: I think so.
Guil: You can still talk.
Ros: What should I say?
Guil: Don’t bother. You can feel, can’t you?
Ros: Ah! There’s life in me yet!
Guil: Whi are you feeling?
Ros: A leg. Yes, it feels like my leg.
Guil: How does it feel?
Ros: Dead.
Guil: Dead?
Ros (panic): I can’t feel a thing! [11, c. 70]

It could be pointed out that in «Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead» Stoppard seems to strive for smooth transitions from one scene to the next, providing associative and logical links between topical units. The associative and logical links can, however, be somewhat artificial, contrived through verbal trickery as in the following instances [4, c. 63–84]:

Ros (relaxes): It couldn’t have been real.
Guil: «The colours red, blue and green are real. The colour yellow is a mystical experience shared by everybody» – demolish [11, c. 14].
Here it is Guilt’s fictitious essay title that provides a smooth transition from the word «real» via colours to Guil’s analysis of mystical encounters which is to follow. A verbal link connects the Player’s speech on the essence of truth to the discussion of Hamlet’s melancholy:

Player: – One acts on assumptions. What do you assume?
Ros: Hamlet is not himself, outside or in [11, c. 48].

The dichotomy of music-hall pattern versus aphoristic mode of speech is evident in the play. The character who tends to speak in aphorisms and epigrams is the Player, who bears some resemblance to Lord Malquist in Lord Malquist & Mr Moon. They have a similar attitude to life in that they observe the struggle of those engaged in action whilst remaining passive, or, in Lord Malquist’s words, their posture is «that of the Stylist, the spectator as hero, the man of inaction who would not dare roll up his sleeves for fear of creasing the cuff». Being an outsider, the Player can afford to regard Ros and Guil, mock-heroes enmeshed in tragedy, with sententious serenity. The Player’s aphorisms and epigrams include references to dramatic art and the theatre/life metaphor as well as to life in general in a hostile world [4, c. 64–65]:

For some of us it is performance, for others, patronage [11, c. 16].

We keep to our usual stuff, more or less, only inside out. We do on stage the things that are supposed to happen off. Which is a kind of integrity, if you look on every exit being an entrance somewhere else [11, c. 20].

Uncertainty is the normal state [11, c. 47].

Everything has to be taken on trust; truth is only that which is taken to be true. It’s the currency of living. There may be nothing behind it, but it doesn’t make any difference so long as it is honoured [11, c. 48].

There’s a design at work in all art [11, c. 57].

Generally speaking, things have gone about as far as they can possibly go when things have got about as bad as they reasonably get [11, c. 57–58].

The bad end unhappily, the good unlucky. That is what tragedy means [11, c. 58].

Life is a gamble, at terrible odds – if it was a bet you wouldn’t take it [11, c. 83].

In our experience, most things end in death [11, c. 89].

The Player is not, however, the only one who is inclined to speak in epigrams. Guil, who has lost the neutral ground of an observer in the heat of the action, also has lines which tend towards the aphoristic or epigrammatic. On at least one occasion he even resorts to an old proverb. The scientific approach to the examination of phenomena is a defence against the pure emotion of fear [11, c. 11]. The only beginning is birth and the only end is death – if you can’t count on that, what can you count on? [11, c. 28] Your smallest action sets off another somewhere else, and is set off by it [11, c. 29] – if we can’t learn by experience, what else have we got? [11, c. 65]

Old ways are the best ways [11, c. 33].

The question is, does not even Ros make some attempts at the epigrammatic, albeit along the lines of gruesome humour:

*Life in a box is better than no life at all. I expect* [6, c. 51].

Repetition is typical of «Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead». The proportion of idiosyncratic speech is negligible, some instances being «well», «I say», and «I mean» in cases where there is no elucidation of a previous utterance. In the «seeking-out» scene what could be described as idiosyncratic speech is used, on a symmetrically increasing and diminishing scale, in a manner typical of Stoppard’s playful use of language:

Guilt: Well...
Ros: Quite...
Guilt: Well, well.

Guilt: Quite.
Ros: Well [11, c. 63].

Thus, we come to the following conclusion. In «Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead» there are language games for intellectuals. The number of clichés is surprisingly small and idiosyncratic speech is used, on a symmetrically increasing and diminishing scale, in a manner typical of Stoppard’s playful use of language:

**Література:**