

PARATEXTUALITY OF THE AUTHOR'S DEDICATION: PERITEXT VS EPITEXT**Ella Mintsys***Senior Lecturer at the English Philology Department**Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University**ORCID ID 0000-0002-1891-4658**Scopus Author ID 56268947800**ella.mintsys@pnu.edu.ua***Liudmyla Kryshropa***Associate Professor at the Department of Philology and Translation**National Technical University of Oil and Gas**ORCID ID 0000-0002-5274-0217**Scopus Author ID 57193353636**liudmyla.kryshropa@nung.edu.ua*

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The article deals with the concept of paratext which came into our awareness due to its introduction and further research by Gérard Genette, who subdivided paratext into two categories: peritext and epitext. The focus is on one of the paratextual elements, dedication, its pragmatic, structural and stylistic peculiarities, found in Danielle Steel's nine novels issued by Corgi Books publishing company. Although numerous studies have explored paratext and its components, there is a noticeable gap in the analysis of dedications. Moreover, none of these studies focus on contemporary romance, adding a unique perspective to the current research. From the pragmatic viewpoint, the individuals (both humans and animals) referred to in dedications play a role of addressees, participants in the communicative situation, alongside with the 'producer' (the author) and the third party (the reader). According to the findings of the present study, D. Steel's dedications have a certain structure, and exhibit a notably personal and emotional tone, characterized by the use of figurative language. This is achieved through various rhetorical devices such as epithets, metaphors, hyperboles, parallelism, gradation, and similar linguistic techniques. Thoroughly examining the empirical data allowed us to substantiate our hypothesis that dedications encompass characteristics from both paratextual categories, namely peritext and epitext. Viewed as the former, dedication is situated in immediate proximity to the main text within the same volume. However, in terms of the latter, this paratextual element can be fully understood by the reader only via information included in Danielle Steel's blog, interviews and suchlike materials, which are not physically connected to the book and exists externally.

ПАРАТЕКСТУАЛЬНІСТЬ АВТОРСЬКОЇ ПОСВЯТИ: ПЕРІТЕКСТ ТА ЕПІТЕКСТ

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паратекстуальність,
паратекст, епітекст,
перітекст, посвята.

Стаття присвячена концепції паратексту, що стала відомою завдяки введенню та подальшому дослідженню Жераром Женеттом, який розподілив паратекст на дві категорії: перітекст та епітекст. Увага зосереджена на одному з паратекстуальних елементів, а саме, на посвятах і їх прагматичних, структурних та стилістичних особливостях. Матеріал дослідження охоплює посвяти, які містяться у дев'яти романах Данієлі Стіл, виданих компанією Corgi Books. Незважаючи на те, що існує багато праць присвячених паратексту та його складових, паратекстуальні та лінгвостилістичні особливості посвяти ще недостатньо досліджені. Більше того, жодне з цих досліджень не проводилося на матеріалі сучасного жіночого роману, що додає актуальності запропонованій статті. З прагматичної точки зору особи (як люди, так і тварини), згадані у посвятах, виступають у ролі адресатів, учасників комунікативної ситуації, нарівні з автором, який є 'відправником' або 'творцем' посвяти, та третьою стороною (читачем). Згідно з результатами нашого дослідження, посвяти Данієлі Стіл мають певну структуру та є глибоко особистими та емоційними за тоном, завдяки використанню стилістичних засобів, а саме епітетів, метафор, гіпербол, паралелізму, градації та інших засобів експресії. Варто зазначити, що глибокий аналіз емпіричних даних дозволив підтвердити нашу гіпотезу, що посвяти включають характеристики як перітексту, так і епітексту. З огляду на те, що посвята розташована у безпосередній близькості до основного тексту, в межах однієї книги, вона безсумнівно є перітекстуальним елементом. Однак, з точки зору епітексту, цей паратекстуальний елемент може бути повністю зрозумілим для читача лише завдяки інформації, що міститься у блозі Данієль Стіл, її інтерв'ю та інших матеріалах, які не є фізично пов'язані з книгою та існують поза її межами.

Introduction. The phenomenon of paratextuality has received a great deal of attention and has been studied from different perspectives since G. Genette introduced and discussed the concept of the paratext in his works *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (1997), *Palimpsestes* (1982), etc., and explained how paratextual elements enable the text created by the writer to become a book and be of interest to its readers. The range of paratextual elements of a literary work, which “accompany the text but are not considered part of the text itself”, is vast. They are perceived as necessary “supplements” or “accessories” to a literary work and interpreted from the perspective of the relationship between the writer, the text and the reader (Enns, 2019). Among those elements are the ones which represent the first

points of contact between a reader and a text such as a) publisher-created paratexts – cover design, jacket copy, plot summary, and press release; b) reader-created paratexts – reviews, author profiles and interviews in national newspapers and popular media outlets (Bansal, 2019: 5), and c) writer-created paratexts – epigraphs, epilogues, dedications, acknowledgements, etc.

G. Genette (1997) divided the general denomination of paratext into two subcategories: 1) the peritext, which is located in close proximity to the main text itself, between or on the covers of the same volume, and includes the author's name, the title, blurbs, cover illustrations, dust jackets, dedications, the preface, chapter titles, maps, authorial appendices, afterwords, footnotes, glossaries, etc.; 2) the epitext,

which is not physically attached to the book but is found outside it, and comprises interviews, reviews, literary criticism, conversations, letters, diaries and others.

Theoretical considerations on paratextuality, its elements and spheres of application are varied. For example, Sirkku Ruokkeinen and Aino Liira (2017 [2019]: 106–129) study the interplay of text and paratext and view paratextual theory from the perspective of textual studies analyzing initials, changes in typography/script, and notes, in late medieval and early modern material. Another group of scholars investigates how paratextual information shapes our reading processes (Altmann, Bohrn, Lubrich, Menninghaus & Jacobs, 2014: 22–29). Don Latham and Melissa Gross claim that discussing the phenomenon of paratext and its subcategories (epitext and peritext), G. Genette did not specify their functions. Therefore, the scholars define the following functions of a) peritext – production (copyright, ISBN), promotional (award medallions, endorsements), navigational (table of contents, index), intratextual (foreword, dedication), supplemental (glossary, maps), and documentary (source notes, webography), and b) epitext - production (outlines, drafts), promotion (advertisements, book trailers), dissemination (catalog records, author interviews), reception (reviews, awards), extension (sequels, fan fiction), and referential (citations in other texts, quotations in other texts) (Latham & Gross, 2020: 10–11). Moreover, the mentioned study points out how peritext and epitext affect the reader.

The importance of studying paratexts has not gone unnoticed in the fields beyond literary studies such as modern mass media (Clabaugh, 2021); video games (Galey, 2023: 708–717); films and television (Skare, 2020: 511–519), etc.

There are multiple case studies dealing with the analysis of different paratextual elements, e.g., translator's footnotes viewed as “original paratexts as they are typically published at the same time as the translated text they accompany” (Buendía, 2013: 152); blurbs perceived as “the primary tool of advertising discourse” (Banari, Jalilifar & Shooshtari, 2019), as a genre which has “a definite communicative purpose and includes the use of specific linguistic and rhetoric conventions” (Demir, 2022), and as “evaluative-persuasive texts” (Cacchiani, 2007); epigraphs as elements creating “a threshold between the text and what is beyond the text” (Ekman & Taylor, 2021), etc.

The given article presents a case study which is a part of the ongoing project on paratextual, intratextual and stylistic peculiarities of Danielle Steel's prose. Due to the fact that nearly each of the author's texts is preceded by a dedication, the **objective** of our study is to analyze stylistic peculiarities of this paratextual element and to prove our hypothesis that

dedication does not refer exclusively to the peritext but can present a combination of both paratextual categories, peritext and epitext. The **topicality** of the research results from the fact that dedication as a paratextual element is understudied in the field of fiction prose and its nature has not been completely and thoroughly clarified.

Methods and Materials. The texts constituting the empirical material for the research originate from Danielle Steel's nine novels (1995; 1998; 2004; 2006; 2008, 2009; 2013; 2014; 2016), all of which are published by Corgy Books.

The methods which have been employed in the present study are as follows: 1) the method of stylistic analysis which helped to define the tools the author used in dedications; 2) a descriptive analysis of the figures of speech used in the paratextual element in question; 3) context analysis helping to better understand the background and build a more complete picture of a situation; it also contributes to building up the relations between the dedications, the context of the books, and other paratextual elements such as the titles and the blurbs. The corpus comprises lexical and syntactic stylistic devices occurring in the analyzed elements of the paratext. The examples are selected by means of manual selection. The fact that all the books under consideration were issued by the same publishing company, i.e. Corgi Books, accounts for their choice. The procedure of the analysis comprises: 1) defining the components of communication of the dedications (i.e. addresser – the author, the ‘producer’ and the sender of the message; addressee – the receiver of the message, who it is directly aimed at; the third party – the potential reader, who is a passive ‘consumer’ of the message and who has the power to choose whether to read it or not); 2) determining relations between peritextual and epitextual features of the dedications; 3) setting out and interpreting stylistic devices occurring in them.

Discussion. In the focus of the given research is one of the paratextual elements, dedication, which is present in all the books by Danielle Steel published by Corgi Books. According to S. Crossman, dedications show that authors devote their books to someone they like, in such a way they honour someone important in their lives. Therefore, “the dedication is usually personal rather than professional”. It can be addressed to family members (spouse, children, siblings, parents); close friends; people impacted by the book or featured in it; the readers of the book; inspirational or supportive figures in the author's life, etc. (Crossman, 2020). We claim that dedications, on the one hand, carry information about the author's life and preferences, on the other hand, they are ‘interwoven’ in the book structure serving as the so-called ‘connecting tissue’ between the title, the main text of the book, and its blurbs.

Speaking about the pragmatic value of dedication, G. Genette defines its status as “characteristics of its communicating instance, addresser and addressee (*from whom? to whom?*)” (Genette & Maclean, 1991). However, we presume that there is also the third party of the communicative situation, the reader, who decides whether to read the message or not.

It is essential that most of the target dedications are meant for Danielle Steel’s nine children. The message that the writer loves them a lot is quite explicit. In the opening part of the dedications, she addresses her children employing emotive epithets, e.g. *To my thoroughly wonderful children; To my beloved children; To my so greatly loved children*. And the closing part of her dedications presents Danielle Steel’s declaration of love for them: *I love you so much; With all of my love; With all my heart and love, And may you always know how much I love you*, etc.

It is also notable that dedications as peritext perform an intratextual function (Latham & Gross, 2020: 10–11). They are closely related to the other paratextual elements such as the title, in some cases the epigraph, and the blurbs, and to the text itself. It demonstrates the balance between the text and its environment, and that the author and the editor remain consistent. For example, the book *Winners* is a story of a seventeen-year-old girl who was a ski champion who hoped for Olympic triumph. However, her hopes were frustrated in a tragic accident. But in the end, she managed to overcome her disability. All that information is in tune with the dedication in which Danielle Steel wishes that her children had “the strength, courage, and perseverance to be winners!” (2014). The novel *Sisters* can serve as another example of the above mentioned idea. The book reads about four sisters whose lives were dramatically changed by a tragedy. As a result, the support they gave to each other opened up new prospects for their future. Thus, addressing her daughters in the dedication, Danielle Steel wishes that the sisters were like her characters, always “there for each other, with tenderness, compassion, patience, loyalty, and love” (2008). The dedication in the book *Betrayal* (2013) echoes the title, the back-cover blurb and the plot. So, she addresses her daughters, saying: “May those you trust never betray you”.

Moreover, we suggest that despite being peritextual elements, dedications also possess some features of epitext and perform the function of dissemination (Latham & Gross, 2020: 10–11). For example, the novel *Johnny Angel* is dedicated to Nicky Angel and Julie, “who was Nicky’s angel”. Judging by the words “we will miss you both until we meet again”, the reader can understand that they both are no longer alive. However, to clarify the fact, it is necessary to consult some additional outside-the-book sources. That is where the dedication’s epitextual aspect steps

in. Thus, in Danielle Steel’s blog *About me* (Steel, 2010), we find out that Nick was her son who had bi-polar disease all his life and committed suicide at the age of 19, in 1997. From another of her posts, *3/27/17, New York New York!!* (Steel, 2017), we discover information about Julie, “the extraordinary woman who helped take care of Nick”. Julie Campbell did not survive the loss, fell into a deep depression after Nick’s death, committed suicide thereafter.

The dedication in the book *Sisters* (2008), is addressed to the author’s mother Norma, her daughters, and also dogs. The latter proves that Danielle Steel is a dog person. The information about her passion for dogs can be found in her blog (Steel, 2010). There also occur some names which may not be familiar to the readers. For example, the novel *Accident* (1995) is addressed to Popeye, “who is always there when it matters”. The Goodreads forum (Natalie’s Reviews, 2014) informs that it is the name of her ex-husband John Traina who died of cancer. In the dedication of the book *Mirror Image* (1998), the author addresses her other ex-husband Tom Perkins, “a multimillionaire Silicon Valley mogul” (True Romance, 2024).

The analysis of the paratextual elements in question demonstrates that all the author’s dedications are highly emotional and expressive due to the rhetorical devices occurring in them. For example, there are chains of epithets describing Danielle Steel’s daughters: *Each one special and unique, courageous, loving, wise, resourceful, creative, persevering, honest* <...>. Mentioning their role in her life, the writer resorts to parallelism sprinkled with metaphors: *You are my heroes, my role models, my treasures and my joy*. Instances of gradation amplified by graphical means (italics and exclamation marks) contribute to the emotiveness of the address. E.g., *To the good women – the great women! The Best women I know* <...>. Hyperboles are also aimed at expressing strong emotions and impressing the addressee: *You are all God’s greatest gifts to me; To my incredibly wonderful fantastic most fabulous in the entire world loving daughters; You are each the best gift that I have given to the others, etc.*

Results. The findings of the research allow us to conclude that the paratextual element of dedication is a typical feature of Danielle Steel’s novels issued by the same publishing company, Corgi Books. It is notable that although there exist multiple studies on paratext and its elements, few of them analyze dedications and none of them is based on contemporary romance, which accounts for the novelty of the current research.

From the pragmatic point of view, the living beings (people and animals) mentioned in the dedications (addressees) are participants in the communicative situation together with the addresser (the author), and the third party (the reader).

As seen from the current study, D. Steel's dedications are highly personal, emotional, and figurative languagewise, due to such rhetorical devices as epithets, metaphors, hyperboles, parallelism, gradation, etc.

Finally, the in-depth analysis of the empirical material made it possible to prove our hypothesis that dedications comprise the features of both paratextual categories, peritext and epitext.

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