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SLANG IN CREATION OF DRAMATIC EFFECT IN CONTEMPORARY FLASH
DRAMA: NICK ZAGONE’S 10-MINUTE PLAYS

Bachelor’s thesis

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PREFACE

Contemporary mini-format drama as a literature genre has been long in the focus of modern researchers and scholars as well as professional and amateur actors and playwrights. Flash drama (or 10-minute drama) relates to daily life and peoples' most common problems which are represented in an extraordinary, sometimes shocking and mysterious way; its provocative ideas and plots inspire discussions in the society by offering shocking ideas in contemporary language settings. However, the use of language and slang, in particular, to create dramatic effects and to place flash drama within an everyday context have not been studied yet.

The aims of the present study are to introduce the notion of drama generally, to overview key features of flash drama and core elements to produce dramatic effect and to analyse flash dramas written by contemporary playwrights to reveal elements used to produce dramatic effect, and slang, in particular.

The paper consists of the Introduction, two main chapters and the Conclusion. The Introduction provides general information about flash drama plays and their structure. It gives an overview of the notion "flash drama" and the main points of its structure. Chapter I "Means of Creating Dramatic Effect in Drama" demonstrates the key features that make dramatic effect in one-act plays. Chapter II "Dramatic Effect in Nick Zagone's Flash Drama" discusses Nick Zagone's flash drama plays and the elements used by the playwright to produce dramatic effect by comparing Nick Zagone's two flash drama plays ('America' and 'What happens behind the bar'). The Conclusion sums up the outcomes of the research and comments on the hypothesis.

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INTRODUCTION

The Notion of ‘Drama’

Generally speaking, drama can be defined in a number of ways. The Oxford Dictionary (2017: para 1) states that drama is “a play for theatre, radio, or television” or “plays as a genre or style of literature” and that it is “the activity of acting”. In addition, according to the Oxford Dictionary (2017: para 6), the notion originates in the “early 16th century: via late Latin from Greek drama, from dran ‘do, act’”, which reflects the most important meaning of drama – it is always an action.

Despite drama having many definitions, Wickham (as cited by Ricks et al 1993: i) believes, “drama is only a literary art by extension, not by nature. Its origins lie on the release of human energy, physical or spiritual, and its earliest manifestations are to be found (in Britain as elsewhere) in religious and secular festivities”.

To sum up, drama has a variety of areas to be used, whether it is literature (as a written play, one-act play), hence the theatre, television and radio. However, in a deeper sense, drama is an opportunity to produce the energy in life, whether from the soul or physical. Moreover, original demonstrations or even the development of drama should be found in celebrations related to two contrasting areas: religion and secular.

Kermode and Hollander (1973) observed the development of Old English drama and its key points in staging, the main themes used in writing the plays. In medieval centuries authors considered comedy or tragedy rather as a poem than a play where the main points were happy or unhappy ending, ability to inform and educate. In the Middle Ages nothing was known about Greek drama. Ancient Roman tragedies were recognized by medieval authors as warehouse of valuable moral/mental and philological/lingual knowledge. As Kermode and Hollander (ibid.) state, the medieval drama had traced its roots from various types of Latin texts. The Latin of the mass, with its daily re-enactment of the Passion of Christ, essentially dramatic in its performance and designed to keep remembrance of the Passion, its antecedents and its implications, before the eyes and minds of the people. Despite the performance of other representatives of the church, the elaborate ceremonies, evolved for large and important celebrations (Easter and Christmas), had the most influential aspect. The presented dramatic aspect for the audience is not as a spoken dialogue while as a sung dialogue (ibid.:363).

It is still not clear how the dramatic representation from sung dialogue in Latin developed into a vernacular spoken play performed in the city on non-concentrated ground. Probably, but not exactly, folk ritual with participation of professional minstrels, dancers, jugglers and acrobats whether separately or in vagabond bands, and such patterns

of performance as dancing, games, festivals must have made their contribution. According to Kermode and Hollander (ibid.), the purpose of medieval drama, however, always remained sacred: drama was the “quick [i.e. living] book” in which the ordinary Christian might read the mysteries of his faith (hence the name “mystery” by which the plays came to be known). As noted by Kermode and Hollander (ibid: 365-366.), the medieval had an inclusiveness of the biblical drama of salvation which allowed plenty of scopes for its presentation. Incidents from outside the canonical books of the Bible, and from independent invention, were added to the plays.

The other medieval dramatic mode of bringing the lesson home to men was the morality play. In the morality play the contest/conflict between good and evil was presented through personification allegory, the virtues and vices contending for the soul of man.

According to Merriam Webster (2018: para 1, a) drama is “a composition in verse or prose intended to portray life or character or to tell a story usually involving conflicts and emotions through action and dialogue and typically designed for theatrical performance”. Moreover, as Barnet (2001: 951) suggests, drama is one of the essential types of literature and it includes “texts written to be performed”. Barnet (ibid.) explains that “a play is written to be seen and to be heard. We go to *see* a play in a theatre...but in the theatre we also *hear* it because we become audience. In reading a play it is not enough mentally to hear the lines. We must try to see the characters, costumed and moving within a specified setting, and we must try to hear not only their words but their tone, their joy or hypocrisy or tentativeness or aggression”. In addition, as Mangan (2013) claims, writing plays is different from writing poems or novels. The last ones are mostly addressed to a single reader, while plays are written for various people, for the audience in the theatre. However, the main target people are: directors, actors and designers, “readers who will read under particular circumstances and with particular ends in mind” (Mangan, 2013:85). Those are the people who, after reading a play, will collaborate to make a performance which will also differ a little from the original plot.

According to Anderson (1993:758) drama is not only gestures, colourful sets and the magical effects. “The effects and gestures are only to serve a story, but if a play does not have a significant story, we find nothing “moving” in the end, because our emotions have not been touched” (ibid.).

As Barnet (2001: 951) notes “handbooks on drama often suggest that a plot (arrangement of happenings) should have a rising action, a climax, and a falling action. This sort of plot can be diagrammed as pyramid, the tension rising through complications

or crises, to a climax, at which point the fate of the protagonist (chief character) is firmly established; the climax is the apex, and the tension allegedly slackens as we witness the *dénouement* (unknotting)”. Whatever structure might be in a play, the story itself has to be grasping with tension being masterly maintained till the unknotting. The playwright should also use a variety of stylistic devices in the text to influence readers, their feelings in a particular way.

Flash Drama and the Process of its Writing

There are many types of drama plays; the one, which is the object of the present study, is *flash drama*, with other names being also used a *one-act play* or a *10-minute play*.

Ten-minute plays have become popular nowadays, there are already lots of competitions being conducted. Moreover, a well-known playwright Glenn Altermann (the author of a popular book “Writing the 10-minute play”, 2013) states in the article “Writing the 10-minute Play” that “ten-minute play festivals have become increasingly popular with theatres over the last few years for several reasons”. The requirement of full-length plays is not completely the same as it used to be due to the popularity of the Internet and television, as well as music videos. Altermann also explains “I personally feel that almost anyone can write, tell stories, and write plays. If you’ve had experiences, you have stories like no one else. Your stories are unique, yours alone” (n.d.: para 6).

Writing flash-drama plays does not suggest that the writing process should be shorter or easier. Writing one-act plays can turn to be hard, especially for beginner writers. Missouri explains (2013: para 3), “A one-act play is a play that has only one act, as distinct from plays that occur over several acts. One-act plays may consist of one or more scenes. In recent years the 10-minute play known as flash drama' has emerged as a popular sub-genre of the one-act play, especially in writing competitions”. According to Danesco (2017), writing plays takes a lot of time and needs several drafts to be written. In addition, as Danesco (2017: para 14) states “creative writing of any form is a craft that has to be worked on over time and polished”. Another main step is that in the beginning of the writer career, giving a draft of a play to a trusted associate or to a fellow writer is as good as “to have actors read your script in a workshop setting” (ibid.: para 16), for example, finding help from your local theatre community.

Considering the form of the play, it is evident, that flash drama plays, as other drama plays, should be structured and they even can have a classic structure, where 10 pages are divided into 5 parts. However, as the article “How to write a 10-minute play” (n.d.: para 2) states, “playwriting, however, is not an exact science, and there are many

different structures you can use for your play.” Moreover, it is important to systemize the play as the article marks “because if you don’t your play will feel loose and unfocused, and we (your audience) won’t trust you to take us on a meaningful journey” (ibid.).

Not the last advice for dramatists would be, as Danesco (2017: para 3) states, writing plays needs “practice, experimentation, study, writing strategies and help from experts - and did I mention practice? - will be necessary, too”. In addition, another professional dramatist states also that “to experience the play, the playwright must become a part of the audience, and this can occur only when there is an actual stage, living actors, voices other than one’s own” (Oates, as cited by Barnet 2001:1294).

To conclude, flash drama is a contemporary sub-genre of one-act play that does not exceed 10 minutes in duration, it has to be structured, while a playwright can use a variety of different structures of a play. There are three important aspects in writing flash drama plays. The first is a structure to follow (even despite having various structures), the second step - to the successfully written 10-minute play is giving it for the consideration by actors or professional writers, for trustworthy theatre communities. The last major advice is to practice sufficiently as well as to study and rise the expertise.

The present study is intended to make a comparative analysis of two flash drama plays written by a contemporary playwright Nick Zagone “America” and “What happens behind the bar” in order to reveal the main features for creation of dramatic effect, as well as to identify the impact of the found peculiarities on the readers’ perception of the play, their emotional effect and the interaction between the real readers’ world and the reality of the character.

The present research hypotheses that slang words are main elements to produce dramatic effect in Nick Zagone’s flash drama plays to create the feeling of belonging to the world of play’s characters, thus to connect the play character with the real world of the reader.

CHAPTER I MEANS OF CREATING DRAMATIC EFFECT IN DRAMA

1.1 Dramatic Effect in Drama

In order to make drama, BBC GSCE Bitesize (2014: 1-4) states that many different ways are used: sound effects and the opportunity to leave characters on stage alone or to change over from one action and group of characters to another.

Soliloquy is a structural device which is one of the most important in the creation of dramatic effect. It is a dramatic element when the audience listens to characters' reflections precisely, while other characters do not. It is essential to know what character's plans are. Soliloquy creates an effect of the time being stopped.

Next structural dramatic device is *aside*. *Aside* allows to express the attitude of a character towards something. It is a comment on the happenings, while other characters do not hear /know the information which is said by asides.

Hiding and concealment are also means of dramatic effect. The example of them is found in W. Shakespeare's play "Othello". As GSCE Bitesize (n.d.: para 7) suggests "Othello hides away to hear Cassio talk, Iago hides to watch Roderigo's attack on Cassio and even Desdemona's body is hidden until Emilia 'draws the bed-curtain' to reveal her lying there". In addition, Shakespeare uses a *symbol* in his drama as one of dramatic elements. The symbol of loyalty in the play "Othello" is the handkerchief of Desdemona. However, the loss of it is not crucial in the beginning of the play, while further it is clear that for Iago an ordinary thing is important and the loss of it by Desdemona means her unfaithfulness.

Dramatic irony is used to create such circumstances when something is known to the audience but not to the characters in a play. Due to that fact, there is an effect that the audience feels more engaged in, they know the happenings however, cannot undertake actions.

To think about the feelings which the audience has is important in order to understand the essence of dramatic effect. Therefore, the play should not be read but experienced. The feelings the audience has are made by various strategies. The first is to combine specific events as one, the second is to clarify thoughts and motivations of a character, next is to suggest the upcoming events. (English Literature/Dramatic Effect, 2014).

To conclude, there are particular elements to create dramatic effect in drama: from leaving characters alone on the stage to share their thoughts without or in presence of other characters to creating symbols of ordinary items used in a play. Dramatic irony

plays a great role in involving the audience in a play performance. Feelings of the audience and means of creating them are also essential for dramatic effect.

1.2 Registers in Creating Dramatic Effect in Drama

According to Yale (2010: 245), there are some particular registers used as a source of variation in a speech of individuals. There are religious register, legal register and a linguistic register. *Special jargon* is one of the key features of a register. (*Jargon* is a vocabulary used by special groups of people.)

Antrushina (et al 2001: 12) points out, that there are two types of speech - formal and informal and that social context is a criterion for the form of speech. Being in various circumstances, different word structures and forms are chosen by people as a way to tell\depict their ideas. The circumstances of formal speech are, for instance, a lecture or a speech in court, an official letter; for informal type - an informal talk and an intimate letter.

According to Antrushina (ibid), informal style is used among close circle of a particular person (their family, friends and relatives) or while person feels himself as at home. This style of speech is “relaxed, free-and-easy, familiar and unpretentious” (et al 2001: 13). However, the level of education of people, their age, profession and region or place of living also impact on the choice of speaking style, the words used. *Colloquial, slang* and *dialect words and word-groups* are the types of informal words and word-groups.

Colloquial words, as explains Antrushina (ibid), are used by everybody of different ages and levels of education people in daily life speech.

Informal words in modern fiction are allowed and even presented in descriptive passages. The use of informal words in fiction, as Antrushina (et al 2001: 14) observes, creates an “intimate, warm, informal atmosphere” to the reader, like a friendly talk.

As Jackson and Zé Amvela (2005:138) states, while speaking and writing, people always adapt their style according to the context and audience in conversation. The styles of the message to friend about a meeting, for example, differs from the style people choose for course assessment. The vocabulary person chooses is a tool to distinguish a style of speech. ‘Formal’ vocabulary is used in formal context, whereas in an informal context ‘colloquial’ vocabulary and ‘slang’, probably, are allowed; ‘taboo’ vocabulary may be used in a very informal context.

Jackson and Zé Amvela (ibid) believes that formal words are used for the purpose of speaking properly about functions of body and other processes which are not usually

mentioned in public. Another reason of using formal words is to show oneself as a well-educated or intellectual person.

1.3 Slang in Creating Dramatic Effect

The notion 'slang', according to Oxford Dictionary (2017: para 1), is "a type of language consisting of words and phrases that are regarded as very informal, are more common in speech than writing, and are typically restricted to a particular context or group of people". Hazel (2015) also states that slang has a function to divide the audience - it is used by people to make the difference between in-groups and out-groups. Slang means synonym words created for specific group of people. Social and reference meanings are both related to slang terms, while considering slang, "the event of using the slang term is often the most important part" (Hazel 2015:165). Moreover, as Hazel (ibid)

As Hazel (ibid) notices, slang words may have several areas of meanings and most of the people do not know all of the meanings of a particular slang word. Younger speakers use slang mostly to distinguish them from older generation. What is more, the majority of slang terms concern taboo topics like sex and drugs.

What is more, there are three types of slang, as the Oxford English Dictionary defines. In the mid-eighteenth century, the first use of slang was mostly as the vocabulary for criminals and for persons of a law. According to Ayto and Simpson (ibid: para 2), "this vein of slang thrives today in the vocabulary of the underworld, street gangs drug trafficking". However, the meaning of slang has broadened after the mid-eighteenth century and the most important function of it became, to quote Ayto and Simpson (ibid), "as a private vocabulary binding together members of a subculture or social group conferring upon them an individuality distinct from the rest of the community", and from the beginning of the nineteenth century, slang is applied "much more generally to any language of highly colloquial type, considered as below the level of standard educated speech, and consisting either of new words or of current words employed in some new special sense". What is interesting, nowadays all slang is colloquial or informal.

Dalzell and Victor (2008) observed the usage of slang in the past and nowadays. In 1850 the word slang was applied to an 'illegitimate' colloquial speech. From then on, lingo became a synonym of 'argot'. Being the word for 'slang' in French, nowadays 'argot' can only be applied to French slang of French cant. Accordingly, this means that the language is disfigured by "coloured peoples speaking English indeed but adapting it to their own phonetics and grammar" (ibid), for instance Beach and Pidgin English.

‘Jargon’, as Dalzell and Victor pointed out (ibid), “originally as in Chaucer, used of the warbling of birds - has long been employed loosely and synonymously for slang, but it should be reserved for the technicalities of science, the professions and the trades: though, for such technicalities, 'shop' is an equally good word. [S]lang is much rather a spoken than a literary language”. While in addition, as Yale (2010: 245) claims, “In social terms, jargon helps to connect those who see themselves as ‘insiders’ in some way and to exclude ‘outsiders’”.

Finally, hanging on the border of legitimate speech, slang is a vagrant language which still remains as an appropriate to use. Moreover, according to Dalzell and Victor (ibid), “Slang, being the quintessence of colloquial speech, must always be related to convenience rather than scientific laws, grammatical rules and philosophical ideals. As it originates, so it flourishes best, in colloquial speech Slang may and often does fill a gap in accepted language”. While in addition, As Ayto and Simpson of the dictionary claim, “the slang of English is English with its sleeves rolled up, its shirt-tails dangling, and its shoes covered in mud” (Ayto, Simpson, 1992: Introduction, para 1).

The analysis of the origin of the word slang shows that the word together with its synonyms has been used to refer to colloquial speech at the level of being almost illegitimate in its use. Its peculiarities in grammar and phonetics were the results of its adaptation to the needs of particular groups of people in business, trade, science, etc.

CHAPTER II DRAMATIC EFFECT IN NICK ZAGONE'S FLASH DRAMA

The following chapter is intended to make a comparative analysis of two flash drama plays written by Nick Zagone: “Amorica” and “What happens behind the bar” in order to reveal the main features in creation of dramatic effect, as well as to identify the impact of the found peculiarities on readers’ perception of the plays, their emotional effect and the interaction between the real readers’ world and the reality of the character.

2.1 Nick Zagone’s Plays: Plots and Characters

According to Goodreads’ article “Ten 10-Minute Plays: Volume II” (2008: para 1), the main features of modern one-act plays are “the dark humor Nick Zagone's "Sixty Years, to Life", zany absurdism of Walter Wykes' "Family 2.0", disturbing imagery of Laura Elizabeth Miller's "Fugue". Each of these short plays expresses the unique vision of an emerging contemporary dramatist. Together, they make an exciting and diverse evening of theatre”.

A web blogger Nicolas G made a review of the comedy play ‘Kingdom of the spider’ by Nick Zagone on his webpage *nicksplayjournal.blogspot.com*. In his review he notices the author’s choice of presentation of the devil and an angel. The devil in the play stands for a Black Widow, and for the angel there is a Mormon girl (Kingdom of the spider: para 1). As Nicolas G states, “what I like about Kingdom of the Spider is that Nick Zagone twists the classical devil and angel scenario. Instead, he has the devil represented by a Black Widow spider and the angel is a Mormon girl” (ibid.). The character Black Widow is represented in a play as a powerful character, she/it is big and knows everything about Bob’s life and his son, which should make an ordinary man vulnerable. The blogger also mentions that “the choice of using a Black Widow is interesting because it poses an immediate threat to him and his child. A Black Widow is the most venomous spider in the world” (ibid: para 2). However, the irony of the comedy involved in the fact that being a huge power as a Black Widow, she is killed by a pamphlet.

The name of the main character’s son - Isaac implies a religious context with the author trying to tell the history of religion. The following extract from Nicolas G review provides a proof that a play is religious, (Kingdom of the spider: para 3):

In the beginning, Bob meets a Satan figure. Bob is constantly left in a state of confusion because the spider doesn’t let him speak. This symbolizes the chaos of the world without organized religion. Then the bible girl comes along and puts an end to the confusion, much like how religion provided order for ancient civilizations. Then the pamphlet is used to kill a living creature even though the girl says God would not kill anything. Similar to how countless people have been killed

in the name of God by people who claim that is what God would have wanted. The last part, I find the most interesting. The girl, after seeing the violence of the spider dying and being interrogated by Bob, has a crisis of faith. She much like a majority of the world today is turning away from religion. She is focusing on what she wants, and that is a baby that will be born into a world without religion.

The analysis of the review reflects that the main topic of the play is religion and the crisis of faith, that soon the world will be without any religion. The serious topic is narrated in a comic way, the example of which is that the Black Widow, which represents the Devil in the play, is killed by a pamphlet.

Analysing Nick Zagone's plays it could be argued that through the plays the author reveals to the society and gives an idea about currently occurring tendencies in the world. Zagone also derides the politics in America, peoples' world view, their habits, manners and demeanour, the relationship between people. However, discussing society's problems through plays is not a new way in playwriting. The role of plays in political issues has been described by Michael Mangan (2013:82):

...throughout the period between the outbreak of the Civil War and the return of the monarchy, plays and play texts were implicated in a variety of ways in the politics and ideological debates of the time. For example, news pamphlets in dialogue form and printed popular playlets made an important contribution to public life: these printed dramatic debates offered an arena in which arguments about the political life of the new Commonwealth could be heard.

There are also expressed the problems of the society, namely, such as degradation and loss of moral values in the play *Fresh & New CIA Torture Techniques*. The family of Iraqi man, Hadir, is in capture by CIA in America. CIA wanted that he broke up a secret. Hadir's family was offered all the great things about contemporary life which were not as such in Iraq (there are mostly strict rules for woman, especially). Hadir understands that the family do not want to go back to the country with strict rules. The following dialogue from the play *Fresh & New CIA Torture Techniques* shows how moral values have lost their value in comparison with comfortable materialistic life (Zagone, 2006):

JUNAH: Oh Boobi why don't you tell them what they need to know and come on over! You wouldn't believe the food here! I won't be skinny for long so hurry up will you?

HADIR: But. Don't you want to be here with me and... and...

JUNAH: And do what Boobi? Do what? Al-Qaida don't pay you enough. Here they have this thing called "a union." You can live well! Look, Boobi you're gonna kill yourself at some point for all those virgins and really then what do I have? I got to look out for myself. Look--Here they give you Christmas bonus!

The author expresses the society's problems in short plays, flash-drama plays, in which he describes practically ordinary situations, the conversation in the bar ("What happens behind the bar") or at the petrol station ("The gas-mart amendment"), for instance. Sometimes the author plays are written in a mystery way, as in the play "Kingdom of the spider", where a huge spider, Black Widow, talks to a man. Despite the mysterious narration, the raised question is panhuman - faith.

One of political issues connected with capitalism is reflected in the play “Amorica”, where one person with a great idea cannot realize it due to a capitalism’s too long way of manufacturing a product.

The simplicity of situations is one of the key effects of the author to create a dramatic situation. The effect is achieved by the fact that readers or the audience understand that the described events exist or are taking place in their reality, that this is the reality that surrounds them. It can be assumed that after watching performances of plays or reading them, the society will think about the problems in the world, in the relationships between people, about the worldview that exists nowadays.

The next dramatic effect in Nick Zagone’s plays is his usage of bad and rude phrases or words in his plays. This layer of language produces a great impact on readers or audience. The example of such language is found, for example, in the play ‘What happens behind the bar’.

The above analysis of the plays suggests ways of creating dramatic effect in Zagone’s plays: the simplicity of everyday situations as plot peculiarities and the use of slang words to support the truthfulness of everyday situations in plays’ plots.

2.1.1. “Amorica”

The play “Amorica” (Zagone, 2006) is a Brechtian Anti-Capitalist play. To summarise the plot, a man, called Bob, created a “What-it” which will help all people in the world and make Bob a rich man. The story continues with the process of manufacturing of the product, which is a starting point of all problems of capitalism Bob faces. Namely, peoples’ lie and the wish by any cost to gain as much profit for themselves as possible. In the end, Bob stays with a loan from the bank without any money in his hands, as well as without his product being manufactured.

The authors’ main idea of the play is the following: nowadays America with its government, industries and citizens intends to make all of the actions only in order to receive a sufficient profit. Majority of people forget about their souls, simple life treasures such as love, friendship, family, sympathy, help to others and honesty.

The vocabulary in the play is more slang specific than neutral. The antagonists of the play are representatives of Capitalism or characters connected with economy (Manufacturer, Laborer, Lawyer, Bank, Cheap foreign labor, Retailer, Salesmen, Advertising and UPS Angel); they use in their speech slang - offensive or milder - and colloquial vocabulary. However, the main character (protagonist) uses only neutral language with exceptions at the end of the play.

The main character in the play is Bob. His language is neutral, except one line at the end, when he says referring to UPS “Screw you” and “Fuck Capitalism” before the blackout. These phrases make a huge dramatic effect due to the fact that the most patient and kindest character - Bob, throughout the whole play does not say any offensive word, even in dialogues with other characters whose vocabulary is rude or rather offensive.

Bob’s intention is to help people with his invention - ‘What-it’, in his line he says, “And I’ve finally finished the plans for a prototype of my new invention. It will help all human kind!” (Zagone, 2006: para 1). However, in the end, even such a moderate person could not withstand the capitalist regime and loses his neutrality in speech.

The following examples show the difference in the vocabulary of different characters. The author reveals the idea that Bob is a kind and patient character with good intentions for human kind.

- LABORER: I’m your friend! I work my ass off for this Manufacturer to earn worthless stock options.
BOB: Well maybe you can help me. I invented this Whats-it and I need to manufacture it.
- BANK: Who’s next?
[The others push and prod BOB to approach the BANK.]
BOB: Hi.
BANK: Fuck off.
- BOB: So. Here you go! Here’s my Whats-It! When are you going to start mass producing it?
LABORER: Never! Fuck off! (Zagone 2016: 1-4)

The Capitalist regime is presented by rude, selfish and cunning people. Nick Zagone reveals a particular idea of characters through their offensive and colloquial vocabulary. For example, the dialogues are overwhelmed with rude words, offensive slang mostly, (Zagone, 2006):

- BANK: What’d I say Fuck-chop? Fuck. Off!
ADVERTISING: [Breaking from RETAILER. To MANUFACTURER:]Okay Fuck-chop he’s buyin’ give me my money there pimp daddy.”
- [Offstage we hear “KISS MY ASS! COME ON! KISS IT!”]
BOB: What’s that?
[We hear “That’s right! Get down on your hands and knees and kiss my ass!”]
LABORER: I’m your friend! I work my ass off for this Manufacturer to earn worthless stock options.
- LABORER: You don’t? Wait. Are you sure I know you? Who are you? I don’t know you. Fuck off.
MANUFACTURER: You heard the man. Fuck off!
LABORER: Never! Fuck off!

However, there are also examples of not strongly impolite but just colloquial vocabulary, (Zagone, 2006):

- **Hon**
MANUFACTURER: Our evil Retailer is no match for Major Corporate Advertising and Marketing. Go to it hon.
- **Buddy**
LAWYER: Don’t you worry buddy. Got it all under control.
- **Ya; Doin’**
LABORER: [Shaking hands with BOB.] Bob! How ya doin’! Remember me?

- **Commie; Get the hell out of here**
MANUFACTURER: So you don't have our Whats-its? [C.F.L. shakes her head.] Get the hell out of here you commie! [Everybody shouts Commie!]Wait!

In the play “Amorica” the main idea was to show the imperfection of the economic system, the capitalist regime. Nick Zagone shows how even a necessary and the best invention of mankind cannot be produced or manufactured because of the fact it will not give any profit. To show how Capitalism is aimed at guaranteed profit-making, according to Terry Eagleton (as cited by Merriam Webster, 2018: para 2), the main principle of regime is “... trusting in nothing that it cannot weigh and measure, and far too little as well, accumulating wealth as an end in itself”.

The informal style of speech in the play is comprehensible for vast majority of the nowadays society, namely slang words and phrases. They reflect that characters of the play are ordinary people as well as the audience or readers of the play. This makes a connection between the world of readers and characters, the audience feel and understand that the characters are the same people with same problems in their life. Moreover, the author uses offensive slang in order to deliver a concrete message to the reader or the audience about the imperfection of Capitalism. Offensive slang is a tool of the author to create dramatic effect in the play. Slang is used to reveal the nature of the society, to highlight bad sides of particular characters in the play, consequently the imperfection of Capitalism. Zagone connects the vocabulary and the unilateral or sector-specific goals of Capitalism’ representatives.

2.1.2. “What happens behind the bar”

In the play “What happens behind the bar” (Zagone, 2006) the scene takes place in the bar, 2 friends, Sam and Ray meet in the bar, talking about mostly unnecessary topics from the first sight. Two friends meet accidentally two ladies and try to make a conversation with them. Closer to the end, it turns out that a lady from the company is pregnant and one of the guy is sick.

The authors’ main idea of the play is to show how a disease of one can turn his or her life in another way, how it helps to reveal simple life joyfulness because then a person forgets about everything which is materialistic and starts to live listening to his soul without being afraid of the loss of his life.

The first tool of the creation of dramatic effect by Nick Zagone (namely to reflect the problem of the society - people do not feel the real life joyfulness anymore) are dialogues and the style of speech used in them. Through dialogues the author shows characters’ behaviour, their manners - which are impolite for intelligent people.

Characters in the play, Sam and Ray, speak about embarrassing things naturally and calmly. For example, two guys were talking about the smell of one's piss and then they continued without any confusion to talk about it with ladies. For example, (Zagone, 2006: 6):

RAY

Can you do me a favor? Can you come over here and smell my buddy's piss.

CARRIE

Well, that's a pick-up line you don't hear every day.

The use of slang in flash drama by the author is another feature to create dramatic effect. Slang words or phrases are rather rude than offensive. For example: dude, damn, go off, barf, okay, the hell it is, gonna. (Zagone, 2006: 8):

RAY

Did you eat a cat today? Did you eat a cat Sam? Is that what you're sayin'?

SAM No, I didn't eat no damned cat!

However, some other devices are used in order to create an impact on the audience. In the "What happens behind the bar" one-act play, the amount of use of stylistic devices is more noticeable than the application of slang. For example, there is irony ("Congratulations. You met your soul mate"), rhetorical questions ("What are you some kind of excretion expert?"), onomatopoeia (ding, ding, ding) and periphrasis ("that your mother falls into the same category"). Another effect is hidden in the name of the play - despite the word 'bar' being in it, it does not appear the main motive of the plot, it is not connected with the idea of the play. However, there *is* a dramatic moment connected with the bar. In the first lines the character Sam says that "Whew wee! I love a good bar fight!" (Zagone, 2006: 2) and at the end (Zagone, 2006: 12):

SAM: Well I don't know, I guess I just don't think too much about things anymore. I just do 'em. Like tonight, I wouldn't have jumped into this bar fight a year ago, but tonight? Bing bing bing! I was in there. And I felt alive doin' it. Alive! Just throwin' some punches, hurling some chairs. Why I felt like... like...

These two lines above make a dramatic impact on audience – the bar and the fight in the bar, such an ordinary thing, can make a person, who has a terminal illness, alive.

To conclude, Nick Zagone uses not only colloquial speech in order to create dramatic effect in his plays. Stylistic devices are also one of the tools to make an impression on readers or the audience. The idea of the plot, where a character has hard circumstances in his life (terminal sickness) also influences people emotionally, as well as character's behaviour represented through the dialogues.

2.2. Slang Use in "Amorica" and "What happens behind the bar"

2.2.1 Frequency of Slang Use in "Amorica" and "What happens behind the bar"

In order to indicate a marked difference in slang words, all of them were divided into two subgroups according to their degree of impoliteness. The first bar chart ‘Group 1’ represents the following offensive slang or slang phrases: kiss my ass, fuck-chop, work my ass off for, fuck off, fuck a goat for, rip your dick off, crap, piss off, slut. The second bar chart ‘Group 2’ is a group with slang words with milder offensiveness, inappropriate or colloquial words: *chop-chop, hon, buddy, okay, feces, ya, doin’, commie, outta, damn, pucker up, call in the big guns, get the hell out of here, sweatshop.*

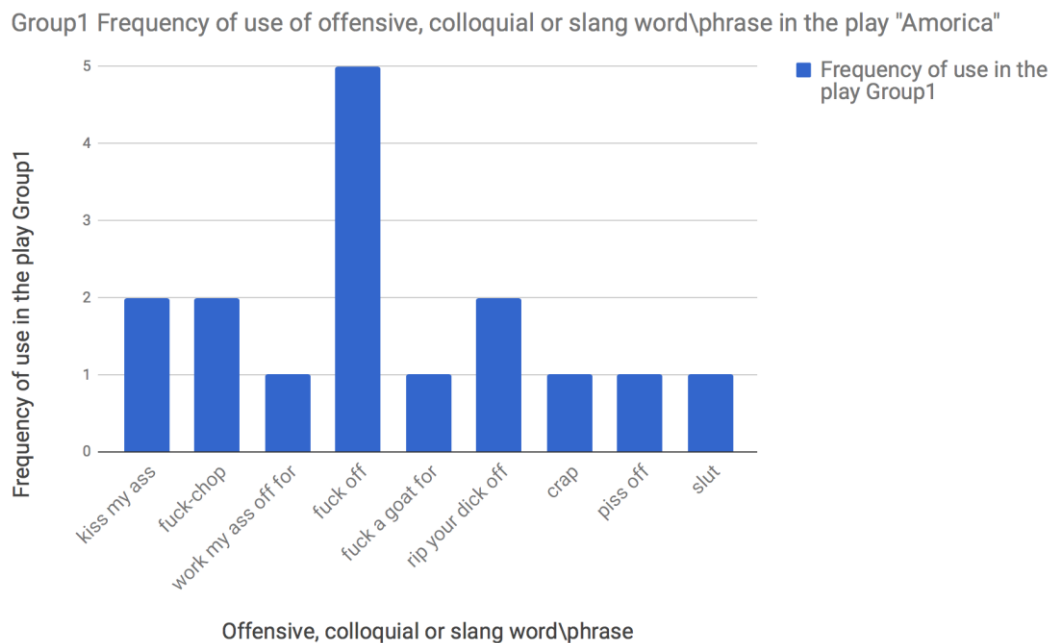


Figure 1. Bar chart of frequency of use of colloquial or slang word/phrase in the play “America”, group1.

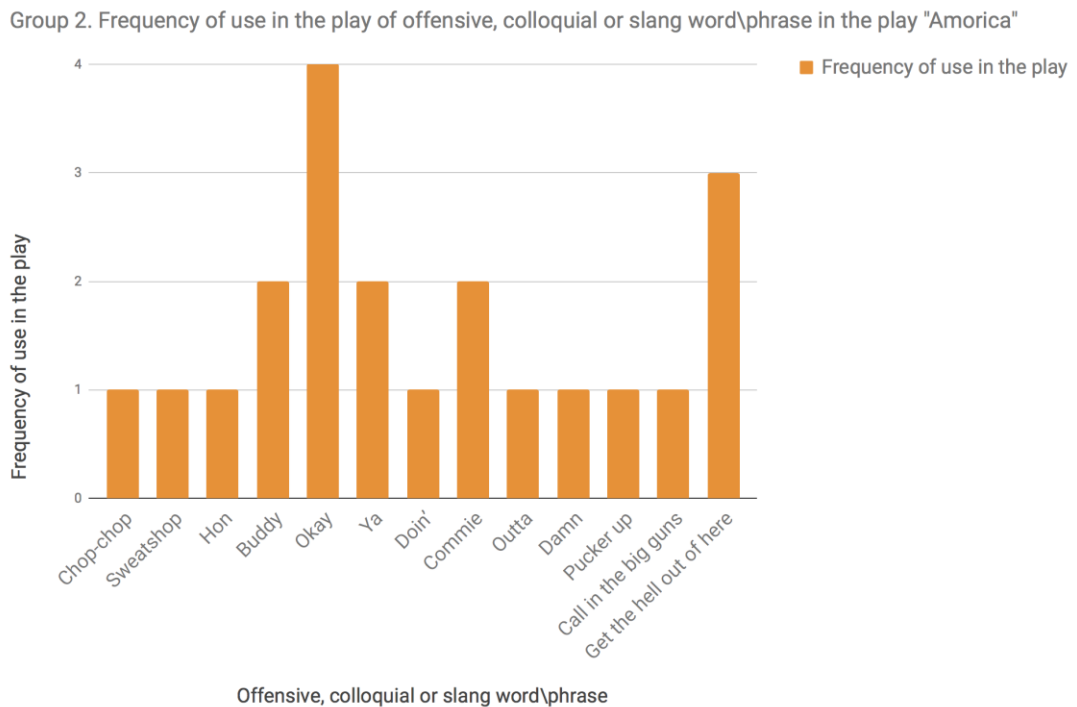


Figure 2. Bar chart of frequency of use of colloquial or slang word/phrase in the play “Amorica”, group 2

The given bar charts show the frequency of use of slang words\phrases in the play “Amorica”. Slang phrases or words were divided into two groups according to their level of rudeness. The first bar chart represents slang words or phrases with milder abuse, the second one is of strong offense.

In the first chart the most frequent word phrase is ‘Fuck off’, which were used 5 times in the play and is a very offensive in speech. Rarely there were noticed words and word phrases as ‘kiss my ass’, ‘fuck-chop’, ‘rip your dick off’. The phrases as ‘Work my ass for’, ‘Fuck a goat for’, ‘crap’, ‘piss off’ and ‘slut’ were mentioned only once in the play.

According to the second bar chart, words as ‘Okay’ and ‘Get the hell out of here’ (repeated in the play 4 and 3 times correspondingly) were also used often in the play among other chosen words for comparison in the second group. ‘Buddy’, ‘Ya’ and ‘Commie’ were used only twice in the play but they are still not the least preferable words.

The analysis of the charts reflects that the most frequently used words in the whole play are: *Fuck off*, *Okay* and *Get the hell out of here*. What is interesting, comparing these phrases, it can be argued that they all have different degree of rudeness, ‘Fuck off’ is the

most offensive, 'Get the hell out of here' has a moderate degree of impoliteness and 'Okay' is a modern word used among the majority of people every day.

The least used slang words were, from the first group of words: *Piss of, Slut, Crap, Work my ass off for and Fuck a goat for*; and from the second group of words: *Chop-chop, Sweatshop, Hon, Doin', Outta, Damn, Pucker up and Call in the big guns*.

Analysing two charts of slang, colloquial or offensive words and phrases in the play "Amorica", it can be argued that extremely offensive slang is used to a greater extent.

The comparison of two one-act plays and the group of slang words and phrases used in them ("Amorica" and "What happens behind the bar"), has revealed that in the first play the use of offensive slang is predominant, while in the second one the language is more legitimate and slang words are only on the border with being illegitimate. To make a contrast, in "Amorica" the frequently used word is 'fuck' with its combination with other words, whereas in "What happens behind the bar" flash drama the most impolite or rude word is 'damn'.

The analysis of both plays has shown that the difference in the use of offensive slang in plays is connected with different plot ideas. In the play "Amorica" the main idea is to show the imperfection and of Capitalism as an economy system. The play "What happens behind the bar" reflects how people forget what *real life* is until the day comes when they get a terminal illness.

In conclusion, Nick Zagone uses slang as one of the tools in order to create dramatic effect in his plays. He also makes an impact on the reader by introducing an image of everyday difficulties in society. The main group of speech vocabulary is colloquial and illegitimate; therefore, slang is one of the supporting feature in writing contemporary 10-minute plays.

2.2.2. Slang vs Neutral Vocabulary in "Amorica" and "What happens behind bar"

The tables were made in order to find the correlation between sentences with slang words and sentences which has *only* neutral register. There were chosen three extracts from the play and every line is under its number. Slang words and phrases are marked in 'bold'.

"Amorica"

Extract No 1 (Zagone, 2006: 3):

1. BOB: Hi.
2. BANK: **Fuck off.**
3. BOB: I need some money see and you're a Bank and...
4. BANK: What'd I say **Fuck-chop? Fuck. Off!**

Table 1. Sentences with neutral or slang/colloquial speech in extract No 1

Sentence number	Speech style	
	Neutral	Slang/Colloquial
1	✓	
2		✓
3	✓	
4		✓
Total	2	2

Extract No 2 (Zagone, 2006: 2):

1. MANUFACTUER: [*Looking at Whats-it.*] What? Hmm. Depends. I don't know. Do I know you?
2. BOB: No.
3. MANUFACTURER: [*Giving back Whats-it.*] **Fuck off.**
4. BOB: Now what do I do?
5. LABORER: [*Shaking hands with BOB.*] Bob! **How ya doin'!** Remember me?
6. BOB: No.
7. LABORER: I'm your friend! I **work my ass off for** this Manufacturer to earn worthless stock options.
8. BOB: Well maybe you can help me. I invented this Whats-it and I need to manufacture it.
9. LABORER: Sure! I can help you! I can get my manufacturer to produce OUR invention **buddy**.
You got a lawyer?
10. BOB: No.
11. LABORER: You don't? Wait. Are you sure I know you? Who are you? I don't know you. **Fuck off.**
12. MANUFACTURER: You heard the man. **Fuck off!**

Table 2. Sentences with neutral or slang/colloquial speech in extract No 2

Sentence number	Speech style	
	Neutral	Slang/Colloquial
1		✓
2	✓	
3		✓
4	✓	
5	✓	
6	✓	

7		✓
8		✓
9		✓
10	✓	
11	✓	
12		✓
Total	6	6

Extract No 3 (Zagone, 2006: 5):

1. [Offstage we hear “**KISS MY ASS! COME ON! KISS IT!**”]
2. BOB: What’s that?
3. [We hear “That’s right! Get down on your hands and knees and **kiss my ass!**”]
4. MANUFACTURER: Oh no. That’s who we have to sell your Whats-it to.
5. BOB: Who?
6. MANUFACTURER: It’s the Large Retail Chain Store!
7. [Enter Andy Kaempher with a SALESMAN **kissing his ass.**]
8. RETAILER: That’s right! **Kiss it again!**
9. BOB: Who’s that **kissing his ass**?
10. MANUFACTURER: My salesman. He’s trying to sell your Whats-it to a 200 store chain.
11. SALESMAN: Please Mr. Retailer. Please buy my manufacturers product.
12. RETAILER: Pucker up **weasel boy** and **kiss it! Kiss it** one more time!
13. SALESMAN: But...
14. RETAILER: **Kiss it!**
15. [SALESMAN **kisses.**]
16. SALESMAN: Will you buy it now Mr. Retailer?
17. RETAILER: Let me think. No. No I won’t, now **get the hell out of here.**

Table 3. Sentences with neutral or slang/colloquial speech in extract No 3

Sentence number	Speech style	
	Neutral	Slang/Colloquial
1		✓
2	✓	
3		✓
4	✓	
5	✓	
6	✓	

7		✓
8		✓
9		✓
10	✓	
11	✓	
12		✓
13	✓	
14		✓
15		✓
16	✓	
17		✓
Total	8	9

“What happens behind bar”

Extract No 4 (Zagone, 2006: 3):

1. RAY: With a little mayonnaise? **Man**, I could eat a whole bushel.
2. SAM: You’re an **idiot**.
3. RAY: I’m an **idiot** ‘cause I eat asparagus?
4. SAM: Well obviously, it makes your pee stink that sure can’t be good for **ya**.

Table 4. Sentences with neutral or slang/colloquial speech in extract No 4

Sentence number	Speech style	
	Neutral	Slang/Colloquial
1		✓
2		✓
3		✓
4		✓
Total	0	4

Extract No 5 (Zagone, 2006: 4):

1. RAY: You should eat more vegetables. I worry about you.

2. SAM: Why?
3. RAY: Vegetables are good for **ya**, gives **ya** nice soft **dirtyies**.
4. SAM: **Dirtyies**?
5. RAY: That's what my mama used to say.
6. SAM: She said that? **Dirtyies**?
7. RAY: Nice soft **dirtyies**. My mama was a lady.
8. SAM: Well your mom's an **idiot** too.
9. RAY: You **callin'** my mama an **idiot**?
10. SAM: Well now I shouldn't say that, I didn't know your mama, however I know you, and you're an **idiot**, and you come from your mama's loins, so I guess logic would dictate that your mother falls into the same category.
11. RAY: So... are you **callin'** my mama an **idiot** or not?
12. CARRIE: Gangway we got a puker!
13. PATTIE: I'm gonna **barf**!
14. SAM: Well we **ain't stoppin'** ya honey.

Table 5. Sentences with neutral or slang/colloquial speech in extract No5

Sentence number	Speech style	
	Neutral	Slang/Colloquial
1	✓	
2	✓	
3		✓
4		✓
5	✓	
6		✓
7		✓
8		✓
9		✓
10		✓
11		✓
12	✓	
13		✓
14		✓
Total	4	10

Extract No 6 (Zagone, 2006: 3):

1. RAY: Your **pee** stinks!
2. SAM: What are you **talkin'** about? It smells fine.
3. RAY: No man I swear your **pee** smells like asparagus.
4. SAM: Well, I didn't eat any asparagus.
5. RAY: Could swear it smells like asparagus.
6. SAM: **What the hell you talkin' about-** asparagus. What are you like a **pee** aficionado? I worry about you.
7. RAY: You ever eat asparagus? Right after you eat asparagus your **pee** has this like distinctive smell. You'll know it if you eat asparagus.

Table 6. Sentences with neutral or slang/colloquial speech in extract No 6

Sentence number	Speech style	
	Neutral	Slang/Colloquial
1		✓
2		✓
3		✓
4	✓	✓
5	✓	✓
6		✓
7		✓
Total	2	7

The results from the tables above were used to find the correlation between sentences with neutral and colloquial/slang speech in all three extracts from each play, in order to reveal the predominant register.

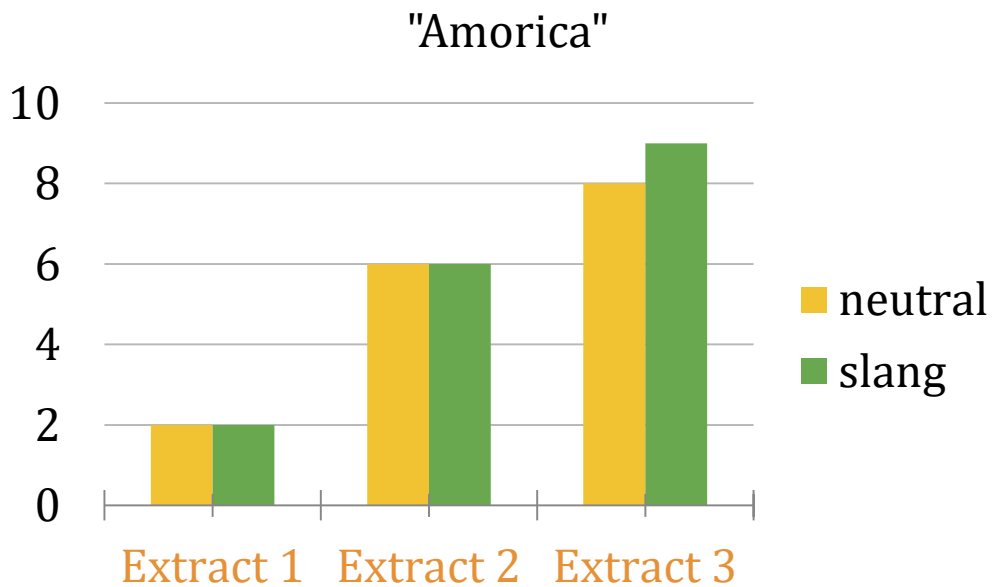


Figure 1. The comparison of slang vs neutral vocabulary used in the play “Amorica”.

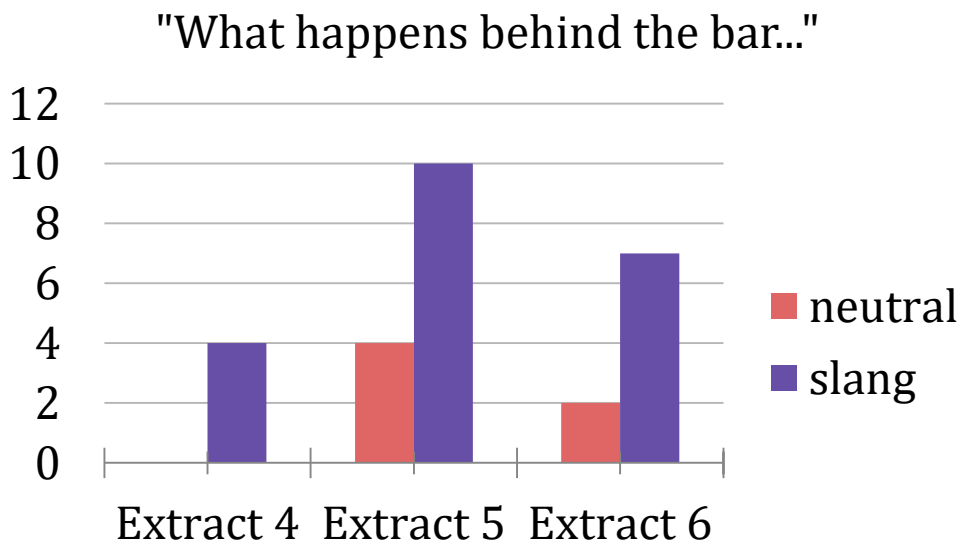


Figure 2. The comparison of slang vs neutral vocabulary used in the play “What happens behind bar...”.

The analysis of the charts has shown that the amount of slang used in the play extracts is generally higher than the use of neutral speech. However, in the graph “Amorica”, the correlation of compared style of speech were similar, at the same level (extract 1 and 2: 2 and 6, correspondingly), while in extract 3, the use of slang exceeds the use of neutral style of speech.

To sum up, slang is a predominant vocabulary layer in both plays’ extracts. Therefore, it can be argued that slang is one of the main tools to create dramatic effect in plays in terms of the language used.

CONCLUSION

Flash drama is a new contemporary sub-genre of drama which popularity is increasing in the theatre society. It is a genre that does not require writing a full-length play, therefore virtually everyone has an opportunity to write a flash drama play. Flash drama can be characterised as a contemporary sub-genre of a one-act play that does not exceed 10 minutes in duration, it allows a range of structural variants in its composition.

However, despite being modern and innovative, flash drama as any other drama influences the audience by creating a particular dramatic effect (the tools to create the effect) with the use of language being one of the most important tools.

The study discussed the results of the analysis and survey of Nick Zagone plays (“What happens behind bar...” and “Amorica”) in order to reveal the tools that produce the dramatic effect with the use of language means, and the use of slang words vs neutral vocabulary in particular.

The study has revealed that there are many different elements that allow to create a dramatic effect and emotional influence on readers or the audience. They are: topics and plot ideas, dramatic elements and style of speech in the plays’ dialogues, namely slang.

Slang is a predominant language layer of the analysed plays. Its use in characters’ lines makes the characters’ world closer to the world of the reader. The hypothesis that claimed that slang words are main elements to produce dramatic effect in Nick Zagone’s flash drama plays to create the feeling of belonging to the world of play’s characters, thus to connect the play character with the real world of the reader, has been confirmed.

SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Kaasaegne miniformaadis draama kirjandusžanrina on olnud pikka aega tähelepanu keskmes teadlastel ja uurijatel, samuti professionaalsetel ja amatöörnäitlejatel ning näitekirjanikel. Flash- draama (kümne minutiine lühidraama) on seotud inimeste igapäevaelus kõige levinumate probleemidega, mis on esitatud erakordselt, mõnikord šokeerivalt ja salapäraselt. Flash-draama provokatiivsed ideed ja süžeed inspireerivad arutelu ühiskonnas, pakkudes šokeerivaid ideid tänapäevastes keeleseadistustes (language settings). Kuid keele ja eriti slängi kasutamist dramaatiliste efektide loomiseks ja flash-draama asetamist igapäevasesse konteksti pole veel uuritud.

Bakalaureusetöö teema on “Slängi kasutamine dramaatilise efekti loomiseks tänapäeva flash-draamades: Nick Zagone’i kümne minutiised näidendid”. Uurimistöö eesmärgiks on anda ülevaade flash-draama põhijoontest ja põhielementidest dramaatilise efekti saavutamiseks ning analüüsida flash-draamat, mille on kirjutanud nüüdisaegne näitekirjanik, et näidata põhielemente dramaatilise efekti loomiseks ja eriti slängi kasutamist. Käesoleva töö hüpotees on, et slängisõnad on dramaatilise efekti saavutamiseks peamised elemendid Nick Zagone’i flash-draama näidendites. Slängisõnade kasutamine loob lugejal-kuulajal kokkukuuluvustunde näidendite peategelase maailmaga, seega need sõnad ühendavad näidendi peategelase ja lugeja maailmu.

Uurimistöö koosneb sissejuhatuses, kahest peatükist ja järeldusest. Sissejuhatus annab ülevaate flash-draamast näidenditest ja nende struktuuridest, samuti mõistest “flash-draama” ja selle struktuuri põhipunktidest. Esimeses peatükis “Means of Creating Dramatic Effect in Drama” käsitletakse lühidraama põhielemente, mis loovad dramaatilise mõju ühevaatuselistes näidendites (in one-act plays). Teises peatükis “Dramatic Effect in Nick Zagone’s Flash Drama” uuritakse Nick Zagone’i kahte lühinäidendit (‘Amorica’ ja ‘What happens behind the bar’) ja põhielemente, mida näidendite autor on kasutanud dramaatilise efekti loomiseks. Kokkuvõttes esitatakse uuringu tulemused ja kommentaarid hüpoteeside kohta.

Uurimistöö tulemused näitasid, et paljud erinevad elemendid võimaldavad tekitada dramaatilist ja emotsionaalset mõju lugejatele või publikule. Need elemendid on kas teemad või süžee ideed, draamaelemendid või kõnestiil näidendite dialooges, nimelt släng.

Släng on domineeriv kõnestiil analüüsitud näidendites ning selle kasutamine peategelaste kõnes teeb tegelaste maailma sarnaseks lugeja maailmaga.

Bakalaureusetöös leidis kinnitust hüpotees, et slängisõnad on dramaatilise efekti saavutamiseks peamised elemendid Nick Zagone'i flash-draama näidendites, selleks et luua kokkukuuluvustunnet näidendite peategelase maailmaga, seega seostada näidendi peategelast vaataja-lugeja reaalse maailmaga.

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FLASH DRAMA: NICK ZAGONE'S 10-MINUTE PLAYS,**

Supervised by *Lect.* N. Raud, PhD,

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