

UDC 811.111'42

<https://doi.org/10.31861/gph2026.858-859.26-35>ENGLISH TRENCH POETRY OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR
AS A DISCURSIVE GENRE

Anzhelika BURAVENKO

Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University

a.buravenko@kubg.edu.ua<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-5364-8831>

The article examines English trench poetry of the First World War as a specific discursive genre within war discourse and analyses the discursive strategies that shape representations of war, heroism, sacrifice and trauma. Drawing on poems by Rupert Brooke, John McCrae, Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, the study shows how nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivisation, mitigation and intensification strategies legitimise or de-legitimise military action and verbalise traumatic war experience. The research is grounded in the Discourse-Historical Approach and an interdisciplinary understanding of poetic discourse as a semiotic modelling activity that both reflects and reshapes the author's cognitive matrix. English trench poetry is treated as a denouncing discursive genre that intervenes in broader war discourse by challenging traditional myths of noble sacrifice and exposing the bodily and psychological costs of industrialised warfare. The article proposes a typology of three subtypes of trench poetry discourse, patriotic, traumatic and satirical, which differ in their focal concepts (HERO, SACRIFICE, DEATH, TRAUMA, MEMORY) and dominant configurations of discursive strategies. Special attention is paid to how sensory concreteness, medicalised lexis, ironic recontextualisation of religious and patriotic formulas and competing perspectives of civilians and frontline participants construct alternative "worlds" of war experience and contribute to cultural memory of the Great War. The analysis demonstrates that trench poetry simultaneously functions as a historical record of frontline experience, a discursive practice of "auth-therapy" that articulates the traumatic worldview of the "lost generation", and a counter-discourse that destabilises legitimising narratives of war in both past and present contexts.

Keywords: *discourse, war discourse, discursive strategies, World War I, trench poetry, traumatic experience.*

Buravenko A. English Trench Poetry of the First World War as a Discursive Genre. *Науковий вісник Чернівецького національного університету імені Юрія Федьковича. Германська філологія*. Чернівці: Чернівець. нац. ун-т ім. Ю. Федьковича, 2026. Вип. 858-859. С. 26-35. <https://doi.org/10.31861/gph2026.858-859.26-35>.

© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University



This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

I. INTRODUCTION

The vast variety of poetry and poetic discourses basically fit into a number of traditionally recognized genres which are tackled from the standpoint of style, poetic technique and devices, narrative type, authorship etc. Although recent studies suggest a deeper interpretation, primarily in terms of connecting poetry itself and cognitive categories (Hamilton, 2023) or treating it as "artistic forms that reflect the collective thinking, worldview, and spiritual–moral values" (Abruyeva, 2025), we pursue a deeper interdisciplinary approach towards poetic discourse as a specific semiotic two-way modeling activity that results in generating image-based alternative realities (worlds) as well as "fueling" and re-shaping the author's cognitive matrix. The novelty of this approach lies in treating poetic discourse not merely as an aesthetic artifact or a historical document, but as a dynamic semiotic mechanism through which traumatic experience is simultaneously encoded, transformed and transmitted across cultural memory. The latter factor is essential for the so-called English trench poetry of the First World War.

The First World War introduced industrialised trench warfare and exposed the gap between early patriotic expectations and the brutal reality of the front: initial enthusiasm and glorification of heroic sacrifice gave way to disillusionment once the conditions of trench life and mass casualties became apparent.

We identify this bulk of poetry as a discursive genre within the broader framework of war discourse, treating it as a historically specific configuration of poetic communication produced by soldier poets. This discourse provides both the reflection of personal experience of catastrophic events (the collapse of worlds and worldviews) (Kolesnyk, 2024) and the means of adapting to their detrimental impact. The corpus of poetry analyzed in this paper encompasses poems by Rupert Brooke, John McCrae, Wilfred Owen, and Siegfried Sassoon.

The aim of the article is to provide pre-analysis of the English trench poetry of the First World War, namely, to identify this discursive genre's typological features and subtypes, and outline basic discursive strategies through which these poems verbalise and reframe traumatic war experience.

II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theoretical Background: Discourse and Genre

2.1 The Concept of Discourse in Linguistics

In contemporary linguistics, discourse is widely understood as language use in context, covering not only the verbal product but also the social, cognitive and cultural conditions of its production and interpretation. While text is usually treated as a relatively stable, structured verbal product, discourse refers to a communicative event that integrates linguistic form, meaning and social action, shaped by participants, purposes, and situational and cultural frames. (Fairclough, 2003, van Dijk, 2008).

Modern theorists describe discourse as a cross-level phenomenon linking linguistic structures with cognitive, social, ideological and historical dimensions of communication. Within critical discourse studies, discourse is conceptualised as a form of social practice that both reflects and shapes social structures, identities and power relations, operating through historically and institutionally patterned text types and communicative practices. (Wodak & Meyer, 2016) Poetic discourse can thus be seen as the realisation of poetic texts in concrete communicative situations, where historical period, genre conventions and relations between poet and reader guide meaning-making. English trench poetry of the First World War, produced by soldier-poets within the extreme conditions of trench warfare, may therefore be approached as a historically specific configuration of poetic discourse that intervenes in broader cultural understandings of war and trauma. (Silkin, 1998). As we have already mentioned, our understanding of discourse rests on the assumption of its semiotic-modelling nature that manifests through infinite iterations of verbalizing inchoative irrational (mythic) structures that

are involved in generating secondary myths as the premises of "rationalization" of a certain alternative reality (Kolesnyk, 2025).

2.2 War Discourse

War discourse integrates the discursive practices through which wars are legitimated, narrated, commemorated or resisted, including political speeches, media reporting, military communication and cultural texts (Hodges, 2015). Central features include call-to-arms rhetoric, the discursive construction of social identities - heroes, enemies, victims, traitors and legitimating devices that present war-related actions as necessary and justifiable. War discourse is deeply ideological, mobilising metaphors, euphemisms and narrative frames that shape collective emotions and beliefs about threat, sacrifice and post-war memory (Hodges, 2015).

In the context of the First World War, literary representations became crucial to the shift from early idealised images of glory and noble sacrifice to later disenchanting accounts centred on suffering, futility and psychological breakdown (Silkin, 1998). Canonical war poetry by Rupert Brooke, John McCrae, Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon has played a key role in forming cultural memory of the Great War, foregrounding themes of mass death, trauma and disillusionment. (Kendall, 2006, Winter, 1995). Respectively, war discourse verbalizes a standard set of concepts centred on WAR and aligned as a volumetric space (a "multi-D field") involving the subspaces of MILITARY, STATE, IDEOLOGY, CULTURE, MYTH etc.

2.3 English Trench Poetry as a Discursive Genre

Discourse theory and genre theory converge by treating genres as recurrent, socially recognised ways of organising discourse in response to typical communicative situations. (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010) Genres are conventionalised configurations of purposes, participant roles and linguistic choices through which communities act and mean. (Miller, 1984, Swales, 1990) Discourse theory explains how language use is embedded in power, ideology and context, while genre theory specifies how these meanings become stabilised into durable patterns of text and practice. (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010).

Within this framework, English trench poetry of the First World War appears as a recurrent way of organising poetic discourse about war, shaped predominantly by soldier-poets who experienced trench warfare first-hand, acquired traumatic experience and attempted to cope with it by "expunging" it from their mental world and placing it into a poetry-ridden alternative reality. While traumatic experience appears as "pseudo adaptation" of a damaged system (SYSⁿ) that develops a "damaged worldview", verbal (semiotic) / discursive activities recreate traumatic experience turning it into a material exteriorized copy of experienced states of affairs. At the same time the actual experience becomes "shaded" or "mythic" and thus separated from the person's "operational system".

As a discursive genre, trench poetry is characterised by recurrent communicative purposes - bearing witness, commemorating comrades, protesting against official narratives - and relatively stable thematic and stylistic patterns.

Trench poems repeatedly depict the material realities of the front-line action that are represented by micro-level concepts pertaining to diverse conceptual spheres: MUD, GAS, SHELLING, RATS, CORPSES etc., while their verbalizers' semantics sports "concrete sensory detail, technical lexis and soldier slang to construct an experiential world that contrasts sharply with abstract patriotic slogans". (Silkin 1998). They foreground disillusionment with earlier idealised war verse, replacing honour and glory motifs with irony, bitterness and explicit articulation of trauma. This shift is evident in the trajectory from early patriotic texts by Brooke and McCrae to the traumatic and satirical poetry of Owen and Sassoon, whose work systematically challenges dominant militaristic and nationalistic discourses. (Kendall, 2006) In other words, the MILITARY conceptual sphere is directly bound to the sphere of VALUES. Respective axiological concepts turn into contextual scenarios' triggers. Their verbal representations function as "motivating navigational

markers" for the CONFLICT scenarios of diverse scale in traditional war discourse. This connection loses its "magic" in the trench poetry as the secondary myth "FIGTING FOR GLORY" is dispelled.

From a discourse-analytic perspective, English trench poetry functions as a counter-discourse, reconfiguring what is sayable about war by centring horror, futility and psychological damage rather than heroic sacrifice. Recurring discursive strategies - graphic embodiment, ironic use of traditional forms, intertextual allusions to religious and patriotic rhetoric, patterns of silence - allow these poems to verbalise traumatic experience and problematise established regimes of truth about the Great War. English trench poetry can thus be conceptualised as a distinct discursive genre within war discourse that both reflects soldiers' lived experience and actively reshapes cultural memory.

In what follows, *English trench poetry* is treated as a predominantly **denouncing** discursive genre of war discourse (a historically specific type of poetic discourse), realised through particular discursive practices of soldier-poets and their readers in the production, circulation and interpretation of trench poems.

A detailed typology of this genre is based on two interrelated criteria: (1) the focal concepts verbalised in trench poems (HERO, SACRIFICE, DEATH, TRAUMA, MEMORY) and (2) the dominant configurations of discursive strategies used to construct and evaluate these concepts in different subtypes.

Within this denouncing genre, three more specific subtypes can be distinguished: a patriotic subtype that idealises SACRIFICE and DUTY, a traumatic subtype that foregrounds BODILY DISINTEGRATION and TRAUMA, and a satirical subtype that exposes LIES, HYPOCRISY and the gap between civilian myths and frontline realities.

3. Discursive Strategies and War Discourse

Analysis of the poetic discourse of the First World War requires identifying the discursive strategies through which poets construct, legitimise and contest representations of war. From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, a discursive strategy can be broadly defined as a more or less accurate and more or less intentional plan of practices (including discursive practices) adopted, with varying degrees of intentionality, to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic aim (Wodak, 2001). In war-related texts, such strategies serve to legitimise or de-legitimise military action, shape images of enemies and allies, and normalise or problematise violence.

In this study, the typology proposed by M. Reisigl and R. Wodak within the *Discourse-Historical Approach* is adopted as the main framework for identifying discursive strategies in war poetry. The DHA provides the primary analytical toolkit for describing the linguistic realisation of discursive strategies in trench poetry, while the concept of the semiotic-modelling nature of discourse (Kolesnyk, 2025) specifies the ontological status of what these strategies construct. In other words, DHA is used to identify how nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivisation and (de)intensification are realised through concrete lexical choices, grammatical patterns and figurative devices, whereas the semiotic-modelling perspective allows interpreting the results of this analysis as the verbal construction of alternative war-related "worlds" and secondary myths that organise traumatic experience. Although DHA was originally developed for the analysis of political and institutional discourse, its core analytical focus lies on the linguistic realisation of strategies such as nomination, predication and argumentation in context. This makes DHA applicable to poetic discourse as well, since trench poems can be examined in terms of how specific lexical choices, grammatical patterns and figurative devices realise these strategies and thus legitimise or de-legitimise war-related actions and identities.

By strategy, they mean a deliberate plan of discursive practices used to accomplish particular political, social, psychological or linguistic goals (Reisigl and Wodak, 2017). They distinguish five main types of discursive strategies:

Nomination strategy are concerned with how social actors, objects and events are labelled and categorised in discourse; different lexical items, metaphors or membership labels construct different

social identities for the same referent. For example, in trench poetry soldiers can be nominated as “*heroes*”, “*beggars*”, “*cattle*” or “*useless swine*”, which immediately positions them either as honourable agents or as degraded, expendable bodies.

Predication strategy specifies what kinds of properties are attributed to these actors and phenomena; by systematically combining them with positive or negative predicates, discourse evaluates them and locates them within a moral and ideological space. Thus, the same soldier may be predicated as “*glorious*”, “*brave*” or, conversely, as “*mad*”, “*hideous*” or “*doomed*”, which shapes the reader’s assessment of war as either laudable or destructive.

Argumentation strategy organises why particular actions, evaluations or policies appear acceptable or unacceptable; by invoking topoi such as danger, sacrifice, usefulness or betrayal, discourse justifies or challenges war-related decisions and interpretations. When a poem exposes the formula “*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*” as “*the old Lie*” after describing a gas victim’s agony, it mobilises the argument that real bodily suffering invalidates the traditional topos of noble death.

Perspectivisation strategy indicates from which point of view events are represented; through the choice of grammatical person, deictic anchoring and reported speech, discourse foregrounds certain perspectives (for example, those of a frontline participant, a mother or an officer) and backgrounds others. A first-person plural voice “*We are the Dead*” constructs the viewpoint of a collective of fallen soldiers, while an address such as “*my friend, you would not tell...*” stages interaction between a frontline witness and a naïve addressee at home.

Mitigation and intensification strategies regulate the degree of force and emotional impact of utterances; by softening or amplifying lexical choices, modality and figurative expressions, discourse can either normalise violence or make it maximally tangible for the reader. Euphemisms like “*quarrel*” for war mitigate the representation of conflict, whereas phrases such as “*froth-corrupted lungs*” or “*bones crunched*” intensify the perception of physical damage and foreground the traumatic character of war experience. Taken together, these strategies provide an analytical toolkit for examining how trench poems construct images of war, heroism, sacrifice and trauma in the poetic discourse of the First World War.

In this way, the interaction of these strategies supports treating trench poetry not only as a literary genre but also as a discursive practice embedded in First World War discourse.

4. Discursive Strategies in English Trench Poetry of the First World War

4.1. Patriotic Subtype of Trench Poetry Discourse: Rupert Brooke and John McCrae

Early WWI poetry constructed legitimising narratives through specific discursive mechanisms that transformed death into symbolic capital and aligned individual sacrifice with imperial ideology. The poems of Rupert Brooke and John McCrae exemplify how nomination, predication, and perspectivisation strategies operate within patriotic discourse to naturalise war and create moral obligations.

4.1.1. Rupert Brooke's *The Soldier* (1914): Territorialising Sacrifice

Brooke's sonnet employs three interconnected discursive strategies to construct nationalist legitimisation:

Nomination strategy: The body as territorial claim. The spatial opposition “*foreign field*” versus “*forever England*” enacts imperial appropriation through linguistic possession. The metaphorical transformation “*dust*” → “*richer dust*” elevates biological decay into national treasure, positioning the corpse as metonymy for England itself. This nomination enables territorial immortality through physical presence — the soldier's body literally becomes a colonial marker.

Predication strategy: Constructing moral superiority. The accumulation of purifying epithets — “*heart, all evil shed away*”, “*thoughts by England given*”, “*dreams happy as her day*”, “*hearts at peace*” — constructs the moral superiority topos. England functions simultaneously as creator (given) and recipient (gives back), establishing circular legitimisation that places the nation beyond critique.

This predication strategy transforms the soldier into a vessel of national virtue rather than an autonomous agent.

Perspectivisation: Testament as moral technology. The conditional frame ("*If I should die, think only this*") combined with imperative mode ("*think*") positions readers as beneficiaries of sacrifice, creating moral obligation. The first-person witness testimony acquires universal truth status — the individual testament becomes collective ideology through direct address. This perspectivisation transforms private death into public property.

The semantic structure of key concepts shows the underlying legitimisation pattern and the core argumentation strategy. In DHA terms, SACRIFICE is framed through an implicit sacrifice-equals-gain topos: if the soldier's body functions as a colonial claim and becomes "*richer dust*" of England, then his death appears justified as a territorial investment. IMMORTALITY is framed as geopolitical permanence ("*for ever England*") rather than spiritual transcendence, and IDENTITY appears as national essence encoded in material substrate ("*richer dust concealed*").

4.1.2. John McCrae's *In Flanders Fields* (1915): Naturalising Obligation

McCrae's poem operates through complementary mechanisms that emphasise intergenerational debt and conditional memory.

Nomination strategy: Aestheticising violence. The poem deploys nature imagery as euphemistic substitution: "*poppies*" function as metonymy for blood, enabling aesthetic transformation of violence; "*crosses*" serve as metonymy for mass death while achieving monumentalisation; "*torch*" operates as metaphor for inherited obligation, creating intergenerational debt structure. These nominations construct sacrifice as natural cycle rather than political decision.

In McCrae's poem the semantic configuration of key concepts changes: SACRIFICE is linked to natural regeneration, as flowers growing from corpses encode the regeneration myth; DUTY is constructed as a transferable burden ("*To you from failing hands we throw*"), almost a physical object that can be passed on; MEMORY becomes conditional immortality, since "*We shall not sleep*" only if the living fulfil their obligation.

Mitigation and intensification: Double rhetorical movement. The poem simultaneously softens present horror while maximising future obligation. Mitigation operates through euphemism: "*quarrel*" substitutes for war, "*failing hands*" for corpses. Intensification employs hyperbolic threat: "*We shall not sleep, though poppies grow*" if betrayed. This combination minimises the violence of current sacrifice while amplifying the consequences of refusing future sacrifice.

Perspectivisation: Authority of the dead. The collective first-person plural ("*We are the Dead*") combined with grammatical shifts—past tense ("*We lived, felt dawn*") → present ("*now we lie*") → future imperative ("*Take up our quarrel*")—grants the dead speakers prophetic authority. This perspectivisation places their demands beyond critique or negotiation, as the dead occupy a moral position inaccessible to the living.

Argumentation strategy: Duty-and-betrayal. The conditional promise "*We shall not sleep*" and the imperative "*Take up our quarrel*" encode the scheme "if the living do not continue the fight, then the sacrifice of the dead will be betrayed". This topos is verbalised through modal constructions, conditional clauses and evaluative lexis that turn remembrance into a linguistic obligation.

4.1.3. Typological Features of Patriotic Subtype of Trench Poetry Discourse

Taken together, Brooke's and McCrae's poems reveal the generic conventions of the patriotic subtype of trench poetry discourse. In both cases legitimisation rests on the sacrifice topos and the construction of a moral imperative addressed to the living.

Within the DHA framework, topoi are understood as formal and content-related conclusion rules that connect arguments with claims in discourse. A sacrifice topos can therefore be defined as an argumentative scheme according to which war-related actions or policies are legitimised on the basis of individuals' willingness to suffer or die for a higher collective good. In its simplest form, this

topos follows the rule “if X sacrifices life or well-being for Y, then this sacrifice and the corresponding action are necessary and justified”, and is linguistically realised through metaphors of investment and gain, conditional clauses and evaluative lexis that present voluntary loss as desirable.

At the level of nomination, abstract nouns such as *glory*, *England*, *eternal* and *heaven* dominate, while nature imagery (*dust*, *poppies*, *torch*) functions as a euphemistic vehicle that aestheticises violence and encodes SACRIFICE as investment in the nation. Predication systematically idealises the nation and the fallen soldiers, and purifying metaphors eliminate moral ambiguity. Argumentation follows a sacrifice-equals-gain equation, where death yields territorial claims, symbolic immortality or aesthetic beauty. Perspectivisation relies on testament and prophecy modes, which establish an unquestionable authority of the speaking “I” or “We, the Dead”, and mitigation ensures that the brutality of war is systematically softened or displaced into nature metaphors.

These features define the patriotic subtype of trench poetry as a genre of legitimising war discourse, where sacrifice is consistently constructed as symbolic investment and moral obligation.

4.2. Traumatic Subtype of Trench Poetry Discourse: Wilfred Owen’s *Dulce et Decorum Est*

Wilfred Owen (1893–1918), a soldier-poet who experienced shell shock, systematically exposed the brutality of trench warfare and attacked patriotic myths in his verse.

In *Dulce et Decorum Est* (1918) Owen portrays trench soldiers through dysphemistic nomination: “bent double”, “knock-kneed”, “old beggars under sacks”, “hags”, and “drunk with fatigue” recode the HERO concept as abject, exhausted bodies rather than noble warriors. Predication thus constructs an anti-heroic image of soldiers as physically degraded and psychologically broken, undermining traditional heroic stereotypes.

The first-person perspective (“we”, “I”) further strengthens this de-heroisation by presenting the events from the viewpoint of a frontline participant rather than an external observer.

The gas attack episode foregrounds sensory nomination (“guttering, choking, drowning”) that moves from visual to visceral perception and intensifies the representation of death.

The recurring nightmare in the third stanza (“*In all my dreams before my helpless sight / He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning*”) exemplifies perspectivisation and intensification: the first-person voice frames war experience as unresolved trauma that returns in intrusive images. (Farahbakhsh 2015), (Horzum 2023)

In the final stanza, medicalised predication (“*froth-corrupted lungs*”, “*incurable sores*”) and zoomorphic metaphor (“*bitter as the cud*”, soldiers as slaughtered cattle) construct DEATH and SACRIFICE as bodily disintegration rather than sublime heroism. The synecdoche “*innocent tongues*” foregrounds the vulnerability of young conscripts, shifting the focus from patriotic abstractions to individual suffering.

By labelling Horace’s dictum as “*the old Lie*” and surrounding it with images of bodily disintegration, Owen uses argumentation and intensification strategies to de-legitimise the topos of noble death and expose it as a culturally sanctioned deception.

The intertextual clash between Horace’s dictum and Owens imagery of mutilated bodies repositions battlefield death from idealised patriotic sacrifice to traumatic, meaningless slaughter.

In generic terms, Owen’s trench poetry represents a traumatic subtype of trench poetry discourse, characterised by dysphemistic nomination of bodies, medicalised predication of suffering and perspectivisation through recurring nightmares that fix war experience as unresolved trauma. Instead of affirming heroic sacrifice, this subtype centres bodily disintegration and psychological after-effects, redefining battlefield death as meaningless and haunting rather than noble.

In Owen’s poem the key concepts are reconfigured as follows: HERO = abject, exhausted body; DEATH / SACRIFICE = meaningless bodily disintegration; TRAUMA = unresolved experience encoded in recurring nightmares.

4.3. Satirical Subtype of Trench Poetry Discourse: Siegfried Sassoon's *The Hero*

Siegfried Sassoon (1886–1967), a decorated officer and outspoken critic of the First World War, repeatedly used satire to expose the futility of the conflict and the hypocrisy of military and political authorities.

In *The Hero* (1916) Sassoon contrasts. At the level of nomination and predication, the grieving mother receives her son's death through idealising language: evaluative expressions such as "*poor old dear*", "*gentle triumph*", "*glorious boy*" and "*gallant lies*" construct a consolatory narrative in which the fallen soldier remains a BRAVE HERO and the war retains moral legitimacy. This positive evaluative frame applies even to deception ("*gallant lies*"), revealing how patriotic discourse beautifies and sanitises combat death.

By contrast, the officer's internal monologue introduces a pejorative counter-discourse. The nomination "*cold-footed, useless swine*" and the graphic phrase "*blown to small bits*" exemplify dysphemistic nomination and intensification strategies that strip the HERO concept of dignity and recategorise the soldier as a cowardly animal-like body. Here DEATH is not a noble sacrifice but an anonymous dismemberment, and the line "*And no one seemed to care / Except that lonely woman with white hair*" foregrounds the emotional and social insignificance of individual loss for everyone except the mother.

Perspectivisation plays a crucial role: through the alternation between the mother's perspective (comforting myth, idealising predication) and the officer's suppressed thoughts (pejorative nomination, brutal details), the poem stages a clash between civilian and frontline discourses of war. Mitigation operates in the officer's spoken account, which conceals the ugly truth in order not to traumatise the mother, while the poem as a whole intensifies this truth for the reader by exposing the euphemistic, deceitful nature of official narratives.

In generic terms, Sassoon's poem exemplifies a satirical subtype of trench poetry, where ironic perspectivisation and pejorative nomination deconstruct heroic discourse and foreground the discrepancy between civilian myths and frontline realities. Through this satirical lens, war appears not as a field of noble sacrifice but as a scene of futile destruction and institutional hypocrisy.

In Sassoon's poem the key concepts appear as: HERO = idealised "*glorious boy*" in the mother's discourse vs "*useless swine*" in the officer's inner discourse; DEATH = anonymous dismemberment; MEMORY = private maternal grief rather than collective glory.

Taken together, the patriotic, traumatic and satirical subtypes trace a movement from idealising war and aestheticising sacrifice towards exposing its violence, psychological damage and damaged post-war worldviews.

In this sense, the analysed poems demonstrate how discursive strategies of nomination, predication, perspectivisation and intensification verbalise traumatic experience and contribute to the collective memory of the war.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The study has shown that English trench poetry of the First World War constitutes a distinctive configuration of war discourse shaped by the perspectives and experiences of soldier-poets. Trench poetry demonstrates complete disdain for war, exposes its horrors, and questions traditional notions of heroism and nobility thus denouncing secondary myths used in propaganda and traditional war discourse. It is characterised by a graphic portrayal of warfare and everyday life in the trenches, which highlights both physical and psychological damage. The late works of trench poets exposed the futility and senselessness of war and challenged earlier legitimising narratives.

The analysis has highlighted nomination, predication, perspectivisation, mitigation and intensification as the central discursive strategies in the poems under discussion. In combination, these strategies destabilise legitimising narratives of war and foreground its traumatic and

dehumanising dimensions. Trench poetry therefore appears as both a historical record of frontline experience and a discursive practice that provides certain "auth-therapy" for the authors, and contests ideological glorification of war and articulates the trauma of the "lost generation".

Further research may extend this DHA-based model to other corpora of war poetry and contemporary war discourses, including Ukrainian texts about war, and explore additional configurations of discursive strategies such as gender- and media-related patterns.

REFERENCES

- Abruyeva, M. (2025). Poetic genres in the literary process: the rubai and sijo. *International Journal of Artificial Intelligence*, 5(12). URL: <https://www.academicpublishers.org/journals/index.php/ijai/article/view/9311/10044>
- Bawarshi, A., & Reiff, M. J. (2010). *Genre: An Introduction to History, Theory, Research, and Pedagogy*. West Lafayette: Parlor Press / The WAC Clearinghouse.
- Brooke, R. *The Soldier*. Poetry Foundation. URL: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/13076/the-soldier>
- van Dijk, T. A. (1977). *Text and Context: Explorations in the Semantics and Pragmatics of Discourse*. London: Longman. [Also reviewed in *Nordic Journal of Linguistics* (1979).]
- van Dijk, T. A. (2008). *Discourse and Context: A Sociocognitive Approach*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. London: Routledge.
- Farahbakhsh, A. (2015). Figurative tropes and their thematic implications in Wilfred Owen's "Dulce et Decorum Est". *Journal of Global Research in Education and Social Science*, 4(4), 245–253. URL: <https://ikpress.org/index.php/JOGRESS/article/view/2691/2500>
- Hamilton, C. (2023). Modern lyric poems: From poetic genre to cognitive category. *Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich*, 66(1), 399–411. <https://doi.org/10.26485/ZRL/2022/66.1/30>
- Hodges, A. (2015). War discourse. In *The International Encyclopedia of Language and Social Interaction* (pp. 1–6). Wiley / Portico. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118611463.wbielsi026>
- Horzum, S. (2023). Disillusionment and silence in British trench poems: Voices from World War I. *Current Perspectives in Social Sciences*, 3, 264–269. <https://doi.org/10.5152/jssi.2022.22274>
- Kendall, T. (2006). *Modern English War Poetry*. Oxford: OUP.
- Kolesnyk, O. (2024). Semantic field "Catastrophe" in alternative worldviews: A quantitative dimension. *Studia Philologica*, 1(22), 96–116. <https://doi.org/10.28925/2412-2491.2024.227>
- Kolesnyk, O. (2025). Alternative worlds' dynamics: Mythic-semiotic focus. *Studia Philologica*, 2(25), 95–113. <https://doi.org/10.28925/2412-2491.2025.257>
- Kumar, T. (2020). The shift in World War I poetry from patriotic theme to the depiction of the dark realities of the war. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 5(5), 1721–1723. <https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.55.58>
- Li, X., Li, D., & Sun, G. (2024). A study on the legitimization strategy in war discourse. *Pacific International Journal*, 7(2), 170–173. <https://doi.org/10.55014/pij.v7i2.591>
- McCrae, J. *In Flanders Fields*. Poetry Foundation. URL: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47380/in-flanders-fields>
- Miller, C. R. (1984). Genre as social action. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 70(2), 151–167. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335638409383686>
- Owen, W. *Dulce et Decorum Est*. Poetry Foundation. URL: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46560/dulce-et-decorum-est>
- Reisigl, M., & Wodak, R. (2017). The discourse-historical approach (DHA). In J. Flowerdew & J. E. Richardson (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies* (pp. 87–121). New York: Routledge. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/251636976_The_Discourse-Historical_Approach_DHA
- Sassoon, S. *The Hero*. Poets.org. URL: <https://poets.org/poem/hero>
- Silkin, J. (1998). *Out of Battle: The Poetry of the Great War* (2nd ed.). Basingstoke: Macmillan / Palgrave.
- Straple, R. E. (2017). Glorious and execrable: The dead and their bodies in World War I poetry. *The Hilltop Review*, 9(2), 14–31. URL: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1247&context=hilltopreview>
- Swales, J. (1990). *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Talbot, M. (2010). *Language and Gender* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Polity.

- Winter, J. (1995). Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wodak, R. (2001). The discourse-historical approach. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis (pp. 63–94). London: SAGE.
- Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2016). Methods of Critical Discourse Studies (3rd ed.). London: SAGE.

АНГЛІЙСЬКА ОКОПНА ПОЕЗІЯ ПЕРШОЇ СВІТОВОЇ ВІЙНИ ЯК ДИСКУРСИВНИЙ ЖАНР

Анжеліка БУРАВЕНКО

У статті розглядається англійська окопна поезія Першої світової війни як специфічний дискурсивний жанр у межах воєнного дискурсу та аналізуються дискурсивні стратегії, що формують репрезентації війни, героїзму, жертовності й травми. Продемонстровано результати багатовекторних інтерпретацій номінацій фрагментів травматичного досвіду, реалізованих у поетичних текстах за авторством Руперта Брука, Джона Маккрея, Вілфреда Овена та Зігфріда Сассуна. Висвітлено, яким чином стратегії номінації, предикації, аргументації, перспективації, пом'якшення та інтенсифікації легітимують або делегітимують воєнні дії та вербалізують травматичний досвід війни. Методологічною основою інтерпретацій є дискурс-історичний підхід, а також використано окремі процедури когнітивної поетики. "Парасольковою" методологічною базою є теорія міфологічно-орієнтованого семіозису, що дозволяє здійснити інтерпретацію ірраціональних механізмів трансформації травматичного досвіду. У дослідженні реалізовано міждисциплінарне розуміння поетичного дискурсу як семіотичної моделювальної діяльності, що водночас віддзеркалює й переосмислює когнітивну матрицю автора. Окопна поезія трактується як денонсуальний дискурсивний жанр, який втручається у ширший воєнний дискурс, заперечуючи традиційні міфи про шляхетну жертовність і оголюючи тілесні та психологічні наслідки індустріалізованої війни. Запропоновано типологію трьох підтипів дискурсу окопної поезії – патріотичного, травматичного та сатиричного. Встановлено, що вказані підтипи дискурсу відрізняються фокусними "смісло-генними" концептами (ГЕРОЙ, ЖЕРТВА, СМЕРТЬ, ТРАВМА, ПАМ'ЯТЬ), а також конфігураціями домінантних дискурсивних стратегій. Продемонстровано, як чуттєво-конкретні образи, медикалізована лексика, іронічна переінтерпретація релігійних і патріотичних формул та зіткнення цивільних і фронтових перспектив конструюють альтернативні «світи» воєнного досвіду й формують культурну пам'ять про Велику війну. Встановлено, що окопна поезія постає водночас історичним документом фронтового досвіду, дискурсивною практикою своєрідної «автотерапії», яка артикулює травматичну картину світу «втраченого покоління», і контрдискурсом, що дестабілізує легітимувальні наративи війни в історичній та сучасній перспективах.

Ключові слова: дискурс, воєнний дискурс, дискурсивні стратегії, Перша світова війна, окопна поезія, травматичний досвід.