ABSTRACT

The objective of the research presented in this paper is investigation and description of structural and functional characteristics of the paragraph and SPU in the English texts of imaginative literature.

The paragraph and SPU are viewed as two grammatical units occupying together with the text the highest level in language hierarchy.

The importance of the research is determined by the relevance of division of imaginative texts into sentences, paragraphs and SPUs.

The tasks of the research are:
– to discuss various theoretical approaches to the sentence, paragraph and SPU as language and text units in Russian and English linguistics;
– to describe the grammatical structures and functions of the paragraph and SPU in the genres of novel and detective story;
– to distinguish the two main types of paragraphs in the genres of novel and detective story from the point of their status in the composition and their content.

The main conclusions are:
1. Structurally all the analyzed texts consist of sentences, superphrasal units (SPUs), paragraphs and thematic extracts. Each paragraph can consist of a sentence or an SPU; each unit of the lower level can be an element of a higher level; the highest level is occupied by thematic paragraph or thematic group of paragraphs, representing an episode.

2. Paragraph is semantically, structurally and functionally principal integral unit of the language, characterized by specific intonation, representing a particular denotative situation, related to the picture of the world of the protagonist.

3. In the analyzed texts the majority of monological paragraphs perform the functions of introduction and description. Their main structural functions are provision of text cohesion, coherence and foregrounding. The introductory paragraph creates the basis for further development of the plot. The descriptive paragraph portrays the subject of the episode/text.