

# Art discourse revisited: Linguocultural specifics of childhood-related art tokens

by Antonina A. Kharkovskaya, Ludmila V. Kuznetsova and Vasily S. Makhuha

**Antonina A. Kharkovskaya** Korolev Samara National Research University [aax2009@mail.ru](mailto:aax2009@mail.ru)

**Ludmila V. Kuznetsova** Korolev Samara National Research University [tankists@bk.ru](mailto:tankists@bk.ru)

**Vasily S. Makhuha** Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy & Public Administration [basilsbox2@gmail.com](mailto:basilsbox2@gmail.com)

**Published in Training, Language and Culture** Vol 3 Issue 1 (2019) pp. 23-36 doi: [10.29366/2019tlc.3.1.2](https://doi.org/10.29366/2019tlc.3.1.2)

**Recommended citation format:** Kharkovskaya, A. A., Kuznetsova, L. V., & Makhuha, V. S. (2019). Art discourse revisited: Linguocultural specifics of childhood-related art tokens. *Training, Language and Culture*, 3(1), 23-36. doi: [10.29366/2019tlc.3.1.2](https://doi.org/10.29366/2019tlc.3.1.2)

*The paper explores the linguistic representation of concepts behind the titles of paintings produced by British and American artists depicting childhood-related scenes and characters. Sociolinguistic and linguocultural factors of titling are analysed along with the pragmatic and cognitive effect of art tokens used by British and American artists. The study singles out seven conceptual segments incorporating a number of nuclear and peripheral art tokens, which are in turn represented by concept-specific lexical units referring to the theme of childhood. Quantitative and semantic analyses of research data are implemented to suggest reasons for the uneven distribution of conceptual segments in terms of their representation in painting titles.*

**KEYWORDS:** art token, art discourse, concept, concept sphere, minitext, title



This is an open access article distributed under the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited (CC BY 4.0)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Art discourse is one of the significant factors involved in the rearrangement of trends regulating the social perception of artistic values and the cognitive framing of the linguocultural matrix. Apart from everything else, it covers a wide range of verbal messages represented in the titles of paintings depicting children and their environment. The world of childhood can be considered mainstream in pictorial art and is attractive in many ways for it shows the essence of children within the context of the visual and verbal epoch-specific 'philosophy' of the artistic space. In terms of discourse analysis, conceptual

grouping of art titles requires rigorous registration of linguistic and linguocultural markers. In view of this, the present study aims to discover the linguocultural trends behind the titles of British and American paintings depicting the world of childhood, whereby such paintings are treated as minitexts comprising art tokens. The paper also suggests a linguistic interpretation of painting titles using professional discourse instruments.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Researchers currently take a keen interest in art discourse and the media of its linguistic manifestation. Art discourse is a voluminous

linguistic space demonstrating the versatility and complexity of social and cultural life in ways that seem both sufficient and varied. Linguistic research into art discourse encourages adequate recognition of cultural and national peculiarities of the corresponding historical period.

The distinguishing features of this type of discourse are closely aligned with the nature of art-related texts combining creative and communicative elements verbalising the field of fine art. Art texts are interpreted through visual perception and verbal manifestation, where the subject of the corresponding verbal discourse becomes the subject of metalinguistic interpretation as it verbalises the imaginative code (Helguera, 2011).

Painting titles embody the characteristic features of the analysed discursive space. Art tokens represent complete texts (English texts within the scope of the present study) rendering the object of discourse. Titles are also inseparably associated with the communicative space that displays the interaction between the locutionary source and the addressee. The emotional and informational elements obtained by the recipient as they interact with an art text containing art tokens is interpreted through a lens of individual sensory, cognitive and linguistic experience. As organised statements, titles of American and British paintings are pre-programmed to hold up against social, thematic and temporal boundaries of English-language art

discourse. In addition, the lexical manifestation of art tokens also depends on the location of execution, the historical period, subject-matter and genre peculiarities.

Analysing linguistic and structural manifestation of art tokens, we label them as small-format texts, or minitexts. Kharkovskaya et al. (2017) assert that the major typologically relevant property of small-format texts is that they contain '*a limited volume of words ... otherwise bearing typical features of all the classical standards of textuality*' (p. 63), meaning that they express maximum information formulated with minimal linguistic input. Minitexts are verbalised as a full-featured linguocultural phenomenon that can be observed in exquisite detail and comprises such essential characteristics as divisibility, intertextuality, special pragmatic functionality, formal and semantic self-sufficiency, thematic representation and completeness. These texts also have an apparent degree of information capacity, their cognitive background – the reason for their creation, the general conception and the result of its creation – realised in the form of special semantic space (Caro & Rodríguez, 2015). Beyond that, minitexts incorporate '*not only nominative but sufficient communicative-pragmatic potential*' (Ren, 2010, p. 82).

Art tokens fully line up with basic parameters of minitexts: painting titles tend to have limited visual design of a single grammatically and syntactically

*‘Art tokens fully line up with basic parameters of minitexts: painting titles tend to have limited visual design of a single grammatically and syntactically complete sentence or utterance bearing a full-featured meaning and drawing attention to the visual dimension of the painting’*

complete sentence or utterance bearing a full-featured meaning and drawing attention to the visual dimension of the painting.

Childhood-related art tokens present an autonomous yet non-isolated linguistic subsystem revealing general linguistic regularities. At the same time, this subsystem exhibits specific features attributable to extralinguistic factors. Whereas the semantic core of childhood-related art tokens bears referential, denotative and meaning-signifying elements, their peripheral segments incorporate etymological, cultural and connotative semantics. This is indicative of the complicated nature of the meaningful content of art tokens and the complimentary interaction of linguistic and cultural information contained within their semantics. The artist’s take on reality is reflected in the nominative paradigm that widens the pragmatic potential behind painting titles by

introducing the aesthetic perspective to the naming process. The aesthetic function is inextricably linked with the artistic value of paintings depicting children and objectively implies the possibility of perceiving the art tokens in question as small-format texts. With these reflections in mind, we can study small-format texts engaged in the linguistic manifestation of English art tokens through the linguo-synergetic array of tools applied by painters to communicate their artistic intentions.

### 3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study suggests a concept-based grouping of selected art texts found in the titles of British and American painters and representing the theme of childhood in its various manifestations. Since the theme appears sufficiently voluminous and poly-conceptual, the sample can be structured into thematically organised segments. Analysing the principle of thematic classification, Wang et al. (2014) suggest that while word classes uniting similar situations or common topics should be attributed to thematic groups, the general identifying sense is optional. In light of this, we assume that thematic grouping of art tokens related to childhood implies eliciting lexical units of common interpretation.

The multifunctional nature of art tokens incorporated in painting titles is considered via the lingua-synergetic approach in order to uncover the

specific ways in which nuclear and peripheral units interact to ultimately outline an entire concept-sphere representative of childhood-related topics referred to in paintings. The extrapolation of linguo-synergetic technologies regulating the meaningful load of art tokens represented by nuclear and peripheral linguocultural markers fosters the adjustment of various structural and semantic relations between the linguistic units being used as part of painting titles.

Despite its variability, the subject matter of childhood-related art tokens can be united into conceptually organised entities – the conceptual segments. However, the ongoing shift of nuclear and peripheral elements within the concept sphere provides a rationale to consider the boundaries of these segments to be open which fairly represents the evolutionary tendencies in art tokens' sociocultural and linguocultural space.

#### 4. STUDY AND RESULTS

The sample is represented by an approximately equal number of art tokens found in the works of British and American painters depicting scenes associated with childhood. Selected art tokens were classified in recognition of the basic concepts shaping their concept sphere as follows.

##### Gender

*The Oddie Children* by William Beechey; *Two Young Girls* by Charles James Lewis; *A Girl* by

Edward Thompson Davis; *The Naughty Boy* by Charles Trevor Garland; *Blue Boy* by Thomas Gainsborough; *The English Boy* by Ford Madox Brown; *His First Fence* by Arthur John Elsley; *His First Model* by George Bernard O'Neill; *The Cavendish Children* by Thomas Lawrence.

##### Personification

*Annie Louisa Robinson Swynnerton* by Julian Rossi Ashton; *Mrs Hicks, Mary, Rosa and Elgar* by George Elgar Hicks; *Portrait of Lord Frederick Beaucler* by William Beechey; *Clavering and Catherine Mary* by John Thomas Peele; *Miss Lily's Return from the Ball* by James Hayllar; *Miss Murray* by Thomas Lawrence; *Thomas and Martha Neate, with Tutor* by Joshua Reynolds.

##### Education and professional skills

*The Necklace-Maker* by Emily Farmer; *The Cockery Seller* by Myles Birket Foster; *The Young Customers* by Helen Allingham; *The Cherry Gatherers* Frederick Morgan; *A Young Flower Seller* by Sophie Anderson; *The Young Highlander* by John Thomas Peele; *The Young Artist* by Charles Spencelayh; *The Little Model* by Edgar Bundy.

##### Leisure

*Hide and Seek* by James Hayllar; *Playing at Schools* by Charles James Lewis; *The Swing* by Frederick Goodall; *The Next Dance* by George Goodwin Kilburne; *Playmates* by Edgar Bundy; *Castle in the Air* by Arthur John Elsley; *The Swing*

## *‘Thematic grouping of art tokens related to childhood implies eliciting lexical units of common interpretation’*

by Myles Birket Foster; *Time to Play* by John Charles Burton Barber; *Good Friends* by Frederick Morgan; *Old Playmates* by Briton Riviere.

### Family

*Little Sister* by Myles Birket Foster; *The Two Sisters* by James Sant; *The Little Mother* by Robert W. Wright; *Kissing Grandpa* by Edward Thompson; *A Brotherly Kiss* by Robert W. Wright; *An Afternoon with Grandma* by Edward Thompson Davis; *Reading for Grandmother* by James Hayllar.

### Space

*Over the Garden Wall* by Frederick Morgan; *In the Orchard* by Myles Birket Foster; *In the Orchard* by Dame Laura Knight; *In a Convent Garden* by George Dunlop Leslie; *The Enchanted Garden* by Harriette Sutcliffe; *Cottage Door, Park Lane, near Witley* by Helen Allingham.

### Time

*Sunny Hours* by Frederick Morgan; *The Minute* by John Everett Millais; *Christmas Greeting* by Charles Trevor Garland; *Good Night* by Arthur John Elsley; *A Quiet Moment* by Edward Thompson Davis; *Rosy Morning* by Sophie Anderson; *A Summer*

*Shower* by James Hayllar; *Happy Days* by Charles James Lewis; *A Pensive Moment* by Charles Sillem Lidderdale.

The process of grouping involved registering basic conceptual properties. The key feature of a concept lies in its identification with the terms *meaning* and *sense* where the meaning acts as the subject and the sense is the concept of the given subject, i.e. information with the help of which the subject transforms into a unit of the concept sphere. Sense is also defined as ‘a *common correlation of all phenomena relevant to the situation*’ (Van den Herik, 2017, p. 22). Meaning is formed within the boundaries of a specific situation and is determined by the verbal utterance and context. Unlike sense, meaning is not subjected to contextual or situational circumstances and is secondary in relation to sense. From this perspective, a concept correlates with the meaning on the grounds that it also correlates with national and cultural specifics of a given language.

To address the issue of plausibility, we suggest studying Table 1 below, representing the qualitative orientation and structuring of conceptual segments singled out in the sample (the results are provided in consideration of the quantitative data).

Having recorded the fundamental conceptual

Table 1

*The conceptual segments representing the 'childhood' concept sphere in art tokens of British and American painting titles*

CONCEPTUAL SEGMENT	REPRESENTATION (% of occurrence)
Gender	20%
• Feminine gender subgroup	• 8%
• Masculine gender subgroup	• 5%
• Mixed gender subgroup	• 7%
Leisure	19%
Education and professional skills	16%
Family	14%
Personification	13%
Time	11%
Space	7%

segments within the boundaries of the sample, the study first takes the analysis of the *gender* segment as an example. Gender presents a combination of basic characteristics determined by the society's cultural guidelines which identify social behaviour representative of men and women as well as interactions between them. Gender is constituted through a definite socialisation system, the division of labour, cultural norms accepted in the society, roles and stereotypes. It serves as an instrument that helps comprehend social processes (Oakley, 2016). Verbal representation of gender relies on the widespread social, cultural and linguistic stereotypes, norms, rules and customs (Corbett & Fedden, 2016, p. 497).

Approximately 20% of painting titles by British and American artists fall within the conceptual segment of *gender*. A number of cognitive layers within the segment can be singled out via a semantic analysis of lexical units, where the constituent parts of these lexical units united by a common conceptual segment are structured to parcel out sub-spheres, which in our case included the sub-spheres of the female subgroup, the male subgroup and mixed gender subgroup.

The female subgroup incorporates titles representing the theme of childhood with the nuclear token *girl/girls* within their naming patterns: *The Blind Girl* by John Everett Millais; *A*

*Gypsy Girl* by George Elgar Hicks; *Young Girl Fixing Her Hair* and *Foundling Girls* by Sophie Anderson; *Two Young Girls* and *The Little Hay Girl* by Charles James Lewis; *Portrait of a Young Girl* and *Portrait of a Girl* by William Beechey; *The Strawberry Girl* by Joshua Reynolds; *A Young Girl with her Doll* and *Two Young Girls* Charles James Lewis; *A Girl* by Edward Thompson Davis.

Tokens such as *she*, *her*, *princess* act as peripheral representative lexical items: *The Princes in the Tower* by Julian Rossi Ashton; *Sharing Her Lunch* and *Her Constant Care* by Frederick Morgan; *Forward She Started with a Happy Cry* by George Elgar Hicks; *The Little Baker with Her Two Assistants* by Charles Burton Barber; *An Autumn Princess* by Sophie Anderson; *Her New Brown Shoes* by Harriette Sutcliffe.

The female subgroup accounts for 8% of the *gender* conceptual segment entries in the sample and is the most representative of the three subgroups.

Following the same algorithm, tokens such as *boy/boys* were identified as the key representative lexical units of the male subgroup: *The Naughty Boy* by Charles Trevor Garland; *The English Boy* by Ford Madox Brown; *Woman Supporting a Boy on a Donkey by a Stream* by Charles Hunt; *Blue Boy* by Thomas Gainsborough; *Portrait of Sir Francis Ford's Children Giving a Coin to a Beggar Boy* by

William Beechey.

The close periphery incorporates tokens such as *he* and *his*: *His Turn Next* by Frederick Morgan; *His First Fence* by Arthur John Elsley; *True to His Colours* by Charles Spencelayh; *Off He Goes* by Charles Trevor Garland; *His Only Friend* by Briton Riviere; *His First Model* by George Bernard O'Neill. Lexical units representing the male subgroup symbolise masculine identity of depicted characters. Approximately 5% of childhood-related art tokens in the sample were classified as belonging to the male subgroup.

The mixed gender subgroup is represented by lexical units such as *child/children*: *The Child's Bath* by Arthur Fitzpatrick; *Dressing the Children* by Dame Laura Knight; *The Stolen Child* by Charles Hunt; *The Cavendish Children* by Thomas Lawrence; *Children in The Woods* by James Sant; *Children in A Cottage Interior* by Robert W. Wright; *The Child and the Star* by Alfred Fowler Patten; *Baby* by Arthur Boyd Houghton. The subgroup incorporates about 7% of painting titles falling within the *gender* category.

Thus, art tokens found in British and American painting titles depicting childhood are most frequently represented by lexical units referring to female characters. This might be because emotionality and attractiveness tend to be more vividly manifested in girls, which is why female



characters have always attracted and inspired artists, irrespective of their age. Painters depicting children, especially girls, pay close attention to their appearance and spontaneity of the situation. Children's images in fine art embody inexpressible uniqueness, secrecy and psychological logic.

The concept of gender is also linguistically manifested in painting titles rather distinctively through descriptive adjectives, complementing and scrutinising the characters' qualities, as in *young, little, small, good, frightened*, etc.: *Young Girls at the Beach* by Helen Allingham; *The Strawberry Girl* by Joshua Reynolds; *The Little Hay Girl* by Charles James Lewis; *Portrait of a Small Girl Standing with a Doll* by Charles Spencelayh; *The Stolen Child* by Charles Hunt; *Girls, Frightened by a Dog* by Edward Thompson Davis; *Portrait of a Young Girl* by George Dunlop Leslie; *The English Boy* by Ford Madox Brown.

*Location* is another frequently exploited association used by artists when giving titles to their paintings, and this is where a close correlation between the different concept segments can come into the spotlight, as in when nuclear and peripheral tokens referring to *space* are combined with *gender*-related tokens in a single title: *Young Girls at the Beach* by Helen Allingham; *Girl in Armchair* by Ruth Addinall; *Children in the Wood* by James Sant; *Children in Aa Cottage Interior* by Robert W. Wright; *Child*

*Among the Rocks* by Arthur Boyd Houghton; *Girls Picking Flowers by the Sea* by Dame Laura Knight; *Children Fishing at a Pool* by Edward Charles Williams.

Perhaps, quantitative precedence of the *gender* concept segment in the sample has to do, at least in part, with the importance attributed to sex roles and patterns in British and American societies, so that the painters resort to a specific 'language' of art to not only reveal artistic details of their works, but to indicate some socially acceptable and expected behaviour in boys and girls, men and women.

The minimal difference in the saturation of conceptual fields with lexical markers somehow affiliates the segments of gender and personalisation in the temporal perspective, as these were represented by a pretty much uniform set of personal names (such as *John, Polly, Robin, Minna, Lucy, Effie, Julie, Samuel, Timothy, Julian, Lionel, Alice*, etc.) through the centuries. These personal names were commonly found in the 18-20th centuries Britain and America and were reflected in the titles of paintings: *Alice in Wonderland* by George Dunlop Leslie; *Portrait of Julie* by James Sant; *Lucy* by Helen Allingham; *Double Portrait of The Brothers Bertram and John Leslie Horridge* by Charles Haigh-Wood.

The most popular female names in Britain and America in the 18-20th centuries were *Emily*,



## *‘Thematic grouping of art tokens related to childhood implies eliciting lexical units of common interpretation’*

*Sophie, Alice, Lucy, Maria and Mary.* Among the most frequent male names were *Oliver, Jack, Thomas, James, George and John.* In the framework of this study we have discovered that in titling their work, artists tended to resort to the most frequent names typical of their cultural tradition. This linguistic peculiarity characterises the painters’ aspiration to demonstrate the national flair not only by means of artistic mastery but also by virtue of language. Perhaps the reason for such a voluminous set of markers referring to *gender* and *personalisation* has to do with the general inclination of artists to underline their characters’ individual yet culture-specific traits.

The concept segment of *leisure* in painting titles is also crucial in representing the childhood perspective, essentially because it reflects children’s feelings and emotions manifested in the course of an activity, especially when they take a vivid interest in it. In the framework of this study, the *leisure* segment is actualised in 19% of the sample and is represented by the nuclear token *leisure*: *Leisure House* by Everett Millais; *Leisure Time* by Edward Thompson Davis; *Moments of Leisure* by James Sant. The peripheral tokens

include lexical items associated with games and entertainment, such as *play, friend, game, dance, concert* and their synonyms: *The Fairy Tale* by James Sant; *Hide and Seek* by James Hayllar; *Painting the Kite* by Robert W. Wright; *The Dropped Stitch* by Alfred Fowler Patten; *The Surprise* by Arthur Boyd Houghton; *Playing at Schools* by Charles James Lewis; *The Swing* by Frederick Goodall; *A Cottage Concert* by Charles Hunt. Other peripheral tokens include lexical items having to do with holidays and festivals, such as *Christmas, birthday, etc.*: *Birthday* by Arthur John Elsley; *Christmas Time* by Sophie Anderson. These are especially representative of the concept of *leisure* with children, as they commonly associate this kind of events with joy and mystery, positive emotions and magic. As for the far periphery, the idea of *leisure* is traced in tokens such as *walk, stroll* and their derivatives: *A Stroll Through the Village* by Robert W. Wright; *Ready for a Stroll* by George Bernard O’Neill; *A Walk in the Park* by Alan Maley; *Walking* by John Everett Millais; *Walk and Leisure* by Myles Birket Foster; *No Walk Today* by Sophie Anderson; *Ready for a Stroll* by George Bernard O’Neill.

The concept segment of *leisure* is often found to be interlaced with other segments, such as *time* (*Play Time* by Edgar Bundy; *Time To Play* by Charles Burton Barber; *Playtime* by Frederick Morgan; *Playtime* by John Thomas Peele), *space* (*Little Stage Fairy* by Alfred Fowler Patten; *A Cottage Concert*

by Charles Hunt; *Castle in the Air* by Arthur John Elsley; *Secret Place* by Charles Burton Barber) and *education and professional skills* (*The Nurse And The Concert* by Robert W. Wright; *Playing at Schools* by Charles James Lewis; *Playing at School* by Charles James Lewis).

*Leisure* is a rather voluminous segment as childhood is commonly associated with recreation and learning of the world through game and rest.

The conceptual segment of *education* is next in line and obviously correlates with school-related activity. Some markers of skills and competencies inherent in pre-school and school-age children are also to be observed within the concept under study. *Education*-related tokens cover 16% of the sample, its nuclear lexical items being *education*, *skills* and *school*. Notably, since spending time at school implies moral, physical, emotional and cognitive pressure exerted on children, artists often use the nuclear representative lexical unit *school* in their titles in combination with a number of other peripheral lexical units, which ultimately adds an 'extracurricular leisure' touch to the painting name, as in *out of school*, *off school*, *home from school*, etc.: *Home from School* by George Elgar Hicks; *Out of School* by Myles Birket Foster; *Off the School* by Charles Burton Barber; *Going Home from School* by James Hayllar. Thus, the *education* segment interacts with the *leisure* segment in terms of semantic manifestation which

attaches additional imagery and vast character to small-format texts in painting titles.

Turning to the *professional skills* conceptual segment, the study found it was mostly represented in the titles by tokens such as *seller*, *peddler*, *picker*, *gatherer* and the like: *The Crossing Sweeper* by William Powell Frith; *The Necklace-Maker* by Emily Farmer; *The Chine Peddler* by Myles Birket Foster; *The Cherry Gatherers* by Frederick Morgan; *A Young Flower Seller* by Sophie Anderson; *The Young Gardener* by George Dunlop Leslie; *The Young Customers* by Helen Allingham.

A simple semantic analysis reveals the simplicity behind children's domestic skills, for they are mostly depicted helping their parents gather fruits in the garden, picking and selling flowers or delivering goods.

The *family* conceptual segment accounts for 14% of the sample in this study and is obviously one of the central ones as it is inseparably connected with the process of growing up and upbringing. Its nuclear token is represented by the lexical unit *family*: *The Family Picnic* by Frederick Morgan; *Family* by John Thomas Peele; *George Clive and His Family with an Indian Maid* by Helen Allingham; *Family Introductions – The Young Family* by John Thomas Peele; *Family* by James Hayllar. Close periphery incorporates lexical units expressing family relations, such as *parents*, *father*,

*‘The ‘family’ conceptual segment accounts for 14% of the sample in this study and is obviously one of the central ones as it is inseparably connected with the process of growing up and upbringing’*

*mother, daughter, son, sister, brother, grandfather/grandpa, grandmother/grandma, grandchildren: Christ in the House of His Parents by John Everett Millais; Grandfather’s Favorites by Arthur John Elsley; Little Sister by Myles Birket Foster; Queen Alexandra with Grandchildren and Dogs by Frederick Morgan; Daughter by James Sant; The Little Mother by Robert W. Wright.*

These exemplary tokens highlight the idea of the family as an organised social group, whose members are connected through the common daily routine, mutual moral responsibility and socially expected physical and spiritual self-reproduction. Because a family begins with children, they are depicted as its integral and most valuable part.

The linguistic manifestation of the *family* segment is closely connected with linguistic units incorporated in the *personification* segment: *Christ in the House of His Parents* by John Everett Millais; *The Children of Sir Hussey Vivian at the Seaside* by

George Elgar Hicks; *Queen Alexandra with Grandchildren and Dogs* by Frederick Morgan; *Lady Cockburn and Her Three Eldest Sons* by Joshua Reynolds.

Although *family* is a highly important part of children’s lives, British and American artists avoid front-loading it into the thematic fields of painting titles, probably because they are primarily aspired to focus on personality which might go missing when other characters are involved.

The conceptual segment of *personification* covers 13% of the sample and uses proper names as its nuclear tokens: *The Coming Nelson* by Frederick Morgan; *Good Old Torry* by Charles Trevor Garland; *Julian Russel Story* by Alexander Mosses; *Kitty’s Breakfast* by Emily Farmer; *Annie Louisa Robinson Swynnerton* by Julian Rossi Ashton; *Portrait of Elizabeth Clara Bromley* by Ford Madox Brown. The fact that in making up titles artists tend to express their attitude towards the primary characters of the painting (children, in our case) is indicative in the abundant use of the adjective *little*, which not so much reflects the idea of size, but rather gives an endearing touch to the title: *Little Bobs* by Edgar Bundy; *Little Vera* by Sophie Anderson; *Little Emily* by Edgar Bundy; *Mary with Her Little Sister* by Alexander Mosses; *The Little Angels* by Julian Rossi Ashton; *Little Red Riding Hood* by James Sant. Metaphorical reference is clearly evidenced in the latter title and helps

provide a more vivid characterisation. If precise enough, a metaphor recreates an image encountered in prior experience and not just forms a certain impression, but actually predetermines the way the recipient perceives the object of depiction. Allusion is another common trope used in painting titles and acting as *'an indirect indicator of a certain historical, geographical, literary, mythological or biblical fact'* (Cupchik, 2011, p. 175) and building on the recipient's familiarity with this fact: *Forbidden Fruit* by John Thomas Peele; *Alice in Wonderland* by George Dunlop Leslie; *Ophelia* by James Sant.

As a side note, whenever the adjective *little* is not used in titles, this may be suggestive of the artist's intention to underline the idea of children's individuality without endowing them with the stereotyped semantics of small size or immaturity: *Annie Louisa Robinson Swynnerton* by Julian Rossi Ashton; *Minna* by Helen Allingham; *Millie Smith* by Ford Madox Brown; *Portrait of Lord Frederick Beaucler* by William Beechey.

The *time* conceptual segment which covers about 11% of the sample is represented by the lexical unit *time* as its nuclear token: *Tea Time Victorian* by Myles Birket Foster; *Bathtime* by Alice Mary Havers; *Dinner Time* by Robert W. Wright; *Storytime* by Charles Haigh-Wood; *Bath time* by Charles Spencelayh; *Tea-Time* by George Goodwin Kilburne; *Springtime in the Woods* by Charles

*'By depicting a child within a definite timeframe, painters try to convey the immediate emotions associated with a particular situation and within fixed temporal boundaries'*

James Lewis; *An Anxious Time* by Frederick Daniel Hardy. Linguistic invariables such as *day*, *year*, *moment*, *afternoon*, *summer*, etc. can be viewed as peripheral tokens along with other units bearing synonymous meaning: *Midday Rest* by Frederick Morgan; *Sleeping* by John Everett Millais; *Christmas Greeting* by Charles Trevor Garland; *Golden Years* by Arthur John Elsley; *Loading the Cast for Market* by Myles Birket Foster; *A Quiet Moment* by Edward Thompson Davis.

For children, every temporal element (*day*, *week*, *month* or *year*) carries a certain degree of importance since their development unfolds continuously, systematically and eventfully. Therefore, *time* is an essential conceptual segment for artists, and painters in particular: by depicting a child within a definite timeframe, painters try to convey the immediate emotions associated with a particular situation and within fixed temporal boundaries. Irrespective of temporal characteristics, children can appreciate nature and rest, a period of idleness and the instructive process of cognition. The *time* segment is pretty

much understudied since painters more eagerly focus on the child's image rather than anything else.

The conceptual segment of *space* amounts to 7% of the sample and is represented by tokens such as *river, seaside, beach, brook* as well as lexical units possessing synonymous semantic meanings and indicating location: *A Day on the River* by Frederick Morgan; *Skipping in the Road* by Birket Foster; *On the Beach* by Dame Laura Knight. *Time*-related lexical units often transfer the idea of a domestic atmosphere and a recreational location thus reflecting children's dominating interests, including tokens such as *village, house, farm, cottage, home, garden, orchard*: *Over the Garden Wall* by Frederick Morgan; *In the Garden* by Julian Rossi Ashton; *The Village Oak* by Myles Birket Foster; *An Old House at West Tarring* by Helen Allingham; *Returning Home* by Charles Sillem Lidderdale.

Although home is the primary place for a child to reside, children are inquisitive by nature and are commonly interested in experiencing the world and discovering new places, which is why tokens such as *market, post office, park, gallery, hospital* are also part of the *space* conceptual segment: *Home from Market* by Edgar Bundy; *Chelsea Hospital* by Helen Allingham; *Visiting the Hall* by James Hayllar; *The General Post Office* by George Elgar Hicks; *In the Park* by James Sant; *At the*

*British Museum* by George Goodwin Kilburne; *Off Marketing* by Helen Allingham; *Returning from Market* by Charles Sillem Lidderdale.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study set out to establish basic conceptual focus of art tokens used in the titles of paintings by British and American artists depicting children and childhood. The sample was grouped based on the semantic analysis of representative lexical units incorporated in seven conceptual segments of *gender, leisure, education and professional skills, family, personification, time and space*.

Quantitative representation of the conceptual segments varies depending on artists' priorities and focus in depicting childhood-related realia, as well as their priorities in giving titles to their works. While *gender* and *leisure* were found to be the most commonly referred to segments, *time* and *space* were less evident.

The integral part of childhood-related art tokens is the cultural element that transfers morally, ethically and spiritually marked semantics revealed at the extralinguistic level. The morphological, lexical, grammatical and syntactic constructions demonstrate the established association bonds which involuntarily emerge upon deciphering the meaning behind painting titles. These associations serve as a foundation for unhindered comprehension and interpretation of the meaning behind the text.

In the British and American fine art heritage, painting titles exhibit structurally similar models typically represented by a single lexical unit, a phrase or a sentence. The study also found that in naming their paintings both British and American artists tend to resort to the most culturally-specific personal names. Depicting childhood-related themes, artists resort to a variety of conceptually

manifested lexis in their titles. The plenitude of perception is achieved not only by means of the most fundamental concepts, but through thematic variability as well. Resorting to the lexical units that illuminate a child's perspective, British and American artists expose a specific view of the world to illustrate the imaginative potential and brilliance behind childhood images.

## References

- Caro, J. O. M., & Rodríguez, L. S. (2015). Analysis of short non-literary texts: Elements for a conceptual approach to the mini-text. *Enunciación*, 20(1), 68-77.
- Corbett, G. G., & Fedden, S. (2016). Canonical gender. *Journal of Linguistics*, 52(3), 495-531. doi: [10.1017/S0022226715000195](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022226715000195)
- Cupchik, G. C. (2011). The future of an allusion. *Scientific Study of Literature*, 1(1), 173-181. doi: [10.1075/ssol.1.1.18cup](https://doi.org/10.1075/ssol.1.1.18cup)
- Helguera, P. (2011). *Socially engaged art*. New York, NY: Jorge Pinto Books.
- Kharkovskaya, A. A., Ponomarenko, E. V., & Radyuk, A. V. (2017). Minitexts in modern educational discourse: Functions and trends. *Training Language and Culture*, 1(1), 66-82. doi: [10.29366/2017tlc.1.1.4](https://doi.org/10.29366/2017tlc.1.1.4)
- Oakley, A. (2016). *Sex, gender and society*. London: Routledge. doi: [10.4324/9781315243399](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315243399)
- Ren, G. W. (2010). Text, genre and multi-genre. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 1(7), 82.
- Van den Herik, J. C. (2017). Linguistic know-how and the orders of language. *Language Sciences*, 61, 17-27. doi: [10.1016/j.langsci.2016.09.009](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2016.09.009)
- Wang, F., Wang, Z., Li, Z., & Wen, J. R. (2014, November). Concept-based short text classification and ranking. In *Proceedings of the 23rd ACM International Conference on Information and Knowledge Management* (pp. 1069-1078). Shanghai, China: ACM.