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Structural and Semantic Organization of the Aphorism as an Integral Text

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ABSTRACT

The relevance of the undertaken research is associated with the integrated approach to the study of aphorism as an integral text. Especially important is the inclusion in the scientific paradigm of the study of those communicative factors, extralinguistic and linguistic, which determine the creation of the text and its interpretation. Aphorism is studied as the special type of text in terms of communicative stylistics; it is characterized by the linguacultural and genre specificity. The aim of the article is the analysis of the main structural mechanisms of aphorism as an integral text and the conditionality of its aphoristic structure in regard to the semantics and pragmatics of aphorism. The research methods represent the integral complex including structural-semantic and intertextual analysis and the method of linguistic and philological interpretation. If an aphorism occurs in a literary text as the component of its semantic space and as the integral syntactic unit, then it is analyzed as the integral text and its semantics receives universal sense, that is, the structural and functional autonomy of an aphorism is possible only in case of transformation of its initial semantics while extracting it from a certain context within the framework of the literary text.

Keywords: Non-linguistic, iconic, scientific paradigm, pragmatics of the aphorism, paramiological, contextual and situational.

INTRODUCTION

The mechanisms of the structural and semantic organization of aphorism, revealed during the research, depend on some

semantic features of this integral text, and, first of all, aphorism should have a concise volume (up to three sentences) in the coordinates of which some universal idea should be actualized that discloses the ontological aspects, guides human thoughts about revealing universal values that would give answers to the important questions of life. The creation of an aphoristic statement within the integral text of a large volume depends on some extralinguistic factors that allow for the transformation of linguacultural important meanings with the help of aphorism. The mechanisms of the structural and semantic organization of an aphorism are defined by its significance and expressiveness (considering its peculiarities of expressiveness, emotionality and imagery). Intertextuality can play an important role in the structure formation of the aphorism and its work in the text.

The methodology of modern linguistics provides a comprehensive approach to the analysis of literary texts, the purpose of which is to investigate the influence of linguistic and extralinguistic communicative factors on the processes of text creation and interpretation. Extralinguistic factors include the author's personality, the specific features and characteristics of the realization of aesthetic communication, as well as the nature of the communicative situation and genre.

Since the functional approach is particularly significant in the context of communicative stylistics, the most important aspect of its development is not the structural-linguistic method of describing styles, but rather the study of the specific functioning of styles in the "correlations between stylistic factors and linguistic means" and the identification of the significance of the non-linguistic dimension in communication.

Modern concepts of communicative stylistics imply the concept of the aphorism as a special type of text characterized by linguistic, stylistic, and genre-specific features. Traditionally, aphorisms are regarded as statements that are concise, philosophical in meaning, and semantically complete. Such statements are associated with a particular author and an iconic form.

Furthermore, aphorisms are analyzed from cognitive-pragmatic and linguacultural perspectives. Aphorisms contain

extensive information about the traditions, norms, worldview, and mentality of a particular linguistic community. Within the scientific paradigm of modern linguistics, it is promising to consider the aphorism as a small-format text, that is, as an utterance possessing a distinctive semantic and communicative status.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the main structural mechanisms involved in the creation of an aphorism as a complete text and to determine the aphoristic structure, semantics, and pragmatics of the aphorism.

As a complex linguistic phenomenon, the aphorism has become an important subject of linguistic research conducted across a number of different fields, including communicative stylistics, cognitive-pragmatic studies, linguocultural studies, and structural-semantic analysis. Communicative stylistics provides all the necessary prerequisites for identifying the distinctive features of the aphorism itself, among which the recognition of its artistic-figurative verbal specificity is considered fundamental.

This distinctive characteristic of the literary text is determined by a number of extralinguistic aspects that distinguish it from figurative verbal expression in other types of discourse. It should be noted that the concept of artistic-figurative verbal specificity is considerably broader than the concept of verbal figurative expression.

Aphorisms are used across a wide range of social spheres, including science, art, politics, legislation, religion, everyday life, and others. They occur in both formal and informal communicative situations, where logical and figurative thinking are combined due to the multiple functions performed by aphorisms, including aesthetic, communicative, and expressive functions.

Furthermore, aphorisms potentially serve a variety of pragmatic purposes, such as persuasion; expressing condemnation and accusation; issuing warnings; providing justification; establishing a particular position or relationship; appealing to authority, including the authority of the author; offering support and advice; transmitting knowledge; exerting

aesthetic influence; and fulfilling other communicative and pragmatic functions.

The analysis of the aphorism as an object of systematic stylistic analysis and linguistic interpretation of a text makes it possible to identify such characteristics of aphorisms as their general meaning, expressiveness, and information density (or brevity), as well as the interrelationships between the logical-semantic and linguistic characteristics of the aphorism as a special type of text.

The cognitive-pragmatic approach to the study of aphorisms makes it possible to identify the specific features of the organization of aphoristic discourse and the linguistic representation of the world, which depend on the mentality of an ethnic community and its linguistic personality.

The structural-semantic approach emphasizes the description of the place of aphorisms in the paramiological representation of the world, their relationship with proverbs, sayings, and other phraseological units, as well as the specificity of the aphorism as a concise form of text, including its intertextuality.

Traditionally, in linguistics, aphorisms are regarded as independent texts, regardless of whether they constitute individual literary works or occur within the context of larger texts. In addition, aphorisms may appear in texts as context-dependent structures, that is, structures that are structurally constrained by their context. As a special type of text, an aphorism can function both as an independent speech product and as a microtext (a component of a larger textual context), and the aforementioned characteristics may apply simultaneously to the same aphorism.

Depending on their structural principle, aphorisms can be classified as independent aphorisms and embedded aphorisms.

Independent aphorisms are those that the author explicitly recognizes as aphorisms, which sometimes allows the author to compile an anthology of their own statements. The genre designation “aphorism” is not always included in the titles of books. For example, Francis Bacon’s *Essays* and Baltasar Gracián’s *The Pocket Oracle and Art of Prudence* contain numerous independent aphoristic statements without necessarily

using "aphorism" as the primary genre designation. Authors may also use related genre terms, such as François de La Rochefoucauld's *Maxims*. At the same time, some works explicitly employ the term *aphorisms* in their titles, as in Friedrich Schlegel's *Aphorisms*.

Embedded aphorisms are analyzed as statements that constitute an integral part of a literary, journalistic, or academic text but can nevertheless be distinguished from larger texts due to the presence of important conceptual ideas. In this case, their characteristic features include lexical elements and lexical combinations belonging to a particular conceptual domain, as well as the possibility of identifying the boundaries of the embedded aphorism, which generally does not exceed three sentences.

We propose that when an aphorism is not independent but occurs within a text as its semantic and structural element, functioning as a separate syntactic whole, it can be studied from a linguistic perspective as a complete textual formation. In this case, its semantic structure acquires a universal character that is relevant not only to the specific context from which it has been extracted but also reflects its ontological meaning.

In other words, the structural and functional independence of an aphorism becomes possible only through the transformation of its original meaning after it has been extracted from a specific context and placed within the context of a literary text. In our view, the processes of the structural-semantic organization of an aphorism depend on certain semantic characteristics of such a complete text. An aphorism should be concise in form while expressing universal ideas about various aspects of human life – ideas that encourage individuals to reflect on universal values and seek answers to fundamental ontological questions.

Furthermore, it should be taken into account that the formulation of an aphoristic statement within a complete text depends on extralinguistic factors through which meanings of significant linguocultural value are conveyed by means of the aphorism. The process of the structural organization of aphorisms must first be clarified in order to ensure their accurate extraction from the macrocontext. The semantics of an aphorism should be

broader than the context in which it occurs; it should not be restricted by contextual and situational characteristics. For example:

> In general, it is not known how much a person needs. Perhaps more than he needs and no less than he wants.

The example above is, in fact, a statement possessing universal meaning, which is revealed through the lexeme "person" and other grammatical means, such as comparative adjectives ("more," "less," etc.).

There are several ways in which an author can incorporate an aphorism into a broader context. In some cases, the aphorism is not transformed within the text: it is not semantically dependent on the surrounding context, and its extraction from the context as an independent text does not entail any changes in its structural-semantic and/or lexical-grammatical organization.

Such aphorisms have an independent character in relation to the context surrounding them. For example:

> Some people achieve success. Some people win through loans. Some people do not even know where money comes from. But we hardly understand what wealth really is.

Here, it should be noted that the independence of the selected aphorism can be observed through the use of pronouns such as "we" and "some," which broadens the applicability of the situation described to the widest possible audience.

One of the semantic features that determines the structure of an aphorism as a specific text is its generality. Generality can be understood as a particular informational property of an aphorism, whereby the information presented is relevant to a broad range of recipients. The cognitive basis of generality lies in the relevance of the topic of discourse and the philosophical depth of the statement, which, in turn, are ensured by its ontological meanings.

Generality is manifested in the structure of an aphorism through the interpretation of its didactic character. For example,

Socrates' well-known aphorism, "The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing" demonstrates how a concise statement can convey a universal philosophical idea. Its generality is achieved through the universal concept of "wisdom" and the opposition between "knowing" and "knowing nothing," making the statement relevant to a broad range of recipients regardless of their individual experience or social background."

In this case, generality is clearly realized through an appeal to the addressee's background knowledge and experience: obviously, no one can immediately comprehend the truth; doing so requires effort and time.

In our opinion, this aphorism possesses a distinctive pragmatic force due to the author's effective presentation of the idea through concise statements and their logical sequence: science is a means of discovering truth.

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