

The Title of a Literary Text as a Discursive Phenomenon¹

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Abstract

Modern text linguistics pays serious attention to the significant structural elements of the text, which carry special knowledge. Such structural elements include the title. In this article, the title is considered as a linguistic and cognitive characteristic and a spatially fixed structural element of the text, «frame», which is located around/before/behind the text, focusing on the importance of the title position in the research of discourse of writer. The titles refer to the elements of the text that carry a special «presuppositional» knowledge, on the basis of which the title as a constructive element of the text requires analysis, mediated by inclusion in the speech-thinking continuum. At that, the title occupies a dominant, but secondary role in relation to the text. In the context of a linguistic and cultural scientific paradigm, the title can be considered as a special text of culture, reflecting the worldview of a particular author and the linguistic picture of the world of the people as a whole. In addition, the header can be comprehended as the object of cognitive linguistics in the aspect of knowledge study about the outer world, carried out by means of language. The duality of the title, on the one hand, is manifested in its «auto semantics», and the independence of this informative unit of the text; on the other hand, its inclusion in the text determines its ontological specificity. In this regard, the two-pronged approach – linguistic and cognitive – combines conceptual analysis with discourse and is very productive in relation to the understanding of the structural elements of the text as a whole and titles – in particular – as representations of the individual picture of the world of the author's, resulting in the process of cognition, since the originality of the linguistic picture of the world of an author is manifested in the choice and combination of lexical means in accordance with a certain artistic purpose and author's attitude and it reflects the general direction of the work and the peculiarities of the linguistic picture of the world of the artist of word.

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1. Introduction

Modern text linguistics pays serious attention to the significant structural elements of the text, which carry a special "presuppositional" knowledge. These are self-sufficient, not fully conditioned by the context units, which are commonly called autosemantic, as opposed to related, synsemantic ones. The title refers to such structural elements, along with the epigraph and precedent texts of various kinds. The duality of the title - on the one hand, its autosemanticism, independence as an informative textual unit, and, on the other hand, its inclusion in the text - attracts the attention of researchers.

The works dedicated to the title appeared in the first half of the 20th century, but their fragmentation and disconnection with the main areas of science of that time led to the fact that they remained unnoticed. Peshkovsky (1914) defined the special role of the title in his classic work "Russian syntax in scientific coverage". He noted the importance of the title for the reader's perception. Peshkovsky considers the title as a "hint" of "the content or even a brief expression of it": the title of the book "is more than a name" (Peshkovsky, 2001, p. 46; Issaliyeva et al., 2018). However, the studies of the work of art title performed by linguistic scholars, considered for a long time that the main task was to solve such problems as title grammatical status identification and the determination of its main functions. In this regard, the work by Krzhyzhanovsky (1931) "Poetics of the title", written in the 30-ies of the last century, was a forward-looking one. It discusses the key points regarding the title nature, and the title and the text are analyzed as the components of a single complex: "the title may be considered as the main part of the book, because it is not isolated from a single book body and like the cover, it fits the text and the meaning" (Krzhyzhanovsky, 193, p. 4).

The work by Arnold (1987) "The value of a strong position for the interpretation of a literary text" may be considered as a prerequisite to another way of the text and its title study, which is an integrated approach to it, that made it possible to apply both literary and linguistic research methods to the text. In the article, the scholar notes that "the relations, which are commonly called tropes, function not only in the microcontext, but also in the titles, and at the level of images, plot and text as a whole through the title. This property of the title is very significant, as it confirms the need to interpret the artistic text as a coherent whole structure and requires the joint efforts of linguists and literary critics" (Arnold, 1978, p. 25).

Proceeding from this, “in order to comprehend the language of a poetic whole fully, it is not enough to know the individual constructive elements of the text — it is necessary to determine their place in the artistic-speech system of the entire poetic speech-mental continuum” (Chumak-Zhun, 2009: 7). This statement is true for the artistic text as a whole - both poetic and prosaic. Thus, the title as a constructive element of the text requires the analysis mediated by the inclusion in the speech-thought continuum.

2. Methods

The analysis of linguistic phenomena is carried out in the work from the standpoint of the anthropocentric paradigm, which treats language as an entity directly connected with human activity and determining it. The work is based on the method of system description, analysis and synthesis, the method of linguistic-cultural interpretation and the cognitive-discursive approach.

3. Main Part

The title occupies a dominant but secondary role with respect to the text, since, according to Krzhizhanovsky (1931), “the original title page has no name” (p. 17). The title is made in the process of writing and completes its image when the book is written. According to the researcher, the book evolves, complicating the title with additional meanings. Here we must object to the author with his categorical approach, since there are known cases of the title creation before the text writing (in particular, it is the way of poem, miniature, improvisation writing on a given topic). Nevertheless, traditionally the title really "crowns" the writer's work. At the same time, Krzhizhanovsky (1931) does not deny the possibility of heading evolution as the text is being written and, in this aspect, offers the classification of titles, and singles out three types of it: Ante-Scriptum, In-Scriptum, Post-Scriptum. The title Ante-Scriptum appears in the writer's mind "as an imperative, attaches chapter after chapter to itself gradually in the process of work, searches for them in different ways, like a locomotive collecting its rolling stock" (Krzhizhanovsky, 1931, p. 22). The author considers the In-Scriptum title as the most common one. Such a title becomes fully formalized only in the process of text reading and, “once it has arisen, it begins to regenerate the textual fabric”. The researcher calls the headings of Post-Scriptum “text jolts”: “they seem to be hidden behind the text pages moving through the reader’s mind, and only with the last words they become clear and necessary, they get a logical visibility that was not felt fully or was not felt at all” (Krzhizhanovsky, 1931, p. 23). Besides, for the first time, Krzhizhanovsky drew attention to the transformation of “old branched titles” into short, lapidary ones, since, according to the researcher, “modern manuscripts are sent to the reader’s eyes only if they are

short” and the semiotic character of the modern title is foreseen by the author: " We demand an hour reduced to a second, a short phrase instead of a period; words instead of phrases; a sign instead of a word" (Krzhizhanovsky, 1931, p. 30).

It seems that the title is not just a word, a phrase, a sentence, but some kind of single-lexeme or poly-lexeme formation, which is the “key” to the ideological content of the text. It means that a heading can be qualified as a microcontext that unfolds in the mind of the recipient into an individually marked macro context. And here there are possible variable “readings”, that is, not always the meaning of the name is understood unequivocally by everyone.

All this determines not only the expansion (with the increase of the study factual base, detailed classifications, etc.), but also the deepening of title scientific analysis. So, from the middle of the 20th century, marked by the use of the systematic approach to the text interpretation, the title is considered as a separate element of the work structure and as a kind of linguistic-cultural complex. At that, an artistic text is interpreted as a special body combining artistic, individual-authorial, ethnic-cultural and common language. That's why it is always a unique phenomenon that requires a comprehensive linguistic-cultural approach. From this point of view, the analysis of the text is carried out in the framework of the anthropocentric paradigm, which considers language as an entity directly connected with human activity and defining it. On this basis, there are two main approaches to the title study in modern linguistics. The validity of these approaches has been proved by many scientific studies: the title is considered as a text unit and as a relatively independent informative body (Jabbari et al., 2019; Nakhaee & Nasrabadi, 2019).

So, according to Galperin (1981), the title of the text defines "the main idea, the idea and the concept of the text creator" (p. 133). Since the title is the “name” of the text, it makes the text individual, distinguishes among others what is written in the definition of the title: “The title is the name of some work (literary or musical) or its individual parts”, while the title is “the verbal designation of a thing, a phenomenon” (Ozhegov & Shvedova, 1997, pp. 185 & 432).

Despite the mutual lexicographic references, the notion *заглавие* and *название* can be differentiated proceeding from the inner form of the words: *заглавие* – from *глава, главный*; *название* – from *называть* (‘call by name’). Thus, these terms are axiologically different and unequal.

Besides, there is a discursive distinction: the title is, first of all, the author's prerogative, the manifestation of the language and ethno-cultural personality of the text creator: the author as the creator, the sculptor of the text body selects an appropriate “body” of the text “head” - the title, which reflects the essence of the text

in a universal form. This determines the author's search for the most adequate title to his work.

For example, the modern writer Semenova (2010), whose fantasy novels are very popular among young readers, gives the second title to her novel "Valkyrie" (written in 1991 and published in 1995) - "The one I always wait for". That is, the author uses the so-called "double heading" - "Valkyrie: The one I always wait for" (Semenova, 2010). This novel tells about the Ancient Russia of the second half of the 9th century, the rise of Prince Rurik and the Varangian governors, which accounts for the first part of the title, "Valkyrie" (the norther gave this name to the main character when he fell in love with her). The mythonym becomes the title, although this metaphorical name of the heroine (Valkyrie - in Norse mythology, the warrior maiden, riding on a winged horse over the battlefield, deciding who will survive and who will die. Thus the world of the dead is called Valhalla) is found only in two fragments of the novel (4 cases of this word use in the novel). This author's title represents the general setting of the work on mythologism, objectifies historical stylization, combining the descriptions of the real world and Slavic mythology (belief in gods, spirits, the cult of ancestors and forest dwellers). In the second heading, the emphasis is shifted to the key idea of the narration: the main thing for the heroine of the novel is to wait for the One she is waiting for (the word One is written with a capital letter as the sign of "one single person" deification).

Thus, the title appears as the result of the targeted linguistic and creative work of the text author.

The lexeme название rather represents the title as the reader's prerogative: название - 'naming' - зов to which the reader's associative memory and language competence responds, turning into a solid text of the work (if it is known to the reader) or to some associatively related series - the idea of the text content possibility (in the case of unknown text for the reader).

In this regard, the concept of frame introduced by Lotman (2016) is of considerable interest: "The frame of a literary work consists of two elements: the beginning and the end"; "The text is not addressed to the end, but to the beginning"; "The main question is not about the end, but about the story origin" (pp. 268-269). This interpretation formed the basis of the text title and other border elements as its frame (frame elements) established in modern philology tradition. The definition of the title as a frame, that is, its spatial characteristic (located around / in front of / behind the text), emphasizes the importance of the title position when the text is studied in the writer's discourse. Being a borderline pretext or an extra text element, the title links and simultaneously separates the text from other texts, makes the quintessence of textual meaning that should remain in the reader's memory,

expanding into a whole text at a certain moment. Besides, the title is the text border, which separates the texts from each other, and the texts are included in the texts without border neglect, that is, the title is an important link in the concept of intertextuality introduced into the discourse by Kristeva.

Summarizing the experience of previously published scientific research on the title functions, Veselova (1998) identifies five of them as primary ones: nominative; informative (communicative); dividing (the title "divides" the text from other objects); expressive-appeal (prepares the reader for the upcoming text reading); advertising (as a primary framework element) (p. 13).

As an example, let's consider the title of the story "The Spring in Fialta" by V. Nabokov ("Vesna v Fial'te"), included in the eponymous collection, first published in New York in 1956. The feature of this title is the invention of the author's toponym - Fialta. Boyd (1993) calls it "the contamination of the Adriatic Fiume and the Black Sea Yalta" (pp. 496-497). But there are no comments from Nabokov (1990) about this. In the text, the narrator speaks of the town as follows: "... in the hollow of its name, I hear a sugary, moist smell of a soft, dark, and most crumpled of flowers, and the sound of Yalta not in tone, although distinct one ..." (p. 305). Thus, the name Fialta is considered in spatial terms and volumetrically. The "hollow" of the name is the gaping vowels [иa], where the downward sound is replaced by an ascending stressed one. Sound associations play an important role. Another word is heard in the sounding of some word, which gives rise to memories, becomes the impetus, the generator of the past. Lekmanov (2004) characterizes the name Fialta in the following way: "having remembered that in one of the episodes of the story, the author speaks of the "greenhouse-wet essence of Fialta", and having compared this characteristic with the place in "Dar", which refers to the "greenhouse paradise of the past", we will understand that Nabokov's Fialta is a kind of earthly paradise substitute for the hero and the heroine, from which they refuse frivolously and criminally" (Ardakani et al., 2015; Srivastava, 2016).

Thus, the title in Nabokov's discourse acquires another characteristic of modern and postmodern discourse, and game function. A. Luxemburg, the author of game poetics theory, Nabokov's creativity expert, highlights such game manifestations in the work as punning, allusions, "exquisite language game" and "multilinguistic game". This title is characterized by the matryoshka principle "one in the other" described by Davydov (2004), the explorer of V. Nabokov's works, that is, like a nested doll in another nested doll: the spring that is presented by the narrator to the reader is represented by Fialta, a non-existent city, a phantom,

Since the toponym Fialta does not have a direct denotation, its sounding image for the reader consists of фиалки (violet) and ЯЛТЫ represented by the narrator.

So, the title units assume an associative network that is unfolded in the text: Fialta - the city ('isolation', 'enclosure', 'circle') - paradise ('happiness', 'love', 'grace', 'bloom'); Spring - youth - love - happiness - paradise. Since the narrator's spring is confined to Fialta, it also acquires boundaries, does not extend beyond the circle of the phantom city. Thus, the title formally represents the syntagm, where the onym Fialta submits to the noun spring. Meaningfully, semantically, the Fialta field contains the spring field, which is its component part. The "core", the contact point of these two semantic fields, is the seme 'violet', which is included in both fields. Фиалка in the semantic field of Fialta is an associative component in purely author's perception, just as Fialta is a purely author toponym. In the semantic field "spring" violet occupies a strong position as a symbol, the flower of spring.

At that, the violet in "The spring in Fialta" is Nina's metaphorical image, which is confirmed by post scriptum: the flower is mentioned in the story twice (besides its "echo" in the title). The first time is implicit when the narrator talks about his associations about the city name: "... the sugary smell of a small, dark, most crumpled of flowers"; another time it appears at the end of the story, in the hands of the heroine: "A bouquet of dark, small, faintly smelling violets appeared in her hands from somewhere ...". The repeatability of the characteristics of small and dark in Nina's description is noteworthy (short stature); the abundance of diminutives: small inclined outline; small cheekbone face; a little narrow-shouldered woman with Pushkin's legs; brown hair). The characteristic crumpled ('succumbing to deformation, not resisting') echoes the adverb disinterestedly ('not to resist - to surrender; for nothing') and coincides with the peculiarities of Nina's character. One can say that the characteristic "crumpled" is the result of the heroine's selflessness, responsiveness: everyone uses her frank fervor, her ability and desire to adapt to another, "an active participation, like female love was spring water containing healing salts, which she willingly watered from her dipper if you remind her." Associated with her husband by a strong and hard friendship, that is, giving herself, acting for the benefit of him without reciprocity, Nina is a violet - a self-smelling flower, small, dark and crumpled. Thus, the implication of this phytonym in the name of the toponym Fialta as a keyword in the work title represents the author's specific linguistic and cognitive work on the title and his desire to capture the key idea of the text in the title.

4. Summary

The mentioned above allows us to characterize the title structure (and the text as a whole) as cumulative one. Accumulation is not just accumulation, but the stringing of elements-memories and images. The title as a product of the individual author linguistic picture of the world reflects a certain way of the artwork conceptualization created on a real basis of the world. At that, this structural element of the text bears the stamp of linguistic culture, it is nationally specific.

The creation of the title implies a focused and painstaking work of the writer. Thus, the title should be considered as a kind of architectural design. The discursive aspect determines the need for communicative situation implementation in the "author-reader" system: the reader needs to unravel the ratio of the title constituent parts: words, sounds, meanings. Created by linguistic means, but with the participation of cultural connotations behind the linguistic signs, the title design must be guessed by the reader to know the author's deepest thought, the philosophical foundation of the text through the use of this "key".

In this regard, a dual analysis is necessary, in the aspect of which the title is considered as a unit of text and as a relatively independent informative body.

5. Conclusions

Thus, a logical conclusion can be made: a title is not just a word, a phrase, a sentence, but a kind of mono or poly-lexeme unit, which is the "key" to the ideological content of the text. The constituent units of the title assume an associative network, which unfolds in the text. In this regard, the title can be interpreted as a special unit, combining art, individual author, and ethnic-cultural, common language, which is why it is always a unique phenomenon that requires a comprehensive linguistic-cultural and linguistic-cognitive, conceptual and discursive approach.

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