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The pragmatic potential of structure of the Yanka Kupala's poetic titles

Potencjał pragmatyczny struktury tytułów poetyckich Janki Kupały

Прагматычны патэнцыял структуры паэтычных загаловаў Янкі Купалы

ABSTRACT: The author studies the functions of the poetic titles in the creative works of the national Belarusian poet Yanka Kupala, whose work is often considered as prophetic and messianic throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. The titles are regarded as the constituents of three different levels of textuality: text, metatext and macrotext, and within the three stages of the poetic text perception: pre-textual, textual and post-textual. The peculiarities of the structure of poetic titles have been revealed in terms of their pragmatic potential. The role of titles in creating poetic images as well as in representation of the entire poet's ancestry is considered through the prism of their syntactical form. The system of title making in the poetry of Yanka Kupala has been revealed with the emphasis on titles-addresses and titles-sources as models for provoking readers' cognitive work in the process of poetry perception.

KEYWORDS: poetic title, title complex, Yanka Kupala's poetry, title's functions, creative metatext, creative macrotext, syntactic structure.

Yanka Kupala's title complex is a formidable object of linguistic study, since, on the one hand, being a component of the text, it obeys all of the linguistic laws and performs a number of functions along with other components of the text – from information and cognitive functions to communication and nomination. But at the same time, the title is an extratextual component of the text, presenting it in a wider context, sometimes resembling a hypertext. The study of titles shows their structural proximity to speech units such as phrases and sentences (and those of different kinds and types) as well as their structural distinctiveness, which is manifested in the

independent functioning of phrases and their ability to perform functions not characteristic of them – for example, communicative and informative ones, whereas in other components of the text the functional potential of phrases is usually limited to nominativeness.

The object of linguistic research is more often focused on mass media titles [Попуцевич 2006; Покровская 2006], researchers pay special attention to the functioning of newspaper titles, since this is the most dynamic genre of the written language (in spoken language, a title is an extremely rare phenomenon), the number of works (newspaper articles) is constantly increasing, in addition, they are temporary in nature, so newspaper titles are to a greater extent a fact of live speech. At the same time, in our opinion, the titles of literary works, which are more fixed and though to a certain extent are units of speech, according to such a criterion as reproducibility they can be regarded as language units as well, thus they represent a highly interesting object of linguistic studies.

An important quality of a literary title, including a poetic one, is its ability to appear in the mind of the reader as a condensed equivalent of the entire work of literature, which is achieved due to the establishment of complex associative links in the process of a literary work cognition. Although Irina Golovina notes the energy of “the tension of a coiled spring” in relation to the above-mentioned newspaper titles [Головина 2006: 1], it is clear that in relation to poetic titles such a metaphor is applicable to much a greater extent, since this energy in the texts of mass media is aimed only at the performance of an advertising function (drawing attention to the text, encouraging the reader of the newspaper to read the relevant article, or even to buy the newspaper (or, in today’s conditions, to subscribe for an online edition). The energy of a newspaper title is quickly absorbed by the information continuum and rarely survives in the speaker’s mind for longer than the time of reading the corresponding article. Whereas the energy of a literary title, on the contrary, only increases during the cognition of the work, and if the work turns out to be artistically valuable, then it increases as much as possible after this process.

The functional potential of a newspaper title is most often limited to the pre-text stage, while a poetic title, fulfilling certain tasks at the mentioned stage, performs many more functions at the post-text stage. After familiarizing the reader with a poetic work, the title is stored in his or her mind as a short equivalent of the entire work, and the significance of the title is reflected in the mind for a long time, sometimes for a lifetime. If cited, reference to the entire work is not always possible, it requires significant time and energy resources, then the title is actually used as a linguistic unit, being, on the one hand, an element of a specific text, in fact, its own nomination, on the other,

it is an element of the glossary of nominations of concepts of cultural life of a society, elements of mass consciousness within a certain cultural continuum.

Thus, the poetic title to a much lesser extent performs, for example, an advertising function or a function of attracting attention, these functions are performed more by the author's name in certain conditions, but first of all, it is aimed at implementing informational, evaluative and pragmatic functions, which are inherent to any title complex, as well as a cognitive and epistemic functions, since a poetic title is one of the means of identification of a poetic work and consolidation of knowledge about it, and finally, even a function of social programming, entering into a complex of general cultural concepts within the limits of a certain society, and sometimes groups of societies with a common or partially common cultural code (for example, many societies of the European cultural space, which, by the way, goes far beyond the borders of the European continent). The cognitive, epistemic functions and the function of social programming are revealed and implemented both at the social and individual levels.

Naturally, the title is first of all a component of a poetic text, therefore it acts in its connection with other components of this text, contributing to the achievement of its main goal – creating an artistic image. A poetic title is considered poetic not only as any element of a poetic work (through their relations to a poetic work), but also by its poetic value, density of stylistic techniques, concentration of elements contributing to the creation of an artistic image, artistic and aesthetic content (qualitative characteristic). The title ensures the completeness of the poetic work, its holistic perception, it acts as a semantic and image-related frame of the work, on which the poetic and image structure of the entire work, its semantic and aesthetic content is strung. Often, such a role of the title finds not only a meaningful, poetic and aesthetic expression, but also a directly linguistic one, when the title acts as a support for stylistic figures or is constantly repeated in the work, which ensures its integrity and unity at the linguistic level.

So, in the poem *Спадчына* (*Ancestry*) the only lexical component of the title is repeated not so many times – just twice, but in the first and last stanzas, which makes the whole poem resemble a bridge between two supports: “I have my dear ancestry” – “My ancestry is called no more Than dear homeland, native soil”. Two uses, but the entire poem is an explanation of what the ancestry consists of and, thus, is built around this word from the title. And grammatically, from ancestry to ancestry, pronouns and contextual synonyms (about it, this treasure, with it) build the poem almost as a single sentence, where everything begins with an implicative question (what kind of ancestry is there?) and ends with an open answer (homeland). In addition, the ancestry undergoes a generic transformation (ancestry – treasure – ancestry),

which also permeates the entire poem and contributes to a broader and more complete understanding of the ancestry. But still, the author establishes the semantic dominance of the poem in “ancestry”, which is why it becomes a title, absorbs textual, subtextual, extratextual and supertextual meanings and preserves them in the minds of the recipients of Yanka Kupala’s poetry in this one word. But this word is not equal to itself as the title of the poem, because the word is nominative by its nature, and though the title is nominative too, it possesses a predication, and expands the semantic boundaries of even the word itself. Thus, ancestry (or rather *спадчына*) in the minds of the majority of the Belarusian-speaking population not only has the meanings outlined in the explanatory dictionary (in the legal and cultural sense), but also, and for many, first of all, it evokes associations with the Yanka Kupala’s poem and the Yanka Kupala’s concept of ancestry.

However, unlike other components of a poetic work, the poetic title is simultaneously a component of the supratextual unity, which, for example, Nina Gubina calls the metatext of the author’s creativity [Губина 2006: 7]. Note that there is no consensus regarding the term “metatext”: not only is this term interdisciplinary, it has different meanings in literary studies and linguistics (and it is found in other branches of knowledge), but not everyone understands it in the same way even within linguistics. For example, Anna Vezhbitska considers a metatext as a “text about a text” [Вежбицка 1978], in a metatext there is a comment or a description of another text. According to Âna Akhapkina, “Metatext by analogy with metalanguage is a “text of the second level” in relation to which the actual text is the object of description” [Ахапкина, online]. This understanding of metatext relates well to other linguistic terms (metalanguage and metaspeech) and is therefore most appropriate. Note that this approach is also observed in Western linguistics, where, however, metatext and metatextuality are considered alongside such categories as intertextuality, paratextuality, architextuality, hypotextuality, and hypertextuality [Chandler, online]. Still according with Daniel Chandler’s article [Chandler, online], there is no unity of understanding and well-ordered terminology here either.

It is obvious that outside the poetic text, of which the title is a component, it is part of at least two supertextual units: the context of the entire work of a particular writer and many other texts, contexts where poetic titles are mentioned, cited when characterizing or commenting on the writer’s work. These are primarily literary or linguistic (but not only) contexts, where titles, when mentioned, actually perform the function of replacing the entire poetic text, acting as its equivalent. In addition, it is possible to consider titles, especially when they are used in literary texts, as nomenclature signs – the names of specific scientific objects [Лингвистический 1990: 509], which for

literary studies are represented by literary texts. Accordingly, poetic titles can be included in the register of metatextual means within even different understandings of the abovementioned term.

Titles are of the greatest interest as components of such a supratextual unity as the work of a certain author; we can define it as a macrotext, as well as in the macrotext of a certain literature and culture in general. It is in this aspect that the titles show the greatest value in terms of the implementation of cognitive and epistemic functions and through them – the function of social programming.

The nature of the poetic title is thus twofold. Being a component of a work of poetry, it obeys the laws of the structure of the text, enters into the image structure of the work, forms a whole with it and acquires its own unique meaning, conceptual and image structure, without the text the title has no meaning and is not equal to itself as a sequence of words. At the same time, being a component of the macrotext, a certain supertext formation, the title also has its own structural features, which, among other things, distinguish it from other components of the text. Note that if the author works on the title as a component of the work consciously, trying to condense the main idea, the most important artistic images, to make it a harmonious element of the textual unity, then the authors rarely work with the title as part of the macrotext and at the level of all their creative heritage, such work is hardly achievable at all. Therefore, if we consider poetic titles from this perspective and are able to study their macrotextual potential and connections, then we must understand that their presence is dictated by the actual artistic laws and logic, artistic intuition, artistic truth, rather than the conscious choice of the author.

The functional orientation of poetic titles, which, as already mentioned, is characterized by communicative, informative, nomination, aesthetic, emotional, advertising [Фатина 2005], evaluative [Попуцевич 2006], cognitive and epistemic functions, directly affects the linguistic distinctiveness of the titles, where the organization and use of linguistic means is directly aimed at the implementation of this or that function. Note that all the functions listed above are rarely implemented within a single title. More often, it performs one or more such functions, which affects its structure. For example, the nominative function requires the use for titles of mainly nominative means (not communicative means, which are sentences), that is, words or word combinations. We have analyzed 258 titles from Yanka Kupala's poetry and 110 of them (43%) are nominative constructions, which not only name the work, but also a certain object, a person described in the work. Such titles [*Мужык* (*A Peasant*), *Мая малітва* (*My Prayer*), *Песня жней* (*Song of the Reapers*), *Вясна* (*Spring*), *Паэзія* (*Poetry*), *Араты* (*Ploughman*)] actually