

## Free Verse as Active Discursive Process of Literary Belletristic Communication: Linguistic & Rhetorical Approach

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**Abstract.** From the perspective of linguistic & rhetorical (L&R) paradigm the paper proposes a conception of research into free verse discourse as an active component of contemporary Russian multi-ethnic socio-cultural educational space in the sphere of Literary Belletristic Communication. The authors interpret the positions of "linguistic & rhetorical hermeneutical circle", define principles of L&R research into free verse discourse, propose corresponding definitions.

**Keywords:** linguistic & rhetorical (L&R) paradigm, free verse discourse, discursive processes, multi-ethnic socio-cultural educational space, literary belletristic communication.

### Introduction.

The problem of this research derives from the anthropocentric approach as the mainstream trend in philology in general and a megaparadigm in linguistics in particular. In this paper we focus on free verse discourse, or free verse, which as the product of the creative idea-to-speech process is popular in Russian multi-ethnic socio-cultural educational space of the late 20<sup>th</sup> – early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The mass audience treats this kind of poetry as vividly innovative with a touch of elitism. The perception of free verse as artistic poetry gives an aesthetic enjoyment and a sense of "pleasure of the text", indicating a high level of the recipient's general and reading culture. Modern Russian free verse discourse as a complex of individual discourse practices (in Foucault's terms [1]) is represented by anthologies and free verse festivals contributing to an essential dynamicity of the current discursive process. Accordingly, it is heuristically significant to comprehend and examine it systematically from the perspective of linguistic & rhetorical (L&R) paradigm [2] as an integrative approach in the theory of linguistics, discourse, text, and belletristic studies.

### Sources and methods.

The material of the study covers entries of reference books and dictionaries, literary critical articles, research papers on free verse interpretation, anthologies and collections of contemporary Russian free verse festivals of the 1990-2000s. The paper employs the following analytical procedures: systematic analysis, concept categorization, modeling, contextual, conceptual, hermeneutic interpretational etc.

### Discussion.

The empirical material of the study includes Russian contemporary free verse discourse treated as an aggregate discourse practice of Russian free verse poets registered in the anthologies of the 1990-2000s and embodied in current discursive process of Russian socio-cultural and educational space. Free verse (French *vers libre* – "free verse") is a term of Western poetics, which

since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century has been defined in Russia as “a number of specific verse formations differing from parasyllabic and syllabic-tonic verse” [3]. Originally, free verse developed in German and French versification (19 c.), later in Russia and England (20 c.). The contemporary Russian socio-cultural educational space witnesses a growth in the interest in free verse as a poetic phenomenon, though its specificity is not sufficiently studied by specialists in rhetoric. Literary scholars paid more attention to free verse: the theoretical and methodological basis of free verse research is constituted by the works of a number of famous Russian scholars: M.L. Gasparov, A.L. Zhovtis, A.P. Kvjatkovskij, Ju.B. Orlickij, Ju.N. Tynjanov etc.

Forming a general theoretical basis for the functioning of productive register of idea-to-speech activity of the linguistic personality as a subject of literary belletristic communication, we perform a general description of the psychological aspects of creativity, treated as process and result (R. Arnheim, A. Maslow, B. Edwards and others); establish the specificity of literary belletristic creativity in general (Aristotle, M.M. Bakhtin, Yu. M. Lotman) and of poetic text making discursive process in particular treating it as a unity with respect to the free verse discourse.

We analyzed ancient rhetoricians' definitions of the poetic inspiration phenomenon as well as the alternative conceptions of Plato and Aristotle. The well-known ancient thesis is that the genuine creativity of a poet is inspired by the divinity called Muse. However, Plato imparts this thesis with a more radical understanding: he talks about a state of holy madness since a truly inspired poet is insane and creates his works in a state of obsession with "transfusion" of energy from a hierarchically higher being to the lower. In his turn, Aristotle thinks that art is created not in the heaven but by a more simple ingenious imitation of Mother Nature's laws, i.e. a more down-to-earth conception. We stick to the intermediary view supported by the analysis of works by free verse poets: inspiration comes from Muse as well as requires hard work.

Our research has clarified the process of creating belletristic text from the standpoints of text linguistics, cognitive paradigm, rhetoric and new rhetoric etc. We study the free verse discourse through the prism of L&R paradigm as a product of idea-into-speech transformation cycle of a special type bordering between prose and poetry. The L&R paradigm offers a system of terminological coordinates, formed at the crossroads of the following three categories: levels of linguistic personality structure (*verbal associative network, thesaurus, pragmatic field*) [4]; stages of universal idea-into-speech transformation cycle (*invention, disposition, elocution*) [5]; rhetorical concepts of belletristic speech act ideology (*ethos, logos, pathos*) [6, 7] etc. Within the last triad we identify: *ethos*, i.e. an ethical, moral philosophical foundation of speech performed through analysis of the value content of free verse conceptual field; *logos* as a verbal, idea-speech foundation resting on the analysis of the conceptual content of free verse concept; *pathos* as an emotional speech foundation linked to the images of free verse conceptual field.

The center of the communication model [8], treated as a "linguistic & rhetorical hermeneutic circle", is occupied by **the (belletristic) message component**, a unity of two dimensions: discourse and text as its semiotic embodiment. This is a synergistic product of five other basic components of communication: producer, recipient, referent, contact and code. Unlike the communication model of R. Jakobson with six equal components, the Liege school of new rhetoric [9] hierarchizes them from the synergetic aspect as was shown above.

**The producer and recipient** of discourse – "living elements" of linguistic & rhetorical hermeneutical circle – appear as linguistic personality<sup>1</sup> and linguistic personality<sup>2</sup> with specified levels of their structure. The anthropolinguistic basis of the free verse communication process is presented by the dynamic lines of psychoenergetic interaction on structural levels of linguistic personality of the free verse producer and recipient (verbal associative network, thesaurus, pragmatic field); by denotative moves within “logos – thesaurus – invention” communication parameters (*logos*); modus – connotative injections within “ethos – motivation – disposition” and “pathos – verbal – communicative parameters” (*ethos, pathos*).

The free verse discourse is formed in the productive register of producer's creative idea-to-speech activity (writing, speaking) with **the contact** being established via the channel of complementary types of recipient's idea-to-speech activity (reading, listening).

Besides literature and generative poetics, the process of creating a belletristic text is known to be studied by various approaches: aesthetics, psychology, rhetoric. Any message carrying aesthetic information, understood in a most general sense, is treated as a belletristic text by modern aesthetics. All forms of art create their own semiotic systems providing for their existence. Besides

the primary code of natural language, the language of art also requires a belletristic code, a dynamic system of rules for sign use to create a work of art, forming a special mental construct called referent-2, i.e. the belletristic referent of fictitious reality. Consequently, **the code** as a communication component is represented at two levels: 1) natural language common for the producer and the recipient, and 2) aesthetic code proper with its "phonetics, vocabulary and grammar" supplemented by the system of cross-textual references, allusions, hints requiring a well-prepared recipient who as a "skilled reader" can fully comprehend the artistic effect and form a complex of psycho-energetic impulses, generating a feeling of "pleasure of the text".

**The referent** is a fragment of reality, belletristically reinterpreted by the producer through ethos, logos and pathos into the "possible world". The act of perceiving the latter by linguistic personality<sup>2</sup> has two consequences: either a communicative effect with the richness of belletristic impression, the strength of aesthetic impact, the brightness of experience, high literary emotion, or a communicative failure when a free verse leaves the reader indifferent.

The belletristic text appears to be a set of images (belletristic utterances) forming a belletristic message. Being of semiotic origin, the belletristic image is not a sign itself: it is a minimal unit of a belletristic text which is to be recognized before the image is to be understood. The system of expressions constitutes a text, whose semantic content – the belletristic conception – is to be interpreted and evaluated" [10] by **the recipient** with the "addressee factor" (N.D. Arutyunova) performing a perspective role and serving as a discourse trigger. The approach offered here is exemplified by a free verse written by Vera Lipatova:

ADDRESSING THE READER:

I live for my pleasure  
my pleasure  
is you

In this aspect of the model the recipient as linguistic personality<sup>2</sup> plays a significant role, since s/he produces a "mental product" making an interpretative presentation of discourse.

The "addressee factor" is specifically transformed with respect to the linguistic personality of free verse recipient; his / her main characteristics, reconstructed from the genre stylistic peculiarities of free verse discourse and its texts in modern anthologies and collections, appear to be intelligence, penetration into word, creative approach to life and innovations, the complexity of the psychological nuances of feelings and emotions. The recipient interprets discourse moving along the idea-to-speech cycle stages: pre-disposition, elocution, disposition, invention, understanding, interpretation, memory.

Drawing on the discourse study of contemporary Russian free verse (1990-2000s) we defined the following principles of L&R approach to the study of this genre as a specific type of discourse:

1) principle of incorporation into a general socio-cultural context: treatment of the discursive formation under study as a process and product of idea-to-speech activity within the framework of the relevant supersphere (socio-cultural, literary belletristic, epistemologically oriented etc.) of socio-cultural educational space at a particular chronological stage of its development;

2) principle of reliance on all components of L&R hermeneutical circle, the definition of speech production as a synergistic product of other five communication factors: producer, recipient, referent, code, contact;

3) principle of a new research prism: placing the studied discourse, embodied in texts, into the terminological coordinates of L&R paradigm, 9-dimensional space of three categories (linguistic personality levels, ideological components of a speech act, idea-to-speech cycle stages), investigating discourse-text through the prism of three groups of universal parameters: ethos-motivation-disposition, logos-thesaurus-invention, pathetic-verbal-elocution (for literary belletristic communication as a sphere of art the reverse order of study is more appropriate);

4) internal and external typology: drawing classifications which rest on the axioms and principles of dialectical logic: "general – specific", "genus – species – variety", "general – specific – separate", "historical – logical";

5) establishing the essential signs and typological features with the aim of formulating a detailed definition of the discourse under study as a specific idea-to-speech cycle construct characterized by L&R specificity at all levels of its formation, organization, functioning;

6) establishing positions and features of the discourse under study from the perspective of textual implementation of the universals of discourse paradigmatics, discourse syntagmatics,

discourse epigramatics in the global space of functioning and interaction of discourse processes of socio-cultural discourse educational space.

### Conclusion.

The theoretical analysis revealed *that free verse discourse* is an active discursive process in the field of literary and belletristic communication of Russian multi-ethnic socio-cultural educational space of the 1980–2000s. Modern free verse discourse ensemble is a systematically organized unity of individual discourse practices registered in a number of publications and anthologies of recent decades. It is a process and product of idea-into-speech transformation cycle of a special type which can be called syncretic complex ("intermediate", "marginal") with the domination of poetic idea-into-speech transformation cycle as the basis of literary personality perception. At the formal level the free verse text has features of prosaic discourse, being at its core poetry of world perception and verbalization of the results through the prism of discourse producer's linguistic literary personality. The fixed number of syllables per line as a metric unit is replaced by the "phrasal dominant" principle (hence the phenomenon of "nervous verse", "broken verse"); on the discursive level of articulation the free verse method of versification is opposed to the canonical one as an alternative discourse mode and a specific construction type of methodology of belletristic verbalization of reality [11, 12].

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