

**MSC 2020****International Scientific and Practical Conference «MAN. SOCIETY.  
COMMUNICATION»****M.M. BAKHTIN'S GENRE THEORY AS A KEY TO TEACHING  
LINGUISTIC TEXT ANALYSIS**

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**Abstract**

The article is devoted to the search for new approaches to teaching the discipline "Fundamentals of linguistic analysis of text". The article describes the experience of using M.M. Bakhtin's teaching about primary and secondary speech genres as an operational method for teaching this discipline in university. The hypothesis about the universal countable set of genre-forming text formants is proposed. The hypothesis is being tested with the use of the logical-deductive method by comparing various approaches to the analysis of text, including approaches based on M.M. Bakhtin's works. As the material for the analysis, the author uses the texts of classical Russian literature of the 19th - 20th centuries, the texts of Russian folklore, political and academic Russian rhetoric. The data of Russian colloquial speech was used as a source of material of primary speech genres. The material is being analyzed with the use of observation and experimental methods. As a result of the study, presence of a correlation between the genre-forming formants of text and primary speech genres and some patterns of such a correlation were revealed. As an effective measure of text analysis, the category of producing speech genre is proposed for use. A set of minimum genre characteristics is established that are retained by the producing speech genre after it has joined the derivative speech genre.

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Social demand for the knowledge about structure of text**

The discipline "Fundamentals of Linguistic Analysis of Text" plays an important role in the curricula of many philological departments of our country. This is due, in particular, to the fact that the knowledge about structure of text is widely demanded by higher and additional education, as well as secondary and even primary school. Graduates of philological departments should satisfy this need.

### **1.2. Lack of current knowledge about structure of text**

Meanwhile, the authors of recognized textbooks on this discipline talk about the "insufficient degree of development of Bolotnov's theory of text" (Bolotnova, 2016, p. 22), they note that "general theory of text and its generally accepted definition are still lacking" (Babenko & Kazarin 2005, p. 10) Perhaps that is why practicing teachers say: "The text and its categories are the most difficult for learners to master both in school and in a higher education institution" (Sviridova et al., 2019, p. 184).

### **1.3. The relevance of the search for new approaches to teaching the discipline "Fundamentals of linguistic analysis of text"**

Thus, the attempts to find new approaches to teaching the discipline "Fundamentals of linguistic analysis of text" seem relevant, appropriate and rational.

## **2. Problem Statement**

### **2.1. Attempts to approach the text through the category of primary speech genres**

As a matter of fact, there is nothing fundamentally new in the attempt to approach the study of text through Bakhtin's category of primary speech genres (Bakhtin, 1986). Such attempts have been made regularly over the past two decades. See, for example, Gorlova (2016), Dementiev (2015), Kislitsina and Deshchenko (2018), Panchenko (2013), Popova (2015), Prozorov (2017), Rabenko (2017), Redkozubova and Kudryashov (2014) and some others.

### **2.2. Assumption of the fundamental limitation of the set of text components**

The novelty of this work lies solely in the fact that the author proceeds from the assumption that the set of genre formants from which the text is composed as such is fundamentally limited. This assumption, however, offers nothing particularly new as well. Every student knows that an essay consists of an introduction, a main part and a conclusion. Any student also knows that a literary text consists of an exposition, a nodus, a culmination and a denouement (an epilogue is not excluded, however). On the other hand, a student (and not just him/her) does not know how these units relate to the category of primary speech genres.

### **2.3. The novelty of the current approach**

The novelty, therefore, lies in the attempt 1) to correlate the traditional compositional units of text with certain speech genres, the structure of which will obviously be simpler than the structure of the entire text; 2) to establish a set of universal compositional units of the text.

## **3. Research Questions**

- 3.1. Is the existence of a certain stable set of compositional text units possible?
- 3.2. What is the nature of correlation between the compositional units of text and primary speech genres?

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is, therefore, to find answers to these questions by summarizing years long experience in teaching the disciplines "Fundamentals of linguistic analysis of text" and "Text as an object of philological research."

## **5. Research Methods**

An attempt to find answers to the posed questions is carried out using 1) the logical-deductive method; 2) observation method and 3) experimental method. The logical-deductive method makes it possible to develop a categorical research apparatus and to substantiate a hypothesis; the observation method allows one to identify the expected characteristics in the empirical material; experimental - to check the validity of the hypothesis by applying fundamentally different research methods to the same material.

### **5.1. Categorical research apparatus**

Following Admoni (1985), we will understand text as a statement meant to be reproduced. Following M.M. Bakhtin, we will understand speech genre as "a relatively stable and normative form of utterance" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 274). By an utterance we mean a speech unit limited by the "change of speech subjects" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 263). As primary speech genres will be considered only those characterized by the following set of features: a) are simple (non-derivative), b) directly correlate with reality, c) directly correlate with the real statements of others (Bakhtin, 1986). M.M. Bakhtin points to another important feature of primary speech genres - that they are formed "in the conditions of direct speech communication" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 252).

This feature is important because it correlates with the previously described in the work of

Voloshinov (1993) "methodological order of language learning", according to which, at the first stage, attention should be paid to "forms and types of speech interaction in connection with its specific conditions", at the second - to "forms of individual statements, individual speech performances in close connection with interaction, elements of which they are, i. e. defined by speech interaction,

genres of speech performances in life and in ideological creativity"; and, finally, at the third stage, "the revision of the forms of language in their usual linguistic interpretation". (p. 105)

Thus, it becomes obvious that primary speech genres are possible only in the discourse of direct unofficial speech communication. But this does not mean at all that derivative speech genres are impossible in this discourse. Thus, the above three features of primary speech genres are quite enough to distinguish any utterance of the primary speech genre from an utterance of the secondary speech genre.

It is easy to see that the researchers listed above do not take into account the entire set of the mentioned characteristics of the primary speech genre, and some do not even take into account the attribute of nonderivativeness, for example, Popova (2015). Most of these authors focus on such a characteristic of primary speech genres as their ability to be part of complex speech genres. However, this ability in itself does not guarantee that the compositional unit of text identified by the researcher corresponds precisely with the primary speech genre.

In order to avoid unlawful identification of any compositional unit of text with one or another primary speech genre, we will use such a category as the genre-forming formant, which Redkina (2017) understands as "the constructive unit of speech genre" (p. 131). This category is convenient in terms of text analysis precisely because, as Redkina (2017) points out, "in addition to non-derivative formants, derivatives can also be included in the genre structure" (p. 131). For the effective use of the category of genre-forming formant, it is also important to keep in mind the fact that primary speech genres, being part of the secondary ones as genre-forming formants, can undergo very serious transformations, so that, being extracted from the text, they will no longer be able to function as independent communicative units, in the same way as one or other morpheme being part of a derived word is sometimes modified in pronunciation beyond recognition. This, undoubtedly, is a factor that complicates the attribution of a statement which has become a certain genre-forming formant to a certain primary genre.

In addition, in order to analyze a text relying on genre-forming formants, one must remember that, since by text we mean a statement designed to be reproduced, no text can represent a statement of the primary speech genre. Even if this statement is clearly non-derivative. Such texts include, for example, proverbs. Proverbs, even if they consist of one sentence (Chickens are counted in the fall [English counterpart - Don't count your chicken before they are batched – translator's note]), are still not statements of primary speech genres, because by definition they can move from one type of discourse to another and each time enter into new relationships with "true reality" and "other people's real statements".

## **5.2. The composition of genre-forming text formants and the problem of correlation between them and primary speech genres**

So, what genre-forming formants does the text consist of? Is it possible to single out genre-forming "atoms" (in the ancient sense of the word)? As a working hypothesis, it was decided to accept the so-called rhetorical parts of speech as such "atoms" (not necessarily "indivisible"). The patterns of constructing a rhetorical text are dependent on the perception of a rhetorical work by ear, which prompts the rhetorician to repeat the same idea eight times (according to the laws of classical rhetoric). The rhetorical parts of speech include the following: 1) address, 2) designation of the topic, 3) narration, 4) presentation, 5) proof,

6) refutation, 7) appeal, 8) conclusion (Mesenyashina et al., 2016). The same classical rhetoric teaches that the ninth part of speech does not exist, and it is possible to omit one or other part of speech, depending on 1) the genre of rhetorical speech, 2) the specific situation of speech interaction. Based on this, we assume that in written speech genres there is no need to repeat the same idea eight times, so we should not expect that the entire set of the listed parts of speech can be found in texts of different genres. At the same time, as rhetoric teaches us, the listed set of parts of speech corresponds to the most general laws of speech perception in general, since their totality just covers all the ways of influencing the addressee: ethos, pathos and logos. Pathos is reflected in the address and proclamation, logos - in the designation of topic, narration, presentation, proof and refutation, and ethos - in general places, which play the most important role in proof and refutation.

It is easy to see that a significant part of these genre-forming formants can act as independent speech genres. So, an address can act as a separate statement of the primary speech genre of a phatic nature, or as a vocal statement, for example:

*Sonya (imploringly). Grandmother! Uncle Vanya! (A.P. Chekhov).*

*An independent primary speech genre can also be the designation of a topic:*

*Governor. I invited you, gentlemen, in order to tell you an unpleasant news: the inspector general is coming to us (N.V. Gogol).*

An appeal can also act as an independent statement of one or other primary speech genre of a directive nature (command, prohibition, permission, request, etc.), for example:

*Serebryakov. My friends, send tea to my office, please! (A.P. Chekhov)*

The same is true for refutation:

*Telegin. I'm sorry ... not Ivan Ivanovich, but Ilya Ilyich ... (A.P. Chekhov).*

The genre-forming formants of narration and exposition can be used as independent statements (Popova, 2015). However, this formant "narration" usually shows signs of derivativeness even as an independent speech genre, since this genre requires listing a number of successive events. Thus, the colloquial genre "Recollection" (which, as a rule, underlies the genre-forming formant "narration"), as Samoilenko and Laguta (2011) point out, "is a complex speech genre which includes simpler informative speech genres: a narrative about an event, a narrative about a person, a narrative-explanation, a paraphrase" (p. 129). Perhaps the same is true for speech genres setting out a synchronous cut of a certain situation:

*Peasants and ... petty-petty bourgeois / such // Well, it means ... traders / owners of eh ... stalls / then ... m-mm ... rented out dachas / sometimes had two to three dachas / to rent out ... (Quoted after: Frumkina, 2003, p. 290).*

One can imagine the colloquial prototypes of the "proof" formant:

*B. Well, in general / everyone forms their own language in some specific conditions / for some it is formed ... (pause) only during ... childhood / and adolescence / I think that my language has been forming all the time // ... Well, in general, my childhood played a significant uh ... role. In the formation (-that?) of language, that's / pro-nun-ciation / even some mis-takes of speech that are typical for me / well, let's say I pronounce "one" / instead of "oni" ("they") / (Quoted after: Frumkina, 2003, p. 292) - and the "conclusion" formant:*

*[B. Then the booths / for bathing /.*

A. For bathing?

B. Yes / on the beach like this, booths were lined up in two / in three rows //.]

A. So everyone had their own booth? Or (unintelligibly)? (Quoted after: Frumkina, 2003, p. 290).

### 5.3. Formal signs of genre-forming formants

Noteworthy is the fact that not just one single primary speech genre can act as an extra-textual prototype of the same genre-forming formant, but several different ones, coinciding, however, in illocution. But this is not difficult to find explanation to. As Bakhtin (1986) points out, “replicas of everyday dialogue or a letter in a novel, while retaining their form and everyday meaning only in the plane of the novel's content, enter reality only through the novel as a whole” (p. 252). The real primary speech genre functions exclusively in real dialogue, where the pragmatics of communication plays an important role, in particular the relationship of equality / inequality between communicants, which is an important genre-forming principle that makes it possible to distinguish between request and order, advice and prohibition, etc. All these components, as well as the consituational characteristics, are lost when the primary speech genre joins the secondary one, only the dictum and the most important of the modus characteristics, in particular the illocutionary characteristic, are preserved. On the other hand, the integral meaning of a text utterance sets a logical and semantic connection between all genre-forming formants of the text.

At the same time, all these genre-forming formants continue to preserve formal indicators in the text, allowing these formants to be opposed to each other. So, for an address such a characteristic will be one or another indication of the addressee of the statement. Moreover, this will not necessarily be an address as a grammatical construction. In some genres of business style, the formant “address” is expressed by the tag “addressee”, and in fiction, an address to the reader, so characteristic of the eighteenth century prose, becomes just a literary game in the twentieth century (*Follow me, reader! Who told you that there is no true, faithful, eternal love in the world?* (M. A. Bulgakov) and completely disappears in the XXI century.

The marker of the formant "designation of the topic" in the texts of business speech is the tag "title", in the texts of scientific style it is usually the title of the article (monograph, report, etc.).

The marker of the "narration" formant is the sequence of past tense verbs (usually of the perfect form), and the marker of the "exposition" formant is the sequence of the present tense verbs (less often - imperfective past tense verbs in the pluperfect sense (*Once upon a time there lived a grandfather and a grandmother. They had Ryaba Chicken*).

The marker of the formants “proof” and “refutation” are the forms of the verb with the meaning of present constant tense or certain forms of expression of unreality: Only force can be opposed to this phenomenon <...> Any indulgence in this area would be considered a crime by the government, since insolence of the enemies of society can only be ended by the consistent application of all legal remedies.

Marker of the "appeal" formant can be not just the use of verbs in the imperative mood, but also any other forms of expression of impetus, including vocabulary with the meaning of obligation: As a result of this, you will inevitably have to turn to the discussion of the state list introduced to the State Duma and at the same time, of course, tolerate the imminence to preserve budgetary equilibrium as the basis for the reconstruction of Russian credit.

The "conclusion" format only has optional markers in the form of introductory words: therefore, so, as a result, but it is not necessary. The very position of this formant, by definition ending the text, indicates its function. However, as a rule, an appeal to certain indisputable values acts as a semantic marker of the conclusion: Russian people had enough strength, because it was a new strength, a new supply of energy.

#### **5.4. The problem of formal-semantic correlation between genre-forming formants and communicative registers**

It is possible to establish a partial correlation between the formal-semantic characteristics of the genre-forming formants and the communicative registers of Zolotova (1996). This correlation can be illustrated by the text of A. Barto's poem "Little Ball":

*Our Tanya cries loudly:*

*Dropped the ball in the river.*

*Hush, Tanechka, do not cry:*

*The ball will not sink in the river.*

So, the first line is the designation of topic. It is written in the reproductive register, since here "the one speaking from the chronotope of what is happening reproduces by means of speech the sensory perceived actions in their specific duration" (Zolotova, 1996, p. 284).

The second line is a narration. It is written in informative register, since "this register opposes to the reproductive one the absence of chronotopos which is common to the speaker and the event, irrelevance, distancing to varying degrees from the event line, and not sensory, but mental, reflective way of knowing" (Zolotova, 1996, p. 284).

The third line represents an appeal and is written in voluntary register, since it represents "the expression of the speaker's will, the addressee's urge to action" (Zolotova, 1996, p. 284). It is important to clarify the following here. Since this poem, by definition, is a secondary speech genre, it is not surprising that it includes an utterance of the primary speech genre - advice addressed not to the reader of the text, but to the character of this text, Tanechka. How, then, an impulse addressed to a character can fulfill the function of the genre-forming formant "appeal" in relation to the addressee of the entire text? Meanwhile, there is no contradiction here. We deal with a literary text addressed to a reader – or rather a listener - of younger preschool age. The young reader usually identifies himself (herself) with the hero of a literary work of and shares his or her feelings, in this case, the child clearly sympathizes with the crying Tanechka. Thus, the author of the text simultaneously redirects to the reader the consolation addressed to Tanechka.

And finally, the last line syncretically combines both proof and conclusion. The most important part of the proof is the general place - topos. In this case, the proof is exhausted by topos. Topos is expressed by generative register, which "represents statements of the highest level of generalization, "timeless", non-referential, generic: aphorisms, proverbs, inferences which correlate understanding of the phenomenon with universal life experience" (Zolotova, 1996, p. 284).

Of course, there can be no mutual-univocal correspondence between genre-forming formants and communicative registers, if only because of their quantitative discrepancy. So, in the voluntary register, not only an appeal is performed, but also an address that encourages (in those texts where it is provided) the addressee to enter into communicative contact with the author. In informative register, not only a narration

can be carried out, but also an exposition, and sometimes also a designation of a topic and elements of proof and refutation. On the contrary, it is rather difficult for the reactive register to select correlates among the listed genre-forming formants. Nevertheless, it is obvious that each of the listed genre-forming formants is characterized by grammatical indicators peculiar exclusively to it.

### **5.5. Possible objections**

The hypothesis about the universal laws of the composition of each text raises, of course, a number of objections. The first objection is related to the fact that there are texts (i.e., statements intended for reproduction) of a clearly non-derivative nature. First of all, this is about folklore texts of "small forms": proverbs, riddles, etc. However, it is not difficult to admit that these texts explicate one, less often two genre-forming formants, while the rest are contained implicitly, having the potential to "unfold" into a full-length text. So proverbs constitute the most important element of the formant "proof" and / or "refutation"; in a number of genres of publicistic discourse, this formant is exhausted by a proverb or an aphorism (in rhetoric this type of argument is called an enthymeme), for example, The thief should be in prison. It is no coincidence that one of the teachers' favourite genres of school essay is the essay based on the proverb. As for the poetic texts of "small forms", for example, Oh close your pale legs! (V. Bryusov) - it is obvious that we have a conclusion, the rest of the genre-forming formants are absorbed by the so-called default figure; the art of poetic speech consists in the author's ability to organize the text in such a way that, according to the available formants, the reader, by an effort of imagination, can restore the omitted part.

The second objection is related to the fact that, on the contrary, there are very voluminous speech genres, the compositional structure of which is in no way reducible to eight genre-forming formants (monographs, novels, epics, etc.). One can object to this by the results of studies on the fractal structure of text (Moskalchuk, 2018). However, there are no studies yet where the fractal of text is understood as a unit belonging to one or another listed genre-forming formants, but this belongs to the prospects of this study.

Finally, we repeat that we have offered just an operational technique that allows students to facilitate the work of linguistic text analysis, which is confirmed by many years of work experience.

## **6. Findings**

Generalization of this experience allowed us to come to the following conclusions. Rhetorical "parts of speech": address, designation of topic, narration, exposition, proof, refutation, appeal, conclusion, - can be considered as genre-forming formants of any text.

Explication of the full set of these genre-forming formants is not required for each text. The correlation between the genre of text and the mandatory for the text set of genre-forming formants in modern linguistics has been described in sufficient detail for a number of genres of institutional discourses (scientific, business, judicial, etc.), for other types of discourse, this task is a currently topical and promising research area.

The nonderivativeness of a genre-forming formant is its possible, but not obligatory feature. By analogy with word formation, it is advisable to propose a category of the producing speech genre, which underlies this or that genre-forming formant. The producing speech genre, being part of the secondary



speech genre, loses a significant part of its own genre-forming features while retaining its illocutionary characteristics and dictum content.

## 7. Conclusion

Analysis of the problem of the secondary speech genres' formation on the basis of primary ones showed that 1) researchers do not take into account all the signs of the primacy of the speech genre; 2) M.M. Bakhtin's point about the fact that primary speech genres as part of complex ones "are transformed, acquiring a special character" should be understood literally, and it is not always possible and advisable to look for a real statement of a certain primary speech genre behind each compositional unit of the text. As for the further research prospects, as we see them, they are associated with the search for 1) not only semantic, but also formal-compositional evidence of the fractality of the text; 2) the correlation between the genre of text and the mandatory set of genre-forming formants in the types of discourse with a low level of regulation.

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