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**CHILD DISCOURSE IN RUSSIAN CHILDISH LITERATURE**

Luan Luan (a)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) RUDN University, 6, Miklukho-Maklaya str., Moscow, Russia, luan.1993@mail.ru

**Abstract**

The paper is devoted to the phenomenon of the child discourse in Russian childish literature. Features of children's discourse are not only expressed in daily practical communication, but also in childish literature. On the one hand, works about children and for children serve as valuable materials in the process of early child-rearing for parents and teachers. On the other hand, children's literature is a window through which babies look and get acquainted with the world around them. The paper examines the phenomenon of child discourse in various works; describes the characteristics of the infant character and his or her speech; analyzes Russian language traditions, valuable orientations expressed by language means in childish literature. The purpose of the study is to clarify the features of the child discourse, its similarities and differences in the works of different writers and folklore. The views of researchers on the considered topic have been analyzed in the paper. Interest in literature for children has recently appeared in domestic and foreign studies. Thus, there is no perfect theoretical support for the analysis of child discourse in literary texts at present. The research can serve as a theoretical basis for further study of various issues of child discourse, child-focused discourse, childish literature, early parenting. The analysis of the child discourse enables parents to find a language accessible to infants in domestic communication situations. The study is also a theoretical basis in practical pedagogical activity, including the preparation of a textbook at school.

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## **1. Introduction**

Speech development is a crucial part of early childhood education. Language does not only affect the child's perception of the world, but also his psychological and intellectual development. The main task during this period is the enrichment and activation of the vocabulary, the education of the sound culture of speech, the formation of the speech grammatical structure. All the above mentioned goals can be achieved in the process of acquaintance with childish literature. Knowledge of children's literature helps the development of an infant's speech from different perspectives. Firstly, children learn new words and phrases that enrich their vocabulary. Secondly, it promotes the formation of coherent speech, the infant's grammatical structure. Thirdly, literary texts reveal all the inexhaustible wealth of the Russian language, contributing to its use in everyday speech communication and in independent creativity of schoolchildren. Moreover, the Russian character, moral values of the people, and cultural traditions are expressed by the techniques of linguistic means in childish literature. In this regard, the phenomenon study of the child discourse in Russian children's literature is of great importance.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Childish literature, in contrast to works for adults, has its own characteristics, especially from the side of language means. On the one hand, writers take into consideration child psychology, the way of thinking and expression when describing children's characters, on the other hand, educational intention. It is safe to say that the discourse of a child in literature is not adequate to the childish discourse, but its research is of vital importance in linguodidactics, linguistics, psychology, sociology and many other areas.

## **3. Research Questions**

The present paper focuses on the issue of the child discourse in Russian childish literature.

1. Child discourse in literary texts about children.
2. Child discourse in literary texts for children and in folklore.

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

The purposes of the study are to clarify the peculiarities of the child discourse, its similarities and differences in the works of various writers and folklore; to analyze the potential educational intentions of authors hidden in the child's speech.

## **5. Research Methods**

A number of research methods including the descriptive method, comparative method, contextual method, and the method of linguoculturological analysis are used in the paper.

The descriptive method includes specification of children's characters and the features of their speech.

The comparative method involves matching of children's everyday language with childish discourse in literary works.

The contextual analysis method: when studying discourse in Russian children's literature, the context and situation of communication are taken into consideration.

The method of linguocultural analysis: discourse in Russian children's literature has not only a communicative meaning, but also reflects the cultural characteristics of the Russian people. Discourse research is carried out on the basis of accounting cultural specifics.

## 6. Findings

The process of studying children's speech in literary texts about children requires exploring the theory of "artistic image", which definition is multivalued. Some scientists, represented by A. I. Efimov, perceive the artistic image as pure speech activity, as a characteristic of the language used in literary texts. They distinguish two types of images: first, literary, which include images of art work characters; second, speech, having "expressive properties of the national language: colorful expressions, tropes, etc." in its composition (as cited in Volkov, 1995).

The concept of "discourse" has a broader meaning when using in all linguistic units with a defined communicative function, regardless of written or oral form. Some scientists talk about "the discourse of writing and speech" and others - about "spoken or written text" (Crystal, 2004). Harris (1952) considered discourse as sequential sentences uttered or written in succession by one or more people in a certain situation.

In Russia, the first step was taken by the children's writer K.I. Chukovskii in the study of child discourse in literary texts. In 1928, his book "From Two to Five", dedicated to children's speech was first published. Studying the book of K.I. Chukovskii, it can be concluded that infant's speech develops rapidly at an early age, especially between two and five years. Child discourse varies greatly during this period, depending on the age factor. According to the author, children come up with own word formation because they are not able to familiarize with the basic elements of speech, with the rules of the Russian word forms. In this regard, childish neologisms mainly appear before the age of five. The book shows what role the prefix plays in the speech of infants (vypuzyril, raspaketit), how easily the child separates it from the root (ia vezha, ia chaianno), what is the originality of his use of irregular verbs (voevaet, splim) (as cited in Pustovalov & Chukovskii, 1976). These examples are considered valuable material for linguists and educators.

It is known that there is a big difference between the adult and children's world. Therefore, the study of the view and psychology from the side of the child is always of interest to scientists and writers. The writer has written many prominent and popular works about children with a full understanding of the psychology, actions and thoughts of the younger generation.

One of the outstanding authors of literary texts about children is L.N. Tolstoi. His works have a significant impact not only on juniors, but also on adults for understanding and raising children. Writers prefer to create narratives and stories about the relationship between a child and an animal while reflecting the special psychological characteristics of children. This is evidenced by many of his works.

In portraying the world of childhood A.P. Chekhov continues the tradition of L.N. Tolstoy, related to penetration into the psychology of the child. He enriched children's literature at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In his opinion, animals make a great positive impact on an infant's life. As he said, pets play a subtle but undoubtedly beneficial role in the parenting and life of children.... Sometimes it seems to me that patience, loyalty, forgiveness and sincerity, which are inherent in our domestic creatures, affect the child's mind much stronger and more positively than the long notations of the dry and pale Karl Karlovich, or the vague rantings of the governess trying to prove to the children that water consists of oxygen and hydrogen (Chekhov, 1976).

A. I. Kuprin, with a constant interest in the study of childhood problems, paid great attention to children from families of low social class. In his opinion, they have the most noble, sincere and kind soul. A typical hero of his stories is the little acrobat Serezha from the prose "White Poodle". Serezha lives in need with his grandfather Lodyzhkin and the poodle Arto. But he has a rich inner spiritual world; he is kind, hardworking, and brave. For a boy, Arto is his friend and family member who cannot be separated from him. The son of a millionaire lady stands in opposition to him; naughty boy of eight to ten years old. He considers the poodle as a toy to be bought and sold.

The story shows two types of children who differently perceive the world around them and this is reflected in their speech. When forming the character of the lady's son, the writer uses the following language means: "Ai-iai-iai-ia-a-a-a!", "Ai-iai-a-a! Rotters! Fools!", " Ai-iai-iai! To me! I wa-ant! A-a-a! Gi-ive! Call! To me!", "I wa-a-ann-a-a!", "The dog! Give the dog! I want! Rotters, devils, fools!" The author uses imperative sentences with short verbs to create the image of the "golden" boy. Referring to Serezha's speech, we easily find the embodiment of his kindness. "– I feel exceedingly sorry for the dog ... The dog is extremely good ...", "– That's OK... Get up, – ordered Sergei. – Let me clean you of dust. You have become limp, grandpa." The boy takes care of the old man and the dog, treats his grandfather with understanding.

As a subtle child psychologist, A.I. Kuprin finalizes the story with a happy end, satisfying the just feeling of the little reader, affirming the victory of the human and moral principle.

Literary read for children is an essential educational tool in primary school. They not only contribute to the development of thinking and logic in the child, but also provide with the correct samples of the Russian literary language. Children perceive the world around them, create their own value system, and develop the ability to assimilate native language while reading literary texts.

Literary works for children (ChLW) appeared later than fiction for adults. The birth of ChLW in its contemporary sense can be dated to L. Carroll's time who first put the principle of entertainment ahead of the principle of learning. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we talk only about individual literary works addressed to children (Beloglazova, 2006). However, the history of the rapid appearance of children's literary works began only in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was that time when scientists began to focus on the features of discourse, plot, modal values and other constituent factors of literary texts for children, which differed from fiction for adults.

It is required to apply the concept of "sub-language", used by many scientists in the study of child discourse and discourse in literary texts. V. A. Zvegintsev and Iu. M. Skrebnev, the soviet linguists, are the founders of the linguistic description theory of colloquial speech, as well as N.D. Andreev et. al.

According to their opinion, the sub-language is understood as a set of linguistic units serving its limited speech sphere (narrower than the entire speech activity of a given society) (as cited in Skrebnev, 1985). The main task of literary works for children is the correlation of the sublanguage of this or that text with the sub-language of children's speech, that is, the speech of a certain age group to which this text is conventionally addressed (Frolov, 2003).

On the one hand, it can be affirmed that sub-language of children's literature has common characteristics with the speech of all literary texts and, on the other hand, acquires the peculiarity of the child discourse. In this regard, the main specifics of children's speech are analyzed in the paper, and the sub-language commonality of children and the child discourse in literary texts is also considered.

First, the words used by children have the property of informativeness from the perspective of the lexicon. In other words, the vocabulary in the child's awareness is substantive and practical. For example, the word "river" is more substantial for adult native speakers. Such word expressions as "river of time", "river of knowledge", "you cannot enter the same river twice", "tears flow like a river" exist in the grammar of the literary language. In this regard, we can say that the metaphor of a children's writer allows expanding the word meaning in a childish idiolect. The expression "milk rivers flow with jelly banks", known to all children from fairy tales, is one of the attempts to acquaint a child with a metaphor. Frolov (2003) also shares this opinion: Communication with literary texts at an early age accelerates the transition of the child as a linguistic person to a higher level of speech ability ... the informativeness of linguistic units in the reader's idiolect decreases when receiving literary texts, thereby approximating his idiolect to an adult native speaker (Frolov, 2003).

Second, children learn language at an early age through imitation. This occurs because the child perceives and responds easier to a simple sound signal. As a result, onomatopoeia plays a crucial role in the process of sensing the world around children. Thus, onomatopoeia, which can be divided into two types, is often found in literary texts for children. Word formation is one of them, for instance "cuckoo (bird onomatopoeia)", "rattle (onomatopoeia to the carriage, knock, rumble)", "ba-bakh! (onomatopoeia to the shot, clap, slap)", and etc. Another type is pure imitation of sounds. Sounds made by animals: miau, gav-gav, kva-kva, chik-chirik; non-speech sounds made by humans: kkhe-kkhe, chmok, kha-kha-kha; and other sounds of the surrounding world: bukh, kap-kap, chpok, pif-paf.

Third, there are diminutive-hypocoristic suffixes "-ushk", "-iushk", "-ochk", "-echk", "-ets", "-shko" in the Russian language. Basically, these words are used in conversation with children or between children. Diminutive-hypocoristic words are also found in literary texts for children: ... devchonka ... stopped by a big pine tree, stamped her nozhka, flashed her zubenki, and waved her platochek, how she whistled ... (Bazhov, 1985). Words like "devchonka", "zubenki", "nozhka", and "platochek" have appeared many times in a short fragment that makes the story attractive and vivid.

Fourth, writers pay attention to rhyme in children's literature in order to create a sense of rhythm. "Rhyme is widespread in Russian folk tales ... in beginnings, endings, constant epithets, sayings: "zhily-byli", "v nekotom tsarstve, v nekotom gosudarstve", "i ia tam byl, med-pivo pil", "zhit-pozhivat, dobra nazhivat", "lisichka-sestrichka", "volk-zubami shchelk" (Frolov, 2003).

Rhyme is closely related to the phenomenon of repetition, the more different repetitions in the text - from sound, simple conjunction, or grammatical form to syntactic construction - the higher the degree of

its rhythm (Ivanova-Lukianova, 2017). A childish writer often uses repetition to attract the child's interest in reading at a phonetic level, like alliteration and assonance; on the lexical level, like paronomasia; at syntactic and plot levels.

Modern linguists and educators prove that folklore plays the most significant and effective role in the development of children's speech among all literary works for children. Children gain not only a sample of the literary Russian language, but also spiritual, moral and aesthetic wealth. Folklore improves and gradually acquires artistic quality in the process of transmission from generation to generation. According to psychologists' research, folktales are pedagogically useful for developing a safety culture in students (Nadezhda, 2017).

Early childhood education is inseparable from folk tales, in which language and expression have the character of imagery and expressiveness for children. A child absorbs the harmony of speech, listening to a fairy tale. Therefore, fairy tales take a substantial place in the education of an infant. Ushinskii (1954) said that these are the first and brilliant attempts of Russian folk pedagogy, and I do not think that anyone would be able to compete in this case with the pedagogical genius of the people. A folk tale is read by children easily already ... because in all ... folk tales, the same words and phrases are constantly repeated, and these incessant repetitions are composed, which satisfy the pedagogical meaning of the story, something whole, harmonious, easily visible, with complete movement, life, and interest.

Basically, child discourse in folklore is shown in the dialogues of heroes. The dialogue between animals takes place in the fairy tale of "Rukavichka"; "Kolosok" includes a conversation between a cock and mice. The main character of "Kolobok" carries on a dialogue with the animals that met him on the way. Social subtext, allegory, and circumlocution are inherent in these tales (Shpitalevskaia, 2015).

Literary texts for children develop the child's verbal potential and creativity. Various genres of works enrich the process of mastering speech and acquaint children with different aspects of the Russian language, with phonetic figures: alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia; vocabulary: tropes; stylistics: metaphor, epithet, personification, hyperbole, comparison, allegory.

## 7. Conclusion

Literary works for children and about children play a crucial role in the development of speech at the initial stage. Folklore is the brightest representative among children's literature. Folklore genres are namely characterized by the brightness, richness and imagery of speech. Children are attracted by the rhythm, melodiousness, sonority and amusement of folklore and this causes a great desire to repeat, remember, which, in turn, contributes to the development of speech.

In fact, there is no clear line between texts about children and texts for children, since in many cases, the literary work covers both. We confirm that children's literature significantly differs from adult literature at phonetic, lexical, syntactic, grammatical, and plot levels. The language of the main hero expresses his moral value and psychological character. On the one hand, this greatly affects the development of the child's speech ability, on the other hand, the formation of the proper worldview.

Based on the result of the paper, it is possible to further investigate a number of issues related to children's discourse, early education, and Russian cultural and linguistic tradition.

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