

**RLMSEE-2020**  
**The Russian Language in Modern Scientific and Educational Environment**  
**APHORISMS AND CATCH PHRASES AS PART OF RUSSIAN**  
**LINGUISTIC CULTURE**

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### Abstract

The article deals with the functions and role of aphorisms and catch phrases in modern Russian linguistic Culture, which are determined by their functions. The main function of aphoristics is the cumulative function. It defines the place of aphorisms and winged words in modern Russian linguistic culture, since the generalized life experience expressed in them reflects the conceptual worldview of the Russian people in diachrony, while expressing the individual author's worldview. Aphorisms and catch phrases have a great pragmatic potential. They allow the speakers to realize their worldview in a specific context. The pragmatic function of aphorism is closely related to the directive function of influencing the receiver. The cumulative, pragmatic, and directive functions of aphorisms and catch phrases are related to the summarizing function. In this case, the aphorism is used in the context as a kind of final saying. Among the functions of aphoristics in Russian linguistic culture, the stylistic function of drawing attention to the text, as well as the text-forming function, should be particularly noted. In general, aphorisms and catch phrases belong to different semiotic systems and are closely interrelated with each other. They are a basic part of Russian linguistic culture. They reflect cultural traditions, being the value elements of the cultural heritage of the Russian ethnic group. The aphoristic space of the Russian language, which includes catch phrases in a broad sense, contains and transmits to the next generations the cultural and moral values of the nation.

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*Keywords:* Aphorisms, concept, Russian linguistic culture



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## 1. Introduction

The modern Russian language space is multidimensional, structurally representing not just interconnected levels and layers of the language, but also embodying the conceptual framework of the nation, the "cultural meanings" of language signs. An integral part of the conceptual framework and cultural space of a language (often correlated with the cognitive one) are stable verbal complexes, paroemias, phraseological units of various types, as well as aphorisms and catch phrases.

In the article "Understanding Conscience and Consciousness in Russian Linguistic Culture" by (Karasik & Kitanina, 2019), it is noted:

The value characteristics of linguistic cultural concepts are referred to the expression of certain norms of behavior encoded in the content of the corresponding mental formations. They are established on the basis of the analysis of value-marked texts. Such texts include, first of all, proverbs, sayings and aphorisms. (p. 74)

Being the exponents of cultural codes, aphorisms usually represent both universals and uniqueness of linguistic culture in synchrony as well as in diachrony. Many linguists wrote about these problems. They are (Lomakina & Mokienko, 2019), (Lomakina, 2019), (Telia, 1996), (Tretyakova, 2020), and others. Catch phrases are more often focused on the representation of the worldview of native speakers of the same culture, expressing the cultural background of the language in synchrony. Therefore, for example, the popular expression from the Soviet film "The Diamond Hand" *Our people do not go to the bakery by taxi* ironically reflects the realities of Soviet life. Note, however, that in the Russian language there is a sustainable set of catch phrases, which included units from the ancient literature, the Bible, and Russian folklore. Aphorisms in combination with catch phrases, phraseological units and paroemias are the basic part of the linguistic and cultural paradigm, which reflects the various ideological categories of an ethnic group.

It should be noted that we share the concept of (Alefirenko et al., 2019) and also believe that:

The worldview ethnicity is a holistic structuring of 1) knowledge – the result of cognitive activity of people on the basis of which the image of the world in the form of everyday concepts and ideas is formed, and 2) expressions of social and individual consciousness in the form of opinions, judgments, points of view, evaluation as a separate member of the community and the whole nation about their environment. (p. 230)

The semantic basis of any aphorism that is a part of the conceptual worldview of the Russian ethnos is made up of concepts, most often expressed in key words.

The aphorisms demonstrate how the ethnospecific representation of the concepts of Russian culture changed in diachrony. For example, aphoristic units with the concepts of *time, man, good, evil*, etc. are known in Russian linguistic culture since the time of ancient Russian literature. The aphorisms of Russian authors reflect changes of ethnospecific semantic data of the concepts.

In addition to the aphorisms of Russian-speaking authors, aphoristic units that come from other linguistic and cultural fields are actively functioning in Russian linguistic culture. For example, at present, the Russian language actively uses the sayings of ancient authors, such as Cicero, Seneca, and Aristotle.

In modern research on phraseology, the theory of "language transfers" has appeared (for example, this is stated in the article by (Bredis et al., 2020) "Rusyn phraseology as an example of cultural and language transfer in Slavic languages"). Cultural and linguistic transfers can be considered aphorisms and catch phrases that came to the Russian linguistic culture.

It should be noted that aphorisms and catch phrases are correlated with language status and intertextuality functions. In some cases, it is difficult to determine the status of a unit in contexts. Aphorisms and catch phrases can simultaneously be part of different semiotic systems. For example, many aphorisms of Pushkin, Griboyedov, and Krylov have given rise to numerous catch phrases that are actively functioning in the modern Russian language: *all ages are submissive to love...; houses are new, and prejudices are old...; and the casket opened easily.*

It should be emphasized that the corpus of aphorisms and catch phrases in the modern language is constantly being replenished, and "the language view of the last decades is marked by a bright phenomenon consisting in the creative, surprisingly colorful use of precedent texts of various types – winged words, quotations, summarizing lines from anecdotes, proverbs and phraseological units" (Seliverstova, 2020, p. 458). Aphorisms and catch phrases are actively transformed in the language, creating the basis for the language game. This phenomenon is especially active in the media discourse. For example, (Mokienko, 2016) states it in the article "The Function of Phrases from Modern Media".

## **2. Problem Statement**

The main tasks in the characterization of the role of aphorisms and catch phrases in modern Russian linguistic culture are to identify and describe their functions in modern language and speech.

## **3. Research Questions**

The role of aphorisms and catch phrases in modern Russian linguistic culture is determined by their various functions.

When studying the functions of aphorisms and catch phrases in linguistic culture, it is necessary to take as a basis one of the many classifications of aphoristic units. The multiplicity of classifications is associated with the ambiguity of the interpretation of the linguistic phenomena "aphorism" and "catch phrase", as well as their definitions.

Thus, Ivanov in his work "Aspects of the Empirical Understanding of Aphorism" notes "The empirical understanding of aphorism in modern European aphoristics is differentiated into nine most significant aspects: scientific-philosophical, literary-philosophical, religious-literary, literary-artistic, literary-journalistic, literary - and folk-legal, folk-poetic, poetic-rhetorical, everyday-linguistic." (Ivanov, 2019).

Developing the topic of the essential analysis of the linguistic interpretation of an aphorism, (Ivanov, 2020) points out:

Aphorisms are single-phrase, nominative, discursive-autonomous, mostly super-word, reproducible stable units, which can be characterized by idiomatic character, formal nature as a separate text, as well as an expressive (aesthetic) verbal form. Aphorisms differ from other phrasal units by the presence of a generalized universal meaning. (p. 699)

We agree with the interpretation of the aphorism by Ivanov, we will only point out that the generalized-universal meaning of the aphorism is expressed through keywords (concepts representing the semantic core of the utterance).

The most important function of aphorism should be considered cumulative, since in the speech practice of every native speaker of the Russian language there are several well-known aphorisms and winged words.

This function is undoubtedly correlated with the function of phraseological units (both from a narrow and broad point of view) in language and speech.

Aphorisms do not just transfer the generalized life experience of an ethnic group; they individualize it, since each utterance refers the participants of communication to a specific author. In its turn, the name of the author of the aphorism (or winged words) is a precedent; it is fixed in the consciousness of the people with certain evaluative meaning components. So, for example, in the modern media, the popular expression "*Pushkin is our everything*" is often used, although it is not devoid of a touch of irony. Therefore, the aphorisms and winged words of Pushkin in speech are frequent, recognizable, that is, in the flow of speech, it is not necessary to specify who said it. For example: "*The less we love a woman, the easier it is for her to like us...*" etc.

Modern Russian linguistics determines the place of cumulative function, since the generalized life experience reflects the conceptual worldview of the Russian people in diachrony, while expressing the individual author's worldview.

The use of aphorisms and catch phrases in speech is associated with the worldview of the author of the text and correlates with the worldview position of the author of the aphorism, and in general demonstrates the conceptual worldview of the ethnos. Therefore, the cumulative function is the main function of aphoristics.

Aphorisms and catch phrases have a great pragmatic potential, as they allow the speaker to realize his worldview in a specific context, based not only on his own life experience, but also with reference to the expert opinion of a writer, scientist, famous politician, etc.

However, it should be noted that there is a pragmatic ambiguity in aphorisms and winged words. In many communicative situations that differ in the content and nature of social connections, the same aphorisms or catch phrases can be used, often with the opposite meaning.

So, for example, the popular expression "*hero of our time*" (which entered the active stock of the language after the publication of Lermontov's novel) can be used depending on the context, either ironically or with a stylistic touch of sublimity. The pragmatic function of aphorisms and catch phrases is closely related to the directive function of influencing the receiver. The impact in this case is due to the authority of the author of the utterance or winged expression, and their relevance in a particular

communicative act, and the personality of the speaker, who in this case demonstrates his high intelligence.

The cumulative, pragmatic, and directive functions of aphorisms and catch phrases are related to the summarizing function. In this case, the aphorism is used in the context as a kind of final statement. However, the range of aphorisms that can play a summarizing function is limited to the range of authors whose sayings will not cause any disputes. At the same time, such aphorisms have minimal pragmatic ambiguity. Such, for example, is the saying of Leo Tolstoy: "*To believe in good, you need to start doing it*", or the saying of Alexander Pushkin:

*"Genius and villainy  
Are two incompatible things."*

The use of an aphorism in speech in the summarizing function shows the extensive background knowledge of the communicants, one of whom uses a well – known saying, and the other decodes its meaning, demonstrating an essential understanding of the conceptual information inherent in the aphorism. At the same time, it is important that the communicants are aware of who the aphorism belongs to.

In many cases, the summarizing function of aphorisms and catch phrases is related to the tactics and strategies of speech influence on the participants of communication. This is the so-called "appeal to authority", in this case, to the authority of the author of the saying. In Russian linguistic culture, there are many authoritative scientists, public figures, writers, poets, whose aphorisms are perceived as a certain dogma. For example, the aphorisms of Klyuchevsky about Russian history is undeniable, as well as the aphorisms of Lotman, related with Russian culture.

In the modern language, aphorisms and winged words are often used in the expressive-descriptive function for the emotional assessment of the essence of communication. The winged words often used in this function demonstrate greater pragmatic ambiguity. Ambivalent winged words of this kind are often used in an ironic way.

For example, the famous saying of the politician of the 90s XX century Chernomyrdin: "*This has never happened, and here it is again...*" or "*We have one course – the right one*".

In the expressive-descriptive function, both individual-speech aphorisms and general-language aphorisms that have come to the language from literary, journalistic, and scientific texts can be used.

Many of these aphorisms are especially associated with the understanding of concepts that represent human feelings: love, hate, fear, joy, happiness, anger, pride, annoyance, etc.

For example: "*Love often makes mistakes, seeing in a beloved object something that is not there, but sometimes only love reveals in it the beautiful or great, which is inaccessible to observation and the mind*" Belinsky. (Korolkova et al., 2004). "*Only love, perhaps, yes, it alone brings < ... > joy*". Berberova. (Korolkova et al., 2004).

Among the functions of aphoristics in Russian linguistic culture, the stylistic function of drawing attention to the text should be particularly noted. Allusions to well-known sayings make the text semantically ambiguous.

It should also be noted that aphorisms and catch phrases in modern Russian can perform a text-forming function. They are part of the "corpus of precedent texts" and can "be used in various discursive practices, create a "frame" of the texts". (Lomakina & Mokienco, 2019, p. 265).

All the functions of aphorisms and catch phrases described earlier are related to their characterization as text components. However, it should be noted that aphorisms could function in the linguistic and cultural spheres as separate units outside of a single text. For example, in the form of a collection of aphorisms of an individual author or several authors in dictionaries.

Collections of aphorisms and catch phrases from the Internet, where many thesaurus pages with sayings of famous people are presented, differ from scientific lexicographic publications. When aphorisms and catch phrases function outside of a text, their functions also partially change.

When analyzing such a language situation, it should be noted that the cognitive function comes to the fore. At the same time, aphorisms are perceived by native speakers as special units that accumulate the basic conceptual worldview values of an ethnic group.

By the nature of the performed functions, aphorisms, and winged words quite fit into the framework of a broad understanding of phraseology.

Russian idioms, as well as phraseological units, are the core part of the Russian linguistic and cultural sphere, expressing the universals and uniqueness of the world of the Russian ethnoses.

Glebova in the article "Phraseological representation of the concept of "Russianness" in the national language worldview rightly notes "The phraseological system of the language provides particularly valuable data for studying the uniqueness of national culture, directly embodying the results of the experience of mastering reality by the people, their knowledge of the world" (Glebova, 2019, p. 50).

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

The purpose of the present study is to determine the place and role of aphorisms and catch phrases in modern Russian linguistic culture, which will clarify the concept of aphorism and describe the features of their functioning in speech as fully as possible.

#### **5. Research Methods**

In modern scientific research, the definition of methods and methodology is crucial for the construction of the research work and the subsequent relevance of the conclusions. The use of only one method limits the scope of the research work and raises doubts about the reliability of the conclusions. When describing the genesis of aphoristics and winged words in modern Russian linguistic culture, it is necessary to use a set of complementary methods, including complementary descriptive-analytical and content analysis methods. These methods allow for a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the content of aphoristic material.

## 6. Findings

Aphorisms and winged words simultaneously belong to different semiotic systems. They are closely interrelated with each other and they are a basic part of Russian linguistic culture. Being the value elements of the cultural heritage of the Russian ethnic group, aphorisms reflect cultural traditions.

The aphoristic sphere of the Russian language, which includes winged words in a broad sense, contains and transmits the cultural and moral values of the people to the next generations.

In the linguistic and cultural space of the Russian language, aphoristic units reflect the specific conventional attitudes of the ethnic group. Aphorisms are semantically bound by the conceptual core (the keyword), which is not only the basis of the semantics of the utterance, but also represents one of the most significant concepts of Russian linguistic culture.

In the Russian aphoristics the basic and, accordingly, the most frequent concepts are *man/people, life, Russia/Rus, people, peace, death, language, happiness, word, love, soul*. Note that these concepts are also marked as the most significant in the dictionary of (Stepanov, 2004) "Constants: Dictionary of Russian Culture".

Russian writers, poets, scientists, and public figures have created these aphorisms and winged words that represent the unique features of the Russian linguistic culture. Note that if the subject of the study is aphorisms and catch phrases that actively function in the modern language, they are part of the general cultural background and reflect the universals of Russian linguistic culture, demonstrating its belonging to the global culture. In this case, the conclusions are different.

Such aphorisms and winged words include the author of communication in the circle of worldwide worldview universals, realizing both the conceptual worldview of the individual and the conceptual worldview of many ethnic groups, expressing the so-called universal values.

## 7. Conclusion

Kovshova, in the article "Cultural and national specifics of phraseological units and questions of explication of their cultural meanings", points out that phraseology can "capture value-significant meanings for their translation in the form of expressive signs of the language, always vividly and effectively expressing evaluativity and generating an emotional attitude to what is happening" (Kovshova, 2016, p. 99).

Aphorisms and winged words in Russian linguistic culture also express the cultural meanings of the national worldview, act as special signs of culture, embodied in the language and speech of individual speakers.

Aphoristics not only expresses stereotypical ideas, but also translates the basic concepts of Russian linguistic culture, and is the center of a conceptual worldview that is valuable for an ethnic group.

The genesis of aphoristics and catch phrases in Russian linguistic culture is associated with changes in the language system that reflects everything that happens in real life.

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