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AmurCon 2021: International Scientific Conference**EVOLUTION OF ‘SONG’ SYMBOL IN BLOK’S LYRICS**

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Abstract

The article is written in the current trend of modern linguistics, i.e. linguistic poetics. The author investigates the evolution of the symbol ‘song’ in the poet’s lyrics by qualitative and quantitative content analysis. Such a review as exemplified in the whole Corpus of A. Blok’s lyrical texts is carried out for the first time. The method used allows finding out that the development of the symbolic meaning of the lexeme ‘song’ passes over three stages. The first stage is defined by a high frequency of the symbol. Attributive associations are too focused on. A song is associated with the inner world - emotional, the world of spirit, love and inspiration. On the one hand, it is described by a high degree of personalization. On the other hand, it is featured as mystique and uncertainty. The second stage is marked by a certain decline in the frequency of the symbol. A song is connected to the outside world - nature and the people surrounding the lyrical hero. It loses the signs of mystery and uncertainty, but the connection of the song with art and nature strengthens. In the third stage, the frequency of the symbol drops sharply. A song is rather heard than sung. It is closely related to the image of Russia and, like the homeland, evokes strong, often distressful emotions. Despite the relatively high number of negative associations, a song is something that confronts destructive forces, keeps the spirit and memory alive.

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1. Introduction

Linguistic poetics is a rather new scientific discipline, which incorporates linguistic strategies, literary studies, rhetoric, stylistics, and aesthetics. Krasnova (2019) defines the subject of this scientific branch as follows: linguistic poetics studies “the fictional functions of textual characters and the mechanisms of their creation and perception”. This definition involves the internal dialogism of any linguo-poetic study. On the one hand, the author of the article explores the ways and forms of objective correlative of the author’s message in certain linguistic units, the interaction of these units in the system of the writer’s individual style. And on the other hand, the author of the paper studies the impact of textual characters on the reader, the ways the reader can interpret the author’s intention. The relevance of studying writers’ individual styles depends on several reasons.

1. Anthropocentric approach to the research of language implies the reconstruction of individual-author’s worldview. 2. The cognitive study of the writer’s language system reveals the mental mechanisms compiling both literary writing and literary interpretation of a fictional text (Balandina, 2017; Yakovets, 2019). 3. Semantic and functional studies in this field allow shedding new light on many issues relating to semantics and semiotics: most features of a fictional text are not unique, but rather are displayed brighter, more prominently and peculiarly than in scientific or publicistic texts, etc. (Zolyan 2016). An important area of linguistic poetics is authorial lexicography (Shestakova, 2012; Vasilyev & Zhatkin, 2018; Zhatkin, 2020). It is the direction that the author of the present article works in.

2. Problem Statement

In Blok’s system of vocabulary, there are words singled out the semantic value of which is particularly high. They are regularly used in non-typical combinations (so-called occasional (contextual) collocations (Vlavatskaya & Korshunova, 2018)), which results in a combinatory broadening of meaning. In some cases we are dealing with symbolic word usage, when the usual, common language semes constructing the core of lexical meaning takes a back seat to. While the individual author’s semes, on the contrary, are actualized. The contextual meaning of the word becomes more profound, becoming almost infinite. Such wide lexemes include, in our opinion, the words *sing* and *a song*, especially the early writings of the poet (Spivakova, 2021).

3. Research Questions

Thus the object of the study is the lexeme *song* in Blok’s lyrics. The subject of the study is the evolution of the symbol ‘*song*’ in the poet’s lyrics. The development of symbolic meanings referred to the song, based on the whole corpus of Blok’s lyrical texts will be described in the article for the first time. The novelty of the research is caused by the fact that new data about the poet’s individual style is introduced into the scientific field. The study is conducted on the empirical basis which consists of lyric verses and poems containing the lexeme *song* or its version *canto*, which are taken from Blok’s 8-collected writings (Blok, 1960). Our records do not include verse translations, since their choice of words is determined not only by the poet’s individual style system but also by the source text. The theoretical relevance of the article

is achieved by improving the methodology of interpreting the author's individual language usage, and the practical relevance of the research consists of the opportunity to use the data obtained in compiling the author's dictionary of A. Blok.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to follow the evolution of the *song* symbol in Blok's lyrics. The author is going to achieve it by solving the following tasks: 1) to classify associations (words surrounding the lexeme *song* in a close context) into categories 'object', 'attribute', 'process', to differentiate semantic groups within these categories, to make an association matrix; 2) to outline main stages of contextual meaning evolution of the lexeme considered based on the matrix analysis; 3) to define each stage based on the matrix analysis and semantic-component analysis of particular lexemes. Semantic-component analysis was carried out on the content of the Explanatory Dictionary of the Russian Language (Dahl, 1882; Slovar..., 1988; Ushakov, 2008)

5. Research Methods

The research uses the qualitative-quantitative content analysis technique as interpreted by Avdeyenko (2021). "The study of symbolic nomination in a set of texts through the content analysis technique involves a multi-level application of semantic analysis of words that can be used in a text in combination with a symbol" (Avdeyenko, 2021, p. 15). The distribution of associations according to a definite logical category and a semantic group allows building a matrix of associations according to which common semantic components within one category and several categories can be distinguished. This methodology of analysis is valid due to the very origin of the research subject because "a symbol can mean a sign expressing a set of semantic relations (concept) rather than a notion" (Avdeyenko, 2020, p. 27).

6. Findings

Using the continuous sampling method from the 8-complete writings of Blok (1960), 124 contexts were differentiated (verses and fragments of poems) containing the lexemes *song* and *canto* (160 language uses).

The frequency of the two lexemes focused on and a set of combinatory grading meanings accompanying them are not identical in different phases of Blok's poetry. We believe that the *song* symbol evolves. Three stages of this evolution were distinguished based on 1) the frequency of the lexemes *song*, *canto* in certain phases, 2) the results of the qualitative-quantitative content analysis, which characterizes the distribution of associations that arise in the same context with the symbols we deal with.

The first stage covers the years 1898-1902. This stage is characterized by the highest frequency of the lexemes *song* and *canto* (87 wordings). Attributive associations predominate (39%). Most of them are associated with the impression made by *a song* (31% of all attributive associations). Within this subgroup, the following thematic groups are especially emphasized: 1) uncertainty, ingenuity, strangeness (distant life, strange, misty, mysterious); 2) high emotionality, tension (passionate, fiery, restless), 3) joy, beauty

(cheerful, marvelous, wondrous). Only in this period personalizing attributive associations are found much (20% of them).

The song is presented as a living being, and more than half of the associations create the image of a suffering being (pale, sick, lonely, not warmed by anything). 18% of the attributive associations are related to temporal characteristics, which usually define the time when the song was heard or sung (spring, old, night), and only in one case, it stands for the length of time the song was sung. Less frequent are the associations according to the tonal characteristic (sonorous, thunderous), possessing (mine, yours), spatial (distant, far, far away, coastal).

Procedural associations are 59%. The most common associations are with sound or auditory perception (47% of all procedural associations). The verbs used by the poet in this phase are the most varied (sing, sound, respond, whisper, echo, hum, etc.). It is also interesting that many process associations in this group (22%) are associated with the semantics of song interruption (fell silent, trailed off, not finish singing, etc.). In 9% of cases, the character of the song sounding is metaphorically portrayed through the metaphor 'sound – liquid' (pouring, spilling) or through the personalization model (fluttering, breathing). 20% of the procedural associations describe the emotional impact the song has. The two most significant thematic groups can be distinguished here: 1) traumatic impact (to torment, die, fear) and 2) inspirational impact (to cheer, believe, worry, ignite). Fairly frequent (16%) are the procedural associations associated with the movement: (to take away, fly around, return).

Object associations are the least frequent: they are only 28%. The following subgroups are distinguished which are approximately equal in frequency: 1) content object (27%); 2) object of influence or addressee (25%); 3) subject (25%); 4) spatial characteristics (23%). In the 'content object' subgroup, associations related to feelings (43%) prevail: love, sorrow, hope, passion, etc. In the subgroup 'object of influence/addressee,' the soul is mentioned in half of the cases. The subject (the author or performer of the song) in most cases is a beloved lady (*You, her, far away and sweetheart*) or some abstract nature (*better days were alive, some image*). Much more rarely the subject is another person (*a female reaper /harvester*), a natural phenomenon (*the wind*). The spatial characteristics localize the song outside inhabited areas (in the meadows, snowbound, from the seaward) or in the inner world of a person (in one's heart, in one's secret soul). *Beyond the wall* association is founded only in one context.

As we can see, the semantic component 'emotion' is repeated in all three categories, and personalizing associations are found in two categories.

Thus, *a song* is a symbol of intense, emotional spiritual life, love and inspiration in this phase; it is personalized, but also mysterious, vague and uncertain. The personalization of *the song* and the frequency of its traumatic associations lead to the identification of such semantic components of the symbol as 'sensitivity', 'feeling of insecurity' and 'misery'.

The second stage covers the period from 1903 to 1907. The frequency of the lexemes falls almost by half: they are used 44 times over the same time interval (5 years).

Procedural associations predominate (37%). More than half of them (52%) are connected with sound and auditory perception. In comparison with the previous period, the lexemes in this thematic group are less varied, mainly the verb *sing* and its derivatives. Among other thematic groups, the most numerous is the group 'Creativity, Art' (16%): *to compose, create, and design a building*. In the previous period, there

were fewer associations of this group (7%). The number of associations connected with movement is much less than in the previous phase (there are only 12%).

Attributive associations account for 33%. In 50% of the cases, they are associated with the impression made by the song. This impression is emotional in most cases, with the proportion of positive (*tender, cheerful*) and negative (*heavy, difficult, dreary*) emotions being about the same. The associations associated with uncertainty, mystery and strangeness nearly come to nought. Only one association of this group (*vague*) is encountered. The nature of the pronouns used with the lexeme *song* has changed: indefinite pronouns (*some*) are replaced by determinative and indicative ones (*such, other, not that*). A considerable share (22%) of attributive associations consists of temporal characteristics, mainly connected with the duration of sound (*long, for a long time*). In 18% of the cases, *the song* is distinguished by possession (*mine, yours*). Single associations are connected with the spatial characteristic (*overseas*) and the genre of a *song* (*berceuse*).

Object associations are the least frequent (30%). Half of them belong to *the Subject* subgroup. Intriguingly, only a few associations are related to the lyrical hero/ narrator (Harlequin) and the image of the beloved lady (Phaine). More often, other persons (e.g. sailors, mother) or natural phenomena, natural objects (*water, storm, blizzard, pine tree*) are referred to as the author or performer of the song. In the latter case, the lexeme *song* is used metaphorically. There are only five associations (22%) in the 'Content Object' subgroup. These are abstract notions (e.g. *freedom*), time intervals (*spring*) and, in one case, the lexeme *date*, referring to the thematic field 'love'. Three associations each are in the subgroups *Object of influence or addressee* and *Spatial characteristics*. In two cases a natural object is named the addressee (*sun, lake*), in one case it is the beloved lady (*Columbine*). The spatial characteristics, as in the previous phase, put *the song* out of cities, but now they are rather connected with the countryside (*cemetery, villages, and river*).

Thus, in this phase, *the song* is still closely connected to the emotional life, but it is a more definite, worldly feeling. *The song* moves from the inner world (soul) of the narrator to the external world - the natural world and people surrounding the lyrical hero. The song loses the attribute of indeterminacy, its connection with the feeling of love somewhat weakens, but the connection with nature and creation strengthens.

The third stage that lasts from 1908 to 1921 is the longest. During this phase, the frequency of lexemes *song* and *canto* drops off sharply, with only 29 linguistic usages over 14 years. The associations are distributed as follows.

Attributive associations prevail (39%). In 47% of cases, *the song* is characterized by identity (*gipsy, soldierly, wind-blown, nightingale*). In four cases the identity is determined by the pronoun *your*, but while in the first and second phases, the semantic evolution of the lexeme *your* means *beloved*, in the third phase, *your songs* are *the songs of Russia*. There are fewer associations by impression (41%). In this thematic group, negative impressions predominate (*pinching, memorized, wild*), although associations associated with positive emotions are also present (*tender, sweet*). Temporal, spatial associations are singular (*long, from afar*).

Object associations account for 32%. In more than half of cases they are in the *Subject* subgroup. The subject of singing is never the narrator or his beloved lady. The subject may be an inanimate object (*zurna, reedpipe*), a bird (*nightingale*), a person (*coachman, Mary*) or an abstract entity (*time*). Spatial

associations are noted in three cases. Space is nominal (*hell, my soul, your desert*). The associations related to the objects of content and effect are singular. The object of content is an abstract entity (*will*) and the object of influence is *the soul*.

Procedural associations are the rarest, accounting for 29%. The most frequent associations are in the *Sound/ audio perception* (30%) thematic groups: *sing, have sung, stun, hear* - and *Impression given* (30%): *like, believe, take away soul, cradle*. The associations related to movement (*to rush*), creation and creativity (*to be born*) are occasional. The subgroup 'Preservation, opposition to the destructive origin' (23%) appears: *not to take, not to tear out, come to mind*.

Thus, the frequency of the symbol in the poet's lyrics decreases in this phase. The song moves from the inner world to the outer world completely - it is heard rather than sung. It keeps impressing emotionally strongly, often painfully and is closely linked with the image of the native land in the poet's mind. *The song* is what keeps the spirit of Russia and the people, antagonizes spontaneous forces of destruction, but it is also the echo of the winds and weather.

7. Conclusion

The analysis of the association matrix makes it possible to identify the integral attributes of the *song* symbol that are relevant to the entire work of the poet, and the attributes that characterize each stage separately, marking the evolution of the symbol.

The following can be referred to as integral attributes:

- Sensibility;
- Traumatic effect;
- Horizon;
- Connection to nature;
- Connection to the past.

The first stage of evolution is characterized by the following attributes of the symbol:

- An orientation towards the inner world rather than the outer;
- Connection with the feeling of love and the image of the beloved lady;
- Personalization;
- Insecurity, vulnerability;
- Ambiguity, mystery and strangeness.

The second stage is characterized by the following attributes of the symbol:

- Orientation towards the external world rather than the inner one;
- Connection to nature and people (mainly common folk, with those "who has more troubles than others");
- More connected to creativity.

On the whole, this stage could be described as transitional, combining some features of the first and last phases of symbol evolution.

The third stage of evolution of the symbol *song* is characterized by the following features:

- Song sounds from outside;
- Song is associated with the native land;

- Song counteracts the forces of destruction and keeps the spirit of Russia:
“The apple trees of the orchard are uprooted,
The children of the woman are taken,
The song can’t be uprooted; it can’t be torn out,
Sweet is her pain” (Blok, 1960, p. 375).

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