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**APHORISTIC DISCOURSE AS A REFLECTION OF MENTALITY**

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**Abstract**

The article is carried out in the context of actual research problems of modern philological scientific community, whose interests are focused on the study of personality as a multifaceted socio-cultural phenomenon. Its communicative characteristics are determined by the person's spiritual needs in unified modern interactive field of communication. Its conditions and boundaries allow a person to realize the principles of asserting their own style of thinking and world perception. The article emphasizes that modern communication promotes the acquisition of valuable social knowledge, opens access to the cultural heritage of humanity. In this context, the significance of aphoristic discourse is actualized as a way of its mentality reflection, the result of mental and cognitive experience of the language personality. The language personality expresses its own opinions, asserts life values, moral principles, foreground ideas, adapted to modern life, etc. using aphorisms – culturally marked linguistic units, stating common people's views and preferences, their moral ideals. The research focuses on the conceptual content of the main thematic groups of identified aphorisms as a set of social cognitive experience, as well as specifics of well-established concepts, represented in convincing and informative form, aesthetically and concisely sustained speech units. The represented empirical material allows us to conclude that appealing to aphorisms with actual thematic content becomes highly-demanded today especially among young people. That is all highly important for the formation and development of modern language personality. Obviously, this tendency is associated with dialogization, which is remarkable in the modern world.

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*Keywords:* Aphoristics, aphoristic discourse, language personality, mentality



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## 1. Introduction

The study of personality as a multifaceted and multidimensional socio-cultural phenomenon in the context of modernity is considered a priority in the research paradigm of human sciences. The interest in personality is determined by linguistic competencies defining the specifics of its communication. The communicative features of personality are determined by goals and time priority, traditions, experience, proven cultural values of modern society, in which the mentality is formed as a set of stable moral and psychological views and attitudes of the personality in a particular communicative space. In recent decades the modern personality has been active in asserting and spreading its own style of thinking, emotional psychological self-expression, self-presentation in the context of the unified interactive field of communication. One of the most important means of realizing this tendency is aphoristic discourse as a representative and composite part of the society's spiritual culture, as a reflection of its mentality. According to Korolkova (2005);

Aphoristics is highly sought in culture, language... in mentality as a short and fairly simple, generally understandable statement of deep philosophical truths. An aphorism is a unique cultural phenomenon, assisting an individual in taking advantage of millennial fruits of experience and thoughts of all mankind. (p. 25)

## 2. Problem Statement

Aphorisms are cultural determinants, culturally marked expressions, that fix common people's views and preferences, their moral ideals. They are "linguocultural source and carrier of people's spiritual values, its wisdom and centuries-old history, a receptacle of social experience, reflecting national features in perception of the surrounding reality by the native-speaking people" (Vasilyuk, 2004, p. 15).

The aphorism is studied in many aspects. Thus, Olshansky and Melnikova (2009), investigating the main directions of modern aphorism studies, distinguish such notions as an aphorism, quote, proverbial expression, maxim, paroemia, and define aphorism as a verbal and artistic genre, as a conceptual game between philosophy and poetry. The cognitive and pragmatic aspect of aphoristic discourse is represented in the monograph by Nalichnikova (2011). Vorkachev (2015) defines an aphoristic utterance as a variation of game discourse, making an emphasis on their "diverting tonality". Kosmin in his work considers functional and discursive aspects of aphorism. The linguist identifies the fifth function of language, the aphoristic function. It "can be placed on top of the other four functions (expressive, communicative, descriptive and argumentative)" (Kosmin, 2015). Tarasenko and Velichko (2017) reveal the essence of the aphorism reflecting the speaker's mentality on the example of the discourse of V.I. Dal' and Johnson. According to scientists, an aphoristic utterance is a set of cognitive, social, emotional and pragmatic characteristics of the speaker. The article by Ivanov is devoted to an attempt to differentiate and describe different empirical definitions of aphorism. The linguist distinguishes nine of the most significant empirical understandings of the aphorism: scientific-philosophical, literary-philosophical, religious-literary, literary-artistic, literary-journalistic, literary-legal, folk-poetic, poetic-rhetorical, everyday-linguistic (Ivanov, 2019).

The activation of aphoristic discourse is associated with the clarity of speech formulas, the desire of a person to express with their help the main ideas of his life theory, value attitudes. Aphorisms have great moral power, affect human consciousness with the depth of thought. They touch upon the aesthetics with their beauty and the memory with conciseness and accuracy. We believe that aphoristic discourse is a spiritual need of modern society, a way of reflecting its mentality and creating a moral image of a modern person. It is a complex part of an entire generation's culture, an active means of expressing its personal attitudes and preferences. That makes actual considering the features of aphorisms functioning in the modern language personality (LP).

### **3. Research Questions**

The subject matter of aphorisms, as is well known, is diverse. It is determined by specifics of reflection, perception and assessment of typical events in people's lives, understanding of different situations, finding solutions to many problems, value determination of their spiritual preferences, features of personal world perception, emotional experience of what is happening by each person individually. It is the seal of time through the prism of subjective understanding and world view that enhances the value of aphorisms that help a person accurately, correctly, logically, adequately, and easily formulate their views, argue positions on philosophical, ethical, moral, common and other topical issues and cope with life problems. The conceptual content of the main thematic groups enables us to consider a set of cognitive experience, knowledge of society, and specifics of established concepts contained in aphorisms.

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

The article aims to consider aphoristic discourse as a form of a person's mentality reflection, to define specifics of aphorism functioning in the speech of modern language personality.

### **5. Research Methods**

To achieve this goal, such methods as observation, interpretation, generalization, analysis, as well as methods of sociolinguistic questioning and the method of describing the results of the questioning are used in the article.

### **6. Findings**

The article presents some summarized comments and conclusions obtained as a result of selection and analysis of aphorisms that are relevant for a modern language personality from common phrases of the Facebook and Instagram networks, as well as the results of the conducted sociolinguistic research aimed at identifying active aphoristic units in the speech of language personality reflecting the ideas of young people about modern life.

## 6.1. Aphorisms in virtual communication

The use of aphorisms, utterances with thematic content is becoming more actual and highly demanded. So that a person tends to represent his views, moods, to confirm them with "phrases of the day", which are more common in social networks using wisdom words and well-formulated expressions. Participants of such a large social network are people of different social statuses and gender characteristics, nationalities and ages.

**The concept of a person** is a multifaceted notion, that always arouses special interest among people. Thus, the attention of a modern person is attracted by classical utterances in which the external and internal essence of a person, his strengths weaknesses, and the people's relationships are contrasted:

- *If they turn away, it means they did not love enough. (V. Vysockij).*

**The concept of life** is more often defined as a set of natural and social actions that ensure the achievement of spiritual well-being and material wealth. The absence of any sign is perceived as the incompleteness of life and its problems. A modern person appreciates all positives aspects of life and considers motivation a must:

- *Even if you have nothing, you have a life that has everything (T. Brown).*

A complex and contradictory world often puts a person to the test who is frequently disappointed in life. Man faces the challenge so he begins to look for moral support primarily in himself, his thoughts, and therefore words that motivate him to act are relevant for him:

- *For the colours of life to play, it is necessary to shake off the dust that has settled on the soul (J. Wilson).*

**The concept of family** is a key concept of the Russian linguistic picture of the world, an important component of the human mentality. As a "linguistic and cultural unit it is expressed in different languages and reflects the peculiarities of national culture. ... along with a universal categorical feature ... has national and cultural specificity" in different cultures (Shulgina & Fang, 2014). Recently, certain changes have been taking place in the modern society, which are associated with the transformation of ideas about what a family can look like, which could not but be reflected in the language. The understanding of a man and woman's roles in a family becomes of vital importance. The naming units objectifying the concepts "man" and "woman" enter into synonymous relations with each other, which are revealed based on the following parameters: marital status, age, kinship relations, the relationship of a woman to a man in the love sphere, status, character traits, behaviour, mental abilities. This is an entire living layer, in which many moral features of modern man are revealed, for example:

- *A decent woman of a decent man.*
- *Do not lose the worthy ones for the sake of the available ones.*

Despite the complexity and inconsistency of time, a person tends to sincere feelings, asserts the eternal values of family and love. In this context, it is interesting, for example, that the concept "happiness" in the Mexican linguistic picture of the world is associated with family and the concept "health" – with well-being, in contrast to the Russian one, where both concepts are associated with one's own soul (Durón-Ramos et al., 2019).

**The concept "soul"** is a cultural dominant in many linguistic pictures of the world and explicates spiritual priorities of society, represents the specifics of the embodiment of the individual sensory world.

The concept "*soul*" is especially relevant in the understanding of the Russian mentality. Apparently, therefore, there are quite a lot of phrases in the speech of a modern person that "unravel" the soul:

- *There can be no beautiful soul that has never suffered...*

**The concept "*time*"** has always occupied a particular place in a person's life, but today the relevance is associated with the tendencies of the ever-accelerating rhythm and pace of life, so a modern person finds an understanding of time in words:

- *You have to fight against time (Stephen King).*

**Concepts of the moral and ethical code of modern society.** The moral and ethical code is considered as a defining and guiding dominant in culture development and therefore as a specific indicator in the world perception and the world modelling in the consciousness of a particular society; its behaviour norms in certain life situations. This is confirmed by the aphorism of O. Wilde, to which the respondent appeals:

- *A great strength in a man, who can keep silent even if he is right (O. Wilde).*

**The concepts "*wealth – poverty*"** in the modern world are defined as markers of a person's successfulness, solvency, but a warning against troubles that wealth can bring is more relevant:

- *It is easy to rise from fool to cool, but every cool guy should remember that the cool is not eternal, but the fool that is eternal (O. Hajyam).*

Thus, in modern internet communication, there is active use of different aphoristic formulas, that undoubtedly emphasizes the language personality desire to assert its own subjective linguistic picture of the world, to express and form ethical and moral ideals and behaviour norms. High moral and universal human ideals are transmitted with the help of original, vivid, imaginative, concise statements. That increases the importance and authority of a person as a communicative participant.

## **6.2. Aphorism functioning in the speech of a modern language personality as an indicator of its mentality**

A relevant tendency of a modern language personality has predetermined conducting a sociolinguistic study aimed at identifying the specifics of aphoristic units functioning in the speech of language personality that reflect the young people's ideas about modern life.

The number of respondents was 136 (100 %), of which 15 % were male, 85 % were female. The age of respondent ranged from 19 to 25 years. Of these, from 19 to 22 were 56.25 %, from 22 to 25 were 43.75 %. The respondents were asked to write down from 5 to 15 philosophical aphorisms, that are significant and relevant for them and the meaning of which corresponds to their values at present.

The obtained material was classified into groups. In particular, such thematic groups as "the meaning of life", "happiness", "moral values in human relationships", "family", "state of mind", "attitude to material and spiritual values" were identified. The thematic range of the aphorisms shows the peculiarities of modern language personality mentality, its moral potential and spiritual values.

The results of the study display a question about the meaning of life – consciously or unconsciously – is the most important for a modern person. The search for an answer to it is a spiritual

guide in life. Thus, for 23 % of the respondent, the meaning of life is the basis of moral, human principles and values, the set of which allow us to speak about its deep content:

- *It is not necessary to look at where a person was born, but what his moral principals are, not what land, but according to what principles he has decided to live his life* (A. Saint-Exupér).

44 % of the respondents note that not even the meaning, but its awareness should be associated with the ability to "feel" life, to love it, to be content with it:

- *Life is not about living, but about feeling that you are living* (B. Klyuchevskij).

It is assumed that this trend is remarkable for modernity when people are intent to live real life today.

Some respondents (7 %) understand the meaning of life as activity, sense of purpose. The attention of the respondents is attracted, for example, by the phrase: "*Life without a goal is devoid of fullness*" (F.M. Dostoevskij) and as a result of sense of purpose – effectiveness (7 %): *Everything that happens to us leaves one or another trace in our lives.*

However, it is noted that a modern person is obsessed with the idea of free life, its personal origin, determining priorities solely by its vision or manifestation – this is what 19 % of the respondents believe. For example, the aphorism "*Live as you want, and not as others expect you to live. It does not matter whether you live up to people's expectations or not, you will die without them. And you will win your own victories!* (Confucius) is adapted to modernity and is rather understood as freedom of actions and choice. As we can see, a modern language personality prefers the perception of life as a personal origin.

The perception of the concept "*happiness*" as the most important internal emotional state, as the spiritual world of a person, corresponding to the great inner satisfaction with the conditions of their being, the fullness and meaningfulness of life, self-realization is important in understanding the features of modern youth worldview. In the obtained responses "*happiness*" is represented by a variety of semantic content. But it is revealed that for modern language personality (58 %) the most valuable is the perception of happiness as a special personal inner state. In particular, this is reflected in the words

- *The main point is that happiness in the soul.*

A certain part of aphorisms helps to understand that for many respondents (42 %) the ways of acquiring happiness is important. So, this thought is reflected in the words

- *Caring about the happiness of others, we find our own* (Plato).

In the system of life views and values of the modern language personality, an important place is occupied by *love* as a special emotional state, peculiar to a person transmitted in deep attachment and dedication to another person. The classification of the aphorisms allow us to show that *love* for

- 67 % of respondents is a real value quality of a person (*The main thing in love is faith. It will last forever*);
- 13 % of respondents – the meaning of life (*It is easier to live without love. But there is no sense in living without it*);
- 12 % of respondents – challenge (*Where there is a lot of love – there are a lot of mistakes*);
- 8 % of respondents – feelings of two (*To love does not mean to look at each other, to love means to look in the same direction together*).

The priority for a modern person is family. According to the thesis that family is the basis of physical, mental, emotional and intellectual state of a person, the obtained responses were classified as follows.

52 % of respondents consider family as happiness (for example, *Happiness is when you have a big, friendly, caring, loving family in another city*).

For 14 % of respondents, family is a value of life (*In the family it does not happen that the spouses do not influence each other*).

18 % of respondents, family is the basis of love (*In family life the most important screw is love*).

9 % of respondents associate family with children (*Each crow considers its chick the most beautiful in the world*).

5 % of respondents associate family with upbringing (*Family is the primary environment where a person should learn to do good*).

The spiritual values of language personality play an important role in the human life system. Thus, the respondents (49 %) put the human relationship in the first place in the moral sense:

- *Live in such a way that people, when faced with you, smile, and communicating with you, become a little happier.*

But a certain part of the aphorisms has a recommendatory nature and thus, determines a particular person's value. This defines morality as an indicator of his character (22 %):

- *To be kind is easy, to be just is difficult.*

Respondents value intelligence in moral qualities (12 %):

- *A smart person tries to learn all his life.*

Thus, a modern person not only turns to wise statements but also formulate his own theses fixing life principles. The aphorisms reveal the human versatility, his priorities, views and values. The analysis and description of the material allow us to define a certain conceptual system of values, preferences of a modern person in the complex and contradictory world.

## 7. Conclusion

The studied material allows us to state that aphorisms are relevant in the speech of modern language personality, that today refers to history, culture, other people statements, whose experience and knowledge are important for modernity. Aphoristic discourse is a need of society, an active means of understanding its mentality. Aphoristic utterances as a compound part of entire generation culture assist in understanding the specifics of modern language personality worldview, determining its cognitive and pragmatic intentions.

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