

SCTCMG 2019
**International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural
Transformations in the Context of Modern Globalism»**

**COMMUNICATIVE AND PRAGMATIC POTENTIAL “I” AS A
SUBJECT OF A NARRATIVE CONTEXT**

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Abstract

The paper covers the features of anthropocentric pronouns in a communicative space of modern German language. At the present stage of development of linguistics special attention is paid to the problem of communicative roles since they more unambiguously characterize the relations within the communicative act. The category of communicative roles implies the relations of crossing/non-crossing of participants of the specified situation with participants of the speech act. In this regard the communicative and pragmatic potential of personality, seems quite interesting. The roles of the participants of a communicative process are distributed through the mirror perspective. The sphere of a speaker is presented by a personal pronoun *ich* and pronouns *du*, *ihr* in their secondary nomination. The analysis of communicative and pragmatic potential of *I-subject* in a narrative context showed the possibilities of functional and semantic units of a personality to express their attitude of the subject of the speech towards the subjects of the communicative situation. The speaker can play not only the role of the subject of action but also act as the addressee or a reference object at the semantic level. Various personal value implied by the speaker in the course of a communicative act also allows reflecting major paradigmatic meaning as the relations between participants of the speech act (distance), determination of the number of communication participants. This demonstrates multifunctionality and syncretism of forms of personal pronouns in German language to express the *I-subject* and confirms its speech paradigmatic status.

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Keywords: Category of personality, functional-semantic field, narrativeness, interaction, mirror symbolics.



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1. Introduction

In the light of anthropocentric grammar the category of personality or the category of communicative roles is considered as a multidimensional set of language units characterized by field structure. A certain type of a situation and specific participants of a communicative act with all dynamics of relationship take the center stage. A speaker is that point where pragmatics and deixis coincide thus forming a special plane of reference. From communicative and pragmatic perspective, the units of a personality field are able to express the attitude of a subject of speech towards the subjects of the description situation, where “the speech subject *Ich* and its functional synonyms represent the combinations of communicative roles. The privileged role of a speaker is caused by the central position in the speech act. The cognitive representation about *I-subject* is directly reflected in the language consciousness, which defines the use of *I-subject* in the course of speech behavior” (Jachnow, 1999; Kuzmicheva & Matveeva, 2017, p. 47). The paper also analyzes the role of field elements in explication of the literary work as a fact of autocommunication. *I* acts that personal center, which egoorients by absorbing the surrounding reality thus giving it the highest sense of functioning and interaction of development phases of language and thinking. *I* in egospherical space includes all its main characteristics, and the content of egosphere has nothing that is not contained in the meaning of the point *I*. In this case the entire egospherical space can be considered as a schematic representation of the surrounding reality experienced and being experienced by it and existing for it through the prism of its personal perception (Khomyakova, 1992).

2. Problem Statement

The problem of a functional and semantic personality field covers an urgent issue of situational and communicative conditionality of language units’ implementation. Interpretation of a language as means of communicative influence allows abstracting from traditional principles of language analysis and concentrating the attention on the issues of speech communication with the focus on interaction between a speaker and a listener in a particular communicative situation concerning personal attitude, the communication situation and a context (Derkach et al., 2014; Deppermann & Reineke, 2018; Gašová, 2019). In this regard it seems relevant to consider the communicative and pragmatic potential of *I-subject* in a literary work to define the ability of the units of a personality field to express the attitude of a subject of speech towards the subjects of the description situation (Zintsova & Golubeva, 2015).

Let us address to the description of personality through communicative spaces to analyze its agents of actualization. The text of the *Mirror Novella (Spiegelgeschichte)* by an Austrian writer Aichinger (1991) served the material of the study. The choice of this author is caused by her deep penetration into the inner world of a character and a many-sided psychological view on the human nature. The novelty of the *Mirror Novella* is not the material being its cornerstone, but the problem of nomination of speech subjects. This problem becomes relevant within narratological context and considering the specifics of works of an Austrian writer Ilse Aichinger, which are purely autobiographical.

3. Research Questions

The subject of the paper is the communicative and pragmatic potential of *I-subject* in a narrative context of the *Mirror Novella* by the Austrian writer Aichinger (1991).

4. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to define the role of units of a functional and semantic field of a personality through the prism of egoreference, to study the features of semantization of *I-subject* within narratological context (Shatin, 2015; Schmid, 2008, 2003; Kindt & Müller, 2006) and to identify the ability of the units of the personality field to express the attitude of a subject of speech towards the subjects of the description situation (Kolesnikova, 2016), where the subject of speech *Ich* and its functional synonyms represent the combinations of communicative roles.

5. Research Methods

The features of the paper predetermined the choice of methods and approaches to linguistic analysis of the material within the system of language. In this regard the study was based on the transformation method to define the functionality of units of a functional and semantic field of a personality, which expression plane is made by personal pronouns, the method of description and generalization to carry out the consecutive analysis of these units from the point of view of their structure, as well as the narratological method to interpret the deep structure of the considered work and to identify the interrelation between a narrator and a reader.

6. Findings

The study made it possible to describe the possibilities of a mirror serving a rod component of a narrative structure of the *Mirror Novella* by Aichinger (1991) as some optical object, as a sign or a symbol. In linguistics the mirror is considered as a culture semiotics phenomenon that causes the need to introduce a context (problems of symmetry, logic of possible worlds). In most cases the mirror acts as a boundary of semiotics and a boundary between “our” and “alien” worlds (at any filling from “I-you” to “predeath-afterdeath”). In other words, the mirror appears in the history of culture as a semiotic mechanism to describe the foreign structure therefore it is so suitable for logical games and mythological compositions.

The simplest mirror effects and modifications of a mirror disclose its semiotic variety.

Being a universal reflector, the mirror is characterized by special features. It reflects the real world and creates the superreal, illusory and mirror-like world, which, on the one hand, reflects the reality, and on the other hand, transforms it. The left here becomes right and vice versa, there is a change of external and internal (the objects at the back side are now seen in the front). The mirror reality forms symmetric addition to extramirror reality. If the mirror as an optical object is modified (cloudy mirror; transparent mirror (i.e. a simple glass in certain optical conditions); concave or convex, i.e. uneven, carnival), then the world reflected in it becomes distorted (Levin, 1988; Stolovich, 1988).

Certain semiotic potentials include the fact that the mirror reflects everything visible that gets into its “field of viewing” (in correlation with the visual angle of an observer), without regard to faces, spontaneously, unintentionally and passionlessly. The psychological mechanism of reconstruction of an integral space from fragments is based on the quasi-mirror structure. One of the main features of a mirror in representation of space is its ability to cover that area of space, which is “behind” the observer, otherwise, to ensure the complete view of the “scene of action”. The reflection may also serve the model of creativity – realistic, or consciously or unconsciously deforming reality (Yampolsky, 1988; Levin, 1988).

All main types of valuable meanings are typical for a mirror. They are characterized by informative value. We also have the right to talk about the peculiar moral value of a mirror, which is demonstrated in certain life and artistic situations. It is connected with the ability to reflect without hiding anything, to be “truthful” in this sense (Stolovich, 1988). Thus, we get a special feature of a mirror – its ability “to speak”, which is the result of its sign character, the nature of semiotics (Stolovich, 1988).

Thus, the mirror, both simple and usual, is some kind of a symbol of some semantic principles of text generation and, at the same time, the text generating mechanism, a metaphor of such fundamental linguistic concept as a predicate, or a propositional function. This function is defined based on some variety of the worlds set by the deictic coordinate of the time of speaking. The mirror may reflect the actual world, but in another timepoint – in the past or in the future concerning the moment of vision, i.e. the mirror description mismatches temporary coordinates. At the same time not the world but referential identical individuals “are reflected”. The mirror is a metaphor for the semantic mechanism, which correlates the individuals from various worlds – and not simply identifies them (Zolyan, 1988).

The mirror can set certain deictic coordinates. Similar to a pronoun “I”, which defines the one who says “I” and shows every time the one whom “I” want to see. The usual mirror in itself also behaves as a pronoun “I” showing the one who is it looking in it. But this is, so to say, another “I” – “I am a twin”, “I in other world”, “I from outside” – and the last “I” (here the contextual coordinates are displaced) is already “him” (Zolyan, 1988). In this context the phenomenon of a mirror is closely connected with the understanding of the category of “another”, “outsiderness” (Bakhtin, 2002). Bakhtin (2002) considers a mirror as means of a self-objectivization, which thus makes the judgment of itself possible. The category of “another” acts as a twin of the true “I” and turns into the objects of own vision of others. Later he developed this concept by putting a mirror and contemplation of own appearance into a single semantic row with “a mirror of another consciousness”. Thus, Bakhtin developed a dialogical context of “reflectance”. Here we may refer to the interpretation of a mirror as an area of convergence of “personal” and “another” view, consciousness, word.

The history of a usual inconspicuous life of the heroine of the *Mirror Novella* by Aichinger (1991), which is told in a matter-of-fact style, laconically and detached turns into a parabola of human existence in the Aichinger’s pen. The action is withdrawn from historical concreteness: the scene of action is some seaport, time – vaguely outlined present. The characters live and work as the majority in similar circumstances. A few epithets that turn into symbols: green sky, abandoned house, yellow flowers, fly-spotted mirror make a special impact in a concise, “compact” text. Traditionally the mirror was always considered as a symbol of knowledge, its poetic topos. In the story it acts as a “cloudy mirror”, a “fly-spotted mirror” hanging in the old woman midwife’s closet. The one dying and again experiencing love

and hope sees herself in exactly that mirror. This makes the implication of the story, which the author discloses behind the seemingly usual life. In fact, the story tells about cruel irreversibility of time illustrated in cruelty of the facts of this story), facts acting as blind and relentless sequence. Is it possible to turn back time, is it possible – at least at the expense of life – to understand your meaning on earth? The author gives the heroine such an opportunity through alienation: the writer “overturns” the principle of “reason-consequence” and begins the narration from the end, with agony and death of the heroine. During short agonal moments life passes in front of her eyes as the frames of some movie staged from the end, “backwards”, as the reflection in a mirror: death, a fatal visit to an old woman, the beloved giving her the address, dates with him, their acquaintance, school, childhood, the mother’s death, the moment of coming into the world, which coincides with her actual death. She seems to be looking in the mirror, but it not that “cloudy” mirror any more. The truth in front of the end differently highlights the motives of actions and acts. Only now it is possible to see the intimate sense hidden under the cover of everyday life (“cloudy” mirror). Live people watching the agony comment on the visions of the heroine. The dying woman challenges this “immanent” comment of “strangers” in her “otherworldly” interpretation. Death is not considered as dying, on the contrary, the end is a starting point of the new beginning. The final sentence of the story following her physical death is as follows: “Keep quiet. Let her talk”.

The communicative space in the *Mirror Novella* by Aichinger (1991) is revealed due to mirror symbolics since the reality of a narrator is directly connected with the mirror. The sphere of a speaker in this story is presented by a personal pronoun *ich* and pronouns *du* and *ihr* in their secondary nomination.

The personal pronoun *ich* of the 1st person singular is presented in the context of a direct speech, where it reflects the speaker of a statement himself, i.e. it is the subject of speech and the subject of the description situation:

«*Mach mir mein Kind wieder lebendig!*» (Aichinger, 1991, p. 18).

«*Mach es lebendig, sonst stoß ich deine gelben Blumen um, sonst kratz ich dir die Augen aus, sonst reiß ich deine Fenster auf und schrei über die Gasse, damit sie hören müssen, was sie wissen, ich schrei*» (Aichinger, 1991, p. 18).

Considering these statements in terms of direct speech in the context of the author’s statement, we may talk about the subject content of these statements.

The entire story is built on the expression of auctorial storyteller through the 2nd person personal pronoun *du*. However, in many episodes it is difficult to draw a clear boundary between auctorial and personal narration since the *du* form by nature has some kind of the author’s character. Not only thoughts and feelings of the main character, but of all acting characters of the story are familiar to the story-teller. The only difference between a classical auctorial storyteller and a narrator of the *Mirror Novella* is that the latter one tries to engage the protagonist rather than the reader into events. The grammatical position of the pronoun *du* is an intermediary between the 1st and 2nd person singular that thus realizes a wide range of possibilities. The requirement to leave the bed immediately so that the death stays behind is directed to a protagonist, however at the same time it can be addressed to the recipient. The events are stated in the form of an internal dialogue, a dialogue between “I” and “not I”, which is reflected in a mirror playing a role of some kind of an address to the reader (*du-Anrede*). This dialogue passes through the entire text. The narration begins with direct address, but the addressee is not mentioned. It seems that the story-teller

addresses the reader. *Here a mirror is the essence of the narration, so the mirror does not only reflect certain situations, but also creates them for the looking.* The non-disclosure of the dialog partner creates tension and at the same time the special moment of alienation, which is typical for Aichinger. It seems that the story-teller addresses the reader. However, as the plot develops further, we more understand the actual main character. Concerning the main character of the *Mirror Novella*, then we may talk about the speaker *Ich*, which moves in the opposite direction addressing its specular reflection in the second person:

«Und eh du schreist, weißt du das Wiegenlied: Schlaf, Kindlein, schlaf!» (Aichinger, 1991, p. 25).

«Und eh du schreist, stürzt dich der Spiegel die finsternen Treppen wieder hinab und läßt dich gehen, laufen läßt er dich» (Aichinger, 1991, p. 26).

There are different functions a personal pronoun *ihr* of the 2nd person plural. Depending on the context the pronoun *ihr* includes the seme of a pronoun *du* of the 2nd person singular and a pronoun *sie* of the 3rd person plural:

«Das Kind legt beide Hände über die Augen und schaut **euch** böse an» (Aichinger, 1991).

This point of view is confirmed by the transformational analysis:

Das Kind legt beide Hände über die Augen und schaut **dich** und **die Menschen im Wagen** böse an.

This pronoun may also include the meaning of pronouns *du* of the 2nd person singular and *er* of the 3rd person singular.

«Aber **ihr** seid sehr fröhlich in diesem letzten Licht» (Aichinger, 1991).

The transformational analysis allowed revealing the meaning of a pronoun *ihr* in this context:

Aber **du** und **er** sind sehr fröhlich in diesem letzten Licht.

However, this illustrates that the pronoun *ihr* represents the continuation of the sphere of realization of the pronoun *du* in its secondary nomination. In both cases the semantics of a pronoun *ihr* includes the meaning of a pronoun *du* as an *I-subject*.

Thus, the focus of a speaker towards himself and the mirror expressing the position of a speaker, its ego-presentation lies behind each case of use of anthropocentric pronouns in the *Mirror Novella*. The speaker represents a certain language personality realizing a particular communicative intention in the speech act with the focus on the component of a statement, which seems the most important for *I-subject* in this context.

7. Conclusion

The address to artistic work in terms of text linguistics is caused by the understanding of its semantic structure through the correlation with non-textual reality.

1. In the Aichinger's text the author talks about a magic "blind" mirror, which does not simply reflect the reality, but distorts it. The real order of things in the world and in language is perceived differently through the prism of the mirror.

2. Aichinger uses direct speech to maintain lexical, intonational, grammatical features of delivered speech thus showing its initial propositional content.

3. From the first sentence the plot of the *Mirror Novella* centers not only around the protagonist, but also directly addresses each potential recipient. The first person is replaced with the second for the dialogue with himself (the author as the interlocutor), and with the reader (the reader as the addressee) or with the

heroine of the story (the hero as the addressee). In this context the story-teller acts as an outside observer. The author that is not indifferent to the narration is also mirror-like, he expresses his point of view, gives comments. In this way it is possible to characterize the subject observer taking active part in the story, in reflection of subject reality and other heroes.

4. The referential shift of persons expressed by pronouns is caused by the context revealing the following specifics: first, presence or lack of a subject of the speech, an object and an addressee of the speech in superficial syntactic structure of a statement; secondly, a subject, an object, an addressee of the speech in deep syntactic structure of a sentence.

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