

Antithesis as a verbal contradiction and its correlation with contrast

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Abstract. The article deals with the problem of antithesis and its interpretation by modern linguists. The history of the study of antithesis as a content category of a text is considered on the works of domestic and foreign linguists. Special attention is drawn to the characteristic features of antithesis in compositional framework of the text and its correlation with contrast. Contrast is observed as semantic and functional basis of a literary text.

Keywords: antithesis, contradiction, opposition, contrast, artistic prose text.

Introduction. Most researchers distinguish contradiction as a basic factor of contrast. Common to all theories of contrast is the claim that it is always based on opposition or contradiction. In general, under opposition we understand the contradiction of thought, association of ideas, which are mutually exclusive or discrepant. Proponents of the contradiction theories D. Akhmanova, G. Andreeva, I. Arnold, N. Arutyunova, M. Bloh, N. Kupinova, O. Martynova, V. Odintsov tend to assert that contrast is predetermined by opposition between form and contents, ideal and real, large and small.

A brief review of publications on the subject. Text as an object of study has attracted the attention of specialists in different fields of knowledge (A. Kamenska, T. Radzievska, V. Zvehintsev, M. Hventsadze and others). Means of expression language form the fabric of language and play an important role in the communicative and pragmatic organisation of a literary text.

The goal. Problems of contrast in linguistics are closely associated with the implementation of category of opposites in language in general [12], the problem of antonyms [5; 13; 14; 16], stylistic means of antithesis [2; 4; 7] and oxymoron [18] and others. Contrast is a complex cognitive entity that builds on the convergence of various contrastive imaginative means, and as a result of the dynamic and interactions of conceptual units of different levels within the text, which is primarily a phenomenon of antithesis.

Materials and methods. Semantic-syntactic structure of antithesis (from Greek *anti* 'against'; *thesis* 'statement') and its stylistic function is based on a sharp contradiction between images and concepts [10]. Another ancient scholars viewed antithesis as an extremely effective oratorical method, which has a strong impact on the listener. Thus, Aristotle regarded antithesis as the major stylistic means of oratorical prose, while Feofrast asserted that antithesis covers processes where "a phenomenon attributed to the properties opposite or reverse phenomenon – the same properties, or the opposite phenomenon – properties opposite" [21, p. 216-236]. These ancient rhetorics considered figures of speech in aesthetic terms as communication and opinion pieces. In particular, in the Middle Ages antithesis was combined with dualism of hierarchical consciousness in opposition pairs: *good* ↔ *evil*, *light* ↔ *darkness*, *heaven* ↔ *earth* [10, p. 428]. In particular, this duality of perception is reflected in the Old English linguistic idioms, or "binomials" [11, p. 74], which are often formed on the basis of a combination of antonymous words and concepts (e.g. *Adam and Eve*, *brothers and sisters*, *boys and girls*, *give and take*, *ins and outs*).

In modern theoretical and critical literature antithesis and oxymoron are considered to be a kind of semantic contrast. Y. M. Skrebnev states that antithesis "denotes any active contradiction, emphasized co-occurrence of notions, really or presumably contrastive. The two op-

posed notions may refer to the same object of thought or different objects" [18, p. 163]. At the current stage of development of linguistics antithesis is actively involved in the artistic discourse, because it meets the requirements of functional prose. As a lexical and syntactic model, it enhances, succinctly represents the message and performs stylistic features, and also it is an integral part of the content information. Antithesis, after P. Dudyk, is described as "a speech expression, opposed opinions, events, behaviour of individuals in order to enhance the impression of speeches – spoken or written" [9, p. 353].

Antithesis is interpreted in the encyclopedia "The New Encyclopedia Britannica", as "a figure of speech in which irreconcilable opposites or strongly contrasting ideas are placed in sharp juxtaposition and sustained tension" [15, p. 588]. The lexical foundation of the antithesis is antonyms and syntax – parallelism constructions. However, antithesis presented as its basic lexical material, antonymous words. Antonym is "an expression feature opposite polarization of words in identical terms" [8, p. 222] and used for expressive, humorous, ironic, evaluation and other purposes.

Antithesis is a typical method of abstract or intellectual style. Ch. Bally, clarifying and deepening this view, believes that "the antithesis in the broadest sense of the word is nothing but a continuation and development of the human mind tendency to contrast notions, antithesis is a compelling example of what style and techniques reflect the natural language language trends" [3, p. 194]. In scientific papers [2; 4; 7] antithesis classification is made by the structural, semantic, stylistic and compositional principles. Researchers consider antithesis as structural and semantic principles of organization of artistic prose text, based on contradiction between various levels of linguistic elements of the text. Taking into consideration the role of different parts of speech in the formation of antithesis, we observe that potentially opposition in antithesis can be expressed by almost any part of speech "a noun (*war and peace*, *truth and wrong*) an adjective (*good and naughty*), a verb (*to love - to hate*), an adverb (*late - early*), a numerals (*the first - the last*), a preposition (*under - above*)" [2].

The basic structural and semantic characteristics of antithesis as a logical and stylistic means after A. N. Morohovskiy, O. P. Vorobyova, N. I. Lihosherst are considered to be the following:

1) focusing on emphasizing the contrast, as illustrated in the following example:

Mr Burton turned up at the fancy-dress party that Friday night. He was dressed as a sock and I laughed so hard. He drove me home that nights and we sat in silence. After so many years of talking neither of us knew what to say. Outside, my house he leaned over and kissed my lips: hungrily; long and hard. It was like our hello to one another and a goodbye all at once [1, p. 74].

2) rhythmically organized full or partial parallelism of structures, such as:

Mrs Papagay judged it might be better to end the seance with some perhaps uplifting written messages. It was always surprising how the living, in the presence of the dead, continued to be pre-occupied with their living concerns, great and trivial. No one but herself had been much shocked by Sophy's state. No one had feared for her [6, p. 285].

3) a combination of stylistic antithesis means (anaphora, epiphora, chiasm, alliteration, metaphor, paradox) shown in the following examples:

All that could be heard was the sound of the camp-fire crackling and popping as sparks sprang out and spiralled their way up to the sky. Owls hooted and there was the distant snap of branches being stepped on by wanderers beyond. There was a deathly silence around the campfire. 'Is anyone going to answer the girl?' Helena looked around with an amused expression. Nobody spoke [1, p. 51].

4) the use of linguistic and contextual antonyms where antithesis opposition is carried out by using both speech and occasional antonyms, antonymous phrases [11, p. 188]. For example:

'What?' I scrambled to my feet and towered over him. <...> 'Your name isn't Bobby Stanley?' 'No, according to everybody else here, my name is Bobby Duke,' he said defensively, accusingly, childishly 'Bobby Duke!' I rubbed my face in frustration. 'What?' I repeated. 'The guy from the cowboy movies? Why?' 'Never mind the why.' His face reddened. 'I think the issue here is that you are the only one who knows my real name. How?' [1, p. 305].

'When they were brought to me, in such perfect condition, <...> Harald Alabaster looked at the dead, shining creatures Morpho Eugenia. Remarkable. A remarkable creation. How beautiful, how delicately designed, how wonderful that something so fragile should have come here, through such dangers, from the other end of the earth. And very rare. I have never seen one. I have never heard tell of anyone who has seen one. Morpho Eugenia. Well' [6, p. 19].

In modern linguistics antithesis is interpreted as a symbol of any meaningful content of contrast, although it has always demonstrated (often through word of antonyms), while the contrast can be implicitly, intentionally hidden [10, p. 428]. For its part, I. R. Halperin says that antithesis is an exclusively linguistic technique that has both stylistic and logical bases. It delineates the concept of contrast and antithesis and recognizes that structurally and semantically they are related [8, p. 223].

Antithesis organizes the relationship between the ideas in the statement ("To err is human. To forgive, divine" → (O. Pop) [Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, 1993, p. 252]. It is believed that the figures not only enhance efficiency, expressive speech, but express, primarily semantic relationship between speech units [19, p. 114] – in this case – between reviewers with contrasting features [20, p. 188]. Therefore, the focus of antithesis is to create contrast (both in micro and macrocontent) can be considered ontological in nature. There are more examples:

Sometimes, people can go missing right before our very eyes. Sometimes, people discover you, even though they've been looking at you the entire time. Sometimes, we lose sight of ourselves when we're not paying enough attention [1, p. 483].

The above-mentioned examples show that antithesis is rhythmically organized in a parallel structure. As N. M. Razinkina states that parallelism as a constructive element

appears in the texture of any artistic prose text in various forms, despite the fact that the syntax of prose has a low degree of regularity [17, p. 52]. It is important to note that the high degree of subjective emotional evaluation (author's own opinions and assessments), where the combination of parallelism (complete or partial) of the antithesis promotes high expressiveness of expression and serves as a means of updating the author's subjective modality, is considered to be peculiar for artistic prose text.

Thus, within macrocontent, antithesis, as a means of argumentation, contributes to the contrast prose text as we can find in the novel "A Place Called Here" by Cecilia Ahern (2006), which from the very beginning is built on contradictions and contrasts. For example:

On the counter, the creamy head of the Guinness began to separate from the dark body. It was still foggy but was becoming clearer. <...> Jack sat up straight, focused his mind, didn't lose his head. Thoughts began to rise to the top and he felt close to something [1, p. 404].

Antithesis can be regarded not only as a structural and semantic means, but also as a compositional and stylistic principle of artistic prose text. L. V. Vertayeva believes that as the main type of speech contradictions in a prose text are contradictions in grammar, vocabulary and compositional elements that are consistent levels of a text "semantization character of different language contradictions depends on the method of forming the opposition and its relations with the context" [7, p. 170]. In this regard, various types of contradictions have a greater or lesser degree of autonomy in the formation of significant meanings. Grammar contradictions become relevant in text lexical content from which they receive more specific semantics. As the researcher states, "lexical semantic units have stronger potential and higher degree of independence on the creation of significant meaning, which is the result of understanding the semantic content". The researcher also suggests that the essence of literary works is better realized with diverse oppositions as "they give more implications, new connotative meanings, a clear context, the author's position is specifically observed" [7, p. 170-171]. This is particularly evident while regarding antithesis as a type of contrast.

Results and discussions. In linguistics there is a long debate about the correlation of contrast and antithesis (L.T. Babakhanova [1967], L. O. Matviyevska [1979] A. A. Potebnya [1999] N. L. Sokolov [1977]). Antithesis is a type of contrast, the language serves its main source of lexical material words, antonyms. Antithesis is also considered to be a stylistic technique, in which a sharp contrast between the concepts and images creates contrast. These both notions, contrast and antithesis, as structural and semantic components are implemented as a part of one segment in different levels of language linguistic hierarchy. Taking into account semantic proximity of antithesis and contrast, some researchers are trying to separate them for quantitative traits [5], other for the structural organization [18].

L. O. Matviyevskaya relates antithesis and contrast as a compositional principle of speech, in which, according to the researcher, antithesis is a part of contrast [13]. We absolutely agree with the opinion of L. T. Babakhanova that antithesis and contrast are linked in hyper-hyponymic relations where the term "antithesis" is used to refer to the stylistic means, and the term "contrast" is broader in scope that includes not only linguistics but literature, logic, philosophy [2].

Conclusion. In terms of value contrast is a complex semantic category that has the nature of the linguistic field, that has its centre or semantic dominant, and a kind

of peripherals. In short, the antithesis is a special type of contrast, its main means of expression, in which a sharp contrast between concepts and images can be seen. It's a figure of speech, which is based on a comparison of two opposing phenomena or features inherent usually to different denotations. Antithesis in our study is interpreted to be opposition of contextual and system antonyms,

belonging to the same part of speech. In addition, the antithesis is implemented at different levels of the text, most of which are different in structure and in many cases is achieved by symmetry of opposition. So, in a fiction antithesis is rarely used in isolation, its characteristic feature is the ability to combine with other stylistic figures.

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Антитеза как словесное противоречие и его корреляция с контрастом

Н. А. Грыня

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается проблема антитезы и ее интерпретация современными лингвистами. Изучение антитезы как категории текста рассматривается на работах отечественных и зарубежных лингвистов. Особое внимание уделено характеристикам антитезы в композиционной структуре текста и его корреляции с контрастом. Контраст рассматривается как семантическая и функциональная основа литературного текста.

Ключевые слова: антитеза, противоречие, оппозиция, контраст, литературный текст.