

FUNCTIONS OF LANGUAGE AND ELEMENTS OF POETRY

Marius Narcis MANOLIU¹

¹Univ. Assist. PhD Student, „Apollonia” University of Iași, Romania
Corresponding author: Marius Narcis Manoliu; e-mail: narcismanoliu@yahoo.com

Abstract

Generally, art is said to be subjective and each person's approach to and perception of it is a valid one although it may be different. Many poetic features belong not only to the science of language but also to the whole theory of signs, that is, to general semiotics. At the same time, poetry has some distinctive features that differentiate it from other forms of discourse. This statement, however, is valid not only for verbal art but also for all varieties of language since language shares many properties with some other systems of signs or even with all of them.

Keywords: *function, expressiveness, context, code, message, addresser/addressee.*

Linguistics is likely to explore all possible problems of relation between discourse and the universe of discourse: what of this universe is verbalized by in a given discourse and how it is verbalized. Jakobson's model of the functions of language distinguishes six elements, or factors of communication, that are necessary for communication to occur: *context, addresser (sender), addressee (receiver), contact, common code and message*. "Each factor is the focal point of a relation, or function, that operates between the message and the factor. The functions are: the *referential* ("The Earth is round"), *emotive* ("Yuck!"), *conative* ("Come here"), *phatic* ("Hello?"), *metalingual* ("What do you mean by 'krill'?"), and *poetic* ("Smurf"). When we analyze the functions of language for a given unit (such as a word, a text or an image), we specify to which class or type it belongs (e.g., a textual or pictorial genre), which functions are present/absent, and the characteristics of these functions, including the hierarchical relations and any other relations that may operate between them." (HERBERT, n.d.)

Language must be approached in the diversity of its functions. Although we distinguish six basic aspects of language, we could hardly find

verbal messages that would fulfill only one function. The diversity lies not in a monopoly of some of these several functions but in a different hierarchical order of functions. The verbal structure of a message depends primarily on its predominant function. Each of these six factors: *the addresser, the message, the addressee, the context, the contact and the code* determines a different function of language.

The *denotative function*, referential or cognitive characterizes the relationship between the linguistic context and the referential one. Such messages convey meanings in the broadest sense of the word. But even though an orientation toward the *context* called *the referential*, also denotative/cognitive function is the main task of many messages, the accessory involvement of the other functions in such messages must be taken into account.

The *emotional or expressive function* is determined by the emotional or expressive relationship between the addressee and the content of the message, updating the attitude of the speaker towards what he said, in different shades of meaning with a true or false emotion. More pronounced expressive elements are the interjections, which keep the emphasis being on intonation, and certain peculiarities in the construction of the message, a certain selection in the inventory of synonyms, the use of the degrees of intensity and of comparison. It can be said that the expressive function is present in almost all messages, because the very choice of a formula for building messages in the simplest manner is also a sign of a certain attitude of the speaker in connection with the content of the message (TRITSMANS, 1987). Certain peculiarities of rhythm, of flow of words in the message, of mimics

and gestures-that accompany certain sequences, the changes in intonation etc, demonstrate that although the language is similar to a code, in reality it involves several codes. This *emotive* function, focused on the *addresser/speaker*, aims a direct expression of the speaker's attitude toward what he is speaking about. It tends to produce an impression of a certain emotion whether true or feigned; the term *emotive*, conceived and used by Marty proves to be preferable to *emotional*. The purely emotive layer in language is presented by the interjections. They differ from the means of referential language both by their sound pattern - sound sequences and by their syntactic role being equivalents of sentences. The emotive function, is made clear in the interjections, on their phonic, grammatical, and lexical level. If we analyze language from the point of view of the information it carries, we cannot restrict the notion of information to the cognitive aspect of language (ALAN & ALAN 2007).

The *conative function* is updated by those elements of the message that directly send to the recipient, meaning that the speaker intendeds to influence, to some extent, the listener, engaging him in a certain way in receiving the message. The most common grammatical expression of this function is performed by direct forms of addressing the listener with verbal forms in the imperative. The conative function often finds its expression through spontaneous interventions of the receiver at certain times during the message transmission making use of formulas such as "you know", "no offense", etc. The conative aspects are specific to a particular current conversation but occur frequently in oratorical texts as a specific means to send the message to the listener/addressee, to process behavior towards the message. In the orientation towards the *addressee/receiver/listener*, the *conative function*, finds its grammatical expression in the vocative and imperative, which syntactically, morphologically deviate from other nominal and verbal categories. The imperative sentences entirely differ from the declarative sentences as they can not be analysed as true or false.

The *phatic function*, somewhat linked to the conative, expresses the relationship between the message and the linguistic contact, between the receiver and the means of establishing a

relationship of communication, of control, extension, restoration and interruption of this contact. The specific elements of this function are, for example, protocol formulas, greeting, the interjection "hello!, let me finish," which the speaker uses or "of course", "OK" used by the listener during the transmission of the message to confirm or to manifest his attitude towards certain sequences of the message. There are messages primarily serving to establish, to prolong, or to discontinue communication, to check whether the channel works, to attract the attention of the interlocutor or to confirm his continued attention.

The *metalingual function* is illustrated by the message that sends to the code; unlike concrete language, objective, referential, the metalanguage transmits the knowledge about the language, that is the referential context of the message is just the code of the language. The clearest expression of the metalinguistic function is the metalinguistics itself, the very language of grammar. But the metalingual function is currently present in ordinary conversation as a means of control on the use of the same linguistic code by the interlocutors. Learning the mother tongue, a foreign language are processes for establishing the dictionary and the grammar of the language code, the encoding and decoding rules. The definition of words, nondefining relative clauses, appositional constructions, refer back to the code, make the distinction between the metalinguistic and the referential function less conclusive. A distinction has been made in modern logic between two levels of language, *object language* speaking of objects and *metalanguage* speaking of language. But metalanguage is not only a necessary scientific tool utilized by logicians and linguists; it plays also an important role in our everyday language. A good example is Molières' Jourdain who, while learning good pronunciation of words, used prose without knowing it, we practice metalanguage without realizing the metalingual character of our actions. Whenever the addresser and/or the addressee need to check up whether they use the same code, the speech is focused on the *code*, it performs a *metalingual function*. "I can't follow you"; "What do you mean?" - asked by the addressee, or "Do you know what I mean?"

inquired by the addresser to check understanding. All these sentences convey information about the lexical code their function being metalingual. Any process of language learning, in particular child acquisition of the mother tongue, makes wide use of such metalingual operations.

The *poetic function* is defined by Jakobson as „*the attitude towards the message itself, centering on the message itself.*“ The poetic function can not be reduced only to poetry, the same as poetry can not be reduced only to the poetic function of the message, and consists in that it emphasizes the concrete side sign of the language, deepening the fundamental opposition between what is intelligible and what is perceptible, between the linguistic sign as a means of intelligible knowledge and the objects of the reference reality.

In the message with a poetic function the relationship between the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic is achieved in a unique way , unrepeatably. The extent to which that a message has a poetic function predominates, it is a construction intentionally developed, as a diversion created or invented, to add something to the existing code. Also, the poetic function is not proper to poetry only, the carrying out of its message dominated by the referential function or metalingual one is very rare, if not incidental (RASTIER, 1997) . We have brought up all the six factors involved in verbal communication except the message itself. The focus on the message for its own sake, is the *poetic function* of language. This function should be studied in connection with the general problems of language, the same as language requires a thorough analysis of its poetic function. Reducing the sphere of poetic function to poetry or confining poetry to poetic function would mean to oversimplify the approach. The poetic function is the determining function of the verbal art. This function, by promoting the palpability of signs, deepens the fundamental dichotomy of signs and objects that is why, when dealing with poetic function, linguistics cannot limit itself to the field of poetry (ARCAND & BOURBEAU, 1995).

The particularities of diverse poetic genres imply a differently ranked participation of the other verbal functions along with the dominant poetic function. Epic poetry, focused on the third person, strongly involves the referential function

of language; the lyric, oriented toward the first person, is connected with the emotive function; poetry of the second person is filled with the conative function.

In verbal behavior there are used two types arrangements, of, *selection* and *combination*. The selection is produced on the base of equivalence, similarity and dissimilarity, synonymity and antonymity, while the combination, the build up of the sequence, is based on contiguity. *The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination*. Equivalence is promoted to the constitutive device of the sequence. In poetry one syllable is equalized with any other syllable of the same sequence; word stress is assumed to equal word stress, as unstress equals unstress; prosodic long is matched with long, and short with short; word boundary equals word boundary, no boundary equals no boundary; syntactic pause equals syntactic pause, no pause equals no pause (EMPSON, 1981).

Poetry and metalanguage are in diametrical opposition to each other as in metalanguage the sequence is used to build an equation, whereas in poetry the equation is used to build a sequence. The poetic function, as Hébert states, is intensified as a result of a significant and selective strengthening or weakening of any other language function, but the reverse is not necessarily true (e.g., the emotive function is not necessarily strengthened by intensifying the poetic function). It is hard to imagine that a marked emphasis or attenuation in one function would not draw attention to the message itself, at least in some cases

Poetics in the wider sense of the word deals with the poetic function not only in poetry, where this function is superimposed upon the other functions of language, but also outside of poetry, when some other function is superimposed upon the poetic function. For Jakobson, what characterizes poetry and distinguishes it from other genres is not so much the presence of the poetic function as its dominance. Jakobson recognizes that epic poetry – focused on the third person, as opposed to lyric poetry – first-person or poetry of the second person – “*strongly involves the referential function of language*” (JAKOBSON, 1960)

The poetic language makes use of elements of expressiveness which are characteristic to poetry, relying upon *figurative language*, the opposite of literal language, figurative language is the language of imagination, and which demands the reader to understand the meaning. The *expressiveness* is the feature of the poetic text to convey forcefully the ideas and feelings of the author. The original figures of speech really bear an expressive effect, so identifying and commenting on them is correct when asked to illustrate the expressiveness of a poetic text. The expressiveness is a quasi-general feature of poetry.

The *expressiveness* is precisely the quality of a communication to be expressive, to convey the message not only accurately, but also suggestively. With reference to a literary work in verse, poetic style the expressiveness denotes an author's uniqueness of poetic style, the novelty and the resourcefulness of his poetic imagery, selecting a certain lyrical lexis able to support the poetic idea and the artistic images in such a way as to impress the reader and make him recognize specific manner belonging to a great writer (KLINKENBERG, 1996).

Imagery is the use of language to represent objects, actions, feelings, thoughts, ideas or states of mind. Poetics deals with problems of verbal structure, just as the analysis of painting is concerned with pictorial structure. Since linguistics is the global science of verbal structure, poetics may be regarded as an integral part of linguistics.

Images are pictures in words, a common feature of poetry. Similes such as 'the moon was sailing across the night sky like a balloon' and metaphors ('the moon was a balloon sailing across the night sky') are typical of how images are constructed.

The *ambiguity* results from the interpretable character of some poetic expressions, leading to more ways of deciphering the poetic message, the double meaning, often used deliberately by authors, or as Jakobson states it: "*Ambiguity is an intrinsic, inalienable character of any self-focused message, briefly a corollary feature of poetry [...] The supremacy of poetic function over referential function does not obliterate the reference but makes it ambiguous. The double-sensed message finds correspondence in a split addresser, in a split addressee, and besides in a*

split reference, as it is cogently exposed in the preambles to fairy tales of various peoples, for instance, in the usual exordium of the Majorca storytellers: 'Axio era y no era' ('It was and it was not')." (JAKOBSON, 1960). It is an essential condition of poetic language, "*designed to stimulate and guide the imaginative capacity*" (COTEANU, 1967)

The ambiguity means the double possibility of equivalence of some elements belonging to poetic language, resulting from the specificity of its construction, so as to open for the reader a number of alternative possible connotations to the same expression of the language- significances and associated meanings implied by the choice of a certain word.

In his study "*Seven Types of Ambiguity*", William Empson establishes these types of ambiguity, as resulting from: lexical polysemy, alternative meanings, simultaneity of meanings; the combination of inconsistent meanings; confusion of the author, who discovers the idea while writing, creating confusion for the reader, from an irrelevant tautology, a total contradiction of meanings. The ambiguity is the phenomenon with greatest variability and opening of poetics, generating the unlimited space of imagination (LAZAR, 2013).

Through all these figures of speech poetry detaches the readers from their usual frames of reference by carrying them into a world rhymes, rhythms and sounds. In doing so they become sensitive to the relationship between the "referential and the expressive aspects of language, as the linguists call it or what cognitive scientists call *content space* - ideas, facts and beliefs - and *retorical space* or mental representation of actual or intended text." (KRAMSCH, 2015).

CONCLUSIONS

The functions of language do not, all of them, operate on the same level. A function may be the main one operating in a certain context but while still being accompanied by others. The poetic function for example can be intensified as a result of some emphasis while others are weakening. In poetry the use of certain figures of speech may bring about a strengthening of the expressiveness intensified by emotional language expressing an

emotional or subjective reaction rather than a logical or rational one, or the emotive language meant to respond or inspire an emotional response. Even though one function may be emphasized in a context at the expense of another it does not work alone. As Jakobson states they work in pairs such as the expressive function with the conative one and the referential with the poetic one. Functions are in a dynamic interaction the strength of one of them resulting from the use of a metaphor, simile, personification or of syntactic parallelism by successive replay of sequences identical to grammar structure, mainly used in poetry.

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