ICONICITY OF THE RHYTHMICAL SYNTACTIC ORGANIZATION IN MODERN AMERICAN POETIC TEXTS

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The article focuses on revealing the interdependence of the form and meaning via the analysis of the rhythmical syntactic organization of modern American poetic texts. The question of how poetic form creates or influences the emergence of sense was raised by Russian formalists, mainly by B. Eihenbaum, V. Zhirmunsky, Y.Tinyanov, V. Shklovsky. Later the idea that the meaning is expressed through the structure of the sentence was stated by such representatives of semiotics as M. Lotman, R. Jakobson, Ch. Pierce, Y. Stepanov, U. Eco, P. Farias, J.Queiroz, M.Freeman, D. Ponterotto and some others. They regard a poetic text as a rhythmic system, the form and the meaning of which give its sense [6, c. 184]. In this framework, we consider that a poetic text ensures rhythmical syntactic and semantic unity. Thus, as the form is meaningful and the meaning is formal, we come to a conclusion that rhythmical syntactic organization of the poetic text as its form tends to convey the meaning. This idea is proved in the theory of poetic iconicity.

The term icon was introduced by Charles Sanders Peirce, the American philosopher, one of the founders of mathematical or symbolic logic and one of the representatives of semiotics, a discipline which studies signs and their meanings.

Iconic signs can be defined as instantiated icons, participating in sign relations, due mainly to some kind of likeness they share with their existing objects [2, p. 423; 1, p. 295]. A poem can be regarded as an icon of reality. Iconicity is the property of the language sign which is manifested in the similarity of its two sides – signifier and signified, between sign and object [2, c.425; 5, c. 747]. Thus, iconicity is semantically motivated [7, c. 58; 8, c. 306].
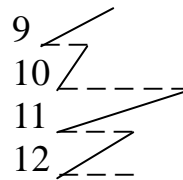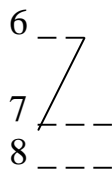
It is stated that iconicity of the poetic text can be observed on the **macro level** (thus, the icon is the whole text) or on the **micro level** (the icon is the syntactic construction(s)). It has been stated that iconicity can be realized by the following means: *1) enjambment* - rhythmical syntactic device of breaking a syntactic unit (a phrase, clause, or sentence) by the end of a line or between two verses; and sometimes as the result of enjambment by means of *the interline pauses*; *2) syntactic expressive means*; *3) length of the verse line*.

All these means influence the rhythmical syntactic organization of the poetic text destructively as they ruin the straight *rhythmic motion*, i.e. the equal alternation of the poetic lines. This kind of organization is treated as a **syncopic** one as the main characteristics of it are brokenness, abruptness and intension.

According to Ch.S.Pierce, language icons tend to reconstruct *external (physical)* and *internal (psychic)* reality and can be further classified into three types: **images, diagrams** and **metaphors** [7, с. 58]. **Images** are defined as instantiated icons of immediate, apparent, or superficial qualities that render the whole impression [1, p. 295]. Images are created mainly on the macro level as the result of the convergence of several syntactic and syntactical rhythmic stylistic devices in the poetic text. Icon-image can reconstruct both *external (physical)* and *internal (psychic)* reality.

As for *external (physical)* type of reality, it can reconstruct some object or entity. Thus, the *similarity* between the object and the icon is *graphic*. Most Imagist poems exemplify the relation between imagination and reality. Let's analyse the poetic text of W.C.Williams "Poem" ("As the cat"):

1 As the cat ///₁ₐ

2 climbed over ///₁ᵦ

3 the top of ///₁ᵧ

4 the jamcloset

5 first the right ///₂ₐ

6 forefoot ///₂ᵦ

7 carefully

8 then the hind ///₃ₐ

9 stepped down ///₃ᵦ

10 into the pit of ///₃ᵧ

11 the empty ///₃ᵨ

12 flowerpot

1 _ _ _

2 ⟋_ _

3 ⟋_ _ ⟍

4 ⟋_ _ _ _

5 _ _ _ ⟍

6 _ ⟋
7 ⟋ _ _
8 _ _ _

9 ⟋
10 ⟋ _ _ _ _
11 ⟋ _ _
12 ⟋ _ _

The rhythmical syntactic organization of the given poetic text is characterized by syncopation in the result of the frequent use of enjambment throughout the poem which is marked by means of three oblique lines (///) and ordinal numerals. The broken, abrupt rhythm is formed on the basis of the usage of short lines, nominative construction (5, 6 lines) and constructions the elements of which are disjoined as the result of brokenness of predicative and attributive relations. The syncopic rhythmical syntactic organization of the poem iconically presents the image of the cat which comes down from the top of the jamcloset into the pit of the empty flowerpot putting his paws one after another. Having connected all the disjoined elements of the syntactic constructions by horizontal lines on the graphical picture, the zigzag figure is formed which serves the good example of the syncopic (broken) syntactic rhythm.

As for *internal (psychic)* reality, the icon-image can render *1) the emotional state* and *2) the way of thinking of the lyrical hero*. It has been proved that the syncopic rhythmical syntactic organization of American poems iconically reconstructs emotional intention, shock, nervous state, strong anxiety, feelings of unhappy love or even sadness and misunderstanding in society as in the fragment of the Ch. Bukowski's poem "Father, who are in the Heaven":

1 my father died while trying to drink a ///
2 glass of water. │I buried him. │ solid ///
3 mahogany casket, │after the funeral I went ///
4 to the racetrack, │ met a high yellow,│ after ///
5 the races we went to her apartment for ///
6 dinner and goodies.

The author renders the emotional intention of the person, whose farther has just died, by means of enjambment and the usage of several constructions in the lines (2, 3,4), nominative construction (*solid mahogany casket*). The absence of grammatical link (*I went /// to the racetrack, │ met a high yellow*), the usage of short constructions and the interline pauses iconically present the quick

change of events, which happened to the lyrical hero just to distract himself, thus being a little bit selfish and cynical.

Diagrams, in their turn, are defined as icons whose similarity with their objects is mostly based on shared structural or relational qualities. Thus, diagrams are icons that reflect continuous relationships between "rationally related objects". Such similarity between the object and the icon is structural [3, p. 90]. It has been proved that the syncopic rhythmical syntactic organization, based on enjambment or interline pauses and observed mainly on the micro level, can iconically imitate:

1. Topological relations are relations of objects which reflect their space disposition in the reality by means of the separate location of the construction elements in the upper and lower lines. Thus, the prepositional constructions as the disjoined elements of the syntactic unit can iconically present long distance between objects in the textual space, e.g.: "*near /// the edge of the sea*"; "*Ecstatic bird songs pound /// the hollow vastness of the sky /// with metallic clinkings / beating color up into it /// at a far edge*"; "*then took her box / and set fire to it /// in the back yard*".

2. Temporal relations which are rendered by means of putting the adverb of time in the strong position (the end of the line) and the usage of the continuous tense, emphasizing the duration of time or an action, e.g.: "*they each have a toothpick and now /// they are talking about women*"; "*and the baby and Kathleen /// are sleeping*".

3. The rapidness and suddenness of actions or motions are achieved by enjambment and short lines, e.g.: "*sweating in the sun / that melted /// the wings' wax.*

4.The direction of the motion is presented by means of disjoint elements of the syntactic construction which are placed into the strong position of the lower line, that is in the beginning of it, e.g.: "*or driven like hail /// stream bitterly out to one side /// and fall*"; "*While little streamlets thread /// Their own meandering way down the hill*"; "*I wish / you'd wig- /// gle that way; a farmer*

was ploughing /// his field"; "this was /// Icarus drowning"; "Those fleas that escaped /// earth and fire /// died by the cold"; "The petals waned paler, and shriveled, /// And dropped".

5. *The level of disposition* is shown as the result of placing the words with the meaning of position on the lower or the upper lines respectively (for example, the adjectives *low*, *high*), e.g.: "*But there the sun │coming up /// out of the nothing beyond the lake│ was /// too low in the sky".*

6. *The pause in actions* is achieved by interline pauses which correspond to the final punctual marks, e.g.: "*the blizzard /// drifts its weight /// deeper and deeper for three days /// or sixty years, eh? │Then /// the sun!".*

7. *The volume, the size or the length of the object* are rendered by means of enjambment as the breaking of the construction elements tends to create the image of " *limp poplar tassels*" swollen in volume, or "*the alleys of trees*" being too long, e.g.: "*too many, too many <u>swollen</u> /// limp poplar tassels on the /// bare branches!*" "*Hairy looking trees stand out /// in long alleys; and long necks /// like ostriches*".

8. *The form of the object* can also be iconically represented by means of enjambment as the disjoint elements on the lower lines tend to create the image of the objects form or the form they left as the result of some actions? For example the track in the raw sods, the branches of the trees which are wet and thus are directed down: "*The pounding of the hoofs on the /// raw sods"; "And the trees and the bushes /// Are wet with its jewelled spray"; " clogs /// Leave holes in the snow* " .

So, iconicity is similarity of that which represents with that which is being represented. Iconicity can be observed as the result of the syncopic rhythmical syntactic organization of the text based on enjambment, the expressive means and the line length. Similarity may be qualitative due to the verbal images and structural – due to the diagrams which imitate topological, temporal relations and some characteristics of actions as direction, rapidness, pause and some

others. Hence it can be physical and abstract (psychic or intellectual), and need not be based only in closeness in looks or in some visual or sensuous features.

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