

ТЕОРІЯ ЛІТЕРАТУРИ

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TEXTS OF LOVE LETTERS AND THEIR GENRE AND STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS

The article focuses on the concept of epistolary text and explores the genre and stylistic characteristics of the texts of love letters. It is stated that epistolary discourse manifests the sphere of interpersonal communication – the interaction of two or more subjects, consisting in the exchange of messages between them of a substantive or emotional nature and representing the realization of an individual's special need in contact with other subjects. The concepts of “epistolary text” and “epistolary genre” play an important role in modern epistolography. An epistolary text is considered as a conceptually, informatively and pragmatically significant written speech work, the categorical features of which are polythematic, standard structure, special role of presupposition and sender's involving factor. Epistolary genre as a form of organization of a written work implies the presence in the texts of general external and internal (substantive) features, namely: a certain structure, the author's orientation to the interlocutor, the author's strong commitment to a particular point of view, the ability to denote real world situations or objects, goal-setting, the presence of the sender's goal to influence the addressee, reflecting the specifics of individual worldview in the psycho-linguistic complex. The term “love letter” is defined as a subgenre of the genre of the intimate letter and, more broadly, the epistolary genre in general. A love letter is viewed as a written text of a person (sender) who has feelings of love and passion for the object (addressee) of his love in order to communicate with him/her at a distance. Thus, the sender is a person in love, the addressee is the object of his/her love. For the genre-stylistic classification of letters, the classification of love letters is chosen as the basis, which defines the following subtypes in terms of content and direction: actually love, intimate-friendly and family-intimate letters.

Key words: classification of love letters, epistolary discourse, epistolary genre, epistolary text, epistolary style, love letter.

Problem statement. Appeal to the problem of considering the features of the implementation of the category of addressing in the texts of the epistolary genre is due to the importance of the anthropocentric paradigm in modern linguistics, which puts forward the position of the subject as the central semantic category of the text. Having originated in ancient times, speech works in the format of writing have always been actively used by society. In the sphere

of modern communication, the epistolary is widely present, in a variety of genre manifestations: from the “classic” private letter to modern emails, business correspondence, advertising letters. This fact indicates the importance of the epistolary genre for speakers of different language strata and a certain degree of its formation. Fiction prose adopted many features of “intimate” epistolary literature as a written form of everyday speech, including love letters.

From the point of view of linguistics, a love letter as a type of text has its own characteristics. A subtle and complex interweaving of oral colloquial and book-written speech took place in it. An unconstrained or, conversely, highly solemn manner of address was entrenched in generally accepted, conditional epistolary forms.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Epistolary discourse manifests the sphere of interpersonal communication – the interaction of two or more subjects, consisting in the exchange of messages between them of a substantive or emotional nature and representing the realization of an individual's special need in contact with other subjects (A. Bodaliev, T. Kabanova, A. Leontiev, M. Makarov, O. Zuieva and others). Therefore, the key among the constant functions implemented regardless of the type of the epistolary text and the conditions for its existence is the communicative function. The deployment of the epistolary discourse in a typical area of communication determines the appearance of discursively conditioned functions. The speech component of the epistolary discourse is the epistolary text – a conceptually, informatively and pragmatically significant written speech work, the categorical features of which are considered to be polythematic, standard structure, a special role of presupposition and addressing factor. The essential and generally recognized variety of the epistolary text is a kind of writing in diverse textual variants of the genre canon (N. Belunov, A. Kurianovich, V. Kuzmenko, V. Zdorovega and others).

A number of researchers (Ch. Bally, I. Bartsevich, Yu. Belchikov, L. Bulakhovsky, Ch. Weise, T. Vinokur, K. Dolinin, A. Efimov, L. Ketsba, A. Lesskis, R. Meyer, N. Pototskaia, L. Shcherba, L. Spitzer and others) distinguish epistolary style along with various functional styles. At the present stage of the study of epistolary texts, there are authors who, recognizing the existence of a special epistolary style, suggest that it is realized in the totality of epistolary genres peculiar to it only. The correlation of the epistolary with the concept of genre unites the views of such linguists as A. Akishyna, N. Belunova, A. Gvozdev, I. Galperin, T. Zorina, A. Kozhyn, N. Logunova, E. Petrishcheva, E. Rizel, D. Rosental, I. Sukhanova and others.

Formulation of the purposes of the article. This study aims to consider the concept of epistolary text and explore the genre and stylistic characteristics of the texts of love letters.

Presentation of the main material. Any utterance bears the imprint of the speaker's personality

and focuses primarily on the “individual style”, i.e., on the original use of verbal signs in the construction of the message. Some types of statements are unfavorable for the reflection of the inner world: military commands, business documents and other messages in which the code is as formalized as possible [3, p. 42]. Other types of statements, on the contrary, fully reflect the author's inner world. This applies mostly to literary texts. The letter in this regard shows the incredible flexibility of the form for the transmission of information, it is able to broadcast a standard set of codes, devoid of any personal intonations, as well as grows into an artistic text [17]. It is thanks to the letters, according to N. Sapozhnikova [16], that a person can enter “the sphere of culture as a kind of chronological accumulator, which reduces existential flows into a single culturological layer”, capturing the personality at a particular time, offering the next readers of letters “a manifestation of the personal I at the level of preservation of historical memory and a variety of ways to encode it at different times” [16, p. 4].

If the sender's personality is presented as a complex hierarchy” consisting of general cultural, “group and strictly individual codes, then group and individual codes will be transmitted in private epistolary communication [12]. This means that the rules of combining signs in the text and their semantic content will be largely individual, and will be able to depart from the general cultural norm. It is with the help of epistolary texts that we can not only consider the inner world of the individual, but also see the dominants of a certain stratum of the cultural era; through the thesaurus of the individual, we are able to reconstruct most of the reality that surrounds people.

The love letter has its own unique language, i.e., it has a certain closed set of meaningful units and rules of their connection, which allow conveying certain messages [13, p. 31]. As the epistolary text is based on natural language, it is complicated by one or more secondary structures that organize the syntactics of expression, regulate the choice of language and even the graphic image of the letter. These secondary structures are constantly being studied by linguists: their characteristics allow us to distinguish epistolary texts from the array of messages circulating in culture. However, with the distinction between epistolary and other texts there are difficulties of a theoretical nature: currently, in the framework of linguistics a common understanding of the epistolary text has not been fully developed yet. In this study, we exploit the definition of O. Kuryanovich, who states that the epistolary text is a conceptually, informatively and pragmatically significant written speech work,

the categorical features of which are as follows: polythematic, standard structure, special role of presupposition and sender's factor [11].

Epistolary communication can be considered a kind of textural communication, where not only the semantics of word usage, but also the form (letter format) acquire a regulatory function. With the help of the form of "materialization" of the letter is carried out, the acquisition of "the subject's self", "their body". The whole epistolary text is "imbued" with a sacred, symbolic sound. It embodies a kind of conventional ritual communicative event: it is not just a way of communication, but also a tool of effective influence. The letter, belonging to the reactive (dialog) language register, is initially a "charged" response. Letters, as J. Derrida argues, create and set in motion a local narrative situation: "You are biased in advance, you distort everything I say" [19, p. 13].

The concept of "genre" is considered essential in epistolography. There are many different approaches to its definition, motivated by interest in the problem of genre not only in modern literary criticism but in linguistics as well. Genre theory is one of the most important areas of theoretical findings, in particular, in the history of literature. And genre is a general concept that reflects the most important properties and connections of different phenomena; it is a set of formal and substantive features of the work [1, p. 19]. It is worth mentioning that the concept of genre came from literary studies to linguistics and is associated with stylistic features that shape the specifics of a literary form.

There are different approaches to defining the genre. One of them is the historical-theoretical approach, according to which the genre is viewed as an aspect of the study of a work of art. R. Welleck and A. Warren in their work "Theory of Literature", which has become a classic, point out that the genre can be considered a group of literary works, which theoretically reveals the general external (size, structure) and internal (mood, attitudes, ideas, in other words, theme and audience) forms [18, p. 248]. Taking into account the aforementioned definition, a letter can be called an epistolary genre, because a letter represents a "clear structure, subject and addressee" [20, p. 92], where the addressee is equated to the "audience". As reported by the researcher K. Nyholm, the term "genre of the letter", in its turn, is regarded as a synonym of the term "epistolary genre", which provides for the interchangeability of these terms [21, p. 211]. M. Bakhtin has stated that "the letter is a secondary speech genre that combines various

primary subgenres: greetings, wishes, suggestions, thanks, reproaches, etc." [2, p. 248]. There is no single classification of genre types of writing. Thus, V. Kuzmenko distinguishes epistolary article, open letter, epistolary pamphlet [10, p. 194]; V. Zdorovega focuses on open letters, messages, letters without addresses, appeals, statements, greetings [6, p. 7–15]. Some scholars emphasize that the epistolary genre is a "subgenre" that is moving from everyday life to literature. Others oppose this point of view, defining epistolary as a separate genre that reflects the full range of literary changes (style, direction, ideas) [14]. There are varieties of letters that are determined by their genre affiliation: the genre of biographical writing, the genre of letters of request, the genre of friendly or love letters. Often such subgenres are not identified when compiling the text of the letter.

Structural and organizational forms of writing, which arose historically and can be described in this case by the concept "form of the work", is for epistolary discourse one of the main and most important factors. Epistolary discourse finds a kind of formalized embodiment in correspondence. It should be noted that the British-American approach to the concept "genre", defines it as a sample, form of organization of the type of a text [1, p. 23], which confirms the validity of the epistolary genre. Based on this definition, we can present the relationship between epistolary genre and epistolary text as follows: epistolary genre (form of organization of a written work) forms the specifics of epistolary discourse of a set of texts, each of which is a separate epistolary sample of the text and a set of texts characteristics of the individual style of the author of the letter.

There is a need to distinguish between the letter as a semi-literary written genre of everyday communication and the letter in the artistic text. M. Bakhtin in his work "The Problem of Speech Genres" captures the dual nature of writing and correspondence in the literary text, noting the simultaneous genre "primacy" (as a semi-literary written genre of everyday communication) and "secondary" (as a genre in the literary text) of writing, and the presence of letters both at the level of the inner world of the literary text (as a way of communication of the characters and as a part of the material world) and at the level of the text (as compositional speech forms) [2].

The ratio of external and internal at the level of the plot organization is realized as the parallel existence and development of two plots: the plot of correspondence and the plot of real life

of the characters. The structure of time and space in a literary text, which involves letters as well, can also be described through the opposition “external / internal”. Another feature of such a text, presented at the level of both object and subjective organization of the work is the functioning of the letter as a subject detail, as “things”, and the moment of “externalization” is fundamentally internal and private. The presence in the lives of the heroes of the sheets of paper enclosed in envelopes means materialization, the embodiment of “immaterial relations”, their existence in the inner world of the work, along with many other things and objects that surround the heroes.

Despite the certainty of the epistolary genre as a whole, the subgenre of love letters still remains an open topic for researchers, covered mainly within intimate epistolary [7; 15; 19; 20]. The genre of intimate letters belongs to the genre of love letters as a whole, because “intimate discourse is broader than the discourse of love, because it includes the level of special intimacy between parents and children, between spiritually tied like-minded friends” [7, p. 155]. As L. Zarytska states, intimate epistolary is correspondence that concerns the personal life of the addressee, their relationships with loved ones and in which their feelings and secret thoughts are revealed [5, p. 5]. I. Horoshko has expanded this definition, noting the stylistic and emotional-mood similarity between the letter and the internal monologue [4, p. 55]. After all, according to L. Kanevska, the letter is a kind of artistic inner speech, which contains a direct reflection of the mental state of the character [8, p. 14].

A. Ilkiv [7] believes that the genre nature of intimate writing involves an enhanced emotional flow. The peculiarities of the genre of intimate correspondence, according to the researcher, are due to the fact that love is difficult to verbalize, because in the love experience the dominant emotional sphere suppresses human mental activity, and rational sphere is responsible for speech. Therefore, the stylistics of the text of love letters acquires signs of unspoken, broken phrases, allegory, and real images are recoded into a complex semiotic system of love codes, symbols, archetypal images [7, p. 27]. The scholar distinguishes between the genres of intimate correspondence of the Romantic era and the Modern era. According to her, genre modifications of romantic intimate writing arose due to the “merging” of the epistolary genre with other documentary and artistic forms. Such genre modifications include: 1) letter of confession; 2) prayer letter; 3) epistolary criticism and epistolary publicism; 4) diary letter [7, p. 215–221].

Intimate letters of modern era are characterized by the introversion, transcendence of emotional connection, some forms of male and female narration, sketchiness, fragmentation, mobility of changing topics of discussion with such basic genre and style modifications of intimate writing as: 1) art letter (a letter with elements of poetry in prose (“letter in a letter”, prayer letter, short story letter, letter-sketch, letter-literary tale); 2) autobiography in letters; 3) epistolary criticism; 4) epistolary publicism [7, p. 333–350].

Ukrainian linguist I. Horoshko distinguishes “love epistle” and interprets it as an intimate monologue that recreates the most secret emotions of the addressee in love and his deep feeling of heartfelt affection for the object of romantic admiration (not necessarily the addressee) [4, p. 55]. L. Rupenko considers a letter of confession of love as an immanent genre variety of intimate epistolary, and notes that it is used within love and intimate family correspondence [15, p. 28]. Among the genre features of such letters, the researcher calls increased emotionality, expression of feelings to the addressee, which is manifested both in vocabulary and stylistic choice (figurative means, syntactic design, such as exclamatory sentences, pauses, colons, etc.). The author’s position in such a narrative discourse is designed to fully reveal his true self [15, p. 28–29], but, as a rule, love letters do not always contain direct confessions of feelings, they are often full of omissions, hints, as well as doubts and requests to dispel these doubts.

So, despite the fact that there are different approaches to defining an intimate love letter, there is still no fixed definition of the notion under study. The concept of “falling in love” is not equivalent in scope to the concept of “love”. The former is considered as being imbued with feelings of love, passion for someone. Based on the definition provided, we can state that a love letter is a written text of a person who feels feelings of love and passion for the object of his/her love in order to communicate with him/her at a distance. Thus, the sender is a person in love, the addressee is an object of love.

In this paper, we regard the genre-stylistic classification of love letters, proposed by L. Zarytska, who, on the grounds of the strength of the emotional flow in the expression of love feelings, has divided them into the following subtypes: actually love, intimate-friendly and family-intimate letters [5, p. 5–6]. Let us consider each of the mentioned type in more detail.

1. Actually love letters are characterized by the most powerful burst of feelings

and expression of emotions, as well as deep sincerity, straightforwardness and persuasiveness of the sender, who above all want to win or regain the affection of a loved one. In addition, these texts best represent the characters of senders in love, because in them, according to M. Kotsiubynska, “as few masks and as many faces” [9, p. 38]. In fact, love letters can be a mental imbalance of the sender because of his/her obsession with personal happiness.

2. Intimate-friendly love letters emphasize the importance of joint actions, common interests, they contain support, they exchange advice and so on. Most often, the sender fills the addressee with positive life energy. It is these letters that reveal the important character traits of the senders. The fact that lovers write intimate and friendly letters testifies to their caring nature.

3. Family-intimate love letters often reveal the nature of the senders, who turn to a husband or wife, with priority for family happiness and well-being. Emotionally, they are more restrained than actually love letters, and more sensitive than intimate-friendly love letters.

It should be stressed that love, sincere sympathy, as well as understanding and care are the main components of the emotional tone of all the types of love letters aforementioned, which, in its turn, unites them and helps to reveal the psychology of their authors.

Therefore, the love letters not only have become the basis for the plots of epistolary novels, but also have given impetus to the development of such novels as a separate genre. Among the love epistolary heritage of both prominent people and laypersons, unknown ones, some of their epistolary dialogues have given rise to other texts – fiction. Household epistolary has become the plot basis of novels, in addition, individual fragments of letters mosaically and fairly organically fit into the outline of a fictional text, which can indicate the longevity of the literary tradition through a combination of genetically different texts: documentary and fiction. It is also

important that love letters illustrate the way people of different social statuses, genders and ages communicate, which allows them to be used as cultural objects in the period in which they are written. The process of birth of new texts on the basis of love letters is continuous, because each generation finds in them a context consistent with its perceptual level, therefore, the megatext of love letters is unlimited in the literary space.

Conclusions. The major conclusions drawn as the result of the study can be summarised as follows. The concepts of “epistolary text” and “epistolary genre” play an important role in modern epistolography. An epistolary text is a conceptually, informatively and pragmatically significant written speech work, the categorical features of which are polythematic, standard structure, special role of presupposition and sender’s involving factor. Epistolary genre as a form of organization of a written work implies the presence in the texts of general external and internal (substantive) features, namely: a certain structure, the author’s orientation to the interlocutor, the author’s strong commitment to a particular point of view, the ability to denote real world situations or objects, goal-setting, the presence of the sender’s goal to influence the addressee, reflecting the specifics of individual worldview in the psycho-linguistic complex. The term “love letter” is defined as a subgenre of the genre of the intimate letter and, more broadly, the epistolary genre in general. A love letter is a written text of a person who has feelings of love and passion for the object of his love in order to communicate with him/her at a distance. Thus, the sender is a person in love, the addressee is the object of his/her love. For the genre-stylistic classification of letters, the classification of love letters is chosen as the basis, which defines the following subtypes in terms of content and direction: actually love, intimate-friendly and family-intimate letters.

The scope of further research lies in studying the specifics of translating different types of English love letters into Ukrainian.

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Бесклетна О. О., Муханова О. М., Шепелєва О. В. ТЕКСТИ ЛЮБОВНИХ ЛИСТІВ ТА ЇХ ЖАНРОВО-СТИЛІСТИЧНІ ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКИ

У статті зосереджено увагу на понятті епістолярного тексту та досліджено жанрово-стилістичні особливості текстів любовних листів. Вказується, що епістолярний дискурс маніфестує сферу міжособистісного спілкування – взаємодію двох або більше суб'єктів, що полягає в обміні між ними повідомленнями змістовного чи емоційного характеру та представляє реалізацію особливої потреби індивіда в контакті з іншими суб'єктами. Поняття «епістолярний текст» і «епістолярний жанр» відіграють важливу роль у сучасній епістолографії. Епістолярний текст розглядається як концептуально, інформаційно та прагматично значущий письмовий мовленнєвий твір, категоріальними ознаками якого є політематичність, стандартна структура, особлива роль пресупозиції та екстралінгвістичного чинника – залучення відправника. Зазначено, що епістолярний жанр як форма організації письмового твору передбачає наявність у текстах загальних зовнішніх і внутрішніх (змістовних) ознак, а саме: певної структури, орієнтації автора на співрозмовника, твердої прихильності автора до певної точки зору та його здатність позначати реальні ситуації чи предмети світу, цілепокладання, наявність у відправника мети впливати на адресата, відображаючи специфіку індивідуального світогляду в психолінгвістичному комплексі. Термін «любовний лист» визначається як піджанр жанру інтимного листа і, ширше, епістолярного жанру взагалі. Любовний лист – це письмовий текст особи (відправника), яка відчуває почуття любові та пристрасті до об'єкта (адресата) свого кохання, щоб спілкуватися з ним на відстані. Для жанрово-стилістичної класифікації листів за основу обрано класифікацію любовних листів, яка за змістом і спрямованістю визначає такі підтипи: власне любовні, інтимно-дружні та сімейно-інтимні листи.

Ключові слова: класифікація любовних листів, епістолярний дискурс, епістолярний жанр, епістолярний текст, епістолярний стиль, любовний лист.