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AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL TEXT: THE SHIFTING OF THE LINGUISTIC FORM (CASE STUDY OF ITS TYPOLOGY AND STYLISTIC FEATURES)

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The article provides an analysis of modern theoretical and methodological studies focused on the study of autobiographical texts within their typological and stylistic characteristics. It has been specified that the theoretical understanding of autobiographical texts closely correlates with the concepts of anthropocentrism and the autobiographical discourse.

The purpose of our paper is to outline the main vectors of theoretical studies of the autobiography and the biography as texts of the autobiographical discourse. It is believed that the processed data have a fruitful basis for further research of the literary biography. It is noted that the linguistic form of the autobiography has undergone changes due to the skillful description of a person's life as an amazing story via which one can outline his/her image.

The attention has been focused on various scientific approaches to the study of an autobiographical text in modern linguistics. Different classification criteria as well as linguistic and stylistic properties of the autobiography and the biography have been established, such as: retrospectivity, chronology, identity of the author, narrator and protagonist, memory, openness, ratio of the past and the present, a pronounced personal element, ratio of subjective and objective principles.

The article claims that the text of the artistic biography differs from the text of the literary biography. The latter is characterized by a gradual and slow depiction of data from the real life of a specific figure, an arbitrary way of presenting the material, a combination of elements of two styles (artistic and official), awareness of the picture of the past life of the object of the literary biography. Among the stylistic peculiarities of such texts the article distinguished emotional and expressive vocabulary, complex sentences, the author's digressions that reflect his personal positions and "destroy" the ambiguity, one-planning and simplification of the biographical text.

Keywords: *autobiography, biography, literary biography, narrator, protagonist, types of biographical texts, stylistic properties of autobiography, author's position, autofiction.*

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АВТОБІОГРАФІЧНИЙ ТЕКСТ: ЗМІНА МОВНОЇ ФОРМИ (НА МАТЕРІАЛІ ЙОГО ТИПОЛОГІЧНИХ І СТИЛІСТИЧНИХ ОСОБЛИВОСТЕЙ)

Главацька Ю. А.

У статті здійснено аналіз сучасних теоретико-методологічних досліджень, зорієнтованих на вивчення автобіографічних текстів з акцентом на їхні типологічні та стилістичні характеристики. Уточнено, що теоретичне осмислення автобіографічних текстів щільно корелює з поняттями антропоцентризму та автобіографічного дискурсу.

Мета нашої статті полягає в тому, щоб окреслити основні вектори теоретичних досліджень автобіографії та біографії як текстів автобіографічного дискурсу. Вважаємо, що опрацьовані дані мають плідне підґрунтя для подальшого дослідження літературної біографії. Зазначено, що мовна форма автобіографії зазнала змін через умілий опис життя людини як дивовижної історії, крізь призму якої можна окреслити її образ.

Увагу зацентовано на різноманітних наукових підходах до вивчення автобіографічного тексту в сучасній лінгвістиці. Установлено різні критерії класифікацій та описано стилістичні властивості автобіографії й біографії, як-то: ретроспективність, хронологічність, тотожність автора, оповідача та протагоніста, пам'ять, відкритість, співвідношення минулого й сьогодення, яскраво виражене особистісне начало, співвідношення суб'єктивного та об'єктивного начал.

Виявлено, що текст художньої біографії відрізняється від тексту літературної біографії. Останньому властиве поступове та повільне зображення автором даних реального життя конкретної фігури, довільний спосіб презентації матеріалу, поєднання елементів двох стилів (художнього та офіційно-ділового), усвідомлення картини минулого життя об'єкта літературної біографії. Серед стилістичних властивостей таких текстів виокремлюють емоційну та експресивну лексику, наявність складних за будовою речень, авторських відхилень, які відображають особистісні позиції, що "руйнують" однозначність, одноплановість та спрощеність біографічного тексту.

Ключові слова: автобіографія, біографія, літературна біографія, наратор, протагоніст, види біографічних текстів, стилістичні властивості автобіографії, авторська позиція, автофікшен.

Introduction. Anthropocentrism is one of the leading principles of modern linguistics; it involves the study of linguistic phenomena in connection with a human being. There are currently a large number of linguistic studies carried out within the anthropocentric branch, but there is still a lack of theoretical knowledge about a particular linguistic phenomenon.

The research on the problem of the author and their self-expression in the text has a long tradition as it has been the subject of scholarly discussions ever since the emergence of autobiographical studies [17].

It should be noted that for a long time autobiographical scientific works have been considered by scientists only in the aspect of source studies. Most of the theories of autobiographical texts are however focused on explaining and identifying the psychological characteristics of a person, studying the

process of human socialization, gender relations, etc. And each of the sciences in its own way classifies autobiographical texts, defines "autobiography" and highlights features typical for the genre [16: 238]. Autobiography is "a narrative of the past of a person by the person concerned" [34].

Biography and autobiography are related to life description. The beginning of the autobiography closely correlates with the development of the biographical genre texts. Of course, no autobiography is complete, so this brings it closer to other types of biographical texts, such as memoirs or diaries.

Despite the popularity of autobiographical texts and their active studying by scientists, in the literature there seems to be no general definition of the autobiographical discourse, although in some papers we can come across it. The main communicative strategy of the autobiographical discourse is self-

presentation, and the main components of the conceptual sphere are "life" and "memory". The autobiographical discourse is self-referential, since the speaker appears as the main referent of the created discourse.

In our opinion, modern extensive research on the genre of autobiography shows that in most cases the status of the autobiography remains unchanged, unlike the manner of its presentation. As a result, *the literary biography* is foregrounded.

Previous Research in the Area. The autobiographical discourse is typically a complex problem of research, as its case study and composition lead to studying various linguistic phenomena, but not the discourse itself. Recent theoretical developments have revealed such studies focusing on: the types of biographical texts [9], writerly self-representations [16], communicative strategies [4; 5], implementation of text categories and stylistic techniques [12], gender specificity [19], genre properties of biographical writing [6; 7; 10], structure of autobiographical discourse texts [13], forms of the autobiographical discourse manifestation [14], autobiographical narratives [2; 30] as well as aesthetic presentation of biographies [3]. Most studies have tended to focus on the corpus of one author's texts [11; 12; 18], autobiographical texts of the same language speakers [15], persons belonging to the same social status, autobiographies of politicians, actors, for example, etc.

A challenging problem, which arises in this domain, is to present typology and the main linguistic and stylistic features of the autobiography as a linguistic form of the autobiographical discourse. **The aim of this paper** is systematizing and generalizing theoretical studies of the autobiography. It has significant benefits in terms of *the literary biography* investigation. For the current work, it is sufficient to point out that the linguistic form of the autobiography has been changed – it's not merely a narration of a figure's everyday life, but a presentation of the author's personal position, on the

one hand, and the skillful description of an individual's life as an amazing story, through the prism of which one can outline his/her image, on the other hand. "The way he or she organizes and arranges the events of the story shows what the author considers important" [34].

Results and Discussion. In modern science, there is still some considerable controversy surrounding the autobiography. In literary studies we may read: "the autobiography is a literary genre with the author himself being the main character. Autobiographical works, in addition to autobiography, include memoirs, diaries, correspondence, as well as artistic autobiographical works. The text of the literary autobiography is based on the facts of the author's life" [8]. "Autobiography is a way to organize the story of a life and reflect on the past in order to better understand the present" [34].

Using the thesaurus method of analysis and referring to the interpretations of dictionary entries of English-language dictionaries and encyclopedias, we can outline several definitions of the lexical unit "biography". Thus, the Encyclopedia Britannica gives the following interpretation of biography: "biography, form of literature, commonly considered nonfictional, the subject of which is the life of an individual. One of the oldest forms of literary expression, it seeks to recreate in words the life of a human being – as understood from the historical or personal perspective of the author – by drawing upon all available evidence, including that retained in memory as well as written, oral, and pictorial material" [23]. In Merriam-Webster's English dictionary we find: "biography is a usually written history of a person's life" [25]. Cambridge Dictionary provides the following definition of biography: "the life story of a person written by someone else" [24].

Currently two leading opinions regarding the essence of the autobiography are distinguished in the field of modern literary studies: the first

is a traditional trend, according to which it is considered that the indispensable components of autobiography are "the presence of biographical material, the identity of the author, the narrator and the protagonist, first-person narration, and linear chronology" [1: 33]. The representatives of the second approach believe that "the autobiography can be expressed in any form convenient for the author" [1: 33]. Investigating the typological differences between diaries, autobiographies and memoirs, scholars emphasize that in memoirs and diaries attention is focused on "the events experienced by a certain historical person and the people he/she had the chance to meet in his/her life" [1: 34]. Moreover, the dominant role in the autobiography is occupied by the author's personal position.

Various approaches have been put forward to solve this issue such as: source studies, historical and literary, cultural, gender, sociological, psychoanalytic, narrative, cognitive, subject, philosophical and cultural, etc.

There are key questions and notions that are still discussed in the literature. And one of them is why previous studies have almost exclusively focused on autobiographical works in the aspect of source studies. Ya. Bystrov explains this in such a way: "This state of affairs is due mainly to the fact that for many years the autobiography was considered a literary form that could not be fully trusted, where the author and the subject of the narration are condescending and loyal in their characteristics" [2: 24].

The French researcher of the genre of autobiography, Ph. Lejeune, outlines such three dominant key statements of the autobiography: "Identity is the real starting point of autobiography", "The deep subject of autobiography is the proper name", "The autobiographical genre is a contractual genre" [21: 52]. Ph. Lejeune himself assumes that the autobiography is "a retrospective prose narrative produced by a real person concerning his own existence, focusing

on his individual life, in particular on the development of his personality" [22: 2].

Thus, we see that according to the opinion above, firstly, the author of the text appears both the narrator and the protagonist "in the author-narrator-protagonist triad, secondly, the events described in the text are considered authentic, since the description of the character's life reproduces the author's life, thirdly, the autobiography performs the functions of both accommodation and reconstruction, which means the interpretation of the narrator's own life events" [2: 25].

Recent developments in the genre of autobiography have led to the thought that the variety of autobiographic texts corresponds the author's outlook, their life experience as well as worldview. In addition, the author may refer to his/her own emotions and ideas, on the one hand, and correlates the ratio of mental and physical events, on the other hand. Moreover, experts have always seen the diversity and breadth of the problems analyzed in these texts as the fundamental text variation index [1; 2; 4; 9; 26; 31].

Autobiographical texts are currently classified according to various criteria depending on the branch investigating the genre of autobiography and the aspects of its studying. Most studies have tended to focus on the following types of autobiographies: traditional, autobiography of the spirit, political autobiography; artistic, memoir and diary autobiographical texts; activity, social and existential-sensual types of autobiography. Let us emphasize that V. Shcherbytska calls the autobiography of the spirit "the path to success" [19: 6].

E. Sharrow states that "a biography is a specialized form of history. It is an account of events based upon the example of one person's life" [32]. He outlines the following types of biographical texts:

- historical fiction biography;
- academic biography;
- fictionalized academic biography;
- prophetic biography [32].

The first type is stories about famous people who are still alive. As a rule, a few well-known facts about the individual are the basis of such biographies. These texts are oriented on to the reader's entertainment. Nowadays fictional biographies often aim to make either a social or political statement. Political biographies and autobiographies have become popular ways to put to advantage one's personal glory while upgrading an ideology too. The algorithm is the following: some facts of an outstanding figure are presented in the form of an entertaining tale to impress the recipient in spite of validity of the facts. Thus, the functional loading of such texts is enjoyment.

The second type is academic biographies. A person's achievements and documented facts are in the focus of attention. The main peculiarities of such texts are related to the smallest details of an individual's life in combination with his/her accomplishments shown chronologically (childhood, family impacts, education, first love, setting the life goal, its reaching, illnesses, death).

The fictionalized academic biography is a blending of the fictional biography and the academic one as a strong theme, a story line as well as factual accuracy are revealed [32]. The dominant function is to impress the reader and depict in what way one can live his/her own life.

The prophetic biography aims the recipient to be given some exact practical life lessons for him/her to use them in life. All true facts are compiled for a spiritual goal or ideal theme to be developed. After all facts find their approval in perfect statements they can be considered relevant for further individual development. The key function of such a biography is "to inspire an idealistic change in the reader rather than just to provide base entertainment" [32].

Y. Bystrov highlights such types of biography as scientific, documentary and artistic [2: 26]. Hence the principle of identifying the protagonist of the artistic biography (real or fictional individuality) is the basis of such a classification of

biographical texts. The scientist suggests paying attention to the fact that the subject of activity (scientific, documentary and journalistic or literary and artistic) is the dominant criterion for distinguishing the specified types of biographies: "a historian or a literary critic (a subject of scientific activity) creates a scientific biography, a publicist (a subject of documentary and journalistic activity) creates a documentary biography, a writer (a subject of a literary and artistic biography) creates an artistic biography" [2: 26].

Roy Pascal in his "Design and Truth in Autobiography" states: "It (autobiography) involves the reconstruction of the movement of a life, or part of a life, in the actual circumstances in which it was lived. Its centre of interest is the self, not the outside world, though necessarily the outside world must appear so that, in give and take with it, the personality finds its peculiar shape" [29: 9]. He affirms that traditionally the availability of biographical material, the identity of the author, the narrator and the protagonist, a first-person narration, and a linear chronology are obligatory for the genre of autobiography [29: 9]. Proponents of the free interpretation of the autobiography believe that the autobiographer has the right to imagine himself in any form he considers appropriate and convenient; any work reproducing the author's personality appears as an autobiography [29: 9]. "The speaker may narrate an event in such a way that the self does not have to accept responsibility for the outcome. It can be described as happening to the protagonist because of the actions of others" [34].

Modern researchers note the following stylistic properties of the autobiography:

- retrospectiveness;
- chronological sequence of events;
- the identity of the author, the narrator and the protagonist;
- memory as the most important category of an autobiographical text;
- openness;

- ratio of the past and the present;
- the plan of the mature narrator in the present and the plan of his "I" in the past;
- a pronounced personal principle;
- ratio of subjective and objective principles [2; 3; 6; 9].

The literature review shows that the autobiography is classified into an artistic autobiography and an autobiographical document. The English researcher, V. Spengemann, thinks that there are two judgments regarding the autobiography:

- a text containing autobiographical (documentary) and non-artistic materials. The personality is described by providing only data touching on his / her life, views and status in modern world;

- a text in which a person presents himself/herself in such a way that he / she considers appropriate – "only in this way one can reveal one's inner essence, one's self" [33].

We emphasize that the two above-mentioned types of the autobiography differ. The documentary autobiography, on the one hand, refers to memoir-biographical prose. Its purpose is to outline the author's personality in a broad sense, to provide a certain list of events in his/her life, to demonstrate the uniqueness of his/her philosophical concepts, and the socio-historical environment of the era in which he/she lives.

S. Sargar draws a distinction between biography and autobiography [32]. He sees the difference "in their literary motives and aspects as forms. The motive behind writing a biography is to create a memorial of the hero. A biographer presents or tries to present the detached, impersonal account of the personality of his hero and exercises his faculty of imagination to make it more interesting. On the contrary, the autobiographer creates his own faithful portrayal. Another important difference between biography and autobiography is that the former is a complete picture of the life of the hero. The biographer begins his story from the birth and ends

it with the death of his hero. On the contrary, autobiography is not complete work because in it the narrative comes to its end before the death of its hero" [32].

Here we come across the term "autofiction" that can be understood "as a narrative modality that inhabits the referential space likewise colonized by autobiography proper, but at the same time offers a patently enriched and treated, hence fictionalized, and metamorphic, version of the life-story of the autofictionneur" [34].

Y. Bystrov believes that there are several subtypes of the fictionalized biography: "artistic biography, literary biography, novelized biography, and factual artistic biography" [2: 20]. The scholar adds that the mentioned genre varieties of the biography are synonymous, as the key principle of genre creation is the proportional correlation of fact and fiction, since "the basis of the narrative in fictionalized biographies is documentary, but the author embellishes the facts for objective as well subjective reasons" [2: 20].

"The artistic biography is a heterogeneous form in which facts are mixed with the art of narration" [2: 17]. The protagonist of the autobiography does not always appear as a reflection of the author. Such an autobiographical text is characterized by elements of generalization, fiction, lyrical digressions, and peculiar criteria while selecting the material.

Moreover, Ya. Bystrov points out that the peculiarity of artistic biography and autobiography "is the introduction of another subject into the narration – the so-called fictitious narrator for the purpose of objectification and separation of the object of observation from oneself (the author)" [2: 26].

There is an opinion that many autobiographical texts presenting verifiable data of a human being's experience contain documentary and artistic features [2: 27; 13; 14]. D. Herman notes that the autobiography is not only a presentation of facts in chronological order, but also an author's, a writer's artistic idea of reflecting those

events and details that appear factual when a certain person creates his/her own image [26].

Such works are called literary biographies. They differ from artistic biographies. The text of the artistic biography combines the literary laws of the genre of autobiography and the trends of modern literature. The character of the artistic biography is created by the author in the same way as the protagonist of classical fiction, that is, the author's modality – his personal attitude towards the person whose life path is described [2: 27].

The text of the literary biography is characterized by the author's gradual and slow depiction of data from the real life of a certain figure. In addition, one should point out the arbitrary way of presenting the material, the combination of elements of two styles (artistic and official), awareness of the picture of the past life of the person about whom the literary biography is written. Such stylistic features of these texts as emotional and expressive vocabulary, the presence of complex sentences, the author's digressions reflecting personal positions as well as "breaking" the ambiguity, one-planning and simplification of the biographical text are distinguished. 50 Essential Literary Biographies can be found here [20].

According to our observations the change of the linguistic form of the autobiographical text occurs due to a special author's approach to describing the life path of a famous person. Such a feature is revealed by giving the text of the literary biography dramatic, ironical, self-ironical, and metaphorical shading, which are inevitably combined with the spatio-temporal organization of the text of the literary biography and the pragmatic attitude of the author-narrator.

Our attention has been focused on the biography "Steve Jobs: Biography" by W. Isaacson [28]. The result of having read it has further strengthened our confidence in its belonging to the literary biography. W. Isaacson at the very beginning of the biography writes: "*He*

was not a model boss or human being, tidily packaged for emulation. Driven by demons, he could drive those around him to fury and despair. But his personality and passions and products were all interrelated, just as Apple's hardware and software tended to be, as if part of an integrated system. His tale is thus both instructive and cautionary, filled with lessons about innovation, character, leadership, and values" [28: 13]. As we see the author himself underlines Job's broad and complicated nature embracing various aspects of his life – his birth, friendship, preferences, desires, obsession with the product, his assessment of people's capabilities, the attitude towards people, women, in particular, and so on. We believe it is of special interest to examine a short review of the literary biography of Steve Jobs [27].

Conclusions and perspectives. Thus, the shifting of the autobiography from a simple presentation of events to their selection, construction, evaluation is a transition to a story-based and, therefore, aesthetically organized biography, performing the "marginal functions" of non-documentary but artistic literature. The main functional loading of the literary biography is that the recipient not only learns about the life of a famous person, but also is satisfied with what he/she has read. Such an aesthetic recompense leads to the reconstruction of the image of an outstanding figure, on the one hand, and the reflection of the process of the author's personality self-identification, on the other hand. All these features may be revealed by means of linguistic analysis. As the result, the literary biography is a favourable starting-line for investigating various linguistic phenomena.

Future research should further develop and confirm the initial findings mentioned above by studying linguistic and stylistic features of the narrative tone and style of the literary biography "Steve Jobs: Biography" by W. Isaacson.

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