

METRO-RHYTHMIC AND PHONIC STRUCTURES OF SPANISH POETIC SPEECH

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ABSTRACT

Spanish poetic speech has three systems of metro-rhythmic structures (syllabo-tonic, accentual-syllabic and tonic) and three varieties of phonic structures (ornamental, symbolic and paronymic). The metro-rhythmic and phonic structures play a major role in ensuring poetic communication through the means of Spanish poetic speech.

The mechanism of Spanish poetic speech has specific media of transforming discrete units of practical linear discourse into the continuum of what is known as score-spatial poetic signs /1/. The high communicative-informational potential of these "spatial signs" is largely determined by that specific impact which, in accordance with the author's communicative design, is exercised on the initial informativeness of speech units by the conditions of the poetic context, which contributes to combining all the informative elements of the poem "vertically" and "horizontally" into a cohesive communicative-informational complex - a lyrical text.

In other words, under the impact of the poetic context the informational relevance of units of poetic speech not simply becomes transformed (relative to their "homonyms" in the language at large)

and not simply becomes multiplied, but also acquires a qualitatively new - aggregative-integral - character: remaining formally and in terms of factual semantics a combination of discrete linear units, the work of poetic speech as regards conceptual-semantic and aesthetic informativeness, is already found to be not the sum and in general not an arithmetical "product" of the semantics of discrete linear signs, but an aggregate and, to a certain extent, indivisible poetic macrosign none of what would appear to be its quite autonomous components can independently perform the communicative-informational function which it performs as part of a cohesive macrosign. As soon as a certain communicative element of the poetic play is taken out of the text, which severs its ties of similarity and/or contrast with other (and very frequently with all) elements of the poem, this element changes from a component of the spatial poetic macrosign (or perhaps from a spatial poetic microsign) into a flat linear - prosaic and discrete - sign.

Here, however, it is important to note another - on the face of it, paradoxical - property of connected poetic speech. Alongside an expressed tendency toward the loss by elements of the spatial poetic microsign of their autonomous communicative value, the opposite tendency is at work - a tendency toward the orientation of the conceptual structure

of the units of the poetic discourse to the general conceptual and aesthetic informational programme of the text: each of such units, down to an individual word, being "overturned into the subject and idea of the artistic design" /2/, tends, as much as possible, to reflect the overall communicative task of the text in an integral, if simplified, form. This dialectical unity of the synsemantics and autosemantics of spatial and poetic micro-signs predetermines the specific complexity both of the analysis of the poetic text (especially written in a foreign language) and of its poetic translation, i.e., of the synthesis of a spatial poetic macro-sign equivalent in terms of conceptual-aesthetic informativeness in the target language.

An important role in the "spatialisation" of poetic speech units is played by poetic (metro-rhythmic, phonic and metalingual) structures, quite specific to the poetry of each national language.

Metro-rhythmic structures can be regarded as techniques of the systems segmentation of speech into verse lines as well as of the systems intralinear speech organisation which takes the form of an ordered alternation of marked and unmarked syllabic positions. The ideal pattern of such alternations is traditionally known as metre. The realisation of the metre in empirical verse is known as its rhythm. Implementing the principle of repeat at the syllabic and linear level, the metro-rhythmic structures ensure the generation of verse speech and form the basis for its development into poetic speech, in other words, speech capable of performing the function of poetic communication - communication with the laconic means of two-tiered semantic (factual and conceptual) and multiaspect aesthetic (aesthetic proper, cathartic, hedonistic, axiological, suggestive-hypnotic, struc-

tural-formal, functional-formal, etc.) information.

The metro-rhythmic structures play the major communicative role of "stratifiers" of semantic information: "linear" syntagmatic connections, which take no account of the "desyntagmatisation" (the term of I.R. Galperin) of verse speech, ensure a continuum of factual information, which bears a marginal character in the lyrical text and, as a rule, is of no basic significance. The "vertical" (naturally, combined with "horizontal") syntagmatic and paradigmatic connections determined by the metro-rhythmic division of the text guarantee the continuum of conceptual and aesthetic information.

Contrary to a widespread view, the Spanish metro-rhythmic structures correspond not to one, but to three different versification systems. First, to the syllabo-tonic system, whose metric repertoire in principle is as diverse as that of Russian or English syllabo-tonic poetry, including bisyllabic and trisyllabic metres. Even among the best-known poetic works by Spanish and Latin American authors the body of "flawless" syllabo-tonic texts, according to preliminary calculations, comprises no less than 3,000 poetic lines. Second, they correspond to the accentual-syllabic system, which represents a non-footed (in contrast to the syllabo-tonic system) compromise between the tonic and the syllabic systems. The accentual-syllabic metre in principle coincides with the metric pattern of dol'nik but, in contradistinction to it, presupposes the constant isosyllabism of the verse lines. Therefore the metre of the accentual-syllabic verse is determined both by the number of ictuses and by the number of syllables, for instance, three-ictus octosyllable, two-ictus pentasyllable, etc. Finally, old Spanish poetry and its modern-time derivations show a trend toward

the tonic system proper - toward what is known as taktovik ("Cantar de mio Cid") and dol'nik (old romances, some texts by Pablo Neruda and Garcia Lorca, etc.).

The phonic verse structure can be interpreted as a device of the systems use of the grapho-phonemic repeats designed to convey semantic (as a rule, conceptual) and/or aesthetic information in a poetic text. The grapho-phonemic system of Spanish occasional alliteration contains 21 units (Spanish has 25 phonemes and 30 letters) and the grapho-phonemic system of the Spanish rhyme has 25 units, which, however, are not fully coincidental with the units of the Spanish phonological system.

The phonic structures, which, in the main, convey only aesthetic information, will be referred to as ornamental. But it should be observed that ornamental phonic structures may also exhibit a measure of semantisation, but not to the extent of enabling the grapho-phonemic repeat to gain the status of a quasi-morpheme /3/ - a sound-letter combination having a certain occasional meaning within a euphonic context, as, for instance, in the following verse by Miguel de Unanuno: "Esta es mi España" (the quasi-morpheme "es" meaning "existence" or even "eternal existence" or "Las montañas de mi tierra/ en el mar se miran" (the "distant" quasi-morpheme "mnr", whose meaning, "mountain-sea", symbolizes Biscaya as a land of mountains and the sea).

The phonic structures which contain a quasi-morpheme and therefore are undoubtedly semantized can be classed with symbolic phonic structures. Finally, clearly semantized ("quasi-morphemic") sound-letter repeats perceived as a specific phonic feature not so much of the verse line as of concrete lexemes /4/ which enter in image-paronymic relations can be categorized as paronymic phonic

structures: manzana amanecida (Jiménez), avienta tus destinos al viento aventurero (Greiff), amarillas mariposas (Jiménez).

In our time the recognition of the conceptual relevance of symbolic and paronymic phonic structures appears to encounter less and less resistance - at any rate, among the authors of works on linguopoetics and linguostylistics. However, as before, debates as to whether it is correct to speak of any informativeness of that part of the phonic structures which has been categorized as their ornamental variety continue unabated. Indeed, what, for instance, is the informational load of the sound repeats l and ll (i.e., of the repeats of the sound-letter "L", which in the Spanish grapho-phonemic system of occasional sound repeats unites both phonemes and both graphemes) in the following lines by Juan Ramon Jiménez (the general language probability of the frequency of occurrence of this grapho-phoneme is 5.7 per cent, and in this fragment its probable expectancy is exceeded more than twice, equaling 12 per cent)?

"... levanta nubes de polvo/ y llora con sus esquilas, /bajo la luna de oro./ La aldea del valle está/ quieta en humo blanco. Todo/ lo que era alegre al sol, sueña/ no sé qué amores llorosas ..."

The functional relevance of precisely such and similar phonic structures, more often than not, raises doubts. Some researchers simply deny that these phonic structures have any conceptuality of their own, reducing their communicative load to the creation of a sonic pattern, emotional resonance, etc.

It appears, however, that the inclusion in the conceptual-terminological apparatus of poetics of such notions as semantic and aesthetic information makes it possible to minimize misunderstandings and narrow the scope of theoretical confrontations of minor importance on this

question as well.

In the author's opinion, ornamental alliteration (i.e., the phonic structures which carry no direct semantic load) bears an informative character if only because it is a major factor creating general textual information and imparting to the text the conclusive, coherent, integral character of the only adequate unit of poetic communication, of a "spatial" sign, which has a paradoxically indiscrete nature.

Furthermore, ornamental phonic structures are also discrete bearers of quanta of aesthetic and sometimes even mediated semantic information in its different manifestations, of which reference will be made to just a few.

1. First, it is a variety of hedonistic information connected with the identification of the degree of creative mastery and the technical freedom of versification and with the "delight" experienced by the recipient, who shares with the author "emotions of creative power over the language" /5/.

2. Second, it is the additional information that the recipient deals not with "practical", but with "poetic" speech, the adequate perception of which requires the use of a specific poetic code.

3. Third, it is phono-motivational information supporting by sound identities the semantic similarity or difference between the verbal structures involved in the sound repeat. Here two situations can be distinguished in their turn (A). Sound repeat as the phonic motivation of a trope construction, which emphasizes not only the associative-semantic, but also the phonic community of the comparatum and/or the tertium comparationis and/or comparant: "una lagrlima luclero (Jiménez), "mi lillustlre loledad de leslquila y lana" (M.Hernandez) (B). Aid with phonic means

to the reconstruction of lexical meanings in autological, i.e., formally ugly construction of a poetic text and the sound-letter motivation of the "fluctuating signs of meaning" (Yu.N.Tynyanov) in a poetic word /6/, as a result of which intensifies the semantic interpretation of units of syntagmatic sequences: "tremulos trigales" (Greiff), "flautas flexibles" (Hernandez), "valleg llenos de dulce añoranza" (Jiménez).

4. Fourth, it is information indicating textual cohesion, expressed by means of phonic cohesion, which itself can ensure such a high degree of the coherence of a poetic discourse that it becomes possible to neglect the ramified grammatical and lexical devices of interphrasal connection.

5. Fifth, it is so called anagrammatical information, produced by the saturation of the text with grapho-phonemic complexes which form part of a certain key word.

6. Sixth, ornamental phonic structures are sometimes used for conveying onomatopoeic information. Naturally, in conceptual terms, it is a fairly lightened sound-letter device. However, its modest semantic advantages do not at all compromise this type of the phonic structure as an auxiliary means of sound expressiveness.

7. Seventh, the conceptualness of another variety of ornamental structures is quite possibly based on the latent effect of primary or secondary sound symbolism. The author says "quite possibly" since specialists in linguopoetics have not arrived at a final solution of this question, in distinction from, for instance, the problem of contextual sound symbolization of poetic speech. It is another matter that the "practical", primary "meaning" of a sound and its relevance to poetic speech, contrary to the

conceptions of the majority of the authors of phonosemantic researches, are divided by as deep a chasm as the meaning of the word "dream" in everyday speech and in the text of Calderon's drama *Life Is a Dream*.

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