PHILOLOGY AND LINGUISTICS

Husar Malvina

PhD in Philology, Assistant Professor,

Assistant Professor of the English Language Department

National University of «Kyiv-Mohyla Academy», Ukraine

THE STATE OF DEPRESSION AND OUR LANGUAGE

Abstract. This article investigates the connection between the mental state and the speech product analysing the lexical material of poems by Lesia Ukrainka through the matrix of linguistic markers for depression. It demonstrates how the frequency of this or that word-trigger usage indicates the main mental problems of the person.

Keywords: depression, lexical analysis, linguistic markers.

Depression is a widely spread problem nowadays. It is connected with some mental disorder, which results in person's low spirits, loss of interest for hobbies and life and may bring to suicidal intentions. Numerous researches in neuropsychology [1], psychology [2], neurolinguistics [3], psycholinguistics [4], [5], psychiatry [6] indicate the depression influence on different brain zones including those responsible for speech. In the work «Linhvistychni markery depresii v ukrainskomovnykh dopysakh sotsialnoi merezhi Facebook» (Linguistic markers of depression in Ukrainian texts of the social network Facebook) [7], the results of various investigations, devoted to the speech peculiarities typical of people suffering from depression were analysed and such particular grammar and lexical forms as personal pronouns, past forms of the verbs, words-absolutes, words-triggers, and some special syntactic constructions like inverted word-orders and easier propositions were indicated [7].

Using the results of work by Voronchuk, it was decided to analyse the poems from poetry collection «Thoughts and Dreams» by Lesia Ukrainka, as it is known,

that she suffered from depression as well because of tuberculosis sufferings and realizing that this disease is uncurable. The investigation is pursuing the purpose to study how the person's soul state is reflected verbally in her poems and thus to investigate the psychological problem with linguistic instruments. To set the connection between the depressive moods of the poetess and the choice of verbal instruments for creating speech product, that is, between psyche state and the speech, the lexical material analysis of poems through the matrix of linguistic markers for depression has been carried out. To calculate the usage frequency of lexical units-triggers the quantitative analysis has been used.

There have been 35 poems from sections «Melodii» (Melodies) and «Nevilnichi pisni» (Slave songs) by Lesia Ukrainka, included into the poetry collection «Thoughts and Dreams» analysed. The results have revealed such speech peculiarities typical of people suffering from depression as frequent usage of personal pronouns and 2nd person pronoun and its forms. So, for example, the pronoun «ja» (I) was used 116 times, «mene» (me) – 63, «meni» (to me) – 46, «mnoiu» (by me) i «soboiu» (by myself) – 4, «sebe» (myself)– 5, «sobi» (to myself) – 6, so total 244 times, pronoun займенник «ty» (you) (65 times) and its forms in cases «tebe» (you) (19), «tobi» (to you) (13), «toboiu)» (by you) (7) – total 104 times.

Also we have fixed a number of words-absolutes, such as: «nikoly» (never) (5), «nikhto» (nobody) (7), «nishcho» (nothing) (1), «nemaje» (no) (6), «nema» (no) (2), «zrodu» (since birth) (3), «ni» (no) (19), «vse» (all, everything) (26), «use» (all, everything) (5), «doviku» (forever) (1), «zavzhdy» (always) (3).

One more linguistic marker for depression is trigger-words. «These words are not similar to negative words, since beside the thematic context they may have either positive or neutral meaning as well».

Analysing the texts of the poems we have encountered such trigger-words: «zhyttia» (life), «zhyty» (to live), «mertvyi» (dead), «vazhkyi» (hard), «zhakh» (horror), «vmyraty» (to die), «vazhkyi» (hard), «zhakh» (horror), «terpity» (suffer), «peklo» (hell), «sumnyi» (sad), «tma» (darkness), «vtomylas» (get tired), «sud» (trial), «vtrachenyi» (lost), «muky» (tormant), «plach» (cry), «plakaty» (cry),

«rydaty» (cry), «tryvoha» (anxiety), «tryvozhnyi» (anxious), «bazhannia» (desire), «bazhaiu» (wish), «strashnyi» (terrible), «sorom» (shame), «padaty» (fall), «upadaty» (fall), «prechuttia» (feelings), «dumka» (thought), «dumaty» (think), «dumy» (thoughts). The words which were used in the poems more often are «temnyi» (dark) and its derivatives – 23 times, «zhal» (pity) – 15 times, «khvora» (ill)– 27, «smert» (death) – 12, «chornyi» (black) – 8, «samotnii» (lonely), «na samotyni» (alone) – 6.

As it was said above, not only words with negative meaning but also with positive or neutral one may serve a marker for depression. So, one of such examples is the word «shchastia» (happiness), which in its different derivative forms in 35 poems was met 19 times. But it is interesting to note that it was used mainly in negative context: «Te shchastia, – to buv tilky son» (That happiness was only a dream), «vboheie shchastia moie» (my poor happiness) [8, p. 147-148], «Nemaie shchastia i ne mozhe buty» (There is no happiness and it will never be) [8, p. 131-138]. Another word – «lubov» (love) – also is encountered 14 times, but in the context of memories and sad experience: «Mene liubov nenavysti navchyla» (Love taught me to hate), «Kolys i ya bula, yak ty, lahidna, tykha / I viryla v braterskuiu liubov», «…nyshchyly moiu liubov» (I used to be peaceful and quiet like you / And trust in brother's love) «Zghadaie vtrachenu, znevazhenu liubov» (Recollected lost, abused love) [8, p. 131-138]. Other trigger-words, which can be either positive or negative depending on the context are «syla» (power), «liudyna» (man), «dumy» (thoughts). But the most frequently used word is «svit» (world, light) and its derivatives, which was met 28 times. It is used in such contexts as : «Ia tilky dumkoiu na sviti budu zhyt» (I will live in this world only in my thoughts) [8, p. 120], «Shchob vilno po sviti litaty» (To fly freely around the world) [8, p. 119], «I svit, nemov tiuremnyi dvir malyi» (the world is like a small prison yard), «Shcho hlianuly na svit v tiuremneie vikno» (that looked at the world through prison window) [8, p. 138-139], «My virymo, shcho v inshim, krashchim sviti» (We believe that in the other better world) [8, p. 131-138], «zmerknuv svit» (the world died), [8, p. 151]. As we can see, the moods of loneliness, isolation, the feeling of reduced space, despair are traced. The derivatives for this word in the Ukrainian

language «svitlo» (light), «svityty» (shine) were met in the following lines: «A chym zhe ty zahlushysh dykyi holos … rozpachlyvoho hukannia svitla?» (And how will you drown out the wild voice… the desperate call for light?), «Ta ne davala ni tepla, ni svitla» (But gave neither warmth nor light), «U temriavi hukannia: «Svitla! Svitla!» (In the darkness shouting: «Light! Light!») [8, p. 141-142], «Osvitylas ohnem blyskavytsi» (Lighted by the light of lightning) [8, p. 119-120], «Ty blyskavytseiu musysh svityty u tmi, Poky zoreiu rozhevoiu krai tvii osvitytsia temnyi» (You must shine like a lightning in the darkness, While the pink star illuminates your dark land), «Vabliat mene, ya pidu za tym svitlom yasnym»(I am attracted, I will follow that clear light) [8, p. 126]. Light is associated with hope, life, something that can solve the problems.

We got interested how the light and depression can be connected. The results of investigation «Residential Lights and Risk for depression and falls» by Mary Jean Brown та David E. Jacobs state that the residentials with insufficient light may become the reason of person's depression [9]. So, there is a direct connection between light and depression.

So, if to analyse the figures of frequency usage of these or those trigger-words and their derivatives in the poems by Lesia Ukrainka and choose the most widely used ones, it is possible to suggest that she felt worried most of all by such problems as illness, constant loneliness, the necessity to stay home, in isolation and lack of light, which maybe caused her depression.

One more linguistic marker for depression is considered to be personification [7]. Personification is a trope or figure of speech (generally considered a type of metaphor) in which an inanimate object or abstraction is given human qualities or abilities [10]. This stylistic device is available in the verses Lesia Ukrainka. Being lonely and having no one to express her emotions to, she talks to her muse, language, nature.

In her poem «Dyvlius ya na yasnii zori…» (I look at the bright stars) Lesia blames stars for poisoning her with sadness: «…Vy, zori, baiduzhii zori! Solodku otrutu lyly…» (You, stars, indifferent stars! You poured sweet poison) [8, p. 118].

Another example of personification is encountered in the well-known poem

«Slovo, chomu ty ne tverdaia krytsia…» (A word, why are you not a firm knife...) [8, p. 143-144]. The whole poem is a message to the language. The first part of the poem shows the author's despair that language cannot be a weapon to kill her enemies. However, here she is upset not because of her illness, but because of the situation that took place in Ukraine in those times: everybody who defended Ukrainian interests were persecuted by tsarist regime. A lot of her colleagues and friends got imprisoned and she felt powerless to help them.

And one more example of personification is the poem «Ave Regina!» [8, p. 147-148]. The whole poem is the cry of Lesia's soul. She considers the muse guilty in her unhappiness: «… Bezzhalisna muzo, kudy ty mene zavela? / Navishcho ty ochi meni oslipyla zhublyvym prominniam svoim? / Navishcho ty sertse moie oduryla, pryvabyla marevom shchastia?» (Ruthless muse, where did you take me? Why have you blinded my eyes with your destructive ray? Why have you fooled my heart, attracted by the haze of happiness?);

ruined dreams: «…Usi tayemni svoi skarby tobi ya povynna viddaty / I kylym, shcho vytkaly mrii, pid nohy tobi prostelyty…» (I must give you all my secret treasures /And the carpet that was weaved by my dreams, I should lay under your feet);

and she utters her dissatisfaction by the writer's fate: «…Navishcho ty vyrvala v mene slova, shcho povynni b umerty zo mnoiu? / Ty kvitamy sertsya moho dorohu sobi ustelyla, /I kroviu yoho ty okrasyla shaty svoi…» (Why did you snatch the words that should die with me? You have covered thy way with the flowers of my heart, And you have adorned your garments with its blood).

Thus, the lexical analysis of poems by Lesia Ukrainka has helped to indicate a series of linguistic markers for depression: personal pronouns, 2nd person pronoun and its forms, words-absolutes and words-triggers and such a stylistic device as personification. These results have persuaded once again that depression has direct impact on the person's brain and reflects in the speech product.

Moreover, we have carried out the quantitative analysis of frequency usage of trigger-words. The results have shown that the most widely used words in poems by Lesia Ukrainka are illness, light and darkness and their derivatives. It indicates that

the main reason for poetess's depression were loneliness, isolation, restricted space and lack of light. Thus, if to find out the most widely used triggering lexical units in the person's speech, you may clarify her or his main reason for depression.

The results of this investigation have demonstrated the direct connection between psychology and linguistics, mental problems and speech and the possibility to reveal the psychological problems with the help of linguistic methods.

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