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DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE AS A LINGUISTIC AND DISCURSIVE UNIT

Dramatic monologue occupies a distinctive place in the structure of dramatic text as a form of speech through which a character's inner state, intentions, and psychological tension are directly revealed. Unlike dialogue, which is based on the interaction of two or more speakers, monologue appears as a relatively extended speech produced by a single character, yet it still preserves a communicative orientation toward an implied listener, the audience, or the reader. This makes dramatic monologue a linguistically and pragmatically complex phenomenon requiring special analysis.

Dramatic monologue is regarded as one of the principal elements of dramatic poetics and as a specific form of artistic speech. In prose, monologue is often connected with the narrator's voice or authorial discourse, whereas in drama it is expressed directly through the speech of the character without authorial mediation. Therefore, dramatic monologue is not merely a narrative device, but an active speech form through which dramatic action unfolds. In this sense, it should not be considered in opposition to dialogue, but rather as a component functioning alongside dialogue within dramatic discourse [1].

From the perspective of modern linguistics and literary theory, dramatic monologue is a multifaceted phenomenon. It combines textual, semantic, communicative, and performative characteristics. It is not simply a speech segment assigned to one character, but a linguistically organized unit that may simultaneously reveal emotional state, narrative information, ideological position, and interpersonal orientation. For this reason, dramatic monologue has attracted attention in linguistics, literary theory, text studies, stylistics, discourse analysis, and theatre semiotics.

Within the framework of M. Bakhtin's dialogism, monologue is not understood as a completely isolated form of speech, but as a structure that implicitly contains other voices, positions, and meanings [2]. Even when a character appears to speak alone, the speech often remains internally dialogic, reflecting previous interactions, imagined responses, inner contradiction, or social discourse. This means that dramatic monologue is never entirely "closed" or self-sufficient. On the contrary, it often contains traces of confrontation, anticipation, or response.

This perspective is especially important for dramatic text, because drama itself is fundamentally based on interaction. Even when only one character is speaking, the dramatic situation usually presupposes another presence — whether another character, the audience, or an internalized interlocutor. Thus, dramatic monologue may be described as a dialogically oriented monologic structure. This paradoxical nature is one of its most important linguistic and communicative features.

The textual organization of dramatic monologue deserves special attention. Scholars such as I.R.Galperin and Z.Y.Turaeva have demonstrated that coherence in monologic speech is maintained through lexical repetition, theme-rheme progression, parallel syntactic constructions, semantic continuity, and compositional integrity [3, 4]. In dramatic monologue, these features ensure not only logical cohesion but also emotional progression.

Unlike ordinary extended speech, dramatic monologue tends to be semantically dense. A relatively short speech segment may contain a large amount of emotional, ideological, and contextual information. In many cases, a monologue simultaneously performs several functions: it informs, evaluates, confesses, justifies, and emotionally exposes the speaker. This semantic compression makes monologue a highly expressive unit within dramatic discourse.

In addition, dramatic monologue often possesses an internal compositional structure. It may begin with an emotionally charged statement, continue with reflection, memory, or argumentation, and conclude with a decision, confession, or unresolved tension. This internal organization shows that monologue should not be treated as a random or spontaneous outburst of speech, but as a structured linguistic and communicative formation.

One of the defining features of dramatic monologue is its addressivity. Although formally it is a single-speaker utterance, it is almost always directed toward an explicit or implicit addressee [5]. This addressee may be another character on stage, the audience, or even the speaker's own inner self. In some cases, the addressee remains hidden, but the orientation toward reception is still clearly present.

From a linguistic perspective, dramatic monologue is characterized by a number of stylistic and syntactic features. Among the most frequent are ellipsis, repetition, rhetorical questions, syntactic fragmentation, pauses, exclamatory constructions, and emotionally marked vocabulary [6]. These features help convey hesitation, emotional intensity, contradiction, fear, anger, uncertainty, or excitement.

In addition to syntax and lexicon, prosodic features such as intonation, tempo, pause, and stress are essential in the stage realization of monologue. These

performative aspects distinguish dramatic monologue from purely written monologic forms in prose. Thus, dramatic monologue must be understood not only as a linguistic structure but also as a performative one. One of the most important functions of dramatic monologue is the revelation of character psychology. In dramatic works, monologue often serves as the main means through which the audience or reader gains access to the character's inner world. Unlike dialogue, which may conceal as much as it reveals, monologue often allows for direct self-exposure.

Through monologue, a character may articulate doubt, fear, desire, guilt, ambition, regret, or moral conflict. This is why monologue frequently appears at climactic or psychologically intense moments in drama. It becomes a space where the character confronts themselves, reinterprets events, or formulates a decisive inner position.

In this sense, dramatic monologue performs not only a linguistic function but also a psychological and aesthetic one. It deepens characterization and contributes to the emotional architecture of the dramatic work. A well-constructed monologue may become the key to understanding the ideological center of the play as a whole.

From the perspective of discourse analysis, dramatic monologue may be treated as an independent discourse unit within dramatic communication. It does not exist in isolation, but functions in relation to the larger structure of the play, the dramatic situation, and the sequence of communicative acts. Therefore, monologue should be studied not only as a formal speech fragment, but as a contextualized and strategically organized element of discourse.

In dramatic discourse, monologue often performs several overlapping functions. It may organize the audience's interpretation of events, shift the emotional tone of the scene, suspend external action while intensifying internal action, or provide narrative information that would otherwise remain inaccessible. In traditional drama, where there is no narrator, monologue often compensates for this absence by conveying inner motivation, temporal transitions, or explanatory context [7].

Thus, dramatic monologue may also be viewed as a partially narrative mechanism within drama. At the same time, it remains fundamentally theatrical because it is tied to performance, embodiment, and stage communication. This dual nature narrative and performative, textual and emotional is what makes dramatic monologue especially significant from a linguistic perspective.

In conclusion, dramatic monologue is a linguistically and communicatively complex form of speech that plays an essential role in the organization of dramatic discourse. Its significance lies not only in its artistic and expressive function, but

also in its capacity to reveal character psychology, deepen dramatic conflict, and structure the communicative flow of the text. The analysis of dramatic monologue from linguistic, pragmatic, and discourse-based perspectives demonstrates that it should be treated as an independent and meaningful unit of dramatic speech. Therefore, the study of dramatic monologue contributes to a deeper understanding of both the language of drama and the broader mechanisms of literary communication.

References:

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