

UDC 821.111(73)+81'373.6+81'37:81'373.7  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32589/2311-0821.2.2025.351774>

**I. S. Kyrychenko**

Kyiv National Linguistic University, Ukraine  
e-mail: [iryna.kyrychenko@knlu.edu.ua](mailto:iryna.kyrychenko@knlu.edu.ua)  
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-3587-5939>

**O. V. Sytenka**

Kyiv National Linguistic University, Ukraine  
e-mail: [helen.sytenka@knlu.edu.ua](mailto:helen.sytenka@knlu.edu.ua)  
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-7000-8910>

## APHORISMS IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICAN POETRY: PARADOXICALITY AS A KEY TO WORLDVIEW REFLECTION

### Abstract

The article examines the mechanisms of implementing paradoxicality in aphorisms of twentieth-century American poetry. Paradoxicality holds a prominent place in contemporary studies, as it reflects not only the uniqueness of linguistic expression, but also the complexity of cognitive processes. As a significant object of linguistic analysis, it demonstrates the ability of languages to generate contradictory yet semantically rich statements, which challenge traditional norms and enhance the philosophical and cultural dimensions of poetic discourse.

An endeavour is made to scrutinise aphorisms as one of the most effective means of verbalising paradoxicality, given that they are capable of producing new senses through semantic oppositions and the violation of habitual models and norms of lexical compatibility, creating a contrast between the expected and the unexpected. Despite the fact that aphorisms have long attracted the attention of the scientific community and as a linguistic and cultural phenomenon have been studied by representatives of various scientific schools, a number of issues still require more detailed consideration. Paradoxicality as one of the defining features of aphoristic expressions is among such issues. It is precisely the paradoxical approach to comprehending phenomena and objects of the surrounding world that shapes the distinctiveness of the aphorism as a form of deep philosophical generalisation and verbalisation of human experiences. Due to their original and stunning content, aphorisms often transcend traditional criteria of truth and falsity.

The material for the study encompasses the aphorisms selected from the works of twentieth-century American poetry. This literary corpus represents a valuable source of forms in which the authors' individuality combines with universal cultural codes. Such expressions not only exhibit the intricate existential and philosophical ideas of their era, but also remain relevant in the twenty-first century, shaping our critical engagement with complex and multifaceted issues.

**Keywords:** paradoxicality, contradiction, semantic opposition, linguistic expression, aphorism, American poetry.

### Анотація

У статті досліджено механізми реалізації парадоксальності в афористичних висловах американської поезії XX століття. Парадоксальність посідає важливе місце в сучасних мовознавчих студіях, адже вона відображає не тільки своєрідність мовного вираження, а й складність когнітивних процесів. Як значущий об'єкт лінгвістичного аналізу, вона демонструє потенціал мови генерувати суперечливі, але змістовно насичені вислови, які кидають виклик традиційним нормам і збагачують філософські й культурні виміри поетичного дискурсу.

Проаналізовано афоризми як один із найефективніших засобів вербалізації парадоксальності, адже вони здатні породжувати нові сенси через семантичні опозиції й порушення звичних моделей та норм лексичної сполучуваності, створюючи контраст між очікуваним і несподіваним. Попри те, що афоризми вже давно привертають увагу наукової спільноти і як лінгвістичний та культурний феномен вивчались представниками різних наукових шкіл, усе ще залишається низка питань, які потребують більш детального аналізу з боку лінгвістів. Серед таких питань, зокрема, парадоксальність як одна з визначальних ознак афористичного вислову. Саме парадоксальний

спосіб осмислення явищ та об'єктів навколишньої дійсності визначає специфіку афоризму як форми глибокого філософського узагальнення та вербалізації людського досвіду. Зміст афоризмів часто виходить за межі традиційних критеріїв істинності та хибності, демонструючи неоднозначність і багатовимірність смислів.

Матеріалом дослідження обрано афористичні вислови з творів американської поезії ХХ століття. Цей літературний пласт становить цінне джерело форм, у яких поєднуються авторська індивідуальність та універсальні культурні коди. Такі вислови не лише відображають складні екзистенційні та філософські ідеї своєї доби, а й зберігають актуальність у ХХІ столітті, стимулюючи рефлексію над проблемами сьогодення та критичне осмислення дійсності.

**Ключові слова:** парадоксальність, суперечність, семантична опозиція, мовне вираження, афоризм, американська поезія.

**Introduction.** In present-day scholarly studies, paradoxicality emerges as a distinctive cognitive and philosophical challenge, compelling a reevaluation of language as a reflective medium for the intricate and ambiguous processes of human cognition. Paradoxicality in languages constitutes one of the central objects of linguistic inquiry, as it reflects the capacity of languages to produce contradictory yet valid and meaningful utterances. These utterances notably enrich artistic discourse through a unique synthesis of stylistic expressiveness and intellectual provocation, eliciting in a listener or reader a need to reassess established conceptual frameworks.

Paradox as a linguistic phenomenon reveals tension between form and content, logic and intuition. It is precisely this contradictory nature that makes it a significant object of analysis within the frameworks of pragmatolinguistics, cognitive linguistics, and stylistics. The linguistic realization of paradox is frequently linked to the subversion of conventional patterns and standards of lexical compatibility, creating a contrast between the expected and the unexpected and disrupting stereotypical models of perceiving and understanding reality. The study of paradoxicality resides at the intersection of linguistics, philosophy, and psychology, as paradox reflects the complex mechanisms of human thought and communication.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** Paradoxicality, including that of linguistic expressions, was actively studied as early as the times of antiquity, particularly in the works by Aristotle (Аристотель, 2018). Subsequently, the phenomenon of paradox was examined in philosophical (Декарт, 2001), literary (Lodge, 1999), linguistic studies (Ємець, 2022; Зорницька, 2012; Ковальова, 2021; Короткова, 2014), and cognitive linguistics (Adamson, 2007). New dimensions for the exploration of paradoxicality emerged within the framework of the approach that O. S. Marina suggested terming semiopoetics (Маріна, 2014).

According to contemporary scholars, a paradox might arise when the facets of a linguistic expression or an utterance contradict one another, with the underlying basis of such contradiction potentially residing in their various aspects – formal-structural, semantic, referential, or cognitive (Oms, 2022; Sorensen, 2003).

In linguistic terms, paradoxicality is a result of conceptualizing objects, events, or phenomena of the real or imaginary world through the prism of rational (logical) and irrational (emotional, sensory) cognition, which is manifested through verbal or nonverbal forms (Marina, 2018, p. 181). Among these, the aphorism stands out as a distinctive rhetorical mode that conveys the author's reinterpretation of the surrounding world in its full complexity and multifaceted nature. The relevance of studying aphorisms as one of the most potent verbal means for realizing paradoxicality is determined by their capacity to model new meanings and to prompt the reader toward a critical re-evaluation of established concepts.

The **material** of our study is featured by a number of paradoxical aphoristic expressions collected from the texts of twentieth-century American poetry, as it represents a valuable source of such forms that reflect a synthesis of an individual style and universal cultural

codes. These expressions encapsulate complex existential and philosophical ideas of the era and remain relevant for the twenty-first century, aiding the reader in comprehending the contradictions of the post-truth epoch through a critical reinterpretation of reality. In contrast to ordinary speech, which in everyday life serves as a means of communication, information exchange, and the expression of thoughts and feelings, poetic speech not only reflects but also evokes such “irrational elements as sensations and emotions” (Маріна, 2015, с. 108; Freeman, 2013, p. 92). Therefore, it can be suggested that paradoxical aphorisms, as elements of the twentieth-century American poetic texts, also possess such potential and fulfill a modeling function, transforming the reader’s worldview, mood, and general understanding of their environment. Such aphorisms resist unequivocal determination according to the criterion of logical truth; that is, as a rule, they cannot be categorically classified as either true or false.

The **purpose** of this article is to reveal the ways of realising paradoxicality in aphoristic expressions, particularly by elucidating the mechanisms of creating contradictory meanings that prompt the reader to reinterpret the established worldview concepts. The research **methods** are grounded in a comprehensive integration of semantic, cognitive, and stylistic analysis, which enable the exploration of the processes of realizing paradoxicality in the aphorisms of twentieth-century American poetry and their impact on contemporary reflection on such complex and elusive concepts as existence, freedom, morality, and the like.

**Presentation and discussion of the main research material.** Among the countless aphoristic expressions existing in the arsenal of every linguocultural community, we can distinguish the so-called independent aphorisms, which were initially created as autonomously functioning self-contained elements, and contextual aphorisms (Гулідова, 2013), which constitute an essential part of artistic or philosophical discourse. It is noteworthy that in texts, particularly in fiction, both prose and poetry, there are so-called potential aphorisms which may acquire the status of fully-fledged autonomous expressions outside their original context. Quite often, it is precisely works of fiction that become an inexorable source of aphoristic expressions which remain in the reader’s memory far longer than a book itself (Grant, 2016, p. 1). The addressee of a text plays the role of a mediator who identifies an aphorism that has captured their attention due to its semantic depth or unusual linguistic form from the macrocontext of an artistic or philosophical work, thereby granting it the status of an independent expression. To a great extent, this is conditioned by a number of aphorisms’ unique characteristic features, such as authorship, conciseness, semantic completeness, universal significance, expressiveness, didacticism, and paradoxicality.

Despite its centuries-long existence, the aphorism remains an object of persistent interest for scholars and has repeatedly been the subject of numerous academic inquiries. Specifically, researchers have focused on its structural characteristics (Шарманова, 2025), linguocognitive features (Анастасьева, 2017; Оніщенко, 2007; Швачко et al., 2008), and functional-pragmatic properties (Анастасьева, 2017; Бабенко, 2013). A number of definitions of the term “aphorism” can be attributed to different approaches to its understanding and interpretation, as well as to discrepancies regarding which of its distinctive features are emphasised by the representatives of various academic schools. Based on the existing approaches, we previously defined it as a complex linguo-cognitive formation structurally organized in the form of one or two sentences and distinguished by the presence of a specific author, imagery, and profound, often paradoxical, judgments (Гулідова, 2013). This definition will also be applied in the present article.

Although aphorisms have long attracted the attention of the academic community and, as a linguistic and cultural phenomenon, have been studied by the representatives of various disciplines and academic schools, a number of questions still remain unresolved and therefore require more detailed scrutiny on part of linguists. Paradoxicality as one of the key features of the aphorism is among such complex issues. The originality and expressiveness of many aphorisms stems precisely from the paradoxical mode of conceptualizing phenomena and objects of the surrounding world. In a broad sense, a paradox can be interpreted as a judgment that diverges from commonly accepted norms and beliefs and constitutes an unusual or original negation of what is considered unquestionably correct (Sorensen, 2003).

Following the suggestion by O. S. Marina, in order to identify and determine a particular aphoristic expression as paradoxical, we shall apply a number of categorical features of paradoxicality actualized within it, such as contradiction, incongruity, illogicality, weirdness, unexpectedness, originality, opposition, and anomaly (Марина, 2014, с. 129; Marina, 2018, p. 181). This will make it possible to reveal the mechanisms of semantic shifts in poetic aphoristic expressions.

One of illustrative examples of paradoxicality realization can be found in the aphoristic expression from A. Rich's poetry: *"Every peak is a crater"* (Rich, 1976). Paradoxicality is grounded here in the combination of semantically opposite lexemes *"peak"* and *"crater"*. The lexeme *"peak"*, in its primary meaning, denotes the highest point or a summit, and metaphorically – the moment of greatest development or success. In contrast to *"peak"*, the lexeme *"crater"* in its literal sense refers to a large hole caused by an explosion or meteorite impact. In a metaphorical sense, it symbolizes decline and failure, thereby creating a semantic opposition that conditions the paradoxicality of the aphorism. In the cited expression, these lexemes realise an opposition of ascent and decline which belong to different poles of a single semantic paradigm. Their combination within one nominative chain creates an ontological paradox, where opposing characteristics are superimposed upon the same object. Declaring their identity violates logic and ordinary perception. The paradox expresses a dialectical unity of opposites: achievement and downfall are inseparable, each transforming into the other. Thus, the opposition *peak – crater* does not merely illustrate the alternation of rises and falls, but fuses them into a single conceptual image, producing a paradoxical effect whereby the highest point simultaneously signifies decline and void, turning success itself into a symbol of impending loss.

A comparable example of a paradoxical aphorism-definition is found in the expression *"Dark is what brings out your light"* (Frost, 1916). Here, the paradox hinges on the antonymic lexemes *"dark"* and *"light"*, which, at first glance, lack a direct logical nexus. *"Dark"* evokes absence, obscurity, or adversity (literal night or metaphorical despair), while *"light"* signifies illumination, clarity, positivity or hope. Consequently, the statement initially seems illogical, and the situation it depicts – impossible. However, the metaphorical dimension of the expression, in which *darkness* can be interpreted as an obstacle or challenge that enables one to discover *light*, that is, the positive aspects of life, resolves this apparent contradiction. Their juxtaposition forms an ontological antonymic paradox: darkness, typically an obliterating force, becomes generative, bringing out or enhancing light. This paradox blends rationality and definitional character with emotional imagery, fulfilling a modeling function that alters the reader's worldview and reality perception.

In the examples discussed above, paradoxicality is manifested precisely through the categorical features identified by O. S. Marina (2018, p. 181). Specifically, A. Rich's expression *"Every peak is a crater"* exemplifies the features of contradiction and impossibility, as it combines mutually exclusive concepts. R. Frost's aphorism *"Dark is*

*what brings out your light*” actualizes paradoxical contradiction and incongruity, since the opposition between “dark” and “light” is presented not as mutual exclusion, but as a condition for the emergence of one phenomenon through the other. In the analysed material, incongruity, as interpreted by V. O. Samokhina, is understood as an alogism, a violation involving the unification of two logical but incompatible ideas (Самохіна, 2012). Thus, it can be observed that aphorisms in the twentieth-century American poetry encompass various types of paradoxical features outlined in the classification, and it is precisely through these features that they generate a profound effect of semantic novelty.

The paradox in the analysed aphorisms is often rooted in challenging traditional viewpoints and seeks to disrupt stereotypical modes of interpreting reality. This disruption may take diverse forms, ranging from critical scepticism toward commonly accepted judgments to a constructive reexamination of values and experiences. As an example, the paradoxical aphoristic expression from R. Frost’s *Home Burial*, “*A man must partly give up being a man with women-folk*” (Frost, 1914), functions as a prescriptive behavioral directive for men on how to navigate relationships with women, presenting a direct antithesis to the prevalent slogan “*Be a man!*”. While the specificity of bringing up men varies across cultural and social communities, they are typically encouraged to embody traditional masculine stereotypes, such as physical strength, fearlessness, competitiveness, and dominance. The analysis of this expression through the lens of paradoxicality, as categorized by O. S. Marina (2018), reveals that it activates several features: contradiction between the socially imposed perception of masculinity and the exhortation to partially abandon it; and illogicality, arising from the apparent contradiction between “being a man” and “partially relinquishing one’s masculine essence”. More so, the aphorism features weirdness and unexpectedness, as the suggested behavioral paradigm defies established social norms via the unorthodox nature of the guidance offered to the recipient. Through the convergence of these characteristics, the aphorism serves as a tool for reevaluating traditional conceptions of masculine behavior.

The aphoristic statement “*Psychology which explains everything, explains nothing*” (Moore, 1935) refutes the prevalent assumption that psychology functions as a universal instrument for addressing all issues and explicating human behavior. The paradoxical nature of this statement stems from the semantic antithesis between its constituent elements – the universal quantifier “*everything*” that signifies totality and the negating quantifier (Паславська, 2005, с. 78) “*nothing*” which in the analysed example emphasises the infeasibility of attaining a fully comprehensive explanation. Employing the framework of paradoxicality delineated by O. S. Marina (2018), the statement exhibits several categorical characteristics: a contradiction between the widely held belief in psychology’s omniscience and its actual explanatory limitations; illogicality and incongruity, resulting from the semantic conflict between “*everything*” and “*nothing*”. Consequently, this aphorism not only exposes the inherent constraints of psychological science but also, through its paradoxical semantic structure, prompts the recipient to critically reassess general assumptions about universal methods for comprehending human nature. By deftly integrating contradictory meanings within a single utterance, it generates cognitive tension that stimulates rigorous critical reflection, thereby enhancing the aphorism’s intellectual potency in challenging epistemological stereotypes.

The semantic analysis of aphoristic expressions drawn from the twentieth-century American poetic texts has identified examples of aphorisms wherein the authors frequently integrate both positive and negative appraisals of a specific concept or phenomenon. For example, in the aphorism “*The best way to hate is the worst*” (Frost, 1929), a contradiction emerges through the employment of two antonymous evaluative adjectives in the



superlative form, “*best*” and “*worst*” to characterize the same referent – the emotion of hatred. Irrespective of how hatred is construed – whether as a behavioral pattern intended to inflict harm on another individual or group, as an emotional response elicited by others’ actions, or as a sentiment accrued through extended interaction – the poet’s judgment is unequivocal: all expressions of hatred entail detrimental consequences for both the subject and the object of such emotions. This case exemplifies how poetic aphorisms can provoke a critical reexamination of entrenched assumptions about human emotions and conduct, thereby underscoring the constructive role of paradox in literary discourse. By fusing the incompatible, such aphorisms challenge the readers to transcend habitual perspectives, fostering deeper insight into the complexities of existential experience and interaction.

Paradoxical aphorisms may be oriented towards either rational or emotional engagement with reality. Those that are rationally oriented frequently elucidate a specific concept or uncover novel, often startling, attributes of an object. For example, in the aphorism “*The moment foreseen may be unexpected when it arrives*” (Eliot, 1935), a contradiction emerges from the antonymous lexical units “*foreseen*” and “*unexpected*”, which juxtapose mutually exclusive characteristics of the same entity – the arrival of an event that, despite prior anticipation, may nonetheless be quite unforeseen, thereby presenting an apparently surprising scenario. Likewise, in the aphorism “*The flash can make the spirit visible*” (Roethke, 1953), antithetical meanings of the immaterial and the visible are fused, challenging the orthodox perception of the spirit as an inherently invisible entity. Concurrently, this paradox illuminates novel attributes of the object, revealing that a specific experience or a fleeting event (“*flash*”) can render a person’s inner state or spiritual essence perceptible. By exploiting similar semantic oppositions, such aphorisms not only disrupt traditional epistemological frameworks, but also provoke a profound reconceptualization of human existence, thereby reinforcing their intellectual and philosophical significance in the literary discourse of twentieth-century American poetry.

The aphoristic statement “*The power of the visible is the invisible*” (Moore, 1941) embodies paradoxicality by integrating mutually exclusive concepts – the “*visible*” and the “*invisible*”. Initially, the statement seems illogical, given the apparent opposition between the visible and the invisible, where one category cannot naturally align with the other. Yet, the profound significance of the aphorism resides in its articulation of an incongruous facet of reality: the potency or value of the visible is realized through latent, unseen processes and attributes. By harnessing this semantic tension, the aphorism not only confronts customary beliefs, but also invites a deeper philosophical reflection on the interplay between perceptible and imperceptible realities. Consequently, this empowers the author to emphasise the intangible facets of the world and highlight the critical role of the imperceptible.

Let us consider some other examples that elucidate the varied forms and functions of aphorisms, grounded in the categorical framework of paradoxicality articulated by O. S. Marina (Марина, 2014, c. 129; Marina, 2018, p. 181). The paradoxical nature of the aphorism “*In order to possess what you do not possess you must go by the way of dispossession*” (Eliot, 1940) arises from the semantic antithesis between the lexemes “*possess*” (to own) and “*dispossession*” (deprivation). This statement foregrounds an interplay between acquisition and loss, defying ingrained logical structures and aligning with the categories of illogicality and anomaly. Yet, within a philosophical context, it bolsters the imperative of forsaking, for example, material possessions to attain a higher, immaterial gain. Such a conceptual approach resonates with the traditions of spiritual self-denial, which are typically oriented toward transcending material attachments to foster inner tranquility, discipline, and spiritual maturation. The aphorism not only challenges the

established frameworks of knowledge, but also invites a profound reconsideration of the dialectics between possession and renunciation, thus enriching the reader's understanding of existential tensions through the lens of poetic discourse.

The semantic incongruity in the aphorism "*We live in freedom by necessity*" (Auden, 1938) emerges from the juxtaposition of the concepts FREEDOM and NECESSITY, which conventionally operate as antinomies. The paradox manifests through the actualization of such categorical features of paradoxicality as contradiction, incongruity, and impossibility, since the combination of mutually exclusive notions generates a semantic and conceptual tension. Freedom, conventionally associated with volition and the absence of constraint, is presented here as conditioned by necessity, which appears logically incompatible. This incongruent relationship creates a profound contradiction that encourages a reinterpretation of the concept of FREEDOM not as an absolute, but as a relational category co-dependent on necessity. In this way, the aphorism dismantles the epistemological stereotype of freedom as boundless autonomy, reconfiguring it within the dialectical interplay of determinism and volition. It also reflects the existentialist perspective (Sartre, 2007), where freedom is inseparable from responsibility and is viewed not as an abstract ideal, but as an existential condition that unfolds through the necessity of making choices within the constraints of being.

In Edwin Arlington Robinson's aphorism, "*Who sees a little may do less than many who are blind have done*" (Robinson, 1916), the contrast between sight and blindness serves as the source of paradox. Common logic dictates the superiority and preeminence of the sighted over the blind; yet, this expression subverts this stereotype, emphasizing the relativity of any assumed advantage. The expression exhibits multiple categorical features of paradoxicality (Marina, 2018, p. 181): contradiction, as it defies the ingrained belief that sight inherently ensures greater achievement; incongruity, through the startling alignment of blindness with superior outcomes; illogicality, as the notion that the blind may outperform the sighted defies rational expectations; originality, as the aphorism offers a novel perspective on human potential. The feature of opposition is central, embodied in the semantic clash between "*sight*" and "*blindness*", which reframes their relationship not as hierarchical but as interdependent. Consequently, Robinson's aphorism plays up paradoxicality not merely as a stylistic ornament but as a profound tool that redefines human perception, capability, and wisdom.

The aphorism from Carl Sandburg's poetry, "*Things will not get better till they've been worse*" (Sandburg, 1936), hinges on the paradoxical statement that amelioration is contingent upon preceding decline. This stands in opposition to common assumptions about progress as a linear trajectory of improvement rather than a regressive phase. The paradox, therefore, emerges from the semantic and logical opposition between "*better*" and "*worse*", whose regular relationship implies mutual exclusivity. The analysed expression comprises several categorical attributes of paradoxicality. Contradiction and incongruity are realised through the inversion of the causal relation between decline and progress; illogicality arises from the statement's challenge to rational expectations of temporal and developmental order; while unexpectedness and weirdness are embedded in the counterintuitive assertion that deterioration constitutes a precondition for renewal. Through this intricate interplay of conflicting meanings, the aphorism performs a cognitive and philosophical function: it compels the reader to reinterpret the concept of progress not as a steady, unidirectional ascent, but as a cyclical process in which crisis and decline serve as catalysts for transformation and growth. The paradoxicality of the statement thus operates as a mechanism of conceptual reframing, urging a deeper reflection on the dialectical nature of change, the idea that resonates with the broader philosophical and existential tendencies of twentieth-century American poetry.

In the aphorism by Allen Tate, *"It is a privilege to be dead"* (Tate, 1932), a profound incongruity emerges between the lexeme *"privilege"*, denoting advantage or honorable right, and the concept of DEATH, conventionally associated with tragedy and loss. The semantic contradiction manifests through the positive appraisal of a phenomenon typically marked as negative. This unexpectedness prompts reimagining death as a unique state, potentially signifying liberation from the world's burdens, thus aligning with an existential perspective on human life and mortality.

Likewise, Sylvia Plath's aphorism, *"Dying is an art, like everything else"* (Plath, 1962), constructs a paradox by juxtaposing death with art, an unanticipated comparison given the traditional framing of death as a tragedy and art as creative freedom and mastery. This interpretation activates the features of eccentricity, anomaly as a divergence from the common (Дягілева, 2020, с. 42), and originality, as it subverts the vision of death solely as a negative event. The paradox resonates with Eastern philosophical paradigms (Rinpoche, 2024), which view death as an integral, natural phase of a life cycle, encouraging the *"art"* of mindful acceptance. Furthermore, Plath's aphorism exemplifies the aestheticisation of death, reflecting a literary endeavor to reframe it not merely as a biological endpoint but as a culturally significant phenomenon. By tapping into these paradoxical attributes, both aphorisms challenge deep-seated beliefs about mortality, compelling a fundamental reexamination of how it shapes human experience.

**Conclusions and prospects for further research.** The analysis of aphorisms in twentieth-century American poetry has demonstrated that they constitute a powerful instrument of both semantic and cognitive reconstruction. The interplay of mutually exclusive meanings, the violation of conventional semantic compatibility, and the creation of linguistic and logical paradoxes enable poets to dismantle established stereotypes and to propose new perspectives on the perception of reality. Paradoxicality, functioning as a multidimensional stylistic and cognitive mechanism, intensifies the subjectivity of expression, stimulates critical and reflective thinking, and enriches both the communicative and cultural context of poetic discourse. Consequently, the aphorism emerges not merely as a stylistic ornament but as a philosophical and epistemological tool for exploring and articulating life complexities.

**The prospects for further research** lie in adopting a gender-based comparative approach to the analysis of paradoxical aphorisms in male and female poetry, particularly of the twenty-first century. Such an inquiry could illuminate gender-specific similarities and divergences in the verbalization of worldview paradoxes, as well as their role in shaping universal philosophical ideas within the context of an increasingly globalized contemporary society.

#### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

#### **Use of Artificial Intelligence**

No artificial intelligence tools or materials were used in the manuscript.

#### **REFERENCES**

- Анастасьєва, О. А. (2017). *Англомовний афоризм: прагматистичний та когнітивний аспекти*. [Дис. канд. філол. наук, Запорізький національний університет]. Запоріжжя.  
[https://phd.znu.edu.ua/page/dis/02\\_2017/Anastasieva\\_dis.pdf](https://phd.znu.edu.ua/page/dis/02_2017/Anastasieva_dis.pdf)  
Аристотель. (2018). *Поетика*. Фоліо.



- Бабенко, О. В. (2013). Функціонально-прагматичні аспекти афоризмів на матеріалі виступів Гіллари Родхем Клінтон. *Науковий вісник Східноєвропейського національного університету імені Лесі Українки. Серія: Філологічні науки. Мовознавство*, 20, 56–59.  
<https://evnuir.vnu.edu.ua/handle/123456789/8215>
- Гулідова, І. С. (2013). Структурно-семантичні особливості афоризмів американських поетичних текстів ХХ століття. *Вісник Луганського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка. Серія: Філологічні науки*, 14, 133–139.
- Декарт, Р. (2001). *Міркування про метод*. (В. Адрушко, С. Гатальська, Пер.). Тандем. (Оригінал опубліковано 1637 р.)
- Дягілева, Ж. А. (2020). Лексико-семантичні засоби вербалізації поняття “Anomalie” в німецькій мові. *Вісник КНЛУ. Серія Філологія*, 23, 2, 40–46.  
<https://doi.org/10.32589/2311-0821.2.2020.222741>
- Смець, О. В. (2022). Парадокс як прояв стилістичного прийому висунення у сучасних коротких оповіданнях: прагматичні та перекладацькі аспекти. *Вісник науки та освіти*, 3(3), 24–37.  
[https://doi.org/10.52058/2786-6165-2022-3\(3\)-24-37](https://doi.org/10.52058/2786-6165-2022-3(3)-24-37)
- Зорницька, І. В. (2012). Типологія парадоксального: класифікація парадоксів у художньому тексті. *Гуманітарна освіта в технічних вищих навчальних закладах*, 26, 192–201.
- Ковальова, Т. П. (2021). Явище художнього парадокса в лінгвістичному аспекті (на матеріалі творів Бертольта Брехта). *Вчені записки ТНУ імені В. І. Вернадського. Серія: Філологія. Журналістика*, 32 (71), 3, 145–153.  
<https://doi.org/10.32838/2710-4656/2021.3-1/25>
- Короткова, Л. В. (2014). Парадокс як прийом створення ефекту ошуканого очікування в англомовному художньому дискурсі. *Наукові записки Національного університету «Острозька академія». Серія: Філологічна*, 44, 137–140.
- Маріна, О. С. (2014). Акатегоріальна специфіка парадоксальних поетичних форм у сучасних англомовних поетичних текстах. *Нова філологія*, 66, 128–133.
- Маріна, О. С. (2015). Варіативність актуалізації парадоксальності в сучасному англомовному поетичному дискурсі. *Наукові записки КДПУ. Серія: Філологічні науки /мовознавство*, 138, 107–109.
- Оніщенко, Н. А. (2007). Метафорична і парадоксальна репрезентація концепту людина в німецькомовних афоризмах. *Вісн. Харк. нац. ун-ту ім. В. Н. Каразіна*, 782, 72–77.
- Паславська, А. Й. (2005). *Заперечення як мовна універсалія: принципи, параметри, функціонування*. Видавничий центр ЛНУ імені Івана Франка.
- Самохіна, В. О. (2012). *Жарт у сучасному комунікативному просторі великої Британії і США: текстуальний та дискурсивний аспекти*. ХНУ імені В. Н. Каразіна.
- Шарманова, Н. (2025). Структурне моделювання польської афористики. *Українська полоністика. Філологічні дослідження*, 23.  
<https://doi.org/10.35433/2220-4555.23.2025.fil-10>
- Швачко, С. О., Анохіна, Т. О., Баранова, С. В., Кобякова, І. К., Козловська, Г. Б., Косенко, Ю. В., & Чуланова, Г. В. (2008). *Лінгвокогнітивні аспекти малих текстів: монографія*. СумДУ.
- Adamson, T. (2007). Cognition and Conflation: Addressing a paradox in cognitive linguistics. *Cognitive Semiotics*, 15, pp. 87–101.  
<https://doi.org/10.1515/COGSEM.2007.1.FALL2007.87>

- Freeman, M. (2013). The Influence of Anxiety: Poetry As A Theory of Mind. *Cognition, Communication, Discourse*, 6, 92–106.
- Grant, B. (2016). *The Aphorism and Other Short Forms (The New Critical Idiom)*. Routledge.
- Lodge, D. (1999). *Modern Criticism and Theory. A Reader*. Pearson Education Limited.
- Marina, O. S. (2018). Cognitive and Semiotic Dimensions of Paradoxicality in Contemporary American Poetic Discourse. *Lege Artis*, 3(1), 179–222.  
DOI: 10.2478/lart-2018-0006
- Oms, S. (2022). Some Remarks on the Notion of Paradox. *Acta Analytica*, 38, 211–228.
- Rinpoche, S. (2024). *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*. Rider.
- Sartre, J.-P. (2007). *Existentialism Is a Humanism*. Yale University Press.
- Sorensen, R. (2003). *A Brief History of the Paradox: Philosophy and the Labyrinths of the Mind*. Oxford University Press.

#### TRANSLITERATED REFERENCES

- Adamson, T. (2007). Cognition and Conflation: Addressing a paradox in cognitive linguistics. *Cognitive Semiotics*, 15, pp. 87–101.  
<https://doi.org/10.1515/COGSEM.2007.1.FALL2007.87>
- Anastas'ieva, O. A. (2017). *Anhlomovnyj aforyzm: prahmastylistychnyj ta kohnityvnyj aspekty*. [Dys. kand. filol. nauk, Zaporiz'kyj natsional'nyj universytet]. Zaporizhzhia.  
[https://phd.znu.edu.ua/page/dis/02\\_2017/Anastasieva\\_dis.pdf](https://phd.znu.edu.ua/page/dis/02_2017/Anastasieva_dis.pdf)
- Arystotel'. (2018). *Poetyka*. Folio.
- Babenko, O. V. (2013). Funktsional'no-prahmatychni aspekty aforyzmiv na materialii vystupiv Hillari Rodkhem Klinton. *Naukovyj visnyk Skhidnoievropejs'koho natsional'noho universytetu imeni Lesi Ukrainky. Serii: Filolohichni nauky. Movoznavstvo*, 20, 56–59.  
<https://evnuir.vnu.edu.ua/handle/123456789/8215>
- Dekart, R. (2001). *Mirkuvannia pro metod*. (V. Adrushko, S. Hatal's'ka, Per.). Tandem. (Oryhinal opublikovano 1637 r.)
- Diahilieva, Zh. A. (2020). Leksyko-semantychni zasoby verbalizatsii poniattia "Anomalie" v nimets'kij movi. *Visnyk KNLU. Serii: Filolohiia*, 23(2), 40–46.  
<https://doi.org/10.32589/2311-0821.2.2020.222741>
- Freeman, M. (2013). The Influence of Anxiety: Poetry As A Theory of Mind. *Cognition, Communication, Discourse*, 6, 92–106.
- Grant, B. (2016). *The Aphorism and Other Short Forms (The New Critical Idiom)*. Routledge.
- Hulidova, I. S. (2013). Strukturno-semantychni osoblyvosti aforyzmiv amerykans'kykh poetychnykh tekstiv XX stolittia. *Visnyk Luhans'koho natsional'noho universytetu imeni Tarasa Shevchenka. Serii: Filolohichni nauky*, 14, 133–139.
- Koval'ova, T. P. (2021). Yavysche khudozhn'oho paradoksa v linhvistychnomu aspekti (na materialii tvoriv Bertol'ta Brekhta). *Vcheni zapysky TNU imeni V. I. Vernads'koho. Serii: Filolohiia. Zhurnalistyka*, 32(71), 3, 145–153.  
<https://doi.org/10.32838/2710-4656/2021.3-1/25>
- Korotkova, L. V. (2014). Paradoks iak pryjom stvorennia efektu oshukanoho ochikuvannia v anhlomovnomu khudozhn'omu dyskursi. *Naukovi zapysky Natsional'noho universytetu «Ostroz'ka akademiia»*. Serii: Filolohichna, 44, 137–140.
- Lodge, D. (1999). *Modern Criticism and Theory. A Reader*. Pearson Education Limited
- Marina, O. S. (2014). Akatehorial'na spetsyfika paradoksal'nykh poetychnykh form u suchasnykh anhlomovnykh poetychnykh tekstakh. *Nova filolohiia*, 66, 128–133.

- Marina, O. S. (2018). Cognitive and Semiotic Dimensions of Paradoxicality in Contemporary American Poetic Discourse. *Lege Artis*, 3(1), 179–222.  
<https://doi.org/10.2478/lart-2018-0006>
- Marina, O. S. (2015). Variatyvnist' aktualizatsii paradoksal'nosti v suchasnomu anhlomovnomu poetychnomu dyskursi. *Naukovi zapysky KDPU. Serii: Filolohichni nauky / movoznavstvo*, 138, 107–109.
- Oms, S. (2022). Some Remarks on the Notion of Paradox. *Acta Analytica*, 38, 211–228.
- Onischenko, N. A. (2007). Metaforychna i paradoksal'na reprezentatsiia kontseptu LYUDYNA v nimets'komovnykh aforyzmakh. *Visn. Khark. nats. un-tu im. V. N. Karazina*, 782, 72–77.
- Paslavs'ka, A. J. (2005). *Zaperechennia iak movna universalii: pryntsyipy, parametry, funktsionuvannia*. Vydavnychyj tsentr LNU imeni Ivana Franka.
- Rinpoche, S. (2024). *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*. Rider.
- Samokhina, V. O. (2012). *Zhart u suchasnomu komunikatyvnomu prostori velykoi Brytanii i SShA: tekstual'nyj ta dyskursyvnyj aspekty*. KhNU imeni V. N. Karazina.
- Sartre, J.-P. (2007). *Existentialism Is a Humanism*. Yale University Press
- Sharmanova, N. (2025). Strukturne modeliuвання pol's'koi aforystyky. *Ukrains'ka polonystyka. Filolohichni doslidzhennia*, 23.
- Shvachko, S. O., Anokhina, T. O., Baranova, S. V., Kobiakova, I. K., Kozlovs'ka, H. B., Kosenko, Yu. V., & Chulanova, H. V. (2008). *Linhvokohnityvni aspekty malykh tekstiv: monohrafiia*. SumDU.
- Sorensen, R. (2003). *A Brief History of the Paradox: Philosophy and the Labyrinths of the Mind*. Oxford University Press.
- Yemets', O. V. (2022). Paradoks iak proiav stylistychnoho pryjomu vysunennia u suchasnykh korotkykh opovidanniakh: prahmatychni ta perekladats'ki aspekty. *Visnyk nauky ta osvity*, 3(3), 24–37.  
[https://doi.org/10.52058/2786-6165-2022-3\(3\)-24-37](https://doi.org/10.52058/2786-6165-2022-3(3)-24-37)
- Zornyts'ka, I. V. (2012). Typolohiia paradoksal'noho: klasyfikatsiia paradoksiv u khudozhn'omu teksti. *Humanitarna osvita v tekhnichnykh vyschykh navchal'nykh zakladykh*, 26, 192–201.

#### ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL

- Auden, W. H. (1938). *In Time of War XXVII*.  
<https://redefineschool.com/auden-sure-law/>
- Eliot, T. S. (1940). *East Coker*.  
<http://www.davidgorman.com/4quartets/2-coker.htm>
- Eliot, T. S. (1935). *Murder in the Cathedral*.  
[https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.86641/2015.86641.Murder-In-The-Cathedral\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.86641/2015.86641.Murder-In-The-Cathedral_djvu.txt)
- Frost, R. (1916). *Choose Something Like a Star*.  
<https://www.blueridgejournal.com/poems/rf-star.htm>
- Frost, R. (1914). *Home Burial*.  
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/53086/home-burial>
- Frost, R. (1929). *The Vindictives*.  
<https://www.poetryexplorer.net/poem.php?id=10022084>
- Moore, M. (1941). *He Digesteth Harde Yron*.  
<https://poets.org/poem/he-digesteth-harde-yron>
- Moore, M. (1935). *Marriage*.  
<https://allpoetry.com/Marriage>

- Plath, S. (1962). *Lady Lazarus*.  
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/49000/lady-lazarus>
- Rich, A. (1974–1976). *Twenty-One Love Poems XI*.  
<https://www.poeticous.com/adrienne-rich/twenty-one-love-poems-xi>
- Roethke, T. (1953). *Four for Sir John Davies*.  
<https://voetica.com/poem/2101>
- Robinson E. A. (1916). *Hillcrest*.  
<https://allpoetry.com/Hillcrest>
- Sandburg, C. (1936). *The People, Yes*. Harcourt, Brace and Co.
- Tate, A. (1932). *To The Lacedemonians*.  
[https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/to-the-lacedemonians/#google\\_vignette](https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/to-the-lacedemonians/#google_vignette)

Дата надходження до редакції 09.09.2025

Ухвалено до друку 18.11.2025

#### Author information

<p><b>Kyrychenko Iryna Serhiivna,</b></p> <p>PhD in Philology, Associate Professor at the Department of English Philology and Philosophy of Language, Kyiv National Linguistic University</p> <p>e-mail: <a href="mailto:iryna.kyrychenko@knlu.edu.ua">iryna.kyrychenko@knlu.edu.ua</a></p>		<p><b>Fields of scientific interest</b></p> <p>phraseology and paremiology, cognitive linguistics, media linguistics</p>
<p><b>Sytenka Olena Vitaliivna,</b></p> <p>PhD in Philology, Associate Professor at the Department of English Philology and Philosophy of Language, Kyiv National Linguistic University</p> <p>e-mail: <a href="mailto:helen.sytenka@knlu.edu.ua">helen.sytenka@knlu.edu.ua</a></p>		<p><b>Fields of scientific interest</b></p> <p>English stylistics, transmodal stylistics, discourse studies</p>



CC Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)