

# Elaborating principles of idiom-formation in the avant-garde literary discourse: a case study of Russian Cubo-Futurism

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**A**bstract: The paper sets out to explore the avant-garde literary discourse from the point of view of its idiomatic constituent. In particular, it studies avant-garde manifestoes written by the representatives of Cubo-Futurism, in which radical aesthetic renewal and the need for the reformation in the sphere of literature are proclaimed. As very expressive and complex rhetorical performances, manifestoes contain various kinds of idiomatic phrases that can be considered both vivid representations of a particular (avant-garde) approach to the language and prescriptions for certain ways of the language use. Special attention is paid to the elaboration of the methodology aimed to identify avant-garde idioms proper in the avant-garde literary discourse. The results obtained show that the manifestoes under consideration are, in essence, the first “trials” in the field of (poetic) language reformation and language experimentation and the sources of the idiomatics (idioms / idiomatic expressions) that can be termed “experimental”.

→ **Keywords:** avant-garde discourse, manifesto, avant-garde idiomatics, experimentation

## 1. Introductory remarks

→ The etymological analysis of the terms *idiom* and *avant-garde* reveals a deep conceptual correlation between them. According to the etymological dictionary (OEtD), the word *idiom* has a number of core senses evolved through time in its semantic structure, among which are the primary senses of ‘a manifestation of the peculiar’, ‘a peculiarity in language’, and also such sense that developed later as ‘the form of speech peculiar to a people or place’. In its turn, modern senses of the word *avant-garde* stem from the military sphere where it denoted literally ‘advance guard’ (or ‘fore-guard’). The primary spatial and temporal implications of ‘in front of’ and ‘before’ as well as the social sense of ‘a particular group of people who keep watch’ developed quite naturally into the designation of a special cultural phenomenon – the avant-garde – denoting nowadays ‘new and unusual or experimental ideas, especially in the arts, or the people introducing them’ (NODE 1998). It follows that at the level of their inner forms, the two terms have much in common and are akin in rendering in their own ways the ideas of something new, innovative and, thus, something peculiar or unusual that is

produced and / or defended by a group of people involved in one social / professional sphere.

→ This established inner semantic kinship between the two phenomena – idioms and the avant-garde – gives rise to a new complex subject-matter of interdisciplinary research, which requires the synthesis of and at the same time the interplay between two fields of knowledge – the theory of phraseology (or idiomatics)<sup>1</sup> and the philological theory of the avant-garde.

→ The present paper sets out to explore the avant-garde discourse from the point of view of its idiomatic component. It aims to study the Russian avant-garde literary discourse, and, more specifically, the Russian Cubo-Futurists' manifestoes as a particular discourse dimension in which the principles of idiom-formation are elaborated and, at the same time, tested. Proclaiming radical aesthetic renewal and the need for the reformation, particularly in the sphere of literature, Russian Cubo-Futurists issued manifestoes, which became the preferred medium representing their new views of the language and the ways it should be used especially in poetry. Being very expressive and complex rhetorical performances, manifestoes contain various kinds of idiomatic phrases that can be considered both vivid representations of a particular

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1 It should be specially noted that in the Russian phraseological tradition, the term *idiomatics* is used to denote a subclass of phraseological units. However, in our research *idiomatics* (more specifically, the idiomatics of the avant-garde or the avant-garde idiomatics) is used as a generic term for denoting special language units that are extracted from literary and artistic works of the Russian avant-gardists, in which they were created as a result of the experimentation with language and artistic forms. The term in question has been introduced and elaborated within the framework of the research project *The Idiomatics of the Russian Avant-Garde (Cubo-Futurism)*, Zykova I., Sokolova O.

(avant-garde) approach to the language and prescriptions for certain ways of language use that results in the formation of such special verbal means that can be referred to the category of idioms. Our main claim is that idiomatic units used in the manifestoes under consideration are, in essence, the first "trials" in the field of (poetic) language reformation and language experimentation and the sources of the ideas of a possible direction these processes can take in order to create idiomatics that may be termed *avant-garde*, or in other words, *experimental*.

## 2. The avant-garde literary discourse in Russia in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century: Cubo-Futurism

→ The basic feature of the avant-garde discourse is its heterogeneity resulted from the integration of various movements, both literary and artistic. This allows us to distinguish three key terms: *the avant-garde discourse* as a more general concept, including *avant-garde literary discourse* and *avant-garde artistic discourse*. Historically, both types of the avant-garde discourse start their development due to the emergence of the avant-garde art.

→ The avant-garde art has a special place in the system of artistic discourses. This is due to its focus on overcoming the boundaries between art and reality, as well as on the formation of a new language of art. The basic principles of creating a new language of art deal with the violation of conventional linguistic norms and with linguistic experimentation at different levels of language. Such conception of the language revolution and the creation of a new language imply the violation of the process of conventional word meaning and creation of polysemantic and transrational verbal constructions that allows to

speak of heuristic and linguistic creativity of the avant-garde literary discourse.

→ The avant-garde theorist Peter Bürger described the new conception of the avant-garde aesthetics in terms of the distinction between organic and inorganic art:

It is no longer the harmony of the individual parts that constitutes the whole; it is the contradictory relationship of heterogeneous elements (Bürger, 1984: 82).

→ According to Bürger, the avant-garde art destroys the concept of a traditional, “organic”, “holistic” work of art with a certain “absolute meaning”. The priority shifted from the perception of the predetermined meaning of the text to the process of text production and interpretation. In the avant-garde text, the interpretation of signs and words became more important than the perception of the predetermined meaning (cf. the title of James Joyce’s “Work in Progress”, or the realization of Velimir Khlebnikov’s principle of incompleteness when he wrote « et cetera » [и так далее] at the end of the poetic text instead of completing the text in a classical way).

→ The Russian avant-garde literary discourse is a rather complex phenomenon. It goes back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century – the time when Futurism as an avant-garde movement challenged the existing traditions of art and literature. The symbolist movement *The Blue Rose* formed in 1907 is considered the forerunner of the Russian avant-garde. It was not exactly the avant-garde movement, but in its aesthetics it began to develop the avant-garde ideas. Anna Lawton notes:

While Futurism in Italy was a compact phenomenon under the leadership of one man,

Marinetti, in Russia it was heterogeneous, with many groups constantly engaging in literary warfare. Each group claimed to be the only true representative of Futurism; each launched vitriolic attacks against the “pretenders”. Yet at times, temporary alliances of convenience occurred (Lawton, 1988: 11).

→ Indeed, the Russian avant-garde discourse is a multi-format integration of various movements and conceptions realized in the works of both individual artists and entire creative associations. Among the artistic and poetic movements of the Russian avant-garde art and literature are Neo-Primitivism (Mikhail Larionov, Natalia Goncharova, *et al.*); Rayonism (Mikhail Larionov, Mikhail Le Dantu); Suprematism (Kazimir Malevich, El Lissitzky, Olga Rozanova, Lyubov Popova); Cubo-Futurism (Velimir Khlebnikov, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Alexey Kruchenykh, Vasily Kamensky, David Burluk, Nikolai Burluk, Elena Guro); Egofuturism (Igor Severyanin, Konstantin Olimpov, Vasilisk Gnedov); *Mezzanine Poetry* group (Ryurik Ivnev, Vadim Shershenevich, Sergey Tretyakov); *Centrifuge* group (Sergey Bobrov, Nikolay Aseev, Bozhidar), and many other movements.

→ Cubo-Futurism as an avant-garde movement in literature and art emerged in Russia as an offshoot of European Futurism and Cubism. Cubo-Futurism, also called Budetlyanstvo, is the Russian avant-garde art movement of the 1910s – 1920s. Art critics first used the term *Cubo-Futurism* in 1913 with respect to the poetry of *Hylaea* group members. As it follows from the group title, Cubo-Futurism combines such opposite conceptions as the analytical canon of French Cubism and the spatial-temporal dynamism of Italian Futurism, which resulted in the distinct Russian style.

→ A special importance of Cubo-Futurism as one of the leading movements of Russian avant-garde literary discourse is due, firstly, to the fact that it is considered the first Russian avant-garde group founded in 1908; and secondly, to the fact that it implemented the main linguistic and aesthetic features in manifestoes and poetic texts.

→ As far as language features are concerned, Cubo-Futurists emphasize the importance of:

- *word-creation and language creation* [словотворчество и языкотворчество];
- *updating the vocabulary in its entirety* [обновление словаря во всем объеме];
- *creation of transrational language* [заумный язык] and *universal language* [вселенский язык];
- *language and semantic shifts* [языковые и смысловые сдвиги].

→ Some of the main features of Cubo-Futurist aesthetics are as follows:

- denial of the previous cultural tradition and reintegration of art and life;
- inter-semiotic reciprocity of poetry and painting;
- violation of conventional language usage and orientation to the linguistic experimentation;
- alogism in painting and poetry created by the principle of contrast, dissonance, and violation of logical and grammatical relations;
- de-automatization as a particular feature of avant-garde communication and text perception.

→ The designated language and aesthetic features were for the first time declared and practically realized in the form of linguistic experimentation in their manifestoes. Owing to this, manifestoes play a special role in Cubo-Futurists' literary activity as well as in the literary work of other avant-garde groups and movements.

### 3. Avant-garde manifesto as a special genre of the avant-garde literary discourse

→ Historically, the manifesto goes back to the group of texts-statements which encompass declarations, decrees, proclamations, notices, etc. However, over time, the manifesto acquires its distinctive features, primarily due to the change of functional accents. The emphasis shifts from the dominance of the pragmatic and perlocutionary functions to the priority of the aesthetic and meta-linguistic functions. This allows not only to trace the transformation of the manifesto as a genre, but also to reveal the typology of manifestoes, which first of all takes into account their specific functional purpose and linguistic features.

→ Initially, the declarative function was characteristic of the manifesto. Later, under the influence of the Great French Revolution (1789–1799), the manifesto became the form of protest, expressing an opposing opinion and indicating a desire to change the existing state of affairs in reality rather than a form of approval. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the dynamics of the manifesto as a genre was determined by its wide distribution and strengthening of its role in the political sphere. The *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848) by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels became the crucial manifesto in ideological, communicative-pragmatic and linguistic aspects. It

influenced the transformation of the genre and marked the formation of a new model of revolutionary (political) manifestoes (Lukács, 1971; Puchner, 2006). At the new stage of genre development, the manifesto acquired the following features: (1) it became a new type of writing, capable to satisfy the pragmatic intention declared in the motto *change the world* (Althusser, etc. 1967: 14); (2) it incorporated the poetic function as a feature of the new genre format and (3) it realized the performative function embedded already in the etymology of this term (however, it was precisely at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the semantics of the performative influence, which was implicitly embedded in the Latin word *manus*, came to the fore in the designation of the *manifesto*).

→ Researchers consider the manifesto the central genre of the literary avant-garde, which intertwines the main features of the socio-political modernity and the core provisions of the new language and aesthetics (Perloff, 1986; Somigli, 2003; Puchner, 2006). John Lyon emphasizes that the futurist manifesto is a synthesis of the relations between the revolutionary discourse, the avant-garde aesthetics and the field of public debate (Lyon, 1999: 1, 46). The manifesto genre turned out to be extremely attractive for avant-garde artists in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century due to its integration of such key language functions as aesthetic, metalinguistic, poetic, pragmatic, and phatic.

→ The specific features of manifesto in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century are as follows:

1. new text format that can satisfy the pragmatic intention of changing the world;
2. focusing on the language not as a means, but as an instrument of influence or, in

Roman Jakobson's terminology, using the poetic function in the revolutionary manifestoes.

3. performativity aiming at the transformation of reality and at doing things with words.

→ We can trace the further manifesto development in the peculiarities of the literary manifesto formation in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In contrast to the manifestoes of predecessors, the avant-garde literary manifesto focuses not so much on the protest as on the call for consolidation and search for like-minded people. The main goal of the avant-garde manifesto is the concentrated and concise formulation of the basic aesthetic principles, tactics and strategies of the new art rather than the expression of rejection towards the existing situation. At the same time, it is aimed at forming a new, prospective, temporary vector directed to the future.

→ The avant-garde literary manifesto overcomes the border between theory and artistic praxis. However, in the first *Futurist Manifesto* (1909), Filippo Tommaso Marinetti seeks to bring together aesthetic provisions and linguistic experimentation. Consequently, the avant-garde authors not only declare language experiments as a way to create new art in the avant-garde manifestoes but also carried out them in their poetic and artistic texts.

→ The genesis of the Russian Cubo-Futurism dates back to the Italian Futurism. Nevertheless, it is possible to note both the commonality and the difference in the esthetical programs of the two Futurisms. Russian Cubo-Futurists, following the Italian Futurists, called for updating of vocabulary, disrupting of syntax, and destructing of punctuation.



→ However, the main ideological and aesthetic differences between them influenced the distinction in the linguistic experiment. Italian Futurists proclaimed the concept of *war – the world's only hygiene* [la Guerra sola igiene del mondo], the cult of speed and machine myth. This was expressed in the following basic language techniques: they used onomatopoeia and battle sounds as the main method of word-formation and replaced punctuation marks with “high-velocity” mathematical symbols in the 1910s; they created neologisms on the basis of Italian as the main source language in the 1930s. Russian Futurists transformed the idea of war into the concept of the revolution of language, culture and society. The linguistic experiment was conducted on the lexical and phraseological levels rather than the syntactic one. Cubo-futurists sought to realize the idea of Common Slavic Unity through the creation of a “universal language” based on Proto-Slavic roots and words, which was expressed both in literary texts and manifestoes.

#### 4. Cubo-Futurists’ manifestoes as research material: main peculiarities vs selection criteria

→ Two main types of the avant-garde literary manifestoes can be distinguished. The first type of texts focuses on the linguistic problems of word creation, linguistic experimentation, and development of language system potentiality. The second type of texts explores the aesthetic issues relating to different areas of art. Both types of manifestoes are characterized by special linguistic features that make them different from other artistic manifestations. They reflect peculiarities of the avant-garde linguistic experimentation and mark the significance of the pragmatic aspect of this type of text. The following linguistic features can be termed as the basic ones:

1) direct address, e.g.: *Читающим наше Новое Первое Неожиданное* [To the readers of our New First Unexpected]; *Брось, Вася, это тебе не пробка!* [Stop, Vasya, that’s not a cork!];

2) mass address forms and inclusive « we », e.g.: *В искусстве мы заявили* [In art, we have declared];

3) aphoristic expressions, e.g.: *Разгадка слова – в букве* [A clue to the word is in the letter]; *Язык так же мудр, как и природа, и мы только с ростом науки учимся читать его* [Language is as wise as nature, and only now with the growth of science are we discovering how to read it] (Douglas, 1987);

4) expressive lexis, including colloquial and abusive language, e.g.: *слюнявые недоноски* [slobbering noobs]; and terminology, especially, military terms, e.g.: *воин, латы, оружие, бой* [warrior, armor, weapon, fight];

5) preference of nouns and verbs use over the other parts of speech, e.g.: *Изламыванье слов, словоновшество!* [Fragmentation of words, word renewal!];

6) prevalence of verbs in the present tense and in the non-finite form, e.g.: *Бросить Пушкина, Достоевского, Толстого и проч. и проч. с Парохода современности* [To throw Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, etc., etc. overboard from the Ship of Modernity];

7) imperative forms, e.g.: *Вмойте ваши руки, прикасавшиеся к грязной слизи книг, написанных этими бесчисленными Леонидами Андреевыми* [Wash your hands which have touched the filthy slime of the books written by those countless Leonid Andreyevs];

8) interrogative constructions, in particular, rhetorical questions, e.g.: Кто же, доверчивый, обратит последнюю Любовь к парфюмерному блюду Бальмонта? В ней ли отражение мужественной души сегодняшнего дня? [Who, faintheartedly, would fear tearing from warrior Bryusov's black tuxedo the paper armor-plate? Or does the dawn of unknown beauties shine from it?];

9) emphatic structures, e.g.: А, Святополки окаянные! [Ah, accursed Sviatopolks!];

10) exclamation sentences and exclamation phrases, e.g.: Создавайте новые родные слова! [Invent new native words!];

11) alogism as the realization of the idea of "instant creativity", errors and misprints importance, e.g.: Свободу от данного мира дает опечатка [A misprint affords us a certain freedom from the world as it is] (Douglas, 1987); Такая опечатка, рожденная несознанной волей наборщика, вдруг дает смысл целой вещи [A misprint, born involuntarily from the typesetter's will, suddenly gives meaning to a new entity] (Douglas, 1987).

→ These language techniques and tools serve to achieve specific new artistic goals. First of all, the realization of space-time dynamism and the formation of an actual communicative situation in the text. For example, the use of verbs in the present tense allows to overcome the distance characteristic of the written text and to create the effect of direct communication between the author and the reader. Thus, the manifesto is not only the basis for theoretical understanding and formation of new avant-garde aesthetics, but also the basis for practical realization of language innovations.

→ Taking all the language peculiarities described above, in our research we focus primarily on the first type of avant-garde (Cubo-Futurists) manifestoes that are devoted to the language problems of word creation. The following two factors predetermine their choice as language material for our analysis of such special linguistic process as idiom-formation: 1) laconic expression of the basic aesthetic principles, tactics and strategies of new art and language; 2) overcoming the border between theorizing and its practical realization; proclaiming linguistic-aesthetic projects and embodying them in the artistic form of linguistic experimentation. At this stage of the research, the following 27 avant-garde manifestoes have been selected in order to establish the ways of Cubo-Futurists' linguistic experimentation resulted in the creation of a peculiar class of language items – *avant-garde idioms proper*. These manifestoes are as follows:

1. *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste* (1912) by D. Burluk, A. Kruchenykh, V. Mayakovsky, V. Khlebnikov;
2. *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste* (Leaflet) (1913);
3. *A Trap for Judges* (1913) by D. Burluk, E. Guro, N. Burluk, V. Mayakovsky, K. Nizen, V. Khlebnikov, B. Livshits, A. Kruchenykh;
4. *The Word as Such* (1913) by A. Kruchenykh, V. Khlebnikov;
5. *Declaration of the Word as Such* (1913) by A. Kruchenykh;
6. *[The Word as Such]* (1913) by A. Kruchenykh and V. Khlebnikov;
7. *The Letter as Such* (1913; published for the first time in 1930) by V. Khlebnikov, A. Kruchenykh;

8. *The First All-Russian Congress of the Futurist 'Bayaches'* (1913) by M. Matushin, A. Kruchenykh, K. Malevich, Usikiriko;
9. *From Explodity* (1913) by A. Kruchenykh;
10. "New Ways of the Word" (1913) by A. Kruchenykh;
11. "The Liberation of the Word" (1913) by B. Livshits;
12. "New Word Cycle" (1913) by N. Kulbin;
13. "Poetic Principles" (1914) by N. Burliuk, D. Burliuk;
14. "Go to Hell!" (1914) by D. Burliuk, A. Kruchenykh, B. Livshits, V. Mayakovsky, I. Severyanin, V. Khlebnikov;
15. *What is the Word* (The Second Declaration of the Word as Such) (1914) by N. Kulbin;
16. "Supplementun to Poetic Counterpoint" (1914) by N. Burliuk;
17. *Word Resurrection* (1914) by V. Shklovsky;
18. "From Secret Vices of the Academicians" (1915) by A. Kruchenykh;
19. "Now On I Refuse to Speak Ill Even of the Work of Fools" (1915) by D. Burliuk;
20. "A Drop of Tar" (1915) by V. Mayakovsky;
21. *The Trumpet of the Martians* (1916) by V. Khlebnikov, M. Sinyakova, Bozhidar, G. Petnikov, N. Aseyev;
22. "Artists of the World" (1919) by V. Khlebnikov;
23. "About Modern Poetry" (1919) by V. Khlebnikov;
24. "Poetry" (1918) by K. Malevich;
25. "Our Fundamentals" (for the first time was published in 1920) by V. Khlebnikov;
26. *Declaration of the Transrational Language* (1921) by A. Kruchenykh;
27. *Word Texture* (1923) by A. Kruchenykh.

## 5. Research methodology and results

### 5.1 Establishing the main categorial properties of the avant-garde idioms proper

→ The selected avant-garde manifestoes have been analyzed from two interrelated perspectives: 1) as theoretical writings in which the principles of idiom-formation are elaborated; and 2) as a discourse dimension where these elaborated principles were used in order to create new language items, i.e. idioms, that comply with the new linguistic-aesthetic principles proclaimed by Cubo-Futurists. Thus, our methodology implies two stages of analysis.

→ As a starting point, we applied the method of frame semantics (see Fillmore, 1982; Minsky, 1975; Belyaevskaya, 2018) to the analysis of the Cubo-Futurists' manifestoes in order to establish the main categorial properties of avant-garde idioms proper. More specifically, we studied the frame of "idiom" (see also Zykova, 2018; Zykova, Sokolova, 2019).

→ Resting on modern knowledge of phraseology (in a broad sense) as well as taking into account Cubo-Futurists' attitudes to the linguistic creativity, fifteen slots were established in the structure of the frame of idiom. These slots are as follows: 1) multi-word character; 2) figurativeness; 3) (subjectively) felt originality; 4) opacity; 5) illogicality; 6) abstraction; 7) ready-made reproduction; 8) stability; 9) separateness; 10) expressiveness; 11) orientation to the de-automation of perception; 12) inter-semiotic character (i.e. capacity to be expressed both in verbal and non-verbal forms); 13) untranslatability into other languages; 14) aphoristic; 15) a rather complicated way of denotatum designation.



→ The analysis has shown that in the manifestos under consideration the given slots have varied degrees of profiling. This fact points out to the possibility of distinguishing between more relevant and less relevant slots in the structure of the frame of idiom from the Cubo-Futurists' point of view, and therefore – between more relevant and less relevant categorial properties that characterize such class of idioms as avant-garde idioms proper.

→ According to the research findings, in the Cubo-Futurists' manifestoes under analysis many discussions focus on such categorial property as (subjectively) felt originality. The profiling of the corresponding slot is carried out by a great number of postulates and expressions used almost in all the texts under analysis. The Russian Cubo-Futurists proclaim that in order to create a new language of literature and art, the following things are of utmost importance, for instance:

- сломать старый язык, бессильный догнать скачъ жизни (“Капля дегтя”) [to destroy the old language that is powerless to keep up with life's leaps (“A Drop of Tar”)];
- надо по-новому сочетать слова и чем больше беспорядка мы внесем в построение предложений – тем лучше (“Новые пути слова”) [it is necessary to combine words in a new way, and the more disorder we introduce into the sentence structure the better (“New Ways of the Word”)];
- использование причудливых хитрых сочетаний (заумный язык), которым достигается наибольшая выразительность (“Слово как таковое”) – the use of [odd artful combinations

(transrational language), thus achieving the very greatest expressiveness (“The Word as Such”)];

- увеличение словаря в его объеме произвольными и производными словами (Слово– новшество) (“Пощечина общественному вкусу”) [to enlarge the scope of the poet's vocabulary with arbitrary and derivative words (Word-novelty) (*A Slap in Face of Public Taste*)];
- опечатка дает свободу от данного мира, она есть один из видов соборного творчества и может быть приветствуема как желанная помощь художнику (“Наша основа”) [a misprint gives freedom from the given world, it is one of the forms of collective creativity, and may be hailed as a desirable assistance to the artist (“Our Fundamentals”)].
- создание неожиданных сравнений, языковых форм сильных неожиданностью » (“Новые пути слова”, “Наша основа”) [the production of unexpected simile, verbal forms that are strong owing to their unexpectedness (“New Ways of the Word”; “Our Fundamentals”)].

→ The analysis of the given (and many other similar) lexical expressions make it evident that in the structure of the frame of idiom the slot (subjectively) felt originality is of high relevance. These expressions reveal the Cubo-Futurists' linguistic-aesthetic principles aimed to destroy norms at different levels and in relation to various aspects of the language (phonetical, graphical, morphological, syntactical, semantic, combinatory, etc.) in order to create a novel, original verbal form.

→ By contrast, such slot of the frame of idiom as, for instance, aphoristicity is evoked by a few lexical expressions and only in some of the avant-garde manifestoes under consideration. This fact infers the low degree of profiling of this slot in the whole structure of the given frame and, thus, the low relevance of the corresponding categorial property of the idiom. For instance, the call for the creation of concise, laconic, memorable words and expressions of a general truth is rendered by means of the following postulates:

- чтоб писалось и смотрелось во мгновение ока (“Слово как таковое”) [that it be written and perceived in the twinkling of an eye (“The Word as Such”)];
- скучное тягучее повествование <...> претит современной стремительной душе (“Новые пути слова”) [to write boring dragging narratives <...> sickening to the modern precipitous soul (“New Ways of the Word”)];
- заумь – самое краткое искусство, как по длительности пути от восприятия к воспроизведению, так и по своей форме (“Декларация заумного языка”) [transrational language (zaum) is the shortest art, both in terms of the length of the path from perception to reproduction and in its form (*Declaration of the transrational language*)].
- The frame-semantic analysis of the Cubo-Futurists’ manifestos has revealed that among the fifteen slots established in the structure of the frame of idiom the high (or highest) degree of profiling is peculiar to the following ones: (subjectively) felt originality, figurativeness, opacity, expressiveness, orientation to the de-automatization of perception, illogicality, inter-semiotic character. The other slots

– aphoristicity, multi-word character, abstraction, ready-made reproduction, stability, separateness, untranslatability into other languages, a rather complicated way of denotatum designation – have a (much) lower degree of profiling.

→ Thus, the data obtained in the research let us come to the following conclusion. In their manifestoes, the Russian Cubo-Futurists attempted to develop the theory of a new artistic language in literature and art. This theory was based on the creation of new original (or peculiar) verbal forms that must possess such main categorial properties as (subjectively) felt originality, figurativeness, opacity, expressiveness, orientation to the de-automatization of perception, illogicality, inter-semiotic character. In accordance with these properties, newly-created verbal innovations can be qualified as avant-garde idioms proper. The Russian Cubo-Futurists’ meta-reflection over the principles of idiom-creation can be illustrated by the excerpt taken from Velimir Khlebnikov’s manifesto “Our Fundamentals”, in which the author attempts to explain the formation as well as use specifics of the idiom *a pair of nededei / a pair of skyans*:

Возьмем слово лебедь. Это звукопись. Длинная шея лебедя напоминает путь падающей воды; широкие крылья – воду, разливающуюся по озеру. Глагол лить дает лебу – проливаемую воду, а конец слова -ядь напоминает черный и чернядь (название одного вида уток). Стало быть, мы можем построить –небеди, небяжеский: ‘В этот вечер за лесом летела чета небедей’.

[Consider the word *lebed*’ [swan]. This is sound writing. The swan’s long neck reminds us of the arc of falling water; its wide wings

recall the water that forms the flat surface of a lake. The word *lit'* [to pour] furnishes *leba*, meaning poured water, while the ending of the word recalls *chernyi* [black] and *cherni-ad'* [a kind of duck]. Consequently, from *nebo* [sky] we can form *nebed'* [skyan, skygnet] and *nebiazbeskyi*. 'Over the forest that evening flew a pair of *nebedi* [skyan]' (translated by Ch. Douglas, 1987).

→ So, in elaborating new linguistic-aesthetic canons in the avant-garde manifestoes, the Russian Cubo-Futurists conducted the linguistic experiments that gave rise to a special class of idioms – the avant-garde idioms proper.

#### 5.2 Extracting avant-garde idioms proper from the manifestoes

→ The next step in our research consisted in extracting the avant-garde idioms proper that were coined by Cubo-Futurists in their manifestoes as an attempt to apply the declared linguistic-aesthetic principles in practice.

→ Taking into account the main categorial properties established by means of the frame-semantic analysis at the previous stage, we have identified as avant-garde idioms proper more than 240 verbal items, for example<sup>2</sup>:

- *гамма буделянина* [the gamma of a willbeian, or the futurian scale (gamma)] ("Our Fundamentals");

- *че воды* [the che of water, or water-che] ("Our Fundamentals");
- *чета небедей* [a pair of *nebedei*, or a pair of [skyan]] ("Our Fundamentals");
- *парфюмерный блуд* [perfumed lechery] (*A Slap in the Face of Public Taste*);
- *бросить кого-либо с парохода современности* [to throw someone overboard from the (steam)ship of modernity] (*A Slap in the Face of Public Taste*);
- *мужественная душа* [a manly soul, or virile soul] (*A Slap in the Face of Public Taste*);
- *подхватить русские воздуха* [to catch Russian airs, or to catch a whiff of Russian ideas] (*The Word as Such*);
- *шпаргалки искусства* [cribs of art, or to copy from someone like schoolboys, making imitation art] (*The Word as Such*);
- *воробьиные истины* [a sparrow's truths] ("A Drop of Tar");

→ The study of the avant-garde idioms proper has revealed their difference in the degree with which their main categorial properties manifest themselves. In order to measure this difference and its degree, a five-point estimation scale was used. As an example, compare the main categorial features of the avant-garde idioms *че воды* [the che of water] and *мужественная душа* [a manly soul / virile soul] analyzed in the table (see Table 1).

<sup>2</sup> It should be specially mentioned that, to give examples, the most representative avant-garde idioms proper were selected from different (twenty-seven) manifestoes. The idioms chosen as examples manifest all the key properties of the class they belong to (i.e. the class of the avant-garde idiomatics), and are not in common use in the Russian language.

The main categorial properties	че воды lit. 'the che [tʃe] of water'	мужественная душа lit. 'a manly soul' / 'virile soul'
	<b>Meaning:</b> "any type of cups"	<b>Meaning:</b> "an artist who is not afraid of radical forms of innovations in the domain of art"
(subjectively) felt originality	++++	++
figurativeness	+	+++
opacity	++++	++
expressiveness	+++	++++
orientation to the de-automatization of perception	++++	++
illogicality	+++	+

Table 1: The difference in the degree of expressing the main categorial properties between two avant-garde idioms proper

→ The avant-garde idioms with the main categorial features expressed to a greater extent can be referred to the nucleus of the class of the avant-garde-idiomatics; whereas all the others – to the periphery of this class.

→ With respect to their structural peculiarities, the majority of the avant-garde idioms proper extracted from the manifestoes under consideration are word-combinations. However, as belonging to this class of idioms, we have also identified compound words based on metaphor as well as sentences of aphoristic character, cf., for instance:

1. the avant-garde idioms with a structure of the word-combination: одуванчиковый лозунг [dandelion slogans]; элизиум вокабул [the elysium of vocables];
2. the word-like avant-garde idioms: Земля-мозг [the Earth-brain]; художники-пищатели [artists-squeakers];
3. the sentence-like avant-garde idioms e.g.: Ведь проповедь, не вытекающая из самого искусства, – есть дерево, подкрашенное под железо. [A sermon that doesn't derive from the art itself is nothing but wood painted to look like metal]

(Douglas, 1987).

→ We define the verbal units of the two last groups as avant-garde lexical idioms and avant-garde paremiological idioms, correspondingly.

## 6. Concluding remarks

→ The avant-garde discourse in Russia originates in the creative works of the *Hylaea* group that represented Cubo-Futurism at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and aimed at constructing new artistic language and new aesthetic canons with the help of conducting artistic experiments, in particular, language experiments. These language experiments resulted in the emergence of a peculiar class of verbal innovations that can be called avant-garde idioms proper. The Russian Cubo-Futurists' manifestoes can be considered the primary source of information about the principles of idiom-formation that were elaborated in order to achieve radical linguistic-aesthetic reformation in the domain of literature and art. According to the research findings, avant-garde idioms proper are characterized by a number of features, which make them distinct from other

types of idiomatic and phraseological units. The main characteristics of this special class of idioms include such properties as (*a rather high degree of opacity, an orientation to the de-automatization of perception, a (subjectively) felt originality, a unique (unusual) figurativeness, (rather) intense expressiveness, illogicality, inter-semiotic character meaning the possibility for idioms to be embodied both in verbal and non-verbal forms*). The development of the ideas of new (avant-garde) idiomatics (new idioms / idiomatic expressions) was accompanied by their immediate implementation in practice in the Cubo-Futurists' manifestoes. The idioms born in the avant-garde manifestoes enriched the fund of figurative and phraseological means of the Russian language helping get a deeper insight into their intricate nature.

→ Summing up, the avant-gardists' contribution to the development of phraseology (in a broad sense) proves to be significant, but it has hardly been assessed to a full degree by contemporary scholars. Therefore, the results obtained at this stage of our research serve as the basis for a further study of the avant-garde literary discourse in order to comprehensively understand the role of the avant-garde in the evolution of the phraseological (or idiomatic) thought.

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## Dictionaries

NODE = *New Oxford Dictionary of English* (1998), Edited by Judy Pearsall, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

OEtD = *Online Etymology dictionary*, [https://www.etymonline.com/word/avant-garde#etymonline\\_v\\_18989](https://www.etymonline.com/word/avant-garde#etymonline_v_18989) (12.12.2019).

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