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Sound Symmetry in Poetic Text: Types and Translation Strategies

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The poetic translation is considered to be one of the most complicated translation types, according to formal and content peculiarities of poetic texts performing aesthetic function. The formal and content anomalies of poetic texts in translation aspect can be described using the universal category of symmetry. The results of the present study were obtained through the process of investigating the strategies of translating onomatopoeias and paronyms in the text of the novel in verse by A.S. Pushkin "Eugene Onegin" into English.

Keywords: poetic text, literary translation, aesthetic function, anomaly, symmetry, asymmetry, phonosemantics, unit of translation, onomatopoeia, paronym, paronomasia.

Introduction

A distinctive feature of any poetic text is its anomaly which helps to realize the main function of such texts - an aesthetic one. There are different types of anomalies, as reflected in the form, content, and in the types of relationships between form and content of the text. Formal anomaly of the poetic text is determined by its expressive sound shape, a particular poetic form (which distinguishes poetry from prose), and, often enough, figurative graphical form. The predominance of connotative meaning over denotative meaning, concentration of implicit meanings, deliberate preservation of the linguistic ambiguities of lexical units in speech, maximum optimization of all stylistic devices and techniques to create expressive text - all these can be attributed to the expressions of content anomalies. The types of content anomaly enumerated above

are involved in creation of "tribal" anomaly of the plan - semantic ambiguity. The relationship between form and content of a poetic text can be defined as that of isomorphism. The active study of general regularities and features of poetic language, as well as individual characteristics of the language of some authors suggests the existence of a special theory of poetic speech [1; 2; 3; 5; 6; 10; 13; 16; 27; 29; 30].

Poetic Translation: Form and Content

Along with the issues related to the linguistic theory of poetic texts, linguists, translators and specialists in translation theory pay much attention to the development of the theory of poetic translation. The problems of poetic translation are part of a wide range of issues of literary translation, but are characterized by their apparent specificity, which makes theorists and

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practitioners have quite contradictory views on poetic translation up to rejecting any possibility of such a translation [26].

Recognizing the possibility of poetic translation, we believe it necessary to study its basic laws, strategies and specific techniques. Emphasizing the importance of both formal and content characteristics of a poetic text and the objective existence of poetic unity in form and content, we consider the possibility of representing the formal characteristics of a poetic text by means of interlingual translation. Paying attention mainly to the formal aspect of the poetic text in the process of translation is rather conditional, as for both the author and the reader of the original meaning of the word in poetry is closely connected with its acoustic form. The form of an artistic work is very significant when perceived by a recipient (a reader). Aimed at the reader, literary translation to a certain extent brings together literary translation with the translations of the Bible. The task of the translator of literary texts is not to demonstrate their own poetic talent (if they wish to do so, they can write their own poems). The translator should act as an intermediary, “the bridge” between an important segment of human experience and the audience, who want to enjoy that experience, but can not overcome the barrier of their native language [28: 7]. Translation of a literary text is, in a sense, an “explanation” of the text to others. And this “explanation” should contain the “explanation” of both the content and formal features of the original text. The purpose of this “explanation” is a disclosure of the aesthetic potential of the original poetic text, and a realization of the aesthetic function of the original and the translation. It is generally recognized that aesthetic function is called to meet the aesthetic feelings of the reader. So formal - and first of all - sound characteristics of a literary text take on a considerable importance. Among the most frequently occurring sound

phenomena that contribute to the realization of the aesthetic function are onomatopoeia, sound symbolism, alliteration, assonance, paronymy and paronomasia, rhyme, rhythm, intonation and stress. In this paper some of the sound phenomena mentioned above will be considered.

When translating expressive texts, poetic texts in particular, there is often a conflict between expressive (as defined by K. Buller) and aesthetic function (“truth” and “beauty”) - between the poles of an ugly literal translation and a beautiful free translation [32: 42]. In “meaningless” poetry sound impact is more important than the meaning. In the poetry for children and refined (art-for-art) literature of the end of the XIX-th century (T. Gautier, P. Verlaine) euphonic “beauty” is more important than “truth” [31]. P. Verlaine paid special attention to the musical sound of poetic lines and the enhancement of the musicality of a verse. The poet described his principles of poetics and aesthetics in the program 1874 poem “Poetic Art” / “The Art of Poetry” (“Art poétique”), where poetry is clearly separated from other types of fiction. Poetry, according to the French poet, should possess some vague meaning which requires a special sound form. Words in P. Verlaine’s works are subjected to poetic logic (if logic in poetry exists at all), and are dissolved in sounds. They are not separate words any more but words-sounds, words-music whose meaning is blurred and intertwined in the poetic tissue. “De la musique avant toute chose, Et pour cela préfère l’impair, Plus vague et plus soluble dans l’air, Sans rien en lui qui pèse ou qui pose. Il faut aussi que tu n’aïles point Choisir tes mots sans quelque méprise : Rien de plus cher que la chanson grise Où l’Indécis au Précis se joint” [36: 486]. B. Pasternak gave the following translation of the original strophes: «За музыкою только дело. Итак, не размеряй пути. Почти бесплотность предпочти Всему, что слишком плоть и тело. Не церемонься с языком И торной не ходи

дорожкой. Всех лучше песни, где немножко
И точность точно под хмельком » [36: 487] P.
Verlaine laid the foundations of impressionistic
poetry based on musicality [15; 18; 38]. The works
of Russian poet-futurist, reformer of the poetic
language V. Khlebnikov are a shining example of
the dominance of sound over sense (sound form
over content) in the poetic tissue [13].

Thus, the sound complex of a poetic work
is extremely important for the realization of the
aesthetic function of literature. Along these lines,
one of the main problems of poetic translation
can be defined as the preservation of the initial
sound complex of the original or creation of a new
sound complex, capable of performing a similar
aesthetic function in translation. In both cases,
the relationship between the sound complexes of
the original and the translation can be considered
from the point of view of the dichotomy of
symmetry versus asymmetry.

Symmetry in Science and Art

Understanding of symmetry both in natural
phenomena and works of art goes back to the
times of antiquity. Ideas of symmetry (literally
“proportionality”) originated from the views of
ancient Greek philosophers and mathematicians,
and related to their studies of world harmony. The
starting point of intensive studies of symmetry
goes back to the end of the XVIII-th century,
when symmetric forms of natural crystals were
discovered and described, and a set of symmetry
operations that generate symmetrical shape were
defined. Later symmetry operation began to be
used both to describe biological systems, and to
develop theories of mathematical symmetry. In the
XX-th century the method of symmetry became
an effective tool for theoretical studies in modern
science. Thus, A.V. Shubnikov and representatives
of his school have considerably expanded the
concept of symmetry by incorporating the sign
of transformational operations. These operations

made it possible to effectively use the concept of
symmetry in various scientific fields and apply
the category of symmetry not only to scientific
phenomena, but also to the phenomena of art.
This widespread use of the concept of symmetry
as well as the idea that symmetry has a universal
status, corresponds to the ongoing trend toward
the unification of the categories of science and art,
and provides an opportunity for a fresh look at
many things, including the phenomena of reality
[24]. In 1972 a program work by A.V. Shubnikov
and V.A. Koptsik «Symmetry in science and
art» was published, and two years later was
translated into English [35]. The researchers
considered the concept of the relative equality
of objects as the basis of the whole theory of
symmetry, and believed that two objects can be
described as equal in respect to some of their
specific characteristics - if both objects have
these characteristics [35: 1].

It is a generally recognized fact that nature
does not allow and can not allow the existence of
absolute equality between two objects, separated
in time and space and, moreover, in real or
relative equality. It is extremely important to
establish a criterion or measuring of the equality.
Obtaining equality implies, above all, the
implementation of an operation of comparison.
The comparison operation can be carried out only
under the following conditions: (1) a comparison
that assumes the existence of relative or actual,
rather than absolute, equality can not be made
considering all the parameters or characteristics
of the compared objects; (2) the comparison
makes use of the concepts of equality measure
(the goal of science is to establish the extent of
the similarity or likeness); (3) carrying out the
operation of comparison a priori assumes that the
compared objects are somehow similar; (4) it is
necessary to take into consideration the fact that
both qualitative and quantitative characteristics
of the compared object can be involved into the

comparison operation. Following A.V. Shubnikov and V.A. Koptsik we use the term «relative equality» and apply the term to certain characteristics or a set of characteristics of the objects to be compared [35: 2]. In our study, these characteristics will be represented by the sound of the poetic original and the sound form of poetic translation. The sound parameters of the two texts involved in the process of comparison will be compared

Symmetry is one of the most important factors of the beauty of form [35: 7]. Symmetry, regarded as the law of the regular arrangement of structural objects is similar to harmony. To be more precise, symmetry is one of the components of harmony. Another component of harmony is asymmetry. The symmetry, asymmetry and harmony of objects and the phenomena of science and art are the basis of their ability to perform an aesthetic function. The esthetics of scientific and artistic creativity are in the ability to feel it there, where others fail to feel it [35: 9].

A.V. Shubnikov and V.A. Koptsik consider symmetry as a structural law of integrated systems and a method to study structural regularities. Between symmetric spaces there exists isomorphism [35: 307]. The category of isomorphism, as well as the category of symmetry, are relatively new categories of translation theory. The concept of symmetry occurs in the theory of art through the concept of structure. Art, as a graphic form of consciousness and modeling the world around us, should reflect and, indeed, reflects the structural aspect of the world. The structure is actually a broad law, a form of the existence and motion of matter, the products of scientific and artistic creativity are also subjected to this law. Art products - literature, poetry, music, painting, architecture possess a complex artistic structure, representing an organic intertwining and interpenetration of a set of substructures that make up the individual

components of artistic expressiveness [35: 351]. Researchers have noted that quite often the application of ideas of «ordinary» symmetry to the study of literature and poetry, as well as music theory, is often metaphorical in nature. Effective use of the theory of symmetry to the objects of humanitarian research will provide more interesting results.

The first Russian scholars, who effectively applied the ideas of classical symmetry to music and poetry, were G.E. Konius (musician and educator), and G.V. Wolf (founder of Russian crystallography). In 1908 G.V. Wolf wrote that the spirit of music is its rhythm [11]. More than a hundred years ago, Russian scientists have concluded that the category of symmetry can be applied to literary works as well as to music. Of particular importance is the category of symmetry for poetic works.

Sound Symmetry and Asymmetry in Poetic Translation

As mentioned above, the most common expressive sound characteristics of poetic text are onomatopoea, sound symbolism, alliteration, assonance, and paronymy and paronomasia, rhyme, rhythm, intonation and stress. These sound phenomena in a certain way irradiate against the background of the original sound material. Reproduction of the entire sound complex of the original in interlingual translation is a virtually impossible task, due to the difference of the phonological systems of the languages included in the translation process. To be fair it should be noted that in the practice of literary translation, there are examples of the complete reproduction of the sounds of the original work in translation. So Celia and Louis Zukovski attempted to convey in translation the sound structure of the works by Roman poet Gaius Valeri Catullus. The translators set a practical task to carry out the reproduction of the form of the poetic works phoneme by

phoneme preserving the sound, rhythm and syntax of the Latin original [25]. In the practice of poetic translation such tasks are extremely rare and the solution to such problems does not bring the desired result. More often translators do not try to preserve not the entire phonemic set of the original in the translated text. They rather seek to preserve clear sound phenomena.

Regular translation units serve as sound-imitating units of language, which are represented by onomatopoeic and sound symbolic varieties. Iconic units are the object of study of a new integrative discipline called phonosemantics. The ability to describe the artistic originality of a poetic text from the phonosemantic viewpoint, as well as the usage of phonosemantic approaches to the translation problems have been repeatedly noted in the works of the founder of the Russian phonosemantics S.V. Voronin [8; 9].

Contemplation of translation problems (both in terms of modeling the processes of translation and translation criticism) from the viewpoint phonosemantics, has allowed the identification of a number of interesting approaches to solving the problems during the last decades. So, an understanding of translation as a synergistic speech comprehension process allows «to update the physical form of the text, its rhythmic structure and the sound organization of matter that can most effectively contribute to the identification of the place and function of a phonetics level in the translation process» [21: 78]. Thus, the need to integrate the sound settings in the translation process is acknowledged.

Not only is iconic vocabulary attributed to the class of sound phenomena that are important for the implementation of the aesthetic function of the original text as well as the translated text, but they also serve as obvious translation units. In a figurative expression by S. V. Voronin, linguistic iconicity was considered by experts in the field of theory and practice of translation

as «stepdaughter» (an «unloved child»), and it had received undeservedly little attention [37]. However, recently the situation has changed somewhat. Considering the cross-language «macroequivalence» of the original text and its translation as a set of individual character «microequivalences» of the given texts [9: 84] supporters of a semiotic approach started to look for phonosemantic universals in translation with the identification of the patterns of translation of iconic vocabulary. Analysis of linguistic material in the aspects of universality / specificity, invariance / variability and isomorphism / allomorphism allowed the researchers to conclude that the macroequivalence of texts in translation to some extent can be achieved via the microequivalence of iconic vocabulary which is part of the original and translated texts, whereas this microequivalence can be both intercharacter and intracharacter [9: 86].

One may hypothetically assume that the establishment of macroequivalence during translation with regard to the microequivalence of iconic vocabulary will have different frequency and form patterns that depend on the text material specifics. Integrated assessment of the quality of poetic translation in the light of the phonosemantic theory, as well as categories of isomorphism and symmetry may be one of the necessary science-based procedures done on the basis of special methods. The development of such techniques may be a primary concern in the near future.

Let us consider some translations of the onomatopoeic words inserted into the poetic fabric of the novel in verse by A.S. Pushkin “Eugene Onegin”. Nabokov’s translation of Chapter IV into English was chosen as the material for analysis [33]. The choice of poetic translation is not accidental. The author of the translation had a fine linguistic sense and in his own poetic and prose works paid great attention to the iconic

features of the language, as evidenced by his metalinguistic phonosemantic comments, as well as examples of phonosemantic analysis contained in the special commentary volume of the English translation of the novel “Eugene Onegin” [34].

We will omit individual consideration of the intercharacter equivalence problem that implies the preservation of all explicit iconic words in the translated text being as equivalent number of the iconic words that are presented in the original text. And so let us turn to examples of intercharacter microequivalence that assumes the equivalence of the phonosemantic structure of explicit iconic words of the original text and the translation.

Analysis of the translation of onomatopoeic words presented in Chapter IV of the novel “Eugene Onegin”, revealed the following types of intercharacter equivalence: identical, hyperonymic, hyponymic.

Examples of identical microequivalence which make accurate reproduction of the semantic structure of iconic elements are few in number. (1) «Трещит лучинка перед ней» – «...in front of her the splintlight crackles» (XLI); (2) «Светлый кубок Еще шипит среди стола» – «The bright goblet amid the table fizzes yet» (XLVII); (3) «Его почуя, конь дорожный Храпит...» – «the road horse, upon sensing him, snorts...» (XLI); (4) «Соседи шепчут меж собою...» – «...among themselves the neighbors whisper...» (XXIV); (5) «Лесная тень, журчанье струй ...» – «the sylvan shade, the purl of streams...» (XXXVIII. XXXIX). Using in the original and in translation onomatopoeic words, the sound of which corresponds to the denotative meaning of the depicted events, allows you to create expressive texts that contain figurative description of the nominated events.

Cases of hyperonymic microequivalence that assume the use in translation of onomatopoeic equivalent with a broader conceptual volume (and, consequently, with a narrower semantic scope)

may be illustrated by the following example: (6) «Но к ней Онегин подошел И молвил ...» – «...but up to her Onegin went and quoth...» (XII). To reproduce information implied in the onomatopoeic verb “молвить», the translator chose an archaic verb «quoth», which to some extent corresponds to the original verb in stylistic color (both verbs are stylistically marked), but does not reproduce iconic potential of the verb «молвить» and therefore it is its hyperonyme (in a semantic volume).

Hyponymic microequivalence is defined as the translation of onomatopoeic words using equivalents with a narrower conceptual volume (and, consequently, with a wider semantic scope). (7) «Гусей крикливых караван Тянулся к югу...» – «the caravan of cronking geese was tending southward...» (XL). In the translation to reproduce the goose honk a low-frequency onomatopoeic word «cronking» is used, according to the dictionaries, to imitate the honk of wild geese - “a hoarse croak (as of a raven) or honk (as of a wild goose)”. (8) «Лесов таинственная тень С печальным шумом обнажалась...» – «the wood’s mysterious canopy with a sad murmur bared itself...» (XL). In V. Nabokov’s translation the onomatopoeic hyponyme «murmur» has a narrower conceptual volume than the neutral Russian word «шум» is used. «Murmur – a low indistinct but often continuous sound». To create the sound image impression of rustling leaves in the forest in autumn, a concentration of similar sounds (sibilants) is used in the original. The detailed sound metaphor of the original is reproduced in translation by one word with strong onomatopoeic potential, allowing the translator to create to a certain extent appropriate sound images.

The examples of finding and assessment of equivalence in poetic translation discussed above are indicatives of a certain effectiveness in the attraction of phonosemantic universals to the

facts of the translation. A set of universals can be expanded. Further research within the framework of the semiotic approach to translation theory should consider the attraction of data obtained for different language pairs involved in the process of translation. Implementing the operation of comparison between the original and the translation from the point of view of phonosemantics lets us speak about a certain phonosemantic symmetry in the compared text. This type of symmetry can be recognized as really existing only in cases of identical microequivalence. In other cases, the texts which are compared can be asymmetrical phonosemantically.

Another important sound phenomenon is paronymy. Several definitions of the term “paronymy” in a wide range of understanding can be found in linguistic literature [4; 7; 19]. In this paper, we will use the term of “paronymy” in a broader sense as the phenomenon of partial sonic similarities between words (paronymes) with their semantic differences (full or partial) [22] because this understanding is presented mostly in works that deal with the problems of paronymy functioning in a literary text [12; 13; 16; 20]. Using paronymy in order to enhance the aesthetic effect in the linguistics was called “paronomasia” - a stylistic device presented by deliberate approximation of words with similar sounds [17]. Paronomasia can be met regularly in the language of poetry and is regarded as its characteristic feature.

Studying the language organization patterns of poetic texts, scholars have found it necessary to identify the phenomena that underlie the aesthetics of such texts and make them a poetic fact. One of the universal phenomena is isomorphism because the connotative colouring that appears on the basis of isomorphism and dominates over the original denotativity [23] is a direct consequence of the inseparable unity of the form and content of a poetic text. The isomorphism of a poetic text

is based on a number of stylistic devices. One of the regularly used methods is paronomasia. Since the translator’s task is to preserve the isomorphism of the original text and to create the product text that serves an aesthetic function, similar to the function of the original text, the stylistic device paronomasia should be retained in the translation.

Preserving the paronomasia of the original text when translating is a task of a certain complexity that has been repeatedly noted in the literature [14]. Let us consider examples of paronomasia in the text of chapter IV of A.S. Pushkin’s novel in verse, “Eugene Onegin” and compare the original text with the English translation by Nabokov. This analysis uses the paronymy typology proposed by V. P. Grigoriev for the texts of the Russian poetry of the XX-th century [13: 280-283]. This typology can be considered universal and applicable to the poetic language of the first third of the XIX-th century. According to this classification, five paronymy types are found to be operating in the poetic language: vocalic, metathetic, epenthetic, consonantal and augmentative.

The vocalic type is the most common and can be illustrated by the following example: (9) «Огонь потух; еще золою Подернут уголь золотой; Едва заметное струю Виется пар, и теплотой Камин чуть дышит. Дым из трубок В трубу уходит. Светлый кубок еще шипит среди стола. Вечерняя находит мгла...» (XLVII). In the English translation the paronomasia of the original is not delivered: «The fire is out; barely with ashes is filmed the golden coal; in a barely distinguishable stream weaves vapor, and with warmth scarce breathes the grate. The smoke from pipes goes up the chimney. The bright goblet amid the table fizzes yet. The evening murk comes on...».

Metathetic paronymy type, which is similar to the vocalic type and the only difference being

the undocked consequence of consonants, is presented by the example: (10) “..Ловласов обветшала слава Со славой красных каблучков И величавых париков..» (VII). In translation this paronymic pair is not preserved, partially offset by the loss of translational paronymic pair used by Nabokov in the translated version of the seventh strophe: «... the fame of Lovelaces has faded with the fame of red heels and of majestic periwigs ...».

Examples with additional consonants are attributed to the epenthetic type when the additional consonant is included in the structure of the second paronyme: (11) “..Зато любовь красавиц нежных Надежней дружбы и родства: Над нею и среди бурь мятежных Вы сохраняете права..» (XXI). In the translation, we find: «As to the love of tender beauties, ‘tis surer than friendship on kinship. Over it even mid tumultuous storms rights you retain .. ». The paronomasia of the original text is not preserved, but aestheticism is partially offset by the translation of the paronymic pair of «friendship-kinship».

The consonantal type is represented in the example (12) “..Ужели жребий вам такой Назначен строгою судьбой?» (XV) - «Can it be

true that such a portion is by stern fate assigned to you?». The paronymes are not represented in the Russian translation.

The augmentative type of paronyme is what we find in the eleventh strophe: (13) “Но, получив посланье Тани, Онегин живо тронут был: Язык девических мечтаний В нем думы роem возмутил» (XI). This type unites the examples when one paronyme is the structural part of another one. In the translation by Nabokov this type of paronyme is also not preserved: «But on receiving Tanya’s missive, Onegin was intensely moved: the language of a maiden’s dreamings in him roused up thoughts in a swarm :..».

Conclusion

The examples discussed above are only preliminary results, but they indicate that the preservation of linguistic iconism and paronomasia when translating is an extremely complex process and requires the development of special techniques which may be actually devised by the translation theory science of the XXI-th century. In terms of the general scientific category of symmetry, one can speak about the iconic (phonosemantic) and patronymic symmetry of the original and that of the translation.

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Звуковая симметрия в поэтическом тексте:

типы и стратегии перевода

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Поэтический перевод является одним из самых сложных видов переводческой деятельности, что обусловлено формальными и содержательными особенностями поэтических текстов, выполняющих эстетическую функцию. Формальная и содержательная аномальность поэтических текстов в аспекте перевода может быть рассмотрена с позиции универсальной категории симметрии. Результаты настоящего исследования были получены при изучении стратегий перевода ономапов и паронимов в тексте романа в стихах А.С. Пушкина «Евгений Онегин» на английский язык.

Ключевые слова: поэтический текст, художественный перевод, эстетическая функция, аномальность, симметрия, асимметрия, фоносемантика, единица перевода, ономап, пароним, паронимазия.
