

PHONETIC AND AESTHETIC ASPECTS OF SYNHARMONISM IN POETIC TRANSLATION

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Formal elements—more precisely, the presence of a “normative” form (regular metre, stanzaic organization, and rhyme)—acquire particular significance against the background of the opposition between two canons that are highly relevant to contemporary poetry: formal verse and free verse. This provides grounds for assuming that the “acquired” semantics of formal elements in twentieth - and twenty-first-century poetry is not limited to the possibilities discussed above (the semantic aura of metre and stanza, the “memory” of rhyme usage, etc.), but also includes a specific aesthetic value that a given element of poetic structure acquires when functioning as a background metaphor within the artistic and aesthetic canon relevant to the creator. In this capacity, the element becomes both a marker and a means of realizing the author's aesthetic concept (the aesthetics of identity or the aesthetics of opposition). The retransmission of this concept constitutes a mandatory condition of poetic sinharmonism.

The aesthetics of identity is based on adherence to models and clichés familiar to the audience and incorporated into a system of “rules” (conventions forming the “frames” of receptive expectations) [2, 223–234]. Proceeding from this aesthetic concept, the creator constructs the text in accordance with linguistic, generic, thematic, ethical, and other significant conventions that constitute the poetic matrix of the source-language (SL) discursive formation, thereby observing a “contract” with the reader. By virtue of their habitual nature, these conventions directly predetermine procedures of meaning construction not only at the creative but also at the receptive phase of discourse (due to the predictability of the communicative structures that actualize them). When decoding such texts—provided that the recipient and the translator possess sufficient discursive competence - the semantic deviation between the creative and receptive projections of the textual “body” is likely to be minimal. In cases where the literary canons of the SL and target-language (TL) discursive formations are closely aligned, the use of adaptive tactics will also be minimal, since the structural elements of texts based on the aesthetics of identity usually fall within the frames of “normal” generic expectations regardless of the recipient's cultural background.

At the same time, “strong” texts [3,20], capable of motivating genuine poetic reflection, are characterized by the opposite format: they are based on the aesthetics of opposition, within which the principal mechanism for implementing the author's intention—and for creating the artistic structures that fix it—is the principle of violating typical conventions. Guided by their own aesthetic goal-setting (i.e. discursive strategy), the author seeks ways of deviation from the conventions and patterns established by literary tradition.

As a result of the violation of the extratextual syntactics of the literary process, unexpected and discursively irrelevant “noise” appears within the information channel defined by communicative structures familiar to the recipient [4,48-52]. The main mechanism of its creation is the device of defamiliarization, the essence of which lies in complicating the perception of the form (the “body”) of the text by placing a structure habitual for the recipient (i.e. a communicative structure) into an unfamiliar context. The defamiliarized image is superimposed on the reader's habitual vision—more precisely, recognition, whereby the receptive perception of communicative structures is de-automatized and the structures themselves are deformed, causing a deviation from the logic of presuppositions fixed in the recipient's expectation frames. Not only the immediate literary-

traditional context may be defamiliarized (e.g. the aesthetics of artistic ‘novelty’ among the modernists), but virtually any parameters of art as figurative comprehension of reality [4, 46].

Within the aesthetics of opposition, the artistic effect is achieved precisely through the exploitation of “noise” that deforms the canon and violates the “contract” with the reader. However, “since the ‘contract’ is not universal or obligatory for all, the aesthetic effect arising at the moment of its violation is subjectively mediated,” and “the aesthetic value of a text is a phenomenon experienced subjectively” [5, 59]. Consequently, the categories of the aesthetic and the artistic (the operator of the aesthetic) are fluid and, even within a single culture, are characterized by a multiplicity of receptive realizations, including mutually opposed ones. Positive reception (or complete rejection) of the author’s aesthetic realization is determined by the degree of its (dis)comfort within the aesthetic concept already relevant to the recipient, with its specific presuppositions and generic expectations.

For translation, this position is of particular importance, since the retransmission of such discursive indeterminacy in the TL text and the preservation of potential heterogeneity (multiplicity) of effects become critical conditions for the implementation of the scriptorial “translator-function”.

For this reason, when working with contemporary poetry, which by definition is based on the aesthetics of opposition, the translator should not “repair in translation what is broken in the original” by attempting to normalize communicative structures deformed by “noise.” The translational projection of the text should not be schematic, forcing an innovative SL text into a classical canon. For retransmission to occur, the translator must identify instances of “contract” violation - those artistic structures of the SL text that the author deliberately opposes to the SL canon—and select discursively equivalent analogues from the repertoire of structures belonging to the TL discursive formation. Given a certain degree of discursive sinharmonism between the translator and the author, as well as sufficient discursive competence of the translator in the literature of the SL, this task is, on the whole, achievable.

Nevertheless, the translator will inevitably encounter an objective problem—the asymmetry between the artistic and aesthetic canons themselves that are relevant to the (re)creative and receptive environments of the SL and TL. Under the influence of these canons, typical genre expectations, reader - scripter presuppositions, and aesthetic principles are formed within each culture. In translation, this asymmetry may motivate the use of radical adaptive tactics - textual normalization—which, in the context of contemporary aesthetics and poetics, should be regarded as a solution not originally aimed at achieving sinharmonism.

First and foremost, this concerns the specific correlation between free and formal verse techniques within the poetic matrices of the SL and TL cultures. In British poetry, free verse for a long time functioned as a tool of a particular kind of provocation and resistance to traditional Romantic poetry, yet it was generally perceived as marginal and of dubious poetic status. Moreover, the looseness of English syllabo-tonics itself constituted a certain element of “freedom.” Probably for these reasons, as well as due to the cultural conservatism characteristic of Britain, twentieth-century British poetry represents an “open dialogue” with the entire Anglophone poetic tradition, and its contemporary state is the result of a long evolution rather than a revolutionary rejection of metre and rhyme in favour of free verse. Both techniques—formal and free—are regarded as equally canonized and belong to the mainstream, which explains their frequent parallel use by authors, even within a single source text.

In a situation where the canon is essentially the absence of a canon, what becomes crucial for the translator is the semantic aura of metre, verse length, and stanza (“acquired” semantics), as well as the rhythmic-intonational and semantic effect of choosing either a traditional metre or free verse in a given segment of the SL text. The aesthetic value of form as a background metaphor loses its primary importance here, since no explicit opposition is present. This grants the translator a certain degree of freedom in handling the original form, through the possibility of searching for functionally equivalent analogues based on the discursive value of the SL formal structures within the TL poetic matrix.

In the Russian translations, the text from the first to the last line is transformed into a “normal” (for the mass Russian reader) poem with an ordered metrical basis and exact rhymes. As a result of

such formal normalization, meanings that could potentially be actualized by the SL reader through the significance of rhythmic contrast become inaccessible to the TL recipient. Consequently, the artistic idea itself is transformed. Moreover, the horizon of readerly expectations set by the title is not fulfilled either: against the background of an absolutely traditional form (metrically ordered and reinforced by regular rhyme), the reader may fail to understand what exactly testifies to the death of poetry in contemporary literature. The logical conclusion follows: the translations are non-sinharmonistic with respect to the SL text, and the retransmission of discursive indeterminacy has not taken place.

At the same time, both translations demonstrate a fairly high degree of equivalence at the lexico-semantic and metaphorical levels, and therefore the non-sinharmonistic formal decisions cannot be attributed to an inadequate understanding of the SL text by the translators. The absence of poetic sinharmonism can be explained by the lack of discursive sinharmonism at the level of artistic canon between the SL and TL cultures.

The SL text raises the issue of the correlation between two canons—formal verse and free verse. While for the British reader both writing techniques are equally natural, for the Russian reader free verse has never fully become canonical. Until the late 1980s, free verse was scarcely published: it was regarded as a form of protest incompatible with ideologically “correct” poetry. In the contemporary Russian poetic matrix, free verse has achieved parity with regular verse only quantitatively; aesthetically, rhyme and classical syllabo-tonics remain dominant.

As M. L. Gasparov notes, free verse in Russia is still “perceived as exotic,” and the “taste inertia of Soviet culture” has not been overcome [1, 308]. Moreover, the Russian reader has traditionally perceived free verse not so much as a mode of expression (as in the West, where it functions through contrast with classical syllabo-tonics), but rather as a form affecting the very content—ideological and political protest.

All these factors, collectively shaping the genre expectations of TL recipients and setting the translational expectancy norm, most likely served as the primary motivation for formal normalization (as a type of adaptation) in the translations discussed above. In this sense, it cannot be unequivocally claimed that the translations are non-sinharmonistic with respect to the SL text: given the asymmetry of discursive factors (aesthetic and ideological) in the SL and TL receptive environments identified by the translators, adaptation was inevitable. Moreover, if the analyzed translations are viewed from the perspective of the historical incorporation of free verse into the TL poetic matrix, some degree of transformation of the artistic idea itself through form was necessary: even if the formal contrast had been preserved, the Russian reader would still have been unable to actualize the meaning of “tradition vs. innovation,” since free verse in Russian culture primarily correlates with ideologically “leftist” content, whereas the very “importance and weight of both formal and modernist traditions” in Russian poetic subculture (unlike in the West) have never been fundamentally contested.

For the theory of poetic translation, the following point is crucial. As S. Bodrunova aptly notes, “under conditions of free verse dominance, the conscious choice of formal writing presupposes that the author is able to convincingly demonstrate why this content is inconceivable without this particular form. And this requires genuine virtuosity and innovation” [6]. Innovation manifests itself primarily in the “enrichment of the formal palette of Anglophone verse at all levels of poetic organization”. At the same time, according to the New Formalists, “no form can be considered obsolete or exhausted”: genres and forms with centuries-long histories are filled with content relevant to the present era, while themes and motifs characteristic of world poetry since antiquity are reinterpreted from an entirely new perspective. Accordingly, when translating such poetry, it is precisely the innovative, defamiliarizing aspects of the SL text that must be retransmitted to the TL recipient: experiments with rhyme and stanza, the semantic aura of metre and stanzaic constructions, aclassical treatments of conventional themes, and so forth.

Thus, had R. McGough’s poem been created within the American poetic matrix, both Russian translations would have to be unequivocally classified as non-sinharmonistic due to the neutralization of “noise” at the level of formal verse structures—despite the established asymmetry between the artistic canons of the SL and TL. In such a case, a discursively equivalent analogue of free verse

functioning as a background metaphor would have been required for sinharmonic recreation of the author's aesthetic concept. Within the Russian discursive formation, this role could be fulfilled by accentual verse (ideally unrhymed), which during the Soviet period occupied the position of the "metrical italics of tradition" [1, 282], thus performing a function analogous to that of free verse for Western modernists.

The same applies to W. H. Auden's poem "Lullaby". Written shortly before Auden's emigration to the United States (1937), the poem's innovation—the illusion of the absence of rhyme—represents an attempt to "defend" the right of traditional form to full-fledged existence within the mainstream alongside free verse. By means of a complex rhyme scheme, Auden demonstrated that freedom is also possible within regular verse and that its artistic tools (rhyme and regular metre) have not exhausted their potential. P. Grushko's translation reduces this innovation to canonical conventionality, while S. Dudin's and V. Savin's translations realize an aesthetic concept fundamentally opposed to that of the original: here, too, form functions as a background metaphor, but now as a minus-device against the background of metrical tradition.

Naturally, when translating New Formalist poetry, the problem of adaptation to the realities of the Russian poetic matrix also arises, due to the asymmetry of versification systems and practices relevant to the SL and TL cultures. This primarily concerns the retransmission of experiments with traditional syllabo-tonic metres, whose semantic aura within the interacting discursive formations often does not coincide. In this respect, imitations of exotic stanzaic forms (Romance fixed forms, classical stanzas, etc.) are likely to be more readily retransmitted, owing to their exotic status in both poetic matrices.

As a special artistic-aesthetic system, the source text is based on the principle of wholeness, which is materially realized in the "body" of the text through the principle of harmony between form and content. The object of translation should be considered the type of harmonic unity / wholeness of the work chosen by the author of the source language text, which textually fixes the logic of the author's discourse. Its recreation in the target language in a singharmonic way is one of the conditions for successful retransmission and can be defined as a macro-universal of poetic translation, expressed in the proposed category of poetic sinharmonicism.

To determine the type of harmonic unity to be retransmitted, it is necessary to identify the discursive value of each significant formal element within the framework of textual wholeness and the corresponding discursive formation. The optimal tool for such pre-translation analysis is discourse analysis.

Conducted in a metapoetic key, by correlating the "genre" expectations and intertextual presuppositions of SL and TL recipients, the parameterization of discourse analysis allowed, in addition to the "innate" semantics, to consider the "acquired" semantics of poetic form elements—their intertextual potential developed within the discursive formation (SL or TL). Due to the asymmetric relationship of the language and prosodic systems, versification practices, and artistic-aesthetic canons in each creative-receptive environment, even structurally equivalent verse units often show radical differences (up to zero equivalence) at the level of acquired semantics, which hinders the possibility of realizing poetic singharmonicism in translation.

The parameters of discourse analysis at the levels of lexicon, morphology, and syntax were outlined briefly, due to the extensive treatment of these topics in specialized literature. The main emphasis was placed on parameterizing discourse analysis at the levels of metrics, rhyme, and poetic phonics (in the proposed metapoetic key). The priority was the ability to retransmit to TL recipients the mechanism of implicit meaning-making, triggered by elements of poetic form, including through discursively equivalent and functional analogues.

The most significant parameters of discourse analysis identified were:

1. The relationship of the semantic aura of meter, verse size, and fixed strophic forms within the matrix of poetic traditions and discursive formations of SL and TL, considering possible intertextual marking within the narrower authorial discourse of texts.

2. Differences in genre expectations of SL and TL recipients regarding various metric deviations (rhythmic inversions, hyper-, hypo-, and lipometry, super-, micro-, and macro polymetric

combinations, spondees, pyrrhic, etc.), types of rhyme, clausulae, specific rhyme schemes, and various poetic phonics techniques, considering their functionality, partiality, and degree of canonization in both poetic traditions.

3. Consideration of the established translation tradition in TL culture.

In modernist and postmodernist poetry, based on the concept of the aesthetics of opposition, in addition to the above parameters, “acquired” semantics implies the special aesthetic significance of formal structures (primarily metric and rhyming), acting as “background” metaphors. The main mechanism of artistic effect here is the principle of violation (through estrangement) of conventions established within the artistic-aesthetic canon, which usually underpins the “contract” with the reader (their genre presuppositions and expectations). The aesthetic effect is subjectively mediated and multiple, and the reception of the estranging artistic realization depends on the degree of (dis)comfort within the reader’s concept of the aesthetic.

Retransmitting this discursive indeterminacy in the TL text while preserving the potential multiplicity of effect is essential both for poetic singharmonism and for realizing the retransmission strategy in the “function-translator” format. From this perspective, the translator should not normalize conventional communicative structures deformed by estranging “noises,” nor fit an innovative SL text into the TL artistic-aesthetic canon. Instead, it is necessary to identify the artistic structures in SL that oppose its canon and select discursively equivalent TL analogues (equivalent in function and marking, though not always structurally equivalent due to linguistic and prosodic asymmetry) from the repertoire of TL discursive structures.

At the same time, artistic-aesthetic canons, which shape typical genre expectations, reader-scripiter presuppositions, and aesthetic principles in each culture, also exhibit asymmetry, which can lead to radical adaptation of the text, sometimes unconsciously, in terms of the effects of translation choices on discourse in the receptive phase. Due to this asymmetry, translation requirements differ for British and American poetry.

Overall, discourse analysis, based on the sequential consideration of the factors proposed in this study, allows the translator not only to reconstruct the logic of the author’s discourse and mechanisms of textual content organization in source language, but also to retransmit the semantic indeterminacy of the discourse to target language recipients in a singharmonic manner, to the extent allowed by asymmetries of language, prosody, and artistic-aesthetic canons. The success of the receptive phase of the translation interdiscourse depends directly on the discursive competence and aesthetic preferences of the target language recipient.

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