

НЕКЛАСИЧНІ ПРАКТИКИ ЛІТЕРАТУРОЗНАВСТВА

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MUSICALITY OF A LITERARY WORK AND TRANSLATION ISSUE

A translation is no translation... unless
it will give you the music of a poem
along with the words of it.

John Milton Synge,
The Aran Islands

The paper is aimed at clarifying the interpretation of the notion “musicality” of a literary work, both prose and poetic, in literary studies; the notion of translation of poetry in translation studies and different approaches to poetry translation. An attempt has been made to evaluate the translator’s gains and losses in reproducing musicality of a poetic work. The translation of Anna Akhmatova’s poem “Creativity” (into English) by John Woodsworth has been analysed and taken as an example of translator’s fidelity to semantic meaning, sound and imagery of the original.

Key words: musicality, poetry, rhyme, rhythm, emotive connotation, alliteration, assonance, semantic meaning.

У статті розглянуто поняття «музикальність» літературного твору, «поетичний переклад» і різні підходи до перекладу поезії, а також проблеми відтворення музикальності вірша в перекладі. Як приклад взято переклад англійською мовою вірша Анни Ахматової «Творчість», виконаний Джоном Вудсвортом, який демонструє вірність перекладача оригіналу і відтворення його художньої цінності. Це римований поетичний текст, що відповідає оригіналу за змістом, формою та художньою своєрідністю. Цей переклад має однаковий емоційний та естетичний вплив як на англомовного читача, так і на російськомовного. Статтю присвячено вивченню музикальності літературного твору та питання перекладу. Зазначається, що музикальність літературного твору означає її схожість з певними принципами, формальними особливостями або виразними засобами, які характерні для музики. Музика і література співіснували з найдавніших часів і мають фундаментальну схожість за формою. На відміну від візуальних мистецтв, музика і література носять переважно тимчасовий характер. На думку деяких вчених, музика і література виникали як єдина традиція усного оповідання, що супроводжувалося музикою.

Вивчаючи музико-літературні взаємодії, зазначаємо, що як системи мова і музика мають деякі спільні ознаки, незважаючи на їх відмінності. У творах, які поєднують слова і музику, такі спільні характеристики можуть активізувати процес обміну. З одного боку, наявність звуку означає, що ми часто усвідомлюємо звукову, матеріальну та абстраговану форму слів. З іншого боку, наявність творів, з їх здатністю до посилення, підкреслює можливості звуку. Три типи взаємодії літератури і музики виділив Стівен Пол Шер, а саме: література в музиці (так звана музична програма, музика плюс література, будь-яка вокальна музика), музика і література.

Музика надихнула багатьох письменників і поетів, багато творів емоційної прози і поезії базуються на музичних композиціях і предметах. Музика та музичні виступи часто з'являються як елементи сюжету та поведінка персонажів. Музика є невід'ємною частиною художнього світу багатьох літературних творів. Використовуючи музику, автор може вводити події і персонажі в певний культурний контекст і створювати специфічний емоційний ефект. Музичальністю вважається різноманітність інтермедіальності, процес взаємодії різних засобів масової інформації у вузькому сенсі різних видів мистецтва; вона безпосередньо пов'язана з поняттям інтертекстуальності. Будь-які твори мистецтва можна розглядати як текст, а порівняння можна зробити з візуального уявлення літератури та живопису, як це визначено Хефферманом, словесне зображення живопису в кіно, літературі та архітектурі.

У літературознавстві розглянуто феномен музичальності літературних творів, так звані музичальні літературні тексти та інтертекстуальні кореляції. Намагаючись захопити різні зв'язки між літературою та музикою, багато науковців досліджували взаємозв'язок між ними та взаємодією між двома мистецтвами. А зараз «дослідження музики і слова» є популярним напрямом досліджень у міждисциплінарному академічному світі.

Ключові слова: музичальність, поетика, рима, ритм, емотивна конотація, алітерація, асонанс, семантичне значення.

The phenomenon of musicality of literary works, so-called musical literary texts, and intertextual correlations have been examined in literary studies by the theorists of intertextuality. The study of intertextuality is based on the critical hypothesis that every work of literature is, in certain various ways, affected by prior texts [10, p. 86]. Trying to capture different links between literature and music, many scholars have explored the relationship between them and the interaction of the two arts. And now “music and word studies” is a popular field of research in an interdisciplinary academic world. As Peter Dayan puts it: “Critics such as Werner Wolf, Stephen Paul Scher, Edward Said, Eric Prieto, Lawrence Kramer... have not shied away from posing the most awkward questions concerning the difficulties of articulating the word-music relationship in academic discourse” [4].

Music and literature have coexisted since ancient times and they have fundamental similarity in form. Unlike the visual arts which exist in space, music and literature are primarily temporal in nature. According to some scholars, music and literature arose as a single tradition of oral storytelling accompanied by music.

Werner Wolf maintains that “Music shares with fiction and literature some essential features which differentiate these arts from the visual arts and create a certain basis for literary experiments with musicalization: most notable in this respect is the temporal dimension common to both music and literature and also the fact that both arts, necessarily or optionally, use an acoustic channel for their realization. In other respects, music is so markedly different from literature, and especially from fiction that it can be duly called “fiction’s Other” [11, p. 76].

Mentioning twentieth-century musicalized fictions such as Anthony Burgess’s *Napoleon Symphony*, “*The String Quarter*” by Virginia Woolf, Aldous Huxley’s *Point Counter Point* and Josipovichi’s *Fuga*, Werner Wolf further adds that “music as fiction’s Other thus becomes a welcome alternative which allows writers to abandon traditional referential storytelling and its implications, while still guaranteeing aesthetic coherence and control for a text which otherwise might be in danger of disintegration”.

Exploring musico-literary interactions, Hazel Smith, states that “... both systems, language and music, have some shared characteristics, despite their differences. In works that combine words and music, such shared characteristics can activate a process of exchange. On the one hand, the presence of sound means we often become aware of the sonic, material and abstracted form of words. On the other hand, the presence of words, with their strong capacity for reference, highlights the referential potentialities of sound” [9, p. 24].

Three types of interaction of literature and music has been distinguished by Stephen Paul Scher, namely, literature in music (so-called program music), music plus literature, in (any vocal music) and music in literature.

Werner Wolf speaks about “overt vs covert” intermediality and distinguishes two types of indirect intermediality regarding the way in which the non-dominant medium appears within the dominant medium: “showing” or imitation, as opposed to “telling” or thematization.

Music and musical performance often appear as elements of plot, setting, characters. Music is an integral part of the artistic world of many literary works. Using music, the author can introduce the events and characters into a particular cultural context and create a specific emotive effect.

Some critics believe that musical-literary preoccupation become widespread within the modernist movement.

The importance of music in the works of James Joyce and their musicality, as noted by Zack Bowen, has long been acknowledged by Joycean scholars. Being a recognized master of prosody, Joyce widely used orchestration means (alliteration, onomatopoeia, etc.) in his prose and poetry.

In his works, starting from "Dubliners", "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man", "Ulysses" to "Winnegans Wake", Joyce achieves the synthesis of the surrounding world, the original uniting element of which is sound. And sound is expressed in the form of a "sounding word". Sound symbolism is an integral part of mytho-poetical system of Joyce's works.

By means of "word music", Joyce tried to express the idea of unity and beauty of the world in his prose and poetry. "Sirens" episode from "Ulysses" has probably the largest number of interpretations by Joycean scholars.

Eric Prieto explains the reason for the use of music by modernist writers: "When novelist turn to a musical form for their model, they are in essence, seeking a way to use repetition and variation in order to bring out the linearity of plot-based form. All of the various musical structures and techniques that have been invoked (often rather confusedly) as alternatives to or supplement for the muthos – leitmotiv, sonata form, theme and variations, counterpoint and fugue, and so on – must... be understood in terms of this opposition between linearity (muthos) and repetition (music). For all these writers, music suggests ways to bring narrative form into line with a search for truth that relies on perfecting the representation of thought" [7, p. 203].

Musicality is considered to be a variety of intermediality, the process of interaction of various media, in a narrow sense, of different kinds of art; it is directly connected with the notion of intertextuality. Any work of art can be regarded as a text and comparison can be made of literature and painting (ekphrasis – the verbal representation of visual representation, as defined by Hefferman), painting and cinema, literature and architecture. Musicality of a literary work means its similarity with certain principles, formal peculiarities or expressive means which are characteristic of music.

Poets always use the structures of musical origin for their verses/poems, such as the sonata, the ballad, the ode, the lyric. In Greek the word "poet" meant not only a "poetry writer", but also a composer. While composing verses, poets held in head the melody they used in versification.

"Music meets verse to become Poetry" – these words belong to Stephane Mallarme, the leader of French symbolists, and a Romantic in the first place.

Poetry and music have much in common: common genres from song to opera, common evolution of these genres in the history of culture, and the world of sounds which becomes an art, musical, poetic or musico-poetic, when organized by means of intonation.

As it has been noted by Yu. Galatenko, poetic studies and musicology use similar terminology. Such linguistic terms as sentence, phrase, period can be applied to music. There are terms which are common to the theory of music and the theory of poetry, for example, image, pause, euphony, tempo, metre, rhythm, motive, leitmotive. But sometimes these terms have different meanings [1, p. 116].

The study of poem's musicality does not mean conventional association of poetry with music. Some scholars distinguish separate parameters of a poem which influence its musicality: instrumentation (alliteration, assonance), rhythm, rhyme. Others analyze musicality as a poetological motion of romantic aesthetics and investigate the practical use of musicality in poetry of Romantic poets.

Poets themselves expressed their ideas on the relationship between music and poetry. Ezra Pound, for instance, saw music as an integral part of poetry: "Poetry is composition of words set to music. Most other definitions of it are indefensible, or, worse, metaphysical" [8, p. 437].

"The proportion or quality of the music may, and does vary; but poetry withers and dries out when it leaves music, or at least an imagined music, too far behind it".

J.S. Eliot in his essay "The Music of Poetry" states (as quoted by Paul Chancellor) that a "musical poem is a poem which has a musical pattern of sound and a musical pattern of the secondary meanings of the words which compose it... those two patterns are dissoluble and one".

We should take into account the conventional character of the term “musicality”. When applied to poetry, musicality is not the sum of all musical phenomena. Any comparison of two arts, music and poetry, is metaphorical.

Speaking about a poem’s musicality does not mean imposing the laws of one art onto another. Musicality means not only the phonetic ornamentation of poem, but also the usage of musical images in poetry. One of the features which make poetry closer to music is its flowing nature. Musicality is usually associated with the notion of melody, harmony, euphony and poeticality.

As D. Connolly states, “Poetry is also informed by a “musical mode” or inner rhythm, regardless of whether there is any formal metre or rhyming pattern, which is one of the most elusive yet essential characteristics of the work that translator is called upon to translate in the target language” [3, p. 168].

A good “vers libre” as emphasized by O. Sedakova has a very subtle sound organization, though it is difficult to describe it and to find a pattern in it. The “verse melody” is not an exact copy of a musical melody proper, as verse’s rhythm is not a musical rhythm proper.

Musicality is evident in the rhythms of the language of J. S. Eliot’s poems (“The Waste Land”, “Love Song of Alfred Prufrock”, “Four Quartets”) which have been explored in relation to figurative music.

“... it’s precisely in cadence that Eliot’s work survives” in “Undead Eliot: How the Waste Land Sounds Now”, as Lesley Wheeler states.

Musicality can be defined as the meaningful totality of a poem’s sound (rhythm, rhyme, assonance), sense (semantic meaning, emotional or other effect on the reader) and structure (which includes repetition and form).

It is impossible to say that one specific device creates the verse music. Only the unity of all stylistic, phonetic and compositional means contributes to the musicality of a poem. Musicality is almost metaphysical phenomenon, partly intuitive, which can not be absolutely understood.

All sound elements of a poem are subordinated to one purpose – to create the verse’s intonation. It is the presence of intonation which makes poetry akin to music. Intonation is the poem’s foundation which organizes poetic diction phonetically into syntagmas, and provides an orderly form for rhythmical structure. It is intonation that establishes the relations between phrases, sets the tempo and conveys emotions. Intonation combines all sound means of language. Comprising all these elements, intonation is aimed at creating meaning.

The translation of poetry is the most debated issue in translation studies. And there exist different views and approaches and strategies used in poetry translation. **One should distinguish** three kinds of poetry translation: verse into prose, verse into verse and poetic translation (vers blanc).

Some scholars and poets believe that it is poetry that is lost translation, others assert that it is impossible to reproduce the form of a poem, while still others claim that both meaning and style should be kept intact in the target text.

As noted by David Connolly, “Today most literary translators stress the need for a lively, imaginative and widely-accessible translation; and a scholarly work such as Nabokov’s interlinear translation of Eugene Onegin is seen as an anomaly”.

Connolly states that the original poem will have to be recognizable in the translation on all levels on which it functions: semantic, stylistic and pragmatic. And in addition to the difficulties, “... involved in accounting for content and form, sounds and rhythms, feelings and associations the translator of poetry has also to produce a text that will function as a poem in the target language”.

Goncharenko, as quoted by Connolly would seem to be expressing a similar view “... at the basis of any translation lies the law of triune (threefold) equivalence, observed and identified in works by Dr. A. Neubert and Dr. A. Schweitzer. First, of semantic equivalence, due to which the translation conveys exactly what the original does. Second, of stylistic equivalence, which makes the translation a stylistic match to the original. Third, of perspective, or pragmatic equivalence, which assures the identity of impact exercised by the translation and the original on the respective readers” [2, p. 7].

Translator like a “transparent glass” must, on the one hand, convey the uniqueness of the original, and on the other hand, introduce it into the receptor culture.

Simon Armitage, a poet and translator, speaking about his experience of translation of “Sir Gawain and the Green Knight”, the late 14th century chivalric epic, a component of the Arthurian

legend, (from Middle English into Modern English) says: “What gets lost is the musicality, the alliterative musicality of the poem. I wanted to foreground and showcase that musicality because without it it’s just a story. Just narrative information”.

According to Connoly “Translation in general may be a science and a craft, but the translation of poetry is also an art and requires talent, creativity and inspiration”.

“... The difficulty of accounting for all the various aspects and functions of the original poem has led many translators and poets alike to declare that translating poetry is impossible. I side with those who, like Brodsky, see it rather as the art of the impossible”.

Visual elements of a poem, including the length of stanza, for instance, should be taken into account in translation.

Mario Laranjeira, discussing the issue of poetry translatability, mentions a textual marker of signification, “visual legibility” of a poetic text (visual distribution of the textual mass on the page), the main function of which is to generate the effect of the poem or “the poem-effect”.

He believes that “for the translator of poetry, the translation starts with transposing visual legibility. A sonnet should be translated by a sonnet, a poem in free verses by a poem in free verses, and so on... visual legibility is the guardian of certain traits that place poetic translation in its time and in its cultural space” [5, p. 96].

Francis R. Jones maintains that “final version of poem’s translation rarely falls into one of the archetypes proposed by the Lefevere (phonetic, semantic, metrical, prose, rhyming, etc.), but are usually hybrid in nature”.

With poetic forms, as quoted by Francis R. Jones, Holmes sees translators as choosing between three main approaches:

– *Mimetic*: replacing the original form. This implies openness to the source culture’s foreignness. However, the form may carry different way in the receptor culture.

– *Analogical*: using a poetic form with a similar culture function to the source form. This implies a belief that receptor-culture poetics has universal values.

– *Organic*: choosing a form that best suits the translator’s “own authenticity” of response to the source.

The main task for a translator of poetry is to reproduce the artistic values of the original so that translation makes an impression on the reader similar to the one (impression) produced by the original.

Justin Nagurney, analyzing the translations of Akhmatova’s Requiem and Poem Without a Hero by Nancy Anderson, writes that the translator “fails to give the reader an adequate understanding of the intrinsic beauty of the poetry. Though, Akhmatova’s style was rooted in the tangible reality of Russian fiction, it was the musicality of her verse which set her verse apart from her contemporaries. Akhmatova was a master of alliteration, assonance and rhyme” [6, p. 213].

And he adds that an earlier translator D. M. Thomas’s version which “has the exact same meter as a Russian, but compromises some of the assonance, seems more true to Akhmatova’s musicality that Anderson’s. ... in preserving the end-rhymes, Anderson has unfortunately abated much of the lyrical subtlety that made Akhmatova’s verse so lovely in the first place”.

John Woodsworth writes that the “musicality (or hearing eye) that come with metred, rhyming poetry thus constitutes an integral part of the poem itself. Subtracting the dimensions of rhyme and metre, inherent in the original genre of the work, takes the target-language perceiver further away from the original and deprives him of the musicality built into the work of art by poet”.

“If the poetic translator is to be faithful to a whole range of dimensions of the original, from the quantitatively thinking I to the qualitatively feeling eye, he must apply the same principles governing word-selection to the translation as the poet applied to the original work – i. e. he must choose his words with as much respect to their sounds, syllabic content and relation to other words in a poem to their semantic and emotional signification”.

He further analyses the five published translations of the 16-line poem “Tvorchestvo” / “Creativity” by Anna Akhmatova into English (from the cycle “The mysteries of craft”). And then he shares his own translation of the poem, “an attempt to do justice to both meaning and musicality”.

ТВОРЧЕСТВО

Бывает так: какая-то истома;
В ушах не умолкает бой часов;
Вдали раскат стихающего грома.
Неузнанных и пленных голосов
Мне чудятся и жалобы и стоны,
Сужается какой-то тайный круг,
Но в этой бездне шёпотов и звонов
Встаёт один, всё победивший звук.
Так вокруг него непоправимо тихо,
Что слышно, как в лесу растёт трава,
Как по земле идет с котомкой лихо...
Но вот уже слышались слова
И лёгких рифм сигнальные звоночки, –
Тогда я начинаю понимать,
И просто продиктованные строчки
Ложатся в белоснежную тетрадь.

CREATIVITY

I sometimes feel a kind of weary languor:
The clock chime never ceasing in my ears,
And far away the dying thunder's clangour.
I seem to hear the plaintive moans and fears
Of captive and unrecognisable voices...
Some kind of secret circle closes in,
But through the endless void of whispered noises
One all-pervading sound transcends the din.
Around it reigns inexorable quiet,
As grass is heard to grow in woodland earth,
Or knapsacked grief to tread the globe and ply it...
But listen, wait, already I hear words
And little telltale sounds of rhymes a-skipping, –
Now, all at once I start to understand,
And, simply, lines dictated come a-tripping
Onto the snow-white pages from my hand.

English translation by John Woodsworth
Ottawa (Canada), 24 December 2001

Having analyzed the translation of John Woodsworth, we can say that no losses, but only gains are visible in the translator's attempt to preserve the poem's sense, style and imagery. All the dimensions of the original poem (of rhyme, semantic meaning, emotive connotation) have been preserved in the target-language text and a suitable balance is achieved between meaning and musicality.

We believe that J. Woodsworth's translation has the emotional and aesthetic impact on the target-language (English) reader similar to that produced on the source-language (Russian) reader.

To conclude we can say that it is up to a translator to choose the sacrifice to make. And the choice depends on a particular poet and a particular poetic work. Sometimes it is better to sacrifice musicality to preserve meaning, while in other cases, a translator's decision may be in favour of preserving word music.

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