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AN EXTENSION OF THE POETIC TEXT COMPREHENSION THROUGH COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ITS MULTILINGUAL TRANSLATION VARIANTS

Abstract

Sound instrumentation of poetic speech as one of the drivers producing direct influence on the emersion and genesis of sound symbolism in the tissue of poetic texts has always been, and remains a subject of vivid scientific interest and polemics among linguists and literary theorists of both the past and nowadays. A correlation between phonetic significance and semantic meaning still remains a subject of clarification and more precise definition. Those who tried to find a correlation between the formal and the notional used to apply for studying appropriate stylistic means of sound arrangement of poetical works, such as paronymic attraction, parallelism, and poetical etymology. In the later research works it is stated that while the stylistic means foregrounded by the precursors are comprehended as those deliberately used by poets to their full extent, the area of the subconscious mind should be considered of at least equal importance in this regard, as the latter produces great influence on the ways of artistic imagery formation as well as ability of its further perception and appreciation. In this sense it appears that the connection between sounding and meaning, or *sound symbolism*, can hardly be revealed in monolingual poetic sample. Contemporary linguistics has no doubt about the fact, that sounds of speech, even spelled separately, do have an ability of forming non-sound associations and images. The aim of this article is to find links which unite a unique poetic whole with its multilingual translations.

Key words: multilingual translations, poetry, poetic speech, instrumentation, sound symbolism.

Introduction

Seamless connection between poetic “sound painting” and meaning, the unity of words and images provide sound instrumentation with a rich representational

potential the comprehension of which may however be purely individual. Coming into a certain context, sounds of speech acquire potential for creating emotional effect needed to the author. This is their way to transmit

additional information. Provided that meaning of language sounds is intuitively comprehended by the speakers of this language, parallelly, there appears the question, if appropriate associations are possible to be translated into other languages, taking into consideration different language systems, diverse mental background, and unequal imaginary parallels.

This article is an attempt to investigate a phonetic sound repetition, as a special case of mutual interaction of sound symbolism and sound instrumentation and a factor of correlation between emotional background and sounding of a poem, as well as to analyze possibilities for recreation of associational potential of alliterations and assonances in multilingual translations of R. Burns' selected poems.

Theory

The influence of translation, as a multicomponent factor of systemic changes within a literary composition on the potential for recreation of semantic mood and context integrity whenever the primary features (meanings) of the original language are changed, is undisputable. It should be noted that among contemporary linguists the very concept of "meaning" is considered beyond the scope of communication itself, but as a basic cognitive unit which forms a worldview of an individual (Leontiev, 2015). Thereby, national and cultural specifics of individual language

context is composed of a number of factors including, but not limited to those related to cultural sensitivities (taboo, stereotypes and patterns), social situation or specific ethnic features of the language. Thus, the artistic (poetical) integrity of the original language does not appear as simply individual set of utterances, but as a complex pool of verbal and non-verbal "behaviors" which in turn corresponds to the appropriate pool inherent to the language of translation.

When it comes to perception and comprehension, language consciousness of different ethnicities shows obvious national and cultural variance. And this is hardly a single challenge on the way towards the formation of adequate translational pattern. Investigating deep structures of poetic language, Y.N.Tynianov (1924) distinguished between major and minor attributes of lexical load and stated that in usual communication our choice of operator units is essentially governed by their major attributes, while in poetic language the major ones come along with certain minor attributes as well (Tynianov, 2007, 85). It is these minor attributes emerging in the tissue of a poetical composition which interact with each other to create appropriate semantic mood, emotional atmosphere and a vivid context while making adequate translation of a text more and more complicated respectively.

Particular incomprehensibility of this context consists in different means used by

individual language and cultural communities in order to perceive and differentiate various objects, as when it comes to e. g. nomination of colors in Oriental and European cultures, where objective (in comparison with objects of external environment) and verbal strategies, respectively, are sometimes absolutely disparate (Luria, 1974, 56). However, in this case such obvious translational challenge as selection of equivalents to cultural determinants at the level of words (word combinations) seems to be lesser to minor discrepancy as compared to necessity of recreating national determination of integral worldview in different cultures (Gachev, 2015).

Method

In view of the above, attempts of intercultural and interlanguage review of symbolic potential of linguistic sounds seem to be of great interest as well (Zhuravlev, 1974, 28). As far as poetic language is concerned, this means investigation of purely artistic factors accounted for the selection of phonetic sounds in connection with other components of language production. After all, as stated by L. S. Vygotsky: “We have our feelings melted down inside ourselves under gravity of social affection which is objectified, carried out beyond ourselves, materialized, and settled upon external objects ...” (Leontiev, 2015).

The simplest principle of sound selection in poetic language is onomatopoeia, while

sound symbolism is the most characteristic one, where certain semantic attitude induces an author to almost unconscious selection of sounds which have associative links with particular semantic features of the entire text or its peculiar significant components. Thereby, as stated by S. V. Nikroshkina, the phenomenon of universal sound symbolism is hardly observed, if corresponding languages have different structures, as to make it clear: “identical selection of sounds may raise dissimilar kinds of emotions in speakers of structurally different languages since each of them has its own phonologic expression pattern ...” (Nikroshkina, 2010).

In this particular case, the phenomenon of sound instrumentation is also considered as a special feature of poetic language. The use of sound repetitions, i.e. words with the same (or similar in terms of articulation) sound class is known as the most common variant of this versification technique. According to E.D.Polivanov, such sound classes may be defined as the “theme” of the instrumentation, which is normally arranged within the most semantically significant lexical component (Leontiev, 2015).

Thus, sound instrumentation constitutes an integral part of poetic language because of its interaction and close correlation to the semantics of a poem. As stated by W. Weidle, “poetical as well as versicular language has its echoing reflection not only in the very sounding

of verse, but in vibrations of the entire verbal tissue as harmonic extension of the meaning to be expressed” (Weidle, 1995, 75). Developing this idea, the researcher points out the fact that phonemes and their combinations as such taken apart from poetic meaning have no specific attributes other than those derived from their potential as language units. At the same time, a poet who reflects upon sounds actualizing them in words by thorough selection, bringing them together and making a seamless tissue, exemplifies a really fabulous transformation, where meanings of words are converted to a meaning of verse sounding.

Discussion and Results

In this connection, and apropos the central problem of this research, namely translation potential for recreation of emotional component enclosed into a poetic composition by means of sound instrumentation, one should remember about heated debates on the very matter of feasibility of poetry translation which give rise to sometimes polar attitudes towards this issue: from radical which followers insist (next to R. Frost) on the idea that it is impossible to achieve an adequate translation of poetry, as recreation results in nothing but killing original verses (Ozerov, 1986, 46), to philosophically moderate ones according to which poetry has a universal character, and images of real world expressed and reflected by means of different languages are mostly similar

or even equivalent, as all the people on the Earth have common mental regularities (Boguslavskaya, 1996, 215).

Based on the latter assertion, and the idea that poetry is a manifestation of universal senses and meanings, we are going to consider some selected cases of meaningful sound repetitions in R. Burns’ poems and potential for their adequate multilingual translations.

The Germanic group of languages is known to have obvious proneness to alliteration due to special strength of their consonants, particularly hushing ones. This feature is very remarkable in the individual poetic style of R. Burns’: the poet often uses repetitions of sounds (h) or (s) and others though depending on general spirits of poems. For instance, in a small quatrain from “My Heart’s in the Highlands”, the sound repetition “th” is observed as follows: “Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the *North*, / The birth-place of Valour, the country of *Worth* <...>.” The emotional spirits of the fragment, grief and sorrow for the things which are impossible to restore, are obviously underlined with a symbolic isosceles triangle with “birth” at the top and “North” – “Worth,” integral parts of the poet’s motherland, at the sides.

In the Ukrainian language translation of this quatrain, M. Lukash places an emphasis not so much on the phonetic as on the lexico-semantic component of the poem: “Будь здорова, верховино, любий рідний край, /

Честі й слави батьківщино, вольності розмай!” It is obvious that the translator deliberately deviates from the consonant sound repetitions which would overload the melodious Ukrainian sample with unnecessary associations.

Unlike M. Lukash, S. Marshak, the author of the Russian language translation, makes use of sound repetition, however, due to the lack of phonetic correspondence, utilizes a slightly homologous sound (c). It should be noted that sense of tone-painting consists in the presence of internal assonance emphasizing the meaning of the main words and thereby enhancing the creation of general integral poetic environment: “Прощай, моя родина! Север, прощай, – / Отечество славы и доблести край <...>.” It is not difficult to notice that here the harmony of Burns’ triunity is lost as well, while sound symbolism resulted from the alliteration implied in the original is not recreated. The same is true for the elegiac and lyric spirit of the poem which is changed to pretentiously exalted mood.

The phonetic palette of R. Burns’ poems is bright and multifarious, which makes its outstanding picture rather challenging for a translator. However, the affinity of Germanic languages creates conditions for more successful search of adequate sound instrumentation patterns than in the case with translations to languages of the Slavonic group. This may be illustrated by the alliteration of

sound (l) in the poem “A Red, Red Rose”: “O my *Luve's like* a red, red rose, / That's newly sprung in June: / O my *Luve's like* the *melodie*, / That's sweetly play'd in tune <...>”, which is perceived as bright and light while its repetition helps to express a mood of the lyric hero, who is full of hopes since he is in love and he is happy about this. Analysis of translation samples proves that the alliteration of sound (l) which passes through the entire song and is repeated in many lexical units (“will”, “still”, “till”, “weel” and others), is successfully recreated only in the German variant by A. von Winterfeld: “Mein *Lieb* ist *gleich* der *Melodie*, / Die süß im *Lied* erklang <...>.”

Sound invariance of languages which belong to different groups of Indo-European origin produces a remarkable impact on the selection of lexical units by a translator. This impact sometimes results in occurrence of sound repetitions of even inverse nature, e. g. assonance instead of alliteration, and vice versa. This may be illustrated with the following fragment of “Ye Banks and Braes”: “Ye *banks* and *braes* o' *bonie* Doon, / How can ye *bloom* sae fresh and fair? / How can ye chant, ye little *birds* < ... >.” The alliterated sound (b) echoes like a heavy bell, so shrilly, one can't help to notice how sorrowful the lyric hero feels. However, in E. Feldman's variant the corresponding emotional state is expressed by means of assonance of sound (o), which, in our opinion, is not a controversy, but rather a

kind of emotional deepening in the situation: “<...> *Хожу одна, совсем одна, / Полна печальных дум* <...>.” The suppressed weeping of pain and suffering (assonance of (u) and (o)) breaks out of German translation (by A. von Winterfeld) as well: “Ihr *Ufer und du Thal des Doon*, / *Wie könnt ihr blüh’n so frisch und schön!*? <...>.” But the most successful in our opinion is the Ukrainian translation: “<...> *Ходжу я, повен журних дум, - / Хоч як пишються квітки, / Хоч як виспівують пташки* <...>.” M. Lukash utilizes alliteration “х”/ “к”, as if the hero were almost inaudibly but heavily sighing, full of grief.

Conclusion

To sum it up, we should note that perception of sound semantics in different languages, which was formed under individual

ethnic and cultural impact, obviously has its unifying factor and the latter lies in the universal, transcendental character of poetry.

It’s the ability of poetry to create concepts, common to different cultures, which makes the translations exist. In this sense, when we come back to possibilities of recreation of sound repetition content components in the translation, it should be underlined the main factor here is the mastery of a translator, because it is he who is able to reconcile phonetic expressive model and universal sound symbolism, thus eliminating weakening semantic discrepancy.

At the same time, no one can argue that multilingual translational experience allows the fullest level of comprehension, as well as the thinnest possibility to fill poetic message as a whole.

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