

## THE METHOD OF VERSE TRANSLATION: DICTUM-MODUS POTENTIAL (peculiarities of content and form)

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**Abstract.** The article presents the hypothesis that the method of a verse translation is determined by its dictum-modus potential expressed both explicitly and implicitly. The rhythm-syntactic level of the poem specifically organizes implicit content of the poem that is proved by a comparative verse analysis. The method of translation chosen by the author reflects dictum-modus potential of original texts and a unique style of the author-translator. This hypothesis is checked on the material of I. Bunin's poem «Молодость» and its translation into English by I. Zheleznova "Youth". The verse is studied as a special form of verbal organization that is not similar either to the piece of music or to the prose. The verbal form of the verse (determined by its composition, syntax and probably unique author's characteristics) results in the necessity of *implicit* pragmatic information, while prose conveys to the recipient this extra linguistic information *explicitly*. Due to this fact, there are some specific forms and content peculiarities of the verse. The hypothesis of this article is that some line positions in a poem are "*semantically strong*" and others are "*semantically weak*". "*Semantically strong*" positions are determined, on one hand, by the *poem structure*: this is the end of the line, stanza or the whole poem. This rhythmical structure is the semantic representation of a poem. The rhythm is capable of *emphasizing the psychological verse content*. On the other hand, semantically strong position is made by the syntax. The dictum-modus comparative analysis of verse lets us speak about the dictum-modus potential of the original and translated poetic texts. The research interest is focused on the extra language categories of the poetic texts, expressed through the rhythmical-syntactic poem structures (strong poetic and syntactic positions), lexical-semantic repetitions of significant words. These language structures model the original text conceptual structures and are actualized in translated poetic texts. In I. Zheleznova's translation the central poem image of youth created by I. Bunin according to the principal of contrast seasonal description is changed. In the translation there prevail the audial images expressing, probably, the translator's autobiographical mood. The lyrical mood of the poem is expressed in the original through the strong positions (the end of the line and neutral order changes), also through poem content connections made by the lexemes.

**Keywords:** modus; implicit information; explicit information; translation strategy; verse; text semantics; text structure; lexical meaning; semantic component; verse rhythm.

### Introduction

The way of translation is determined by different factors (author's emotion, conversational tone, closeness to the original content, rhythms

play). So, the analysis of translated texts must be based on these verse characteristics. The method of translation analysis, demonstrated in this article, makes an accent on specific cognitive and language structures existing in verse and activating translation mechanisms. Scientific interest of this research is the specific information of the poetry extracted by the translator from the text in the process of perceiving. This extracted information is different from the prose.

The paper focuses on dictum-modus organization of the proposition and further, the whole poem in general. The idea of the proposition duality advanced by Russian linguist T.V. Shmeleva seems to be productive from the point of view of the translation method. Any proposition contains both **objective information** about the world and **subjective information**. Subjective information expressed by the speaker at the moment of communication is featured in the work of T.V. Shmeleva [1]. Searching for objective-subjective information in translation is the purpose of this article.

**The relevance** of this research is determined by the character of language material - poetic texts reflecting peculiarities of lexical and rhythmic form of the poetry different from the prose. Following the famous Russian scientist V. Zhirmunskiy we study the material of poetry as a specific form of language where a word is influenced by its meaning [2: 14].

**The goal** of the article is to determine lexical-semantic, phonetic and rhythm-syntactic regularities of original and translated verse organization, to study the peculiarities of their dictum-modus transformations in translation.

This research is within the framework of modern translation theory aimed at studying universal basis in translation of poetic text from one language to another. This determines the relevance of the research. There are scientific works devoted to the description of some universal features laid in the process of translation (typological dominant of the text by N.V. Shutemova [3], the theory of poetic universals translation by K.I. Leontyeva [4], the theory of topic groups by I.U. Popova [5], the theory of lexical typology by T.V. Bychkova [6], the method of quantitative analysis of accuracy and liberty of translation by M.L. Gasparov [7].

### Material and methods

As a linguistic material we analyze the poem by I. Bunin «*Молодость*», written in 1916 and a Russian translation - the poem «*Youth*» by I. Zheleznova. I. Zheleznova is the author of the poetry book including the most important poems by A. Pushkin, M. Lermontova, F. Tutcheva, A. Blok, A. Ahmatova, V. Mayakovsky translated into English [8].

The choice of this poem is determined by its programmed character in the poetry of I. Bunin, the importance of the image “youth” in the author’s world picture. This image is very dynamic and has a rich association poten-

tial. The poem contains recollections of youth associated with a positive attitude with an anxiety before future changes. The image of youth is extracted from the text integral perception, the first stanza of which is difficult for understanding. Recollections of youth are conceptualized through changing pictures of nature (spring - autumn), scenery of Russian steppe. Content multilayer of the text helps to reveal peculiarities of modus - dictum poem potential reconstructed in the Russian translation on the *model: text perception - its translation from one language system into another - this text translation into another language*.

The general problem dealt with here is the concept of dictum-modus content organization of verse. A scientific work by T.V. Shmeleva features the principal implicitness of modus categories. When the absence of its features in the proposition is a norm, but the presence is the sign of a special case [1]. The translator as an interpreter and text creator interprets its content in his own way. These meanings are connected with dictum text content on the whole or with one of its elements. From this point of view, the category of estimation is contained in the proposition and is very often expressed through the intonation (not evidently) [Ibid.]. The intonation itself, rhythmic organization of the verse (making it different from the prose) lets us look at the verbal verse organization in a different way, to show their dictum-modus potential. T.V. Shmeleva gives us the metaphorical comparison. She compares a proposition dictum potential with a keyboard. Every proposition is like a separate note or a complex. According to this metaphorical comparison modus is similar to the string music instrument. All the strings should sound at the same time. And every time every string gives a unique sound. [Ibid.: 28]. A unique string sound is appearing in the translation into Russian. The author's interpretation of the text aimed at its integral and conceptual understanding. Poetic text goes through some transformations in the process of translation into another language. The character of these transformations depends on specific implicit information expressed on different text levels:

- lexical-semantic level (regular repetitions of the same words in the borders of one stanza or stanzas; words with the same semes; words of the same lexical-semantic groups or categories);
- phonetical level (alliterations);
- rhythmical-syntactic and wider compositional level.

The hypothesis in this article is as follows. Verse has a specific rhythmical-syntactic and compositional organization. This idea is studied very thoroughly because the compositional organization of the text organizes the verse content and allows expressing subjectively important meanings.

The theoretical background of this hypothesis is the ideas formulated by a famous Russian linguist L.V. Sakharny [9] developed in the modern works of E. Uryson [10, 11, 12, etc.]. The hypothesis is that some line positions in the line are *“semantically strong”* and others are *“semantically*

*weak*". "**Semantically strong**" positions are determined, on one hand, by the **poem structure**: this is the end of the line, stanza or the whole poem. This rhythmical structure is the semantic representation of a poem. The rhythm is capable of **emphasizing the psychological verse content**. On the other hand, semantically strong position is made by the syntax:

1. **The violation of word order.**
2. **The end of the sentence and the end of the attached phrase.**

Semantically strong positions may be divided into **semantically strong poem positions** and **semantically strong syntactic positions**. According to E. Uryson, we can probably claim that semantically strong position in the poem is marked on the phonological level. This is obvious for the end of the line (stanza) and for the end of the sentence (attached phrase). These positions are marked by different pauses and specific prosodies.

As far as the violation of word order in an every day speech is concerned, it also is marked with a specific prosody. The violation of word order psychologically emphasizes the fragment of the proposition. On the whole, the fragment of the proposition in a semantically strong position (poetic or syntactic) is psychologically emphasized [10, 11]. The meaningful importance of the line end is proved by experimental researchers of verse perception. According to these researchers, the end of the poem is a so-called physical border deliberately made by the poet and not letting to return to what we have just read [12].

Comparative analysis of original and translated texts reveals the peculiarities of verse form and content. As the object of analysis we study the Russian poem and its English translation.

As the main method we use the method of cognitive modelling, structure-semantic and comparative analysis.

**The method of analysis.** The dictum-modus potential of poems is described in two stages.

At the first stage, every line in the first and the second stanzas of Russian poem «*Молодость*» by I. Bunin are subjected to a lexical-semantic analysis.

Semantically strong poetic positions, expressed by the end of the line or stanza, convey extra language categories (estimation, motive and the purpose of speech communication, communicative intention, etc.). The end of the line lexemes form rhythmical pairs and makes conceptual units, resulted in association chains in a recipient's consciousness (reader's, translator's).

Such conceptual units are realized also on the level of semantically strong syntactic positions. These positions are based on the semantically important foregrounding of the words. Lexical, phonetic repetitions and also repetitions of semantically similar words (with repeated semes), syntactic parallelism, etc. are studied in the article as the author's pragmatic markers that present his attitude to verse content.

At the second stage, we compare the poem's dictum-modus potential, finding out the role of dictum configurations and modus categories in the language picture of the world modelling process. This modelling is studied from the point of view of poets-translators.

## Research and results

*The first stage* of Russian verse analysis.

### **Молодость**

*В сухом лесу стреляет длинный кнут,  
В кустарнике трещат коровы,  
И синие подснежники цветут,  
И под ногами лист шуршит дубовый.  
И ходят дождевые облака,  
И свежим ветром в сером поле дует,  
И сердце в тайной радости тоскует,  
Что жизнь, как степь, пуста и велика.*

### **THE FIRST STANZA (original)**

**В сухом лесу стреляет длинный кнут,**

The highlighted word in this line is *кнут* at the end of the line in a strong poem position. The word *кнут* itself isn't associated with the concept of youth, thus it appears as the result of poetic text development. The changes in the direct word order attract our attention (*compare.: кнут стреляет*), where the verb *стреляет* is in a strong syntactic position. The seme of the sound is actualized in the verb semantics and alliterations (*кнут, стреляет*).

**В кустарнике трещат коровы,**

The lexeme *коровы* is on the line end, thus in a strong poetic position. Semantically neutral word order is broken once again by highlighting the verb *трещат* containing the semantic component *sound*.

**И синие подснежники цветут,**

There are highlighted two words *синие* and *цветут*. The strong position of line end and accentologically highlighted word *сИние* let us tell about an important semantic element, which is in a specific line position in the lexeme. In this context these are lexemes with the color semantics.

**И под ногами лист шуршит дубовый.**

It's obvious that a strong position of the word *дубовый* includes this lexeme into the syntactic position that is important from the point of view of implicitly expressed concept of the lyrical hero's youth. We suggest that the image of an oak is associated with the Western world. This suggestion is based on our practical knowledge about the world and about the geograph-

ical localization of this plant. The lexeme *шуршит* (containing the seme *sound*) is highlighted by its strong poetic position when the lexeme *лист* is highlighted with the help of intonation.

Let's draw conclusions from the first stanza analysis.

The dictum information, expressed in the proposition, is realized in the first stanza through the nature description.

The image of nature gets some estimative and individually author's connotations forming extra content of the stanza. Lexical units with *nature* semantics are involved into the more complicated structure - the image *youth*, which is developed in Bunin's recollections.

Semantically important oppositions: *кнут – цветут; коровы – дубовый* (taking into the account cultural-symbolic connotations of this word). Due to these oppositions, the image of youth is associated with bright pictures. These pictures are different in their emotional estimation (*high - low; sublime - everyday*). Positive rational estimation of this image is made by the only color adjective *синие* having in the text metrically highlighted stressed position. Taking into the account the fact that blue color in I. Bunin's poetry is a symbolic color and it's connected with the open sky, harmony and hope [13].

In strong poetic positions there are the lexemes: *стреляет кнут – подснежники цветут; трещат коровы – лист шуршит дубовый*. The words themselves are not connected. Taking into the account the lexemes with strong syntactic positions we can model the image of youth depicted by I. Bunin. The sense accent here is on the lexemes with *sound* semantics: *стреляет – трещат – шуршит*. Semantic significance of this semantic component is emphasized by alliterations. The pairs of lexemes: *стреляет и лист; кнут и цветут*, containing similar alliterations and standing in strong positions (the end of the poem line and breaking neutral word order), make an associative connection.

Audial images are typical for recollection modelling (*compare: this melody is still spinning in my head*), thus conceptually important for youth image existing in the poet's memory. Composition-syntactic content connections, which are made by line end rhymes, make different realistic pictures closer. These pictures are equally important for I. Bunin's lyrical hero. Seasonal changes are an important genre marker, which is introduced in the text with the help of epithets and verbs with a corresponding semantics: *в сухом лесу – синие подснежники цветут – лист шуршит дубовый*.

*The second stage of English verse analysis.*

### *Youth*

*A whip cracks in the wood, and cattle low  
And through the underbrush are heard to*

*Crash heavily. Leaves rustle. Snowdrops show  
Their blue heads here and there. A sudden, furtive  
Wind starts to blow, and ashen clouds are swept  
Across the skies, a cool, fresh rain presaging...  
The heart grieves and is glad that life is, strangely,  
Vast like the steppe and empty like the steppe.*

Ivan Bunin

Translated by Irina Zheleznova

### THE FIRST STANZA (translation)

#### **A whip cracks in the wood, and cattle low**

Хлыст щёлкает в лесу, и коровы мычат

In a strong poetic position of the line end is the verb *low* (*мычат*) containing the seme *sound*. The noun *whip* in a strong poetic position (in the original) is not marked (neutral syntactic position) in the translation into English. The sense accent is shifted onto the image of “mumbling cows”, which is added by the translator. The audial images are prevailing in the translation.

#### **And through the underbrush are heard to**

И через подлесок слышно

The verb of perception is in a strong poetic position. The position of this verb corresponds with the translator’s idea to use audial images as the way to convey the conceptually important information.

#### **Crash heavily. Leaves rustle. Snowdrops show**

Рушится с грохотом и треском. Листья шуршат. Подснежники показывают

The end of the poetic line puts the verb *show* (*показывать*) into the strong poetic position. The verb with the visual semantics is on the first place. The situation of sounding is made with the help of two verbal lexemes with a corresponding semantics: *crash heavily* (*трещать сильно*), *rustle* (*шуршать*).

#### **Their blue heads here and there. A sudden, furtive**

Их голубые головы здесь и там. Внезапный, тайный

The beginning of the sentence is a logical continuation of the proposition of perception, which is started in the previous line. The object of perception and its localization are concretized. In a strong poetic position are the adjectives: *sudden* (*внезапный*), *furtive* (*таинственный*) not presented in the original but deliberately highlighted by the translator.

Propositionally expressed *dictum information* is realized in the first stanza through the image of nature.

The conceptual meaning of the stanza goes beyond this image due to using some lexemes, their syntactic and rhythmical text position defined by

the translator. Under the influence of original pragmatic language means the translator represents this influence in English poem in his or her own way.

It's necessary to emphasize that the rhythmical shape of the poem is kept in its English translation. The verbs with the *sound* semantics (the total number 3), which are used in an English text, are transformed in Russian variant in 4 Russian audial verbs semantics. I. Zheleznova (following the general logics of the original) used a lot of alliterations: ***whip, cracks, crash, rustle***.

Thus, audial images typical for a recollection situation make poem conceptual basis and prevail in English translation.

Comparative analysis of lexical-semantic connections and strong poetic positions lets us find out original modus potential and its influence on the translation. In the strong first line poetic position is the verb *low*, correlating with the verb *show* in the third line and making the play of visual-audial contrast images.

Let's analyze the even lines of the translation. Here, in strong poetic positions there are sentences: ***heard to - furtive. heard to - furtive***. Comparative analysis of these original lines and their translation is interesting from the point of view of the poem impact power. In I. Bunin's text lexical-semantic connections are between the lexeme (*мрещат*) ***коровы*** and (*листв шуршит*) ***дубовый***, highlighting the seasonal (autumn) characteristics of these propositions.

As it was shown before, such a text development is based on the opposition: *high - low* associated with recollection motive with the conceptually important seasonal opposition: *spring - autumn*. The proposition of sound (*leaves rustling*) exists in the translation but has a syntactic position that is different from the original. This proposition loses the content generating function in the poem. The lack of epithets in the text of translation proves the changes in the translated text content on the whole. For example, there is no such a word combination: *в сухом лесу*, which takes part in a nature contrasts description. Rhythmically emphasized lexeme (***синие подснежники***) (represent optimism and lyrism of the Russian poem) has a descriptive character and doesn't take part in estimation image forming.

I. Bunin's narration developing his youth image - recollection is interrupted in the English translation by the adjectives *неожиданный* (*sudden*) и *тайный* (*furtive*) without denoting the object of description. So, the constructed form of the first line gets a specific significance. This constructed line character emphasizes its transitional character and mood. The youth is associated not only with seasonal changes. In the end of the first stanza, there is appearing a new interpretation of the central image and its expansion.

In the translation we can see the author's mood to convey emotionally-colored information. This translation is the result of the logical perception of original lyrical mood. Intended modification that is reflected in selected lexemes semantics. Increase in the number of audial images in the transla-



tion proves translator's retrospective perception of the original. And its correspondence with his own empiric experience.

### THE SECOND STANZA (original)

The descriptive character of the first stanza (describing the Earth's word order, seasonal changes) turns to the description of endless expanse of Russian steppe, space landscape. On the linguistic level the opposition *low - high* (*the earth - the sky*) is emphasized by the word combination (*под ногами*) put into the strong syntactic position. The sky concept is expressed through the word combination: *дождевые облака*. These word expressions make association chains based on the knowledge of man's spatial orientation.

The youth image is widened in the second stanza up to the spatial borders, in which the earth is understood as positive and happy (for example, the epithet *синие* as the symbol of harmony and hope).

#### **И ходят дождевые облака**

In the strong poetic position is the lexeme *облака*. The neutral word order is changed and the accent is on the verb *ходят*. The word *clouds* in the combination with the epithet *дождевые* make the symbolic image of water element with a positive estimation.

#### **И свежим ветром в сером поле дует,**

The dynamism of the situation is created with the help of the verb *дует* at the end of the line and the word combination *свежим ветром* put on the beginning of the line - a strong syntactic position (determined by the neutral order breaking). Wind movement has a positive estimation made by the epithet *свежим* (the wind, as we know, is the ambivalent element able to break and confuse. Compare: *\*ветер в голове, ветряная мельница, etc.*). Due to the general positive context of this line, the epithet *серый* (*серым*) also has a positive rational estimation. Compare: *\*серая мышь, серость (о человеке)*). So, in the poem «*Седое небо надо мной*» grey color symbolizes loneliness, not presented in the poem «*Молодость*».

#### **И сердце в тайной радости тоскует,**

The third line ends with the verb *тоскует* in a strong poetic position. The neutral order breaking leads to the content foregrounding of the word combination *в тайной радости*.

The lexeme *тоска* is interpreted as a strong mental anguish, emotion in the combination with boredom and sadness. So, we can see from the definition, that this lexeme has a negative estimation and express negative emotions. The general positive lyrical mood is made with the help of quantitative word overwhelming with the opposite semantics (*радость, свежий*). These words make vertical semantic connections and are syntactically emphasized. The future changes frighten the lyrical hero and he is ready for them. His grief passes away in the hope for the better.

**Что жизнь, как степь, пуста и велика.**

The meaning that is emphasized at the end of the poetic line, the stanza and the whole poem as a whole is expressed in the word *велика* ending the poem and concluding it in general.

Let's conclude the analysis of the second stanza.

The conceptually important information is expressed by the metaphor: (life - way; youth is the beginning of this way). The attitude to this image is formed on the poetic text's lexical, syntactic, rhythmical levels. (*Compare: \*жизнь прожить – не поле перейти; молодость – глупа, старость – тупа*).

The ending rhymes of 1 and 4, 2 and 3 lines are forming sense pairs: *облака – велика, дует – тоскует*. The lexeme *велика*, which is at the end of the line and the whole poem, concludes it. The youth is associated with the space, clouds and the sky having a positive feeling but not the fear or confusion. The fresh wind (*ветром... дует*) is the symbol of future changes. So, despite the fact that the heart grieves (*сердце... тоскует*) this grief is light and happy. In the stanza there formed positive, optimistic attitude of I. Bunin lyrical hero, standing in the very beginning of his life's way.

In the first stanza (in comparison with the second stanza) the character of rhyme changed. These changes seem to be conceptually significant and reflect the idea of the full life and its space component.

Repetition of the conjunction *и* in the beginning of the lines is connected with the idea of youth that is reconstructed in the I. Bunin lyrical hero's memory. This conjunction is absent in the first two lines of the first stanza and in the last line of the second stanza (concluding the recollection).

**THE SECOND STANZA (translation)****Wind starts to blow, and ashen clouds are swept**

Ветер начинает дуть, пепельные облака проносятся

In the strong poetic position are the verbs *are swept* and in the first part of the line is the neutral word order. The lexeme *облака* is used in the combination with the adjective *ashen*.

**Across the skies, a cool, fresh rain presaging...**

По небу, холодный свежий дождь предвещая...

In the strong line end poetic position is the lexeme *presaging*.

**The heart grieves and is glad that life is, strangely,**

Сердце горюет и счастливо, что жизнь, странным образом,

In this line positionally emphasized is the adverb *strangely*, expressing the translator's life attitude.

**Vast like the steppe and empty like the steppe.**

Широка, как степь и пуста как степь.

The word *steppe* (*степь*) is in the strong end of the line poetic position, ending the whole stanza and the poem in general. The significance of the metaphor *youth - steppe* (*степь широкая* (*vast*) и *пустая* (*empty*)) is emphasized by this word repetition two times in this line.

Conclude the analysis of the second stanza translation.

From the point of view of *dictum poem content*, the translation to the English language convey the full volume of information that is in the Russian poem.

*The modus potential* of the poem is the more complicated translator's task. I. Zheleznova keeps the original rhyme between 1 and 4 lines but avoids this rhyme between 2 and 3 lines.

The composition of the second stanza is rhythmically making closer the verbs: *clouds are swept* and *steppe*, underlining their conceptual closeness, the idea of space endlessness and life perspectives of lyrical hero.

The comparative linguistic analysis shows that at the end of the first stanza the translator inserts the lexeme not presenting in the original. The first line of the last stanza is ended in I. Zheleznova's translation with the epithets *sudden, furtive*. The symbolic image of the wind is associated with mystery. The strong position of the line end proves the importance of these characteristics.

In English translation, there is actualized the important information that implicitly exists in the original. This information is the quintessence of the lyrical mood expressed in the second stanza. This mood is realized in the end of the line lexemes 2 and 3 in the second stanza, emphasized in the strong position of the line end (*presaging, strangely*). All these lexemes express the translator's mood - the reader, his / her impression from the poem. The impression of ambiguity and unpredictability of future prospects having their own attractiveness (*glad*). The descriptive character of I. Bunin's poem is changed by the estimative translator's description.

So, the analyzed material lets us determine the dictum-modus potential made in interaction of different levels, lexical, syntactic and rhythmical, that are in a constant contact with each other. Dictum content of I. Bunin's original is the nature description, scenery pictures. In the process of cognitive information processing the images are rebuilt and modified under the influence of language and individual translator's experience. In I. Zheleznova's translation the central poem image of youth created by I. Bunin according to the principal of contrast seasonal description is changed. In the translation there prevail the audial images expressing, probably, the autobiographical translator's mood. The lyrical mood of the poem is expressed in the original through the strong positions (the end of the line and neutral order changes), also through poem content connections made by the lexemes. Ignoring these connections leads to the loss of a lot of information important for a poem understanding. The second stanza translation expresses the translator's intention to transmit emotionally colored information, implicitly existing in the I. Bunin's poem.

## Conclusion

The dictum-modus comparative analysis of verse lets us speak about the dictum-modus potential of the original and translated poetic texts. The research interest is focused on the extra language categories of the poetic texts, expressed through the rhythmical-syntactic poem structures (strong poetic and syntactic positions), lexical-semantic repetitions of significant words. These language structures model the original text conceptual structures and are actualized in translated poetic texts. Evidential value of the dictum-modus potential of the poems is valid in a comparative studies of the original and its translation (translations). The future studying of such a potential is perspective in a comparative research of different literature areas, separate author's individual styles.

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