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THE ROLE OF PROSODY IN THE ANGLOPHONE AND UKRAINIAN POETRY

Проаналізовано відмінності у застосуванні елементів просодії в різних часових та просторових рамках, досліджено роль просодії у верлібрах, а також визначено основні функції просодії, які необхідно брати до уваги при англо-українському віршовому перекладі.

Ключові слова: *просодія, функції просодії, структура вірша, поетична традиція, англо-український віршовий переклад.*

Проанализированы отличия в использовании элементов просодии в разных временных и пространственных рамках, изучается роль просодии в верлибрах, а также сформулированы основные функции просодии, которые необходимо учитывать при англо-украинском стихотворном переводе.

Ключевые слова: *просодия, функции просодии, структура стиха, поэтическая традиция, англо-украинский стихотворный перевод.*

The differences in the prosody employment within a certain temporal or spatial framework is analysed, and the role of prosody in vers libre is highlighted. The main functions of prosody that have to be taken into account in the process of English-Ukrainian verse translation are defined.

Key words: *prosody, prosody functions, verse structure, poetic tradition, English-Ukrainian verse translation.*

It is generally accepted that poetry as a form of creativity and art is older than prose. As Volodymyr Krekoten` points out, “at the early stages of verbal creativity there was a need for

establishing a certain distance between the artistic speech and the everyday one. That was the reason for rhythmical organisation of the artistic speech, for the so-called *enforcement*.” [1] – *translation is mine*. – *N. D.* This peculiar way of organisation ensures many important functions that poetry has been performing since its origin, including magical, mnemonic, suggestive, etc. Such distinct poetic forms as lullabies and nursery-rhymes may serve as another sample of poetry usage for the sake of its mnemonic and suggestive functions. It is also a proof that a human mind, especially so at the early stages of its development, is extremely susceptible to the speech organised in a certain rhythmical way.

The way of organisation of poetic speech is known in Literary Studies as prosody. As Katie Wales in her Dictionary of Stylistics notes, prosody has since the fifteenth century traditionally been defined as the study or rules of versification, now more commonly known as metrics [2: 323]. Indeed, the *New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* defines prosody as “the science of versification: that part of study of language which deals with the forms of metrical composition” [3: 1492]. A similar definition can be found in the Ukrainian *Literature Studies Dictionary*: “prosody is a branch of Verse Studies, which deals with classification of significant metre-related constituents of poetic diction” [4: 577] – *translation is mine*. – *N. D.* However, limiting prosody as the study of versification to the metrical or rhythmical aspect only seems unjustified. As it is rightly observed in *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*, prosody as an art of organization of poetic diction covers characteristics and analyses of the whole verse structure [5: 393], thus encompassing stanzas organization, rhythm, metre, and phonetic means.

It should be also clarified that there is more than one form of prosody. As Amy Lowell, a well-known American poet and critic, indicated, “all nations have laws of prosody, which undergo changes from time to time. The laws of English metrical prosody are well known to every one concerned with the subject. But that is only one form of prosody. Other nations have had different ones: Anglo-Saxon poetry was founded upon alliteration, Greek and Roman was built upon quantity, the Oriental was formed out of repetition, and the Japanese Hokku got its effect by an exact and never-to-be-added-to series of single syllables. So it is evident that poetry can be written in many modes” [6: 16]. Thus, it allows for a conclusion that prosody is important for all types of poems, no matter the temporal or spatial aspect. The difference in the prosody employment in any particular poetic tradition has to do with the conventional usage of a certain prosodic element (or a combination of elements) as a characteristic and a defining formal feature of poetry.

Let us compare and contrast, for example, two samples of Polish poetry belonging to different temporal periods. The first verse by Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer was first published in 1894, while the second one written by the Nobel Prize laureate Wisława Szymborska – in 1962.

Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer	Wisława Szymborska
Preludium XXXV (Mów do mnie jeszcze)	Reszta
1 ...Mów do mnie jeszcze ... Za taką rozmowę	1 Ofelia odśpiewała szalone piosenki
2 Teskniłem lata... Każde twoje słowo	2 i wybiegła ze sceny zaniepokojona ,

3 Słodkie w mem sercu wywołuje dreszcze –	3 czy suknia nie pomieła się, czy na ramiona
4 Mów do mnie jeszcze ...	4 splywały włosy tak, jak trzeba.
5 Mów do mnie jeszcze .. Ludzie nas nie słysz ą.	5 Na domiar prawdziwego, brwi z czarnej rozpaczy
6 Słowa twe dziwnie poją i kołys ą,	6 zmywą i — jak rodzona Poloniusza córka
7 Jak kwiatem, każdym słowem twem się pieszc ze –	7 liście wyjęte z włosów liczy dla pewności .
8 Mów do mnie jeszcze ... [7]	8 Ofelio, mnie i tobie niech Dania przebaczy :
	9 zginę w skrzydłach, przeżyję w praktycznych pazurkach .
	10 Non omnis moriar z miłości [8]

As Yu. Bulakhovs'ka observed, poetry of the Polish authors from the second half of twentieth century is distinctively different from the creativity of their predecessors, especially so in terms of lack of rhyme and lack of musical rhythm and melodiousness, which ensure that a poetic piece can be readily transformed into a musical one [9]. Indeed, the first verse possesses the mentioned prosodic features and was actually performed as a song by Czesław Niemen as well as by Justyna Steczkowska in her more recent album under the same title released in 2001. "Mów do mnie jeszcze" is a leading motif and a primary message of the whole piece. Apart from being emphasized with the end rhyme in a repetitive pattern *aabbccbb*, it is additionally stressed with the inner rhymes in the first line of both stanzas. Thus, rhyme is a key prosodic element in this piece. The fixed stress on the last but one syllable of any more than one-syllable word predictably results in all rhymes being feminine. It is also a cause for rather stable dactylic tetrameter (the last foot of each line is incomplete), interrupted with the iambic pentameter plus one unstressed syllable in the second and the seventh lines.

l	u	u	l	u	u	l	u	u	l	u
u	l	u	l	u	l	u	l	u	l	u
l	u	u	l	u	u	u	l	u	l	u
l	u	u	l	u	l	u	u	u	l	u
l	u	u	l	u	l	u	u	u	l	u
u	l	u	l	u	l	u	u	u	l	u
l	u	u	l	u						

Rhyme is also present in the verse by Wisława Szymborska, but the pattern is far less regular and predictable (*abcdefdef*), and traces of metre are only occasionally found. However, a structural regularity can be still observed: each line consists of the same number of syllables – 13; but for the fourth and tenth, which are the last lines in the first and second stanza respectively, and contain 9 lines each. And – due to the fixed stress – every line ends with a trochaic foot.

u	l	u	u	l	u	u	l	u	u	l	u	
u	u	l	u	u	l	u	u	u	u	u	l	u
u	l	u	u	u	l	u	u	u	u	u	l	u
u	l	u	l	u	u	u	l	u				
u	l	u	u	u	l	u	l	l	u	u	l	u
l	u	u	u	u	l	u	u	u	l	u	l	u
l	u	u	l	u	l	u	l	u	u	u	l	u
u	l	u	u	u	l	u	u	l	u	u	l	u
l	u	l	u	u	l	u	u	l	u	u	l	u
u	l	u	u	u	l	u	l	u				

Evidently, a verse cannot dispense with a special way of its structure organization, whether it is a rhymed piece, visual poetry or a vers libre. Concerning that latter one, Amy Lowell was of the opinion that it is mostly based upon cadence instead of metre in terms of prosody, and strives for a perfect balance of flow and rhythm [6: 16]. Thomas Stearns Eliot, while expressing a similar thought about “contrast between fixity and flux, this unperceived evasion of monotony, which is the very life of verse” in his 1917 essay “Reflections on Vers Libre” [10: 107–111], proceeded even further and claimed that vers libre does not exist: “...as for vers libre, we conclude that it is not defined by absence of pattern or absence of rhyme, for other verse is without these; that it is not defined by non-existence of metre, since even the worst verse can be scanned; and we conclude that the division between Conservative Verse and vers libre does not exist, for there is only good verse, bad verse, and chaos” [10: 111].

Let us now consider a few samples out of the Ukrainian and Anglophone poetry in terms of their key prosodic peculiarities.

Невже ще існують люди (Оксана Забужко)

1 — <u>Невже ще існують люди,</u>	u	l	u	u	l	u	l	u
2 котрі читають вірші? —	u	u	u	l	u	l	u	
3 <u>спитав поет.</u> —	u	l	u	l				
4 <u>Бо ж вірші — то тільки паперові серветки,</u>	u	l	u	u	l	u	u	l
5 <u>Що слугують мені до промокання сліз.</u>	u	u	l	u	u	l	u	u
6 <u>Люди,</u> котрі підбирають	l	u	u	l	u	u	l	u
7 <u>мокрі паперові серветки,</u> —	l	u	u	u	l	u	u	l
8 <u>це ті самі,</u> що лишаются з	u	u	u	l	u	u	l	u
9 <u>потерпілим,</u>	u	u	u	l	u	u	l	u
10 <u>доки не приїде карета «швидкої»,</u>	l	u	u	u	l	u	u	l
11 <u>ті,</u> що можуть подарувати квіти	l	u	l	u	u	u	l	u

11 незнайомій самотній жінці —	и	и	л	и	и	л	у	л	у							
12 і піти собі, так і не назвавшись,	и	и	л	и	и	л	у	у	у	л	у					
13 ті, хто завжди має час для заблу- каних перехожих	л	и	и	л	и	и	л	и	и	л	и	и	у	у	л	у
14 і для старих людей.	у	у	у	л	у	л										
15 Невже ще є такі люди? —	и	л	и	л	у	у	л	у								
16 спитав поет. —	и	л	и	л												
17 Бо я до них не належу... [11: 82]	и	л	и	л	у	у	л	у								

As we can see, even though there is no fixed metrical scheme in this *vers libre*, the rhythm of the piece abounds in regular occurrences of iambic and dactylic feet. Moreover, the nature of these repetitions is by no means accidental as they usually occur in a row of two or more identical feet at the beginning of almost every line – with the occasional but regular breaks in the scheme, which make the flow freer and less readily predictable. There is also another variant of a regular dactylic pattern with a break between two or more identical feet found within the single line – it is used either in the shorter lines (line 7, for example: *luu-u-luu*) or in a longer line, provided that the number of identical feet in a row is more extended (for example, line 9, where the last unstressed syllable is missing: *luu-u-luu-luu-lu*).

The importance of structure here is also emphasized with the regular lexical repetitions: *невже ще – люди – спитав поет – паперові серветки – люди – паперові серветки – ті – ті – ті – невже ще – люди – спитав поет*. In prose, such an extended repetition with a regular pattern to it within about five sentences would be a bit abundant, but in a poetic piece it plays the role of a certain skeleton as well as a frame, linking the seventeen lines into a single poetic work, creating a special emphasis with an obvious rhythmic and lexical repetitions and reiterating the main idea of the text. Thus, even though this verse does not have rhyme and pronounced phonetic effects we customarily expect of poetry, the importance of prosody in shaping and delivering the author’s main idea as well as the aesthetic value of the piece cannot be denied.

The structure is even more elaborated in the verse *Full Moon and Little Frieda* by the famous British poet Ted Hughes:

Full Moon and Little Frieda

1 A cool small evening shrunk to a dog bark and the clank of a bucket –

2 And you listening.

3 A spider’s web, tense for the dew’s touch.

4 A pail lifted, still and brimming – mirror

5 To tempt a first star to a tremor.

6 Cows are going home in the lane there, looping the hedges with their warm
wreaths of breath –

7 A dark river of blood, many boulders,

8 Balancing unspilled milk.

9 ‘Moon!’ you cry suddenly, ‘Moon! Moon!’

10 The *moon* has stepped back like an artist gazing amazed at a work

11 That points at him amazed [12].

The regularity of the pattern of interchanging longer and shorter lines is obvious at a first glance. Let us have a closer look at the rhythmical scheme of the verse:

u	l	l	l	u	l	u	u	l	l	u	u	l	u	u	l	u
u	l	l	u	u												
u	l	u	l	l	u	u	l	l								
u	l	l	u	l	u	l	u	l	u							
u	l	u	l	l	u	u	l	u								
l	u	u	l	l	l	u	u	l	u	u	u	l				
l	u	l														
u	l	l	u	u	l	u	u	l	u							
l	u	u	u	l	l											
l	u	l	l	u	u	l	l									
u	l	u	l	l	u	u	l	u	l	u	u	l	u	u	l	
u	l	u	l	u	l											

Each line of the first stanza begins with a iambic foot, then changes to the trochaic feet at the beginning of every line in the second stanza (but for the one, middle line with a iambic foot at the beginning, which makes a masterful short break and serves as a link to the previous and the next stanza simultaneously), and comes back to the initial iambus in the third stanza composed out of two lines only. Apart from the occasional appearance of trochaic feet in the middle of the line used mostly for contrast with the initial iambus, we can also frequently witness the same regular dactylic pattern (with a break between two or more identical feet found within the single line) as in the Ukrainian verse analysed above. For example, line 11: luu-luu-luu. The final line is the only line in the verse that has a fixed iambic metrical scheme, thus effectively drawing a line at the end of it. The lexical repetition of the word “Moon” occurs in the two lines only, closer to the end, however the verse is very rich in sound repetition: *shrunk – bark – clank – bucket – web – tense – dew – brimming – mirror – tempt – star-tremor – with – warm – wreaths – breath – blood – boulders – balancing – unspilled – milk – gazing – amazed – amazed*. As a result, we can observe the effect of onomatopoeia (*clank, bucket, brimming*), a bit of inner rhyming (*wreaths – breath*), alliteration (for example, *breath – blood – boulders – balancing*), assonance (e.g., *gazing – amazed*), consonance (*shrunk – clank, etc.*). The two pairs of words – *web/dew* and *brimming/mirror* – are very interesting in terms of sound effect as they represent (fully or partly) the inversed repetition of their constituent letters. It is highly unlikely that the author used so many prosody means and chose all these specific words unintentionally, so we may conclude that the prosody use in this verse is very important.

Let us now analyse a sample of the rhymed poetry by a renowned American poet Robert Frost. Fire and Ice

1 Some say the world will end in fire ,	l	l	u	l	u	l	u	l	u	a
2 Some say in ice .	l	l	u	l						b
3 From what I've tasted of desire	u	u	u	l	u	u	u	l	u	a
4 I hold with those who favor fire .	l	l	u	l	u	l	u	l	u	a
5 But if it had to perish twice,	l	u	u	l	u	l	u	l		b
6 I think I know enough of hate	l	l	u	l	u	l	u	l		c
7 To know that for destruction ice	u	l	u	u	u	l	u	l		b
8 Is also great	u	l	u	l						c
9 And would suffice [13].	u	l	u	l						b

A quick exercise in scansion will show us that the poem is written in iambus with the length of the lines varying from dimeter to tetrameter, and three out of nine lines are one unstressed syllable longer (which does not make for a separate foot, though). However, as Thomas Stearns Eliot aptly observed, scansion tells us very little [9, p. 108]. The rhythm in this piece is much more elaborated and complex than the strict and predictable scheme of iambus would allow for. The regular occurrence of spondee at the beginning of lines makes for a strong and slightly slow, deliberated tone. It is softened at regular intervals by the appearance of pyrrhic or a usual iambic foot, and disappears closer to the end – for the sake of short, rhythmic and laconic resolution. The repetition is also present, even though not distinct or highly pronounced, at the phonological level and at the lexical levels. At the phonological level it is necessary to mention alliteration in “*some say*” and “*favour fire*”, while at the lexical level it is felt mostly in the two central words – “**fire**” and “**ice**”, which are additionally contrasted as the synonymous to them in this verse “**desire**” and “**hate**”. This contrast is a central theme for the poetic piece, and is strongly emphasised by the rhyming scheme that Robert Frost chose for this poem: *abaabcbb*. As we can see, for the total of 9 lines only three different rhymes are employed. The main theme of the verse is additionally presented as the a-rhyme and b-rhyme contrast, which is slightly softened by the appearance of the *cbbc* rhyming pattern as the laconic closing conclusion. Moreover, it is interesting to notice that the lines speaking about *fire/desire* all have the same rhyming, which is never used when a line even mentions contrasting *ice/hate* motive. Obviously, this combination of prosody as a form and inner sense of the verse is very important here and by no means accidental. The “sound of sense” – as Robert Frost himself called a perfect combination of form and sense in a poetic work – was for the author an important indication of an artistic masterpiece. As Robert Frost wrote to John T. Barlett in a letter from the fourth of July, 1913: “I alone of English writers have consciously set myself to make music out of what I may call the sound of sense. Now it is possible to have sense without the sound of sense (as in much prose that is supposed to pass muster but makes very dull reading) and the sound of sense without sense (as in *Alice in Wonderland* which makes anything but dull reading). . . . The reader must be at no loss to give his voice the posture proper to the sentence. The simple declarative sentence used in making a plain statement is one sound. But Lord love ye it mustn't be worked to death. It is against the law of nature that whole poems should be written in it. If they are written they won't be read. The sound of sense, then. You get that. It is the abstract vitality of our speech. It is pure sound – pure form. One who concerns with it more than the subject is an artist” [14: 9–10].

Now, that we have established the importance of prosody in a poetic work, it is possible to define at least some of its major functions based on the conducted analysis and general observations: 1) aesthetic – as a special way of verse organization prosody ensures its aesthetic value; 2) mnemonic – rhythm and phonetic means make the poetic text easy to memorize; 3) rhythmic – through the use of metrical scheme or regularly repeated patterns a certain rhythm is created; 4) suggestive – a combination of rhythm and sound effects may have an effect, which is slightly similar to hypnotising, when a certain image (by using onomatopoeia, for example) is deliberately called to mind and either positive or negative associations are invoked; 5) stanza-creational – is linked to the way sentences are divided into separate lines and then – into stanzas, in order to ensure better understanding of the structure of the poem and to facilitate its perception; 6) text partitioning – is similar to the stanza-creational function, and ensures that the line or a number of lines within one stanza are additionally divided into the smaller sense units by spondee, caesura, inner rhyme, etc.; 7) genre-defining – different poetic genres such as sonnet or Hokku are mostly defined by the way of their organization (the number of lines, a special scheme of rhyming, the number of syllables in a line, etc.), as the choice of the topic imposes much less restrictions and could be misleading in terms of genre-defining; 8) entertaining – the use of rhyme and other phonetic means as well as the length and rhythm of a line may have a significant impact upon play of words, witty phrases and aphorisms, etc. 9) magical – is an ancient function of poetry, when the certain combination of words arranged in a peculiar manner are believed to have a direct influence upon people, their actions, or even objects and natural phenomena; 10) signal – the presence or absence of certain prosodic means in a line may be critical for the understanding of a text, and creates an additional dimension for its depth and “reading between the lines”; 11) establishing additional associations/sense – by the use of rhyme, assonance, consonance, alliteration or positioning certain words in the corresponding or contrasting slots in a line it is possible to establish a certain link (comparison, similarity or contrast) between the words unconnected in all the other contexts; 12) creating laconic conclusions/aphorisms – the closing or initial lines may have a distinct metrical scheme, which (combined with a proper length of the lines and linked by the means of rhyme, for example) will result in a memorable and aphoristic laconic conclusion; 13) adding emotional overtones – is similar in a way to the suggestive function; prosody may intensify the effect that the verse is supposed to have upon the readers’ emotions by using slower or faster rhythm, implementing certain phonetic means or emphasizing the chosen words; 14) protagonist’s or author’s characterisation – the way that prosodic means are used (similarly to the way that the word-choice does) may be peculiar to a certain character of a verse or even the authors themselves, thus providing an additional field for analysis.

In the conclusion, we have to admit that it is impossible to reproduce everything in the translation process and some sacrifices are to be made. Traditionally, prosody is more often than not chosen for the role of sacrifice. However, not all of the variety of its functions can be sacrificed without a significant negative impact upon the resulting Target Text. When prosodic peculiarities are that closely linked to the very sense of the verse and shape its additional, deeper layers, it is advisable that translators try to preserve the most distinctive prosody features and functions – or, being aware of them, at least try to compensate for them in whichever means possible.

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