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COMPARATIVE TRANSLATION ANALYSIS OF PHILIP LARKIN'S POEM «SAD STEPS»

Summary. The proposed article is devoted to comparative translation analysis of the poem «Sad steps» written by a contemporary English poet Philip Larkin one of the distinguished representatives of the literary trend «The Movement». The authors of the article had failed to find Ukrainian and Russian versions of the above-mentioned poem performed by professional translators they proposed to translate it to the students of the Philology Department of Volodymyr Dahl East Ukraine National University who participated in the Students' Artistic Translation Contest.

Key words: comparative translation analysis, the Ukrainian and Russian versions, rhythm and rhyme, future translators and interpreters, successful translation.

Statement of the problem in general aspect and its connection with important and practical tasks

British poetry since 1945 has been in the midst of a kaleidoscopic renaissance. Among the general public, interest in poetry is extremely high. Virtually poets themselves struggle to make sense of the flood of poetry.

Our article is devoted to the remarkable figure in Modern English literature Philip Arthur Larkin. No doubt his contribution to English literature is really significant. Philip Larkin became popular with the English-speaking readers as an amazing poet and one of the leading representatives of «The Movement», the literary trend which presented the world with the group of wonderful poets including Donald Davie, Kingsley Amis, Thom Gunn, John Wain, Elizebeth Jennings and certainly Philip Larkin. «The Movement» appeared in the nineteen-fifties and it has the followers even nowadays.

Actually the poets of «The Movement» were not an organized group with any well-defined and deliberately formulated aims shared by them all. All the same, there were certain features which were identified by critics as being common to the poetry of most of the members of this group. In a «Paris Review» interview questioned on this point, Ph. Larkin did not give any clear definition of the poetry of «The Movement», though he did agree that certain features were common to the work of all the poets of this group. Talking about his own poetry, he emphasized the «expository, documentary, empirical, and rational elements» in his poems; and these qualities were evident in the work of other members of the group also [3, c. 264].

However Philip Larkin had, in the beginning, been deeply influenced by the symbolist poetry of W.B. Yeats and of the

French poets of the late nineteenth century. But subsequently he tried to shed this symbolist and modernist influence in favour of the kind of poetry that Thomas Hardy and other traditionalists had written. And yet he never completely outgrew the Yeatsian or the symbolist influence. At the same time, Philip Larkin stands with Kingsley Amis and Donald Davie as a leading member of this group of poets; but he is the poet whose work also illustrates, in many of his poems, the features of the symbolist and modernist mode of writing of which W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, and Ezra Pound were the chief representatives. While consciously or unconsciously carrying out the aims of «The Movement», Ph. Larkin yet adopts most of the methods and strategies of the modernists and symbolists like W.B. Yeats and Ezra Pound. Thus he takes what may be regarded as the middle course between the aims of «The Movement» and the aims of those poets against whom «The Movement» poets had revolted. And that is the reason why «Ph. Larkin's poetry may be said to represent the poetic scene of «The Movement» as a temperate zone» [3, c. 265].

Analysis of the latest investigations and publications on the given theme, making out the parts of general problem not solved earlier with which the paper deals

The analysis of the latest researchers and publications concerning the literary activity of the above-mentioned poets in particular Philip Larkin testifies that many British scholars devoted their scientific works to «The Movement». They were Barry Alpert, Robert Conquest, Roger Fowler, Michael Grant, Donald Greene, Seamus Heaney, Mark Jarman, Peter R. King, Augustine Martin, M.L. Rosenthal, Michael Schmidt. All these scientists consider Philip Larkin's participation in «The Movement» as «... a clear, distinct, and undeniable fact, but this participation has been diluted or modified or moderated by the symbolist or Yeatsian mode of writing poetry» [3, c. 265]. So not all his poems represent «The Movement». Not all his poems represent the symbolist or Yeatsian mode of writing. But many of his poems represent the aims of «The Movement» by virtue of their anti-symbolist features; many of his poems represent the symbolist or Yeatsian mode of writing; and a number of poems combine the features of both these modes of writing. In Michael Schmidt's opinion Philip Larkin's poetry belongs to the «temperate zone which lies between the extremes of «The Movement» and the extremes of symbolist and modernist poetry» [2, c. 144]. The brightest example is the poem «Sad Steps» which we are going to analyze.

It goes without saying Philip Larkin was acknowledged as the distinguished poet in Great Britain: he was awarded the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry. In fact Philip Larkin received many awards in recognition of his writing. In 1975 he was awarded the CBE (Most Excellent Order of the British Empire), and in 1976 was given the German Shakespeare-Prize. Philip Larkin chaired the Booker Prize Panel in 1977, was made Companion of Literature in 1978, and served on the Literature Panel of the Arts between 1980 and 1982. He was made an Honorary Fellow of the Library Association in 1980. In 1985 Philip Larkin was awarded the much prized Order of the Companion of Honour.

However, Philip Larkin's poetic activity has never received a serious study from the point of its translatability. In the process of our research we faced with the problem that none of the professional translators turned out to have translated Philip Larkin's works into Ukrainian and only some of them had been translated them into Russian. To solve the problem we had to seek help from the students of the Philology Department of Volodymyr Dahl East Ukraine National University. Therefore our research work can claim to the status of innovatory as we are going to present you with the translations of the piece of poetry which has never been translated into Ukrainian before.

Formulating the paper aim

Thus the aim of the given paper is to make a comparative translation analysis of Philip Larkin's poem «Sad Steps».

Presentation of the research with complete grounding of the obtained scientific results

In fact the Students' Artistic Translation Contest is annually held in Volodymyr Dahl East Ukraine National University. One of the pieces of poetry which was proposed to translate to participants was Philip Larkin's poem «Sad Steps». The title of Philip Larkin's «Sad Steps» is a reference to «Sonnet XXXI» from the sonnet sequence «Astrophil and Stella» by the Elizabethan poet Sir Philip Sidney.

The main topic of «Sad Steps» is that the youth that we probably do not appreciate when we have it, causes a great sorrow that we suffer when we lose it. The first stanza of the poem is introducing the situation that he is about to live in the context of his bedroom at night. The scene that the poet is describing is like a picture in which we could see a man looking at the outside of his bedroom at the dark night while he becomes engrossed in his thoughts.

«Sad Steps» is a lyric poem that starts out showing Ph. Larkin's way of surfacing harsh realities into poetry simply by reading the first line. The speaker is «Groping back to bed» from a mid-slumber «piss» and looks out the window at the sky [1]. He is ultimately using the objects in the sky and their interactions to reflect on his youth. The stanzas in this poem are in a formal structure with «symbolism and imagery of the natural world intertwined throughout» [4]. The natural imagery involved includes: the clouds, moon, and sky. Each of these images is used as a symbol of something in his life. He speaks of the clouds as being rapid and of how they blow through the night sky. «This seems to be a reference to life and how quickly unfavorable realities come at person» [4]. The moon is a very symbolic element here. The moon is referred to as clean and dashing around the clouds. This implies that he, in his youth, is the moon, which is exemplified through the thought of he how he was clean and pure when he was younger and tried to «stand apart» (as the moon does in the poem) or more understandingly stand strong against the ups and downs of life that each person must handle from a young age [4]. When he first looks out the window he must

«part thick curtains» to see the view and then is «startled by» the sight of the sky [1]. This is a representative of how far away from his youth he feels and how he was surprised at how far away it feels. He then goes on to speak highly of his reflection of youth by saying how «high and preposterous and separate» it was [4]. Using these three descriptives as examples of how frivolous and pleasantly disconnected life as a youth can be, he goes on calling his youth a «Lozenge of Love!» and «Medallion of Art!» [1]. Then he realizes that those are simply memories. Philip Larkin uses this poem as a reflection on his youth and, in the end, sees where it has brought him today and accepts that it is now gone.

Regarding the form of the poem, it is divided into six stanzas, each one of them contains three lines. The rhyme is abcbaccdedcefeffe.

The language in this poem is very accessible, even colloquial if we consider the first verse in which he uses the word «piss». He uses a different linguistic register in the beginning of the poem, which is very colloquial and it is changed little by little to a more formal language. He uses some remarkable literary devices such as some metaphors to refer to the moon: «high and preposterous», some hyperboles «immensements», «Medallion of Art!» [1]. The use of the exclamation marks provides intensity to the poem and allows the poet to emphasize the feeling that he wants to transmit with some verses. Finally, some brackets and colon have also been used by the author.

Now we are going to analyze the variants of translation which were made by the senior students of the Philology Department of Volodymyr Dahl East Ukraine National University, winners of the Students' Artistic Translation Contest. One of the translations was performed by Oxana Tereshchenko, a third-year student. She translated Philip Larkin's poem «Sad Steps» into Russian. Oxana called her version «Темное крыльцо». Actually she changed the title of the verse and we can make the first conclusion that she transformed one of the strong positions of the poem in order to cover her own vision of it. There is the same stanza in her translation as we have in the original (three lines). Her translation is vivid and emotional: «Медаль искусства, серп любви!.. Пустьяк, а пробирает дрожь!» [5].

Another Russian translation was made by Maria Savenchuk, also a third-year student. Maria called it «Грустные шаги». The student added some extra lines in each stanza (six lines) trying to preserve the meaning neglecting the original rhythm and size. Owing to it her work can be perceived as an independent piece of poetry. Masha's version of the line «...and I am startled by the rapid clouds» is «Тихо, ощупью в постель бреду, пораженный чудною картиной» [5]. Besides Maria added an allegory «Мать-луна» into the first stanza which added into the verse a touch of tenderness and calmness, while in the original verse we can observe only: «The moon's cleanliness» [1]. As to the rhyme, it is essential to mention that Maria has the mix of male and female rhymes (we can notice the interchange of accents in the lines):

«Справив по утру нужДУ
и раздвинув плотные гарДИны,
Тихо, ощупью в постель бредУ,
Пораженный чудною картИной» [5].

In the original version by Philip Larkin we have the following rhyme:

«Groping back to bed after a piss
I part thick curtains, and am startled by
The rapid clouds, the moon's cLEAnliness» [1].

In our opinion O. Tereschenko's translation is more close to the original:

«... идя в постель обратно,
Я шторы распахнул и оцепенел
От сияния луны, она прекрасна!» [5].

The second stanza of M. Savenchuk's translation is really very bright. The girl managed to preserve the message of the author rather successfully:

«Время раннее. Четыре.
Островерхие тенистые сады
У подножия пещер царили
И глядели с высоты
Избранные ветром небеса.
Есть забавное ведь что-то в чудесах» [5].

Maria's version is expressive and melodious. The translator preserved the contents and created her own rhyme of this verse abcbd: «Островерхие тенистые сады у подножия пещер царили» [5]. This personification adds tenderness and touch of glorification. In the original we have the following lines:

«Four o'clock wedge-shadowed gardens lie
Under a cavernous, a wind-picked sky.
There's something laughable about this...» [1].
Oxana Tereschenko's variant of translation is:
«Как мчались тучи, близилось к утру,
Ветер взвился под пористое небо.
Есть в этом капелька комизма» [5].

On the whole, the abovementioned translators managed to complete their tasks: to preserve balance between laconism of the form and figurativeness of the original idea. Each of the suggested variants has a right to exist according to the purpose of translation and personal preferences of the renderer. The versions we have analyzed contain different variants of solving the problem, however, none of them can be called perfect. Yet in our opinion Maria's translation is more successful as it is more melodic and better rhymed than the second.

As for the Ukrainian versions of the poem performed by professional translators we failed to find any of them. So we present the translation of Darya Ivanova, a fourth-year student:

«Іду у ліжко уночі – відкрив тонку завісу,
Побачив я ночі красу
І місяць під навісом.

Світало майже. Хмари мчали,
Здавалось, ранок настає,
І в цьому дещо смішне є.

І місяць, що крізь хмари скаче,
Немов гарматою гнаний й вітром,
Дахи, що гріються під сірим світом.

Великий, недолугий і єдиний у тіні –
Це знак мистецтва й кохання символ,
Вовки моєї пам'яті, безмерності. О ні!

Немов дрібне – а все ж мене трясє.
Твердий, яскравий, глибиною великий
І самотній погляд – і це ще не все –

Нагадує про сили, про страждання.
Вернути молодість – це марні сподівання [5].
Darya called her translation «Кохання знак» because

she does not consider the image of the moon as the image of sadness. The rhyme of her translation differs from stanza to stanza: aab, bba, aab... As for Darya's variant of translation into Ukrainian we consider it to be melodious and rather precise. Her version may be considered as an individual poetic text created in the target language. Nevertheless, it preserves the message of the author and is equivalent to the original poem according to its conceptual and aesthetic information, but at the same time uses completely different language. It is a vivid example of translation creative work aimed to erase borders between the original and translation poetic texts sacrificing the precision of translation to some extent.

Conclusions and perspective of future development

In future we are aimed to continue investigating Philip Larkin's literary activity and involve the students, future translators and interpreters, of the Philology Department of Volodymyr Dahl East Ukrainian National University in translation of his both poetic and prosaic works.

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Барилко С. М., Барилко Є. О. Порівняльний аналіз перекладів вірша Філіпа Ларкіна «Сумні кроки»

Анотація. Пропонована стаття присвячена порівняльному аналізу перекладів вірша «Сумні кроки» сучасного англійського поета Філіпа Ларкіна, одного із видатних представників літературної течії «Рух». Автори статті надають для аналізу перекладацькі версії цього вірша, виконані майбутніми перекладачами, студентами спеціальності «Переклад» філологічного факультету Східноукраїнського національного університету імені Володимира Даля, які брали участь у студентському конкурсі художнього перекладу.

Ключові слова: порівняльний аналіз перекладів, українські та російські версії, рима й ритм, майбутні перекладачі, вдалий переклад.

Барилко С. Н., Барилко Е. А. Сравнительный анализ переводов стихотворения Филиппа Ларкина «Грустные шаги»

Аннотация. Предлагаемая статья посвящена сравнительному анализу переводов стихотворения «Грустные шаги» современного английского поэта Филиппа Ларкина, одного из выдающихся представителей литературного течения «Движение». Авторы статьи предлагают для анализа переводческие версии этого стихотворения, выполненные будущими переводчиками, студентами филологического факультета Восточноукраинского национального университета имени Владимира Даля, которые принимали участие в студенческом конкурсе художественного перевода.

Ключевые слова: сравнительный анализ переводов, украинские и русские версии, рифма и ритм, будущие переводчики, успешный перевод.