





Silent as the sleeve-worn stone Of casement ledges where the moss has grown –	Нем, как мох на коленях стертых ступенях Древних храмов, где в камне застыло смиренье.
A poem should be wordless As the flight of birds. ... <sup>2</sup>	Порхнет, бессловесный, из толщи страниц, Как стая птиц. ...
(Archibald MacLeish. “ARS POETICA”)	(Translated into Russian by Yakov Kolker)

The “burden of silence” (Hayakawa, Hayakawa, 1990, p. 57) is too great to bear and needs to be removed. To be relieved of the burden, man gives freedom to language in all its functions – phatic, informative, emotive, metalinguistic, aesthetic, and the one that absorbs all the others, assigning a specific sphere to each – the poetic function. Roman Jakobson defined it as a function oriented towards the message or focused on the message for its own sake (Jakobson, 1975, p. 202). He regards poetics as an inherent part of linguistics, with the poetic function revealing itself far beyond poetry and literary texts in general: “The difference between messages does not consist in the monopoly of one particular function, but in the hierarchy of functions. The verbal structure of a message depends chiefly on the predominant function” (Ibid., p. 198). Thus, according to R. Jakobson, the poetic function reigns over the others in works of literature, but is also present in other kinds of discourse, where priority is gained by some other functions (Ibid., p. 206). Some contemporary authors venture a different viewpoint, maintaining that the poetic function can preserve its leading position outside literary texts, for instance, in the language of advertising (Kurganova, 2004; Isayeva, 2017) or in a scholarly lecture (McIntyre, 2003). It stands to reason that the poetic function can hold its own in non-literary discourse where it steps in as the chief and indispensable means of achieving the purpose of expressive communication, – as, for instance, in the memorable speech of Martin Luther King “*I Have a Dream*”<sup>3</sup>. Anyway, scholars agree with Jakobson that linguists studying the poetic function cannot restrict their vision to poetry alone (Jakobson, 1975, p. 203).

Jakobson begins examining the poetic function with defining its place among the other language functions: *referential, emotive/expressive, conative, phatic and metalinguistic*. This list suggests that Jakobson sees the emotive function as a synonym of the expressive one, aimed at revealing the emotional attitude of the sender to the content of his/her message. The tendency to equate the two functions or, at least, to treat them as an inseparable unity has been registered in some linguistic reviews

<sup>2</sup> <https://poets.org/poem/ars-poetica> (accessed: 03.04.2021).

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.pagebypagebooks.com/Martin\\_Luther\\_King\\_Jr/I\\_Have\\_A\\_Dream/I\\_Have\\_a\\_Dream\\_p1.html](https://www.pagebypagebooks.com/Martin_Luther_King_Jr/I_Have_A_Dream/I_Have_a_Dream_p1.html) (accessed: 08.02.2021).



(Korolyova, 2016; Sliusareva, 2017). There may be grounds for such treatment in cases when one openly gives an outlet to one's emotions. Even reserved phrasing ("Not bad" or "That was `some game!") betrays the emotional attitude by intonation and logical stress, which entitles the interpreter to resort to lexical or syntactical expressive means: "Совсем (весьма) неплохо!" ("Not bad at all!") or "Вот это была игра так игра!" ("That was a great game!"). And when the speaker is reluctant to express his/her emotion explicitly, the emotive function relies on the context, with "a zero designator" of the emotive charge. Thus, Soames Forsythe (Galsworthy. *The Man of Property*", Ch. 8), unwilling to admit being impressed by the project of his future country house, calls it "original": "Well," he stammered at last, "it's – it's, certainly original." He had such a private distrust and even dislike of the word 'original' that he felt he had not really given himself away by this remark.

As for the poetic function vs. the aesthetic one (unmentioned by Jakobson), the two terms are often treated as synonyms (Tzur, 2010; Sliusareva, 2017). This viewpoint can be justified if the aesthetic function, like the poetic one, is seen as the ability of language to embody the poetic message, where any language unit can potentially become a "figure of poetic speech". Then the aesthetic effect of a literary text ensures the semantic capacity and precision of the language rather than "beauty" (which can degenerate into embellishment, just as effectiveness can degenerate into showiness). That is why a literary text cannot be approached with a psychological or ethical treatment of the aesthetic function as "harmonizing verbal communication and satisfying the human need for truth, goodness, and beauty" (Bolotnova, 2014, p. 763). Perhaps, the aesthetics of an individual style can be seen "above all, as a system of aesthetically creative selection, comprehension and spacing of symbols" (Vinogradov, 1923, p. 196), which makes the writer's expressive manner recognizable no matter whether the book is familiar or not. But the poetic function, unlike the aesthetic one, has little to do with an author's general manner of writing. Rather, it reveals itself in a specific literary work, where every foregrounded word or phrase, whether typical of the writer or coming as a surprise, has its own *inimitable* purpose, participating in a *unique* interplay of wording, syntax, rhythm, melody, and fabric of the text.

Therefore, the aim of this paper is, first, to show that the poetic function, often interacting with the emotive and/or expressive one, cannot be equated with the aesthetic function. Second, we explore the *obscure* manifestations of the poetic function, which, unlike dazzling tropes, may *escape immediate detection*, catching the reader's eye only in retrospect.

In a literary text, the poetic function is not merely the leading function among the others; rather, the others serve as a means of its realization. Unlike the aesthetic function, the poetic function does not merely



show *what* stylistic means are employed; it shows *why* they were selected, *with what purpose*, and *how they interact with the surrounding context* in the conceptual framework of the text.

In this way, the poetic function makes it possible both to unite and to oppose the author's general manner of writing and the style of a particular literary work. It sometimes happens that the specific styles of two literary texts make it hard to believe that both belong to the same author. Compare, for instance, Thornton Wilder's play "Our Town" and his novel "The Bridge of San Luis Rey". Each work (apart from the genre distinctions) has its own composition, system of imagery and language means. But, for all the differences in the narrative manner, both works are united, first, by the author's motive (trying to understand man's predestination in this world) and, second, the author's use of a seemingly incidental image that retrospectively emerges as central to the author's conception. Aesthetics, with its dichotomies of "good – bad", "correct-incorrect", "beautiful-ugly", "plain-ornate", "direct-euphemistic" (Rastall, 2008) characterizes the formal aspect of style rather than the form-content fusion, in terms of Andrey Bely (Bely, 1990, p. 190); it does not elicit the hidden spring that gives impetus to the development of a literary work.

## 2. Implementation of the poetic function in a literary text

### 2.1. The contribution of phonetic and graphical expressive means to textual semantics

The poetic function is at work whenever an expressive means employed creates additional connotation, besides appealing to our aesthetic feeling. The language of poetry, with its compression and semantic capacity, is akin to the language of formulae: each sign is in its proper place, each affecting the total meaning. In a literary work, significant meaning can be conveyed by the sound arrangement, by rhyme, by rhythm, and even by pauses.

In his poem "Как ясность безоблачной ночи...", Afanasy Fet rhymes the odd lines without rhyming the even ones, instead of the more habitual *abcb* rhyme. This deviation from the expected pattern serves as an expressive means according to the principle of foregrounding, where focusing on the unorthodox form is opposed to its "automatic" perception (Arnold, 2016; Shchirova, 2015; McIntyre, 2003; van Peer, 2007). The unexpected rhyme pattern in Fet's verse lends it a specific melodious quality and emphasizes the images in the unrhymed lines, which makes it essential to preserve the same rhyme arrangement in the translation.



<p>Как ясность безоблачной ночи,          Как юно-нетленные звезды,          Твои загораются очи          Всесильным, таинственным счастьем.</p> <p>И все, что лучом их случайным          Далеко иль близко объяго,          Блаженством овеяно тайным —          И люди, и звери, и скалы.</p> <p>Лишь мне, молодая царица,          Ни счастья нет, ни покоя,          И в сердце, как пленная птица,          Томится бескрылая песня.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">1862</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Afanasy Fet.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Like the clarity of a cloudless night</p>	<p>As fragrant and cloudless nights,          As ageless and luminous stars          Your eyes burn triumphantly bright          With a secret mysterious joy.</p> <p>And all that the rays accidental          Could reach and attract, and embrace,          Is covered with bliss, sweet and gentle,          The people, the beasts, and the rocks.</p> <p>My queen, have I done something          wrong?          Unhappy, uneasy, and anxious,          My heart holds a suffering song,          A bird in a cage, sad and voiceless.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Translated by Yakov Kolker)</p>
--	--

Yet there is reason to believe that the *abac* rhyme pattern, for all its foregrounding effect, creates no new shades of meaning in this verse, and does not affect its system of imagery and the textual message. Therefore, its musical effect performs the *aesthetic* function rather than the poetic one.

Let us illustrate how phonetic foregrounding participates in shaping the semantic structure of a poem, thus implementing the poetic function.

...Листьям августа, с астмой в каждом атоме  
 Снится тишь и темь. *Вдруг бег пса*  
 Пробуждает сад.

(Boris Pasternak. "The End")<sup>4</sup>

The unhurried trochee, slowed down with the assonance of the vowel "a", is suddenly exploded by the three stressed syllables, rendering the rapid rhythm of the dog running and thus disturbing the autumnal leaves' peaceful slumber. The changing rhythm within the second line sustains the prolonged metaphor.

Rhythm actively participates in meaning-making, be it prose or poetry, when the author resorts to a sudden change of sentence length:

... Ска-жи, что бред!  
 Что нет и не будет мосту  
 Кон-ца.  
 Конец.

(Marina Tsvetaeva. "The Poem of the End")

---

<sup>4</sup> August leaves, with asthma in each atom // Long for peaceful sleep. (Suddenly, a) *dog's quick feet* // wake the garden up (Boris Pasternak. "The End").



The hyphens abundantly used in this part of the poem emphasize the rhythm of each step during the final promenade of the former lovers, the end drawing inexorably near. And the sudden transition from long sentences to the ultimate one-word line “The end” sounds like a sudden abyss under one’s feet, – an almost physical sensation.

No less significant can be the use of the dash beyond its purely logical functions. Its semantic potential is often discoverable in the poetry of Emily Dickinson and Marina Tsvetaeva. The dash can provide a pause for the reader to share the emotional experience of the poet (“*В огромном городе моем – ночь. Из дома сонного иду – прочь ...*”). Or the dash can almost work a miracle, making a phrase, within the conceptual framework of the poem, almost an antonym of its usual meaning. For instance, Tarkovsky’s verse “After Twenty-Two Years” (1963), commemorating Marina Tsvetaeva’s tragic death, offered a specific translation challenge in the second line of the following stanza:

...Не дерзости твоих страстей  
И не тому, что *всё* едино,  
А только памяти твоей  
Из гроба научи, Марина!  
(Arseny Tarkovsky. “After Twenty-Two Years”)

“*Всё* едино” seems to mean “What’s the difference!”. In her poem “Тоска по родине!..” (“Nostalgia for Motherland!..”) Tsvetaeva keeps repeating bitterly: “I don’t care...”, “It’s all the same to me”, “It does not matter”. But in the last stanza the tone changes due to the dash and the final three dots, which slow down the tempo and suggest another interpretation: “Live your life as your soul requires – and come what will!”.

...Всяк дом мне чужд, всяк храм мне пуст,  
И всё – равно, и всё – едино.  
Но если по дороге – куст  
Встает, особенно – рябина...  
(Marina Tsvetaeva. “Nostalgia for Motherland!..”)<sup>5</sup>

It is this interpretation that the final draft of the translation renders:

...Nor reckless passions, nor the creed  
“*Live out your life, and come what may*”, -  
Marina, teach me what I need:  
To miss you till my dying day!  
(Translated by Elena Ustinova)

---

<sup>5</sup> “I feel an alien in every home, I feel a stranger in every temple // and all is – equal, all – external. // But if on my way there emerges – a bush // especially – a rowan tree ...”



## 2.2. Induction of a semantic feature by the syntactic environment

Textual antonymy of words synonymous in the language system can be illustrated by Zabolotsky's poem "Лицо коня" ("The Face of a Horse"), where synonyms "конь" and "лошадь", both meaning "horse", are endowed with opposite semantic features: *poetic* vs. *prosaic*, *intellectual* vs. *dull*, *regal* vs. *humble*. Translation into English required an elevated synonym of the neutral word "horse". The poetic synonym "charger" was discarded because of its war-like implication. In the end, the translator chose the Latin term "equus", emphasizing its elevated tone by the capital letter. An excerpt from the parallel texts is given below.

<p>...Лицо коня прекрасней и умней. Он слышит говор листьев и камней. Внимательный! Он знает крик звериный И в ветхой роще рокот соловьиный.</p>	<p>The face of Equus is intelligent and fair, He hears the voice of leaves and stones' prayer. Observant! He pays equal heed to both: The roaring lions and the nightingales verbose.</p>
<p>И зная всё, кому расскажет он Свои чудесные виденья? Ночь глубока. На темный небосклон Восходят звезд соединенья. И конь стоит, как рыцарь на часах, Играет ветер в легких волосах, Глаза горят, как два огромных мира, И грива стелется, как царская порфира.</p>	<p>The knowledge of the Universe he bears. But how can he tell it and to whom? The night is full of visions and nightmares And twinkling constellations dance and zoom. And Equus guards the world like Sir Gawain. The wind plays gently with his silky mane. The eyes shine brightly like enormous globes. The silky mane spreads like a monarch's robe.</p>
<p>(Nikolay Zabolotsky. "The Face of a Horse")</p>	<p>(Translated by Yakov Kolker)</p>

It is not only poetry that implies textual meaning by opposing it to the explicit message. Implication can be suggested, just as laconically and expressively, within a phrase: "What shall we put by for a rainy day – money or rubles? (A bitter joke of the 1990s, when inflation in Russia was galloping). The vehicle for the implied meaning is the disjunctive conjunction 'or', showing that rubles are worthless paper and turning a "general vs. specific" correlation into an opposition of antonyms.

Nearly the same effect was detected in a radio programme (Vesti FM, 20.03.2021): "В этом смысле Трамп, конечно, нанес пользу американ-



скому имиджу” (“In this sense Trump, undoubtedly, *dealt* the American image a lot of good”). The apparent slip of the tongue (*нанес* instead of *принес*) must have been intentional irony, suggestive of “dealing a blow”. Feshchenko characterizes such ‘abnormal’ utterances as a kind of ‘watershed’ between two language theories – the normative-grammatical (generative) theory and the linguo-poetic one (Feshchenko, 2018: 316). Perhaps, Chernomyrdin’s ironic maxims fall within the same group of anomalous utterances: “Never have we witnessed anything like that – and here it is again!” (URL: <https://rg.ru/2013/11/02/frazi-site.html>; accessed 28.02.2021). It is also a case of defeated expectancy, of foregrounding that modifies, succinctly and expressively, the textual meaning of a “clumsy” statement.

Equally anomalous are syntagms that do not violate lexical or grammatical combinability, but seem illogical and absurd outside their poetic context:

...Я не знаю, где твоя держава,  
И не знаю, как сложить заклятье,  
Чтобы снова потерять мне право  
На твое дыханье, руки, платье.  
(Arseny Tarkovsky. “Taken away from me...”)

The lyrical hero laments the loss of his beloved: “...What spell can I cast to *lose* again the right to your breath, your arms, your garment?” Instead of the logically expected phrase “to *regain* the right”, the poet uses a seemingly absurd antonym, which reveals a new meaning: “to *lose* the right”, however painful it may be, means parting with a living woman, existing in your time and space, which is so much more than “having the right” to cherish the memory of one who has passed away. Thus, in a literary text, an antonym may serve as a succinct and eloquent signifier for its obvious but dull and colourless signified.

### 2.3. A contextually induced rhyme, or “The absence of a sign is also a sign”

A similar effect – that of a new semantic entity – can be gained when an implicit word is expressed by the *absence* of the rhyme expected. This strategy of expressing the unexpressed was used by Prince Hamlet, when he feigned insanity:

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,  
This realm dismantled was  
Of Jove himself, and now reigns here  
A very very – pajock.





The archaic form “pajock” (“peacock”) upsets the equilibrium of a traditionally rhymed quatrain and suggests an implied word instead of the “intruder”. An eye-rhyme hints at the word “ass”, and this hypothesis is supported by practically every translation of the verse into Russian.

Мой милый ДАМОН, о поверь,  
На этом троне ЦВёл  
Второй ЮПИТЕР; а теперь  
Здесь царствует — ПАВЛИН.

(Translated by Mikhail Lozinsky)

Ты знаешь, дорогой ДАМОН,  
ЮПИТЕРА ОРёл  
Слетел с престола, и на трон  
Воссел простой осё...тр.

(Translated by Boris Pasternak)

Both translators faithfully preserve the implied word “осёл” (“ass”) induced by the rhyme (цвёл, орёл). In fact, Pasternak almost has it in his word-play “осё...тр”, changing an ass into a sturgeon at the last moment. To what extent do both translators render the interaction of the expressed and implied characteristics? It seems that phonetic similarity (осётр – осёл) is less significant than the metaphor of the peacock (pompous and vane) enhanced by the implied metaphor “ass” (a stupid nonentity).

Besides, the phrase “a simple sturgeon” is hardly “a lucky strike”, as the sturgeon has been considered an expensive delicacy since the Middle Ages. Pasternak’s second and third lines are not irreproachable either: “Jove’s eagle // has flown off the throne...”. As if the eagle (or, rather, “Jove himself”) had left the throne of his own accord!

Lozinsky’s translation is closer to the original, with the exception of the rhyme-bound verb “цвёл” (“a new Jupiter blossomed on his throne”), which sounds a bit ironic in Russian, and could not be said by Hamlet, who worshipped the memory of his father.

Perhaps the most acceptable translation of this quatrain is the one cited below from memory since it was a nineteenth-century edition we caught a glimpse of years ago.

Забавный случай, друг ДАМОН,  
У нас произошёл:  
ЮПИТЕР *потерял* свой трон,  
И стал царем — ПАВЛИН<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> An amusing incident, dear Damon, // happened here recently: // Jove lost his throne, // and our new monarch is a peacock.



And yet we see Jupiter *losing* his throne, which suggests either a deposition or an abdication, but not a violent death that deprived the country of a worthy monarch...

Below is another example of the final word in a rhyme interacting with an implicit word suggested by the expected rhyme:

One thing's sure and nothing's surer  
The rich get richer and the poor get – children...  
(Scott Fitzgerald. "The Great Gatsby")

The word "surer" within an antithesis suggests the rhyme "poorer", which lends the semantic component of "poverty" to the word "children". But the context allows a different interpretation: children are one's true fortune, not only in the spiritual sense: they will grow up and start supporting their aged parents. It is a case of "twinkling meaning" (Mikhnev, 2004), with now one, now another in the forefront: "expenses leading to poverty", "filial care in old age", and "the sheer joy of parenthood". Therefore, it is only to be expected that in translation the rhyme may lose its multiple meanings and defeated expectancy:

Пусть богач над златом чахнет  
У тебя другое счастье!...  
(Translated by Nikolay Lavrov)

This translation is too didactic: "Let the rich protect their gold – yours is a different kind of happiness!". Kalashnikova's version preserves the ironic tone of the original embedded in the verb "наживать" (acquire, amass), equally compatible with profit (amass a fortune) and problems (acquire lots of children):

Наживают богачи денег полные мешки,  
Ну а бедный наживает только кучу детворы, ...  
(Fitzgerald, 1965, p. 106 – in Russian)

Besides inducing implicit words with the help of an expected rhyme, the unsaid can be expressed in a different way. R. Jakobson is not absolutely right when he insists that the process of eating can never be an act of semiosis (Jakobson, 1975). For instance, in Pushkin's story "The Shot" Silvio's enemy arrives at the place of the duel with his hat full of cherries, which he consumes with relish in a carefree manner. This is a semiotic act: the young man demonstrates his courage and sangfroid, and Silvio adequately interprets his non-verbal message.

#### 2.4. Zero expressiveness and its meaning-making effect

Opposing beauty and ugliness as aesthetic categories, Umberto Eco further opposes ugliness in real life and ugliness depicted by the arts, which leads him to the concept of "the beauty of ugliness". But we would like to emphasize another idea of U. Eco: the concept of ugliness



can be regarded as “non-correspondence to the ideal of beauty” (Eco, 2014, p. 8–12). And then ugliness can be associated with the absence of imagery or with failing to conform to the laws of aesthetics.

Below are two examples of literary prose demonstrating a violation of the aesthetic tradition.

Example 1. (Ernest Hemingway. “The Snows of Kilimanjaro”)

She liked to read in the evening before dinner and she *drank* Scotch and soda while she read. By dinner she was fairly *drunk* and after a bottle of wine at dinner, she was usually *drunk* enough to sleep.

That was before the *lovers*. After she had the *lovers* she did not *drink* so much because she did not have to be *drunk* to sleep. But the *lovers* bored her. She had been married to a man who had never *bored* her and these people *bored* her very much (*italicised by Ya. K., E. U.*) (Hemingway, 2004, p. 483–484).

The obtrusive lexical repetitions perform no aesthetic function. They are expressly prosaic and tiresome. But the poetic function is obvious: the dull monotony of the wording emphasizes the character’s frustration, and the emptiness of her life after losing her husband. Here the form does more than accentuate the content, it *becomes* the content, which is one of the tasks of the poetic function.

Example 2. (Robert Littell. Ten Steps)

The better part of the story is little more than a meticulous description of an everyday morning ritual, recording the standard working day of a standard inhabitant of small-town America. Every action of his is narrated with accuracy and precision to be envied by any compiler of a manual with such inescapable “topics” as “My working day” и “My flat” – and just as devoid of expressiveness!

Then I washed my hands. The soap was worn down so that there was almost none left. It was a soap that smelled like salad. I turned off the water, but the water still went drip-drip from the faucet. I dried my hands. I hung the towel on the left end of the rod. The right end of the rod is for Mae. The rod is glass, and someday it will come loose and fall down and break. <...>

In the kitchen I saw Mae shelling peas. She forced the peas out of the shell with her thumb and they fell into the bowl. There were three peas on the floor and I picked them up and put them in my pocket. The kitchen floor was laid in linoleum with blue and white squares two inches square (Littell, 1950, p. 100–101).

Coming down the front porch, the narrator counts the steps and, already quite a distance away, starts wondering if they are really ten in number or whether it is better to return and count them again.

At the end of the story, he goes straight to the local police station and confesses to a murder committed the day before. It is only at that moment that the reader comes to see the true meaning of such a scrupulous enumeration of insignificant things: the narrator knows that he will not see his home, his wife, his little son for years, if ever at all, and wishes to imprint the smallest details in his mind.



This story totally lacks the aesthetic function; but the poetic function is all the stronger for it, giving the reader a new awareness of the things that seemed overabundant and boring. The “zero expressiveness” as absence of tropes and figures of speech is compensated for by the composition of the story.

A contrast between the neural form of a message and its textual meaning is often observed in the strong final position. It is discoverable in the last line of Anna Akhmatova’s verse “Сжала руки под темной вуалью” (“I pressed my hands under my dark veil”): ...Улыбнулся спокойно и жутко // И сказал мне: “Не стой на ветру”. (He gave me a calm and weird smile // And said, “Stay out of the wind”).

The advice, totally inexpressive, is enriched with emotive textual connotation that allows various interpretations. Is it mistrust of the belated confession of love? Is it determination to face the refusal with dignity? Is it the final chord of the farewell?

Anton Chekhov completes his sad story “Late-Blooming Flowers” with a short sentence intentionally given with indentation: “Yegorushka is very pleased.” Here the poetic function is interlaced with the emotive function, as the final sentence sounds bitterly ironic in the context of the whole story.

In John Collier’s story “The Chaser” a young man hopelessly in love comes to an obscure shop to purchase a love potion, which turns out to be just a dollar, unlike other potions, such as a “life cleaner”, a colorless and tasteless poison, 5000 dollars a phial. The seller vouches that the effect of the love potion lasts for a lifetime and will turn the haughty girl into a devoted wife who will follow her husband everywhere, catch every word of his, want to know every thought of his. Delighted, the young man pays and takes his leave: “Good-bye”. – “Au revoir”, answers the shop-keeper.

The two equivalents become antonyms in the story. In translation, the young man’s parting should sound as final, while the shop-keeper’s reply should remain in French, with its literal meaning “Till we meet again”. The textual antonymy expresses the implied message: the happy young man is little aware that his future wife’s untiring devotion may one day become too much for the husband to bear and he might be tempted to return for the expensive “life-cleaner”.

### 2.5. Intersemiotic manifestations of the poetic function

First, the poetic function manifests itself in “intersemiotic translation”, which Roman Jakobson called “intersemiotic transmutation”, that is, interpretation of verbal signs by means of non-verbal sign systems (Jakobson, 1978). Scholars study the language of the cinema and the possibility of adequate translation of a long story or a novel into a film. It should be kept in mind that “any language unit (visual-figurative, graphical or acoustic) can become an element of the cinematic language if this language unit has any alternative, including the alternative of *not*



being used" (Lotman, 1973, p. 45). There are studies in "translation" of plays into the language of a theatrical performance, with focus on the semantic divergences between the original play and its theatrical "translation", as well as the difference between various interpretations of a play by theatre directors (Loginova, 2019). Commenting on intersemiotic translation, Suren Zolyan remarks that "'reflections' always result in re-creating a new system of imagery instead of reproducing the old one" (Zolyan, 2020, p. 65).

Second, non-verbal "languages" may get integrated with the natural language, gaining a multicode effect, which can be seen "either in combination of different codes within one text, or in the peculiar way they function in the discursive-communicative aspect" (Sokolova, 2020, p. 65). Code combination can be used with a purely pragmatic purpose, for instance when a verbal description of what is happening on the screen can help people with impaired sight to enjoy the film (Holsanova, 2016). But a multicode effect like this, where the codes are not *mutually* supportive, had better be called "(inter)semiotic *complementation*" (Kaźmierczak, 2018).

Third, – and here is a vast field for further research – there is reason to suppose that the expressive languages of different kinds of art overlap, to some extent. Of course, there can be no "intersemiotic dictionaries" because, for all the similarity of intersemiotic signs, the meaning is always unique. But non-verbal devices can be borrowed by a verbal text, with the poetic function channeling the readers' interpretation.

Literary discourse had stumbled across cinematographic techniques long before the invention of the cinema. Take, for instance, variations of "close-ups" and "long shots" in descriptions, a literary analogy of "a slow-motion camera" – e.g., with the help of Past Continuous forms, which show a brief event as a process, or with the help of breaking a super-phrasal unit into a sequence of one-sentence paragraphs.

We treat a literary device as a derivative of a stylistic expressive means and its textual mission. Viewed from the perspective of the poetic function, a literary device is not so much a trope or a figure of speech as a way of creating an impressive poetic image in a laconic form. Thence such devices as *contrast* (antonyms, antithesis, heterogeneous enumeration), *analogy* (simile, metaphor, periphrasis), *seeming absurdity* (paradox, oxymoron, omitted links in a cause-effect chain), *intentional ambiguity*, *symmetry* or *asymmetry* etc. This approach to a literary device is especially essential to translation of belles-lettres texts, since it focuses on the function of the technique used rather than on the technique itself, and makes it possible to resort to a different expressive means provided the intended meaning is not distorted.

The poetic function helps to build bridges between different semiotic codes, and in each text the same device can create a different implicit semantic undercurrent, which makes the device unique.

Thornton Wilder's novel "The Bridge of San Luis Rey" begins with the collapse of "the finest bridge in Peru" precipitating five travelers who happened to be crossing it. This tragic event is observed from afar



by a monk, to whom the people falling to their death seem like “five gesticulating ants”. Such a long shot is necessitated by the distance between them. But the image of “ants” has an important textual value. Is our existence but a game of chance or is there a “Design”, Divine Providence that rules our lives?

*Gradual transition* from a close-up or a medium shot to a bird’s eye view is a frequent cinematic device. It is used with traditional purposes, such as showing a battle-field from above, or with unique purposes, as Andrei Tarkovsky did at the very end of his film “Solaris”. The same device is often observed in literature.

Thus, in the final paragraph of J. Joyce’s story “The Dead”, which is asymmetrically opposed in volume, tone, and emotive charge to all the preceding narrative, the character sees, with his mind’s eye, snow falling on the whole of Dublin, on all the country, the whole planet, “*falling faintly through the universe*” and bringing together all the living and the dead. This passage, sonorous, melodious, all-embracing, sounds like a requiem and illustrates integration of three arts: literature, cinema and music.

The same device is used with quite a different purpose at the end of Fitzgerald’s novel “The Great Gatsby”. The change of “shots” is effected by passing from the specifying pronoun “he” to the generalizing “we”, meant to express the futility of attempts to reach the ever-escaping “tomorrow”, so rich in promise. Here, again, the generalization is supported by rhythm and alliteration: “*So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past*”. M. Bulgakov resorts to the same device at the end of his novel “The White Guard”.

Gradual “craning away of the camera” is observed at the end of Act 1 in Wilder’s play “Our Town”. The local vicar sends a letter to a sick child, with the following address on the envelope: “*Jane Crofut; The Crofut Farm; Grover’s Corners; Sutton County; New Hampshire; United States of America; North America; Western Hemisphere; the Earth; the Solar System; the Universe; the Mind of God*” The infinitesimally small pinpoint of a farm remains in the focus of ever-widening circles, signifying that each of us is a meaningful particle of the universe. In a different context, nearly the same device can emphasize hopeless isolation of every individual, as shown in A. Minghella’s cinema production of S. Becket’s “Play” (URL: <https://vimeo.com/28766126> (accessed: 04.04.2021)).

We hope that an intersemiotic approach to pre-translation analysis can provide the translator with a better vision of the poetic function of the text and assist in translating it with responsibility liberated from a commitment to literal accuracy.

### **3. Conclusion: Comparative generalization of the peculiarities of the poetic function**

The poetic function in literary texts can be viewed as a circle, with other, smaller, circles (other functions of language) placed partially inside it and partially outside. They frequently converge, when a relevant



image is created with original expressive means catching the reader's eye (expressive and aesthetic functions) and appealing to our feelings (emotional function). Its priority proceeds from its responsibility for the form-content fusion: it justifies the usage of each language sign and its role in the discursive space of the text.

Enumerating language functions, Roman Jakobson appears to use the words "expressive/emotive" as alternative terms. But for all their resemblance, the two functions are hardly identical. Expressiveness is always explicit while emotiveness can be rendered indirectly, which brings it close to the poetic function.

The expressive function attracts immediate attention and is always emphatic. The poetic function preserves its impact even in an allegedly "weak" form of expression. Its seeming obscurity can vary from complete suppression of the implied semiotic sign to diverse ways of its oblique manifestation. We observe total suppression of a textual fragment in Agatha Christie's novel "The Murder of Roger Acroyd": "The letter had been brought in *at twenty minutes to nine*. It was just on *ten minutes to nine* when I left him, the letter still unread." (Agatha Christie).

The narrator, Dr. Sheppard, for all his scrupulous enumeration of the events, "carelessly omits" to mention that within the ten minutes between 20:40 and 20:50 he murdered his host for fear of being exposed as a blackmailer. In contexts like this, foregrounding does not occur until much later, retrospectively. The linguistic vehicle for the poetic function of suppression is the absence of indentation, which would create a pause hinting at what might have happened in the interim.

Suppression in the final position sums up the primary cause and its final consequence, forcing the reader to reproduce mentally the whole cause-effect chain: "*For want of a battle the kingdom was lost. // And all for the want of a horseshoe nail*". And suppression at the beginning of a story sounds like a paradox, an absurdity, which intrigues the reader:

After having lived for over twenty years in the same district, Albert Hall was forced to move to a new neighborhood. He surprised his landlord by telling him that he was leaving because he could not afford to buy any more chocolate (Alexander, 1969).

Retrospective realization of the poetic function, with its emotional coloring, is inescapable in cases of defeated expectancy, when the readers re-estimate the nature of the events, the true relationship between the characters etc.

The emotive or expressive function *may* (but *is not obliged to*) participate in conveying the central message of the text. More often than not, it exhausts itself within the immediate context. When in Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion" Henry Higgins characterizes Eliza as "*deliciously low*", the immediate context suffices to make it clear that it isn't the girl's vulgarity as such that attracts the professor, but the apparently insurmountable task of "making a duchess" of this "draggled-tailed guttersnipe". Here we deal with a convergence of several functions: poetic, emotive, expressive



and aesthetic. That is, the poetic function *can* reveal itself locally, but its main predestination is that of revealing the *total textual* meaning that can only be grasped against the background of the whole text (or even against a broader intertextual background). *The emotive/expressive function* (in Jakobson's classification) *relates to the rhetoric of discourse, and the poetic function relates to the text as an integral unity*. And yet the poetic function of a text as a unified whole invites the reader to view the text as a semiotically open space, with a potential for re-interpreting and expanding its meaning through intertextual associations.

The poetic function is unobtrusive. According to Barthes's metaphor of "the death of the author" (Barthes, 1977, p. 148), it facilitates the immediate reader-text dialogue. And that is why we conclude this paper in the same way we started: with the reticence of true poetry, so well formulated by Archibald MacLeish:

...A poem should be equal to:	...Стих — жизненный опыт, ритм и такт,
Not true.	Но не факт.
For all the history of grief	В истории людского горя
An empty doorway and a maple leaf.	Стих — арка на пустом подворье.
For love	В любви
The leaning grasses and two lights	Он символ, звезды, весть.
above the sea —	В нем смысла нет, он просто
A poem should not mean	Есть.
But be.	
(A. MacLeish. "ARS POETICA")	(Translated by Yakov Kolker)

### References

- Alexander, L.G., 1969. *A first book in comprehension, précis and composition*. London.
- Arnold, I.V., 2016. *Stilistika. Angliyskiy yazyk* [Stylistics. The English Language]. Moscow (in Russ.).
- Barthes, R., 1977. The Death of the Author. In: *Image, music, text*. London, pp. 142–148.
- Bely, A., 1990. *Mezhdru dvukh revolyutsiy. Seriya literaturnykh memuarov* [Between Two Revolutions. Series of Literary Memoirs]. Vol. 3. Moscow (in Russ.).
- Bolotnova, N.S., 2014. Aesthetic function of word and text. In: A.P. Skovorodnikov ed. *Effektivnoe rechevoe obshchenie (bazovye kompetencii)* [Effective Speech Communication (basic competences)]. Krasnoyarsk: Siberian Federal University, pp. 763–765 (in Russ.).
- Eco, U., 2014. *On Ugliness*. New York, Paris, London, Milan: Rizzoli.
- Feshchenko, V.V., 2018. R. Jakobson as Mediator of Cultural Transfer between Linguistics and Literary Experiments. *Przegląd Wschodnioeuropejski*, 9 (2), pp. 309–317 (in Russ.).
- Feshchenko, V.V., Koval', O.V., 2014. *Sotvorenie znaka: Ocherki o lingvoestetike i semiotike iskusstva* [Creation of the Sign. Studies in linguo-aesthetics and semiotics of art]. Moscow (in Russ.).
- Fitzgerald, F.S. 1965. *Velikii Getsbi* [The Great Gatsby]. Translated from the English by E. Kalashnikova. Moscow (in Russ.).
- Hayakawa S.I., Hayakawa A.R., 1990. *Language in Thought and Action*. San Diego.





- Hemingway, E., 2004. *The Essential Hemingway*. London: Arrow Books.
- Holšánová, J., 2016. A Cognitive Approach to Audio Description. *Researching Audio Description: New Approaches*. Palgrave Macmillan Publ., pp. 49–73.
- Isayeva, L. V., 2017. The Poetic Function of Language and word-play in a poly-code advertising text. In: *Yazykovoi diskurs v sotsial'noi praktike* [Language discourse in social practice]. Tver', pp. 118–124 (in Russ.).
- Każmierczak, M., 2018. From Intersemiotic Translation to Intersemiotic Aspects of Translation. *Przekładaniec. Special issue "Word and Image in Translation"*, pp. 7–35.
- Korolyova, E. I., 2016. *Ekspressivnye grammaticheskie sredstva yazyka v aspekte funkcional'no-semanticheskogo polya (na materiale sovreemnoi britanskoi belletristiki)* [Expressive grammatical means of the language in the aspect of the functional and semantic field (based on the material of modern British fiction)]. PhD Dissertation. Yekaterinburg (in Russ.).
- Kurganova, E. B., 2004. *Igrovoj aspekt v sovreemnom reklamnom tekste* [The word-play aspect of contemporary advertising text]. Voronezh (in Russ.).
- Littell, R. 1950. Ten Steps. In: *Modern English Short Stories by American Authors. An Advanced Reader*. N. Y.: Regents Publishing Company, pp. 100–103.
- Loginova, E. G., 2019. Polymodal scripts of semiotic resonance in the discourse of drama. *Kognitivnye issledovaniya yazyka* [Cognitive language studies], 38, pp. 130–141 (in Russ.).
- Lotman, Yu. M., 1973. *Semiotika kino i problemy kinoestetiki* [Semiotics of the Cinema and Issues of Cinema Aesthetics]. Tallinn (in Russ.).
- McIntyre, D., 2003. Using Foregrounding Theory as a Teaching Methodology in a Stylistics Course. *Pedagogy of Style and Stylistics*, 37(1), pp. 1–13. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/style.37.1> [Accessed 10 March 2021].
- Mikheev, M. Yu., 2004. *Opisanie hudozhestvennogo mira A. Platonova po danym yazyka* [Description of A. Platonov's Poetic World According to Language Data]. PhD Dissertation. Moscow. Available at: <http://uni-persona.srcc.msu.ru/site/research/miheev/dis/glava-I.htm> [Accessed 12 January 2021] (in Russ.).
- Peer, W. van, 2007. Introduction to foregrounding: A state of the art. *Language and Literature*, 16 (2), pp. 99–104.
- Rastall, P., 2008. Aesthetic responses and the "cloudiness" of language: is there an aesthetic function of language? *La linguistique*, 44 (1), pp. 103–132.
- Shchirova, I. A., 2015. On the Notion and the Role of Foregrounding. In: *Studia Linguistica. Yazyk v prostranstve sotsiuma i kultury* [Studia Linguistica. Language in the space of society and culture], 24, St. Petersburg, pp. 198–206 (in Russ.).
- Slyusareva, N. A., 2017. The Functions of Language. In: *Bolshaya Rossiyskaya entsiklopediya* [Big Russian Encyclopedia], 33, Moscow, pp. 657 (in Russ.).
- Sokolova, O. V., 2020. Hybrid texts as a form of interaction between avant-garde artistic and political discourses. *Slovo.ru: baltiiskii aktsent* [Slovo.ru: Baltic Accent], 11 (1), pp. 50–86 (in Russ.).
- Tsur, R., 2010. The poetic function and aesthetic qualities: cognitive poetics and the Jakobsonian model. *Acta Linguistica Hafniensia*, 42 (sup1), pp. 2–19.
- Vinogradov, V. V., 1923. On the tasks of stylistics. Observations of the Style of Avvakum the Archpriest's Legend. In: L. V. Shcherba ed. *Russkaya rech'* [Russian speech]. Petrograd, pp. 195–293 (in Russ.).
- Jakobson, R., 1975. Linguistics and Poetics. In: E. Ya. Basin, M. Ya. Polyakov eds. *Structuralism: "za" i "protiv"* [Structuralism: "pro" and "contra"]. Moscow, pp. 193–230 (in Russ.).



Jakobson, R., 1978. On Linguistic Aspects of translation. In: *Voprosy teorii perevoda v zarubezhnoi lingvistike* [Translation theory issues in foreign linguistics]. Moscow, pp. 16–24 (in Russ).

Zolyan, S. T., 2020. “The Rose of Transfiguration” – a polylogue of Alexei Veselovsky, Vyacheslav Invanov, and Vaan Teryan. *Foreign Language Teaching. Chuzhdoesikovo obucheniye*, 47 (1), pp. 56–71 (in Russ.).

### The authors

*Dr Yakov M. Kolker*, Professor, Ryazan State University, Russia.  
E-mail: kolker1937@yandex.ru

*Dr Elena S. Ustinova*, Associate Professor, Ryazan State University, Russia.  
E-mail: e.ustinova@365.rsu.edu.ru

### To cite this article:

Kolker, Ya. M., Ustinova, E. S. 2021, On the less obvious manifestations of the poetic function: a translator’s view, *Slovo.ru: baltic accent*, vol. 12, no. 3, p. 34–53. doi: 10.5922/2225-5346-2021-3-3.

## О НЕЯВНЫХ ПРОЯВЛЕНИЯХ ПОЭТИЧЕСКОЙ ФУНКЦИИ: ПЕРЕВОДЧЕСКИЙ ВЗГЛЯД

**Я. М. Колкер<sup>1</sup>, Е. С. Устинова<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Рязанский государственный университет им. С. А. Есенина  
390000, Россия, Рязань, ул. Свободы, 46  
Поступила в редакцию 23.03.2021 г.  
doi: 10.5922/2225-5346-2021-3-3

Рассмотрено взаимодействие поэтической функции с эмотивной и экспрессивной функциями в художественном тексте. С помощью семантического анализа авторы доказывают, что поэтическую функцию не следует отождествлять с эстетической. Выявлены особенности поэтической функции, благодаря которым она связана с эстетической, эмоциональной и экспрессивной функциями, но играет роль смыслоформирующего стержня художественного произведения. Обсуждаются неявные проявления поэтической функции в случаях, когда она, на первый взгляд, выражена слабо или почти не выражена, но в рамках целого текста, особенно в завершающей позиции, звучит во всю силу. Предлагается функциональная трактовка термина «прием», дающая переводчику художественного текста свободу в выборе выразительного средства. Излагаемые положения проиллюстрированы отрывками из переводов поэзии, выполненных авторами статьи. Показано также, что формосодержание (в терминологии Андрея Белого), за которое «отвечает» поэтическая функция, нередко обогащается использованием интерсемиотических приемов. На примере применения в литературе кинематографического приема постепенного перехода от крупного плана к «взгляду с птичьего полета» иллюстрируется использование одного и того же приема для выражения уникальных смыслов.

**Ключевые слова:** функция, полифункциональность, формосодержание, сема, концептосфера, интерсемиотический художественный прием



### Список литературы

- Арнольд И. В. Стилистика. Современный английский язык. М., 2016.
- Белый А. Между двух революций. Серия литературных мемуаров. М., 1990. Т. 3.
- Болатнова Н. С. Эстетическая функция слова и текста // Эффективное речевое общение (базовые компетенции). Словарь-справочник / под ред. А. П. Сковородникова. Красноярск, 2014. С. 763–765.
- Виноградов В. В. О задачах стилистики. Наблюдения над стилем Жития протопопа Аввакума // Русская речь : сб. ст. / под ред. Л. В. Щербы. Пг., 1923. Ч. 1. С. 195–293.
- Зоян С. Т. «Роза Преображения» – полилог Алексея Веселовского, Вячеслава Иванова и Ваана Терьяна // Foreign Language Teaching. Чуждоезиковое обучение. 2020. Vol. 47, № 1. С. 56–71.
- Исаева Л. В. Поэтическая функция языка и языковая игра в поликодовом рекламном тексте // Языковой дискурс в социальной практике : сб. науч. тр. междунар. науч.-практ. конф. Тверь, 2017. С. 118–124.
- Королева Е. И. Экспрессивные грамматические средства языка в аспекте функционально-семантического поля (на материале современной британской беллетристики) : дис. ... канд. филол. наук. Екатеринбург, 2016.
- Курганова Е. Б. Игровой аспект в современном рекламном тексте. Воронеж, 2004.
- Логина Е. Г. Полиmodalные сценарии семиотического резонанса в дискурсе драмы // Когнитивные исследования языка. 2019. № 38. С. 130–141.
- Лотман Ю. М. Семиотика кино и проблемы киноэстетики. Таллин, 1973.
- Михеев М. Ю. Описание художественного мира А. Платонова по данным языка : дис. ... д-ра филол. наук. М., 2004.
- Слюсарева Н. А. Функции языка // Большая российская энциклопедия. М., 2017. Т. 33. С. 657.
- Соколова О. В. Гибридные тексты как форма взаимодействия авангардного художественного и политического дискурсов // Слово.ру: балтийский акцент. 2020. Т. 11, № 1. С. 50–86.
- Фещенко В. В. Р. Якобсон как проводник культурного трансфера между лингвистикой и литературным экспериментом // Przegląd Wschodnioeuropejski. 2018. Т. 9, № 2. S. 309–317.
- Фицджеральд Ф. С. Великий Гэтсби / пер. с англ. Е. Калашниковой. М., 1965.
- Щирова И. А. О понятии и роли выдвигания // Studia Linguistica : сб. науч. тр. СПб., 2015. Вып. 24: Язык в пространстве социума и культуры. С. 198–206.
- Якобсон Р. Лингвистика и поэтика // Структурализм: «за» и «против» / под ред. Е. Я. Басина и М. Я. Полякова. М., 1975. С. 193–230.
- Якобсон Р. О лингвистических аспектах перевода // Вопросы теории перевода в зарубежной лингвистике. М., 1978. С. 16–24.
- Alexander L. G. A first book in comprehension, précis and composition. L., 1969.
- Barthes R. The death of the author / transl. by S. Heath // Image, music, text. L., 1977. P. 142–148.



- Eco U. *On Ugliness*. N. Y. ; P. ; L. ; Milan, 2014.
- Hayakawa S.I., Hayakawa A.R. *Language in Thought and Action*. San Diego, 1990.
- Hemingway E. *The Essential Hemingway*. L., 2004.
- Holšánová J. A Cognitive Approach to Audio Description // *Researching Audio Description: New Approaches*. L., 2016. P. 49–73. doi: 10.1057/978-1-137-56917-2\_4.
- Kaźmierczak M. From Intersemiotic Translation to Intersemiotic Aspects of Translation // *Przekładaniec*. 2018. Special issue: Word and Image in Translation. P. 7–35. doi: 10.4467/16891864ePC.18.009.9831.
- Littell R. *Ten Steps* // *Modern English Short Stories by American Authors. An Advanced Reader* / compiled by R.J. Dixson. N. Y., 1950. P. 100–103.
- McIntyre D. Using Foregrounding Theory as a Teaching Methodology in a Stylistics Course // *Pedagogy of Style and Stylistics*. 2003. Vol. 37, №1. P. 1–13.
- Peer W. van. Introduction to foregrounding: A state of the art // *Language and Literature*. 2007. Vol. 16, №2. P. 99–104. doi: 10.1177/0963947007075978.
- Rastall P. Aesthetic responses and the “cloudiness” of language: is there an aesthetic function of language? // *La linguistique*. 2008. Vol. 44, №1. P. 103–132.
- Tsur R. *The poetic function and aesthetic qualities: cognitive poetics and the Jakobsonian model* // *Acta Linguistica Hafniensia*. 2010. Vol. 42, Issue sup1: *Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague*. P. 2–19. doi: 10.1080/03740463.2010.482311.

### Об авторах

Яков Моисеевич Колкер, кандидат педагогических наук, доцент, профессор, Рязанский государственный университет им. С. А. Есенина, Россия.

E-mail: kolker1937@yandex.ru

Елена Сергеевна Устинова, кандидат педагогических наук, доцент, Рязанский государственный университет им. С. А. Есенина, Россия.

E-mail: e.ustinova@365.rsu.edu.ru

### Для цитирования:

Колкер Я.М., Устинова Е.С. О неявных проявлениях поэтической функции: переводческий взгляд // *Слово.ру: балтийский акцент*. 2021. Т. 12, №3. С. 34–53. doi: 10.5922/2225-5346-2021-3-3.