

**TILTM 2020****Topical Issues of Linguistics and Teaching Methods in Business and Professional Communication****GRAMMAR RHYTHM FIGURES IN LITERARY PROSE: CASE STUDY OF S. THOMAS'S POPCO**

Elena Shliakhtina (a)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) FSBEI of Higher Education 'Yaroslavl State Pedagogical University named after K.D. Ushinsky',  
108/1, Respublikanskaya street, Yaroslavl, Russia, elenav\_yar@mail.ru

***Abstract***

The article is aimed at studying syntactic rhythm figures in English and Russian literary prose. An experiment has been conducted based on the use of an original software application to find such grammar means of text rhythmization as simplece, epanalepsis and polysyndeton in S. Thomas's novel 'PopCo' and in its translation into Russian. During the experiment, the author has analyzed how often these rhythmic figures are used in the original as well as the frequency of preserving or losing grammar means in the translation into Russian. The analysis has shown that polysyndeton is the most common rhythm figure employed by the author in the novel. Epanalepsis is less often used and there are few examples of simplece in the text. There are some cases where these figures are lost in translation because of the differences in English and Russian grammar systems. However, in a number of situations the translator uses some other rhetoric figure to reproduce the rhythm in the translated text. The author makes the conclusion that it is necessary to preserve rhythm in translation and that grammar means of rhythmisation are as important to study as rhythm figures at phonetic and lexical levels.

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**Keywords:** Epanalepsis, literary prose, polysyndeton, rhythm, simplece.



## 1. Introduction

Rhythm is recognized as being an integral part of any text. Therefore, the question of its presence in texts of different genres attracts attention of many linguists and translators. However, when speaking about rhythm people think, first of all, about poetry and forget that it can be found in literary prose as well. According to Encyclopedia Britannica Online (n.d.), rhythm is essential to poetry; prose may be said to exhibit rhythm but in a much less highly organized way. This description underlines that rhythmic characteristics are less important for prose than for poetry, which is not quite accurate. It should be noted that rhythms of poetry and prose are two different types of creative vision and structural organization of the text. Boulton (2016) explains it in the following way: ‘the rhythm of poetry consists, with a few exceptions, of a regular pattern of stresses... the rhythm of prose depends entirely on subtle variations’. It means that the rhythm of prose consists of various rhythmic techniques that make it more interesting to study.

## 2. Problem Statement

In this paper we share the view of Boychuk et al. (2015) who define rhythm in prose as ‘regular repetition of similar and commensurable units of speech that perform structuring, text-forming, expressive and emotional functions’. It follows from the definition that rhythm in prose is based on the reiteration and rhythm figures can be found at all language levels, which proves the complex nature of the phenomenon. As literary prose presents a multi-level system with an aesthetic function, its components (conceptual, evaluative, emotional, rhythmic-intonational) are arranged at phonetic, metrical, lexical and syntactic levels. All these elements correlate with each other creating the beauty of the text. For this reason, we believe that studying rhythm in literary prose is of special interest.

What makes the task more challenging is that translators try to reproduce the meaning of the text to the full extent and considerations concerning rhythm quite often remain in the background. However, it is impossible not to pay attention to the rhythmic structure of the text as it emphasizes the author’s vision of the situation and is necessary for conveying the mood of the book.

There is a wide variety of rhythm figures in literary prose, for example, alliteration, assonance, anaphora, epiphora, anadiplosis, symploce, epanalepsis, reduplication, polysyndeton, syntactic parallelism, and many others. Much attention is usually paid to phonetic and lexical means of text rhythmization, while the syntactic level is not properly considered. That is why this paper focuses on grammar figures of rhythm in the English and Russian languages.

## 3. Research Questions

There is a considerable amount of literature on different aspects of rhythm analysis. Many linguists focus on studying rhythm in speech. For example, Grabe and Low (2008) consider rhythmic classifications of speech, calculate durational variability in successive acoustic-phonetic intervals and compare measurements from stress-, syllable- or mora-timed languages with measurements from other languages. Cummins (2002) views coupling between nested prosodic units as an additional source of rhythmic patterning in speech, dependent on text properties and speaker’s characteristics. Ramus et al. (2016) present instrumental measurements based on a consonant/vowel segmentation for eight languages and propose a

hypothesis regarding the role of rhythm perception in language acquisition. Dellwo (2016) studies vocalic intervals and the standard deviation of consonantal intervals in a speech signal, monitors relative C variation across speech rates and calculates the variation coefficient. Arvaniti (2012) focuses on rhythmic classifications based on metrics; quantifies rhythm class distinctions in English, German, Greek, Italian, Korean and Spanish. Goswami and Leong (2013) analyze issues related to the study of speech rhythm and temporal structure and regard rhythm perception as well as rhythmic synchronization.

There is a number of papers devoted to the studies of rhythm in poetry. Cureton (2015) focuses on the issue of poetic form and rhythm, in general, and components of free verse, in particular. Burns (1998) studies the nature of rhythm and rhythmic structures in the works of famous poets and provides an in-depth look at poetic rhythm and meter and defines the main notions and concepts related to the text rhythmization. The author studies the rhythm of songs, nursery rhymes, etc. Barry et al. (2009) analyze Bulgarian, English and German verses with regular poetic meters of different types and elicited prose utterances with various accentual patterns. Crawford (2016) describes the main terms connected with the topic such as ultimate rhythm, language rhythm, context rhythm, visual rhythm, etc. and characterizes the rhythm of free verse.

Rhythm in prose is also the main topic of many research papers. Boychuk (2015) views the rhythm of a text as one of the main categories which characterizes the writer's individual style, offers a classification of the rhythmic means and presents the study of rhythm in works of French authors. Beeferman (1996) measures the regularity of lexical stress in English texts and shows a relationship between the probability of word sequences and the amount of rhythm present in them. Balint et al. (2016) consider rhythmic features of written texts (speeches, essays and newspaper articles) and statistically determine sets of features for each genre. Golubeva-Monatkina (2017) studies the rhythm in fictional prose and the issues of rhythm translation into another language.

Besides Golubeva-Monatkina, the following scholars should be mentioned in the area of rhythm translation in prose. Ding (2008) explains how important to preserve rhythm in translation as it has not only meaning and form but also the effect on the reader. Whyatt et al. (2016) present a comparative analysis of processing effort and cognitive rhythm demonstrated by professional translators. Scott (1997, 2018, 2020) in the series of articles studies the rhythm of free verse and preserving rhythm in translation, explores translation of poetic rhythm in the work of Leconte de Lisle's 'Midi' (2020), in Yves Bonnefoy's translation of William Shakespeare's Hamlet (1997) and demonstrates that it is possible to recapture the poetic rhythm in translation (2018) due to free verse. Pekkanen (2015) focuses on different manifestations of rhythm; considers key factors constituting rhythm in narrative writing and compares translations of literary texts from English into Finnish.

Taking the above-mentioned into account, we can say that there are a lot of books and articles devoted to the study of rhythm and the authors consider it from different points of view. However, there are practically no works that deal with the syntactic level of text rhythmization.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

As the rhythm of prose is extremely important when it comes to sentence structure and the choice of words in a given sentence, the following figures are considered in the paper: symploue (repetition of a word or a phrase simultaneously at the beginning and at the end of successive clauses or sentences);

epanalepsis (repetition of a word or a phrase after intermediate words within the same clause or sentence); polysyndeton (repetition of a conjunction to join clauses in places where it is not contextually necessary).

These figures were selected for the research for two reasons. Firstly, because of their positional specifics they represent syntactic means of text rhythmization. Secondly, they are often used for expressive purposes and serve to attract special attention to the emotions of the characters and to convey the mood of the whole book.

It is also necessary to note that we will analyze not only a piece of literary prose in the original but also its translation into Russian and will see if rhythm is reproduced in translation and to what extent it is done.

The examples given here are from the original and translation of an English novel *PopCo* by S. Thomas. It was chosen because it is an intellectual detective novel with an unusual plot. In her book, the author satirically portrays modern consumer society. For this reason, the novel has become popular among the readers. Besides, the author uses a lot of rhythm figures in her book that are important for the research. The book was published in Russian in 2006 and the translation was made by D. Borisov.

## 5. Research Methods

The analysis was done with the help of an original software application *ProseRhythmDetector* designed by a team of linguists and programmers (N. Lagutina, K. Lagutina, E. Boychuk, I. Vorontsova, E. Shliakhtina, O. Belyayeva) from Yaroslavl State Pedagogical University named after K.D. Ushinski and P.G. Demidov Yaroslavl State University (Certificate of State Registration of Software №2019619380, 2019). The automated tool offers integrated search of rhythm figures (anaphora, epiphora, symploce, epizeuxis, anadiplosis, epanalepsis, diacope, polysyndeton) in a text of any style. In our research the application of the tool allows to quickly detect elements constituting rhythm in a piece of literary prose and to easily find rhythmic shifting in translation.

## 6. Findings

The research has revealed that the most frequently used rhetorical figure is polysyndeton. In the analyzed novel the device has found 1578 examples. This somewhat big number can be explained by the fact that the repetition of a conjunction draws the reader's attention to the word that stands after it and this way the author creates the effect of narrative continuity. In the Russian text 1232 examples of the figure have been detected. The data show that this type of rhythm is not always repeated in translation.

Conjunction *and/u* is the most frequently employed word in polysyndeton both in the original and in translation. It is found in 925 cases in English and in 894 cases in Russian. Thus, this kind of repetition is reproduced in most of the cases in translation. However, there are examples when polysyndeton is omitted in the Russian text. For instance, *I think about mosquito nets and children running away from home in a hot country and how my kit would work in different climates.* – *Я задумываюсь о противомоскитных сетках, о детях, что сбегают из дома в какой-нибудь жаркой стране, и о том, как можно использовать мой набор в разных климатических зонах.* The structural composition of the sentence has shifted in translation. Here, there is no polysyndeton in the translated sentence but due to the repetition of

the Russian preposition *о*, together with a noun that follows it (in two out of three places), the rhythm of the sentence is fully preserved.

The author uses repetition of *that* in 159 sentences while in translation the conjunction *что* is reproduced in 142 sentences. For instance, *They say that only children can see magical creatures, that by the time you are an adult, you have lost the ability.* – *Есть мнение, что лишь дети могут увидеть волшебных существ, что к совершеннолетию эта способность утрачивается.* In both cases, polysyndeton emphasizes the importance of the character's words.

There are 79 sentences with the conjunction *or* repeated in the original. All cases are reproduced in translation. For instance, *But we can make things that explode or float or take you to fantasy lands.* – *Но мы делаем вещи, которые плавают, или взрываются, или служат ключами к сказочным странам.* The author enumerates absolutely different things and emphasizing every item with the conjunction she underlines unlimited opportunities of the person. This idea is expressed in the translated text as well.

Such conjunctions as *if, because, after, so; a, чтобы* are less often used for the rhythmization of both original text and its translation, whereas others are not present at all, for instance, *for, since, till; либо, когда, поскольку.*

The research also includes the analysis of epanalepsis use both in the English and Russian versions of the novel. Its main stylistic function is to transmit an emotional state (e.g., anger, despair, happiness, joy) of a character stressing some word or a phrase at the beginning and at the end of a clause or a sentence. This way the first and the last parts are better remembered. In the course of the analysis 25 cases of epanalepsis have been found in the original, as compared to 16 cases found in translation. For instance, *Everyone knows everyone.* – *Все знают всех.* The sentence itself is not quite emotional. However, epanalepsis emphasizes the key idea and in a broader context the reader understands that the main character feels discomfort and even fear. There is only one word between the repeated pronouns, so epanalepsis has a compact pattern that provides a sense of coherence.

With the help of the tool, five cases of simplece have been detected in the original and four of them are translated into Russian. Simplece serves as a sentence binder; moreover, the repetition of individual words together with the repetition of syntactical structure helps to achieve emphasis. For instance, *She is waiting somewhere for me! She loves me!* – *Она где-то там, ждет меня! Она любит меня!* In the example, the syntactic figure strings together the sentence and creates gradation. The use of simplece accompanied by an exclamation mark is intended to underline the excitement of the character. It creates the same effect on the reader in translation.

In one case simplece is lost in the Russian text. However, the translator uses another rhetorical figure: *If you dress like them, you fit in. If you dress in an opposite way to them, or in things so ridiculous they could never consider wearing them, you are cool, daring and an individual – and therefore you fit in.* – *Если я одеваюсь, как они, – я «своя в доску». Если я одеваюсь диаметрально противоположным образом, или в имотки настолько нелепые, что им никогда и в голову не придет их носить, значит, я клевая и рисковая, то есть я – «индивидуальность», а следовательно, «своя в доску».* In the original sentence the simplece is used to highlight the opposite ideas, and to attract the reader's attention to the fact that the character's colleagues are fond of discussing the look and the behavior of surrounding people. They think that they are very carefully choosing people to socialize with, but, in fact, the reader

understands that it is not true. The structure of the sentence helps to create an ironic effect. Simploce is not preserved in translation because it is impossible to use the same grammar construction in the Russian language. Instead, the translator employs anaphora that compensates the loss and makes the sentence rhythmic. It is also necessary to note the presence of epiphora in the English sentence (*you fit in*) that is also preserved in translation («*своя в доску*»). This sentence is a good example of combining different figures of rhythmization to show the attitude of the main character to the colleagues.

## 7. Conclusion

In the survey, with the help of the automated tool, we have analyzed the use of grammar rhythm figures, such as polysyndeton, epanalepsis and simploce, in a piece of modern English literary prose and in its translation into Russian. The analysis shows that polysyndeton is most frequently used rhetorical figure in the novel in both languages. The number of polysyndeton cases preserved in translation is significant because it is one of the easiest ways to make the sentence rhythmic and its loss is caused by the grammar differences of two languages. In sentences where polysyndeton cannot be repeated the translator tries to recapture the rhythm with the help of other rhetorical figures, for example, simple repetition.

Epanalepsis is less common in the novel. However, due to the use of this rhetorical figure, the author places greater emphasis on an idea, a key point or a string of words and this way she intensifies the emotional tension. This helps her to show the feelings of the main character more deeply. In many cases epanaleptic structure is reproduced in translation.

While analyzing the use of simploce, the following is revealed. This rhetorical figure is very seldom used in the novel. It can be explained by the complexity of its structure. Nevertheless, it is created to emphasize the contrast between different points of view and it adds a sense of balance to the text. Almost in all cases simploce is preserved in translation.

In general, grammar rhythm figures are necessary to take into account when analyzing a text in the original and in translation because they are an essential part of the rhythmic structure of literary prose. Future research will concentrate on studying phonetic, lexical and grammar rhythm figures together, as they help to build cadence, rhythm and overall flow of the text.

## Acknowledgments

The reported study was funded by RFBR under research project No.19-07-00243.

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