

**ISCKMC 2020****International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»****SEARCH FOR MEANING AND FORM: TRANSLATION OF THE  
KHETAGUROV'S POEM INTO FRENCH**

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**Abstract**

The paper considers the poetic translation of the famous poem *I am not a prophet* by K.L. Khetagurov into French and substantiates the translator's choice of this or that method. Translation of poetry is considered to be one of the most complicated translation. The authors list the existing types of translation transformations and cite the opinions of domestic and foreign scientists-linguists and translators. Different types of lexical and grammatical transformations, such as permutation, word order reconstruction, omission, addition, replacement of parts of a sentence and parts of speech, etc., which affect both the form and content of linguistic units, are formal-semantic transformations. The study is relevant due to changes that occur in the structure of a poetic work during translation, which is caused by different grammatical structures of Russian as the original language and French (the poem was translated by Professor R. K. Kuliev). In France, since the second half of the 20th century, there has been a radical change in the approach to poetic translation and rethinking of the role of the phonetic component as one of the fundamental characteristics of a poetic work. According to the author-translator, poetry conveys information of a higher order (aesthetic) due to the ability of words, phrases, sentences to embody a certain meaning in separate small segments of the text, i.e. evoke certain feelings, emotions and associations in the reader.

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*Keywords:* Poetic translation, translation transformations, translation methods



## 1. Introduction

Translation should always meet strict requirements. Poetic translation is considered to be one of the most complicated translation types. The concepts of method, technique, strategies are used to describe the translation process. The translation method is “a certain system of interrelated techniques that takes into account the type of translation and translation methods” (Komissarov, 1999, p. 73). The famous Russian poet and translator Vyazemsky (1980), a close friend of A.S. Pushkin, was fluent in several foreign languages, including French. He distinguished two methods of translation: independent and subordinate. In the first case, the translator, “imbued with the spirit of the original work, pours it into his own forms”, whereas in the second case, he “tries to retain the forms, considering the element of the target language... Independent translations, that is, re-creation, had brilliant examples in Russia: this is how Karamzin and Zhukovsky translated” (Vyazemsky, 1980, p. 104).

Translators who adhere to the subordinate method of translation strive to accurately convey the form of the work. This method implies retaining not only the size, stanza and metrics of the poem, but also the order and type of rhymes, features of its melody and sound organization. A great number of translators believe that this is the only way to retain the individual style of the author in translation (Naumenko, 2012).

## 2. Problem Statement

The choice of the translation method, which depends on the type of poetry, is very important for the translator. Etkind (1983) writes: “Depending on the type of poetry, the relationship between the logical content, stylistic expression and sound pattern changes” (p. 30). The choice of the most important element in the poem to be translated is of great importance for the translator (Bryusov, 1955). The transformations that make the transition from original units to translation units are called translation transformations. Retsker (2010) distinguishes two types of transformations: grammatical transformations in the form of replacement of parts of speech or parts of a sentence and lexical transformations that imply concretization, generalization, differentiation of meanings, anatomical translation, compensation for losses arising in translation, as well as semantic development and integral transformation. Shchetinkin (1987) suggests the following types of translation transformations: lexical (concretization, antonymic translation, amplification, generalization, semantic agreement, adaptation, compensation, explication); stylistic (modulation); grammatical (permutation, omission, replacement, addition). In our opinion, classification proposed by V.E. Shchetinkin provides the most complete picture of translation transformations. When translated into French, transmission of the poetic form is complicated by the fundamental differences between the Russian and French versification systems. The Russian syllabo-tonic system is based on the regular alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables, while the French syllabics is based on the equal number of syllables in all units with the obligatory stress on the final syllable in each rhythmic group (Gasparov, 1989). Classical French versification has strict rules for counting syllables and imposes restrictions on the use of a number of forms. For example, word forms in which [ə] is in position after a stressed vowel (*prie, pries, prient*) cannot appear before a word that begins with a consonant (Grammont, 2008). Poetic translations performed in the 19th century are fairly free in form and

manner (free stanza, size, with no attempt to approach the equivalent). Interestingly, there was no clear distinction between the terms 'translation' and 'imitation' in the French poetic translation of the 19th century. For example, some translations had the subtitle *Traduction ou imitation en vers* (Armand, 2012).

In the 20th century, some classical rules were violated, and French poets were given the opportunity to write in a free manner. Due to significant differences between the French and Russian versification systems, every French translator had to either abandon the poetic form, or choose a poetic form that most adequately, from his point of view, conveyed the features of the original poem. At that time, a poetic line in French was of greater length compared to that in Russian, which created some difficulties. Thus, since the second half of the 20th century in France, there has been a radical change in the approach to translation of a poetic text and rethinking of the role of the phonetic component as one of the fundamental characteristics of a poetic work.

### 3. Research Questions

1. What author gave the most complete classification of translation transformations?
2. What did the radical change in the approach to translation of a poetic text in France from the second half of the 20th century lead to?
3. What specific lexical and grammatical transformations were used by the translator when translating Khetagurov's poem *I am not a prophet* into French?

### 4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to show the difficulties in choosing the form and meaning when translating the poem *I am not a prophet* by a famous national poet of Ossetia K.L. Khetagurov into French based on personal experience of poetry translation.

### 5. Research Methods

The study employed the following methods: a) theoretical: study and analysis of linguistic literature and literature on the theory and practice of translation by domestic and foreign authors; b) historical and literary; c) comparative and contrastive; d) generalization and interpretation of the data obtained.

### 6. Findings

The original poem *I am not a prophet* by K.L. Khetagurov consists of six stanzas of four verses each. The French translation has six stanzas of four verses each, i.e. the appearance of the poem is preserved. Meanwhile, the size of the original (iambic pentameter) becomes twelvefold verse in French (in our case, the Alexandrian verse) while retaining the original rhyme scheme (1–3, 2–4):

1  
*Я не пророк... В безлюдную пустыню*  
*Я не бегу от клеветы и зла...*

*Разрушить храм, попать мою святыню  
Толпа при всём безумье не могла.*

*Aucunement prophète, faisant l'objet de blâme,  
Je ne fuis pas dans le désert, voilà!  
Raser un sanctuaire pour bafouer mon culte,  
Si folle qu'elle soit, la foule ne va pas.*

In the first stanza (verses 1–2), a flexible Russian word order is transformed into a fixed French one. Thus, there is no excessive use of the personal pronoun of the 1st person in translation. In verses 3–4, concretization is provided by the lexeme *raser*, which is more acceptable in French and avoids literalism in translation. The addition of a concessive phrase *si folle qu'elle soit* is grammatically interesting, which is due to the needs of rhythm. The verb *aller* appears in the present tense, since the Russian *не могла* is, in our opinion, projected into the present-future.

2

*Я не ищю у сильных сострадания,  
Не дорожу участием друзей...  
Я не боюсь разлуки и изгнания,  
Предсмертных мук, темницы и цепей...*

*La grâce des forts n'a pas d'emprise sur moi,  
C'est similaire pour le concours d'amis.  
Je ne craignais jamais de vivre en ermite,  
Banni, trahi, maudit et poursuivi.*

In the second stanza (verses 1–2), the unstressed personal pronoun of the 1st person is replaced with the stressed form in translation, which, in our opinion, retains the required emphasis. The lexeme *сострадание* is more likely associated with benevolence, mercy (including financial one) of the powers that be, rather than with their sympathy (therefore, *la grâce des forts* is used). In verse 3, the lexical compensation for *разлуки и изгнания* is achieved through the collective semantics of *en ermite*. In verse 4, the semantic agreement with the original *предсмертных мук, темницы и цепей...* is provided by a set of miseries: *banni, trahi, maudit et poursuivi*, thus strengthening and explicating the rhyme.

3

*Везде, для всех я песнь свою слагаю,  
Везде разврат открыто я корю  
И грудью грудь насилия встречаю,  
И смело всем о правде говорю.*

*À toutes, à tous j'adresse ma parole,  
Blâmant à découvert libertinage,  
En ripostant tout droit à la violence,  
Avec chacun je parle sans ambages.*

In the third stanza (verses 1–2), the omission of the redundant *езде* is compensated for by gender amplification (feminine and masculine) in translation *для всех* through *à toutes, à tous*. A separate indication of the feminine gender in the process of communication appears as a kind of imperative in modern French. In verse 3, due to the absence of loan translation in French, a set expression *зрудью зрудь* is replaced with *en ripostant tout droit*, which conveys the meaning but loses in imagery. In our opinion, there is a certain semantic omission in the translation of verse 4 by the phrase *avec chacun je parle sans ambages*, which corresponds to the semantic pattern of the phrase but falls short from the pragmatic point of view.

4

*На что друзья, когда все люди братья,  
Когда везде я слышу их привет?  
При чём враги, когда во мне проклятья  
Для злобы их и ненависти нет?*

*Qui est ami, quand tous les hommes sont frères?  
"Salut!" jovial arrive de toute part.  
Qui est ennemi aussi? Je n'exerçais plus guère  
Des répulsions sur ceux qui me détestent.*

In the fourth stanza, grammatical permutations can be observed in both verses 1–2 and 3–4. In both cases, the subordinate clauses of time included in the original poem in the interrogative sentences are replaced in translation with independent *sentences*, which is more consistent with their informative rather than interrogative nature. Lexical translation of verses 3–4 seems more clear and unambiguous than that in the original. However, attempts to give them more imagery in translation resulted in variants that show literalism.

5

*В тюрьме ясней мне чудится свобода,  
Звучнее песнь с бряцанием цепей,  
В изгнание я дороже для народа,  
Милее смерть в безмолвии степеней...*

*La liberté dans la prison se montre plus visible,  
Au bruit de fers tout chant est plus sonore.  
Blessé et exilé, je suis plus cher au peuple,  
La mort – plus douce, quand on peut se taire.*

In the fifth stanza (verse 1), there is generalization (awareness that this sensation inherent in the subject of speech stems from the context and situation). In verse 2, there is the word order reconstruction with the explication of the predicate verb. In verse 3, there is amplification of the meaning with replacement of the adverbial modifier of place with an adjective-attribute in the case of the unstressed

personal pronoun. In verse 4, the omission of the lexeme *стенею* is associated with semantic compensation, since the rheme of death (the main thing in information) is associated with silence as such, without specification.

6

*При чём толпа? Ничтожная рабыня  
Пустых страстей – дерзает пусть на всё!  
Весь мир – мой храм, любовь – моя святыня,  
Вселенная – отечество моё...*

*La foule n'est rien, servante dépravée.  
Une folle personne. Qu'elle aille à tout va!  
Le monde - mon sanctuaire, l'amour – un culte sacré,  
Tout l'univers géant – une mère patrie aimée...*

In the sixth stanza (verses 1–2), the substitution of a statement for a question is due to the fact that the rhetorical question of the original implies an answer with a negative sign: *При чём толпа?* = *Толпа тут не при чём*. The antonymic translation (verses 3–4) of the Russian phrase *отечество моё* as *mère patrie* is associated with the absence of loan translation in French.

## 7. Conclusion

The paper considered different types of lexical and grammatical transformations: permutation, replacement of parts of a sentence, word order reconstruction, omission, addition, replacement of parts of speech, etc. Translation transformations affect both the form and the content of linguistic units, therefore they are formal-semantic transformations.

A poetry translator should retain the content of the original, although not all components of the content can be conveyed. This task is feasible, but losses are inevitable for any translator. In the future, other (more successful) versions of the translation of this poem will certainly appear.

Thus, translation of poetry is the most difficult type of translation, which implies a creative approach and skills of a translator. Translators face challenges and problems, they strive for adequacy and attempt to convey the exact meaning of the original in the most appropriate forms. However, the poetic text has something that conveys information of a higher order (aesthetic), which arises due to the ability of words, phrases, sentences to embody a certain meaning in separate small segments of the text, i.e. evoke certain feelings, emotions and associations in the reader. According to the authors, the translations of the works by Khetagurov into foreign languages contribute to the expansion of the Ossetian and the Caucasian ethnocultural space, sharing of the poet's views and ideas with people who speak other languages and belong to different ethnocultural communities (Kuliev et al., 2019). High-quality poetic translations, as well as bright original works of art, are a powerful means of intercultural communication and a great opportunity of expanding the linguistic picture of the world for people speaking different languages.

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