POETIC CYCLES AND INFORMATION BEYOND THE MICRO-LEVEL OF WORDS: ON THE TRANSLATIONS OF JOSEPH BRODSKY'S CYCLE *A PART OF SPEECH* INTO ENGLISH AND LATVIAN

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Abstract

A poetic cycle is a specific case of poetic contextualisation and for translators this means additional efforts in identifying the micro- and macro-level network of functional and semantic links. Joseph Brodsky's cycle *A Part of Speech* represents a highly conceptual approach and strong integration of each and every poem. In this context the paper briefly outlines different types of micro- and macroscopic approaches to poetry translation. Further practical analysis of some translation issues observed in the respective English and Latvian translations show that decisions of poetry translators are informed by different backgrounds in the author-text-reader relationships. Artistic creativity is certainly present in the translation activity but this does not mean that a completely independent target text is produced.

Keywords: poetic cycle, poetry translation, microscopic approach, macroscopic approach

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to address the issues encountered in rendering original poetic cycles into a target language (TL). Discussion of both poetry and its translation put forward the necessity to focus on different types of micro- and macroscopic approaches which are briefly outlined in the paper. We have also included notes on the impact of context-dependence of poetic texts on the information structures having further implications regarding the mechanisms of meaning-formation and the capacity to understand poetic texts. Thus, the concept of competence stands out as an essential aspect of the discussion, especially when the challenges of poetry translators and the associated issues of poetry translation (PT) quality are considered. The theoretical ideas serve as the basis for the discussion of the translations of Joseph Brodsky's cycle *A Part of Speech* into English and Latvian. This section of the paper starts with an overview of the key contributors to the analysis of the original Russian cycle and its translations, which is followed by our comments on some significant translation issues observed in the respective English and Latvian translations.

2. Micro- and macro-level approaches

The history of the critical discussion of poetry and its translation is a history of, first, identifying and recognising different types and levels of micro- and macroscopic approaches; second, analysing different relationships of the micro- and macroscopic elements and, third, developing respective tools (methods) for their study and analysis. Irina Mikhaylova (Mikhaylova [Михайлова] 2007) refers to the main two types of translatological approaches to literary translation indicated by Kitty M. Leuven-Zwart: one of them is based on literary science (macro-level approach), while the other dwells on the linguistic analysis of texts (micro-level approach). The first approach traces the background and history of literary translations and investigates their integration in the host culture by considering the translation principles in the context of the mainstream literary movements of the respective period. According to the linguistic approach a target text (TT) is subject to a microscopic analysis by contrastively discussing each element or line of the text in order to identify common ways and rules of translation related to certain objective and subjective aspects (ibid, 19-20). Respectively, Xavier Lin, a student of Susan Bassnett's, uses the concept of microscopic (comparative) criticism where linguistic details of the source text (ST) and the TT are discussed, and the macroscopic method based on the comparisons of the overall qualities of the ST and the TT. More specifically, he adheres to the critical approach as practiced by Matthew Arnold, who identifies two steps towards a good translation: first, clearing away the mist in the translator to a degree of pure transparency, and second, uniting with the original (Lin 2007, 20-28).

In the context of integrating the micro- and macroscopic approaches in PT two essential recent contributors to the theoretical discussion are Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (2001 [1998]). In his foreword to *Constructing Cultures* edited by Bassnett and Lefevere, Edwin Gentzler (2001 [1998]) arguably claims them to be the first to articulate the cultural turn in Translation Studies in the 1990s (xi). For us, however, the way they discuss the application of the cultural approach to PT is more important: although traditionally the cultural approach would imply a macro-level analysis, now 'materiality' of poems is also recognized. Bassnett, through the ideas foregrounded by Octavio Paz and Ezra Pound, first, suggests that poetry translators should possess skills both in reading and in writing, second, underlines inseparability of content and form in a poetical piece of art (Bassnett 2001 [1998], pp. 69-70) and third, insists on the metaphor of transplanting the seed or 'reliving' the initial process of poem's creation (58, 64). Though the idea of transplantation may at first seem 'misty', in fact, Bassnett clearly implies the artistic nature of PT as the original poem should be transformed into a target poem, an aesthetic piece of art. As regards the stage of reading and interpreting a poem, Bassnett advocates the idea of playfulness: poems, unlike sacred texts, are open

to interpretative readings which infuse yet another life in the texts (Bassnett 2001 [1998]: 65).

As to the micro- and macroscopic context of PT, on the one hand, poems are considered at the hypertext level by using the concept of 'textual grids', commonly accepted literary forms and genres within a culture (Lefevre and Bassnett 2001 [1998]: 5). Recognition of such textual links is essential in linking text, translation and culture. In this way we make a step beyond the mere understanding of the translated world and translations as a vessel which ensures, as defined by Lefevere, circulation of cultural capital (ibid, 41). Translations themselves represent civilization and its (cultural) history. Such connections and integration indicate other instances of micro- and macro-context. For example, in his recent study on the history of literary translation in Russia Vsevolod Bagno (Bagno 2017) discusses the importance of literary translations both for the individual creative work of Russian writers and for the whole Russian culture. Literary translations had marked the advent of new genres, forms and meters in the Russian poetry; moreover, translations contributed to the emergence of new cultural contexts.

On the other hand, coming back to the micro-level, Bassnett reflects on the ideas of translator Frederic Will, who defines the specific character of texts and also notes that texts consist of words and lexical and grammatical patterns. Thus, the approach of translating the 'spirit' of the ST without decoding, in a detailed way, both textual features and extratextual factors would lead to an impasse. (Bassnett 2001 [1998]: 60) Likewise, we distance ourselves from the notion of PT as the creation of a completely new TT due to the fact that at the interlingual level at least some elements of the poem's 'material', its lexical units and grammatical constructions, can, should, and always are preserved in, and transferred to, the TT. Creativity, subjective choices (including the notion of 'poetic intuition', which may, however, be linked with more objective factors such as the translator's experience and competence) and decision-making based on the results of decoding the features of the ST which are further contrastively encoded into the TT describe the process in a more complete way. An absolutely independent TT would not only question the applicability of the concept of 'translation,' but would also imply, in a somewhat similar way to the case of a word-for-word translation, the possibility of absolute and valid equivalence. Instead, as noted by Bassnett and Lefevere (2001 [1998]:2), translators decide on the specific degree of equivalence for which they can realistically aim in a specific text.

3. Lin's 'total effect'. Context-dependent text processing

In view of the complex nature of how poetic texts are integrated into and interact with the respective cultural and/or historical context, and the fact that every poetic

text (as a linguistic concept) is a poem (and, aesthetically, poems should be read, analysed and translated as poems) and vice versa, Lin suggests that the task of poetry translators is to translate a 'total effect' of a poem with a compatible 'total effect' of the TT by considering whether and in what ways the context is aesthetically effective (Lin 2007: 9-11). He also coins a new term, a blend 'poestalt' ('poem' + 'gestalt') for this 'total effect' (: 14-15). At first Lin puts poetry translation—as to the aspects of readership and interpretation—in the cultural and intertextual context by recognising the fact that a text's "aesthetic significance cannot happen in a vacuum" (Lin 2007: 103). An aesthetically valid interpretation, as a result of the chemistry between the aesthetic faculty of the reader and the work of art itself, manifests the beauty of a poem without excluding other valid interpretations, and an essential criterion of translator's competence and capacity is the sensitivity to perceive the panoramic contextual relations (121-123). Again, another type of micro- and macro-level relationship is identified and recognized as being important: the text's individual 'world' and its links with other texts; translator's (reader's) individual [aesthetic] faculties and his or her capacity to interact with the external reality or context. Contextualisation of poetic texts, particularly in the translation situation, means a requirement to remain focused on the whole textual and extra-textual situation as taking into account, for instance, only the linguistic context would lead to a formal modelling of transformation of the source linguistic code without actually covering the entire network forming this code in a poetic text, or, in other words, the traditional code-based approach is no longer feasible. Significantly, Lin emphasises that instead of reducing the complicated organism of a poem to a few poestalts where the main task would be the identification of what is supposed to be there in the poem, he speaks about seeing these poestalts in a poem involving the chemistry between the text and the reader (Lin 2007: 45-46). However, we would add that, considering the aesthetic nature of poetry and the fact that "the poem keeps regenerating itself in different readings" (71), the prospect of explicitly defining the experience of poetry writing or reading and, thus, also an entirely controlled process of PT may only be imagined, but cannot be achieved in actual terms.

The above ideas illustrate the complex nature of context-based relations within a text and beyond it. In this regard one of the first significant contributors is James Holmes, who has provided seminal insight into context-dependent text processing in PT (Holmes 2005 [1988]). In the process of translating the original poem by taking as a goal the creation of a target text which meets the basic requirements for being called a poem in the target language, the translator of a poem must, according to Holmes, "shift" the original poem not only to another linguistic context but almost without exception also to another literary intertext and socio-cultural situation (47). For translation as a practical activity this theoretical aspect means a pragmatic necessity to study both the context of the source and the target text, and such a mapping process is then followed by the target-text projection phase. Highly disparate bits of information make the text (1) a linguistic artefact

in its relation to the linguistic continuum within which it is formulated; (2) a literary artefact in its relation to the literary continuum; and (3) a socio-cultural artefact in its relation to the socio-cultural continuum within which it is formulated (Holmes 2005 [1988]: 84-84).

Although Holmes mainly discusses the temporal and spatial aspect of context in attempting to embed the ST context into the divergent TT context, context is also a key factor determining the relationships of the text's functional and semantic elements leading to a set of potential interpretations. It should, however, be noted that while context informs 'surroundings' of a unit or a text, context actually limits rather than extends the respective interpretations: "A text is a place where the irreducible polysemy of symbols is in fact reduced because in a text symbols are anchored to their context [...;] thus many modern theories are unable to recognize that symbols are paradigmatically open to infinite meanings but syntagmatically, that is, textually, open to the indefinite, but by no means infinite, interpretations allowed by the context" (Eco 1990: 21).

However, the semantic 'capacity' and the interpretative potential of a unit, or a text, may again have their micro- and macro-level implications. For instance, connotation which belongs to the pragmatic meaning of a word embodies a type of 'cultural memory' (cf. Telija, cited in Brudik 2017: 40). In this way its interpretation, especially at the level of the whole text, may extend to a vast macro-level diachronic analysis of the unit's cultural and linguistic aspects. Meanwhile, at the micro-level, the semantic functions and their assessment in the particular text would only produce a specific, limited number of potential interpretations. For a poetry translator such limits, first, mean that any text or unit provides a degree of freedom in its processing (otherwise, no translation would be possible), second, require identification of the restrictive objective aspects, and, third, make assessment of poetry translations possible while unlimited interpretations and variants would imply that no criteria for quality assessment may exist.

The previous paragraph leads us to the next important aspect when context is discussed, i.e. its linkage with meaning-formation and understanding of a unit, or a text, where a distinctive role is played by competence. Moreover, for a translator, 'understanding' of the ST also implies translator's ability to process the linguistic and extra-linguistic information extracted. At this point the initial reference could be Alexander Shveitser's claim that translation should render text's content consisting of four elements or meanings: 1) denotative; 2) syntactic; 3) connotative, and 4) pragmatic meaning (Shveitser 1988: 90). However, the four categories themselves do not serve as sufficient explanation of the mechanisms which form the respective [poetic] information or its meaning. For this purpose, an essential dimension—the relationship of content and its expression—is described by Yuri Lotman. He argues that in art any sign possesses iconic, figurative character. The iconic signs link the expression and content. Thus, it is difficult to draw the line between the expression and content which is a traditional approach used in structural linguistics. In art the sign itself shapes its content: non-

semantic (syntactic) elements of natural language are semanticised (Lotman 1970: 33-34). This theory has significant implications for the PT theory regarding unavoidable and avoidable losses in terms of expression and content. The foreground aspects are the pragmatic (use), communicative (informative), and emotional (effect) elements.

Further on, in a different perspective, the essence and role of poetic information may be understood through Lotman's comment that "good poems, i.e., those that bear poetic information, are poems in which all of the elements are simultaneously both expected and unexpected" (Lotman 1976: 128) and imply "a conflict with the reader's expectation, tension, struggle," thus forcing "the reader to accept an artistic system that is more meaningful than his usual one" (131).

The above notes briefly describe some types of micro- and macro-level elements and their relations in view of poems as aesthetic (artistic) texts and linguistic units, and as 'material' processed by poetry translators. Their decisions are subject to individual, private and upper-level backgrounds in the author-text-reader relationships, while the translator himself or herself represents a 'system' of complex factors which have certain influence on the quality of translations (linguistic, cultural and historical competence, aesthetic, poetic tastes and preferences, etc.).

4. Translations of Joseph Brodsky's cycle *A Part of Speech* into English and Latvian

A poetic cycle as a sequence of related poems is a specific case of poetic contextualisation leading, as confirmed by the examples in this paper, to additional tasks for the translator in identifying the micro- and macro-level network of functional and semantic links which also become an element of identifying, for example, different layers of implicit information. Moreover, Joseph Brodsky's cycle *A Part of Speech* is included in a self-titled volume (first published in 1977), where the highly conceptual approach of the poet ensures strong integration and linkage of each and every poem and cycle included in the book. Thus, the cycle, a macro-level unit as regards its separate poems, becomes a micro-level unit of the volume. This implies additional decoding and encoding efforts and other challenges for translators of the cycle.

4.1. Summary of previous research

The cycle which apparently has a special place in Brodsky's own hierarchy of his poems has been studied by several researchers; the translations have also attracted academic interest. For the purposes of a summarised description and assessment of *A Part of Speech* in Russian and in English we provide some of the conclusions from previous research which are relevant for our study of the translations:

1. In Russian, the main theme of the cycle is an existential crisis and exile from the homeland, native language, and from the beloved one; two poetic forces 'drive' the poems – love and creation, the Word (cf. Olson 2017, Semenova 2001).

2. Rearrangement of the order of the cycle's poems in the English translation lead to certain shifts: in Russian the cycle represents a journey from "you" to "I," but in English the structure is circular (Berlina 2014a: 148).

3. A quantitative analysis of versification of the STs and the respective TTs shows that Brodsky succeeds, to a great extent, in preserving the original meter despite the principal formal differences between Russian and English (Volgina 2005: 110).

4. The rhyme structure of the cycle's poems often necessitates creative rearrangements of syntax and, sometimes, semantic changes (Volgina 2005: 49).

5. In standard English "dol'nik"* is based on iambic verse while in Russian "dol'nik" derives from trisyllables; thus *A Part of Speech* which sounds traditional in Russian acquires experimental character in English leading to different emotional and tone-related associations (Volgina 2005: 111); consequently, the poetic information rendered in the TTs is also changed implying a potentially different effect on the reader; this example illustrates how, at the micro- and macro-levels, morphology, meter, poetic tradition and cultural background combine in poetry and contribute to poetic information and implicature.

6. Nouns still prevail in the translations revised by Brodsky; however, on average, an adjective is attached to every second noun. Volgina suggests that Brodsky prefers adjectives over an increased number of nouns in order to "avoid such additional meanings" which are not intended in the STs (Volgina 2005: 114-115). However, this conclusion contradicts her next statement that Brodsky sacrifices some characteristic features of his poetics for metrical benefits and "favours additional meanings" which are inevitable in the case of numerous added adjectives. This example also illustrates contradictions in Brodsky's own approach to PT causing confusion, especially among native English poets and reviewers.

7. Brodsky's sense of audience shapes and reshapes the cycle, from the choice of individual words and phrases to the arrangement of the poems that make up the text (Olson 2017: 50).

8. Each poem is endowed with an individual architecture which is not necessarily representative of the whole cycle (Kozlov 2010: 88).

9. Through the network of poetic information rendered directly or implicitly it is possible to establish the main conceptual lines of the cycle (Kozlov: 95-96). We would argue against Kozlov's statement that Brodsky provides no clues regarding the "common ground" of the cycle (89). First, Kozlov's study itself proves the contrary; second, our analysis of the cycle in the context of its translations also

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* Transliteration according to the BGN/PCGN Romanization system by using this online tool: http://www.translitteration.com/transliteration/en/russian/bgn-pcgn/.

indicates that the author has included a sufficient number of units (for instance, lexical items) which expose the main ideas. It is also essential that we consider the cycle, its concepts and the respective translations at the level of the whole original volume.

Based on this background information we further include our comments on the Russian cycle (RST) and its translation (for a full insight it is, however, recommended to also read our other two studies on the cycle which are in print at present) by Daniel Weissbort (Brodsky(b), 311-320, TT1), the translation after Brodsky's revision (Brodsky(c), 101-115, TT2) and the Latvian translations by Amanda Aizpuriete, Māris Melgalvs and Ronalds Briedis (LTT).

4.2 Poem No. 1: *I was born and grew up in the Baltic marshland*. *Hence* and *from here* vs. *from nowhere* – the issue of micro- and macro-level coherence of poetic information

In view of one of the principal themes of the cycle, i.e. exile and relationships with the homeland from the new location (which, as the second poem in the English translation [this is the version of the cycle to which we will further refer in this study] reveals, is defined in a very specific way), any unit related to this theme requires careful processing. The translations of *otsyuda* (literally: 'from here'): *from here* (TT1), *hence* (TT2) and *no kurienes* (LTT), shows that all the translations may be considered adequate when viewed within the limits of the respective line of the poem or the whole poem, however, some issues may arise in a broader context, namely, when contrasted with the unit *niotkuda s lyubov'yu* (literally: 'from nowhere with love') in the second poem in the English translation. The pair *otsyuda* – *niotkuda* (literally: 'from here'; 'hence' – 'from nowhere') forms semantic unity and contains important poetic information: the opposition embodies both an existential crisis and an explanation of the sense of estrangement, destructiveness and partition; privately, linguistically (regarding linguistic and creative exile there is also another pair of oppositions which explains the idea of the title of this cycle: *i otsyuda* – *vse rifmy, otsyuda tot bleklyy golos* (literally: 'and from here – all the rhymes, from the wan voice') vs. [now when I am nowhere or when I speak from nowhere] *ostayetsya chast' / rechi* (literally: 'a part of speech remains')), and spiritually. Thus, in Weissbort's rendition the pair *from here* – *from nowhere* completely fulfils the respective contextual and poetic requirements but Brodsky's choice – *hence* – though semantically acceptable and in line with his preferences for the use of one-word variants (Berlina 2014b: 39), makes the links less apparent and less coherent.

The Latvian translation by Amanda Aizpuriete *no kurienes* (literally: 'from where') may seem, when compared with the unit in the RST, a less adequate solution (for instance, compare: 'no šejienes' (literally: 'from here')). The same applies at the level of coherence of the respectively related units: *otsyuda* – *niotkuda* (it is used, for instance, in *Niotkuda s lyubov'yu* (Brodsky(a): 75)) vs. *no kurienes* – *neznokurienes* (*Niotkuda s lyubov'yu* is translated into Latvian by

Māris Melgalvs) (Brodsky(d): 139): though morphologically a misleading impression of coherence may arise (*no kurienes – neznokurienes*), in fact, the respective substantive forms are 'šejiene' vs. 'nekuriene,' while in Latvian the word is associated with specific syntactic use and respective specific meanings; irrespectively of the syntactic construction it usually refers to an unknown location or movement towards an unknown location. Thus, even if we admit the substantive form 'kuriene' in Latvia, it implies a higher degree of vagueness than the RST unit '*niotkuda*' and the potential Latvian variant 'no nekurienes'.

4.3. Poem No. 2: *The North buckles metal, glass it won't harm*

4.3.1. Coherence of poetic information and imagery in the RST and its translations

The first line of the second poem *Sever kroshit metall, no shchadit steklo* (literally: 'the North crushes metal but spares glass') and its translations (*The North crushes metal but leaves glass intact* in the TT1 and *The North buckles metal, glass it won't harm* in the TT2) serve as a reason to look back into the translation of the first poem and specifically to the adjective *metal* which is added to the word *cry* (though by means of an enjambment) in the TT2 (no adjective added in the TT1 and in the LTT). When both original poems and their translations are considered, we see that the respective referential and associative links are provided within the same poem and beyond: first, aspiration for enforced poetic coherence may be identified when the translated unit *metal cry* is linked with *zinc-grey breakers* in the translation of the first poem; second, we see that the added attribute *metal cry* preserves macro-level coherence with the second poem where the word *metall* (as a noun) is used in the RST and preserved in both English variants (no Latvian translation is available). This example illustrates that in the case where attributes are added in a translation they are not normally chosen randomly and either a balancing approach or an approach of poetic coherence (or both) is used.

4.3.2 Sedov vs. Scott – an example of domestication?
Olson discusses the consequences of replacing the Russian proper name *Sedov* with *Scott* in the final line of the poem's translations in English: though both of them are explorers, the implicature changes fundamentally (compare: the Soviet empire vs. the British empire to which Scott belongs; the explorer of the North Pole (Sedov) vs. the explorer of the South Pole (Scott) (Olson 2017: 53). Any modifications which change the implicature and the potential interpretation(s) need careful consideration as cultural and historical implications may sometimes be misleadingly interpreted or processed not only by readers but also by translators, even in a situation of self-translation or revision by the author. In the specific example the problem arises not from the attempt of domestication (though it is arguable whether this may be regarded as an instance of domestication) itself (Robert Scott is a world-famous figure equally well-known in the English-speaking world and in Russia and, theoretically, this name could have been used

in the Russian original as well) but due to the ruined macro-level contextual relationships: in the English translations a Northern scene combined with a reference to an explorer of the Southern hemisphere lacks cohesion and could cause objective confusion leading to a problem which cannot be identified in the RST. Thus, we suggest that the replacement is unnecessary and inacceptable.

4.4. Poem No. 3: *From nowhere with love the enth of Marchember sir*. *Niotkuda* – the issue of the perspective

This poem, its cultural context and strategies for its reading and interpretation are discussed in detail by Kozlov (Kozlov 2010). Based on his study and on our own insight we further provide some notes on the English and Latvian translations.

The previously discussed perspectives of *otsyuda* (in the first poem of the cycle) and *niotkuda* (in the second poem) is another aspect which, additionally to the circular structure noted by Berlina, may have determined the sequence of the poems in cycle's English translation (TT2). Relevance of this conclusion is strengthened by the perspective observed in the whole original volume: apart from the cycle, *niotkuda* is mentioned two more times:

(i)   *vidish' vdrug kak by svet niotkuda* in *24 dekabrya 1971 goda* (Brodsky(a), 3) which is the opening poem of the volume (compare: *brings forth lights as if out of nowhere* (Brodsky(c), 53)); and

(ii) *Tak pri etom vzirayesh' / na sebya niotkuda* in the cycle *Meksikanskiy romansero*, No. 5 (Brodsky(a), 64) (compare: *automatically gazing / at yourself from nowhere* (in English it is cycle's second poem; Brodsky(c), 92).

In both instances in the ST (and in the translations as well) *nowhere* is a 'location' which may be looked at from somewhere else but in the first poem of *A Part of Speech*, the final instance of mentioning *nowhere*, it becomes a 'location' of the speaker's own existence.

The English translations coherently adhere to such perspectives. Although neither of the two original poems (*24 dekabrya 1971 goda* or *Meksikanskiy romansero*) is translated into Latvian, we may suggest that in the given context 'nekuriene' rather than 'neznokuriene' (though a metrically suitable variant) would again serve the functional needs in a more acceptable way. This consideration is another argument in favour of using 'no nekurienes' in the Latvian translation of *Niotkuda s lyubov'yu*.

4.5. Poem No. 4: *A list of some observations. In a corner, it's warm*

4.5.1. Zimniy vecher s vinom v nigde – the task to ensure the same textual 'circumstances'

In the fifth line of the poem (first line of the 2nd stanza in the RST) a word which, in view of the previous parts of the cycle, needs special attention is *nigde* (literally: nowhere) as the line and the specific word is meaningfully related to the unit *Niotkuda s lyubov'yu* in the previous poem of the cycle. Fortunately, translator's

task in ensuring coherence is made easier due to the standard way of rendering of 'niotkuda' and 'nigde' into English: 'from <u>nowhere</u>' and '<u>nowhere</u>' respectively. More importantly, the translator should identify this relationship and preserve it by also maintaining the same level of its explicitness. Should any lexical replacement be necessary, the keyword 'nowhere' is one of those which needs to be there due to its micro- and macro-level importance.

The word is also used in the ninth poem of the cycle: *zhizni, vidimo, netu nigde*. Apart from the literal translation ('there is apparently no life anywhere'), an interpretation, when we consider this unit as potentially interrelated with the first and the fourth poem of the cycle, could be: 'nowhere – the place where there is no life,' which would lead to a coherent macro-level implicature (in fact, we could speculate about at least one more interpretation: life (or reality) could not be accepted or enjoyed neither back in the homeland, nor now, in exile). Due to the English syntactic rules this potential dual interpretation is lost in both English translations (no Latvian translation is available): *It seems there's no life <u>anywhere</u>* (TT1) and *it seems there is / no life <u>anywhere</u>* (TT2).

We should also note two more instances where the word *nigde* is used in the Russian volume, both of them – in two cycles placed before the cycle *A Part of Speech*: (1) *Tam, za <u>nigde</u>, za ego predelom / [..] est' kakaya-to veshch', predmet. / Mozhet byt', telo.* (literally: 'beyond nowhere and its boundaries [..] / there is something, an object. / Perhaps a body.') in *Laguna*, No. XIV (Brodsky(a), 38) and (2) *nachinayas' nad golovoyu / i nigde ne konchayas'* (literally: 'staring above the head and not ending anywhere') in *Temza v Chelsi*, No. 5 (Brodsky(a), 41). One could be tempted to draw some parallels with the respective implicature identified in *A Part of Speech* as *Laguna* and *Temza v Chelsi* are also written when Brodsky lives in exile. Moreover, with regard to extract (1) another question could be: what or who is the 'body'. For instance, potential implicit links may be identified with the addressee in the poem *Niotkuda s lyubov'yu, nadtsatogo martobrya*. However, it is not the task of the translator to explain the implicature, its relevance and likelihood. The translator's task is to preserve the same textual 'circumstances' which would lead to similar questions regarding the potential implicit information and extra-textual context. Anthony Hecht's translation *where, past all boundaries and all predicates [..] / something, some object, comes to mind. / Perhaps a body* (Brodsky(c), 82) changes the original elements with a potential of implicature (*nigde* ('nowhere') – *niotkuda* ('from nowhere')) to a completely different textual representation: *where, past all boundaries and all predicates – from nowhere* which, arguably, does not provide the clues for the identification of the implicit links and could therefore be seen as a loss. Meanwhile, the remaining part of the translation *something, some object, <u>comes to mind</u>. / Perhaps a <u>body</u>* and its main emphasis (a body that comes to mind) ensures the same (or, to our mind, even more explicit) textual representation of the potential implicature. Thus, the previous loss is, at least to some extent, balanced out.

4.5.2. Numbling "Good night" to a window fringe – another example of macro-level links within the cycle

The final part of the RST *s [..] / ottiskom "dobroy nochi" ust / ne imevshikh skazat' komu* (literally: 'with [..] / the imprint of lips mumbling "Good night"/ having no one to say this to') enforces the implicit relationship of this poem with the poem *Niotkuda s lyubov'yu, nadtsatogo martobrya*, more specifically, with the units *ne vash, no / i nichey vernyy drug* (literally: 'not yours and / no one's devoted friend') and *pozdno noch'yu [..] / ya vzbivayu podushku mychashchim "ty"* (literally: 'late at night [..] / I'm fluffing up my pillow with howling "you"').

The respective English translations (no Latvian translation is available) are: *printed with lips [..] / having no one to say goodnight to* (TT1) and *with the print of lips [..] / mumbling "Good night" to a window hinge* (TT2). When <u>no one to say</u> good night <u>to</u> and <u>mumbling "Good night" to a window hinge</u> are compared with 'not yours and / <u>no one's devoted friend</u>', we see that the translations show different levels of explicitness as regards the respective linkage with the other poem and the general ideas of the cycle. Readers would need additional efforts to interpret speaking to a window hinge as a situation when there is no person, no one else to speak to and, thus, to establish potential implicit connection with other units and poems of the cycle. The lexical choices in the translation revised by Brodsky are certainly determined by the rhyme-related needs in the final two lines (*fringe – hinge*). This illustrates that Brodsky's passionate commitment and requirement to preserve both the form and the content of the original poem is subject to objective limitations as some losses and compromises are often unavoidable. Consequently, the relevant preferences and their criteria should be established. Though in this instance the loss at the level of the implicit links is not substantial, in general terms, in a cycle where the formation of a network of implicit and interrelated poetic information is among the key aims, preservation of the information, its networking and representation may possess a higher preference than the formal features of each specific unit.

4.6. Poem Nr. 7: *You've forgotten that village lost in the rows and rows*. *Sidyat na repe* – the issue of phraseological units

In this poem, which is analysed, for example, by Natal'ya Rusova (cf. Rusova 2009: 212-216), who uncovers the mood of the text and its macro-level links with other poems of the cycle, we would like to pay special attention to the phraseological unit *sidet' na repe* (literally: 'sit on turnips'). The unit itself and its English translation (TT2) is discussed by Elena Kidyarova (2010). She notes that the author uses a transformed version of the traditional Russian phraseological unit *sidet' na khlebe i vode* (literally: 'sit on bread and water' meaning to live in poverty). Kidyarova comments that the English variant in the translation revised by Brodsky (TT2) – *turnips is all they live on* – exhibits an untraditional approach of calquing although the grammatical structure of the unit is changed due to the

respective versification needs (Kidyarova 2010: 137). We would note, however, that hardly any phraseological features of the original unit are preserved, thus, the initial stylistic function is almost completely lost. The revised version accepted by Brodsky is, in fact, close to the first English translation by Weissbort: *turnips they rely on* (TT1). The main common feature and the main problem of both variants is that they present transformations which make the meaning of the unit almost literal.

The same issue applies to the unit *rāceņus vāra* (literally: '[they] cook turnips') in the LTT (translated by Ronalds Briedis). In the Latvian translation the phraseological features are completely lost; moreover, the implication of poverty is considerably less explicit. We should note that phraseological units which are constructed similarly to the unit used in the RST exist in Latvian (the most likely source is calquing), for instance, 'sēdēt uz adatas' (literally: 'sit on a needle'; be a drug addict), 'sēdēt uz diētas' (literally: 'sit on a diet'; be on a diet). Thus, the translator could have considered an adapted variant 'sēž uz rāceņiem,' which could have been integrated in the LTT according to the versification needs and would have fulfilled the stylistic function. Most importantly, it would be possible to identify and uncover the figurative meaning of poverty.

This example illustrates the complexity of rendering specific lexical units which possess a figurative meaning, fulfil a specific stylistic function and are strongly integrated in a national culture. The RST unit is even a transformed variant of the original phraseological unit leading to objective additional issues when a translation is needed. All the translations of the unit discussed in this sub-section show certain losses.

5. Conclusions

1. Poems are textual systems where different micro- and macro-level elements co-exist and form complex relationships which are processed by translators as aesthetic (artistic) texts and as linguistic 'material'. Decisions of poetry translators are informed by different backgrounds in the author-text-reader relationships while translator's personality is another 'system' of complex factors which have certain influence on translation quality.

2. Although the element of artistic creativity and re-creation is certainly present in the translation activity, PT does not mean that a completely independent TT is produced. If this was the case, it would imply that absolute and valid equivalence is possible.

3. Both micro- and macro-level semantic functions and their assessment may only produce a limited number of interpretations. In a translation situation these limits (i) mean that any unit/text provides some degree of freedom in its processing, (ii) require identification of the objective restrictive aspects, and (iii) imply the possibility of PT assessment.

4. A poetic cycle as a sequence of related poems is a specific case of poetic contextualisation. For poetry translators this implies more efforts in identifying and rendering, in a coherent way, the micro- and macro-level network of functional and semantic links.

5. When the respective contextual implicature of a ST is misinterpreted, domestication as a translation approach may lead to ruined cultural and conceptual context.

6. In the translation process a key task of the translator is ensuring in the TT the same textual 'circumstances' which would lead to similar conditions for the identification of the potential implicit information and extra-textual context.

7. The requirement to preserve both the form and the content of the ST is subject to objective limitations as some losses and compromises are often unavoidable.

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