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## **VLADIMIR NABOKOV'S SELF-TRANSLATED *LOLITA*: REVISITING THE ORIGINAL ALLITERATIVE MODES**

*This paper is a case study comparison of Vladimir Nabokov's self-translated Russian version of his English novel *Lolita* with its original text within the frame of the theory of literary translation. Here, self-translation is referred to as a branch of literary translation whose distinctive feature is that the work is both composed and translated by the same person. It is interesting to observe that, for the most part, the authors who translate their own works into another language are bilingual. Theoretical investigation into the field of self-translation is a recent endeavour; the term only appeared around 1976. Before it appeared in *A Dictionary for the Analysis of Literary Translation*, self-translation was thought to be related to bilingualism, and was therefore approached from the perspective of linguistics.*

*This paper analyses some alliterative modes, including suballiteration, produced by Nabokov in the two versions of *Lolita*. Throughout, the process of translation is viewed as a "two-stage reading-writing activity." The novel's translation into Lithuanian, which was performed from Nabokov's Russian translation, is used to show the difference between translation and self-translation, and to reveal the clash or the interplay between the foreign and the domestic in the development of alliterative appeal.*

**KEY WORDS:** *literary translation, self-translation, alliteration, suballiterative patterns, revisiting, original modes, author-translator, ordinary translator, double writing, virtuoso rendering.*

When considering the phenomenon of self-translation, it should be noted that the term is not to be found in the history and theory of translation until its first appearance thirty-six years ago, when it was offered

by Anton Popovič in his *A Dictionary for the Analysis of Literary Translation* (1976). He defined it as "translation of an original work into another language by the author himself" (Popovič, cited in Santoyo 2006,

p. 22). According to Julio-César Santoyo, this field of translation was often regarded as “something absolutely marginal, a sort of cultural or literary oddity” (Santoyo 2006, p. 22). Rainier Grutman explains that such an attitude occurred because translation scholars “thought it to be more akin to bilingualism than to translation proper” (Grutman 1998, p. 17), as in most cases it is bilingual authors who translate their own works into another language. As the history of literature shows, a number of authors have translated their own works: Thomas More (1478–1535), Étienne Dolet (1509–1541), Romain Gary (1914–1980), Carlo Goldoni (1707–1793), Samuel Beckett (1906–1989) and Vladimir Nabokov (1899–1977), to mention just a few.

Grutman raises one of the most essential questions: “*Why* do some writers repeat in a second language what has already been said in their previous work?” (Grutman 1998, p. 18). He believes that such a task cannot be undertaken solely because of the author’s dissatisfaction with translations in general, nor even because of the material needs of exiles to receive financial gain. The scholar has no doubt that “there must be some ulterior motive that helps writers to overcome their initial reluctance” (Grutman 1998, p. 18). A similar question has been extended by Gian Mario Villalta, who stresses that there is a considerable difference between translation and self-translation. He relies on Brian T. Fitch’s idea that “once a writer produces a second linguistic version of a text, the first is incomplete without it” (Fitch 1988, p. 123). The scholar notes that in such a case, the complete work may only be represented by the original and the translation taken together. Grutman

shares this opinion when treating the general process of translation as a “two-stage reading-writing activity,” and the process of self-translation as “double writing” (Grutman 1998, p. 19). Villalta, in his turn, argues that self-translation is “the repetition of the process” (Villalta 2003). Nevertheless, he thinks that the author as translator does not merely repeat the process of writing, but takes advantage of the possibility “of gaining perspective, of adding meaning” (Villalta 2003). This development of perspective or addition of meaning is related to the interaction between the original version and the translation: in other words, the two expressions of poetics. In Villalta’s words, “the author perceives the feasibility of realizing a certain poetic form in one language but not in another... and wants to underline this aspect emphatically” (Villalta 2003).

It should, however, be stressed that the self-translating writer or poet has a unique authority, allowing him/her “to bring novelties to the poetic horizon of the language of greater resistance” (Villalta 2003). This suggests that such writers not only shift from one language to another, but also transfer their works into another culture. Grutman cites Menakhem Perry, who maintains that “since the writer himself is the translator, he can allow himself bold shifts from the source text which, had it been done by another translator, probably would not have passed as an adequate translation” (Perry, cited in Grutman 1998, p. 18). This idea also reveals the relation between the two texts, i.e., the original and its translation, thereby suggesting that the translated text gains additional characteristics. The recreation of a literary text in another language and its adaptation to a different system of signs bring

in new literary, philosophical and cultural perspectives. Here, another problem comes into focus as well—namely, the problem of authorial freedom that is often demonstrated by a privileged author-translator. When the author translates his/her own work, it is “invested with an authority that not even an ‘approved’ translation by diverse hands can match” (Grutman 1998, p. 19). In self-translation it is difficult to distinguish between the author and the translator: “here the translator is the author, the translation is an original, the foreign is the domestic and vice versa” (Hokeson and Munson 2007, p. 161).

Self-translation demonstrates a playful collusion between various fictive and cultural horizons. According to Chiara Montini, bilingual authors and readers have a “completely different experience of the fictive universe” (Montini 2010, p. 307). In fact, this “conjoined twins” literary phenomenon crosses the boundaries of monolingual literature and turns to be a “process of multiple translanguingual revision” (Rosengrant 1995). On the whole, in the case of Nabokov’s *Lolita*, the very concepts of “foreign” and “domestic” escape clarity, as the original version was written in English—a foreign language to its author—and only then translated into his native Russian. Indeed, it is complicated to distinguish between domestication and foreignization in the process of the novel’s translation.

Vladimir Nabokov is a self-translating author who began his career as a translator by rendering the works of foreign writers into his native language, often “re-Russianizing” the original texts. He started translating his own works after his Russian novel

*Camera Obscura* (1932) was translated into English by Winifred Roy in 1936. The author was so dissatisfied with the translation that he decided to translate his own works himself. He practised self-translation between the Russian and English languages. After his literary career was launched, Nabokov became anxious to translate more of his Russian fiction into English. Yet he was unwilling to do it himself, “since his experience with the Englishing of his first two novels had persuaded him just how demanding and distracting an exercise it was” (Grayson 2000, p. 989). The main difficulty was, as the writer confessed to his translator Michael Scammell, to fight against the creative temptation to amend the work in the process of translation.

It should be admitted that Nabokov did a lot of work in the field of translation. He “re-Englished” his few stories which were translated by other translators. According to Grayson, Nabokov took this activity very seriously, since he intended his English translations to serve as the basis for their translation into other languages. That was the process which he tried to control as much as his competence allowed.

Jane Grayson claims that, in reality, Nabokov “quite often valued the retention of the stylistic effect more highly than the retention of meaning” (Grayson 2000, p. 990). Jenefer Coates, in her turn, argues that “Nabokov makes adjustments by rewriting or rephrasing to create different [and new] effects” (Coates 1999, p. 99). It is worth noting that, as Grayson puts it, the writer often performed “a virtuoso backward somersault” (Grayson 2000, p. 990) while rendering his best known novel, *Lolita*, into Russian. The Russian translation was first

published in 1967. Yet before translating the novel, he performed a similar feat in the rendering of his autobiography. This became more a complement than a translation, because “the act of writing of events in the language in which he had originally experienced them generated further, richer recall” (ibid.), thus confirming the insight of Villalta that self-translation allows the writer to expand his/her work and gain different perspectives. Coates states that there were cases when Nabokov created different versions of his English texts, sometimes even doing back-translation from English into Russian and then again back into English. For example, his *Speak Memory: An Autobiography Revisited* (1966), which originally was an English text titled *Conclusive Evidence* (1951), was self-translated into Russian as *Drugie Berega* in 1954 and then recomposed in English (Coates 1999, p. 99).

Once, when accused of “self-contradiction in his theory and practice of translation by preaching fidelity and practising freedom”, in his defence Nabokov mused that “self-translation... involved the mature writer revisiting the ‘greener fruits’ of his youth” (Coates 1999, p. 99). Hence, being well familiar with the original inspiration woven into the text, the author had the sole power to recreate the work by adjusting it and designing new effects for an audience different in geographic, national, social, linguistic and temporal terms.

After considering the theoretical insights on self-translation, Nabokov’s theoretical views on translation and his practical translatory attempts, it is reasonable to proceed with the analysis of the translation of the novel *Lolita* into Russian and to describe

the specificity of Nabokov’s approach to self-translation.

Nabokov’s style of writing demonstrates an unusual complexity from the linguistic, textual and aesthetic perspectives. The stylistic instruments he employs are often aesthetically sophisticated. It may be claimed that the reader’s attention is immediately attracted by the writer’s specific choices of lexical items with respect to the acoustic effect they create. Hence, one of the main stylistic devices in his texts is alliteration accompanied by assonance. Nabokov understood that alliteration is an essential part of meaning and has an important semantic and rhetorical function. On the other hand, for him, an added alliterative appeal is the instrument to evoke a challenging game with the reader. Indeed, in his *Lolita*, Nabokov often develops a polyphonic sound orchestration. His highly elaborated alliterative modes demonstrate a playful repetition of the initial, medial and final consonants and/or syllables. As Judson Rosengrant argues, the latter “either echo the initial groupings or establish new linkages, thereby creating a harmonious acoustic environment, a rich choir of sounds” (Rosengrant 1994).

In this paper, Nabokov’s alliterative patterns will be analysed in the following order: first, those found in the original *Lolita*, followed by their equivalents (if any) in the Russian translation performed by the author himself. Consider the following alliterative excerpt:

Valechka—by now shedding torrents of tears tinged with the mess of her rainbow make-up—started to fill anyhow a trunk, and two suitcases, and a bursting carton, and visions of putting on my mountain boots and taking a running kick at her

*rump* were of *course* impossible to put into execution with the *cursed* *colonel* hovering around all the *time* (Nabokov 1991, p. 29; emphasis added).

The sentence is rather long and is composed of segments distinguished by punctuation. In the first segment of the sentence, which starts with the first dash and ends with the second dash, there is an obvious alliteration of the initial and nearly final *t* in “*torrents*” and the initial *t* in “*tears*” and “*tinged*” which is complemented by the medial sonorous *r* in “*torrents*” and the medial *r* in “*tears*” connected to the initial *r* in “*rainbow*”. Moreover, the suffix *-ing* in “*shedding*” is somewhat repeated in the word “*tinged*”. Taken together, these sounds create a flowing effect—the consonant *t* does not protrude to distort the melodious sound patterning of the whole sentence, thus avoiding a choppy effect. The alliteration of the initial *m* in “*mess*” and “*make-up*” should also be considered. Nabokov weaves the auditory patterning of the text very inventively as is seen in the following: the initial *r* in “*rainbow*” effectively alliterates with the medial *r* in “*torrents*” and “*tears*”. This also serves as a relief for the reader before another alliterative beating of the consonant *t* in the second segment, produced by the two medial *t* in “*started*”, the initial *t* in “*trunk*” and “*two*”, and the medial *t* in “*suitcases*”, “*bursting*”, “*carton*”, “*putting*”, “*mountain*”, “*boots*”, and the initial *t* in “*taking*”. This segment also contains alliteration of the consonant *k*, which connects the two segments—it is produced by the medial *k* in “*make-up*”, the final consonant *k* in “*trunk*”, the medial one in “*suitcases*”, and the initial one in “*carton*”,

continues by the medial *k* in “*taking*”, both the initial and final *k* in “*kick*”, the initial *k* in “*course*”, the medial one in “*execution*”, and the two initial consonants in “*cursed*” and “*colonel*”. The similarity between the sounding of the voiceless consonants *t* and *k*, whose alliterations intermingle in the sentence, contributes to the reinforced effect.

Further, on the phonological level, the abundance of *t* and *k* expresses the particular emotion experienced by Humbert Humbert, since in the reader’s mind the pattern may evoke the concept “attack.” Throughout the whole excerpt, the emotional aspect and Humbert Humbert’s determination are also supported by the alliteration of the sonorous *r*, which has a heroic connotation—as was noticed by the French Renaissance *Pléiade* poets. Here, certainly, it bears an element of parody and reveals the protagonist’s pseudo-heroism as he wishes to attack his wife from behind. The alliteration of the sonorous *r* in “*trunk*”, the initial *r* in “*running*” and “*rump*” and the medial *r* in “*hovering*” and “*around*” helps to create a parodic movement. It should be stressed that the rendering of this acoustic effect would pose a challenge for an ordinary translator. Finally, the alliterative phrase “the *cursed* *colonel*” used at the end of the sentence is the chief milestone in Nabokov’s attempt to trick the reader within the game of reading. First, with the help of the abundant repetition of the consonant *t* the author ironically describes the departure of Humbert Humbert’s wife Valeria, who, despite “shedding torrents of tears,” goes on filling “a trunk, and two suitcases, and a bursting carton.” In fact, H. H. does not really feel hurt, but rather insulted, “because matters of legal and illegal conjunction were for [him] alone to decide” (Nabokov 1991, p. 28).

The repetition of the consonant *t* also involves the reader and seduces him/her to identify with and pity the protagonist, which is one of the key elements in Nabokov's parody. This desire for identification is best revealed in the phrase "the cursed colonel" describing Humbert Humbert's rival, where the alliteration of the initial voiceless consonant *k* emphasises the seemingly evil nature of Valeria's lover. In fact, Humbert Humbert blames the colonel for preventing him from enacting his revenge and thereby allows him to justify to himself the wish to do harm to his wife.

As translator, Nabokov successfully retains this effect by rendering the excerpt as follows:

*Валечка – уже к этому времени проливавшая потоки слез, окрашенные размазанной радугой ее косметики – принялась набивать вещами кое-как сундук, два чемодана, допавшуюся картонку, – и желание надеть горные сапоги и с разбега пнуть ее в круп было, конечно, неосуществимо, покамест проклятый полковник возился поблизости (Набоков 2010, p. 40; emphasis added).*

Although here the segments are not identically re-alliterated, a number of characteristics coincide. There is one dominant consonant in both the original and the translated versions, namely, the voiceless consonant *t* in English and the voiceless consonant *к* in Russian. The author-translator makes a similar harmonious transition in the sentence to create the reinforced effect achieved in the original. Firstly, the initial consonant *в* (*v*) in "Валечка" and "времени" and two medial *в* (*v*) in

"проливавшая", whose initial *n* (*p*) is alliterated with the initial *n* (*p*) in "потоки", draw the reader in. Secondly, the medial sonorous *p* (*r*) in "проливавшая" and "окрашенные" together with the latter's medial sonorous double *нн* (*n*) and the medial double *нн* (*n*) in "размазанной" soften the harsh aspect of the alliterated *n* (*p*) and *кр* (*kr*). In the Russian translation, Nabokov connects the two segments, namely the participial clause "проливавшая потоки слез" ("shedding torrents of tears") and the past simple indicative "принялась набивать" ("started to fill"), both related to Valeria, by the alliteration of the initial consonant *n* (*p*). Just like in the original, the consonant *m* (*t*) is echoed in the chain of words when H. H. expresses his "vision" of kicking his wife. Here the alliterated consonant *n* (*p*) plays the role of a framing consonant: "пнуть" and "круп". Moreover, similarly to the original, this segment possesses its own alliteration which also strengthens the expression of H. H.'s wish to take revenge on his wife. It is reinforced by the alliteration of the initial *з* (*g*) in "зорные" and the nearly final *з* (*g*) in "сапоги" and "разбега".

According to Alex Preminger, "[alliteration] on the sound or sound combination may be followed by, alternate with, or include another alliterative sequence (parallel or crossed alliteration)" (Preminger, cited in Rosengrant 1995). In the Russian phrase expressing Humbert Humbert's wish there is an additional case of alliteration, namely of the medial *p* (*r*) in "горные" and the initial *p* (*r*) in "разбега", which makes the vocal play richer. The last string of alliteration in the Russian translation exceeds the original English text. The sequence of the words with four initial *n* (*p*) plus the assonance

of the vowel *o* with a single non-alliterated word in between has a beating effect on the reader's ear, thereby making him/her feel the protagonist's emotion more deeply and directing his/her attention to the figure of the colonel—as in the original. The harsh effect of the alliterated final and medial voiceless consonant *m* (*t*) in “покамест” and “проклятый” which accompanies the alliteration of the medial voiceless consonant *κ* in “поκамест” and “проκлятый” and the medial plus the final voiceless consonant *κ* in “полκовниκ”, is taken over by the soft alliteration of the sonorous *л* (*l*). The alliterative chain of the consonant *κ* begins in the first word of the sentence with the near final consonant *κ* in “Валечκа” and continues with the preposition “κ”, the near final *κ* in “потоκи”, the medial *κ* in “оκрашенные”, the initial and nearly final *κ* in “κосметκиκ”, three *κ* consonants in “κое-κаκ”, the final *κ* in “сундуκ”, the initial and nearly final *κ* in “κартонκу”, the initial *κ* in “κруп” and “κонечно”, and the already discussed sequence of “поκамест проκлятый полκовниκ”. Just like in the original, Nabokov interweaves the alliterated consonants *m* (*t*) and *κ* with the alliterated sonorous *л* (*l*) and *н* (*n*) to introduce a smooth shift in the emotion.

To demonstrate how carefully and creatively the author's translation of his novel was done, let us take the same excerpt, translated into Lithuanian by an ordinary translator. This will also help test the hypothesis that a bilingual author who translates his works himself achieves a greater approximation to the original, both in form and content, than an ordinary translator does. Consider the Lithuanian translation:

Valečka – jau ligi tolei priverkusi ašarų upelius, nusidažiusius iššterliota jos kos-

melikos vaivorykšte – suskato kaip pakliuvo grūsti daiktus į skrynią, du lagaminus, kartonine dėžute sprogstančiais šonais, – ir noras apsimauti alpinisto bažus ir išibėgėjus spirti jai į kryžkauli, žinoma, buvo neigyvendinamas, kol prakeiktas pulkininkas kuitėsi netoliese (Nabokovas 1990, p. 31; emphasis added).

Although here the alliterative patterning is poorer, the attempt is still made to perform it. The repetition of the voiceless consonant *k* in “Valečka”, “priverkusi”, “kosmetikos”, “vaivorykšte”, “suskato”, “kaip”, “pakliuvo”, “daiktus”, “skrynią”, “kartonine” and, after a longer interval, in “kryžkauli”, “kol”, “prakeiktas”, “pulkininkas” and “kuitėsi”, connects the separate segments of the sentence as in the case of the Russian *Lolita*. Even though this repetition does not involve the reader as much as the original or its Russian translation do, nevertheless, it catches his/her attention. There is a case of assonance produced by the initial vowel *a* in “apsimauti” and “alpinisto”, complemented by the voiceless consonants *p* and *t* that reveal Humbert Humbert's determination to have his revenge. In the second instance of alliteration, the initial consonant *p* in “prakeiktas” and “pulkininkas” bears the same meaning as in the source text, namely, it emphasises his emotion toward the colonel. There is also a rich alliteration of the medial sonorous *l* in “Valečka”, the initial *l* in “ligi”, the medial *l* in “tolei”, “upelius”, “iššterliota”, “pakliuvo”, the initial *l* in “lagaminus”, the medial *l* in “alpinisto” and a nearly final *l* in “kryžkauli”, the final *l* in “kol”, and the medial *l* in “pulkininkas” and “netoliese”.

The same may be said about the alliteration of the sonorous *n*.

However, it should be noted that the Lithuanian translator has made two mistakes. First, she uses the verb *apsimauti* together with the noun *batus*; this is incorrect and should be replaced by the verb *apsiauti*. In addition, there is a case of logical mistranslation: the Lithuanian noun *kryžkaulis* is not used to figuratively describe what is meant by *rump*. In the context of a human body, it means “the part of the body that you sit on” (OALD). As a medical term meaning *sacrum*, the Lithuanian noun *kryžkaulis* is inappropriate in the situational context of the excerpt. Alliteration should not be forced to the extent of causing a degeneration of meaning or content. A more appropriate Lithuanian word could be the noun *pasturgalis*. For example, in Vincas Krėvė-Mickevičius’s collection of proverbs *Patarlės ir priežodžiai (Proverbs and Adages, 1931)* one finds: *Davė vagiui ant atminimo į pasturgalio skynimą* and *Gausi į pasturgalį už tokius darbus!* (Krėvė-Mickevičius, cited in *The On-line Dictionary of the Lithuanian Language*). The Lithuanian translator obviously ignores the requirement for cognitive accuracy.

As demonstrated above, Nabokov’s alliterations are playful and multilevelled. The writer also develops what Rosengrant calls “suballiterative echoing”: the voiced consonants are combined with their voiceless counterparts, and vice versa (Rosengrant 1995). This type of alliterative practice contributes to Nabokov’s acoustic equilibristics and creates effects which evoke adequate reactions in the readers, regardless of whether they are consciously aware of them or not. For instance, in the

English original the reader finds the following phrase: “devote a dangerous amount of time” (Nabokov 1991, p. 138), where the voiced consonant *d* in “*d*evote” and “*d*angerous” is combined with the final voiceless *t* in “*d*evote” and “*d*amount” and the initial *t* in “*t*ime”. In the Russian version of the novel, the same phrase is rendered as “пришлось посвятить некоторое время” (Набоков 2010, p. 179). Nabokov changed the place of alliteration in the Russian version. While he successfully rendered the alliterative effect of “*d*evote a *d*angerous” in “пришлось *п*освятить”, he failed to find a proper wording to convey all of the acoustic features of the original—which would have required the voiceless consonant *n* (*p*) in the Russian text to be reinforced by the voiced consonant *б* (*b*). He also lost the original epithet “dangerous”, which had an ironic shade.

But what Nabokov fails to render in one place he compensates for (often abundantly) in another. Consider the sentence “She sprawled there, biting at a hangnail and mocking me with her heartless vaporous eyes” (Nabokov 1991, p. 203), where the voiceless consonant *s* in “heartless” and “vaporous” is combined with the voiced sound /z/ in “eyes”. This is translated as “Она сидела развалясь, выкусывая заусеницу, следя за мной глумливым взглядом бессердечных, дымчатых глаз” (Набоков 2010, p. 261). In the Russian sentence, the suballiterative patterning of the voiced *з* (*z*) and the voiceless *с* (*s*) is much more complex. The voiceless consonant *с* (*s*) in “сидела”, “развалясь”, “выкусывая”, “заусеницу”, “следя”, “бессердечных” and the consonant *з* (*z*), which becomes voiceless in “глаз”, are

interwoven with the voiced consonant *з* (*z*) in “развалясь”, “заусеницу”, “за”, “взглядом”. The rich alliteration of the consonant *д* (*d*) has an emphatically playful effect on the reader in “сидела”, “следя”, “взглядом”, “бессердечных” and “дымчатых”, one which is missing from the original text.

Another example may be found in the excerpt, “the old fence at the back of the garden” (Nabokov 1991, p. 73), which, in the scale of Nabokov’s alliterative expression, is a rather humble example. Yet it is translated by the writer into Russian as “ветхий забор позади сада” (Набоков 2010, p. 96), with alliteration of the voiced initial *з* (*z*) in “забор” and the medial *з* (*z*) in “позади” being emphasized by the voiceless initial suballiterative *с* (*s*) in “сада”. Here also, the medial *д* (*d*) in “позади” alliterates with the medial *д* (*d*) in “сада”. Moreover, the assonance of the vowel *а* immediately following the suballiterated consonants in “забор позади сада” is used effectively. However, in the Lithuanian translation—“palaikė tvora sodo gale” (Nabokovas 1990, p. 37)—no acoustic effect has been created.

It should be noted that in Nabokov’s books, playing upon the same letter is, as Rosengrant puts it, “neither a mere mechanical adjunct nor a superficial embellishment... but an integral part of the rhetorical and expressive meaning of the text” (Rosengrant 1995), one which should be compensated for by the translators of his novels.

To prove that Nabokov was an alliteration virtuoso, the cases where he successfully alliterates the same words in the translation as in the original will be provided. For instance, the phrase “they

were as different as *mist* and *mast*” (Nabokov 1991, p. 18) is rendered as “они были столь же различны между собой, как *мечта* и *мачта*” (Набоков 2010, p. 27); “in dull *d*ingy Paris” (Nabokov 1991, p. 27) as “в скучном, сером Париже” (Набоков 2010, p. 38). The phrase “*between* *beast* and *beauty*” (Nabokov 1991, p. 59) is translated as “между *чудом* и *чудовищем*” (Набоков 2010, p. 79). The latter deserves special attention. In the original, the emphasis is created by the alliteration of the initial *b* presented together with the assonance of the vowel *e* in “*between*” and “*beast*”, and the first syllables of the given words show a modified visual root repetition in “*between*”, “*beast*” and “*beauty*”. In the translation, this is reflected by the very successful choice of words that help to work out both visual and audible root repetition in “*чудом*” and “*чудовищем*”. The missing modified root repetition in the third word is replaced by the alliterated voiced consonant *д* (*d*) in “между”, thus emphatically uniting the three words together. The original text’s alliteration of the medial voiceless consonant *t* in “*between*”, the final *t* in “*beast” and the nearly final *t* in “*beauty” is substituted in translation by its voiced counterpart *д* (*d*) in nearly final position in “между”, and in medial position in “чудом” and “чудовищем”. Moreover, in the translated phrase, the first two letters of the first word “ме-” match the last two letters of the final word in reverse order, thereby forming a framing rhetorical device: “между... чудовищем”.**

It should be stressed that the writer preferred to preserve the rhythmic pattern at the expense of the semantic pattern: the shorter word is followed by the longer one in both versions—“beast and beauty”, “чу-дом и

чу-до-ви-щем”—though the meanings are reversed: “beast” ~ “чудовище”, “beauty” ~ “чудо”.

There are cases where Nabokov alters the content to preserve an alliterative pattern. For instance, the phrase “some ‘serum’ (sparrow’s sperm or dugong’s dung)” (Nabokov 1991, p. 242) is rendered as “какую-то ‘сыворотку’ (из спермы спрута или слюны слона)” (Набоков 2010, p. 311). Here, the bird of the original phrase is replaced by a sea creature—an octopus, while the sea mammal of the original phrase becomes a terrestrial mammal to retain the alliteration of the first two consonants worked out in the original novel, i.e., the consonant pair *sp* together with the alliteration of the medial sonorous *r*. The initial *sp* and the medial sonorous *r* in “*sparrow*’s” alliterate with *sp* and *r* in “*sperm*”. In a very similar manner, the initial sound combination *du*, the medial consonant *g* and the final consonant combination *ng* in “dugong” alliterate with the initial sound combination *du* and the final consonant combination *ng* in “dung”. In the Russian translation, the initial *cn* (*sp*) (an exact translation of the original consonant pair) and the medial *p* (*r*) (following the original) in “*спермы*” (an international word) alliterates with the initial consonant combination *cn* (*sr*) and the medial *p* (*r*) in “*спрута*”. No doubt, the alliteration is rendered into Russian very successfully. In the second part of the quotation, the initial consonant combination *cl* (*sl*) and the medial sonorous *n* (*n*) in “*слюны*” alliterates with the initial consonant pair *cl* (*sl*) and the medial sonorous *n* (*n*) in “*слона*”. It should be stressed that the four original initial *s* consonants in “*some*”, “*serum*”, “*sparrow*’s” and “*sperm*” are suc-

cessfully extended in the translation to five cases of the initial voiceless consonant *c* (*s*) (in “*сыворотку*”, “*спермы*”, “*спрута*”, “*слюны*” and “*слона*”). Here, actually, the content has not been sacrificed for the sake of the form, since it is the play on words and the erotic implication that matter in the given context.

Sometimes Nabokov exercises his privilege as an author-translator by introducing additional content to extend the play on sounds and letters. For instance, the original sentence “...the *motel*, where *millions* of so-called ‘*millers*,’ a kind of insect, were *swarming* around the neon contours of ‘No Vacancy’” (Nabokov 1991, p. 241), is rendered as “вокруг которой *маячили миллионы мотельных мотылей, называемых ‘мельниками’* – не то от ‘мелькать,’ не то из-за *мучнистого* оттенка на свету” (Набоков 2010, p. 311). Here, the writer enriches the alliterative pattern so that the first syllables coincide in two pairs of words, whereas in the original they do so only in one pair: consider the original “*millions*” and “*millers*” and the translated “*мотельных*” and “*мотылей*”, and “*мельниками*” and “*мелькать*”.

Nabokov was a genius in creating contrastive alliterative pairs, as in the phrase “*famous for its violet-ribboned china bunnies and chocolate boxes*” (Nabokov 1991, p. 188); and he proved himself a talented translator to render them as follows: “*известное своими фарфоровыми, в фиолетовых бантах, кроликами и коробками шоколада*” (Набоков 2010, p. 241). Such cases perfectly confirm that his revisitation of the original alliterative modes was performed with creative inspiration, making full use of the possibilities

offered by another language. For comparison, let us take the Lithuanian translation: “žinoma porceliano triušiais su violetiniais kaspinėliais ir dėžutėmis šokolado” (Nabokovas 1990, p. 204). Unfortunately, here the contrastive alliterative pair has been completely lost. Yet, it could have been retained, e.g., by creatively adding the epithet *fantastiškais* ~ “fantastic” to the words “porceliano triušiais”.

Of course, there are also places where Nabokov takes the opposite approach and sacrifices form for content. For instance, in the episode where the priorities of the Beardsley school in preparing the girls for social life are enumerated: “we stress the four D’s: *Dramatics, Dance, Debating and Dating*” (Nabokov 1991, p. 177). This is translated into Russian as “мы придаем такое значение танцам, дебатам, любительским спектаклям и встречам с мальчиками” (Набоков 2010, p. 226) and no alliteration is introduced. In a similar example, the form seems to be more important than the content: in the episode where Humbert Humbert is reading “volume C of the *Girl’s Encyclopedia*”, he utters the words “*Campus, Canada, Candid Camera, Candy... Canoeing or Canvasback*” (Nabokov 1991, p. 92). Nabokov translates these in the following way: “*Канада, Кино, Конфета, Костер*” (Набоков 2010, p. 121) and “*на Кролике или на Купании*” (Набоков 2010, p. 122). The Lithuanian translator renders it into Lithuanian creatively, trying to preserve the alliterative mode of the Russian translation: “*Kanada, Kelias, Kinas... po Kraulio ir Kroso*” (Nabokovas 1990, p. 100–101). Given a chance, the author-translator extends the list of the words. Consider the original:

Humbert Humbert imagines the teenagers’ activities in “Camp Q” as follows: “*Canoeing, Coranting, Combing Curls*” (Nabokov 1991, p. 134). The translation into Russian offers the following enumeration: “*Какао, Катание, Качели, Коленки и Кудри*” (Набоков 2010, p. 174). The Lithuanian translator also enjoys some freedom when rendering the given list: “*Kakava, Kamuoliai, Kaspinėliai, Keliukai, Kepuraitės*” (Nabokovas 1990, p. 146). These examples show that both the author as translator and the ordinary translator use free, yet not too detached semantic digressions to retain the alliterative quality of the sentence.

But sometimes Nabokov exercises his authorial privilege by adding content to expand the play on letters. For instance, the above analyzed phrase “the motel, where millions of so-called ‘millers,’ a kind of insect” (Nabokov 1991, p. 241), is expanded and rendered into Russian as “вокруг которой маячили миллионы мотельных мотылей, называемых ‘мельниками’ – не то от ‘мелькать,’ не то из-за мучнистого оттенка на свету” (Набоков 2010, p. 311). Relying on Nabokov’s Russian translation, the Lithuanian translator follows this version of the text, in which the author discusses the etymology of the word “мельниками” (“millers”). Yet she omits the phrase “не то от ‘мелькать,’” thus only partially explaining the etymological meaning of the word; the translated excerpt appears as follows: “apie kurių zujo milijonai motelio drugių, vadinamų „malūnininkais”, gal kad prieš šviesą atrode tarytum apsinešę miltais” (Nabokovas 1990, p. 264). While the author-translator managed to find a common root in the words “*мельниками*” and “*мелькать*” (“to glimmer”), the Lithu-

anian translator could only emphasize the insect's association with human millers, who are always covered in flour. As for the alliteration, although the sentence in the Russian text demonstrates a richer alliteration, the Lithuanian translator's attempt may be regarded as rather successful: there are four alliterated sonorous *m* in the original, eight cases in the Russian version, and six cases in the Lithuanian translation. Another important instance is the repetition of the initial syllable "mill-" in the original ("*mil-lions*" and "*millers*"), the creative rendering of the initial syllable "мель-" in the Russian ("*мельниками*" and "*мелькать*"), and a very successful—and closer to the original—Lithuanian translation of the initial syllable "mil-" in "*milijonai*" and "*miltais*" ("flour"). Obviously, the alliterative impossibility between the words "*миллионы*" and "*мельниками*" forced the author to find an additional word to retain the repetitive syllabic structure. The Lithuanian translator, in her turn, did not mean to return to the original version of the text, but was made to focus on the words "*milijonai*" and "*miltais*" rather accidentally, thereby repeating the initial syllable that was presented in the original. She could not find an adequate alliterative association between the words "*milijonai*" and "*malūnininkais*" ("millers"), thus failing in her linguistic quest despite finding a proper etymological solution by introducing a new word, as was done in Nabokov's translation.

To conclude, Vladimir Nabokov translated the prose text of his novel *Lolita* by carefully considering the playful poetic patterns offered by another language, respecting and challenging a new receptive audience with a different culture. On the

other hand, for him, as a post-modern self-translator, translation was a game. The author-translator enjoyed his authoritative freedom to a degree that any ordinary translator could never afford. The comparative analysis of the original and self-translated *Lolitas* revealed developments of perspective and additions of meaning in the latter, achieved by bringing novelties into the poetic horizon of the source. Nabokov understood that alliteration is an essential part of meaning and has an important semantic and rhetorical function. He made many alterations and additions to the source text, some of them serving as explicitations to help his prospective audience detect what he was playing on; others were introduced mainly because the Russian language allowed him to perform new stylistic manoeuvres, and the authorial self could not resist the temptation. With his creatively playful intuition as both the composer of the original book and its translator, Nabokov knew what was more aesthetically important or significant for the sake of the game to be played with the reader: whether this was the dominance of form over content, or vice versa. As self-translator, he managed to retain and sometimes expand a great number of alliterative and suballiterative cases and develop a similarly effective complex sound orchestration. When he failed to render the alliterative pattern in one paragraph or sentence, he compensated the loss by creating rich alliteration in places where the original text does not expose any.

It should be noted that a number of Russian critics of traditional orientation expressed dissatisfaction with Nabokov's Russian language in the translated *Lolita*. As George Cummins claims, the author-

translator confessed that “the opulent garden of his literary past (the Russian of his Russian books) [was] dug out, burnt out, and gone—never to flower again” (Cummins 1977, p. 354). In his translation, Nabokov employed the Russian of a cosmopolitan exile.

This exploration of the two versions of the novel has revealed that the complete *Lolita* may best be appreciated by bilingual readers through an interactive reading of the original English version and the author's

own Russian translation, as they offer two distinct expressions of Nabokov's poetics. Unfortunately, an ordinary translation would never exert such an effect. As a complex phenomenon, literary translation requires the translator to possess and continuously develop special reading and interpretive skills, in addition to having good knowledge of the critical material which would allow him or her to grasp and render the specific style of the particular author he/she undertakes to translate.

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VLADIMIRO NABOKOVO ROMANO *LO-LITA* AUTORINIS VERTIMAS: ORIGINALO ALITERACINIŲ MODELIŲ *REVIZITACIJA*

**Santrauka**

Straipsnyje pateikiama atvejo studija, pagrįsta dviejų Vladimiro Nabokovo romano *Lolita* versijų – anglų ir rusų kalba – lyginimu. Tyrimui buvo pasirinktos teorinės literatūrinio vertimo išvalgos. Straipsnio autoriai autorinį vertimą traktuoja kaip atskirą literatūrinio vertimo šaką atsiribodami nuo negrožinės literatūros tekstų autorinio vertimo tyrinėjimų. Įdomu pastebėti, kad dažniausiai savo kūrinius į kitą kalbą verčia bilingviai autoriai. Todėl nekeista, kad pirmiausia į autorinio vertimo reiškinių dėmesį atkreipė lingvistai, o ne vertimo teoretikai. Teoriniai autorinio vertimo srities tyrimai dar tik pradinėje stadijoje, jiems vos keli dešimtmečiai. Pirmasis „autorinio vertimo“ terminą (angl. *self-translation*) pasiūlė Antonas Popovičius *Literatūrinio vertimo analizės žodyne* (1976).

Straipsnio autoriai analizuoja kelis Nabokovo virtuozinės aliteracinės raiškos atvejus. Tyrinėjamas originalus romano *Lolita* tekstas ir minėtų atvejų autorinio vertimo į rusų kalbą specifika. Dviejų kalbinių variantų kūrimas suvokiamas kaip dvipakopis skaitymo-rašymo procesas, t. y. originalo aliteracinių modelių kūrybinė *revizitacija*. Nabokovas verčia knygos tekstą atlikdamas naujus žaismingus stilistinius maneuvrus, kuriuos inspiruoja kita kalba, tačiau kartu jis išlieka reiklus kognityviojo tikslumo aspektu. Jei rašytojui nepavyksta perteikti tokių aliteracinių struktūrų, kokios yra originale, jis kompensuoja šį trūkumą, neretai pateikia dar sudėtingesnius garsinius modelius kitoje vietoje.

Kaip patvirtino tyrimas, kokybiniu požiūriu autorinis vertimas pranoksta bet kokį kito ver-

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AUTORSKI PRZEKŁAD *LOLITY* VLADIMIRA NABOKOVA: SPOSOBY ODDANIA INSTRUMENTACJI GŁOSKOWEJ

**Streszczenie**

Artykuł zawiera studium przypadku – porównanie dwóch wersji językowych (angielskiej i rosyjskiej) powieści Vladimira Nabokova *Lolita*. Badanie oparto na teoretycznych założeniach przekładu literackiego. Autorzy artykułu traktują przekład autorski jako osobny rodzaj przekładu literackiego, odmienny od autorskich przekładów tekstów nie-literackich. Należy zauważyć, że swoje utwory na inny język najczęściej tłumaczą pisarze bilingwalni. Dlatego nie dziwi fakt, że zjawisko przekładu autorskiego zwróciło najpierw uwagę językoznawców, nie zaś teoretyków przekładu. Badania teoretyczne w dziedzinie przekładu autorskiego znajdują się dopiero w stadium początkowym – liczą zaledwie kilkadziesiąt lat. Termin „przekład autorski” (ang. *self-translation*) jako pierwszy zaproponował Anton Popovič w *Słowniku analizy przekładu literackiego* (1976).

Autorzy artykułu skupili się na analizie kilku mistrzowskich realizacji instrumentacji głoskowej w oryginalnym tekście *Lolity* Nabokova oraz w autorskim przekładzie powieści na język rosyjski. Tworzenie dwóch wariantów językowych jest pojmowane jako dwuszczeblowy proces czytania-pisania. Nabokov tłumaczy tekst książki, stosując nowe, zabawne zabiegi stylistyczne, stanowiące inspirację dla innego języka, jednak pozostaje wymagający wobec wierności poznawczej. Jeśli nie udaje mu się oddać struktur aliteracyjnych oryginału, kompensuje te braki w innym miejscu, często tworząc o wiele bardziej skomplikowane zestroje.

tėjo bandymą perteikti subtilią originalo garsų orkestruotę, kurios pagrindą sudaro aliteracija ir subaliteracija. Tyrime taikomas lyginamasis metodas. Palyginimui buvo pasitelktas romano *Lolita* vertimas į lietuvių kalbą. Tekstas verstas iš Nabokovo autorinio vertimo į rusų kalbą. Pirma, čia susiduriame su vertimo vertimo atveju. Antra, jei versti yra pasirenkamas kūrinys, gyvenantis du visaverčius kalbinius gyvenimus, vertėjas privalo mokėti abi kalbas, – tai leistų gerai pažinti abu romano variantus. Be to, būtina studijuoti literatūros kritikos medžiagą, atskleidžiančią sudėtingus Vladimiro Nabokovo postmodernistinės kūrybos mechanizmus.

*REIKŠMINIAI ŽODŽIAI*: literatūrinis vertimas, autorinis vertimas, aliteracija, *subaliteracija*, garsų orkestruotė, virtuoziškas perteikimas, *revizitacija*, dvigubas rašymas.

Badanie dowiodło, iż pod względem jakościowym przekład autorski znacznie przewyższa jakiegokolwiek próby, podejmowane przez innych tłumaczy, oddania subtelnej instrumentacji głoskowej, opartej na aliteracji i subaliteracji. W badaniu zastosowano metodę porównawczą. Jako materiał porównawczy posłużył przekład powieści *Lolita* na język litewski. Tekst był tłumaczony z autorskiego przekładu Nabokova na język rosyjski. Po pierwsze, mamy tu do czynienia z przypadkiem tłumaczenia z tłumaczenia. Po drugie, skoro tłumaczony utwór funkcjonuje równolegle w dwóch wersjach językowych, tłumacz powinien znać oba te języki i uwzględnić oba warianty powieści. Poza tym konieczne jest studiowanie materiałów krytycznoliterackich, ukazujących skomplikowane mechanizmy postmodernistycznej twórczości Vladimira Nabokova.

*SŁOWA KLUCZOWE*: przekład literacki, przekład autorski, aliteracja, *subaliteracja*, instrumentacja głoskowa, mistrzowskie realizacje, podwójne pisanie.

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