

**PHONOLOGICAL SURVEY OF ROMAN JAKOBSON
AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
FOR METHODOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS IN TEACHING**

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Abstract. *This work analyzes Roman Jakobson's phonological survey, which was inspired by poetic texts, verse structure and direct observation of the work of certain poets. Changes in poetry, especially in the verse space, brought about a new view of the sounds in speech and their real linguistic (communicative) function. The survey will show that there is a lot of symmetry and regularity in grammatical opposition among various poets across different epochs and nations. In that way, a composition role of grammatical categories which recur or are contrasted was confirmed. Jakobson's phonological survey can be a theoretical framework for methodological innovation in teaching grammar which correlates with teaching literature.*

Key words: *phonology, grammatical categories, binary oppositions, parallelism, poetics, verse structure, methodological innovations.*

1. INTRODUCTORY NOTES

In both language and linguistics, the presence of conversationists is vital. Language is acquired through dialogue; it develops within dialogue; the association between personal and collective contribution to linguistics and artistic rendering of a language is the most successful when viewed in discourse. Roman Jakobson¹ features a unique unity between

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¹Serbian scientific public does not need to be specially introduced to Roman Osipovich Jakobson (1896–1982), Russian linguist and semiologist, pioneer in the development of structuralist analysis of language, poetry and art. The first work to appear in Serbian was a selection of his essays entitled *Linguistics and Poetics* (1966) edited by Milka Ivić who also wrote the Foreword for it. Then, in 1978, *Essays on Poetics* appeared, with a Foreword by Leon Koen. In 1986, a separate book *Six Lectures on Sound and Meaning*, with a Foreword by Claude Levi Strauss, was printed. It should be noted that Roman Jakobson made a significant contribution (some originally published in Serbian) to the interpretation of our old and oral poetry, especially our most important oral verse – epic decasyllable. Yet, everything

life and scientific experience. He took part in the formation of two “societies“, and they in turn had an effect on his formation: in March 1915, the Moscow Linguistic Circle was established, with Roman as its leading figure, and in 1916 A Society for the Study of Poetic Language (Опојаз) – the core of Russian Formalism, was established in Sankt Petersburg. Also, he left a lasting trail in all university centres of Europe and America, where he spent a considerable portion of his life. He played a key role in establishing and work of the Prague Linguistic Circle, important not only for structural linguistics but also poetics² that is literary semiotics; then followed a very influential and long work at Harvard University, from 1949 to 1967. Harvard Graduate School – The Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures founded by Jakobson, is one of the most prestigious ones in the world due to Jakobson himself (Ivić, 1990, 202). Special role of grammar in poetry is his great contribution to poetics, which belongs to his American period. Later, in 1968, in his theoretical work “Poetry of grammar and grammar of poetry“, the idea of obligatory nature of grammatical categories for each respective language was born. There is a strong association between the obligatory language categories and their untranslatability. Out of aforementioned, we arrive at a conclusion that his entire life was inextricably intermingled with the coming into existence and development of modern linguistics and literature.

Roman Jakobson was devoted to his scientific interests. He never gave up on what captured his curiosity in his early life – he kept working out those same basic assumptions, all the while expanding the material. Thus, it is possible to point out his “conservatism“ along with his revolutionary inventiveness because he remained faithful to his early interests and notions. “Roman Jakobson always adhered to his one principle: results obtained from working in one field should be tested in another field. He would always ask himself the same question: ‘What does this occurrence correspond to in some other art form? In that way, he switched from dialectology and folklore to painting, film and journalism“ (Pomorska, 1998, 182).

2. ROMAN JAKOBSON'S LINGUISTICS AND POETICS

There was no other leading linguist in the twentieth century that was, like Jakobson, also a leading literary theorist. Among other things, that was possible because from the beginning his viewpoint was between language and literature, between linguistics and poetics. Jakobson's first passion was popular proverbs as the shortest work of poetry that at the same time belonged to language; his second passion was modern poetry: first, it was the French symbolist Stephen Mallarmé, then Russian futurists Viktor Hlebnikov and Vladimir Mayakovsky. In his works, he often analyzed verses written by Baudlaire and Pushkin. Their poetic imagination boiled down to poetic imagination and that was what enabled Jakobson to perceive language from the side that was usually hidden and thus claim that poetry was no more than an utterance aimed at expression.

Out of this core later stemmed the most influential theory about a special function that a language has especially in poetic art. The Prague Linguistic Circle defined four language functions (function stood for being focused on a certain goal): depictive focused on the subject matter of speech, expressive focused on the speaker, appealing on the listener and

that we could find out about Jakobson in Serbia and abroad somehow falls behind as we read *Conversations*, a book of dialogues that he had with Krystyna Pomorska (Petković, 1998, 188) by the end of his life.

²In linguistics, application of linguistic theory and method to analysis of poetry. Still, some linguists (such as Roman Jakobson) see this notion more broadly so that their “poetic function“ encompasses every esthetic and creative use of oral or written medium (David Crystal: *Encyclopedia Dictionary of Modern Linguistics*, Belgrade; Nolit, 1985, 186).

poetic on expression. Focus on expression is semiotically replaced with focus on sign, especially according to Mukarzowsky.

The study “Linguistics and Poetics“ was written as a synthetic amalgamation of Jakobson's extensive knowledge. Only someone who possessed such knowledge could ultimately justify not only four but all six functions of the original sign system. Each element (sender, receiver, contact, message, code and context) defines one function when communication is focused on it: referential focuses on the object, emotional on the sender, conative on the receiver, phatic on contact, metalingual on the code and poetic on the message. Every form of communication is perceived as multifunctional, but in every one of them one function is predominant. Poetry encompasses all the language functions, but the poetic one is the most predominant. So, focus on the message, bringing the message into focus for the sake of the message itself – that is the poetic function of language (Jakobson, 1966, 294).

The well-known terms of De Saussur linguistic school paradigm and syntax axis were replaced by Jakobson who coined up the selection axis and combination axis, which do not mean one and the same thing because he associates the principle of similarity with selection, and neighborhood or proximity with combination. Selection is carried out on the basis of equivalence, similarity and dissimilarity, synonyms and antonyms, whereas combination, which refers to sequence is based on proximity. “Poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the selection axis onto the combination axis. Equivalence emerges from the constituent principle of sequence“ (Jakobson, 1966, 296).

3. ON PARALLELISM AND GRAMMATICAL FIGURES

This work does not state nor does it explain any existent language or poetry theories; rather, it is about their coming into existence. Thus Roman Jakobson revealed in a dialogue with Krystyna Pomorska that his phonological survey was inspired by poetic texts, verse structure and direct observation of the work of certain poets. Changes in poetry, especially in the verse space, brought about a new view of the sounds in speech and their real linguistic (communicative) function.

The problem of binary and marked system components led to the primary element of linguistic art – parallelism. Parallelism is a binary unity. Jakobson repeatedly pointed out that there was equivalence in parallelism, not sameness. However, even the term equivalence somehow concealed the inequality of the two members, stifling the hierarchical advantage that one of the members displayed (Jakobson & Pomorska, 1998, 103). Nevertheless, there are many instances in which the researchers encountered significant difficulties: for example, when the semantic base should be determined for the permanent paired elements or when the parallelism itself should be determined, particularly in poetic texts. As opposed to popular folk fiction, these instances which do not contain fixed permanent pairs often make the researcher to intuitively react when determining equivalent pairs.

3.1. The issue of parallelism kept Jakobson occupied throughout his entire career. Even back in 1915 during his student days at the Moscow Linguistic Circle, he was interested in the reciting, especially epic form of the Russian folklore verse, in particular in the language of North Russian folk poems. The prosodic structure of the verse of these nomadic peoples' folk poems made it possible for him to later bring this verse, step by step, with the help of contemporary grammar, to pre Slavic and then further to Indo-

European versification; on the other hand, work on the nomadic peoples' resumes helped him determine how old they were and their historical and mythological basis.

Jakobson was puzzled by the more obvious internal organization of the Russian popular folk reciting verse, i.e. parallelism which connected the adjacent verses from start to end, and he was particularly puzzled by the fact that most experts in the field of Russian folklore basically paid no attention to this important fact. There was a well-known paired organization of lines in the biblical versification, for which the very name "parallelism" had been adopted two hundred years earlier. Given larger poetic license and possibilities of variation, Russian poetic parallelism was very close to this system. Therefore in 1919, Jakobson tried to interpret one particular text which was both lyric and epic, a short (only 21 lines long) pattern of the beautiful cycle of poems about Misery – Misfortune. The article was not published because Jakobson thought that it was an immaturely rendered draft version on which he should work more. His idea of a new interpretation of that same text ripened half a century later and it was incorporated into a monograph on grammatical parallelism and its Russian pattern, published in 1966 in the American magazine *Language*. However, in Jakobson's opinion, that version was yet another draft version.

Jakobson was not the only one who dealt with the artistic aspect of parallelism: even back in 1865 Gerald Manly Hopkins pointed out that the structure of poetry was based on the continuous use of parallelism and that it was an important, yet at those times still undiscovered role which parallelism played in poetry. "The system of permanent matching in the composition and array of syntactic constructions, grammatical forms and categories, lexical synonyms and complete sameness, and finally, sound groups and prosodic patterns – all this introduces a firm unity and at the same time wide variety into the verse structure" (Jakobson & Pomorska, 1998, 106).

Reviewing the work of Wolfgang Steinic on parallelism in Finnish-Carel folk poetry, published in Helsinki in 1934, Jakobson suggested deeper analysis:

"Namely, paired and at the first glance isolated verses often contain some special parallel relationship which somehow eluded the reviewer's attention. On their own part, recurrent units are more overwhelmingly felt at the level of incessant variation. Focus on parallelism, along with the similarity within verse pairs heightens the awareness of all the forms of similarity and difference between the semi-verses within the verse; in one word, all similarities and juxtaposition gain importance[...] There is, finally, the question that is of key importance for understanding verses – what is the hierarchy of parallel units: which one of them is subordinated to the other, what determines their mutual relationship – the internal contents of the verses or simply the primariness of the first verse and secondariness of the second one, or the position of the entire double verse in context" (Jakobson & Pomorska, 1998, 107).

All this orchestration of the parts and the whole unconditionally annuls assumptions of the poverty and monotony of parallel verse systems. Such wealth of possibilities encompassed within tight unity and juxtaposition might explain the fact of great diversity, even the dominant role of parallel systems in world poetry, both oral and written. Jakobson further emphasizes that thanks to the research done by anthropologists who came close to linguistic methodology – like James Fox for example – we discover a close relationship between poetic parallelism and mythology, including ritual. Here can be seen attractive prospects of interdisciplinary study of parallelism.

3.2. Jakobson dealt with the role of parallelism in artistic prose. Krystyna Pomorska said that some experts believed that Jakobson's principle of an overall parallel order in poetry referred to prose too, with the only difference that this principle was expressed in prose in more extensive components. On the other hand, others believed that the presence of parallelism in prose allegedly contradicted Jakobson's classification of prose as a predominantly metonymic and poetry as a predominantly metaphorical composition. Understandably, there is no doubt that there is parallelism in prose. Early formalists were aware of that fact, pointing out paired creations of characters in the function of character or parallel constructions of the whole storyline such as Gogol's parody prose or Tolstoy's moralist narratives. But these examples were somehow associated with folklore.

Discussing the role of parallelism in artistic prose, Jakobson pointed out that there were a lot of examples of artistic prose organized on the principle of consistently applied parallelism and reiterated Hopkins' words that the researcher would be astonished by the hidden presence of active parallelism even in a relatively free composition of prose works, where parallel constructions become intertwined and deviate the most from the obligatory subordination to the elementary principle of time succession. Anyway, there is a significant hierarchical difference between the verse and prose parallelism.

“In poetry the verse dictates what parallelism will be like: prosodic verse structure as a whole, melody unity, repeated verse line as well as its constituent metric parts; all that leads to the parallel array of elements of grammatical and lexical semantics and thus the sound inevitably takes over supremacy over the meaning. On the other hand, in prose the supremacy in the organization of parallel structures belongs to different semantic units, so that the parallelism of units related by similarity, contrast or proximity becomes emphasized in the storyline construction, in the specific subject and object of the story as well as in the sequence of narrative motives“ (Jakobson & Pomorska, 1998, 110).

Artistic prose is between poetry itself and the language of ordinary, practical communication, and one should not forget that the analysis of every intermediary phenomenon is far more difficult than studying the two poles. This does not mean that we should give up on studying structural characteristics of prose narration; rather, it means that it is necessary to have more sophisticated methods and always bear in mind that there is not one unified artistic prose but a whole set of levels which draw the speech towards one of above mentioned poles and push it away from the other. Jakobson believed that it was necessary to examine the specificity of the folklore prose, which is more prevalent and more transparent than the individual prose with its huge differences in stylistic directions. The closer the individual prose was to folklore, the stronger parallelism there was in it.

3.3. Jakobson concluded that while strict linguistic analysis enabled us to encompass different forms of poetic parallelism, poetic parallelism represented an important basis for the linguistic analysis of the speech and gave us precise indicators of what grammatical categories or components of syntactical constructions were perceived as equivalent by a certain language community and thus they took on the role of parallel units. On the basis of both Slavic and biblical materials, it appears that the vocative and imperative can take up the same position in two lines, i.e. simultaneously with the difference between the noun and verb form, here is emphasized the connotation character inherent to both categories. At the same time, an equivalent pair of two sentences, one with the verb and the other without the verb, i.e. with the zero verb, does not disturb the parallelism of either sentence (Jakobson & Pomorska, 1998, 109).

Grammatical parallelism serves as a valuable additional means for determining those basic grammatical features that form the basis of such a complex system. Semantic coupling practised in a certain parallel system are the key to understanding not only the semantic structure of a given language but also to unique way of thinking of the respective language community, with all the necessary caution when it comes to evaluating thinking on the basis of language peculiarities.

Jakobson focused his scientific attention on the array and artistic role of different grammatical categories in concrete poetic works. He was surprised to see the amount of symmetry and regularity in grammatical oppositions across various poets from various epochs and nations. Work after work confirmed the composition role of grammatical categories which repeated or contrasted. It turned out that the notion of “grammatical figure“ pointed out by Hopkins was no less important and effective in the art of poetry than the notion of “speech figures“. In international publications Jakobson presented the results of grammatical analysis of English, German, French, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, Greek, Russian, Czech, Slovakian, Polish, Slovenian, Serbian, Croatian, Bulgarian, Old Slavic and Japanese poems, which covered the last thirteen centuries of world poetry.

He had no intention of reducing poetry to grammar. Today any linguist knows that form must not be separated from meaning, and it would be equally unjust to discuss the meaning of the whole poem without scientific evaluation of all the elements that make up the whole. Even in the initial grammatical analysis the linguist is trying to, whenever possible, pave the way for semantic interpretation of the exposed grammatical basis. In the end he points out “The network of grammatical categories as a whole determines the type of our speech, and those characteristic features of that network our everyday speech leaves out and behind gain far more power and importance in poetry, as shown by grammatical“ (Jakobson & Pomorska, 1998, 124).

Krystyna Pomorska sums up Jakobson's scientific preoccupations: “If the most characteristic and at the same time unique feature of grammatical categories is the fact that they are obligatory for the speaker, then they become a kind of language sign, figure, myth. Exactly because of that is their semantic potential realized so much in poetic structure, getting out of the hidden, invisible state into the visible, extremely picturesque and symbolic“ (Jakobson & Pomorska, 1998, 125).

4. METHODOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS IN TEACHING

Traditional teaching of grammar was neither designed to be interesting and creative nor was it meant to perfect language culture. Grammar was not associated with a literary text and teaching literature and grammatical rules could not be utilized for creating linguistic beauty. Grammar was not associated with spoken and written expression either, which might, otherwise render it practical and significant for everyday spoken and written communication.

If Jakobson's phonological survey was used as a theoretical framework for designing grammar teaching, then we could have a correlation with teaching literature; thus, there would exist a creative way for lecturers to point out grammatical figures of speech, without any intention of reducing poetry down to grammar. The aim is, however, to view the grammatical rules and array of language units in terms of their function in creating language beauty and achieving expressiveness and suggestiveness of a literary text.

As an illustration of the above mentioned, we will show the extraordinary play between independent and slanting cases in well-known Pushkin's lyrical poem "I loved you". This poem was often quoted in the literature science as a good example of non-picturesque poetry because there is no single distortion when it comes to lexical words in it. That is the reason why this eight verse poem is saturated with figures of speech:

*Я вас любил: любовь еще, быть может,
В душе моей угасла не совсем;
Но пусть на вас больше не тревожит;
Я не хочу печалить вас ничем.*

*Я вас любил без молвно, безнадежно,
Торобостью, торевность ютомим;
Я вас любил так искренно, так нежно,
Как дай вам Бог любимой быть другим.³*

The poem surprises with the very choice of grammatical forms. There are 47 words in it and out of those 47 only 29 are lexical ones (in both Russian original and in Serbian translation); out of the 29 words, there are 14, i.e. almost one half, pronouns, 10 are verbs and there are only 5 abstract nouns. These nouns define the psychological world of the first person singular. There is no single adjective in the poem whereas the number of adverbs amounts to 10. All three persons in question in the poem are referred to exclusively by using pronouns: *I* in independent case, and plural *you* and *others* in dependent ones. The poem consists of two stanzas whose verses cross rhyme. The most frequently used word in the text is the plural *you*: it is used in the accusative and dative cases and only so.

Closely associated with it in terms of the frequency of use is *I*. The first person pronoun is found only four times and always so in the nominative case, only in the role of

³*Ja sam вас волео. Љубав се још можда
У срцу моме није сасвим угасла;
Но нека вас она више не узнемирава,
Ја не желим ничим да вас ожалостим.*

*Волео сам вас без речи и наде,
Час страхом, час љубомором мучен;
Волео сам вас тако искрено и нежно,
Нек вам да Бог да вас други тако воли.*

I loved you; even now I must
confess,
Some embers of my love their
fire retain;
But do not let it cause you more
distress,
I do not want to sadden you
again.
Hopeless and tongue tied, yet I
loved you dearly
With pangs the jealous and the
timid know;
So tenderly I love you, so
sincerely,
I pray God grant another love
you so.

the subject and exclusively at the beginning of the verse. A portion of verbs that agree with this subject is accompanied with adverbs, and the subordinate, non-finite verb forms are accompanied with objects in the instrumental case. This peripheral case, i.e. the agent instrumental, combined with the likewise peripheral dative, at the end of the concluding verse brings in the third participant of the lyrical drama who is juxtaposed to the *I* nominative from the beginning of the introductory verse.

This two stanza monologue has the traditional three part division 4+2+2. The first stanza develops the *v e r b* theme: the etymological figure replaces the verb *любил* with abstract noun *любовь* assigning it the illusion of independent existence. The second stanza develops the *s u b j e c t* theme. Both the adverbs accompanying verbs and the instrumental forms accompanying the subordinate verbs extend to the past those, obvious or hidden latent negative phrases that coloured the present with passive self-denial in the first stanza. Lastly, after the third repetition of the starting formula, the concluding verse is dedicated to its *o b j e c t*. Here reverberates the contrast between the two moments of dramatic development: the author's acknowledging the existence of the *other* opposes the previously sad jealousy while the fact that there are no articles in the Russian language makes it possible not to answer the question whether this jealousy in the past and the present blessing refer to different "others" or to one and the same opponent. After all, the poem consciously lends itself to open interpretation of the last verse.

Among the grammatical categories used in poetry for associating by similarity or contrast, there are all types of form and function words, then the number, gender, case, tenses, moods, aspects, verb forms, classes of abstract and concrete words, negations, finite and non-finite verb forms, definite and indefinite pronouns and articles and, finally, various syntactical units and constructions. That means that a literary text, apart from being prevalent in teaching literature, would be valuable in teaching grammar as well. This kind of analysis of language units and their mutual association would add to creative climate in teaching grammar, which in turn would promote curiosity, creativity in perceiving and use of language rules in practice, and thus grammar functionality itself would be much larger.

5. CONCLUSION

This work testifies about how Jakobson's phonological survey was inspired by poetic texts, verse structure and direct observation of the work of certain poets.

The analysis shows the stages Jakobson's work on parallelism went through. In his texts he pointed out that the role parallelism in poetry was great and that the parallelism itself was made up of the system of consistent matching in the structure and array of syntactical constructions, grammatical forms and categories, lexical synonyms and complete sameness, along with sound groups and prosodic patterns – all of which brought firm unity and at the same time wide variety into the verses tied together by parallelism. Whereas in prose the supremacy in the organisation of parallel structures belongs to different semantic units and so there is parallelism of units associated by similarity, contrast or proximity, here we can see parallelism in the storyline construction, in the specific subject and object of an action as well as in the sequence of narration motives.

So Jakobson was in grammatical figures with no intention of reducing poetry to grammar. Poetry, combining association by similarity and immediacy of contact, inspires adherence to the principle of equivalence in constructing a poetic text. Symmetrical reiteration and juxtaposition of grammatical meanings becomes an artistic procedure.

Jakobson is not leading us towards some thinkable literary poetics he himself could write, rather, he is leading us towards an open semiotic theory, which at one and the same time comprises both language and literature and expands to other sign systems as well. Jakobson's phonological survey can be a theoretical framework for methodological innovation in teaching grammar which correlates with teaching literature.

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FONOLOŠKA ISPITIVANJA ROMANA JAKOBSONA KAO TEORIJSKI OKVIR ZA METODIČKE INOVACIJE U NASTAVI

U radu su analizirana fonološka ispitivanja Romana Jakobsona, koja su dobijala podsticaja iz pesničkih tekstova, iz strukture stiha i iz neposrednog praćenja rada pojedinih pesnika. Promene u pesništvu, posebno u prostoru stiha, potpomogle su nov pogled na glasove u govoru i na njihovu stvarnu jezičku (komunikativnu) funkciju. Istraživanja će pokazati da ima mnogo simetričnosti i zakonitosti u gramatičkim opozicijama kod najrazličitijih pesnika iz raznih epoha i nacija. Na taj način potvrdiće se kompoziciona uloga gramatičkih kategorija koje se ponavljaju ili, naprotiv, kontrastiraju. U analizi pokazujemo da je uloga paralelizama u poeziji velika, a taj paralelizam čini sistem postojanih podudaranja u sastavu i razmeštaju sintaksičkih konstrukcija, gramatičkih oblika i kategorija, leksičkih sinonima i potpunih istovetnosti, najzad glasovnih grupa i prozodijskih shema – i sve to u stihove vezane paralelizmom unosi čvrsto jedinstvo i u isti mah veliku raznolikost. U prozi primat u organizaciji paralelnih struktura pripada po opsegu različitim semantičkim jedinicama, pa paralelizam jedinica koje su prema sličnosti, kontrastu ili susedstvu povezane, ovde aktivno dolazi do izražaja u sižejnoj konstrukciji, u karakteristici subjekta i objekta radnje, kao i u nizanju narativnih motiva. Na primeru Puškin-ove pesme „Voleo sam vas“ pokazali smo da fonološka ispitivanja Jakobsona mogu biti teorijski okvir za metodičke inovacije u nastavi gramatike koja interferira sa nastavom književnosti.

Ključne reči: *fonologija, gramatičke konstrukcije, binarne opozicije, paralelizam, poetika, struktura stiha, metodičke inovacije*