

**AGAINST MYTHISTORY: OLEKSANDR FINKEL'S
THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TRANSLATION (1929) AND
A NON-LINEAR HISTORY OF TRANSLATION STUDIES**

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Abstract: This article reassesses Oleksandr Finkel's *Theory and Practice of Translation* (1929) as a foundational yet marginalized contribution to Translation Studies. It challenges narratives that locate the discipline's emergence in the 1970s by showing that Finkel developed a systematic, theoretically ambitious model decades earlier in the Ukrainian and early Soviet context. Through close textual analysis and historiographic reconstruction, the study demonstrates how Finkel integrated linguo-stylistic analysis, genre differentiation, and cultural-historical reflection across non-literary prose, literary prose, and verse. The article argues that his later neglect stemmed from Soviet Russocentrism and Cold War epistemic barriers, and contends that recovering Finkel enriches contemporary Translation Studies and supports a plural, non-linear historiography attentive to marginalized traditions.

Keywords: history of translation studies; institutionalization; linguo-stylistic translation theory; Oleksandr Finkel; Ukrainian *perekladoznavstvo*

1. Introduction

The historiography of Translation Studies is often organized around a dominant origin story: the discipline is said to have emerged in the early 1970s, with James S. Holmes's programmatic writings serving as a founding moment (Holmes 1972/1988a). Within this teleological account, earlier reflections on translation — especially those developed outside Anglophone and Western European centers — are frequently relegated to “pre-disciplinary” commentary and dismissed as conceptually immature or merely anecdotal (Batchelor & Odrekhivska 2026). Yet this narrative functions less as a neutral history than as a selective “mythistory” (Baer 2020), a term denoting origin narratives that consolidate power within disciplines by marginalizing non-hegemonic traditions. A non-linear historiography, by contrast, attends to multiple, parallel, and interrupted developments rather than teleological progress toward the 1970s

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“founding” moment. The result is paradoxical: a field deeply concerned with translation as a mediator of global knowledge remains structurally under-translated itself, with major theoretical traditions circulating unevenly across languages and academic contexts (Baer 2020, esp. 229–234; Mellinger & Baer 2021).

This asymmetry is particularly visible in accounts of early Soviet and Ukrainian translation scholarship. Within the Soviet Union, the tightening of Russocentric norms from the 1930s onward — intensifying after the Second World War — made citation of non-Russian scholarship politically and professionally fraught. Outside the Soviet sphere, Cold War divisions, restricted access to publications, and the enduring homogenization of “Soviet” thought limited the incorporation of Eastern European theories into Western handbooks and anthologies. Holmes himself lamented the inaccessibility of substantial Soviet scholarship (Holmes 1988b: 99). These dynamics produced a double erasure: internal Soviet structures of recognition and citation, and external mechanisms of visibility, translation, and disciplinary canonization (Hostová et al. 2024: 116–117; Kalnychenko 2025a: 188).

Oleksandr Moiseievych Finkel’ (1899–1968) exemplifies the stakes of this double erasure. A professor at Kharkiv University and a prolific scholar of stylistics and translation, he belonged to the generation of Ukrainian intellectuals who helped define the conceptual foundations of Soviet translation scholarship in the 1920s–1930s (Baer 2024). Yet his work remains absent from internationally circulating histories of the field. The symptomatic nature of this absence is signaled by the title of his posthumous Ukrainian collection, *Zabutyi teoretyk ukrayinskoho perekladoznavstva* (A Forgotten Theoretician of Ukrainian Translation Studies) (Chernovatyi et al. 2007), prepared by Leonid Chernovatyi, Vyacheslav Karaban, Valeriy Podminohin, Oleksandr Kalnychenko, and Vitaliy Radchuk. His most significant contribution, the monograph *Teoriya y praktyka perekladu* (Theory and Practice of Translation) (Finkel’ 1929b), stands out for its early date and the breadth and systematicity of its theoretical ambition.

This article reconsiders *Teoriya y praktyka perekladu* as evidence that sophisticated translation theory existed well before the field’s formal naming in English in the 1970s. Finkel extends translation theory beyond literature to what he calls “non-literary prose,” offering a typology that differentiates scholarly, administrative, and journalistic discourse and grounding this in contemporary linguistic thinking, including ideas associated with Charles Bally’s stylistics (Bally 1909; Finkel 1929b). The monograph addresses themes central to later Translation Studies — translation’s cultural-historical impact, stylistic equivalence, the history of translational methods, the tension between Classicist and Romantic views, and “Humboldt’s dilemma” — while its organization, moving from theoretical foundations to analyses of prose genres, literary prose, and verse, reveals a synthetic model of translation as both culturally embedded and technically analyzable.

Re-reading Finkel clarifies a broader historiographic issue: many developments associated with post-1970s “turns,” including sociological perspectives, institutional analysis, epistemic plurality, and translation’s role in cultural power, have clear antecedents in earlier traditions. While the cultural turn expanded the field’s scope, it also marginalized linguistically informed scholarship and reinforced the assumption

that theoretical maturity required a rupture with pre-1970s paradigms (Bassnett & Lefevere 1990; Hermans 1999). Finkel's work challenges this narrative by integrating linguistic, stylistic, and cultural-sociological approaches. This study pursues three aims: situating the monograph within Ukrainian and early Soviet intellectual history; reconstructing its conceptual architecture in relation to contemporaneous European theory; and arguing that recovering Finkel requires interepistemic translation rather than mere terminological transfer. While previous scholarship has valuably recovered his biography and key ideas (Kolomiyets 2010; Rysicz-Szafraniec 2021; Shmiher 2009, 2024), the present article offers the first sustained English-language close reading of the full 1929 monograph's architecture and reframes it through the lenses of mythistory (Baer 2020) and non-linear historiography to challenge the discipline's dominant origin narrative.

Methodologically, the article combines close reading of Finkel's text with contextual disciplinary analysis. In doing so, it contributes to efforts to reconceive Translation Studies as a plural, non-linear field whose history is shaped by contingent practices of inclusion and exclusion.

2. The Institutionalization of Translation Studies in Ukraine through the Lens of Disciplinarity (Late 1920s–Early 1930s)

Reconsidered through Daniel Gile's criteria for a modern academic discipline (Gile 2012, 2013; Baer 2024), the institutionalization of translation studies in Ukraine during the late 1920s and early 1930s emerges as a remarkably complete — though short-lived — disciplinary formation. Within a narrow historical window, Ukrainian translation culture fulfilled all four defining characteristics of disciplinarity: systematic theorization, disciplinary self-consciousness, institutionalized training and research, and a distinct disciplinary name.

The period marked a decisive shift from sporadic commentary to sustained, methodologically articulated theorization (Shmiher 2009; Kalnychenko 2017, 2023). Volodymyr Derzhavyn contributed significantly through reviews and theoretical articles (1927–1931) that introduced the influential distinction between “homologous” (translation-stylization) and “analogous” translation, enabling comparative evaluation beyond individual cases (Kalnychenko & Poliakova 2015; Kalnychenko 2025a). Oleksandr Finkel strengthened the field's scientificity by extending translation theory beyond literature to scientific and technical texts, seeking general principles of equivalence, accuracy, and textual function across genres — an approach aligned with Gile's understanding of scientificity (Gile 2013). Mykola Zerov reconceptualized Ukrainian literary history by integrating translation as an essential component of the national literary process. He proposed a genre-based periodization (travesty, translation-travesty, and translation proper) and established rigorous criteria for verse translation based on stylistic unity, linguistic precision, and aesthetic adequacy (Bryska 2017; Kolomiyets et al. 2026; Shmiher 2009). Through criticism, textbooks, and his 1932/33 lecture course “Methodology and Methods of Translation” (Kolomiyets 2020, 2023), Zerov articulated foundational principles, distinguishing translation as process

and product, separating history from theory and methodology, and emphasizing translators' role in shaping the target language.

Ukrainian translation studies also exhibited strong disciplinary self-consciousness. Scholars reflected not only on methods (e.g., Ivan Kulyk, Hryhorii Maifet, Yuri Savchenko) but on the nature, cultural role, and future of the field. The late-1920s translation boom helped reassess Ukrainian's linguistic and cultural status, replacing skepticism about its suitability for world literature with confidence in its artistic and intellectual capacity (Oleksandr Biletskyi, Yelyzaveta Starynkevych). University syllabi explicitly included the history of translation studies, signaling advanced disciplinary awareness (Dzhuhastrianska & Strikha 2015; Kolomiyets 2020, 2023).

The most concrete institutional step was the founding of the Ukrainian Institute of Linguistic Education in 1930 in Kyiv, with a branch in Kharkiv (Kalnychenko & Kamovnikova 2020; Kalnychenko 2025b). Translation was integrated into higher education through formal curricula, defined competencies, and research-oriented teaching, supported by journals, reviews, and publishing programs. Within this framework, the discipline gained the stable designation *perekladoznavstvo* ("translation studies"), documented in syllabi by Mykhailo Kalynovych (1932) and Mykola Zerov (1932) (Dzhuhastrianska & Strikha 2015; Kolomiyets 2020, 2023). Finkel's *Teoriya y praktyka perekladu*, the first book-length theoretical study of translation in Eastern Europe, reinforced this consolidation by framing translation as an autonomous, systematic field of inquiry. Viewed through Gile's criteria, early Ukrainian *perekladoznavstvo* represents a fully realized disciplinary formation, interrupted not by conceptual immaturity but by political repression.

3. Oleksandr Finkel as a Pioneer of Ukrainian Translation Theory

Oleksandr Finkel (1899–1968) was a major Ukrainian linguist, translation theorist, translator, and educator whose intellectual career was closely associated with Kharkiv. Widely known in the Soviet period as co-author of the literary parody collection *Parnas dybom* [Parnassus Upside Down], as the translator into Russian of all 154 Shakespearean sonnets, and as co-author (with N. M. Bazhenov) of the university textbook *A Course in the Modern Russian Literary Language*, he also published extensively on linguistics and translation while authoring influential Russian language textbooks. After graduating from the Kharkiv Institute of Public Education (the reorganized Kharkiv University) and completing postgraduate training in linguistics in 1928, Finkel held teaching and research posts at several Kharkiv institutions, including the Institute of Foreign Languages. His scholarly formation coincided with the vibrant 1920s Ukrainian intellectual climate in which translation occupied a central cultural role; his own engagement with translation theory began with his first article in 1922 (Finkel 1922).

Finkel's most significant achievement was *Teoriya y praktyka perekladu* (1929), the first systematic Ukrainian-language monograph devoted exclusively to translation. This work laid the foundations for translation studies as an autonomous discipline in Ukraine and, more broadly, in Eastern Europe. Combining theoretical reflection with

detailed analyses of non-literary prose, literary prose, and poetry, Finkel developed a linguo-stylistic approach grounded in stylistic equivalence, text-type differentiation, and historically conditioned criteria of translation quality. The book rapidly gained institutional recognition and became the theoretical basis for translation courses by Mykhailo Kalynovych, Mykola Zerov, and later Dmitrii Usov in Moscow (Kalnychenko & Kamovnikova 2020; Kalnychenko 2025b). Another pioneering strand of his work concerned self-translation (Kalnychenko & Kamovnikova 2019), beginning with his 1929 study of H. F. Kvitka-Osnovianenko's self-translations and continuing in his 1939 candidate dissertation (Finkel 1939b). He further developed these ideas in his 1962 Russian-language paper "Ob avtoperevode" (Finkel 1962), later published in English translation preceded by a scholarly introduction by the present author (Kalnychenko 2021; Finkel & Bullock 2021). In the 1960s, Finkel further refined his ideas, including attempts to develop quantitative methods for assessing translational closeness.

After Finkel's death, Ieremiia Aizenshtok (1970) offered both a personal and scholarly assessment of his contribution. Since the 2007 republication of his key works, Finkel's legacy has been reassessed by Shmiher (2004, 2009, 2024), Kolomiyets (2010), and Rysicz-Szafraniec (2021), who establish him as a foundational figure in Ukrainian translation studies and a precursor to later linguo-stylistic, comparative-historical, and quantitative approaches. While these studies provide valuable systematizations of his oeuvre, highlight innovations in self-translation and quantitative methods, or offer detailed readings of the 1929 monograph's theoretical core, the present article advances a distinctly historiographic argument: Finkel's work exemplifies a fully institutionalized, linguo-stylistically grounded *perekladoznavstvo* already in the late 1920s–early 1930s, thereby necessitating a non-linear, plural understanding of Translation Studies' emergence and challenging the persistent "mythistory" (Baer 2020) centered on Holmes and the 1970s.

4. Oleksandr Finkel's *Theory and Practice of Translation*: Structure and Theoretical Premises

Oleksandr Finkel's *Teoriya y praktyka perekladu* (1929), first published in Ukrainian by the State Publishing House of Ukraine (DVU) in Kharkiv, occupies a foundational place in early Ukrainian translation theory. Reissued in 2007 as part of the collection *Oleksandr Finkel – zabutyi teoretyk ukrainskoho perekladoznavstva* [Oleksandr M. Finkel — A Forgotten Theoretician of Ukrainian Translation Studies] (Chernovatyi et al 2007), the monograph offers a comprehensive view of his scholarly legacy.

Designed to move from general theory to specific practice, the book integrates historical, theoretical, and applied perspectives across four parts. Part One establishes conceptual foundations, addressing translation's cultural-historical significance, stylistic challenges, Classicist and Romantic theories, Humboldt's dilemma, and the translation process. Part Two broadens the scope to non-literary prose—scholarly, administrative, and journalistic—focusing on terminology, syntax, and functional differentiation. This genre-sensitive expansion beyond literature, underexplored in

prior scholarship, demonstrates Finkel's contribution to a broadly applicable theory decades before Western functionalism. Part Three examines literary prose, including synonymy, realia, tropes, and syntax, while Part Four presents a tripartite model (phonological, semantic, syntactic) for verse translation assessment.

In the preface, Finkel stresses the need for systematic theory amid expanding translation activity and uneven quality. The book does not prescribe rigid rules but clarifies problems and illustrates solutions through contemporary practice; these ideas were later refined in his 1939 article, which foregrounds the historicity of accuracy and equivalence and articulates principles of translation multiplicity and text-type-dependent adequacy (Finkel 1939a; Shmiher 2024).

The detailed reconstruction in the following sections, while necessarily descriptive in places, offers a sustained close reading of the monograph's deliberate architecture—the systematic progression from theory through non-literary prose, literary prose, and verse. This structural fidelity highlights Finkel's methodical ambition and provides a more comprehensive account of its genre-sensitive, linguo-stylistic coherence than prior scholarship (Kolomiyets 2010; Rysicz-Szafraniec 2021; Shmiher 2009, 2024), especially when viewed through non-linear historiographic lenses.

4.1 Part One (“Theory”)

Section I: The Cultural-Historical and Artistic-Literary Impact of Translations

Finkel defines translation's primary goal as introducing one language community to works produced in another. This goal stems from both practical-social needs (administration, science, public instruction) and aesthetic-literary ones; interliterary exchange is therefore constant. Periods of accelerated borrowing, such as Russia's Petrine era, merely dramatize an ongoing enrichment of lexicon, forms, and stylistic repertoires. Early phases typically prioritize “state-significant” literature (technical, administrative, instructional), while artistic translation consolidates and expands the target language's poetic resources. Historical testimonies — from Cicero and Quintilian to Humboldt's preface to Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, as well as Russian classicists and Ukrainian writers such as Panteleimon Kulish and Mykhailo Starytsky — illustrate how translation refines style and imports formal resources into the receiving tradition.

Section II: The Stylistic Aspect of the Problem of Translation

Against naïve one-to-one transfer (the Septuagint legend), Finkel argues that the true difficulty begins beyond the word. Following Potebnia (1867/1993), he notes that individual words usually have lexical counterparts; the real challenge arises at the level of the linguistic work, as languages share communicative functions but differ in structural means (lexicon, syntax, metrics). Human language serves two broad functions: communicative-cognitive (oriented toward clarity and precision through “constructive” phenomena) and artistic-expressive (realized through system-relative deviations that produce stylistic “surplus”). Since thematic content is in principle transferable, the essence of translation difficulty lies in stylistic reproduction: finding adequate stylistic means in the target language while respecting the source text's

thematics. Translation is thus the art of reproducing stylistic features under thematic constraints.

Section III: Methods of Resolving the Problem through History

Finkel shows that multiple methods have coexisted historically. Beyond extremes such as transcription or strictly literal mimicry, there are free translations and paraphrases (e.g., Cicero). Tycho Mommsen's triad — (1) "styleless" translation (content without aesthetic form), (2) original creation in a foreign style (imitation), and (3) "strict/stylistic" translation (faithful in both form and content) — clarifies that (1) and (3) constitute translation proper, while (2) is imitation. He critiques Fedor Batyushkov's staged schema (dominant nations translate freely, subordinate nations slavishly, and peers aim at adequacy), noting that it fails even for Russian classicists, whose practice oscillates between freedom and exactitude.

Section IV Classicist and Romantic Theories of Translation

Finkel proposes that translation methods correlate with broader poetic worldviews. Eighteenth-century Classicism — grounded in normative poetics and belief in absolute aesthetic values — legitimates "corrective" translation, allowing the translator to improve a text deemed an approximation of the ideal. Romanticism, by contrast, reorients toward individuality, national specificity, and historical consciousness, demanding preservation of the concrete work and author with all their idiosyncrasies. The Romantics (Schlegel, Tieck, Humboldt, Schleiermacher) reframed translation theory by making accuracy central and shifting focus to the limits of precision, interlingual relations, and quality. After Romanticism, no fundamentally new principled positions emerged; later developments remained largely technical. Since modern linguistics and literary studies arose within Romantic paradigms, Finkel concludes that contemporary translation should largely adopt Romantic positions.

Section V: Humboldt's Dilemma

Finkel revisits Humboldt's "basic problem of all translation": translators oscillate between clinging to the original at the cost of the target language or adhering to domestic norms at the cost of the original. For Finkel, the dilemma is stylistic, not thematic. The dispute clusters around two poles: primacy of foreign stylistics (foreignizing stylization) vs. primacy of domestic stylistics (domesticating analogues). Romantics tended toward foreignization (e.g., Schleiermacher, Humboldt); later practice often favors domestication, especially aiming at thematic equivalence and comparable reader effect (e.g., Wilamowitz Moellendorff).

Section VI: The Culturo-Sociological Dimension

No absolute opposition exists: both extremes undermine translation's purpose. Foreignizing stylization risks "exoticism" and parody; radical domestication risks erasing national and individual character. The translator must navigate cultural distance, recognizing that tropes and stylistic devices carry culturally specific content. "Accuracy" is composite, encompassing both technical reproduction and the transmission of cultural aspects. Temporal and cultural differences complicate transfer, and false proximity poses dangers even between related languages.

Section VII: Thematics and Stylistics: Stages of the Translation Process

For Finkel, legitimate translation preserves both thematics (content) and stylistics (aesthetic system). Transfer of content alone is retelling; transfer of style alone is imitation. Perfect restoration is unattainable; translators must make informed choices rather than invoke the work's "spirit." The "cultured translator" undertakes rigorous hermeneutic preparation — verbal, historical, and technical—grasps authorial intent, and systematically searches for stylistic equivalents within the target language's resources. Arbitrary omissions or additions are condemned. This groundwork motivates the book's architecture: separate treatments of non-literary prose, literary prose, and verse translation, each reflecting distinct methodological centers yet sharing core principles.

In sum, Part One presents translation as a culturally embedded, stylistically governed craft.

4.2. Part Two: The Translation of Non-literary Prose

As part of broader Soviet efforts to theorize scholarly translation — driven by the multilingual dissemination of Marxist-Leninist texts — *Teoriya y praktika perekladu* extended translation theory beyond literary and sacred works to non-literary prose (Baer 2024: 17; Baer & Hofeneder 2025: 319). Finkel argued that non-literary translation is both socially significant and theoretically complex (Finkel 1929: 45). Drawing on Charles Bally, he distinguished scholarly and administrative texts and added journalistic prose as a distinct category for analysis (Finkel 1929b: 47–48, 51).

Section I: Prose Genres

Translation theory has long privileged literary texts. Finkel rejects the notion that prose translation is mere "content transfer." Because function shapes linguistic form, a systematic approach begins with genre differentiation. Prose is primarily constructive language oriented toward clarity and knowledge transmission; over time, each genre develops characteristic lexis, syntax, and phraseology. He identifies three main types: scholarly (focused on knowledge and proof, emphasizing terminological precision), administrative (regulative and operative, with specialized clerical style), and journalistic (a hybrid genre with internal variation). Each demands genre-sensitive translation strategies.

Section II: Scholarly (and Scientific) Prose. Terminology and Lexicon

Adequate translation requires lexical resources (or language planning), strong bilingual competence, and disciplinary knowledge — translation is interpretation before re-expression. Terminology represents the ultimate test of precision: terms are generally stable and often international, so transcription is preferred unless established equivalents exist. Forced national neologisms and competing variants are discouraged. Beyond terms, consistency in scientific lexicon is essential; synonymy and paraphrase risk blurring meaning and ethics, sliding translation toward retelling.

Section III: Syntax

Scientific syntax is “constructive” and oriented toward clarity. It should be rendered through natural target-language forms rather than calqued patterns. A scientific translation should not betray its source language while still preserving the author’s individual traits within the register. Intervention is justified when the original syntax is disruptive; otherwise, excessive restructuring risks undue adaptation. Because syntax encodes logical structure, altering connectors or clause relationships can distort reasoning — making syntactic fidelity as vital as terminological accuracy.

Section IV: Types of Administrative Prose

Legal texts are conservative and rely on frozen formulae; translators should follow authoritative standardization and avoid inventing competing terms. Common failures include inconsistent terminology, arbitrary variation in connectors, and “free” renderings that resemble commentary. Clerical and business prose center on phraseology: word-for-word calques produce unnatural constructions, so source templates should be replaced with functional target-language equivalents. Proclamations and manifestos form a subtype in which rhetorical force brings administrative translation closer to literary translation.

Section V: Journalism – Conclusions

Journalism is stylistically diverse and individualized. Translators must first identify the dominant tendency — scientific-expository, literary, or colloquial — and apply the corresponding principles. Edited speeches usually present no special difficulty; functional equivalence is crucial in politeness formulae and correspondence. Non-literary prose is not “easy”: its difficulty lies in the tight coupling of function and form, which demands fidelity to terminology, logic, and phraseology.

4.3 Part Three: The Translation of Literary Prose

Section I: General Remarks

Finkel maintains that literary prose is inherently more demanding to translate than nonfiction because of its dense stylistic texture and aesthetic organization, in which every linguistic choice may serve an artistic function. As a result, oppositions such as fidelity to the work versus reworking, or preservation of foreign style versus domestic replacement, become particularly sharp. Authentic literary translation requires semantic, technical, and historical interpretation as well as acute stylistic awareness; the assumption that prose is easier than poetry is false.

Section II: The Individual Word – Synonymy

Each word may carry aesthetic value; even slight semantic inaccuracies can weaken the overall effect. Translators must preserve synonymic variation and avoid approximate equivalents, inconsistent mappings, and paraphrase. In prose, semantic precision takes precedence over euphony.

Section III: Words with a Social Function – *Couleur Locale*

Finkel identifies socially, culturally, and historically specific words as one of the central challenges of literary translation. Greetings, forms of address, titles, professions, institutions, and other culture-bound items become problematic because stylistically neutral terms in the source language often turn into marked “barbarisms” in translation, unintentionally acquiring artistic weight and disrupting the original balance. He outlines three basic strategies — functional substitution with a domestic equivalent, literal translation or calque, and transcription — none of which is universally valid. Excessive domestication erases cultural specificity, while overuse of transcription turns literature into ethnography. Rejecting rigid rules, Finkel advocates case-by-case decisions based on cultural distance, the familiarity of realia, and potential false associations for target readers. His pragmatic approach — rejecting both radical domestication and exoticism—anticipates later realia theories (e.g., Vlahov & Florin 1990) but embeds them within a broader stylistic-functional framework.

Section IV: Words with an Aesthetic Function

Finkel examines words that perform an aesthetic function and distinguishes two principal mechanisms: change of designation without change of meaning (archaisms, neologisms, barbarisms, foreign insertions) and change of meaning (tropes). Stylistic contrast should be preserved: archaisms should be rendered with equivalent temporal distance in the target language, and neologisms should be kept when they express authorial individuality. Foreign words (barbarisms) and quotations usually remain unchanged. Dialect requires special care: because its effect depends on contrast with the standard, Finkel recommends rendering it as non-standard colloquial speech with minimal local color — a view later echoed by Kornei Chukovsky.

Section V: Slang Words, Stylistically Marked Expressions

Socially marked language—slang, vulgarisms, and professional jargon — must not be “cleaned up,” as such practices distort both style and reality. Finkel criticizes translators who elevate low registers to neutral or high style, citing numerous examples where expressive force is lost. Insults, curses, and expletives are culturally specific; full substitution often falsifies tone, while literalism may jar. He allows transcription or literal translation with minimal explanation, prioritizing functional accuracy. Professional jargon is usually translatable, and precision is essential because it contributes to realism.

Section VI: Tropes

Finkel classifies tropes as quantitative shifts (e.g., hyperbole), qualitative shifts (metaphor, irony), and combined shifts (idioms, puns). Quantitative tropes should be preserved without reduction. Qualitative tropes are generally translatable through careful equivalents, with notes where needed. Combined shifts are the most culture-bound: literal translation with commentary or carefully managed foreignness is preferable to flattening meaning. Puns are often untranslatable; inventing new ones should be exceptional, although later scholarship emphasizes recreating their function when the form cannot be retained.

Section VII: Syntax

Syntax expresses relations, not merely meanings; direct transfer is impossible. Translators should seek functional equivalents in target-language constructions that fulfill the same aesthetic role. Particular attention must be paid to sentence length, word order, coordination and subordination, parallelism, repetition, and rhetorical figures. Splitting or merging sentences and ignoring anaphora can cumulatively deform style.

Section VIII: Paraphrasing, Additions, and Omissions

Paraphrase is the most harmful tendency: minor adjustments easily become systematic amplification, simplification, or omission. Treating plot as primary encourages “improvement” and turns translation into retelling. Faithful prose translation remains possible as an artistic act attentive to every formal level; the danger lies in the translator’s license, not the reader’s difficulty. The goal should be maximal preservation of aesthetic structure, with acceptance of inevitable losses but without compensatory distortion.

4.4 Part Four: Verse Translation

Finkel maintains that prose and poetry share an ethic of fidelity, but verse is more demanding because semantic, syntactic, and phonological parameters must align. While lexico-semantic and many syntactic requirements carry over from prose, verse-specific features — euphony, rhyme, meter, stanza, and enjambment — require strict attention. Permissive habits, such as semantic drift in prose or formal liberties in verse, are errors. Finkel’s tripartite model (phonological–semantic–syntactic) prefigures later systemic approaches (e.g., Lefevere’s seven strategies) while remaining grounded in stylistics, thereby complicating narratives that dismiss linguistically oriented theory as inherently pre-theoretical.

Section I: Introductory Notes, Morphological Features

Morphological markers (e.g., diminutives) should be preserved when they carry meaning. Source-language word formation should not be calqued unless it has aesthetic value in the target language. Genre traditions (e.g., Homeric compounds) should be respected without lapsing into mannerism.

Section II: Euphony

Euphony consists of organized sound patterning (alliteration, assonance, instrumentalization). Exact replication is rare across distant languages; the translator’s obligation is to convey deliberate, structurally salient patterns using target-language resources, avoiding invented ornamentation.

Section III: Rhyme and Stanzas

Rhyme should be reproduced where present, with priority given to type and function rather than strict sound identity (e.g., avoid routine verb rhymes if the poet did not use them). Stanzaic architecture — line count, rhyme scheme, and masculine/feminine

endings — must be preserved. Free verse does not license added rhyme, and classical unrhymed meters raise distinct issues.

Section IV: Meter and Rhythm

Two problems dominate: alien metrical systems and the preservation of shared meters. Finkel advocates preserving the original meter, as altering it lacks principled limits and invites arbitrariness. Rhythm (cadence) is a distinct element and equally binding; changing cadence can harm the poem even when foot patterns match.

Section V: Textual Accuracy

Translators must respect verse-specific syntax and the alignment or misalignment of syntactic and metrical units. Enjambment, parallelism, and chiasmus carry rhythmic and rhetorical force and should be preserved where grammar permits. While absolute exactitude is difficult, large semantic shifts or overly comfortable domestications erode the boundary between translation and variation.

Section VI: Analysis of Translations

In his analysis of a Russian translation of Pavlo Tychyna's *Wind from Ukraine*, Finkel demonstrates how losses in iambic structure, rhyme chains, and syntax accumulate. His corrective rendering shows that stricter fidelity is both attainable and preferable.

Section VII: Conclusions

A poem is not merely a sum of devices; without disciplined fidelity to its stylistic system, cultural meaning is lost. Translators must identify the work's dominant features and avoid normalization. When trade-offs are necessary, they should aim for the minimum acceptable loss across content and form, privileging stylistic integrity. Bold, exacting translations that preserve foreignness are preferable to timid, homogenizing ones.

This architectural coherence, as demonstrated above, underscores the monograph's status as a mature, systematic contribution to translation theory.

5. Conclusion

This article argues that Oleksandr Finkel's *Teoriya y praktyka perekladu* (1929b) necessitates a fundamental revision of Translation Studies' canonical origin story. Situated within its Ukrainian and early Soviet institutional context, the monograph demonstrates that a systematic, methodologically explicit translation theory existed decades before the field's formal naming in the 1970s. By integrating cultural-historical reflection with linguo-stylistic analysis and a genre-sensitive account spanning non-literary prose, literary prose, and verse, Finkel dissolves later oppositions between linguistics and culture, prose and poetry, or "pre-theoretical" commentary and modern theory. His historically conditioned notion of equivalence, typology of non-literary prose, functional treatment of syntax and tropes, analysis of socially marked lexis, and ethical critique of paraphrase together form a coherent research

program rather than *ad hoc* advice. Reconstructing this program also reveals how Soviet Russocentrism and Cold War geopolitics produced a double erasure that obscured Finkel's influence. Recovering his work broadens the discipline's methodological repertoire and supports a plural, non-linear historiography in which Ukrainian *perekladoznavstvo* emerges as a central, not peripheral, tradition. Unlike earlier recuperative efforts focused on internal Ukrainian developments or specific theoretical tenets, this article uses Finkel to intervene in contemporary disciplinary self-understanding. Through close structural and conceptual analysis, it demonstrates how early Eastern European scholarship already integrated linguistic, stylistic, genre-sensitive, and cultural-sociological dimensions—anticipating later “turns” while remaining firmly embedded in its historical moment.

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Conflict of Interests

The author(s) declare no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in relation to this research.

Ethics Statement

The author(s) confirm that this study was conducted in accordance with the Journal's Research Ethics and Integrity Statement and that all ethical requirements applicable to the study have been fulfilled.