

## EXPRESSIVE PROPERTIES OF THE CATEGORY OF TENSE IN THE LYRICS BY MYKOLA KHOLODNY

**Zhanna Honcharova**

Senior Lecturer at Foreign Languages and Cross-Cultural Communication Department,  
Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics, Ukraine  
e-mail: zhannagoncharova803@gmail.com, orcid.org/0000-0003-3665-5335

### Summary

The article deals with the analysis of tense verb forms functioning in the lyric works by Mykola Kholodny. It is viewed to be significant for the interpretation of the artist's lyrical works and the determination of the morphological features of his idiosyncrasy. It is revealed that the poetic task accomplishment in the considered works occurs through the actualization of the grammatical background tense dominant, which is carried out in two ways. The main one is the poetic technique of concentration of morphologically similar units: the usage of the single tense grammemes or combination of different tense verb forms with dominant present tense forms. The technique of morphemic repetition is singled out as another method to actualize the background tense dominant in the poet's idiosyncrasy. The author's choice of methods to actualize grammatical forms and meanings combined with other master's expressive techniques (morpheme repetition, the principle of compositionality, the use of the stylistic figure of oxymoron) is seen to be a characteristic feature of his idiosyncrasy and serves to be the author's unique way to create a text.

**Key words:** idiosyncrasy, tense verb forms, background dominant, poetic technique, morphological feature.

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### 1. Introduction

As differential characteristic of idiosyncrasy the tense verb forms have been the focus of linguists' attention for many years. The researchers of this topic suggest that the stylistic potential of verb forms is impressive. Linguists consider the category of tense to be the stylistically richest category, explaining it by voluminosity of lexical semantics of the verb, the diversity of morphological categories, meanings, forms (*Oleksenko 2020: 207*). It appears to be one of the most important categories of the spatial and temporal continuum, which is reflected in the language of fiction, the language of poetic works in particular. The issue of space and time in the language of poetry is of growing interest among scholars, since a complex interaction of temporal layers is observed, regularities of various tense meanings formation are realized, and compositional possibilities inherent in tense and aspect relations of the verbs in a poetic text are used (*Ibid.*).

The grammatical category of tense is one of the important grammatical categories involved in the formation of the poetic space and time in lyrical works by Mykola Kholodny. In this article we aim to consider the functioning of tense verb forms in the poetry of the mentioned author, which is significant for the interpretation of his lyrical works and determination of the morphological features of his idiosyncrasy.

The assigned goal caused the accomplishment of the following objectives: to reveal the poetic potential of tense verb forms in artistic functioning using a functional method and to characterize grammatical means and poetic techniques to create poetic meaning using a method of contextual and interpretative analysis.

## 2. The poetic technique of concentration

Philologists' observations testify that the concentration of the single tense verb forms in a poetic text or its fragment as part of the integral structure of the text is the result of the formation of the tense verb form dominant, which creates the basis of the temporal plan and is an integral part of the compositional structure of the work. According to the degree of markedness in the poetic text, two types of grammatical dominant are distinguished: background (unmarked) and actualized dominant (Skorobohatova, 2015), (Samsonenko, 2018). The grammatical tense dominant is background due to the fact that the verb forms of the past tense, present and future, conveying the temporal sequence of events that happened, are happening and will happen in objective or artistic reality at the moment of speech, are perceived as "ordinary", "normal" and acceptable (Batsevich, Kochan, 2016). Poetic text as a space for maximum realization of the possibilities of linguistic units, grammatical ones in particular, is able to actualize this dominant.

One of the main ways to actualize grammatical forms and meanings in the works by Mykola Kholodny is the poetic technique of concentration of morphologically similar units (Skorobohatova, 2015). The use of the same morphological form or several repeated morphological forms in a completed work or its fragment creates the effect of its "recognizability" and "markedness" (Samsonenko, 2018), highlights its meaning. This produces an actualized dominant. The poetic technique of the concentration of similar morphological units, the verb forms of the present, past or future tense within a certain textual space significantly enhances the expressiveness of the text and becomes a characteristic feature of the artist's idiosyncrasy.

## 3. Present tense forms organization of the poetic works

When studying the poetic text, linguists came to the conclusion that lyrical works, which are known to reproduce feelings, moods, and thoughts, are characterized by repeated actions, processes, and states occurring in different periods of time preceding and following the moment of speech. The depiction of such repeated habitual actions, processes, and states that may precede and follow the moment of speech is realized through the present extended tense, which is a subtype of the present non-actual tense (Vykhovanets, 2004). As scholars fairly point out, the actual present tense is not peculiar to lyrics in general, because the action in lyrical genres is usually not correlated with the moment of speech (Oleksenko, 2020).

Analyzing the poetic works by Mykola Kholodny, we found out that this pattern – the realization of the meaning of the present extended tense – is typical for the master's language, but there are poems where the present verb forms have the meaning of the present actual. Compare: *Він іде степом і відчуває, / як хтось йому цілить у спину. / Він повертається – нікого нема. // Він далі іде і відчуває, / як хтось йому цілить у спину. / Знов озирвається – нікого нема. // Він далі іде й відчуває, / як хтось йому цілить у спину. / Він повертає в зворотний бік. / І все ж відчуває, як хтось йому цілить у спину* (М. Холодний «Він іде степом...»). We note that the given example is not a poetic fragment, but a completed work with dominant present verb forms, which reproduce the meaning of the present actual tense. The background dominant of the present tense becomes actualized in the given sample due to the repetition of the verb form of the third person singular (*іде, відчуває, цілить*) at the beginning of each stanza and in the last verse line, which is considered to be another poetic technique – the principle of compositionality.

The actions coincide with the moment of the lyrical hero's contemplation and almost do not go beyond its limits. In our opinion, they are depicted as a comment on a specific situation

that the reader observes. The poetic work that we are analyzing turns out to be a narrative about the things the lyrical hero sees or experiences at the moment of speech, which is not very characteristic of the lyrics of the 20th century. In addition, we believe that the present tense acquires a dynamic meaning through the sequential change and repetition of verb forms, which creates a sense of movement in the given piece of poetry. The famous researchers of the last century, specifically V. Vinogradov, paid attention to the dynamic semantics of the present tense, determined by the syntagmatics of the speech process and by the change of verb forms. The researchers of the present day support these views, emphasizing that the compositional load of the present tense is to be regarded considering the syntactic tense of a separate poem (Oleksenko, 2020). We share the standpoint that the present tense itself is devoid of movement, but the consistent change of present verb forms enables the dynamic development of the narrative.

We are of the opinion that the mechanism of expression and functioning of artistic time in the poetry «Монолог Франка» is noteworthy. The grammatical verb forms of the past tense are perceived as those reproducing an action which has just been performed. Such cases, when the grammatical tense of the verbs used in poems does not coincide with the time depicted in the work, is traditionally qualified as transposition which is conceived as the use of one form in the function of another. In a broad sense, this term is interpreted as any figurative use of a language form, in particular the transposition of verb forms (Melnyk, 2015). We assume that the transposition of past verb forms is implemented in this piece of poetry «Монолог Франка» actualizing resultative actions in present. Compare: *В багно звірми притоптана калина. / Російська мова в душу нам плює. / Та ще не вмерла мертва Україна! / Народ в народі знову постає! / Народу шлях показують суди / (Недарма ж звуться ті суди – народні), / І садить він по півночах сади, / і добува метали благородні. / І вчать його майори філософії, / і підривають йому береги. / А навкруги усе вже пересохло. / Але не все ще всохло навкруги! / Нас і виховують, нас і приховують. / Не вислуховують – так підслуховують. / серед зими, народе, й серед літа / Стоїть в снігах надій твоїх Говерла. / Але ти вже розлився на півсвіта, / І рабська твоя падає орбіта. / І ще не вмерла.* (М. Холодний «Монолог Франка»).

The entire poem is organized with verb forms of the present tense with the meaning of the present extended, which is regular for the works of the mentioned poet: *плює, постає, показують, звуться, садить, добува, вчать, підривають*, but we observe the inclusion of the transposed past forms: *не вмерла, пересохло, всохло, розлився*. These forms are used together with the adverbs *ще* and *вже*, which indicate the duration of the action up to now, up to this time (*ще*) and the final implementation or occurrence of the action, phenomenon or state (*вже*). By the meaning these past verb forms correspond to the semantics of the present perfect tense, which constitutes the paradigm of the grammatical category of tense in the English language. It reproduces the meaning of a completed or uncompleted action in the present with a visible result that is important at the moment. These are the adverbs *ще* and *вже* that are the markers of this grammatical tense. The adverb *вже* strengthens the action that has been completed; it is used in affirmative sentences. The adverb *ще* is mainly used in negative sentences, emphasizing an action that has not been completed yet. According to our point of view, the past verb forms in the poetic lines by Mykola Kholodny / *Та ще не вмерла мертва Україна! / <...> / А навкруги усе вже пересохло. / <...> / Але не все ще всохло навкруги! / <...> / Але ти вже розлився на півсвіта, / <...> / І ще не вмерла.* reproduce the meaning of completed actions, the fact of their performance is important in present. In our opinion, their result can be interpreted as follows: *ще не вмерла=ще жива, ще бореться; усе вже пересохло=немає нічого живого (життя); не все ще всохло=ще є життя, надія; ти вже розлився на півсвіта=ти далеко, тебе зараз тут нема.*

So, we can say that the author uses dominant verb forms of the present tense with the semantics of the present extended and transposed past forms, which have the meaning of completion, effectiveness in the present. Such semantic filling of the past tense forms gives the reader the opportunity to establish a connection between the past and the present. The author depicts the reality and events that he witnessed himself through the use of these tense verb forms. In this way, the master brings the real life of that period closer to the reader, which becomes his main poetic task.

#### 4. The poetic technique of morphemic repetition

The actualization of the background dominant of the present tense forms in the given sample occurs due to the author's expressive techniques, which enhance the stylistic effect and the fascinating influence of morphological forms on the reader. We observe the technique of morphemic repetition, the use of a common root in the words that acquire different meanings due to the prefixes. Compare: *виховують* – *приховують*, *вислуховують* – *нідслуховують*, *пересохло* – *всохло*. The sound similarity of forms due to the root repetition creates a play of meanings and an expressive effect. In the verse line *Та ще не вмерла мертва Україна!* We note the use of the stylistic figure oxymoron *не вмерла мертва*. This is a combination of words opposite in meaning, contrasting concepts. We analyzed the past tense forms, which have the meaning of the fact of a completed/uncompleted action in the present *ще не вмерла=ще є живою мертва Україна*. A new semantic quality is built, an unexpected expressive effect, which is enhanced by the principle of compositionality. Beginning and finishing his poem with this line, the author creates the compositional integrity of the poetry, showing the connection of events at the level of the entire text (*Skorobogatova, Kozlova, 2020: 206*). Verb forms play an important role in it.

#### 5. Different tense forms organization of the works

Authors develop the poetic narrative in different ways, choosing one or another temporal plan of poems and linking their choice to a specific poetic task. Each poet has individual features of using general poetic methods of actualizing units of the morphological level, which reflect the master's creativity modus. Our conception of the term “modus” is based on its definition in the dictionary by A. Zagnitko (“modus – combinatorics of two elements at the level of parts of speech, model – at the logical and grammatical level; modification – detailing of its various grammatical variants; reflection of the position of the subject regarding the objective content”) (translated by Zh. H.) (*Zagnitko, 2012*). We also ground on the general scientific definition (“modus – type, manifestation, variety of an object; an insignificant, accidental, temporary property of an object, inherent in its certain states; a way of being, action, experience and thinking”), given in the Great Ukrainian Encyclopedia. Therefore, we consider the concept of the author's creativity modus to be the master's type of thinking, his method of action, which enables to produce new ideas that are reflected in the individual creative use of traditional artistic techniques and the author's selection of linguistic and stylistic material. Mykola Kholodny develops the plot of the poetic narrative by actualizing the grammatical category of tense, often combining different time plans, which gives the reader the opportunity for a broad and detailed perception of what is depicted in the work.

For example, in the poem «На смерть В. Сосюри» we record the following interrelation of different time plans: present - future with the inclusion of past verb forms. Compare: *Поети вмирають в душі, / а потім в лікарні вмирають. / Спочатку ховають вірші, / а потім поетів ховають. // Поету копають яму; / коли, – знає тільки він сам; / в поезії білі плями, / це більше на серці плям. // Неначе потрапив не в свій город – / нервово повітря ковта. / Поете, не той тепер Миргород, / Хорол річка не та. // Поетів вивчають діти / І слідчі десь цілу ніч; / поетам купують квіти / (померлим, відома річ!). / На цвинтар за місто як сніг / вивозять на третій швидкості. / Глузують із друзів їх, / немов зі сторичної рідкості. // <...> Білі ведмеді. Ватра. / Земляцьких кісток опилки. / Зникнуть поети завтра, / залишаться члени Спілки. // І хто нас з-під криг тоді визволить? / І хто нас запалить? Хто? / Он знову на третій швидкості / помчало когось авто.* (М. Холодний «На смерть В. Сосюри»). The basis of the grammatical structure of the poem is made up with the present verb forms realizing the meaning of the present extended. They are alternated with future tense grammemes of the perfect aspect. Analyzing ten stanzas, we note that only three include future verb forms, two of which are located in the final lines. Such disproportionate use of verb forms, with dominant grammemes of the present tense, creates the structural and grammatical asymmetry (Omelchenko, 2025). In our view, it clarifies the author's intentions to depict actions that are relevant for any moment of perception, whether preceding the moment of speech, during or following it. The future verb forms convey the meaning of a forecast, of vain hopes. The grammeme of the past tense, which in the context of the poem acquires the meaning of the activity or life completion, is final in the work. In this way, the author depicts the details of his creative development and life, which was not easy for the artists who lived and worked during the period of the sixties in XX century. The time plan of the work organization gives a feeling of impossibility to change the life situation, stagnation and disbelief in the future.

In the poem «Шестидесятникам» Mykola Kholodny combines verb forms of various grammatical tenses in a different way. He builds a logical sequence of the past, present and future events, giving preference to past verbs forms. Compare: *Коли ще живі були ми / І мали, як всі, хребет, – / народ був поету дверима, / дверми був народу поет. / Поети народом дихали, / Йому слугували очима, / «Не столь отдалённо їхали – / Україну везли за плечима. / Роками, віками мучились. / Поети були поетами! / А ви за три дні спадлючилились / в погоні за еполемами. // <...> / Батькам ви далися на чари – / а матір в ярмо запрягли. / тесали дубові мари / Й на них самі же лягли. // <...> / Поети! Обридло нам «за»! / Де ваше «проти»?! / Сусіду вартуєм Курили. / Спитати б, дідизну чию? / В відітнутих крилах Кирила / відгадуєш долю свою... / Вливається кров козацька / в азійську під знаком злиття. / Каліки! Як висохнуть ріки – / хто морю продовжить життя? / За вами у пресі стежать, / За іншими...Краще, зоставим. / Але чи й столиці належите. / Але чи належить вона вам?.. / Й коли вже, поете, згодишся / відчутти волячим серцем, / що в ній українцем народишся, / а вік проживеш іноземцем?* (М. Холодний «Шестидесятникам»). The poet begins his lyrical work using the past tense verbs of the imperfect and perfect aspect (*мали, був, дихали, слугували, їхали, везли, мучились, спадлючилились, запрягли, лягли, обридло*), describing the lives of Ukrainian poets of the sixties. Then the author mixes the temporal plans of the present and future tenses, using the following scheme P+F (*вартуєм, відгадуєш, вливається + висохнуть, продовжить*) – P+F (*стежать, належите, належить + згодишся, народишся, проживеш*). The master combines different tense verb forms and creates a voluminous picture, proclaiming the rejection of totalitarian reality, human self-respect and the need to preserve national values.

## 6. Single tense forms organization of the works

In the works by Mykola Kholodny we can often observe the poems where the grammatical structure is based on the single tense verb forms. We emphasize that the present verb form is used to a greater extent in the artist's works. We also observe the poems which are frequently structured with the past or future tense verb forms. A well-known linguist Olena Oleksenko points out that lyric poetry is not characterized by narrative, which is produced by the narrative semantics of the past tense (Oleksenko, 2020: 209). However, in Mykola Kholodny's idiostyle occasionally we record such poems in which the accumulation of the past tense verb grammemes creates compositional significance and contributes to the "formation of poetic narrative" (Omelchenko 2025) (translated by Zh. H.). Compare: *Війна **вечеряла** серцями, що жито **сіяли**. / Вона **прийшла** й по тебе, не спитавши, хто ти. / І ти **покинув** дім, узявши **неньки фото** / та море сліз її, старої і безсилої. / **Не мріяв** ти / про хату під гранітною плитою, / де **хтось кричав**: «За Сталіна» – / а потім **ляєсь** брудно; / Її **чиясь відірвана нога благала**: «люди! / за що мене, за що / **зробили сиротою?**» / Земля **палала**. Ти її **сховати** / хотів би в пазуху. Та **раптом внав**. / І **впало** фото на долівку трав. / На нього **глянули Карпати**. / Повз тебе **бігали** мерці байдуже колонами / Під музику **какофонічну жерл**; / Над твоїм тілом, що **пливло** човном червоним / **досвідчено схилився мародер**. / Ти **помирав** / і **думав**: «Правнуки-аматори / над нами будуть яблуні садить...» / Ти **помирав**. А з під чужих **чобіт / ще довго усміхалося** старе обличчя матері (М. Холодний «Материнське фото»).*

The author turns to the presentation of the story, which illustrates specific extended moments of the lyrical hero's life. They are explicated by the grammemes of the past tense of imperfect aspect (*вечеряла, сіяли, кричав, благала, палала, бігали, помирав і думав*). The morphological characteristics of these forms make it possible to depict prolonged actions that communicate the sadness and sorrow of that period. Past tense grammemes of perfect aspect, which denote actions that reached an internal limit (Bezprozasko, & Gorodenska, 1993), acquire additional elements of meaning in the mentioned poem: a resultative action (*прийшла, покинув, зробили*); a single action (*внав, впало, глянули*). Researchers of the grammatical level of poetic works mention the "aorist and perfect interaction" (Oleksenko, 2024: 327) when combining past verb forms of the perfect and imperfect aspect, which becomes an important indicator of the plot development. Against the background of this picture, the lyrical hero's depressed state that is reproduced due to the past verb forms of the imperfect and perfect aspect, the master conveys the idea of a single glimmer of hope, using only one future tense grammeme of the imperfect aspect (*будуть садить*) in the final line of this work. We consider such inclusion of the future tense verb forms into the plan of the past to be essential for the realization of the poetic meaning not only in the analyzed one, but also in other poems by this master («Василеві Симоненкові», «У руках тримала, та не мала...», «Україна», «Поговір»).

We will illustrate mentioned author's sample of the poetry, the grammatical structure of which also has a background dominant (Skorobogatova, 2015), because it is reproduced only on the basis of future tense verbs. The poet alternates the future forms of the perfect and imperfect aspect disproportionately. The verb forms that denote completed actions in the future are used to a greater extent. Compare: *Постанови партійні **читатиму**, / через рік все прочитане **виблюю**. / а тим часом **хтось реготатиме**, / твого тіла вивчаючи біблію. // Я **відріжу** одну собі ногу, / **зеконмити** на чоботі **щоб**, / і **подамся** у тир, **їйбогу**, / **щоб** ціляли мені в лоб. // І не ти **поцілуєш** мене, / а гарячая куля в уста. / **Не заплачуть** стрілецькі знамена, / **хтось на дроба спиляє хреста** (М. Холодний «Постанови партійні.»). In this*

way, the author highlights his vision of what will happen in the future, what will be the result of these actions. Using the future tense forms of the perfect aspect, the master emphasizes confidence in their accomplishment. In contrast, the imperfect aspect creates the meaning of a long, unlimited future action, which embodies the possible development of events.

## 7. Conclusions

Thus the analyzed factual material of Mykola Kholodny's poetic works indicates the regular organization of poems by grammemes of the present tense with the meaning of the present extended («Собаки», «Пахне небо...», «Нічний гість», «Монолог Франка», «Він іде степом...», «І знову ніч», «Як вам живеться, вуйче...», «Рука», «Дитинство», «На хуторі кохання», «Білий світ до серця...», «На смерть В. Сосюри»). Such author's choice of tense verb forms contributes to the reproduction of real events of that stagnation period, to the creation of a true picture of the Soviet world reality. However, we recorded samples of poems where the author interchanges different time plans. Mostly the combination of time plans is realized according to the following schemes: Pr(present) + F(future); P(past) + Pr(present) + F(future). Combining different temporal plans, the master uses the corresponding tense forms disproportionately, giving preference to grammemes of a single grammatical tense, which is connected with the author's intention to recreate the necessary artistic meaning. Switching from present verb forms to the grammemes of the future tense the author illustrates a picture of the lyrical hero's changing mood, who predicts a possible development of events in that stagnating period. Poems, which are built in a logical sequence of three temporal plans (past-present-future), enable the recipient to perceive them extensively and in details.

Sometimes the basis of the grammatical structure of poetic works by Mykola Kholodny is made up of grammemes of a single grammatical tense, only past verb forms, present or future verb forms are used. The author regularly uses present tense forms with the meaning of the present extended or present actual at the level of the entire poetic text. The master organizes poetic works with grammemes of the past or future tense to a lesser extent. We have recorded a few samples. By means of the past verb forms of the imperfect aspect, which denote continuous actions, the life situation is recreated as a background against which resultative or single actions take place, denoted by the past tense grammemes of the perfect aspect. The author transmits his vision of the future through the future verb forms of the perfect and imperfect aspect, which actualize the meaning of confidence in specific actions fulfilment (perfect aspect) and possible life processes (imperfect aspect).

Cases of transposition of tense verb grammemes have been registered. In the context of some poetic works the past tense forms acquire the meaning of completion (resultativeness) in the present. In this way, due to the alternation of the present tense forms and transposed past tense grammemes, a single time dimension is formed – the plan of the extended present, which denotes actions that occur at the moment of speech and in different time periods preceding and following this moment.

In any poetic work there is an author's intention to reproduce a certain poetic meaning. The realization of the poetic task in the works analyzed in this article and many other ones by Mykola Kholodny occurs through the actualization of the grammatical background dominant of tense. The master resorts to the use of various methods of actualization. The main one is the poetic technique of concentration of morphologically similar units. One and the same morphological form or several repeated morphological forms in a completed work or its fragment

creates the effect of its "recognizability", which emphasizes its meaning. Applying this general poetic method of actualization, the poet uses grammemes of a single tense or combines the forms of two or three grammatical tenses, giving preference to the present tense forms. Another method of actualization of the background dominant of tense in the poet's idiosyncrasy is the technique of morphemic repetition. The use of a common root in the tense verb forms creates a sound similarity of these words, which gives an expressive effect. This choice of methods of actualizing grammatical forms and meanings combined with the author's expressive techniques (morpheme repetition, the principle of compositionality, the use of the stylistic figure of oxymoron) is considered to be a characteristic feature of idiosyncrasy and serves to be a way of existence for the artist's creativity, his unique way of creating a text.

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