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## Grammatical Categories of Number and Case of Nouns to Reflect the Specificities of the Poetic Form of Speech

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**Abstract.** Focusing on the verse linguistics of Russian, this research pioneers an inquiry into how nominal inflection (case and number) dictates versification specifics. The methodological framework is built upon a synthesis of distributive, quantitative, descriptive, analytical, and semantic-stylistic analyses. The primary data for this investigation consists of a representative sample of 20th-century poetry extracted from the National Corpus of the Russian Language. By establishing a direct correlation between grammar and poetic meter, the study presents a unique contribution with dual significance: it enriches the theoretical underpinnings of linguistic aesthetics while simultaneously providing valuable resources for teaching linguistic courses.

**Keywords:** versification patterns; grammatical resources of language; Russian noun morphosyntax; case and number; poetic form

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## Функционирование грамматических форм числа и падежа существительных в качестве реализации особенностей поэтической речи

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**Аннотация.** Цель исследования – выявить специфику версификации поэтических текстов, обусловленную функционированием грамматических форм числа и падежа русских субстантивов. В основу методологии положены принципы семантико-стилистического, аналитического, описательного, дистрибутивного и количественного анализа. Для исследования была скомпилирована электронная база данных, состоящая из поэтических текстов XX века, предоставленных Национальным корпусом русского языка. Впервые автором установлена взаимосвязь между грамматическими формами числа и падежа существительных и организацией ритмико-рифменной структуры русской поэзии. Полученные результаты могут быть использованы в преподавании лингвистических дисциплин.

**Ключевые слова:** стихотворные произведения, грамматические категории числа и падежа русских субстантивов, эстетические ресурсы грамматики, особенность версификации



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## Introduction

The study into the morphological category of number and case of nouns remains one of the many complex problems of Russian grammar. This research adopts the position of G.I. Panova [Panova, 2010, p. 98, pp. 110-111], who conceptualizes the number of nouns as a semantic category possessing the features of reflectiveness, obligatoriness, and inflectionality, thereby according it a key role in the language's structural organization<sup>1</sup>. The case of nouns is an obligatory morphosyntactic category that is both inflectional and semantic, with distinct structural significance<sup>2</sup>.

The analytical approach adopted herein, which examines aesthetic manifestations in grammatical structures such as nominal number and case, draws upon the foundational work of linguist G.A. Khairutdinova. According to the researcher, studying this problem requires the use of a comprehensive integrative approach. Linguistically embodied aesthetic resources are defined as units within a literary text that are aesthetically potent. Their impact is realized when the reader experiences profound spiritual delight, a form of pleasure derived primarily from aesthetic appreciation [Khairutdinova, 2013, p. 280].

The aim of the study is to identify the features of versification in poetic works realized through various grammatical forms of noun number and case.

## Literature review

The form of artistic speech – both poetic and prosaic – can be interpreted in terms of analyzing the aesthetic properties of linguistic units, including morphological means. Many scholars note the validity of this approach when studying poetic speech in particular. According to M.L. Gasparov's model, the rhythmic system of modern Russian poetry operates on the principle of a multi-layered hierarchy of phonological prominence. Within the operation of this system, each successive element generates a degree of rhythmic anticipation. The resulting aesthetic effect, he argues, stems precisely from the subsequent confirmation or violation of this expectation [Gasparov, 1974, p. 17].

Considering the basic concepts as well as the general laws of the organization of the Russian poem, M.L. Gasparov states that a poem is speech divided into relatively short segments. In a poem, this division into segments is obligatory, uniformly defined for all readers: in modern verse, this is usually expressed by the graphic division of the text into lines [Gasparov, 1974, p. 11]. It is also important to note that poetry is a rhythmically organized type of speech, while prose is an ordinary type of speech [Lotman, 1972, p. 30]. Furthermore, in poetic language, there exists a certain elementary device – the device of bringing two units closer together. In the area of euphony, modifications of this device are rhyme, assonance and alliteration [Yakobson, 1987, pp. 299–300].

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<sup>1</sup> Panova, G.I. 2010. *Morphology of the Russian Language: Encyclopedic Dictionary-Reference Book*. Moscow, URSS. P. 98.

<sup>2</sup> Panova, G.I. 2010. *Morphology of the Russian Language: Encyclopedic Dictionary-Reference Book*. Moscow, URSS. Pp. 110–111.

Analysis of works that examine the uniqueness of the language of poetic works allows us to assert that poetic speech is a complex, rhythmically organized system of highlighting syllables, feet, etc. At the same time, features such as **rhyme** and **rhythm** are of particular importance. In terms of the perception of this form of speech, they are primarily associated with certain aesthetic expectations and taste assessments of the recipient. Therefore, in the next part of our research, we will turn to a more detailed consideration of these versification means.

From the point of view of describing the uniqueness of a poetic text, let us first consider the concept of rhyme. O.S. Akhmanova believes that rhyme is the repetition of more or less similar sound combinations at the ends of poetic lines are symmetrically located parts of poetic lines; in Russian classical versification, the main feature of rhyme is the coincidence of stressed vowels. The researcher writes about the possibility of distinguishing various types of rhymes: banal, rich, poor, verbal, pun-based, etc.<sup>1</sup>. V.E. Kholshchevnikov believes that the poetry of most peoples is characterized by the predominance of end consonances. This is explained by the fact that consonance at the end of a metrical line, before a pause, is heard much more distinctly than at the beginning or middle; thus, the rhythmic structure and sound repetition of consonance or assonance at the end of the line reinforce and enhance each other more than consonance or assonance at the beginning of the line [Kholshchevnikov, 2002, p. 86]. Of all sound repetitions, rhyme is the most noticeable and regular. Rhyme has both phonic significance, like any sound repetition, and metrical significance denoting the boundaries of a metrical series, a verse [Kholshchevnikov, 2002, pp. 84–85]. V.P. Moskvina believes that rhyme in the narrow understanding of the term is a type of paronomasia that serves a verse-marking function and represents the consonance or assonance of two words at the end of a verse. In a broad understanding, within poetic architecture, rhyme serves as an organizing principle by creating phonetic echoes at predefined prosodic boundaries. This technique structurally unifies discrete units, shaping the overall stanzaic form<sup>2</sup>.

Many scholars have written about the significance of rhythm as an important element of versification. According to O.S. Akhmanova, rhythm is an equable alternation of acceleration and deceleration, tension and relaxation, length and brevity, similarity and difference in speech<sup>3</sup>.

Of particular interest to us is the position of L.A. Novikov who points out that rhythm can express of the aesthetic component of the meaning of an artistic work [Novikov, 2001, p. 51].

V.E. Kholshchevnikov argues that the alternation of strong and weak syllables – that is, the nature of the feet – plays a key role in shaping poetic rhythm. However, the meter of a verse is determined not only by the type of feet, but also by their number, i.e., the length of the line. The most versatile and widely used meter in Russian poetry proved to be iambic tetrameter, which was employed for a broad range of genres – from solemn odes and love poems to narrative verse and epigrams<sup>4</sup>. V.P. Moskvina, in his characterization of the rhythm of a poetic work, adheres to the traditional point of view. He believes that rhythm is the equable alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables in the flow of speech. Rhythm transforms the meter, tempering the categorical nature of its demands<sup>5</sup>.

### Materials and methods

Analysis of poetic texts reveals that the aesthetic potential of nominal morphological categories may be examined through a multi-faceted framework. This framework encompasses the manifestation of aesthetic categories, the construction of textual imagery and compositional

<sup>1</sup> Akhmanova, O.S. 1966. Dictionary of Linguistic Terms. Moscow, Soviet Encyclopedia. Pp. 587-590.

<sup>2</sup> Moskvina, V.P. 2007. Expressive Means of Modern Russian Speech. Tropes and Figures. Terminological Dictionary. Rostov-on-Don, Phoenix Publishing House. P. 652.

<sup>3</sup> Akhmanova, O.S. 1966. Dictionary of Linguistic Terms. Moscow, Soviet Encyclopedia. P. 388.

<sup>4</sup> Kholshchevnikov V.E. 2002. Osnovy stikhovedeniya: Russkoe stikhoslozhenie [Fundamentals of Prosody: Russian Versification]. St. Petersburg, Publ. Filologicheskii fakul'tet SPbGU; Moscow, Publ. Akademiya, 208 p.

<sup>5</sup> Moskvina, V.P. 2007. Expressive Means of Modern Russian Speech. Tropes and Figures. Terminological Dictionary. Rostov-on-Don, Phoenix Publishing House. P. 642.



structure, and the principles governing versification [Zhang, 2018, p. 182]. This article addresses a notably underexplored dimension of poetics – the direct contribution of nominal number and case to the realization of rhyme and rhythm. Its objective is to systematically examine and categorize specific instances where these grammatical forms function as constitutive elements of a poem's sound structure. The methodology integrates descriptive and analytical, semantic and stylistic, and distributive and quantitative approaches. For the purposes of this study, a digital corpus was constructed from 20th-century Russian poetry available in the National Corpus of the Russian Language<sup>1</sup>. The subsequent analysis engages with about a thousand discrete units of analysis derived from this collection.

## Results and discussion

This study demonstrates that the aesthetic functions of nominal case and number categories can be effectively assessed using poetic speech theory as a robust analytical tool, a conclusion substantiated by the gathered evidence. The fact is that the realization of the aesthetic possibilities of the grammatical categories under study is often determined by versification goals.

The initial phase of our examination concerns the contribution of specific linguistic features to the formation of poetic **rhyme**. This objective is commonly realized through plural forms, which are categorized into two types: a) variant morphological forms and b) forms that constitute a deviation from standard grammatical conventions. The most frequently encountered variant noun forms functioning as versification devices include plural variants, double (or correlative) forms, and archaic lexical units.

Let us begin with variant plural forms. For example, in B. Kornilov's poem “Samson”, the plural form *боцмана* (*boatsmana* – boatswains), which has the stylistic label “specialist” and is a variant of the neutral form *боцманы* (*boatsmany*)<sup>2</sup> used to create a rhyme with the word *стена* (*stena* – wall):

*Повинуясь боевым приказам,  
на перроне черная стена –  
то матросы выстроились разом,  
в дудки засвистели боцмана...*

The following poetic passage utilizes the colloquial variant “бухгалтера” (*bukhgaltera* – accountants) contrasting with the normative plural form “бухгалтеры” (*bukhgaltery*) in standard usage<sup>3</sup>, which creates consonance at the end of the line:

*Во имя человечества – пора,  
Необходимо для целей природы,  
Чтоб у кормила – вы, бухгалтеря.* (B. Slutsky. “The Reckoning Clerks”)

Stylistically marked variants of polysemous words possessing distinct plural realizations – termed double plurals – may serve comparable aesthetic purposes. In the subsequent illustration, the plural form *сыны* (*syny* – sons) of the lexeme *сын* (*syn*) is deployed for rhyming purposes. This phenomenon represents a conscious linguistic innovation, whereby *сыны* adopts the semantic function of denoting sons in a family context – a function which the standard plural *сыновья* (*synovya*) traditionally holds:

*Мне бы надо отправиться в снежную ночь  
В неизведанный край тишины,  
Когда спит моя мать, когда спит моя дочь,  
И жена моя спит, и сыны.* (D. Samoilov. “The bright-horned midnight hangs over the earth...”)

<sup>1</sup> Russian National Corpus. 2003 – 2025. URL: <http://www.ruscorpora.ru/> (accessed: 01.09.25).

<sup>2</sup> Graudina, L.K., Itskovich, V.A., Katlinskaya, L.P. 2004. Grammatical Correctness of Russian Speech: Stylistic Dictionary of Variants. Moscow, AST, Astrel. P. 164.

<sup>3</sup> Graudina, L.K., Itskovich, V.A., Katlinskaya, L.P. 2004. Grammatical Correctness of Russian Speech: Stylistic Dictionary of Variants. Moscow, AST, Astrel. P. 164.

The analysis of our material revealed that archaic plural forms are often used to create sound repetitions at the end of corresponding rhythmic groups. The subsequent excerpt employs the archaic form *дерева* (*dereva* – trees) to fulfill a prosodic requirement, utilizing this historical variant as a rhyming device where the conventional *деревья* (*derevya* – trees) would not suffice:

*Как выговаривал слова,  
Какие знают **дерева**,  
Животные и птицы,  
А человеческую речь  
Всегда старался приберечь  
На лучшие страницы.* (V. Shalamov. “The Atomic Poem”)

The following textual example demonstrates the less common phenomenon of grammatically non-normative plural forms being employed for metrical purposes: the nominative plural *офицера* (*ofitsera* – officers), which has been documented as incorrect in linguistic scholarship, appears in place of the standard form *офицеры* (*ofitsery*) [Avilova et al., 1982, p. 498–499]:

*Мне видится и сегодня  
то, что я видел **вчера**:  
вот восходят на сходни  
худые **офицера**,...  
плывут, плывут.* (B. Slutsky. “The Thirty”)

The research identifies two principal categories of case forms functioning in rhyme construction: a) variant morphological realizations and b) forms exhibiting grammatical deviation.

We begin by examining variant case forms. As established in morphological studies, a subset of first-declension masculine nouns exhibits divergent genitive singular endings, alternating between *-a* (*-я*) and *-y* (*-ю*). These variant forms primarily occur with mass nouns expressing partitive semantics and abstract lexical items. Thus, in the following text fragment, the variant genitive singular form *чаю* (*tchayu* – tea) characteristic primarily of colloquial speech is used to create consonances at the end of the line [Avilova et al., 1982, p. 486–487]:

*Баю-баю-баю-баю,  
Ты уже напился **чаю**,...  
Баю-баю-баю-бай.* (I. Selvinsky. “Lullaby”)

Poets frequently leverage the alternants of the instrumental case (second declension) as a strategic prosodic resource for shaping the architecture of their verse. For example, in the following fragment of a poetic text, the form *работою* (*rabotoyu* – work) is used instead of the normative word form *работой* (*rabotoy* – work)<sup>1</sup>:

*На складе я **работаю**  
Вокзал не вдалеке.  
Я занята **работою**  
Усердно в уголке.* (E. Kropivnitsky. “The Manager”)

The research reveals that these disyllabic endings are now stylistically stratified. Their strong association with poetic texts stems from their preservation in formal written language [Avilova et al., 1982, p. 489], whereas journalistic style reflects a diachronic shift, having widely adopted the *-ой* endings<sup>2</sup>.

Singular prepositional case alternants likewise function as a morphological resource for rhyme. This prosodic strategy is demonstrated in M. Ayzenberg's verse; the poet's selection of the

<sup>1</sup> Graudina, L.K., Itskovich, V.A., Katlinskaya, L.P. 2004. Grammatical Correctness of Russian Speech: Stylistic Dictionary of Variants. Moscow, AST, Astrel. Pp. 190 – 191.

<sup>2</sup> Graudina, L.K., Itskovich, V.A., Katlinskaya, L.P. 2004. Grammatical Correctness of Russian Speech: Stylistic Dictionary of Variants. Moscow, AST, Astrel. Pp. 190 – 191.



non-neutral *в отпуску* (*v otpusku* – on vacation) over the standard *в отпуске* (*v otpuske*) is a deliberate maneuver to secure a precise masculine rhyme<sup>1</sup>:

*Кто расходится под вечер,  
кто гуляет в **отпуску**,  
кто свою, безумный, лечит  
семинарами **тоску**...* (“A person is cunningly arranged...”)

Plural case form variations systematically serve poetic sound patterning. S. Cherny's “V usadbe” (“In the Estate”) exemplifies this technique through the implementation of the colloquial genitive plural *помидор* (*potidor* – tomatoes), diverging from standard *помидоров* (*potidorov*) to create terminal sound repetition<sup>2</sup>:

*За столом в таком же роде  
Деликатный дамский **хор**:  
О народе, о погоде,  
О пюре из **помидор**...*

Archaic case forms of nouns also function as a means of versification. Thus, in the poem “Variatsii” (“Variations”) the archaic nominative singular form *телятя* (*telyatya* – calves) is used to create consonances at the end of the line:

*На двух маток сил не **тратя**,  
Наподобие **тели**,  
Будь **телятиной**, **телятя**, –  
Ай, люли. (G. Obolduyev)*

The subsequent poetic illustration demonstrates how the archaic dative singular *небеси* (*nebesi* – skies) serves a verse-structuring function by establishing a masculine rhyme:

*Гроб выстеливается пурпуровым аксамитом –  
Почетъ царская  
отходящему  
**к небеси**,  
И в грядущее  
Вычеканивается  
по плитам:*

*«Князь великий и самодержец всея **Руси**».* (D. Andreev. “The Afterlife of Ivan III”)

Sound repetition at the end of poetic lines is also ensured through archaic plural case forms. In the poetic verse presented below, the obsolete morphological form *депев* (*derev* – trees) replaces contemporary *деревьев* (*derevyev*) to fulfill specific verse-structuring requirements:

*Как темно сейчас среди **дерев**,  
Дальний грай доносится до слуха,  
Гаснет свет, за лесом **догорев**.* (B. Poplavsky. “The winter glade is quiet and full of snow...”)

In Anna Akhmatova's poems, there are also similar examples:

*Нет, и не под чуждым небосводом  
И не под защитой чуждых **крыл**,  
Я была тогда с моим народом*

*Там, где мой народ, к несчастью, **был**.* (“So it wasn't for nothing that we shared our troubles...”)

Word forms representing a deviation from the grammatical norm are less common. The poem “Pod porogom” (“Under the threshold”) by M. Tsvetaeva incorporates the grammatically unconventional form *разов* (*razov* – times) as a stylistically motivated form, substituting the standard genitive plural *раз* (*raz*):

<sup>1</sup> Graudina, L.K., Itskovich, V.A., Katlinskaya, L.P. 2004. Grammatical Correctness of Russian Speech: Stylistic Dictionary of Variants. Moscow, AST, Astrel. P. 196.

<sup>2</sup> Graudina, L.K., Itskovich, V.A., Katlinskaya, L.P. 2004. Grammatical Correctness of Russian Speech: Stylistic Dictionary of Variants. Moscow, AST, Astrel. Pp. 182–183.

*Раз да раз – пять **разов**:*

*Перед Богом – пять **годов**.*

Adopting a methodological approach that examines number and case forms through their direct prosodic impact allows for the discernment of grammatical patterns that are strategically employed for **rhythmic objectives**.

Plural noun forms existing as stylistic variants – whether through contextual specialization or quantitative distribution – serve as a vital stylistic resource for poets establishing rhythmic patterning. For example, the use of the colloquial plural form *свитера* (*svitera* – sweaters) in one of O. Berggolts's poems allows for the realization of the rhythmic features of amphibrach as a trisyllabic meter considered grammatical unit also contributes to creating a rhyme<sup>1</sup>:

*А сколько посылок приходит с утра  
сюда, в ленинградские части!*

*Как пахнут и варежки, и **свитера**  
забытым покоем и счастьем... (“...I will talk with you today...”)*

In the following text fragment, the less frequent plural form *года* (*goda* – years) is used compared to the word form *годы* (*gody* – years)<sup>2</sup>. The choice of grammatical form is determined by the iamb – a disyllabic meter with the second stressed syllable in the foot:

*Прошли **года**, но мир пространства крепок,  
И у пространства память так свежа,  
Как будто там, вверху, воздушный слепок*

*Пропавшего навеки этажа.* (I. Elagin. “Here stood a house. And there was a poplar. No house now...”)

Archaic plural forms of nouns also participate in creating the rhythmic organization of a poetic text. Thus, in the following example, the archaic plural form *снеги* (*snegi* – snows) [Avilova et al., 1982, p. 497] is used instead of the word form *снега* (*sneга*) to realize a tetrameter trochee:

*Принакрыли в чистом поле  
**Снеги** белую кровать.* (N. Zarudin. “Kuban Song”)

In V. Bryusov's poem “Домовоу” (“Домовоу”), the outdated plural form *томы* (*tomy* – volumes) is employed instead of the normative *тома* (*toma*) [Avilova et al., 1982, p. 497] which is instrumental in forming the iambic tetrameter:

*В земной толпе – я темный дом,  
Где **томы**, тени, сны, портреты;  
Эдгаров Янек – я; за льдом –  
Ток лавы, памятью прогретый.*

Plural forms that represent a deviation from the grammatical norm are less common. Thus, the non-normative plural form of the noun *черепы* (*cherepy* – skulls) instead of the normative word form *черепа* (*cherepa*) [Avilova et al., 1982, p. 498] is used in B. Sadovskoy's poem which ensures the rhythmic inertia of the iambic tetrameter:

*Была пора: сюда на бой  
Текли за половцами обры,  
И долго здесь в траве сухой  
Белели **черепы** и ребры.* (“The ornate aircraft hums...”)

Within this direction of our analysis, the functioning of case forms of nouns that participate in ensuring the rhythmic organization of a poetic text should also be considered.

The conducted research has shown that variant case forms of nouns used in a certain sphere of speech activity are most often employed for this purpose. Among singular forms, two cases are noted: instrumental and prepositional. Thus, in one of S. Petrov's works “May burst forth in all its

<sup>1</sup> The grammatical unit in question also contributes to the creation of a rhyme.

<sup>2</sup> Graudina, L.K., Itskovich, V.A., Katlinskaya, L.P. 2004. Grammatical Correctness of Russian Speech: Stylistic Dictionary of Variants. Moscow, AST, Astrel. P. 164.



glory, and the verdure surged up...”, the variant instrumental singular form *массою* (*massoyu* – mass) instead of the normative word form *массой* (*massoy*) is used to realize a pentameter anapest as a metrical size:

*А потом по немому, как месяц, условью,  
замыкая в круг запахов тени и день,  
темнолистой, ночною, горчащую кровью  
хлынет темною **массою** в окна сирень.*

The analysis of our materials confirms the observation of L.K. Graudina who notes that disyllabic instrumental case forms of nouns of the second substantive declension, such as *весною* (*vesnoyu* – spring) are quite widely used in modern poetic speech as a versification means [Graudina, 1980, p. 184].

Variant prepositional case forms are also used for a similar versification purpose. For example, in the following fragment of a poetic text with the size of a tetrameter anapest, the author uses the colloquial variant prepositional singular form *терему* (*teremu* – part of buildings at the top) [Graudina, 1980, p. 197] with the preposition *в* (*v* – in) instead of the analytical word form *в тереме* (*v tereme* – inside):

*Иль всё та же и там разостлалась равнина  
Безответных на клеток курганов-полей,  
И о витязе светлом не легче кручина  
**В терему** заповедном царевне моей? (N. Klyuev. “In Separation”)*

Among plural forms, two cases are also used to ensure the rhythmic organization of the text: genitive and instrumental. Thus, in V. Ivanov's poem “Aspekty” (“Aspects”) the realization of the iambic pentameter is facilitated, among other things, by the use of the genitive plural form *межей* (*mezhey* – boundaries) which has a colloquial stylistic coloring [Graudina, 1980, p. 187] instead of the normative form *меж* (*mezh*):

*В те дни, когда плясал в Париже Скиф  
И прорицал, мятежным Вакхом болен,  
Что нет **межей**, что хаос прав и волен.*

As we can see, of the means to ensure the rhythmic inertia of the iambic pentameter with pyrrhic is the use of the variant (colloquial) instrumental plural form *лошадями* (*loshadyami* – horses) [Avilova et al., 1982, p. 495] instead of the normative *лошадьми* (*loshad'mi*).

Variant forms that are outdated in modern Russian also participate in creating the rhythmic organization of a poetic text. The analysis of our material shows that among singular forms, archaic forms of the nominative, dative, prepositional, and vocative cases are noted. Thus, in S. Yesenin's poem “Pero ne byl'nitsa...” (“The pen is not a tale...”) the outdated nominative singular form *мати* (*mati* – mother) is used to create a dimeter iamb:

*Служи, чернильница,  
Лесной канон.  
О **мати** вечная,  
Святой покров.  
Любовь заречная –  
Без слов.*

The vocative case form *сыне* (*syne* – son) along with other linguistic units participates in the rhythmic organization of a trochee:

*И мои степные рати  
В правый бой благослови...»  
Поп ему: «Послушай, **сыне!**  
По степям копытный звон. (D. Samoilov. “The End of Pugachev”)*

Plural archaic forms show greater activity compared to singular forms. Thus, in one of V. Khlebnikov's works, the rhythmic organization of the verse (trimeter amphibrach) is achieved by the use of the outdated genitive plural form *друзгов* (*drugov* – friends):

...Чтоб разом

Был освещен неясный разум,

И топот победы Сибири синих подков,

И дерзкая **другов** ватага. (“The Blue Shackles”)

In the following example, the archaic dative plural form *деревам* (*derevam* – trees) is used to realize the rhythm of a trimeter anapest:

Гулко дятел стучит по пустым

**деревам**, не стремясь достучаться. (I. Brodsky. “In the Mustard Forest”)

The rhythmic inertia of the iambic pentameter with pyrrhics in B. Poplavski's poem “Dukh muziki” (“The spirit of music”) is formed, among other things, thanks to the use of the archaic instrumental plural form *крылами* (*krylami* – wings):

На зовы труб, над пропастью авгурной,

С **крылами** ярких флагов на плечах,

Прошли танцоры поступью бравурной,

Как блеск ракет, блуждающих в ночах.

According to the results of our analysis, word forms representing a deviation from the grammatical norm are less common. Thus, in the example below, the erroneous genitive plural form *мечт* (*mecht* – dreams) is used. The use of the word for *мечт* is motivated by the rhythmic organization of the verse – iambic pentameter with pyrrhics:

Уста горят блаженным возделеньем.

От **ярких мечт** – пречистая ограда! –

избавлен я земли произвольным. (A. Ginger. “The Bosom”)

## Conclusions

In our research into number forms as means of versification, we have analyzed their role in creating the rhyme and rhythm of a poetic text. It has been revealed that plural forms are most often used for this purpose. Among them, variant forms (archaic or characteristic of a certain style, sphere of communication) and double forms are distinguished. Furthermore, word forms representing a deviation from the grammatical norm have been noted. A systemic investigation has revealed the prosodic functions of case forms in establishing line-end sound patterns and rhythmic flow, wherein both variant realizations and norm-deviant forms demonstrate operational activity. This investigation of number and case of noun morphology in poetic contexts confirms the efficacy of our analytical approach in revealing the aesthetic capacities of grammatical forms. The findings enable a structured elucidation of the aesthetic dimensions characterizing these categorical distinctions.

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