

## Translation Strategies for Speech Features of Characters in Fictional Texts (a Case Study of Speech of Upper Class Representatives)

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**Introduction.** The paper analyses different means used for conveying the phonetic features of the speech of upper class representatives in English fiction, in particular in the works of Charles Dickens and John Galsworthy. The author focuses on functions of phonographic stylisation of the aristocratic speech and discusses the techniques and strategies for rendering this phenomenon into the Russian language.

**Methodology and sources.** When selecting examples for analysis, we used the method of corpus analysis, which made it possible to establish the frequency of using a particular phonographic means, as well as the continuous sampling method used to analyse a specific technique of phonographic stylisation. Methods of linguistic, sociolinguistic and translation analysis were used to analyse specific examples of phonographic stylisation and their translations into the Russian language. The novels by Charles Dickens and John Galsworthy were used to carry out the research.

**Results and discussion.** When translating the speech of upper class representatives into the Russian language, phonographic means can be rendered only in those cases when they perform a parody function. Otherwise, phonographic means are not conveyed but might be substituted or compensated by lexical and syntactical means, which can be considered a natural consequence because of the difference in the traditions of representing the speech of aristocrats in English and Russian literary traditions.

**Conclusion.** Phonographic means and phonographic stylisation are the most important component of the artistic representation of character's speech in general, and the speech of upper class representatives in particular. Consequently, this phenomenon is a multifaceted linguistic problem in the theory of translation. This study outlines the main directions of analysis of phonographic stylisation while rendering the speech of aristocrats, but this problem is far from being solved. Other cases of using phonographic stylisation may be the subject of further research into contrasting and translation aspects.

**Key words:** phonographic stylisation, translation, speech of upper class representatives, stylistics.

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## Стратегии перевода речевых характеристик персонажа художественного текста (на материале речи представителей высших слоев общества)

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**Введение.** В статье рассматриваются различные средства изображения фонетических особенностей речи представителей высших слоев общества в художественных произведениях, в частности в работах Ч. Диккенса и Дж. Голсуорси. Автор анализирует способы и стратегии передачи на русский язык фонографической стилизации речи аристократии с точки зрения функций, выполняемых ею в тексте произведений.

**Методология и источники.** При отборе примеров для исследования применялся метод корпусного анализа, который позволил установить частотность использования конкретного фонографического средства, а также метод сплошной выборки, используемый для анализа конкретного средства фонографической стилизации. При рассмотрении примеров фонографической стилизации и их переводов применялись методы лингвистического, социолингвистического и переводческого анализа. Материалом исследования послужили произведения Чарльза Диккенса и Джона Голсуорси.

**Результаты и обсуждения.** При переводе на русский язык речи представителей высших классов общества фонографические средства передать можно только в тех случаях, когда они выполняют пародийную функцию. В остальном фонографические средства не передаются, а только компенсируются в отдельных случаях за счет лексических и синтаксических средств, что можно считать закономерным следствием различия традиций изображения речи аристократов в англоязычной и русскоязычной литературных традициях.

**Заключение.** Фонографические средства и фонографическая стилизация составляют важнейший компонент художественного изображения персонажной речи в целом, и речи представителей высших слоев общества, в частности. Соответственно, это явление представляет собой многогранную лингвистическую проблему в теории перевода. В настоящем исследовании намечены основные направления анализа фонографической стилизации в аспекте перевода на примере речи аристократов, однако эта проблема далеко не исчерпана. Предметом дальнейших исследований в контрастивном и переводческом аспектах могут стать другие случаи использования фонографической стилизации.

**Ключевые слова:** фонографическая стилизация речи, перевод, речь высших слоев общества, стилистика.

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**Introduction.** There are a lot of different means that are used for conveying features of the speech of upper class representatives in English and Russian fiction. They can be found on various language levels: phonetic, lexical and syntactical. The formal and functional features of such

means, the frequency and prevailing traditions of their use in different national literature and different genres have become the subject of a comparative analysis. The strategies for conveying such means in contemporary translations have also changed. If until the 1990s, phonographic means were conveyed to the Russian language mainly by means of compensation of other language levels, then in translations of the last three decades, the means of graphic representation of the features of speech are increasingly used in translated literature.

A comparative analysis of the speech features of the English and Russian aristocracy in fictional texts of the 19th century was carried out in the dissertation of Iu. Kvartovkina [1]. The main research findings show that the speech of the upper class representatives in Great Britain and that in Russia has a lot of similarities. In both languages it is a literary standard, each having country specific social characteristics. These elements indicate personal development, upbringing, education and lifestyle (occupation, pastime, etc.) [1, p. 5]. The dominant features of this language are: the use of foreign languages; abstract vocabulary and an extensive vertical context (allusions and quotes); bookish and legal vocabulary; hunting vocabulary; “theatricality of speech” (underestimation and overestimation); a special “manner of speech” and its “phonic parameters” [1, p. 4–5]. Similar speech features are also characteristic of the speech of the Russian aristocracy. According to Iu. Kvartovkina, ‘softness, tranquility, clear articulation, good speech delivery, and a gentle voice’ are commonly found in the speaking manner of Russian aristocrats. At the lexical level, it is characterised by the use of the terminology of politics, hunting, card games, horseback riding, and religion. Figurality, “theatricality”, flamboyance and euphemism usage are also peculiar for the upper class speech. This paper also gives a brief description of the phonetic features used in the speech by upper class representatives in Great Britain. At the phonetic level, the speech of aristocracy is characterised by a clear articulation of sounds and received pronunciation, as well as by a tendency to monophthongisation of vowels. Contracted forms (*d’ye*, *’pon*, *’tis* and others) are used in situations of friendly or informal communication. The research shows that they are more commonly found in the second half of the 19th century [1, p. 6]. However, a similar characteristic of the phonetic aspect of the speech used by Russian aristocrats has not been revealed in her thesis. This appears to be quite logical, since phonographic means for depicting speech of the upper classes have not been ever used in the Russian literary tradition.

The speech characteristics of upper class representatives proposed in the work cited above seem to be tentative to some extent. In addition to the listed features, it can also be marked by, for example, special lexical and grammatical minimalism and at the same time by numerous repetitions and parasitic filler words, which have been repeatedly noted by researchers of the language of English literature [2, 3] (for example, the speech of Barnacle Junior in Dickens' novel *Little Dorrit*). The phonographic components of the stylisation for the speech of aristocrats deserve special attention. In addition to the marked forms indicated above, the stylisation is also achieved through: sound stretching, which is characteristic of the upper-class speech; the assimilation of sounds in fluent speech; the union of words into single phonetic-intonational complexes, which is phonographically transmitted by word junctures, etc. When translating vernacular or dialectic speech into the Russian language, there exist some means to depict a functionally equivalent Russian vernacular. However, when translating the speech of the aristocrats there are no such matches. When the speech of the upper class representatives is translated, one can convey only characteristic formulas of politeness, addresses and treatment as well as specific vocabulary inherent only to noble people [2].

**Methodology and sources.** When selecting examples for analysis, we used the method of corpus analysis, which made it possible to establish the frequency of using a particular phonographic means, as well as the continuous sampling method used to analyse a specific technique of phonographic stylisation. Methods of linguistic, sociolinguistic and translation analysis were used to analyse specific examples of phonographic stylisation and their translations into the Russian language. The novels by Charles Dickens and John Galsworthy were used to carry out the research.

Phonographic means, being an important component of representing the speech of the aristocracy, are the most difficult to convey in translation. They are widely used by numerous novelists as they are traditional markers of oral speech, such as *gad* or “How de do?”. These means are also multifunctional and are used both for the stylisation of vernacular and dialectic speech and for the stylisation of the upper-class speech. Such markers are most often not preserved in translation and even omitted:

1. “How de do?” [4, p. 337].  
“Как поживаете?” [5, p. 344].
2. “How de do, sir?” [6, p. 86].  
“Как ваше здоровье, сэр?” [7, p. 257].
3. “Oh! How de do, Miss Dombey?” [8, p. 284].  
“О, как поживаете, мисс Домби?” [9, p. 498].
4. “How de do, John?” [10, p. 26].  
“Как поживаешь, Джон?” [11, p. 43].

However, there have been some attempts to convey this marker using phonographic means of the Russian language. While translating John Galsworthy's novel “In Chancery”, the translator tried to use these devices to achieve the same effect:

- “How de do? How de do? ‘Xcuse me getting’ up” [12, p. 407].  
“Здрасте, здрасте! Извините, я не встаю” [13, p. 250].

However, it seems that the vernacular used in the translation does not correspond to the register of Soames' speech as it sounds too informal and cannot characterise the given situations of speech acts.

The features of the representations of the upper class speech have been repeatedly studied. The scholars use various novels written by Charles Dickens to identify these particular features. When portraying the speech of aristocrats, Charles Dickens uses a wide range of phonographic stylisation techniques. The most striking example is the speech of Lord Frederick Verisopht in Dickens' novel “*Nicolas Nickleby*”. First of all, it is the extension of sounds represented graphically: extension of [æ] – *pla-an, ma-an, wa-a-x, pa-ack, ba-a-d*; extension of [e] – *deyvle, playsure, nayver*; etc. Aleksandra Krivtsova did not convey this specific feature in her translation:

1. “Otherwise the most knowing card in the pa-ack, Miss Nickleby,” said Lord Frederick Verisopht” [4, p. 235].  
“Иными словами – лучшая карта в колоде, мисс Никльби, – сказал лорд Фредерик Верисофт” [5, p. 296].

2. “Well,’ said Lord Frederick, sipping his first glass of port, ‘if this is a discounting dinner, all I have to say is, deyvle take me, if it wouldn’t be a good pla-an to get discount every day” [4, p. 237].

“Ну-с, – сказал лорд Фредерик, смакуя первую рюмку портвейна, – если этот обед дан по случаю учета векселя, я могу только сказать – черт меня побери! – что хорошо было бы учитывать их ежедневно” [5, p. 299].

3. “Then my ears did not deceive me, and it’s not wa-a-x work,’ said his lordship. ‘How de do? I’m very happy” [4, p. 337]

“Значит, слух меня не обманул и это не восковая фигура, – сказал его лордство. – Как поживаете? Счастлив познакомиться. Как поживаете?” [5, p. 344].

Such dropping of speech characteristics is undoubtedly not negligence. Actually, it is motivated by the fact that in the Russian literary tradition there are no similar or comparable phenomena. Russian writers of the 19th century did not use phonographic stylisation means to render the speech of the aristocracy. The main markers of speech of Russian aristocrats are lexical and syntactic features that are implicitly expressed. At the same time, given that the speech characteristics of the characters in Dickens’ novels are somewhat exaggerated, they might be compensated by lexical and syntactic means while translating. Attempts to convey Dickens’ phonographic stylisation to the Russian language lead to poor and unacceptable results. For example, Aleksandra Krivtsova and Evgeny Lann in their translation of ‘The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club’ written by Charles Dickens rendered such a feature peculiar to the speech of Angelo Cyrus Bantam:

“Welcome to Ba-ath, Sir. This is indeed an acquisition. Most welcome to Ba-ath, sir. It is long-very long, Mr. Pickwick, since you drank the waters. It appears an age, Mr. Pickwick. Re-markable!” [14, p. 3764]

“Добро пожаловать в Ба-ат, сэр. Вот это поистине приобретение. Еще раз добро пожаловать в Ба-ат, сэр. Давно, очень давно, мистер Пиквик, вы не бывали на здешних водах. Кажется, будто целый век прошел, мистер Пиквик. За-амечательно” [15, p. 35].

As we can see, the use of such a technique does not mean anything to the reader of the translation. The word *За-амечательно* sounds more like an accent or an impediment in the character’s speech, or even a Southerner’s speech, rather than a sign of aristocratic speech. This strategy is only partially motivated by the fact that Dickens in this case is parodying an aristocratic accent and imitating their speech. The Russian translation, in its turn, appears to also make readers smile. However, in this case there is no correspondence, in the terminology of Andrei Fedorov, ‘between the source text and the target text’.

Meletina Klyagina-Kondratieva in her translation of Dickens’ ‘Bleak House’ made an attempt to reproduce the phonographic stylisation of the speech of the ‘debilitated cousin’, but the result was also unsatisfactory:

“Debilitated cousin thinks – Country’s going – Dayvle – steeple-chase pace” [16, p. 604].

“Изнемогающий кузен полагает, что... стгана летит... во весь опог... к чегту на рога” [17, p. 371].

This is another ironic rendering of the upper class speech, but in the translation there appears a graphic representation of the sound rotation [p], which might indicate a speech defect rather than depict the speech of an aristocrat. In another case, the translator's attempt was more successful, she conveyed another characteristic sign attributable to aristocratic speech – the omission of some sounds and syllables:

“The debilitated cousin supposes he is 'normously rich fler.’” [16, p. 602].

“Изнемогающий кузен предполагает, что он "чу'овищно богатый с'бъект”” [17, p. 370].

The next example shows that the translator uses both techniques described above:

“They say of her that she has lately grown more handsome and more haughty. The debilitated cousin says of her that she's beauty nough – tsetup shopofwomen – but rather larming kind – remindingmanfact – inconvenient woman – who will getoutofbedandbawthstahlshment – Shakespeare” [16, p. 689].

“Изнемогающий кузен находит, что кгасоты у ней хватит... на це'ый магазин кгасоток... но от нее как-то не по себе... вгоде той неугомонной особы, что вскакивала с постели и бгодила по ночам... где-то у Шекспига” [17, p. 421].

The ‘dilapidated cousin’ combines words into phonetically monolithic segments, which are semantically incomplete utterances separated by pauses. This is a direct parody that exaggerates one of the characteristic features of aristocratic speech. When the character's speech is represented in fiction with defects, it might fulfill several functions: serve as a formal sign of a character's speech; indirectly indicate the specific features of the character (for example, stuttering and stammering often indirectly indicate insecurity, lack of confidence or indecision); be used to create comic situations, irony, sarcasm, etc. In this case, while reading the translation, the reader again hears first of all a burry person, a person who mispronounces [r] and [l], but not a representative of high society. However, in spite of the fact that the translation, or the target text, like the original, makes readers smile, the reasons for it are different.

Here is one more common technique used in literature and drama for portraying the speech of aristocrats. Dickens uses this technique to portray Lord Mutanhed's speech, replacing the sound [r] with the sound [w], and, as if intentionally, selects words with the sound [r] for this character:

“Gwacious heavens!" said his Lordship, 'I thought evewebody had seen the new mailcart; it's the neatest, pwettiest, gwacefullest thing that ever wan upon wheels. Painted wed, with a cweam piebald” [14, p. 381].

“Милосегдное небо! – сказал милорд. – Я думал, что все видели новую колясочку. Это пгостейшая, кгасивейшая, элегантейшая вещь, котогая когда-либо двигалась на колесах. Выкгашена в кгасный цвет, лошадь молочно-пегая” [15, p. 36].

Aleksandra Krivtsova and Evgeny Lann use the same technique in their translation as Melitina Klyagina-Kondratieva, although in this case, in the target text, this is primarily a defect in pronunciation, not related to the language of the aristocracy for the Russian reader. However, in some cases, Dickens reduces the satire to almost absurdity when he mechanically replaces [r] with [w], as, for instance, in the following example:

“And a little seat in fwont, with an iwon wail, for the dwiver,' added his Lordship” [14, p. 381].

Yet, in most cases, the phonetic features of the speech of upper class representatives are not reproduced in translation, as, for example, in the speech of Mr Mantalini, who replaces the sound [æ] with the sound [e] in the words *demd*, *demmit*, *demnition*, and the diphthong [ei] is substituted with the diphthong [ai] in the words *demnition*, *outrigeously*:

“If you will be odiously, demnebly, outrageously jealous, my soul,' said Mr Mantalini, 'you will be very miserable – horrid miserable – demnition miserable” [4, p. 206].

“Если ты будешь так отвратительно, дьявольски возмутительно ревнива, душа моя, – сказал мистер Манталини, – ты будешь очень несчастна... ужасно несчастна... дьявольски несчастна!” [5, p. 257].

These droppings have almost no effect on the overall impression of the translation, as Mr Mantalini's speech is full of bookish vocabulary, which characterises him as a representative of the upper classes.

**Results and discussion.** When translating the speech of upper class representatives into the Russian language, phonographic means can be rendered only in those cases when they perform a parody function. Otherwise, phonographic means are not conveyed but might be substituted or compensated by lexical and syntactical means, which can be considered a natural consequence because of the difference in the traditions of representing the speech of aristocrats in English and Russian literary traditions.

**Conclusion.** Phonographic means and phonographic stylisation are the most important component of the artistic representation of character's speech in general, and the speech of upper class representatives in particular. Consequently, this phenomenon is a multifaceted linguistic problem in the theory of translation. This study outlines the main directions of analysis of phonographic stylisation while rendering the speech of aristocrats, but this problem is far from being solved. Other cases of using phonographic stylisation may be the subject of further research into contrasting and translation aspects.

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