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# Linguopragmatic and Translatological Potential of Expressive Means in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*

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## Abstract

The article deals with the study of expressiveness phenomenon in literary translation. The aim of the study is to specify expressive means presented in the novel *The God of Small Things* after A. Roy and their translatological peculiarities as far as it concerns English-Russian translation. The study has revealed that in most contexts expressive means conveying axiological, emotional and cultural connotations reflect images which seem universal both for Indian and Russian cultures. In such case a translator manages to convey the expressive means in the TT and achieve the intended pragmatic effect. At the same time cultural and axiological components can undergo reduction as certain linguistic signs possess specific cultural connotations and are implied to provoke particular emotions and associations in representatives of the source linguoculture. Some reduction can be preconditioned by formal differences in the systems of the source language and the target language. The main research methods employed in the study are content and comparative analyses of the source and the target texts.

**Keywords:** literary translation, linguopragmatics, expressive means.

## 1. Introduction

One of the key issues of recent studies in translatology is exploring aesthetic, semiotic and linguocultural aspects of literary translation (Venuti, 1992, p. 5; Hickey, 2001, p. 49; Aixela, 1996, p. 52-54; Bassnett, 2002, p. 22; Milostivaya and Marchenko, 2014, p. 42). The current tendency fits into modern research agenda since any literary work conveys specific individual vision and form of its expression, along with factual explicit information. The reflection of expressiveness phenomenon has been viewed within the framework of linguistic and purely stylistic studies as well as in translatology, with a focus on means of realizing unique speech strategy of the author. It is only natural that this approach proves useful as it places the issue of expressive means and stylistic devices in another perspective, namely the potential to preserve the integrity of a literary text and manifest the author's intentions. The article explores the key expressive means capable of preserving unique architectonics of the novel *The God of Small Things* after A. Roy and their translatological peculiarities as far as it concerns English-Russian translation.

## 2. Theory and Methodology

From the theoretical viewpoint, this study stands at the crossroad of several notions: the concept of literary translation as "the process which transforms one semiotic entity into another" (Hatim and Mason, 1990, p. 105), and expressiveness as one of the relevant aesthetic and pragmatic linguistic categories as claimed by Arnold (1990), Kozhina (1993) and Vinogradov (1990).

Different semantic, lexical-semantic, syntactic and psycholinguistic categories are claimed to be based on expressive semantics of language units. Expressiveness reveals at every language level though the main body of expressive means is formed by lexical and phraseological means. Both oral and written communication feature expressive elements rendering pragmatic meaning. In literary texts this phenomenon actualizes their main function – the aesthetic one. We assume that the fundamentals of the notion are certain psychological patterns that, on the one hand, concern the expression of feelings and emotions by the speaker, and, on the other hand, the perception by the recipient. The linguistic mechanism of expressiveness involves a certain degree of deviation from a language norm.

According to Emirova (1988), expressiveness can be defined as a linguistic category resulting from actualization of axiological, figurative, emotional and intensity semes in the meaning of a language unit (p. 15). Intensity is viewed as a quantitative indicator of semantic content of a lexeme or an expression. Emotionality is a feature of a subject, the ability to experience emotions, convey all kind of feelings in action and express them. The axiological constituent reveals the attitude of a speaker towards the topic, i.e. positive or negative characteristic of a person, object or phenomenon registered in a word. The final component, the figurative one, expresses a more abstract or imaginative meaning than a literal one. The range of expressive means varies as regards languages and functional styles. But generally speaking, they can be specified at every language level – phonetic, morphological, lexical and syntactic – and represented by intensified units, neologisms, colloquial and slang words, stylistic devices, connotative morphological patterns, etc.

One of the key approaches to translation of expressive means in literary texts is the employment of an expressive equivalent that is capable of provoking the emotional reaction from a recipient of a target text (TT) similar to the reaction of a recipient of a source text (ST). In order to achieve it a translator uses a number of stylistic modifications which allow of preserving the intended communicative effect in TT. It is recommended to refer to analogous constructions if there are any, and in case there are none a translator is supposed to express the meaning in TT at the same stylistic level. The challenges arise in contexts conveying a meaning which is not registered in dictionary entries but comprehended by native speakers and evoking particular feelings and emotions. Such lexical units are “closely associated with specific cultural features and everyday life of native speakers” (Milostivaya and Marchenko, 2015, p. 435). In this case translation entails either the reduction of semes within a unit of translation or the expression of the meaning in an explicit way. It is admitted that “cultural empathy enables a person to navigate through various cultural borders and rigidities to comprehend diverse systems of cultural syntax and semantics” (Kumar, 2012, p. 229).

Methodologically, aiming at identifying the range of expressive means employed by A Roy in *The God of Small Things* and specifying the peculiarities of their English-Russian translation, we base our research on reflection, content, contextual and comparative analyses of the ST and the TT. The selected set of methods reveals similarities and differences as regards expressive means in the ST and the TT, and makes it possible to estimate the appropriateness and necessity of digressions made in the TT.

### **3. Analysis**

*The God of Small Things* (1997), which won the Man Booker Prize for Fiction in 1997, is a novel of Indian writer Arundhati Roy. The plot of the story centers round childhood experiences of

fraternal twins. A compelling story is interwoven with emotions and deep feelings conveyed by numerous stylistic devices and expressive means. The intensity of these means proves high enough to claim that they perform the text-forming function. Russian translation made by L. Motylev was published in 2005. The Russian version is presented in the text of the article in a transliterated way.

The preliminary analysis of 1680 contexts in the ST reveals that expressive means are mainly actualized at the lexical level in the form of synonymic and antonymic expressions, epithets, metaphors and neologisms (approximately 940 items). Syntactic expressive constructions – parcellation, ellipsis, chiasmus, anaphora, epiphora, parallelism – can be ranked second (approximately 820 items). At the phonetic level the author refers to alliteration and onomatopoeia (33 items). The graphic aspect of the text reveals expression through intentionally capitalized words, a different type or vertical layout on the page (47 items).

Thus, at the lexical level A. Roy (1998) coins an abundance of neologisms by means of affixal and prefixal formation: *re-Returned* (p. 9), *co-unfortunate and Ex-nun* (p. 45), *Man-less and Mulligan-less* (p. 45), *outdoorsy* (p. 13), *dinnerfull and dinnerless* (p. 116). There are instances of neologisms formed by null suffixation: *to Jolly Well Behave* (p. 150), *blooded on memories* (p. 12). Several lexemes were coined by word composition – *suddenshudder* (p. 15), *thunderdarkness* (p. 10), *carbreeze and daymoon* (p. 87), *the green-for-the-day* (p. 187), *dullthudding* (p. 7), *a furrywhirring and a sariflapping* (p. 6), *Estha-the-Accurate* (p. 217), *Thimble-drinker/ Coffin-cartwheeler* (p. 135). The major part of narration is presented on behalf of a child, so neologisms convey the leading literary function, i.e. the aesthetic one, and reflect a unique vision of a child. Hence there is a wide range of patterns to present in the TT.

The most frequent devices conveying expressiveness in the novel are metaphor and simile. Some of them tend to be extended. Thus, the idea of silence is presented through unexpected, bright and memorable images of a sponge, a bolt or a loss:

Silence filled the car *like a saturated sponge*. 'Washed-up' cut like a knife through a soft thing this was the trouble with families. Like invidious doctors, they just knew where it hurt (Roy, 1998, p. 68).

Salon mashiny, *kak gubka*, stal napityvat'sja molchaniem. Slovo "otzhivshim" sadanulo, kak nozh po mjakoti. S prosverkom solnca i sudorozhnym vzdohom. Vot v chem beda s blizkimi rodstvennikami. Kak vrachi-izvrashhency, oni znajut, gde samye bolnye mesta (Roy, 2005, p. 69).

The image employed by the author seems universal and can be expressed in the ST by an equivalent lexeme "gubka". The same concerns the following context: "Childhood tiptoed out. Silence slid in *like a bolt* (Roy, 1998, p. 303). – Detstvo na cypochkah vyshlo von. Bezmolvie voshlo v paz, *kak sterzhen zasova* (Roy, 2005, p. 304). As a rule the expressive construction is introduced by "like" and is later developed by other elements.

The idea of loss and misfortune serves as the leitmotif and is conveyed by a simile "like old roses on a breeze". It is noteworthy that in India, where the action takes place, rose is considered a divine flower. It is connected with elevated feelings and spiritual sphere. While in Russian culture it is first of all a symbol of beauty, eminence and dignity. The wording and the semantic content of the expression is more or less the same in all contexts – the smell of roses reminds the main character of unfortunate events and painful experiences.

By then Esthappen and Rahel had learned that the world had other ways of breaking men. They were already familiar with the smell. Sicksweet. *Like old roses on a breeze* (Roy, 1998, p. 11). – K tomu vremeni Jestappen i Rahel uzhe uspeli koe-čto uznat o sposobah lomki ljudej. Oni uspeli poznakomitsja s zapahom. Toshnotvornaja sladost. *Slovno ot staryh roz prineslo vetrom* (Roy, 2005, p. 12).

He had a tiffin carrier with tomato sandwiches. And an Eagle flask with an eagle. He had terrible pictures in his head. Rain. Rushing, inky water. And a smell. Sicksweet. *Like old roses on a breeze* (Roy, 1998, p. 18). – U nego byla s soboj korobka, nabitaja sandvichami s pomidorami. I Orlinaja fljazhka s orlom. A v golove kartiny odna huzhe drugoj. Dozhd. Stremitelnaja, chernilnaja voda. I zapah. Toshnotvornaja sladost. *Slovno ot staryh roz prineslo vetrom* (Roy, 2005, p. 19).

History's smell. *Like old roses on a breeze*. It would lurk forever in ordinary things. In coat hangers. Tomatoes. In the tar on roads. In certain colors (Roy, 1998, p. 28). – Zapah istorii. *Slovno ot staryh roz prineslo vetrom*. Teper ona neistrebimo budet tait'sja v samom obydenom. V veshalkah dlja odezhdy. V pomidorah. V ploskih pjatnah gudrona na shosse. V ottenkah nekotoryh cvetov (Roy, 2005, p. 29).

The image of roses is preserved in the TT though one should admit that the cultural seme conveying special relevance of these flowers in Indian culture is reduced. The expressiveness is secured by a similar syntactic pattern and a colloquial expression of comparison chosen by a translator – “slovno” (as if, similar to). The idea of something negative connected with roses can be traced in the choice of lexeme “smell”. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2016), it possesses the seme “an unpleasant odor”. The equivalent employed in the TT is “zapah” – the most general word in a synonymic paradigm which has neither negative nor positive connotations.

To Estha - steeped in *the smell of old roses*, blooded on memories of a broken man – the fact that something so fragile, so unbearably tender had survived, had been allowed to exist, was a miracle (Roy, 1998, p. 15). – Chudom pokazalsja Jeste, pogruzhennomu v *zapah staryh roz*, napitannomu pamjatju o perelomannom cheloveke, tot fakt, čto nechto stol hrupkoe, stol nevynosimo neznoe smoglo sohranitsja, imelo pravo na sushhestvovanie (Roy, 2005, p. 16).

Thus, in the context given above the seme of something unpleasant is not secured. Still the expressiveness can be compensated by numerous iterations of the simile in different contexts.

A few contexts feature intensification of expressive semes in the TT. As a rule it is preconditioned by the availability of a brighter image which corresponds to the one in the ST.

In the Hotel Sea Queen car park, the skyblue Plymouth *gossiped* with other, smaller cars. A *big lady* at a *small ladies'* party. Tailfins aflutter (Roy, 1998, p. 113). – Na stojanke u gostinicy «Morskaja koroleva» lazurnogo cveta «plimut» *shushukalsja i perefyrkivalsja* s drugimi, men'shimi mashinami. *Pyshnaja* dama v gostjah u damochek *poskromnee*. Tak i cheshut krylyshkami (Roy, 2005, p. 114).

The metaphoric lexeme “*gossiped*” is specified in the TT by two verbs “*shushukalsja*” (whispered secretively) and “*perefyrkivalsja*” (spoke very softly) which convey not only the figurative meaning but also create alliteration effect in Russian. The antonyms “big ladies” and “small ladies” figuratively referred to cars are also intensified with semes expressing “corpulent” and “delicate”

as regards the physical appearance. The intensification does not add any cultural shade and only develops the original image.

Now we take a close look at passages containing expressive means typical only of the English language, e.g. phrase epithets. Our observations suggest that their TT equivalents fail to preserve similar emotional potential and tend to be more explicit.

She lay in it in her yellow Crimplene bell-bottoms with her hair in a ribbon and her *Made-in-England go-go bag* that she loved (Roy, 1998, p. 10). – Ona lezhala v nem v svoih zheltyh krimplenyvuh brjuchkah klesh, so stjanutymi lentoj volosami, so svoej ljubimoj *stilnoj anglijskoj sumochkoj* (Roy, 2005, p. 11).

The translator expressed “Made-in-England go-go bag” as “*stilnoj anglijskoj sumochkoj*” (stylish English bag), so the semes of some exquisite thing produced in one the world fashion centers and a fashionable fancy or fad seem to be missing. The expressiveness has decreased as the axiological component is presented in an explicit way. The same omission takes place in contexts featuring stylistic convergence – a combination of a phrase epithet and capitalized words.

Mammachi played *a Welcome Home, Our Sophie Mol melody* on her violin. A cloying chocolate melody. Stickysweet, and meltybrown. Chocolate waves on a chocolate shore (Roy, 1998, p. 183). – Mammachi zaigrala na skripke *dobropozhalovatelnuju melodiju*. Pritornuju, shokoladnuju melodiju. Lipko-sladkuju, tjaguche-korichnevuju. Shokoladne volny, lizhushhie shokoladnyj bereg (Roy, 2005, p. 184).

The phrase epithet is substituted in the TT by a neologism “*dobropozhalovatelnuju*” denoting “welcoming”. The expressiveness of capitalized words and an address to a person is omitted. It is obvious that there is no unified translation strategy as regards this type of expressive means as in similar contexts they can be presented in the form of a sentence in inverted commas or without them:

Chacko, in *his What Happened to Our Man of the Masses? suit* and well-fed tie, led Margaret Kochamma and Sophie Mol triumphantly up the nine red steps like a pair of tennis trophies that he had recently won (Roy, 1998, p. 153). – *V kostjume pod nazvaniem «Chto jeto vdrug strjaslos s nashim Chelovekom Mass?»* i horosho pokushavshem galstuke Chakko triumfalno vzoshel s Margaret-kochamnoj i Sofi-mol po lestnice iz devjati krasnyh stupenej, slovno jeto byli ego trofei, kotorye on tolko chto vyigral v tennis (Roy, 2005, p. 154).

It had been *the What Will Sophie Mol Think week* (Roy, 1998, p. 25). – V obshhem, nedelja proshla *pod znakom: Chto Podumaet Sofi-mol?* (Roy, 2005, p. 26)

The phrases are introduced by such words as “under the name”, “called” or “under the sign of” which help to create the image of something special and preserve the emotional semes. The contexts with expressive means at the graphic level are presented in the TT with similar graphic features: first line indent, parcellation, syllabic structuring, etc. The passage given below shows formal similarity of the ST and the TT:

Heeaagh!

Rahel returned to contemplating toads.

Fat. Yellow. From stone to scummy stone. She touched one gently. It moved its eyelids upwards. Funnily self-assured.

Nictitating membrane, she remembered she and Estha once spent a whole day saying. She and Estha and Sophie Mol.

Nictitating

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ing (Roy, 1998, p. 210).

Jejejeje!

Rahel' opjat' stala smotret' na zhab.

Tolstye. Zheltye. S odnogo tinistogo kamnja na drugoj. Ona mjangko tronula odnu rukoj. Ta podnjala veki. So smeshnym samouverennym vidom.

Migatelnaja pereponka, vdrug vspomnila Rahel'. Oni s Jestoj celyj den odnazhdy jeto tverdili. Ona, Jesta i Sofi-mol.

Pereponka

ereponka

reponka

eponka

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a (Roy, 2005, p. 211).

The number of lines in the final parts of the ST passage and the TT passage is different. In each consequent line the author omits one or two letters but the corresponding word in Russian is shorter, only one letter is omitted every time. In general the difference seems irrelevant as the main idea is adequately rendered. Taking into account the fact the graphic means perform a text-forming function in the ST it appears relevant to preserve them in the TT.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The conclusions of the study reveal that the expressiveness category is markedly presented in A. Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* at all language levels. Expressive means form a unique convergence of axiological, emotional and cultural connotations. The majority of contexts manifest image and figurative meanings which seem universal for Indian and Russian cultures. In such cases a translator manages to convey the expressive means in the TT. Cultural and

axiological components can undergo reduction as some linguistic signs contain specific cultural connotations and are capable of provoking particular emotions and associations in representatives of the source lingouculture. Without special footnotes or endnotes the TT can be deprived of the intended communicative effect to a certain extent. In much the same way due to formal differences in the systems of the source language and the target language some expressive grammatical structures are rendered with compensations in order to make them more comprehensible for a recipient of the TT. The study proves that preserving expressiveness in literary translation is an essential prerequisite for a communicatively adequate TT.

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