

Idiolect of Fiction Character in Translation

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Abstract: The article focuses on the role of idiolect in forming a multifaceted fiction character and its reproducing in translation. Any idiolect has certain structural features common for "lects", which are viewed as varieties of the speaker's community. The means of conveying idiolects of fiction characters in Ukrainian translations, be they native speakers or foreigners, are under study.

Keywords: idiolect, fiction character, sociolect, dialect, accent, translation.

Language is a very important characteristic of a person's social status. The problem of social indication of a language is thoroughly developed in sociolinguistics: the horizontal and vertical classifications of languages in geographical and social dialects is highlighted, various sociolects (the language of the urban poor, the language of prestigious private school leavers, Black English, male and female language, etc.) are singled out and described, slang characteristics are set, professional languages and jargon are being studied. [Karasik: 50]

Good writers have never underestimated the significance of vivid and expressive language of their characters. Idiolect is defined as a system of individual stylistic features. [K.Wales, 1989: 230]. Many authors demonstrate their keen perception of voice and intonation, carefully creating idiolects. Any theme can be presented in different ways - with anguish, joy, indifference, cruelty, regret. Idiolect helps to reveal the inner world of the character, deepening the understanding of the character's psychology.

The issues of reflecting idiolect have not yet been considered comprehensively and systematically in translation studies, so they remain relevant and immediate.

Any idiolect has structural features that are common for all "lects" or the language variability within the same lingual community. Today researchers distinguish quite a number of various "lects" - a dialect and a sociolect but also a genderlect, a chronolect. "Lects" tend to intertwine, overlap and affect each other, so it is not always possible to obtain a pure specimen of any of them.

Numerous fiction translations show that translators do not always succeed in reflecting all speech features of a character, sometimes for purely objective reasons (not every linguistic element has a counterpart or equivalent in the target language), but it certainly deprives the translated work of important colors.

The Soviet school of translation declared "principled translatability" of any fiction text, the possibility of which was applied to languages and cultures standing on basically the same stage. The thesis of the principled translatability can be applied to texts with the "information of the first type" according to I.Arnold - scientific, technical, legal, medical, financial or economic. Fiction resists translation, as every author seeks to create a unique, inimitable work which cannot have its language counterpart in another culture by definition.

Idiolects of fiction characters occupy a special place among the artistic means of creating characters and reflecting a particular ethnic culture. The language of a fiction character may indicate his/her age, birthplace, upbringing and education, social and professional affiliation, and even gender. That is why it requires meticulous reproducing in translation.

The translator should always "listen to" the fiction speech, not just "read carefully", singling out individual features of each character and seeking to convey them in translation to the fullest extent possible. These features do not only include grammar, vocabulary and syntax but also the tempo and the rhythm of the speech, pronunciation may be distinct or slurred, energetic or weak. The translator should take the latter into consideration in order to ensure the maximum integrity of idiolect speech.

There are no precise lexical, phonetic and grammatical equivalents of "lects" in different languages. However, they are in some way or other reproduced in translation. The norms of the literary language are socially recognized and fixed in books, the lect norms are not codified, which enables the translator of a text to use various means in translation, among which compensation can be considered the most effective one: distinct phonetic and grammatical deviations from the language norm, for example, in English texts are mainly compensated on the lexical level. Compensatory tactics are not unified. Each element of the fictional idiolect, the speech of a fiction character, requires a specific translation solution which is not always universal. This means that a particular technique can produce a positive result in one text, but the same deviation from the standard speech requires a different approach in another text depending on various factors. In particular, it refers to the idiolect of native speakers, whose educational level is quite low, and the idiolect of foreigners, who speak with a specific accent. Even similar "errors" of native speakers and foreigners require variability in reproduction.

The idiolect of a native speaker is an extremely broad concept, unless we talk about the aristocratic circles of the British Isles, who use "received pronunciation". Jane Austen's characters use the same language as long as they belong to the same social class, while in "Lady Chatterley's Lover" by D.H.Lawrence the title hero speaks Yorkshire dialect, which unmistakably indicates his social and educational status. The novel "Wuthering Heights" is written in English, yet E. Brontë widely used dialectisms of western Yorkshire. Nelly and Joseph speak Yorkshire dialect. Cockney sociolect is not just a coloring of the character's speech in G.B.Shaw's play "Pygmalion", - it is an important plot-forming element. Eliza's every word indicates her social status. In this respect the novel "David Copperfield" by Ch.Dickens is a real idiolect symphony, which creates numerous challenges for translators.

"The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" by Mark Twain can be considered a quintessence of dialects. The author remarks: "In this book a number of dialects are used, to wit: the Missouri negro dialect; the extremest form of the backwoods Southwestern dialect; the ordinary "Pike County" dialect; and four modified varieties of this last. The shadings have not been done in a haphazard fashion, or by guess-

work; but painstakingly, and with the trustworthy guidance and support of personal familiarity with these several forms of speech." [Twain: ix]

Let's try to systematize the most characteristic features in the speech of the narrator, Huck Finn, as well as other characters.

Grammatical level:

- dropping conjunction 'that': there wasn't ever anything could 'a' worked better.
 - the tautological use of a personal pronoun after the subject-noun: the king he fretted;
 - the incorrect use of "to be" verb forms: is I heah, or whah is I, dat's what I wants to know;
 - the wrong formation of past tense forms, making "regular" past for irregular verbs: seed (saw), drawed (drew), brung (brought), dove (dived).
 - the improper comparative and superlative degrees:
 - adjectives with suffixes –er, –est: improper comparison forming:: ignorantest; treacherousest; blessedest; innocentest; thankfullest; carelessest; best-naturedest;
 - double comparative: more surer; more easier; most loveliest;
 - the use of hain't, ain't instead of a present tense form of verbs to be and to have: I hain't got to ask (have not got); I hain't goin' to tell (I am not going); ain't you ashamed (aren't you); 'tain't likely (it is not);
 - the improper use of 1st person verbs with 2nd and 3^d persons: she say; it don't work; you pays your money and takes your choice; What does pirates have to do?; we was; you was over here; kings is kings;
 - the use of Present Simple instead of Past Simple: He come along one day, and he see she was a-witching him; it was a charm the devil give to him;
 - the use of Past Participle instead of Past Simple: that was easy, so we done it; he said he swum along; just then Jim begun to breathe;
 - the use of Past Simple instead of Past Participle in Perfect tenses and Passive: I had wrote, they'd stole it; you've went away; Is she took bad? he was rode; we were wore out;
 - dropping the auxiliary verb in Perfect tenses: I been to the circus; he ought to waited for them;
 - the use of transitive verbs instead of intransitive, lay instead of lie, set instead of sit, raise (rouse) instead of rise: He used to lay drunk; somebody's got to set up all night; so now he raised a howl that fairly made a body's hair raise; I rouses up;
 - the use of double negation: I don't know no things, it wouldn't hardly do; she never meant no harm by it; she couldn't write, nuther; I couldn't get that out of my conscience, no how nor no way;
 - the use of adjectives instead of appropriate adverbs: she done it beatiful; then he says slow and scornful; I'm awful sorry;
 - possessive pronouns formed by analogy to mine: ourn (ours), hern (hers), hisn (his), theirn (theirs);
 - many instead of much: that was too many for me;
 - the use of un- instead of in- or ir-: undigestible; undisposed; unregular; unreverent.
 - the use of indefinite article with plural numbers: a long ways; a good ways off.
- Phonetic level:
- adding t at the end of a word: skift (skiff), dogst (dogs), chanst (chance), wunst (once), relict (relic), to roust (to rouse);

- dropping sounds and syllables: 'em (them), 'n (than), better'n (better than), 'pears (appears), 'tend (attend), th'n (than), y'r (your), f'r (for), cer'nly (certainly), tollable (tolerable), do' (door), roun' (round), fren' (friend), o' (of), d'I (did I), complice (accomplice), 'dout (without), better'n (better than);
- substituting one phoneme for another : th → d: de (the); th → f: nuffn (nothing); ere, ir, are → ah: whah (where), sah (sir), squah (square); e → i: yistidday (yesterday); i → e: sperrit (spirit); u → i: jis' (just); u → e: shet (shut), jest (just), jedge (judge);
- using -ah instead of -ere, -ir, -are: whah (where), dah (there), heah (here), sah (sir), squah (square);
- substituting d for of th: de (the), dis (this), den (than, then), wid (with), dey (they, there);
- substituting e for i: resk (rik), tell (till), ef (if), hender (hinder), sperrit (spirit), sence (since);
- substituting for u: shet (shut), jest (just), jedge (judge);
- substituting e for d: mine (mind), tole (told), sole (sold), chile (child), behine (behind), fine (find), scole (scold), kine (kind);
- substituting er for ow or o: shadder (shadow), wider (widow), sorrer (sorrow), mullater (mulatto), tobacker (tobacco);
- substituting f for e th: bref (breath), nuffn (nothing), sumf'n (something);
- substituting i for u: sich (such), jis' (just);
- substituting i for e: git (get), yit (yet), yistidday (yesterday);
- substituting i for oi: pile (spoil), bile (boil), jint (joint).

The complete reproduction of these features in translation is practically impossible. There are no means to transfer these phonetic and grammatical deviations in the Ukrainian language. The possibility of grammatical errors in Ukrainian is significantly more limited than in English, as a large percentage of grammatical phenomena in English is not logically conditioned: the correctly used forms "am", "is", "are" can be rather regarded as the marker of the speaker's education level, not as a semantically valid feature. This asymmetry is conducive to compensations, mainly on the lexical level.

Certain phonetic feature in Ukrainian local dialects can be perfectly understood throughout the country, even if their usage is confined within certain territorial borders. That is why they can be generally used in translation, without being pigeon-holed as a distinct regional trait. For instance, [i] sound is changed by [и] in Brovary district of Kyiv region – [кит] instead of [кіт], and sound [o] is replaced by [y] in Kremenchuk district of Poltava region – [гулува́ буліть]. This balanced approach can be used in translations. The degree of likelihood is important here, as long as undue domestication is unwelcome.

There is a difference between how Ukrainian is spoken in the Poltava region in the center and in Bukovyna in the west. Domestication can distort the text badly. For instance, Harry Potter's mentor Hagrid in J.K. Rowlings novel "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" uses a mixture of Scottish and Irish. The Ukrainian translator V. Moroz makes him speak in a mixture of Western Ukrainian dialects: Hutsul, Lemky, Boiky, Pokuttya. Such a vernacular, though it distinguishes Hagrid among other characters, can significantly change the overall perception of the novel. The complete mirroring of local dialects in translation is not to be sought: the reader is unlikely to believe that a Negro from the state of Mississippi can speak like a resident of a village in Ha-

lychyna or in Kherson region. However, in each case, relatively neutral indicators of language deviations that point at the social status rather than a geographic area can be used. Losses are inevitable here, but it is possible to minimize them. As dialectal speech is inseparably linked with a social group, this particular parameter can be shown in translation.

There is a distinct contamination in the language of foreigners: the unconscious, almost mechanical transfer of a native language norms to a foreign language. There are quite a few foreigners among characters in the novels of W.Collins, J.Galsworthy, A.Christie, E.Hemingway, J.D.Salinger, E.L.Doctorow, etc. Their idiolects are carefully created by authors. An English reader gets a polyphonic picture, while Ukrainian translations often monotone these features.

Accents in the idiolect speech of characters deserve the translator's special attention, considering not only their possible lexical and grammatical errors, but also the prosody intrinsic for native speakers. When speaking a foreign language, people tend to add a special shade of their own pronunciation: a German, an Englishman and a Frenchman speak, say, Ukrainian with different accents. Deviations at all levels – phonetic, grammatical, lexical and stylistic – are observed in accents, which are idiolects of foreigners. Their reproduction in translation is easier to be attained than the language deviations of native speakers, as foreigners' speech sounds peculiar by definition.

Methods of translating contaminated speech are mainly factitious, though they can represent actual differences between languages. It is good for the translator to have a clear understanding of any fiction foreigner's native tongue. In case there is a conventional method to transfer a certain type of contaminated speech, the translator can resort to it, irrespective of the form of the original contamination.

It can be interesting for a Ukrainian translator that the Ukrainian tradition of reproducing foreigners' speech in translation (unlike the Russian one) is not very well developed. This situation is historically conditioned, but, still, one can find enough examples of contaminated speech of foreigners in the original Ukrainian literature, which can be creatively employed in translation.

Foreigner's "broken" speech in translation should sound natural enough, and therefore its transfer must be functional. That is why the translator must be familiar with the structure and sounding of foreigners' speech because this speech is usually an unconscious translation from their native language. [Vlakhov, Florin 1980: 258-259] Being an element of a character's idiolect these deviations are not necessarily associated with a single word or sentence, so the translator can apply any compensation approach – phonetic, morphological, syntactic, so as to keep the feeling of "otherness" of their speech in translation.

In translation studies one can find different points of view as to the possibility and necessity of reproducing language deviations of the original text, which are associated with the imitation of foreigners' speech in translation.

Although some linguists believe that these deviations should not be reproduced in translation, and that colloquial forms of language should be used for their reproduction at best, in fact, it is one of the expressive elements of the author's style that calls for a close attention on the part of the translator. [Nekriach, Kopylna: 156]

Annette Forsythe and Prosper Profond, the characters of J.Galsworthy's "The Forsythe Saga" speak with French accent, as well as a French singer in "The Catcher in the Rye" by J.D.Salinger. A.Christie created an unforgettable character of Hercule Poirot, a private detective, Belgian by birth, who speaks with French accent, which makes him immediately recognizable in the original. Ukrainian translations of these books do not always reproduce accent: Poirot speaks just like all other characters, whose native language is English. Thus, one of the attractive character-making features is eliminated, which can't but distort the general impression of the book.

The strategies of reproducing accents in Ukrainian translations can be as follows (according T. Nekriach and O.Kopylna):

- 1) phonetic means;
- 2) the violation of the morphological and syntactic rules;
- 3) the improper use of words.

Unfortunately, these strategies are neglected in Ukrainian translations.

The German accent in English texts can be found in O.Henry's "The Last Leaf" and "Witches' Loaves", as well as J.Galsworthy's "The Forsythe Saga". The "zero" translation of the accent is conducive to simplification and decolorization of the original.

Nevertheless, there is an example of reproducing German accent in Ukrainian literature. This is "The Tale of Dobrobyt" by I.Franko. Mr.Hopman from the clerical office speaks with a strong German accent. The author devoices consonants, particularly, fricative, which is distinctive for German language: *Топпропит (Добробит), топре (добре), туше (дуже), хроші (гроші), тумайте (думайте), оплікацію (облігацію), пув (був), ропити (робити); спіша (збіжжя), посволите (дозволите), мошете (можете), саперемо (заберемо), непоше (небоже), сатармо (задарма), росумієте (розумієте), сарас (зараз), самало (замало).*

The translator hardly has a right to drop at his/her own discretion the characteristic components used by the author of the original which are quite possible to be reproduced. The task of the translator is to transfer all the variety of artistic means which include the idiolect of characters, as a powerful tool of making a syncretic image.

Certain elements in a work of literature resist translation. The translator has to activate her/his creative potential to the fullest degree in order to find alternatives for them. The task is not at all simple and easy. If the language of translation possesses all the necessary means for reproducing a certain feature, these means have to be applied, otherwise, these subjective omissions became arbitrary, which can water down fictional work in the receiving culture.

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