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## Phonographic Stylisation as a Means of Imitating Speech Anomalies: Challenges Faced by Literary Translators

### 1. Introduction

Speech anomalies or violations of the accepted spelling norms demonstrate unique personal speech peculiarities shaped by a range of various factors, including the speaker's social or territorial status, physical or emotional condition, physiological state, or health issues. Depicting such peculiarities often involves the use of phonographic means, a technique known as phonographic stylisation. This technique entails selecting typical or unique phonetic features and representing them through deliberate distortions of a word's graphical shape to achieve the author's artistic goals. For terminological clarity, let's define *phonographic means* as stylistically significant graphical distortions at the language level used both for stylisation of vernacular and dialectal speech as well as for representing individual features, such as contaminated speech, speech defects, etc., while *phonographic stylisation* refers to the strategies and specific methods used to implement these means. The term "phonographic stylisation means" may also be used.

Relied on violations of accepted pronunciation norms and alterations of a word's graphical form within the same language, phonographic stylisation presents significant challenges for translators by epitomizing each language's unique character and naturally resisting the translation process. Few languages exhibit the same relationship between phonological and graphical representation as English, making phonographic stylisation difficult to replicate in the target language (TL). Moreover, phonographic means used to represent dialectal pronunciation are unlikely to survive the translation process. Each translator must independently discover the most effective methods to address these challenges. This article presents examples of phonographic stylisation in English source texts (ST), featuring excerpts from the works of four authors ranging from the nineteenth century to the present. By identifying phonographic stylisa-

tion means in each excerpt and analyzing their functions, this study examines their translations into Polish, with the emphasis placed on the strategies translators have employed to preserve the characters' distinctive speech peculiarities.

## 2. Translating Phonographic Stylisation Means

In Eastern Europe, phonographic stylisation has been most notably developed by Professor Valeria A. Kukharenko, who even coined the term “graphon” for this phenomenon. Kukharenko defines “graphon” as “graphical representation of the individual pronunciation of a speaker”<sup>1</sup> and “a deliberate distortion of a word (or phrase) to convey its authentic pronunciation”<sup>2</sup>, with the latter requiring further explanation. According to Kukharenko<sup>3</sup>, a graphon's purpose is to replicate “authentic pronunciation”, but true pronunciation can only be accurately conveyed through transcription, not standard graphic means. In literature, graphic methods capture only the most recognizable phonetic features of characters' speech. Conveying pronunciation in full detail graphically would overload the text with phonographic means and make it unintelligible, particularly when depicting sociolects and dialects rich in phonographic deviations. Therefore, instead of systematically replicating the phonetic features of speech graphically, authors should focus on the artistic stylisation of the anomalous lexis.

This approach aligns with the contemporary concept of stylisation in the realm of translation studies. According to Krzysztof Hejwowski, as cited in Izabela Szymańska<sup>4</sup>, stylisation is a common strategy which merely indicates that a speech variety was applied in the ST. Hejwowski<sup>5</sup> rightly observes that translators seldom use real “full” dialects; they typically select certain signals of dialectal variety in lexis and/or pronunciation and/or inflection and/or syntax, as is also true of the authors of the ST. Sara Ramos Pinto<sup>6</sup> calls this phenomenon “pseudo-variety”. Therefore, it is evident that phonographic deviations are rarely depicted naturalistically. Instead, the most characteristic aspects are chosen for depiction, prioritizing the ease of perception and recognizability of phonetic complexes by the reader in this “artistic transcription”.

<sup>1</sup> Kukharenko V. A., *Интерпретация текста [Text Interpretation:]*, Moscow, Prosveshchenije, 1988, s. 152.

<sup>2</sup> Kukharenko V. A., *A Book of Practice in Stylistics*, Moscow, Vysshaya Shkola, 1986, s. 53.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Hejwowski K., *O tłumaczeniu aluzji językowych* [w:] Lewicki R. (ed.), *Przekład – język – kultura*, Lublin, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie Skłodowskiej, 2010, Tom II, s. 50, quoted after: Szymańska I., *The Treatment of Geographical Dialect in Literary translation from the Perspective of Relevance theory*, Research in Language, Łódź, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2017, vol. 15 (1), p. 65.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ramos Pinto S., *How important is the way you put it? A discussion on the translation of linguistic varieties*, Target [online], 2009, 21(2), p. 292, <https://doi.org/10.1075/target.21.2.04pin>, [Accessed 16 Dec. 2009].

In translation studies, it is commonly assumed that the treatment of phonographic stylisation depends on the translator's interpretation of their functions. Kukharencenko<sup>7</sup>, focusing on the role of graphons in distinguishing protagonists' speech and the reasons for graphically fixed distortions of the pronunciation norms, categorizes graphons into two groups: those related to mood, emotional state, and age (occasional and transient), and those reflecting origin, education, and social status (recurrent and permanent). Hejwowski<sup>8</sup> addresses this issue in connection with the translation of dialects. He identifies the major functions of dialects in literature, such as highlighting social status and educational differences, expressing ethnic and cultural identity, indicating a character's foreign origin and poor knowledge of a language, characterizing characters, showing a character's affiliation with a subculture, marking historical periods, and adding linguistic humor.

The above discussion on the functions of phonographic stylisation reveals that the dialects and individual pronunciation peculiarities serve as powerful communicative cues which "guide the audience to the intended interpretation"<sup>9</sup>. These cues, interpreted as the author's way of suggesting that the character would spell the words in this manner to reflect a much lower level of education and literacy than the average person, are expected to be understood by both the reader of the ST and the translator as "a rational decision"<sup>10</sup>. This is crucial in translation, where translators might unintentionally overlook the author's intentional linguistic decisions in their efforts to standardize the text. One can therefore agree with Diane Blakemore and her idea of *impression* who says: "an utterance is more valuable not because the meaning is more precisely spelled out but because "it would have evoked a whole range of thoughts and impressions"<sup>11</sup>.

Let us now briefly survey some views on the possibility of rendering the means of phonographic stylisation. Various linguistic and socio-cultural constraints may complicate or even preclude the possibility of replicating these means by parallel/analogous means of the TL. Linguistic constraints are evident in the variability of pronunciation of individual sounds, their combinations, and the reading rules within two distinct language systems. Socio-cultural constraints are reflected in the unique traditions of phonographic representation of certain personal speech traits in English and Polish literature. As Jane Hodson<sup>12</sup> reports, English literature has developed a phonetic system of its expressing due to the flexible English orthography which accommodates diverse sound representations and has acknowledged phonographic means to imitate speech nonstandardness related to dialectal or sociolectal pronunciation, with

<sup>7</sup> Kukharencenko V. A., *Интерпретация текста...*, p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> Hejwowski K., *O tłumaczeniu aluzji...*, s. 45–47, quoted after: Szymańska I., op. cit., p. 62–63.

<sup>9</sup> Gutt E.A., *Textual properties, communicative clues and the translators* [in:] Navarro Errasti M.P. et al., (eds.), *Transcultural Communication: Pragmalinguistic Aspects*, Zaragoza, Anúbar, 2000, p. 155.

<sup>10</sup> Keller R., *Zeichentheorie: Zu einer Theorie semiotischen Wissens*, Tübingen/Basel, Francke, 1995, p. 218.

<sup>11</sup> Blakemore D., *Understanding Utterances: An Introduction to Pragmatics*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1992, p. 10.

<sup>12</sup> Hodson J., *Dialect in film and literature*, Gordonsville, Palgrave MacMillan, 2014, pp. 90–91.

these being the most challenging to render in any TL. In contrast, the Polish literary tradition seldom employs these stylisations, opting instead to use colloquialisms and unconventional syntax for similar purposes. This has resulted in the documentation of dialects, slang, and phonetically deviated lexis being virtually non-existent, an observation supported by various studies<sup>13 14 15 16</sup>. Adherence to such “rules” stifles the introduction of unfamiliar elements, nipping any potential stylistic innovation in the bud. Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska has highlighted this issue, noting that:

Translating dialects and slang poses a significant challenge to translators. Often, it is impossible to capture the essence of a particular speech due to the absence of a cultural equivalent in the TL. For instance, finding an equivalent for African American Vernacular English in Polish translations of American literature is particularly problematic. In such cases, translators typically resort to intermediate solutions, employing light stylisation (transl. mine – OK)<sup>17</sup>.

Therefore, we may assume that, unlike English, Polish lacks a well-established system of phonographic means. Consequently, employing such means to the same degree in both ST and TT may not produce the same functional effect. In translation then, the potential recreation of phonographic stylisation may primarily be achievable through translating various speech anomalies into standard Polish. However, this approach is challenged by the undeniable fact that standardizing speech anomalies can result in the loss of significant semantic nuances, which are unlikely to be fully compensated for by any compensatory changes. Therefore, translation has taken place, but the rendition failed to transfer specific speech traits.

For a long time, lexical or lexico-grammatical compensation has been the dominant method for conveying phonographic stylisation in translation theory and practice. This has led to what Kornei Chukovsky<sup>18</sup>, a renowned children’s poet and literary translation theorist, termed “simplified translation”, a process that diminishes the distinctiveness of speech characteristics, resulting in significant stylistic and pragmatic losses. In *High Art* (1968), Chukovsky illustrates this through a debate between an imaginary translation prosecutor and a defense attorney:

<sup>13</sup> Dębska K., *Neutralizacja różnorodności językowej a usuwanie obcości z przekładu* [w:] Brzozowski J., Filipowicz-Rudek M. (eds.), *Między oryginałem a przekładem XV. Obcość kulturowa jako wyzwanie dla tłumacza*, Kraków, Księgarnia Akademicka, 2009, s. 53–72.

<sup>14</sup> Hejwowski K., *O tłumaczeniu aluzji językowych* [w:] Lewicki R. (ed.), *Przekład – język – kultura*, Lublin, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2010, Tom II, s. 41–56.

<sup>15</sup> Berezowski L., *Dialect in Translation*, Wrocław, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1997.

<sup>16</sup> Rudolf K., *Sześćset czydzieści pięć upatkuf tłumacza – czyli nieistniejąca stylizacja w polskich przekładach literatury angielskiej*, Tekstualia, Gdańsk, Uniwersytet Gdański, 2014, 1 (36), 29–46.

<sup>17</sup> Adamczyk-Garbowska M., *Polskie tłumaczenia angielskiej literatury dziecięcej. Problemy krytyki przekładu*, Wrocław, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1988, s. 33.

<sup>18</sup> Chukovsky K. I., *Высокое искусство [High Art]*, Moscow, Sovetsky Pisatel, 1968.

Consider Jim from Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*. In the original text, his speech is rich with deviations from standard grammar. Out of every hundred words he speaks, forty blatantly break grammatical rules. (...) No matter how talented or brilliant you are, you will never be able to replicate in translation any of the seven colorful jargons mentioned by Twain in the novel's preface. The Russian language lacks the lexical tools to achieve this. (...). There are no equivalents for the linguistic quirks and twists that abound in the original text. Every translator, even the most skilled, is bound to fail (transl. mine – OK) <sup>19</sup>.

An alternative approach involves replicating the phonographic means of speech stylisation from the source language (SL) using parallel/analogous means in the TL. John Catford advocates for this approach, suggesting that translators, while selecting an equivalent TL dialect, should employ “a dialect related to the same part of the country in a geographical sense”<sup>20</sup>. Catford exemplifies his approach by translating Cockney, a south-eastern dialect of Britain, into French, with most translators opting for *Parigot*, a northern dialect of French, as both are urban dialects<sup>21</sup>. The scholar thus proposes a general solution to a dialect translation: “the criterion here is the ‘human’ or ‘social’ geographical one (...) rather than a purely locational criterion”<sup>22</sup>. Conversely, Olgierd Wojtasiewicz<sup>23</sup>, the pioneer of Polish translation studies, completely rejects replacing the SL dialect with a dialect from the TL, such as substituting the *Podhale* dialect with that of the Scottish Highlanders. He argues that the unique cultural and historical connotations attached to specific language varieties make them inherently untranslatable, as “the associations that a given word or phrase evokes in the TL audience are completely different from those intended in the original”<sup>24</sup>. He proposes a compensatory method called “cautious retouching”<sup>25</sup>, which involves occasionally introducing certain features typical of the TL's metropolitan dialect.

Jiří Levý, a Czech translation theorist, proposed a radically different approach. Levý argued that since dialectal forms are unique to each language, they need not be recreated nor rendered literally. According to Levý<sup>26</sup>, the translator's responsibility is to differentiate only between the TL standard and deviated variety which draws on phonetic, lexical and/or syntactic features which are common enough not to be identified with a specific region. To address the challenge of translating dialects, Levý<sup>27</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., s. 135.

<sup>20</sup> Catford J., *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, Oxford University Press, 1965, p. 87.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 87–88.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Wojtasiewicz O., *Wstęp do teorii tłumaczenia*, Wrocław-Warszawa, Zakład im. Ossolińskich, 1957, s. 90.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., s. 65.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., s. 90–91.

<sup>26</sup> Levý J., *The Art of Translation* (Trans. by Corness P.), Jettmarová Z. (ed.), Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2011, pp. 97–98.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

proposed using an artificial TL dialect that evokes associations with the translator's own country. Interestingly, Levý's model accurately predicted the strategies now employed by contemporary translators. Massimiliano Morini<sup>28</sup> proposes creating a synthetic TL that consists of incorrect or slightly modified words and phrases, as well as regional expressions, all phonetically adapted to the rules of the TL. Morini believes that this invented language could effectively represent the anomalous spelling found in the ST.

We may conclude with a simple observation: by treating the challenge of reproducing speech anomalies in translation as a functional issue rather than merely a linguistic one, the translator gains additional creative opportunities, such as employing "a functional analogue"<sup>29</sup> (albeit somewhat schematic) or creating an artificial/synthetic language within a TL, to effectively characterize a protagonist's unique speech traits similar to the ST. Influenced by global trends and the recognition of translation as a cultural phenomenon, Polish translations are increasingly embracing the parallel/analogous reproduction of characters' speech peculiarities. We will analyze some examples below.

### 3. Examples Containing Phonographic Stylisation and Their Translations from English to Polish

#### 3.1. Speech Peculiarities Caused by Physical and Emotional State

The peculiarities arising from the speaker's physical and emotional state will be illustrated using *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (better known as *The Pickwick Papers*), by Charles Dickens. Dickens masterfully characterizes individuals through their speech, showcasing remarkable subtleties in portraying the language of comic characters. Lord Mutenhed's lisp, a fashionable trait among the British aristocrats, serves as the most striking example of phonographic stylisation. To achieve the desired phonographic effect, Dickens employs a simple yet effective technique to portray Lord Mutenhed's speech idiosyncrasy. He replaces the sound [r] with the sound [w], and, seemingly intentionally, selects words containing [r] for this character:

(1) a) 'Gwacious heavens!' said his lordship, 'I thought **evewebody** had seen the new mail cart; it's the neatest, **pwettiest**, **gwacefullest** thing that ever **wan** upon wheels. Painted **wed**, with a **cweam** piebald'<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> Morini M., *Norms, difference and the translator: Or, how to reproduce double difference*. *Revue des Littératures de l'Union Européenne, Review of Literatures of the European Union: Traduzione Tradizione? Paths in the European Literary Polysystem*, 4, 2006, p. 130.

<sup>29</sup> The technique of translating a SL dialect by a TL dialect was considered a kind of "functional equivalent" by some theorists of that time (e.g. Catford 1965).

<sup>30</sup> Dickens Ch. *The Pickwick Papers*, Hertfordshire, Worthworth, 1993, p. 624.

b) 'And a little seat in **fwont**, with an **iwon wail**, for the **dwiver**', added his lordship. 'I **dwove** it over to **Bwistol** the other morning, in a **cwimson** coat, with two servants **widing** a quarter of a mile behind; and confound me if the people didn't **wush** out of their cottages, and **awest** my **pwogwess**, to know if I wasn't the post. **Glorwious, glorwious!**'<sup>31</sup>

Let's examine how translators in Poland, a culture where phonographic stylisation has only recently begun to gain recognition, strive for translation adequacy in such situations. The oldest translation of Dickens' novel from the 19th century by Włodzimierz Górski (1824-1878), supplemented by Zofia and Wiktor Popławscy in 1927 and still being reprinted, shows no attempt to convey the phonetic features of Lord Mutenhed's speech into Polish:

(2) a) – Czy tak? Sądziłem, że wszyscy ją widzieli. Jest to najpiękniejsza i najgustowniejsza rzecz, jaką widziałem kiedykolwiek na kołach. Pomalowana na czerwono; a konie maści kawy ze śmietanką<sup>32</sup>.

b) – Z siedzeniem dla stangreta na przodzie – mówił dalej lord. – Jeździłem nią wczoraj do Bristolu, czerwono ubrany i z dwoma dżokejami z tyłu. Niech mi Bóg skarże, jeżeli chłopci nie wychodzili ze swych domów i nie pytali mnie, czy nie jestem pocztylionem! To doskonałe!<sup>33</sup>

The omission of speech characteristics in Górski's translation is not a negligence. Given that the translation was contemporary to the original, Górski assumed that replicating the character's speech peculiarities in a similar manner would not be functionally effective. This decision was influenced by the fact that 19th-century Polish writers didn't use phonographic elements to stylize aristocratic speech, unlike their British counterparts. Elżbieta Umińska-Tytoń's<sup>34</sup> research shows that the speech of upper-class representatives in 19th-century Poland was marked by highly formal and polite language, the use of foreign languages (mainly French and sometimes English), and extensive vertical context (allusions and quotes). Polite euphemisms, words with a long literary tradition, and prohibitions against colloquial and dialectal words were common, as well as terminology related to pastimes and occupations<sup>35</sup>. Umińska-Tytoń also describes the phonetic features of Polish upper-class speech, including clear articulation, language and spelling accuracy, and good speech delivery<sup>36</sup>. It seems quite logical that Górski did not preserve the graphic representation of the sound shift [r] in translation, as this might suggest a speech defect rather than the aristocrat's impeccable speech. Since the primary markers of Polish aristocratic speech are lexical

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Dickens Ch., *Klub Pickwicka*, przeł. [z ang.] Włodzimierz Górski, uzup. Zofia i Wiktor Popławscy, Warszawa, Prószyński i S-ka, T. 2, 1995, s. 118.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Umińska-Tytoń E., *Polszczyzna dziewiętnastowiecznych salonów*, Łódź, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2011, s. 189-235.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., s. 252.

and syntactic, they can be compensated for in translation by using similar means, which can be considered a natural consequence. Górski effectively did this by using bookish and formal words (such as *stangret* for ‘coachman’ and *pocztylion* for ‘postman’ in (2b)), foreign terms, particularly English (like *dżokej* for ‘jockey’ in (2b)), and syntactic patterns typical of the Polish nobility, including exclamatory sentences (e.g., *Niech mi Bóg skarże; To doskonale!* in (2b)), which characterize Lord Mutenhed as a representative of the upper classes. Interestingly, in the segments from the newest, slightly modernized 2005 edition supplemented by Zofia and Wiktor Popławscy and Paweł Gruchała, quoted in (3) and corresponding to the originals in (1), the phonographic stylisation means for depicting the character’s unique pronunciation also remain un conveyed:

(3) a) – Czy tak? Sądziłem, że wszyscy ją widzieli. Jest to najpiękniejsza i najgustowniejsza rzecz, jaką widziałem kiedykolwiek na kołach. Pomalowana na czerwono; a konie maści kawy ze śmietanką<sup>37</sup>.

b) – Z siedzeniem dla stangreta na przodzie – mówił dalej lord. – Jeździłem nią wczoraj do Bristolu, w czerwonym ubraniu i z dwoma dżokejami z tyłu. Niech mi Bóg skarże, jeżeli wieśniacy nie wychodzili ze swych domów i nie pytali mnie, czy nie jestem pocztylionem! To doskonale!<sup>38</sup>

It’s worth noting that Dickens deliberately contrasts Lord Mutenhed’s exaggerated speech impediment with standard English to highlight the comic/parody function of phonographic means. By using a graphic representation of the sound shift [r] excessively, Dickens skillfully satirizes the aristocratic accent, amplifying the irony to near absurdity and thereby making readers laugh at this ridiculous figure. Since these violations of orthographic norms are intended by the author, inferences stemming from their use can be treated as a deliberate choice that conveys not only the information content but also the way in which it is expressed and the special effect such stylistic features create. Given that the speech defect was caused by an inability to pronounce [r] (rhotacism), we have attempted to reproduce the phonographic stylisation of Lord Mutenhed’s speech in our alternative translation by substituting [r] with [ł], which sounds most natural to the Polish ear. This allows readers to accurately infer the author’s intended meaning in the given context and adds a touch of humor:

(4) a) – **Napławdę?** Sądziłem, że wszyscy na **kułolcie** ją [pocztową bryczkę] widzieli. Jest to **najzgląbniejsza**, najładniejsza i **najdłóższa** rzecz, jaka kiedykolwiek **połuszała się** po ulicach miasta. Pomalowana na **czelwono**; a konie maści łaciatej.

b) – A z przodu siedzenie, z żelazną **połączką**, dla **stangłeta** – mówił dalej lord. – **Wczolaj** łano sam **płowadziłem** ją do **Błystolu**; **uślany na czelwono**, a dwaj dżokeje jechali ćwieć mili za mną. Bóg mi świadkiem, że chłopci wybiegali ze swoich domów i pytali mnie, czy nie jestem pocztą! To po **płostu** wspaniałe!

<sup>37</sup> Dickens Ch., *Klub Pickwicka*, przeł. [z ang.] Włodzimierz Górski, uzup. Zofia i Wiktor Popławscy oraz Paweł Gruchała, Kraków, Wydawnictwo Zielona Sowa, 2005, s. 379.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

To translate the highlighted units, we use various equivalents, with the main criterion being the presence of the sound [r] in their spellings. A permanent equivalent example is the lexical pair *Bristol* – *Bristol*, where [r] is present in both languages. A non-permanent (variable) equivalent example is the lexical pair *run* – *poruszać się*, chosen from multiple potential lexemes like *biegać*, *przebiec*, *mknąć*, *pędzić*, *poruszać się*, *kursować*, *toczyć się*, *przemknąć* etc. When neither permanent nor variable equivalents fit the phonographic stylisation criterion, an occasional equivalent is used. For instance, ‘Gracious heavens’ is translated to *Naprawdę* because the Polish phraseological equivalents (*O mój Boże! Miły Boże!* etc.) lack [r]. This involves a compensatory change, prioritizing the phonographic marker over the original phraseological expression.

As observed, the translation effectively preserves the phonographic stylisation to reflect the speech impediment, featuring 16 instances compared to 20 in the ST. This results from three factors. First, some Polish translations do not include [r] (e.g., ‘prettiest’ and ‘gracefullest’ become *najpiękniejsza* and *najgustowniejsza*). To accurately imitate the impediment, the translation incorporates phonographically stylized lexemes not present in the ST (e.g., *najdroższa*). Second, since lexemes containing [r] are essential in both languages, the Polish translation uses equivalents with [r] for English phrases that lack it (e.g., ‘neatest’ becomes *najzgrabniejsza*), or where it is not pronounced due to English pronunciation rules (e.g., ‘quarter of a mile’ becomes *ćwierć mili*, ‘morning’ becomes *rano*). Third, in positions where [r] is silent, it was not replaced with a phrase containing it in the translation (e.g., ‘servant’ for *dżokej*).

The following example, which also falls under the category of speech peculiarities resulting from the speaker’s physical and emotional state, imitates the speech of Gollum, the iconic character from John R. R. Tolkien’s *The Hobbit or There and Back Again* (1937). Tolkien masterfully employed a phonographic technique to capture Gollum’s peculiar manner of speaking; he injected a plethora of hissing and sibilant sounds, often reduplicating them within individual lexemes, especially in word-final positions, added a sibilant to the end of verbs irrespective of subject-verb agreement, and intentionally chose words with the [s] sound to enhance the impression of hissed speech. It is clear that the language used by Gollum may have been intentionally designed by Tolkien as a tool for meaning creation and expression:

(5) a) ‘**Ssss**’, said Gollum, and became quite polite. ‘Praps ye sits here and chats with it a bitsy, **my preciousss**. It like riddles, praps it does, does it?’<sup>39</sup>

b) ‘What **iss** he, my **preciouss**?’ whispered Gollum<sup>40</sup>.

c) ‘Bless us and splash us, **my precioussss!** I guess it’s a choice feast; at least a tasty morsel it’d make us, gollum!’<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Tolkien J.R.R., *The Hobbit: or There and Back Again*, 3rd. ed., London, Unwin Books, 1966, p. 84.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

d) ‘Does it guess easy? It must have a competition with us, **my precious!** If precious asks, and it doesn’t answer, we **eats** it, **my preciousss**. If it asks us, and we **doesn’t** answer, then we **does** what it wants, eh? **We shows** it the way out, yes!’<sup>42</sup>

The reason for such stylisation is that the sound [s], due to its high-frequency hiss characteristics in both Germanic and East Slavic languages, often evokes a serpent’s hiss. By deliberately using and intensifying this phonestheme, Tolkien subtly conveyed Gollum’s identity and motivations, portraying him as an evil, snake-like, and surreptitious character. This technique of subconscious suggestion allows us to perceive the character’s thoughts and feelings beyond what is explicitly stated. Thus, the functions of the phonestheme, including aesthetic influence, explicit extraction of hidden content, and creation of an associative field, are realized. Maria Skibniewska, the first Polish translator of Tolkien’s works, attempted to replicate these functions in her 1960 translation using analogous phonographic means in Polish, and the result was satisfactory:

(6) a) – **Sss!** – rzekł Gollum i nagle dziwnie wygrzeczniał. – Może usiądziesz i pogadasz z nim troszeczkę, **mój ssskarbie**. Może , on lubi zagadki, może lubi, **ccco?**<sup>43</sup>

b) – Kto to może być, jak **myśślisz**, mój **ssskarbie?** – syknął Gollum<sup>44</sup>.

c) – Co za szczęście, co za szansa, mój **ssskarbie!** Smaczny **kąssek** widzimy, będzie co na **zzzab** położyć, glum, glum!<sup>45</sup>

d) – On tak łatwo zgaduje? – Niech on **ssstanie** z nami do zawodów. Jeśli mój **ssskarb ssspyta**, a on nie odpowie, to mój **ssskarb** go zje. A jeżeli on **ssspyta**, a **ssskarb** nie odpowie, to **ssskarb** zrobi wszystko, czego on **sssobie** będzie życzy<sup>46</sup>.

Our analysis focuses on two key aspects of the above segments. Firstly, they exhibit a higher density of sibilant and hissing consonant reduplication compared to the original. This is due to the deliberate choice of Polish equivalents containing the sounds [s], [ś], and [z], and their redundant reduplication in word-initial (5a, 5b, 5c, 5d) and medial positions (5b, 5c), as opposed to the ST’s primarily word-final positions. Secondly, (4a) introduces additional phonographic stylisation techniques, such as shortened forms that mimic English colloquial speech (e.g., ‘praps’ for ‘perhaps’, ‘ye’ for ‘you’, ‘bitsy’ for ‘a little bit’), as well as morphological (e.g., ‘ye sits’) and grammatical errors (e.g., ‘we eats’, ‘we doesn’t answer’, ‘we shows’). These elements remain untranslated due to the lack of phonographic means developed for them in Polish in the late 1950s when the translation was performed. Apart from this, the general impression given is that of a figure who has lived in long isolation from societal norms and conversation.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>43</sup> Tolkien J.R.R., *Hobbit czyli Tam i z powrotem*, przeł. [z ang.] Maria Skibniewska, [wiersze przeł. Włodzimierz Lewik], Warszawa, Iskry, 2013, s. 78.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., s. 79.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., s. 80.

### 3.2 Speech Peculiarities Caused by Socio-regional Stratification of the Language

The most notable example of phonographic representation among speech anomalies due to socio-regional language stratification is the imitation of the Flower Girl's Cockney in Bernard Shaw's canonical play, *Pygmalion*. Eliza Doolittle's accent is pivotal to the plot, as it starkly contrasts with the upper-class register, clearly marking her pronunciation as that of a lower-class individual. As Shaw himself wrote, "It is impossible for an Englishman to open his mouth without making some other Englishman despise him"<sup>47</sup>. To authentically portray Eliza's Cockney speech, Shaw uses phonetic transcription, vividly capturing her distinctive pronunciation:

(7) a) 'Ow, **eez ye-ooa** san, is e? Wal, **fewd dan y' de-ooty** bawmz a mather should, eed now bettern to spawl a pore **gel's** flahrzn than ran awy atbaht pyin. Will **ye-oo** py me **f'them?**<sup>48</sup>

b) 'Nah then, Freddy: look **wh'y' gowing**, deah'<sup>49</sup>.

c) 'There's menners **f' yer!** **Te-oo** banches o voylets trod into the mad'<sup>50</sup>.

While substituting specialized slang in the SL, such as military jargon, with analogous slang in the TL is often feasible, conveying the specifics of a character's regional speech poses a greater challenge. This is because the social groups using regional varieties may differ greatly in both sociological and cultural aspects, resulting in erroneous territorial associations. Therefore, it is crucial to analyze the function of a dialect within a specific literary text to decide on the appropriate translation method. Analyzing the translations of *Pygmalion*, Basil Hatim and Ian Mason point out that the aim of the translation is "to bring out the user's social/linguistic 'stigma', not necessarily by opting for a particular regional variety but by modifying the standard itself"<sup>51</sup>. The scholars suggest that "the user's status may have to be reflected not primarily through phonological features but through non-standard handling of grammar or deliberate variation of the lexis in the TL"<sup>52</sup>. In other words, the equivalence in the translation of the play must be established functionally.

The translators who did this were Florian Sobieniowski and Kazimierz Piotrowski. In Florian Sobieniowski's<sup>53</sup> 1914 translation, this speech appears as follows:

<sup>47</sup> Shaw B., *Pygmalion*, London, Longman Publishing Group, 1991, p. XI.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Hatim B., Mason I., *Discourse and the Translator*, London and New York, Longman, 1997, p. 43.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Sobieniowski's translation of *Pygmalion*, which premiered a month before its London debut in 1914, was a major success at the Polski Theatre, becoming Shaw's most successful work there. The play had three major productions (the others were in 1931 and 1937) and numerous revivals. Unlike other European countries, Poland did not have a tradition of publishing plays, especially foreign ones. As

(8) a). – To paniusi synek, ten gagatek? Żebyś go paniusia jako matka uczciwiej podchowała... To nie sztuka spaskudzić co – i w nogę... zapłaci mi to paniusia?<sup>54</sup>

b) – Fe, Fred! Gdzie leziesz, kochasiu...<sup>55</sup>

c) – Panicz zakichany... dwa bukiety fiołków wrypać w błoto...<sup>56</sup>

Being unable to portray the accent depicted in the original via phonographic means of the Polish language, Sobieniowski adopted other strategies. To compensate for the nuances of the original pronunciation, such as apostrophes marking shortened pronunciation of vowels and the artificial extension of sounds (e.g., ‘fewd dan y’ de-ooty’, ‘Will ye-oo’), Sobieniowski broke the lines into monolithic segments and crafted semantically incomplete utterances separated by pauses, making Eliza’s speech spontaneous and believable as that of a low-status girl. The translator compensated for phonographic anomalies by using colloquial expressions that can be seen as the embodiment of the speech of uneducated Polish speakers: *w nogę* for ‘to run away’ in (8a), *spaskudzić* for ‘to make something worse than it was’ in (8a), *gdzie leziesz* for ‘where are you going’ in (8b), and *wrypać w błoto* for ‘to mire in wet, sticky earth’ in (8c). There are also instances of informal address forms, with (8b) applying colloquial *fe* for ‘dear’ and ironic or contemptuous *kochas* for ‘darling’, (8a) using colloquial *gagatek* for ‘mischievous or naughty child’, (8a) employing pejorative *paniusia* for ‘a pretentious, superficial, or lacking intelligence woman’, and (8c) using derogatory *Panicz zakichany* for ‘young master who is disliked or contemptible’. Additionally, there is an instance of anomalous grammar: *zapłaci mi to paniusia* instead of *zapłaci mi za to paniusia* for ‘the lady will pay me for this’ in (8a)), which further enhances the portrayal of an uneducated girl.

Overall, without resorting to phonographic stylisation, the translator focused on accurately depicting the speech of the rough and uneducated flower girl. By using anomalies at levels other than phonological – such as vernacular lexis and non-standard grammar – he employed a strategy of lexico-grammatical compensation. He chose not to use a parallel dialect translation. Considering the time of the play’s translation, Sobieniowski likely believed that using a dialect could impede national comprehension, especially if the audience consisted of people from different regions with significantly varied speech patterns and vocabulary.

Examination of Kazimierz Piotrowski’s 1959 translation of the play shows that nothing of this local color has been transferred into the TL:

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a result, although Sobieniowski translated over forty of Shaw’s plays, most of which were performed, almost none were published during Shaw’s lifetime.

<sup>54</sup> Shaw B., *Pigmalion*, przeł. [z ang.] Florian Sobieniowski, Warszawa, 2007, s. 8.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, s. 7.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

(9) a) – Aa, to pani synek, co? No proszę, szkoda, żeś go pani lepiej nie wychowała, bo jak biednej dziewczynie sponiewierał kwiatki, to by nie nawiał, tylko wybulił, co się należy. Zapłaci pani szanowna za te kwiatki?<sup>57</sup>

b) – Co jest, Fredziu?! Z kija się urwałeś, kochany?<sup>58</sup>

c) – Ładnie cię wychowali! Dwa bukieciki fiołków wdeptał w błoto<sup>59</sup>.

Having chosen to stylize the speech of a non-standard speaker primarily through lexis, as in the previous translation, Piotrowski employed several distinctive features: colloquial expressions (e.g., *nawiać* for ‘run away’ in (9a), *wybulić* for ‘pay out’ (9a), *Co jest?* for ‘What’s going on?’ in (9b), *z kija się urwać* for ‘to be out of one’s mind’ in (9b)); the diminutives (e.g., *kwiatki* for ‘little flowers’ in (9a), *synek* for ‘little son’ in (9a), and *bukieciki* for ‘little bouquets’ in (9c)); rural stylization elements (e.g., *żeś nie wychowała* instead of *że nie wychowałeś* for ‘you didn’t raise him better’ in (9a)<sup>60</sup>, and informal address forms (e.g., sarcastic *kochany* for ‘darling’ in (9b), and the now dated form *pani szanowna* for ‘Dear Madam’ in (9a)). Finally, there is something clearly amiss in Eliza’s manner of speech. The narrator describes her speech as foul and vulgar, attributing this to her careless, sloppy pronunciation associated with the lower social classes. In the translation, the absence of features that convey the character’s impudence resulting from her speech, which could have been effectively expressed through more abrupt and shorter sentences, is noticeable. The general impression is that of a surprisingly well-spoken speech, with no other lexical anomalies apart from expressions typical of colloquial usage. Ideological norms likely influenced these choices, as deviations from standard language, aside from the dated elements, if not entirely banned, were certainly discouraged.

It is worth noting that the translated segments are not uncommon examples of renditions that avoid phonographic stylisation of speech impediments arising from socio-regional language stratification. When choosing a strategy for addressing phonographic stylisation, translators should consider Patrice Pavis<sup>61</sup> advice on intercultural translation. They need to assess the cultural distance between the ST and the TT and realize that overemphasizing the source culture can make their text unreadable, while excessive normalization can obscure its origin. To decide on the most suitable strategy for addressing phonographic stylisation in *Pygmalion*, intertwining parallel dialect translation with the creation of an invented TL composed

<sup>57</sup> Shaw B., *Pygmalion*, przeł. [z ang.] Kazimierz Piotrowski, Warszawa, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1981, s. 32.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., s. 31.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Unlike the incorrect form, Piotrowski uses the correct one, which is most commonly associated with non-standard language.

<sup>61</sup> Pavis P., *Problems of translation for the stage: interculturalism and post-modern theater* (trans. Kruger L.) [in:] Scolnicov H. and Holland P. (eds.), *The Play Out of Context. Transferring Plays from Culture to Culture*, Cambridge, 1989, p. 37.

of incorrect, popular variants seems most appropriate. Using heavy dialects might make the performance or play harder to understand, especially in cultures with significant dialectal differences. However, the TL audience, being native speakers, will likely understand any unfamiliar dialectal terms, aided by the context of the performance.

### 3.3. Speech Peculiarities Caused by the Contact of Two Languages

The final example to be examined pertains to the third type of speech peculiarities associated with bilingual language interference, as illustrated in Zadie Smith's novel *Swing Time* (2016). The segments portray the speech of Uncle Lambert, a Jamaican living on the outskirts of London, who speaks with a distinct Jamaican accent:

(10) a) 'Cyan do nuttin wid er. Always been like dat'<sup>62</sup>.

b) 'Once dis house full of pick'ney,' said Lambert, "but dem children got children now"<sup>63</sup>.

c) Cyan do nuttin wid dat woman. I knew it from time she was small. Her will is a will of iron'<sup>64</sup>.

Smith consistently employs phonographic stylisation to convey a strong Jamaican flavor in Lambert's speech (e.g., 'Cyan do nuttin wid er' in (10a, 10c)). Skillfully incorporating several elements of the accent into character's speech, the author replaces [θ] with [d] (e.g., 'dat' for 'that' in (10a), 'dis' for 'this' in (10b), 'wid' for 'with' in (10c)) and [t] (e.g., 'nutting' for 'nothing' in (10c)), a common technique to convey a foreign accent in English. There is a representation of h-dropping in (10a), a feature common in many accents, especially in the case of the pronouns 'he'/'her' and 'him'/'her'. Smith further uses grammatical anomalies (e.g., 'always been like' in (10a), 'but dem children got children now' in (10b)) to convey a strong Jamaican flavor. The overall effect of phonographic stylisation contributes to the depiction of Uncle Lambert as a non-progressive character, contrasting sharply with those who advocate for Black men to advance and secure respect in a predominantly white society. His accent serves as a symbol of his stagnant state, rather than merely indicating his nationality.

Tomasz Kłoszewski's translation of these segments displays a substantial attempt to render the phonographic stylisation found in the original:

<sup>62</sup> Smith Z., *Swing time*, New York, Penguin Press, 2016, p. 20.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

(11) a) – **Nicz sze nie da zrobicz**. Zawsze taka była<sup>65</sup>.

b) – Dawno temu ten dom był pełen **czeczarni** – powiedział – no, ale one teraz mają już swoje małe<sup>66</sup>.

c) – **Nicz sze nie da zrobicz** z tą kobietą. **Widziałem** już, jak była mała. Ma żelazno **wole**<sup>67</sup>.

Tomasz Kłoszewski methodically selected the means of phonographic stylization to capture Lambert's distinctive phrases in translation (e.g., 'Cyan do nuttin wid er...' instead of *Nicz sze nie da zrobicz...* for 'Nothing can be done' in (11a, 11c). Deliberate alterations in the word spellings are used to reflect Polish pronunciation differences, such as changing alveolar and postalveolar consonants to dental ones (e.g., *nicz* instead of *nic* for 'nothing in (11a, 11c)), *zrobicz* instead of *zrobić* for 'to do' in (11a, 11c). Further stylisation includes devoicing (e.g., *czeczarni* instead of *dzieciarni* for 'children' in (11b)) and intentional misspellings (e.g., *widziałem* instead of *wiedziałem* for 'to know' in (11c)). Intentional grammar anomalies occur (e.g., the denasalization of nasal vowels *żelazno wole* instead of *żelazną wolę* for 'will-Accusative' in (11c) but are used inconsistently (e.g., *z tą kobietą* for 'with this woman' in (11c) is grammatically correct form). These inconsistencies do not detract from the overall impression of the non-native English speaker, whose speech is effectively rendered through phonographic means that most readers can easily recognize. Thus, we could explain this as being the use of parallel/analogues means of the TL.

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper demonstrates that while the challenges a translator faces in rendering phonographic stylisation are not entirely insurmountable, they can only be partially conveyed in the TL. Phonographic stylisation relies on the phonological and orthographic features of a specific language, inherently possessing characteristics that make it difficult, if not impossible, to translate. This explains why translators often choose to omit phonographic stylisation, as seen in *The Pickwick Club*, or compensate for its absence by resorting to violations on the levels others than phono-graphical, such as using colloquial language and incorrect grammar, as in *Pygmalion*. Conversely, the Polish versions of *The Hobbit or There and Back Again* and *Swing Time*, include fragments where phonographic stylisation is preserved, with characters speaking in accents recognizable to both SL and TL audiences. This strategy can be interpreted as using parallel or analogous means to render phonographic anomalies.

<sup>65</sup> Smith Z., *Swing time*, przeł. [z ang.] Tomasz Kłoszewski, Kraków, Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy Znak, 2017, s. 28.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., s. 29.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., s. 30.

Having examined the peculiarities of rendering different types of phonographic anomalies in English-to-Polish translation, a cautious conclusion can be drawn from this short survey. There is a gradual shift in translation trends: rather than rejecting the parallel reproduction of phonographic anomalies, there is a growing awareness of the need for creative solutions to represent analogous features in Polish translations – a search that is beginning to yield fruitful results. The findings highlight the need for further research into phonographic stylization in literary texts and effective methods for conveying them in translation, as this issue remains unresolved.

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### Phonographic Stylisation as a Means of Imitating Speech Anomalies: Challenges Faced by Literary Translators

**Summary:** This paper examines the phonographic stylisation means used to convey characters' speech anomalies in English literature, focused on the works of Charles Dickens, Bernard Shaw, John R. R. Tolkien, and Zadie Smith. The paper also explores the functions of phonographic stylisation and discusses strategies for translating this phenomenon into Polish. The analysis covers three types of phonographic stylisation means: those arising from the speaker's physical and emotional state, those used to stylize vernacular and dialectal speech, and those related to bilingual language interference. Despite authors' careful efforts to maintain phonographic stylisation, translators might miss these subtleties, resulting in translations free from any speech anomalies whatsoever. However, recent studies show a trend towards translation

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strategies that closely imitate or analogically reproduce speech anomalies, thereby more accurately preserving phonographic stylisation in the target language, as seen in Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and Smith's *Swing Time*.

**Keywords:** phonographic stylisation means, speech anomaly, function, translation strategy, translation

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