

Comparative Study of Paralinguistic Means in Character Descriptions in English and Russian Literary Text

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ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the comparative analysis of paralinguistic means in the portrait characteristics of a character based on the material of the novel The Man of Property by John Galsworthy and the novel Brothers and Sisters by Fyodor Abramov. The focus is on paraphonetic and parakinesic means accompanying verbal speech and forming the emotional-semantic and cultural background of literary narration. The methodological basis of the analysis includes the classification of paralinguistic means, comparative-descriptive and interpretive approaches. It has been established that in English prose, paralinguistic elements function as indirect markers of tension and hidden emotions expressed by restrained bodily reactions and prosodic shades. Russian prose, on the contrary, demonstrates explicit, bodily expressed emotional behavior of characters, where nonverbal signals serve as direct indicators of psychological state, social roles and interpersonal dynamics. Such differences reflect cultural attitudes towards the demonstration of emotions, models of communicative behavior and ideas about status and closeness. The results confirm that paralinguistic means are an integral element of artistic discourse and require linguaculturally meaningful interpretation. The conducted analysis emphasizes the significance of the nonverbal component in literary communication and can serve as a basis for further cross-cultural studies of the artistic text.

Keywords: Paralinguistics, portrait characteristics, linguoculturology, non-verbal communication, national character, communication strategy

INTRODUCTION

Paralinguistic means are an important component of the portrait characteristics of a character in a literary text, providing a multi-layered transfer of information about his internal state, personal qualities and relationships with others. In the context of linguacultural studies, the analysis of such means allows us to identify the features of national and cultural concepts underlying the non-verbal behavior of characters. This study is aimed at comparing the representation of paralinguistic means in works of English and Russian literature of the late 19th - mid-20th centuries. Despite the growing interest in non-verbal communication, a comparative analysis of paralinguistic means in English-language and Russian-language literary texts remains an underdeveloped area.

Paralinguistics as a scientific direction was substantiated in the works of E. Hall (Hall 1959), P. Ekman (Ekman 2003) and other researchers of nonverbal behavior. E. Hall was the first to draw attention to the cultural nature of proxemics and bodily interaction, identifying paralinguistic components as a separate class of communication. P. Ekman focused on facial expressions and emotions, emphasizing the contextual ambiguity of gestures and facial expressions: for example, a smile can signal pleasure, irony or anxiety, depending on the situation.

V. I. Karasik (2002) considered paralinguistic elements as part of the linguistic personality and cultural behavior, and D. B. Gudkov (2003) and A. A. Leontiev (1997) emphasized that non-verbal manifestations are inseparable from cultural codes and cognitive interpretation, which is especially important when analyzing a literary text.

Modern linguists have expanded the approach to paralinguistics, integrating it into the field of linguacultural studies and intercultural communication. A special contribution

was made by researchers from Uzbekistan, who developed applied classifications and typologies of PLS.

D. A. Abduazizova conducted a detailed study of paralinguistic means in Uzbek, Russian and English cultures (Abduazizova 2019b: 96-108). She developed an extended classification, including: parakinetic means: gestures (14 subcategories), facial expressions (6), body movements (5), as well as paraphonetic means: segmental (6) and supersegmental (9) (Abduazizova 2019a: 72-84). She also substantiated the need to teach non-verbal behavior in the process of intercultural interaction and proposed a comparative-typological method for analyzing PLS (Abduazizova 2021: 115-120).

G. B. Nadzhimova studied the linguacognitive features of non-verbal behavior in English and Karakalpak cultures (Nadzhimova 2023a: 249-253). Her approach is based on the interdisciplinary integration of cognitive linguistics, cultural semiotics and paralinguistics (Nadzhimova 2021: 53-58). The scientist showed how kinetic signals reflect mentality, national traditions and norms of behavior, forming unique cultural codes of perception and expression of emotions (Abramov 1978: 142-176).

A number of researchers emphasize the importance of paralinguistics in the formation of cultural mutual understanding. The works of Aripova (2002: 186); Samigova (2022: 71-75); Khasanova (2021: 354-359); Eralieva (2021: 80-83); Usmonova (2022: 106-109); Balibekova & Shovksiev (2022: 518-520); Nizomova (2023: 151-156) and Yakubov (2023: 7-12) show that knowledge of paralinguistics contributes to the development of intercultural competence; the improvement of translation practice and a deeper understanding of cultural norms and historical and everyday features of different peoples.

In empirical studies, L. Abdukodirova established that hand and finger movements make up a significant part of bodily communication in the Uzbek language (20% and 13%, respectively) (2024: 56-59).

N. I. Khursanov studied dramatic works of English and Uzbek literature, identifying correlations between verbal and non-verbal means and their function in social dramaturgy (2024: 17-27). K. Kakharov compared Uzbek and German speech

etiquette, focusing on nationally specific features of non-verbal behavior. H. Ismailov, within the framework of forensic linguistics, linked non-verbal signals with psycholinguistic indicators of truth and lies in the speech behavior of the accused. Ghaidarov emphasized the importance of supersegmental elements – intonations, pauses, stresses – in conveying the connotative meaning of speech (2009: 136).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The empirical basis for this study is two works of art belonging to different national-cultural and literary traditions: John Galsworthy's novel *The Man of Property* (1906), representing English realistic prose of the early 20th century, and Fyodor Abramov's novel *Brothers and Sisters* (1978), reflecting the specifics of Russian village prose of the second half of the 20th century. The analysis of paralinguistic means is carried out on the basis of their classification into the following main categories: kinesic means (gestures, facial expressions, body positions and movements), as well as paraphonetic means (prosodic characteristics, including intonation, pauses, unmarked sound signals such as sighs, etc.).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Parakinesic devices, describing static or repetitive bodily states, play an important role in artistic discourse, especially when it comes to expressing emotional tension and internal conflict of a character. In English literature of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they perform a special function – they replace the direct expression of feelings, especially within the Victorian cultural model, where restraint was considered a sign of nobility, willpower and social education.

In James Forsyth's description, Galsworthy uses static parakinesics:

...brooded over the scene with his permanent stoop ... (Galsworthy 1906: 5)

Permanent stoop (permanent stoop) here acts as a bodily symptom of psychological stiffness, self-absorption and hidden pressure. The pose does not change: it is fixed in habit, in character. In English culture, such a cinemame traditionally markstransfer of life's fatigue to the body, internal protest that finds no outlet or silent disagreement with what is happening, with an outwardly submissive posture. Thus, James's posture is not just a physical characteristic, but a socio-cultural code: the body expresses what is not expressed in words.

The following description concerns James's eyes:

His gray eyes had an air of fixed absorption in some secret worry, broken at intervals by a rapid, shifting examination of surrounding facts. (Galsworthy 1906: 5)

It can be seen from the example above that two mimic-parakinesic strategies are combined:

- fixed absorption – a frozen gaze directed "inward";
- rapid, shifting scrutiny – a cursory observation of the surroundings.

This look functions in two ways: on the one hand, it is an expression of deep inner excitement, hidden from others, on the other hand, it is maintaining control over the situation, corresponding to the social role of the observer.

This corresponds to the English model of emotional behavior, in which it is customary to hide personal concerns and at the same time not to lose social control. Internal concentration and rapid reorientation of the gaze serve as “substitutes” for speech and feelings.

Another expressive example is a simple but meaningful action:

In his hands he turned and turned a piece of China. (Galsworthy 1906: 5)

The repetitive movement of the hand rubbing an object is a micro-action that expresses hidden anxiety. It does not violate

external restraint, but releases tension bodily. In the English cultural context, such behavior is often interpreted as psychologically acceptable form of self-regulation, a display of polite detachment or inner uncertainty or a symbol of emotional conflict that does not result in an open reaction.

Porcelain item (a piece of china) can also carry a symbolic meaning : as something fragile, it acts as a metaphor for subtle, vulnerable feelings that the hero cannot or does not want to express.

In all three cases, Galsworthy uses subtle parakinesic means as an alternative to direct description of emotions. This is not only an artistic device, but also a reflection of the cultural norms characteristic of the English bourgeois society of that time. Such characters do not express emotions directly, considering this a sign of weakness, use body micro-signals to indicate anxiety, tension, fatigue or maintain outward restraint even while in deep internal conflict.

Parakinesics in Galsworthy acts as a representative of the cultural attitude towards self-control, replacing dramatic speech with the silent language of the body. Paraphonetic markers of the emotional and social status of the character (based on the novel by J. Galsworthy *The Man of Property*). In artistic discourse, the sound features of the characters' speech – intonation accents, pronunciation features, rhythm, pauses – play an important role in the formation of portrait characteristics and the expression of deep cultural meanings. These elements are related to paraphonetic means – secondary sound structures that do not carry lexical information, but actively participate in the creation of the emotional and social background of speech. Analysis of paraphonetic means in the novel by J. Galsworthy *The Man of Property* demonstrates that the author consciously uses the sound fabric of characters' speech as a way to reflect their social position, cultural identity, and emotional states.

In the episode where the architect Bozini is mentioned:

“This young Bosinney,” - he made the word a dactyl in opposition to general usage of a short o. (Galsworthy 1906: 11)

The character pronounces his surname with an unnatural stress (*BO -si- ney*), instead of the standard *bo -SIN- ney*. This rhythm shift is perceived as a phonetic marking of an “outsider”: the hero demonstratively emphasizes the foreignness of the name, thereby expressing hostility and social superiority. In English bourgeois culture, the correct pronunciation of names and words is a sign of belonging to “one’s own.” In the example, the paraphonetic gesture becomes a non-verbal form of social irony and exclusion.

The following example represents paraphonetic means:

Well, HE takes good care of himself... (Galsworthy 1906: 12)

It can be noticed the stress falls on the pronoun *HE*, which does not have a grammatical function, but expresses an emotional-evaluative modality. The intonation emphasis marks an ambivalent attitude: between envy, admiration and contempt. This is a typical mechanism of British irony, in which intonation is more important than words – it “says” what cannot be expressed directly.

The following example demonstrates another type of paraphonetic means:

...if he likes to do these things, I s'pose he can afford to.
(Galsworthy 1906: 13)

The shortened forms “pose” instead of “suppose” is a phonetic reduction characteristic of colloquial speech. Here it performs an emotionally protective function: the hero reduces the seriousness of what is said, as if “distancing himself” from the topic. In the context of the English cultural tradition, such a reduction serves as a form of polite rejection, where the avoidance of directness is compensated by the softness and informality of the statement.

Paraphonetic verb “coming down sharp” indicates a sharp, abrupt pronunciation in the next phrase:

“Doctors!” - said James, coming down sharp on his words.
(Galsworthy 1906: 14)

It reflects internal anxiety, irritation and lack of control. In the culture of Victorian England, where it was important to maintain restraint, such sharpness indicates a temporary loss of the social mask. It conveys an impulsive emotional breakdown, with an outwardly sparse vocabulary.

The example beneath shows no other type of paraphonetic means:

“Er - how are you?” he said in his dandified way, aspirating the ‘h’ strongly (this difficult letter was almost absolutely safe in his keeping). (Galsworthy 1906: 14)

Aspiration of the “h” (its clear pronunciation) is a culturally significant feature in British phonetics. In the traditional lower classes (especially in “Cockney”), “h” is often “swallowed” (“how” → “ow”). On the contrary, hyper-clear pronunciation of “h” demonstrates belonging to the upper class, or, on the contrary, a claim to it. The hero, “pulling out” “h,” tries to emphasize his gentlemanly sophistication, which in the context of the novel sounds ironic and even parodic. This phonetic behavior becomes a social gesture, showing how important it is in the bourgeois environment to “speak correctly.”

Paraphonetic means in Galsworthy's artistic speech do not simply decorate the text, but perform communicative, psychological and cultural functions. Through stress, abbreviations, modulations and pronunciation features, the author reveals the social structure of interactions between characters, represents internal tension, irony, aggression or embarrassment and conveys the values and norms of Victorian and Edwardian England, in which speech serves not only to express thoughts, but also to confirm status.

Thus, paraphonetics in a literary text becomes a powerful linguacultural tool that covertly expresses hierarchies, conflicts and identities within the framework of literary reality.

In Fyodor Abramov's novel *Brothers and Sisters* the characters' speech often includes sighs, pauses, and speech inclusions that perform an emotional and expressive function:

Едет наш Еруслан, – сказал кто-то со вздохом. (Abramov 1978: 9)

("Our Yeruslan is coming," someone said with a sigh)

The sigh here acts as a sign of inner reconciliation, a light irony, which is characteristic of Russian village culture, oriented toward collective experience of difficulties. It is a form of silent reaction, built into the national way of behavior: not a complaint, but humility.

The characters' speech intonations are usually filled with commanding categoricalness or emphasized irony. Thus, Likhachev's command speech is filled with accents of control:

Сколько тебе говорено, что здесь нет Харитоши, а есть товарищ Лихачев? ... Понятно? (Abramov 1978: 10)

(How many times have you been told that there is no Kharitoshia here, but there is comrade Likhachev?... Understood?)

The repeated phrase "Understand?" is rhythmically designed as a directive and serves as a prosodic marker of power. Such speech is typical of the Soviet official command discourse and conveys the corresponding cultural attitudes – hierarchy, strictness, straightforwardness.

One of the most expressive non-verbal gestures is the episode with Likhachev:

Лихачев, как штык, выбросил в сторону Анфисы обрубок левой кисти. (Abramov 1978: 14)

(Likhachev, like a bayonet, threw the stump of his left hand towards Anfisa.)

Here, the sharp movement of the hand, accentuating the physical defect (the stump of the hand), enhances the effect of intimidation. This gesture performs the function of demonstrating power, aggression and absolute dominance in the dialogue. It culturally fits into the discourse of "military directness" – an important code of Soviet ideology, in which bodily marking (wound, victim) justifies moral rigidity.

Mimicry is also used as a way of evaluating and making ironic remarks without words:

Федор Капитонович насмешливо и сожалеюще посмотрел на девушку... (Abramov 1978: 13)
(Fyodor Kapitonovich looked at the girl mockingly and regretfully ...)

This facial expression refers to a form of soft irony typical of Russian village culture – an instrument of instruction without direct criticism. In this way, the function of socialization is realized through emotional facial expressions.

Emotions are often accompanied by multiple parakinesic signals:

Настя с отчаянием всплеснула руками:
– *Да ведь, может, завтра ручьи побегут. Ты что, Anfisa Петровна, не понимаешь?* (Abramov 1978: 22)
(Nastya threw up her hands in despair:
- Well, maybe tomorrow the streams will start flowing. Don't you understand, Anfisa Petrovna?)

In this example, vocalization, body movements, and intonation are combined. They form an image of female anxiety, culturally acceptable and even expected in rural society. Emotional openness, physical mobility, crying as a public gesture - all this is perceived in culture as a sign of sincerity.

An analysis of the non-verbal components of artistic speech in F. Abramov's novel allows us to identify the deep cultural mechanisms through which the characters' personalities and their emotional and social behavior patterns are formed. Paralinguistic means in the text perform not only an expressive but also a linguacultural function, becoming signs of social stratification, gender roles, and collective emotions.

A comparison of paralinguistic means in the English and Russian literary traditions allows us to identify not only formal differences in the description of non-verbal behavior, but also the cultural attitudes that underlie them. Using the example of John Galsworthy's novels *The Man of Property* and Fyodor Abramov's

Brothers and Sisters trace different models of expression of emotions, authority and interpersonal distance, transmitted through paraphonetic and parakinesic means.

In English text, paraphonetics is most often used for minor modulation of meaning, creation of subtext, conveying irony or omission.

1. “Well, HE takes good care of himself...” – Intonational stress on the pronoun expresses ambivalence (admiration or contempt).
2. “Doctors !”- said James, coming down sharp on his words. – A short, abrupt burst of speech indicating suppressed anxiety.

In Russian text, paraphonetic means, on the contrary, are direct expressions of emotional state.

1. ...сказалкто-тосовздохом (...said someone with a sigh) – The sigh reflects collective experience and peasant patience.
2. ...Понятно? (“...Understand?”) is the rhythmic and percussive design of the command, typical of Soviet regulatory speech.

Therefore, it can be concluded that English paraphonetics functions as a means of rhetorical control and creation of social distance, manifesting itself mainly through irony and restrained intonational assessment. Russian paraphonetics, on the contrary, is characterized as a form of direct emotional expression, often overt and straightforward.

Galsworthy describes minimal bodily manifestations that function as symbols of internal tension:

1. “...brooded over the scene with his permanent stoop...” – Slouching as a marker of emotional pressure and lack of freedom.
2. “...he turned and turned a piece of china ” – Fine motor skills that signal anxiety and self-control.
3. “... aspiring the 'h' strongly ” – Phonetic hypercorrectness as a social mask.

In Abramov’s work, the character’s body is always actively involved in speech and interaction; his movements are straightforward, open, and physical :

1. ...*как тык, выбросил в сторону* *Анфисы* *обрубок кисти* (“...like a bayonet, he threw the stump of his hand towards Anfisa”) – aggression, command.
2. ...*с отчаянием всплеснула руками...* (“... she threw up her hands in despair ...”) is a physical demonstration of anxiety and helplessness.
3. ...*посмотрел с насмешкой и сожалением* (“...looked with mockery and regret”) – facial expressions as a form of emotional and social assessment.

CONCLUSION

English parakinesics is manifested mainly through indirect and symbolically loaded bodily signals, often requiring interpretation in context. While Russian parakinesics is distinguished by directness, clarity and close connection with social roles and situations, which makes the characters' body movements transparent in meaning and clearly expressed in appearance.

A comparison of English and Russian artistic discourse shows that paralinguistic means are closely linked to emotion, social norms and acceptable behavior.

In English prose, paraphonetics and parakinesics encode tension, mask feelings, contributing to a sense of underlying conflict. In Russian literature, on the contrary, the character's body and voice directly transmit emotions, are part of social interaction and collective existence.

Thus, paralinguistics turns out to be a powerful cultural-linguistic mechanism that reveals nationally specific models of speech behavior recorded in artistic discourse.

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