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Stylistics of Scientific Discourse in Charles Darwin's "The Origin of Species" and Its Russian Translations

The present research is devoted to the study of diachronic development of the Russian academic style based on three translations of Charles Darwin's "The Origin of the Species" into Russian conducted in different time periods. The original text and the translations are analysed with the goal to identify the characteristic features of the style at different points in time and to determine its developmental tendencies.

Key words: evolutionary biology, academic discourse, scientific translation, academic prose style.

Translation is an integral part of the propagation of scientific knowledge that ensures successful intercultural communication of novel concepts in order to stimulate scientific progress. One of the youngest branches of natural science that has had a significant influence on the society is the field of evolutionary biology and the related field of genetics. It is commonly believed that the evolutionary theory has had a significant influence on cultures and ideologies, and that this influence has been reciprocal, as ideologies have also shaped the evolutionary theory in certain ways [1, p. 39]. The numerous translations of the fundamental work in the field, namely Charles Darwin's "The Origin of Species", into Russian will reveal upon examination how the advancements in the field of biology and changes in social and political ideology have influenced the perceived adequateness of the translations through time. Three translations of "The Origin of Species" conducted in different periods of time are examined in the present study with the aim of exposing the stylistic variation of the Russian academic prose style in the diachronic perspective. There are numerous Russian translations and editions of "The Origin of Species", and the fact that new translations regularly appear and that older translations are being revised indicates that the discourse of evolutionary biology is still developing and changing and that this work is still of interest to the scientific community. The corpus of excerpts analysed is limited to the section "Classification" from Chapter 14 extracted from the following publications:

1. the 6th edition of "The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life" by Charles Darwin (1872) [2];

2. the 3rd edition of the first translation of the work into Russian by S. Rachinskiy (1873) [3];

3. the translation by K. Timiryazev edited by N. Vavilov (1935) [4];

4. the 2nd edition of the translation by K. Timiryazev edited by A. Takhtajan (2001) [5].

The initial **hypothesis** states that the first translation (1873) treats the book primarily as a literary text, therefore, the translation is conducted freely in regard to the original preserving the publicist style, subjectivity and expressiveness of the style of the time and the source. As the 1935 edition was created at the dawn of modern systematic study and translation of academic discourse, it is source-text oriented and exhibits both features of Darwinian style and those of modern Russian academic style, which had developed but had not yet been described by that time. The most recent edition (2001) is target-text oriented and employs modern Russian scientific style in its mature form, as at the time of creation of this edition, the theory of scientific translation was fully developed and the Russian academic style was described extensively.

The comparative stylistic analysis of the three translations has been conducted with the aim of describing the Russian academic style at the moment of publication of the translations. The stylistic differences determined reveal the tendencies of the development of the style. Twenty excerpts illustrating the diachronic evolution of the style have been selected from the texts using the method of continuous sampling.

All the conclusions stem strictly from the observations of the instances of stylistic discrepancy among the three translations. No attempts to give an exhaustive description of the style of any one translation were undertaken in the present study. For the reasons of brevity, general phrases like “the most common means of ... in T1873 is...” are used. They refer to the aspects of the style in the cases where it differs from the other texts, and they do not contain any claims about the frequency of a certain occurrence in the whole text of the translation, but rather only in the excerpts analysed. The sentences that claim that something is absent from one of the translations mean that in every case analysed a different construction was chosen for translation, although such constructions may be found in the text fragments that were not analysed or that did not contain any stylistic discrepancies among the translations.

The table below contains an illustration of the process of the comparative stylistic and diachronic discourse analysis applied in the research. The material is presented as microcontexts organised in tables each containing an excerpt of the source text and its three translations. Stylistic differences pertinent for the analysis are marked in bold; the detailed description of the differences determined in the fragment follows the table.

Table 1. Microcontext 1

Source	T 1873	T 1935	T 2001
I attempted also to show that there is a steady tendency in the forms which are increasing in number and diverging in character, to supplant and exterminate the preceding , less divergent and less improved forms.	Я постарался также показать, что формы, увеличивающія свою численность и расходящіяся въ признакахъ, постоянно стремятся вытъснять и истреблять формы менѣ расходящіяся , менѣ усовершенствованныя, формы болѣ древнія .	Я старался также показать, что у форм, постепенно возрастающих в числе и расходящихся в признакахъ, есть постоянное стремление подавить и привести к вымиранию более ранние формы, менее расходящиеся в признакахъ и менее совершенные.	Я пытался также показать, что у форм, возрастающих в числе и дивергировавших в признакахъ, есть постоянная склонность заместить и истребить предшествующие им формы, менее дивергировавшие в признакахъ и менее улучшенные.

In Microcontext 1, two instances of using Latinate lexis instead of Slavic lexis can be observed in T2001 (*дивергировавших* as opposed to *расходящихся*). Another lexical difference is the conveyance of the adjective *preceding*. In T1873 and T1935, it is translated by using adjectives (*древнія*; *ранние*), whereas T2001 uses an attributive participle (*предшествующие*). In T1873, *формы* is the subject of the clause and an action verb (*стремятся*) is the predicate. The predicate is further complemented by two additional infinitives *вытъснять* and *истреблять*. A contrasting situation is displayed by the other two translations. The subject of the clause is the abstract and inanimate *склонность/стремление*. The meaning of *to supplant and exterminate* is not expressed in complements of the predicate but rather as modifiers of the subject, resulting in long extended nominal phrases. Furthermore, in T1935, the meaning of *истребить* is transferred to the noun complement of the verb *привести* (*к вымиранию*), which is consistent with the nominal nature of the style. The subject of the clause is thus the extended noun phrase *постоянное стремление подавить и привести к вымиранию более ранние формы, менее расходящиеся в признакахъ и менее совершенные*, which shows a stark contrast with the subject of the same clause in T1873 (*формы*), in which all of this information is conveyed in the predicate.

The conducted comparative analysis has shown that one of the general trends of the development of the academic style is the increasing striving for brevity. The trend is the most pronounced in T2001, less so in T1935, and T1873 contains instances of addition of explanatory elements, which results in the translated passages being longer than the original ones. The means of achieving conciseness in T2001 are ellipses of repeated units, omission of units, abbreviations, sentence restructuring, avoidance of parentheses and relative clauses.

At the lexical level, the analysis suggests that the style of T1935 occupies an intermediate stage in the development of the Russian academic style. A total of 24 instances of preference for lexical units of foreign origin in T2001 over Slavic lexis used in T1873 has been identified (e.g. *grouping* – *сочетание* – *группировка*; *authors* – *писатели* – *авторы*; *scheme* – *рамка* – *схема*; *living objects* – *живые существа* – *организмы*, *method* – *приём* – *метод*; *a single sentence* – *определение* – *термин*, *morphological characters* – *чертахи строения* – *морфологические особенности* – *морфологические признаки*, etc.). T1935 employs foreign lexis in 34% of these cases and Slavic lexis in 66% of the cases, suggesting that the tendency for using foreign lexis was not as pronounced at the time of its publication. The two translations employ lexis borrowed from Latin, Greek and French, which are mainly cognate to the words used in the original, while T1873 employs Slavic equivalents in these cases. This trend can be observed in relation to the lexis belonging to the classes of noun, verb and adjective.

In T1873, the use of figurative language has also been determined. For example, the neutral prepositional phrase *From the most remote period in the history of the world* is translated using an expressive metaphor *От самой зари жизни*, which differs both stylistically and semantically from the original, in T1873, by a neutral trite metaphor *отдаленнейших периодов в истории земного шара* in T1935, and by a phrase equivalent in style and meaning in T2001 (*с отдаленнейшего периода истории мира*) avoiding the metaphor.

T1873 is in many instances based directly on the source text in its word choice, whereas T1935 and even more so T2001 conveys the meaning by an equivalent set phrase that is now perceived as characteristic of the style. Due to the style being more developed by 2001, more such set phrases are found in that text. T1935 uses similar or identical set phrases in 75% of the cases. They are usually noun pairs, preposition-noun pairs or verbs-complement pairs that are employed for evoking a specific meaning regardless of the phrasing in the original passage. These set phrases exhibit no variation in structure, always retain the same grammatical form and

syntactic role and are composed of the same lexical units. The emergence of fixed expressions that permit no variation and limit certain lexical units in their declensional paradigm prove to be one of the defining features of the Russian academic style. The findings of the present research suggest that this feature of the style had already been strongly pronounced in 1935 and solidified by 2001.

Pronouns, especially the 1st person plural pronoun, are the most common in T1873. Eight instances of personal pronouns being present in T1873 while being absent from the other two translations have been determined (e.g. *the one known cause* – *единственная известная нам причина* – *единственная известная причина*). They are the least common in T1935, in which either pronouns are omitted while the construction remains similar to that of T1873, or the constructions are entirely different and do not require a pronoun. T2001 also avoids pronouns but to a lesser extent than T1935.

The emergence of complex prepositions resulting from fusion of simple prepositions with nouns can be observed in T1935. In T2001, such complex prepositions are employed more widely, but in the text of 1873, they are completely absent. T1935 exhibits prepositions of these types in 75% of cases of their occurrence in T2001. This process in the realm of prepositions is parallel to the phenomenon that is observed in the realm of nouns, namely the emergence of fixed preposition-noun and noun-noun pairs.

A tendency characterising the syntactic structure of the style that can be observed in T1935 and T2001 is the avoidance of relative clauses, parentheses and participle clauses when compared to T1873 (e.g. *the rules followed in classification* – *на правила, которыми руководствуется классификация* – *правилами классификации*). Parenthetical phrases are common in T1873, but are not found in either of the other two translations. The parentheses are either omitted completely in them or the meaning is transferred to a modifier of some part of the sentence. The possible reason for avoiding parentheses is that they modify the whole sentence, which leads to a degree of ambiguity. Instead of relative clauses, attributive nouns, adjectives and participles are employed for expressing the same ideas. T1935 and T2001 modify a concrete word in the sentence to express the meaning of the parenthesis or a relative clause without the ambiguity. The developmental trend of the style is to have clauses that are longer but in lesser quantity.

One of most conspicuous features of the style of T1935 is its nominal structure. Extended nominal constructions with attributive nouns have been determined in 7 microcontexts, in which other means of noun modification are used in other translations. The research suggests that T1935 is about

three times more likely to employ an attributive noun for modification of other nouns than T2001. The text makes use of long strings of modifying nouns connected by means of the genitive and dative cases or by means of prepositions with the use of the prepositional case. T2001 also contains numerous nominal constructions of this type, but generally they are briefer. In some instances, adjectives and participles are preferred to strings of nouns.

T1935 exhibits the most active morphology. A frequent case is the use of nouns derived from verbs or adjectives in cases where these parts of speech are used in the original. Nouns or infinite verb forms modified by means of affixation to express meaning that is carried by other parts of speech in the original and the other translations is a characteristic feature of the style of T1935. T2001 is more likely to employ a modifier instead of using nouns or infinite verbs, but meaning-carrying finite verbs are likewise avoided. The verb is not likely to carry the meaning of the predicate in T1935 and T2001. The meaning is usually carried by the direct or indirect object or its modifiers and the verb performs a connective function.

A difference in the means of noun modification can be observed among the styles of the three periods. Adjectives, participle clauses and relative clauses are the preferred means of noun modification in T1873. Attributive nouns in the genitive, dative and prepositional cases are the most common way of noun modification in the excerpts of T1935. Attributive participles are found to be just as common as attributive nouns in T2001. Participle clauses occur in T2001 with a higher frequency than in T1935 but with a lower frequency than in T1873.

The parts of speech found in T1873 but avoided in T1935 and T2001 are the verb, the adjective, and the adverb. In T1935 and T2001, active verbs are often transformed into infinitives, participles, or other sort of noun-modifying parts of speech. There are seven instances of intransitive action verbs carrying the semantic meaning of the predicate in a clause in cases where a generic transitive verb with a connective function complemented by a meaning-carrying noun is used in the other two translations. T1935 is two times more likely to employ a construction of this type than the translation of 2001.

Verbs are the richest in meaning and carry the major semantic information in T1873, whereas in the other two translations, the semantic information of a sentence is usually expressed through other parts of speech, with verbs having mostly a connective function. T1935 exhibits a preference for passive constructions, whereas T2001 favours reflexive verbs. Modal passive constructions and impersonal constructions are more common in T1935 and T2001 translations than in that of 1873 (e.g. *is partially revealed* – *обнаруживаютъ передъ нами наши классификации*

– классификаций, подмечающих разные степени изменений – причина ... раскрывается перед нами). Information about nouns that is present in the verb of which the noun is the agent, its object and complements in T1873, is conveyed by other means in the T1935 and T2001. This is mostly done through the direct modification of the noun itself by nominal attributives in the text of 1935 and the use of participial constructions in T2001. Modification of verbs by means of adverbs is common in T1873, but the same ideas are mostly expressed as verb complements in the other two translations.

The miscellaneous features that differentiate the translations are the use of Roman numerals in T2001 and the lack of capitalisation of words that pertain to or suggest the supernatural in T1935. Certain lexical units have acquired common abbreviations by the time of publication of T1935 and T2001, but were not abbreviated in T1873. T1873 contains a number of words with expressive and evaluative connotations, which are absent in the other two translations. The text of the original is most fully and faithfully transmitted in T1935. T1873 contains additions in certain instances and omissions in others. T2001 contains no additions, but an ample amount of omissions.

The hypothesis of the research has been partially confirmed. Each of the three translations analysed in the present research exhibits a number of characteristic features that differentiate each of them from the others. The diachronic analysis suggests that no distinct academic style existed in the Russian language at the time when the first translation of “The Origin of Species” was published. The style had been formed and acquired its characteristic traits by the time of publication of T1935 translation. The developmental tendencies of the style become more evident in T2001, meaning that the style reached its mature form and solidified by the turn of the century. The hypothesis predicted that the style of 1935 contains elements found at both the earlier and the later stages of the development of the academic style. The style of T1935 is in fact more similar to and shares more common traits with the style of T2001, which implies that the style evolved slower in the second half of the 20th century than before.

The topic of the research is viable for further study. Due to the limited size of the text corpus used for the purposes of the present research, only the most general characteristics and developmental tendencies of the academic style could be established. Further comparison of the many translations of Darwin’s work is needed in order to understand the course of the development of the academic style in more minute details. The varieties of academic style employed in other branches of science and in other time periods also require further inquiry. The field of evolutionary biology and as

a consequence the discourse of this field is still developing, and the interest in Darwin's work as the foundation of this branch of biology is still present in the community.

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