

# The features of translating English-language essays into Russian

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the research is to examine the specificity of the translation of essay from English into Russian and identify devices necessary when working with this type of publicistic style based on the analysis of translations of essays. It is shown that the translation of essays is a linguistic problem. A study of the theoretical literature reveals the techniques of tropes used in translating English-language essays into Russian. On the material of the essay by the author Pamela Gossin the specificity of translation of tropes into Russian is examined. As a result, a classification of translation devices for matching lexical substitutions (concretization, generalization, antonymic translation, semantic development) that are applied in the translation of essays from English into Russian has been proposed.

**Keywords:** essay, tropes, expressive means, aesthetic information, tropes translation devices.

## Introduction

The essay genre represents an important and specific part of the journalistic style. It is focused on the author's reflections, evaluations, and manipulations of the reader's opinion, which are vividly expressed through lexical devices, and especially through tropes. However, the lack of a unified approach to translating expressive means in essays from English into Russian poses challenges for linguists and translators, thereby increasing interest in this topic and emphasizing the need to establish regular methods for conveying tropes.

The purpose of this study was to examine the specificity of the essay as a genre and to identify the features of translating essays from English into Russian.

The main objectives were to analyze the genre and stylistic features of English-language essays, to study the linguistic means of expression in essays and their role in conveying aesthetic information, to identify translation

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techniques used in essay translation, and to examine the peculiarities of translating tropes using the example of an English-language essay.

According to I. R. Galperin, an essay is a short composition on an abstract-philosophical, aesthetic, literary-critical, or ethical topic, where the author's primary task is to demonstrate a personal attitude toward the subject in order to highlight the main issues of concern (Galperin, 1958, p. 409).

Some scholars also believe that the central role in an essay is played by the author's reasoning about particular facts and the form in which these are presented. The main function of such texts can be considered as presenting facts through the prism of the author's perspective. However, in modern times, the genre boundaries of essays are regarded as blurred.

As defined by E. V. Ivanova, an essay is a variety of sketch in which the emphasis is placed on demonstrating the author's impressions and reflections rather than on a simple presentation of facts (Ivanova, 2023, p. 46).

In scholarly literature, no strict formal boundaries exist for the essay because of the genre's specificity and subjectivity. Its forms are highly diverse, and texts may resemble sketches, reviews, or magazine articles. Despite active research, essay subgenres remain understudied (Samarskaya & Martirosyan, 2012, p. 89).

The primary function of journalistic texts, particularly essays, is the transmission of aesthetic information. This is achieved through devices such as wordplay, innovative use of nonverbal signs, phonetic stylistics, and various expressive linguistic means (Lebedeva, 2023, p. 57). All of these elements are introduced by the author to emphasize an individual style. Creativity constitutes an integral part of journalistic texts, which are the result of the author's creative activity, involving imagination, subjective selection of facts, and the use of aesthetic narrative devices. The development of the author's thought from facts to a personal concept also forms the creative component of the essay. Authorial stance may be shown either explicitly or implicitly, alongside such important features as evaluativity, emotionality, and artistry (Ivanov, 2022, p. 114).

Another task of the essay writer is to exert emotional influence on the reader and to persuade the audience of the validity of the proposed theses. It is important not only to convey certain facts but also to affect the reader emotionally and intellectually, creating a resonance that shapes the reader's worldview and stance on a given issue (Novikov, 2024, p. 35).

Thus, in the pre-translation analysis of an essay, it is essential to assess the expressive means and techniques used by the author. The application of expressive devices ensures adherence to key stylistic norms, enhancing precision, expressiveness, and stylistic relevance. Furthermore, the author can deliberately and systematically convey thoughts while considering the context and communicative situation.

Greater expressiveness and persuasiveness may be achieved through the use of tropes and various stylistic figures. By skillfully employing stylistic techniques, the author produces the desired effect on the reader, making the text more memorable and effective.

In summary, aestheticization of information constitutes the core element of the essay. Objective facts are incorporated into the author's subjective world, which determines the communicative function of the essay—creating a deep emotional and intellectual response from the audience.

To convey aesthetic information in essays, various lexical devices are widely used. It is the abundance of tropes that makes the essay a unique blend of informativeness and imagery, distinguishing it from other genres.

In essays, one may encounter a rich palette of expressive devices such as metaphor, metonymy, and litotes. The author requires sharp and unique evaluations of facts under discussion. The situation constructed in the text influences the choice of linguistic means, which in turn shapes the situation's development and perception.

It should be noted that, despite its challenges, essay translation is not impossible. There are translation techniques specifically designed to aid in rendering expressive devices, which allow translators to preserve and convey aesthetic information in essays.

One such methodology is presented in the work of I. S. Alekseeva (2001), where aesthetic information integrated into the text through individual figurative devices is conveyed using variant correspondences or transformations while preserving individual tropes such as epithets, personifications, and metaphors.

Variant correspondences warrant closer examination. In translation theory, several definitions exist. V. N. Komissarov (1990) describes them as target-language units regularly used in translating a given source-language unit. It is important not to seek translation equivalents by comparing elements in identical positions in the source and target language systems, since correspondences must be derived from communicatively equivalent contexts.

This technique is widely used in practice. The translator's task is to find a range of possible correspondences and select the most contextually appropriate one. Situations often arise in which regular correspondences must be abandoned in favor of contextual substitution, chosen to accurately convey meaning. This method is often employed for stylistic purposes to recreate the original's aesthetic effect.

The nature of contextual correspondences depends on the context, requiring translators to adopt creative solutions. Several translation techniques are typically used to create contextual substitutions, such as:

1. **Concretization** (replacing a broad term with a narrower one);
2. **Generalization** (replacing a narrow term with a broader one);

3. **Antonymic translation** (replacing an affirmative construction with a negative one, or vice versa, or replacing a source unit with its antonym in the target language);
4. **Semantic development** (using a target-language unit whose meaning represents a logical development of the source unit).

In this study, we analyzed and translated Pamela Gossin's essay *Animated Nature: Aesthetics, Ethics, and Empathy in Miyazaki Hayao's Ecophilosophy*. Below, we illustrate contextual substitution techniques for conveying aesthetic information using epithets, one of the most common tropes in the essay.

For instance, Russian tends toward explicitness, making concretization a natural choice. This technique was used to preserve stylistic features such as richness and completeness of expression:

"...and since then Miyazaki has seen his audiences' tendency to find simplistic take-away lessons in his films that detract from the greater aesthetic vision he intended to express through those works."

"...и с тех пор Миядзаки понял, что зрители склонны находить в его фильмах плоские смыслы, которые отвлекают их от более глубокого эстетического видения, которое сам автор хотел выразить в этих работах."

Here, the word "плоский" (flat) adds a critical nuance, reinforcing the contrast between the profound meaning intended by Miyazaki and the oversimplified interpretations perceived by the audience.

Similarly, we used **generalization** in the following example:

"The natural settings of his animation and manga are so effectively realized that a significant portion of his audience, ironically, has had difficult time seeing the forest for the trees."

"Пейзажи в его анимации и манге так хорошо сделаны, что значительная часть зрителей, как бы иронично не звучало, «за деревьями и леса не увидела»."

Here, the abstract "effectively" is rendered as the broader and simpler "хорошо" (well), avoiding unnecessary complexity and preserving fluency.

An example of **antonymic translation** appears below:

"...these images of spent fighters offer the realization that even apparently justifiable violence exacts a deep toll on our human life force."

In this case, the neutral "spent" is conveyed using a negatively marked expression "обессиленный" (weakened, exhausted), adding imagery crucial for essayistic texts.

Authors of journalistic texts often use clichés to add clarity, simplicity, and conversational tone. For example:

“In his widely influential essay ‘Why Wilderness?’ he offers a clear and effective articulation of a nature ethic that recognizes and incorporates a nature aesthetic as well.”

“В своем широко известном эссе «Почему дикая природа?» он предельно четко сформулировал важные мысли об этике природы, которая неотделима от её эстетики.”

Instead of the direct “widely influential,” the cliché “широко известный” (widely known) was chosen to preserve conversational tone.

**In conclusion**, conveying aesthetic information in essays is a specific challenge due to its deeply subjective nature. Translating essays is undoubtedly a linguistic problem, yet it also represents a rewarding task for translators, as it overcomes cultural barriers and introduces readers to the works of various authors.

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