

PHONETIC EXPRESSION AS A MECHANISM OF MEANING FORMATION IN THE LYRICS OF RUSSIAN ROMANTICISM OF THE 19th CENTURY

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the study of phonetic means of expression in poetic texts and their role in the formation of artistic meaning. The paper examines the problem of a comprehensive analysis of expression as a multi-level category that integrates emotionality, evaluation, and aesthetic impact. Particular attention is paid to the phonetic level of language, which in poetic speech functions not only as a means of sound organization of the text but also as an important component of meaning formation.

The theoretical basis of the study is formed by the works of Russian linguists and literary scholars devoted to the issues of artistic expressiveness, the poetic function of language, and the interaction between form and content. The research analyzes sound instrumentation, alliteration, assonance, rhythmic and intonational organization of poetic text as means of realizing the expressive potential of language.

The practical part of the study includes a comparative analysis of the lyrics of M. Yu. Lermontov and F. I. Tyutchev. Based on the analysis of selected poems, the study identifies individual authorial models of phonetic expression and their role in shaping the emotional and philosophical worldview. It is established that sound devices function as structural elements of the artistic whole, enhance imagery, and contribute to the aesthetic perception of poetic works.

Keywords: Phonetic expression, poetic text, sound instrumentation, alliteration, assonance, rhythm, intonation, artistic expressiveness, meaning formation, poetic function of language, 19th-century lyrics, individual authorial style.

Despite the sustained interest of modern linguistics and poetics in the phenomenon of expression, the problem of its systematic and comprehensive description in poetic texts remains a subject of scholarly debate. In a number of studies, expression is considered either as a manifestation of emotional coloring in speech or as a characteristic of individual stylistic devices, which complicates the identification of its integral artistic and semantic nature.

The analysis of the phonetic level of language presents particular difficulties, as its expressive potential has long been interpreted as secondary in relation to lexical-semantic and syntactic components.

The theoretical foundations for studying expression, expressiveness, and the sound organization of poetic texts were developed in the works of V. V. Vinogradov, A. A. Potebnya, L. V. Shcherba, G. O. Vinokur, R. O. Jakobson, M. M. Bakhtin, Yu. N. Tynyanov, I. R. Galperin, Yu. M. Lotman, and other scholars.



As V. V. Vinogradov noted, the expressive capabilities of language “are not limited to the meaning of a word as a nominative unit, but are revealed through its sound, intonation, rhythm, and stylistic coloring”¹ [Vinogradov, 1959, p. 29].

However, in traditional linguistic studies, phonetic means are most often analyzed in isolation, without considering their participation in forming a holistic artistic image. This leads to a fragmented understanding of poetic expression and reduces the interpretative potential of poetic text analysis.

In the works of R. O. Jakobson, it is emphasized that in poetic speech “the sound aspect of a word acquires independent significance and enters into active interaction with meaning”² [Jakobson, 1987, p. 98]. Nevertheless, in a number of studies on poetics, sound patterning is considered mainly as a formal device that is not always connected with the deep semantics of the text and the author’s worldview. Thus, the question of how phonetic means of expression participate in meaning formation and the emotional and philosophical content of poetic works remains insufficiently explored. Particular complexity arises in comparative studies of phonetic expression in the lyrics of poets belonging to the same historical and literary period. Despite the considerable number of studies devoted to the works of M. Yu. Lermontov and F. I. Tyutchev, their poetic language is more often analyzed from the perspective of thematic and figurative systems, philosophical content, or genre and stylistic features. Yu. M. Lotman noted that “a poetic text should be regarded as a hierarchically organized system in which each level of form is involved in the process of meaning creation”³ [Lotman, 1972, p. 34].

However, the phonetic level in comparative studies of Lermontov’s and Tyutchev’s lyrics has not yet received sufficient systematic coverage. In addition, there is no unified approach in scholarly literature to the interpretation of expression as a category that integrates emotionality, evaluation, and aesthetic impact. M. M. Bakhtin emphasized that “the expressiveness of a word arises at the intersection of meaning and the living intonational attitude of the speaker toward the subject of speech”⁴ [Bakhtin, 1979, p. 76].

This concept is particularly significant for analyzing poetic speech, where intonation and sound play a fundamental role in conveying the author’s position and the inner state of the lyrical subject.

Thus, the research problem lies in the insufficient development of a comprehensive approach to the study of phonetic means of expression in poetic texts, as well as in the lack of comparative analysis of their functional and semantic role in the lyrics of M. Yu. Lermontov

¹ On the Language of Fiction / V. V. Viktor Vinogradov. — Moscow: Goslitizdat, 1959. — 654 p.

² Selected Works on Poetics / R. O. Roman Jakobson. — Moscow: Progress, 1987. — 464 p.

³ Analysis of the Poetic Text / Yu. M. Yuri Lotman. — Leningrad: Prosveshchenie, 1972. — 271 p.

⁴ Aesthetics of Verbal Creativity / M. M. Mikhail Bakhtin. — Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1979. — 424 p.



and F. I. Tyutchev. The relevance of this issue is обусловлена the need for a deeper understanding of the interaction between sound and meaning in nineteenth-century poetry and for identifying individual authorial models of sound expression.

The category of expression occupies one of the key positions in modern linguistics and poetics, as it is associated with the study of the expressive capabilities of language and the mechanisms of its emotional and aesthetic impact. Expression reflects the subjective attitude of the speaker or author toward depicted reality and manifests itself in the intensification of speech expressiveness. Unlike neutral, informative speech, expressive speech is oriented not only toward conveying information but also toward influencing the recipient and shaping a particular emotional and evaluative perception.

In the linguistic tradition, the concept of expression is closely connected with the categories of emotionality, evaluation, and intensity. At the same time, expression cannot be reduced solely to the expression of emotions, as it includes a broad spectrum of subjective-modal meanings associated with the author's position and communicative intention.

Within the linguistic tradition, expression is interpreted as the ability of language to convey an emotional and evaluative attitude toward reality. In this context, it is useful to refer to explanatory dictionaries that fix the commonly used meaning of the term.

Thus, in S. I. Ozhegov's Dictionary of the Russian Language, expression is defined as "the expression of feelings, experiences, expressiveness," while the adjective "expressive" is interpreted as "containing expression, expressive"⁵ [Ozhegov, 1990, p. 223]. This definition emphasizes that expression represents the manifestation of subjective emotional experience fixed in language and can be realized through various linguistic means.

It is important to note that expression is a multi-level category and manifests itself at the phonetic, lexical, morphological, and syntactic levels. Each level conveys different components of emotional and evaluative meaning: phonetics provides sound coloring and rhythmic-intonational structure, vocabulary conveys evaluative meanings, and syntax expresses the dynamics and intensity of utterance.

V. V. Vinogradov emphasized that artistic speech is characterized by "increased expressive saturation, in which linguistic means acquire the ability to convey subjective evaluation, emotional-volitional attitude of the author, and aesthetic orientation of the utterance"⁶ [Vinogradov, 1959, p. 18].

A significant contribution to the development of the theory of expression was made by A. A. Potebnya and L. V. Shcherba, who considered the sound form of a word as an integral component of meaning formation. According to Potebnya, "the inner form of a word is a connecting link between sound and meaning"⁷ [Potebnya, 1989, p. 145], which makes it possible to consider sound in artistic speech as an active element in the formation of imagery.

⁵ Dictionary of the Russian Language / S. I. Sergei Ozhegov. — 4th ed., revised and enlarged. — Moscow: Russkiy Yazyk, 1990. — 921 p.

⁶ On the Language of Fiction / V. V. Viktor Vinogradov. — Moscow: Goslitizdat, 1959. — 654 p

⁷ Thought and Language / A. A. Alexander Potebnya. — Moscow: Pravda, 1989. — 256 p.



Shcherba, in turn, noted that “the sound aspect of speech plays a significant role in conveying emotional and expressive shades of utterance”⁸ [Shcherba, 1974, p. 89]. This position was further developed in the works of G. O. Vinokur and I. R. Galperin, who connected expression with the functional capabilities of the language system and its stylistic potential. It should be noted that the phonetic level was traditionally considered “secondary” in relation to the lexical-semantic level; however, in poetic speech, sound devices become an independent source of expression. Therefore, it is relevant to study their functional and semantic role, as well as their interaction with other levels of language within the structure of the artistic whole.

Within the structural-functional approach, R. O. Jakobson considered expression as a manifestation of the poetic function of language, in which the recipient’s attention is directed toward the form of the utterance. According to him, in poetic speech “the sound aspect of a word acquires independent significance and enters into active interaction with meaning”⁹ [Jakobson, 1987, p. 98], which determines the special role of phonetic means in creating artistic effect. Similar ideas are developed in the works of Yu. N. Tynyanov, who emphasized that elements of form in poetic text exist in a state of constant dynamic interaction.

From a communicative perspective, expression is considered a means of influencing the recipient, forming an emotional response, and emphasizing the author’s position. In poetic texts, this is manifested through intensification of expressiveness, highlighting key meanings, and creating an aesthetic effect directed toward the reader’s perception.

In poetics, expression is interpreted as the result of purposeful artistic selection and organization of linguistic means that ensure the emotional and aesthetic impact of a work. Yu. M. Lotman emphasized that poetic text possesses “a high degree of stylistic organization, where expressiveness is achieved not by individual devices but by a system of relations between text elements”¹⁰ [Lotman, 1972, p. 56], which allows expression to be considered as the result of interaction among all language levels, including the phonetic one.

M. M. Bakhtin emphasized that “in artistic speech, meaning is always embodied through intonation, and intonation serves as the carrier of authorial evaluation and emotional attitude”¹¹ [Bakhtin, 1979, p. 89]. In poetic text, intonation acts as a mediator between meaning and feeling: it not only records emotional state but also creates rhythmic and musical organization of verse, thereby intensifying expressiveness and contributing to the formation of artistic imagery.

Thus, expression in artistic text is not a random emotional outburst but the result of conscious linguistic choice by the author, in which sound, intonational, and semantic components are interconnected and form a unified artistic structure.

In poetic texts, expression at the phonetic level manifests itself through sound patterning, rhythm, alliteration, assonance, and intonational constructions, which intensify the emotional saturation of the utterance. Thus, in the lyrics of M. Yu. Lermontov and F. I. Tyutchev, phonetic means often serve not only as “sound decoration” but also become part of the semantic structure of the text. Let us consider how phonetic expression contributes to the creation of expressive sound and semantic depth in Lermontov’s poem *The Sail*.

⁸ Lev Shcherba L. V. *Language System and Speech Activity*. — Leningrad: Nauka, 1974. — 428 p.

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¹⁰ In The same place

¹¹ In The same place



In poetic texts, expression at the phonetic level is realized through sound instrumentation, rhythm, alliteration, assonance, and intonational constructions, thereby enhancing emotional intensity. In Lermontov's lyrics, phonetic expressive means become a crucial component of artistic influence, reinforcing the image of the "rebellious sail" and conveying the emotional and philosophical tension of his poetry.

In the poem *The Sail*, the expressiveness of sound organization is closely connected with the theme of inner conflict and longing. Already in the opening lines, a rich alliterative pattern can be observed: combinations of the sounds [p] and [s] in the phrase "A sail... a lonely sail..." create the effect of trembling, unstable movement, corresponding to the image of a solitary vessel in the mist. The repetition of the sound [r] in words associated with the sail, homeland, rushing movement, and storm intensifies dynamism and emotional tension, conveying the lyrical hero's inner anxiety.

Furthermore, the assonance formed by the vowels [a] and [o] creates a sense of depth and vastness while simultaneously emphasizing loneliness, corresponding to the philosophical motif of spiritual searching and restless aspiration.

The rhythmic organization of the poem also functions as a source of expression. The alternation of short and long stressed syllables forms a rhythm of anxiety and agitation, which is further intensified by repeated elevated intonational constructions. In the lines expressing that the hero neither seeks happiness nor flees from it, the repetition of specific consonantal sounds combined with exclamatory intonation strengthens the emotional climax, emphasizing the tragic exhaustion of the lyrical hero and his conscious choice of a rebellious path.

Intonational emphasis of key words and semantic phrases is also significant. The exclamation expressing sorrow, followed by negation structures, creates an effect of inner protest and philosophical reflection, where sound and meaning mutually reinforce each other. Thus, phonetic expressive means in *The Sail* function not as decorative elements but as active components of meaning formation, reflecting internal tension, the striving for freedom, and the search for peace within turmoil.

Similarly, in the poem *Motherland*, phonetic expressive means also function as a significant component of meaning formation. Let us examine their role in shaping the emotional and philosophical image of the native land.

In the poem *Motherland*, phonetic expressive means convey the lyrical hero's complex emotional attitude toward his homeland — a love filled with contradictions, nostalgia, and inner tension. Already in the opening line, the repetition of the verb "I love" emphasizes emotional intensity and inner obsession, while the attribute indicating the strangeness of this love introduces a sense of incomprehensibility and internal contradiction.

Alliteration of the sound [l] plays an important role, producing an effect of softness and lyrical calmness, corresponding to images of steppes, forests, rivers, and quiet rural life. At the same time, the assonance of the vowels [o] and [a] intensifies the sense of spaciousness and boundlessness, emphasizing the scale of native nature and the depth of emotional response. Sound organization also expresses the motif of simplicity and folk authenticity through the repetition of consonants characteristic of colloquial speech and rural everyday life. This is especially noticeable in scenes depicting country roads, peasant life, and everyday rural imagery, where phonetic texture creates a vivid бытовая representation and strengthens emotional identification with folk life.

The rhythmic structure of the poem, based on the alternation of long and short phrases, reflects the internal dynamics of lyrical consciousness: at times slow and contemplative, at other times

emotionally excited. Phonetic expressive means in Motherland form not only a sound background but also the internal structure of the author's emotional attitude toward the homeland, expressing love imbued with complex philosophical intonation.

Within the framework of the study of phonetic expression in nineteenth-century lyrics, it is also important to analyze Tyutchev's poem *There Is in Early Autumn...*, where sound devices play a crucial role in creating an emotional and philosophical image.

In this poem, phonetic expressive means perform a key function in forming the image of autumnal beauty, silence, and simultaneous inner sadness, emphasizing the transitional nature of time and the lyrical hero's philosophical reflection.

1. Sound Patterning and Alliteration

The poem demonstrates intensive use of soft consonant phonemes, which contributes to the acoustic effect of calmness, silence, and lyrical tenderness. The predominance of these sounds creates a sense of smoothness and slow, harmonious passage of time.

In the line describing a crystal-like day, the alliterative sequence of consonants creates an acoustic model of transparency and cold purity, reinforcing the semantic characteristics of the image and forming a corresponding sound symbolism.

2. Assonance and Phonetic Symbolism

The assonance of vowels contributes to a sense of spaciousness and lightness, emphasizing the purity and beauty of the autumn season. Combined with other vowel harmonies, it forms the image of a luminous, transparent evening when nature appears to be resting.

3. Rhythm and Intonation

The rhythmic organization of the poem is based on a balanced meter that creates the impression of calm and measured temporal flow. Intonational pauses and rises in certain lines intensify the feeling of contemplation and quiet sadness.

Particular importance is attached to the descending intonation at the end of stanzas, which produces an effect of tranquility and subtle melancholy.

4. Intonational Constructions as Carriers of Expression

The poem actively employs descriptive intonation in which sound and meaning reinforce each other. Although exclamation marks are absent, emotional coloring is achieved through rhythmic structure, repetition, and intonational pauses, giving the text philosophical depth and calm sadness.

Thus, phonetic expressive means in Tyutchev's poem function as active components of meaning formation: sound patterning and rhythm create an atmosphere of transparency, silence, and temporal transience, while intonational constructions intensify philosophical reflection and emotional tonality.

During the study of expression in linguistics and poetics, it was established that expression represents a key category reflecting the author's subjective attitude toward reality and realized through various language levels. Expressive speech is characterized not only by emotional saturation but also by evaluative orientation and communicative influence upon the recipient, making it an important object of both linguistic and literary research.

Within scholarly tradition, expression is closely connected with emotionality, modality, and evaluation. In poetic texts, it emerges as the result of conscious artistic selection and systematic organization of linguistic means.

The phonetic level plays a particularly important role in the formation of artistic expression. Sound, rhythm, and intonation do not merely complement meaning but become active components of meaning formation. According to Jakobson's theory of the poetic function of



language, the recipient's attention is directed toward the form of the utterance, which makes phonetic means an independent source of expressiveness.

This is confirmed by classical studies in Russian poetics, emphasizing the relationship between sound structure, emotional evaluation, and aesthetic impact. The practical analysis of the lyrics of Lermontov and Tyutchev demonstrates that phonetic expressive means function not as decorative embellishments but as structural elements of the artistic whole. In *The Sail*, alliteration, assonance, rhythmic dynamics, and intonational emphasis reinforce the image of inner conflict and striving for freedom. In *Motherland*, phonetic organization conveys the author's complex emotional attitude toward the homeland, combining lyrical tenderness with philosophical tension. In Tyutchev's *There Is in Early Autumn...*, sound patterning, rhythm, and intonational pauses create an atmosphere of transparent silence and philosophical melancholy, confirming that phonetic means are capable of conveying not only acoustic but also semantic depth of poetic imagery.

Thus, the study of phonetic expression in nineteenth-century lyrics confirms its central role in poetic discourse: sound devices function as carriers of the author's emotional and evaluative position, intensify artistic imagery, and ensure the integrity of aesthetic perception.

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