

© **Gulia F. SHIGAPOVA**

bliznashka_28@mail.ru

UDC 821.161.1'342

**PHONETIC SYMBOLS IN THE NOVEL
BY A.I. KUPRIN "THE GARNET BRACELET"**

SUMMARY. This article reveals the skill of Kuprin on the level of the sound symbolism of the artistic word in the narrative "The Garnet Bracelet". Through the analysis of the sound space of Zheltkov's letters were identified the dominant soundletters, characterized by their symbolic connotation. As a result it was found that the phonetic line deepens the emotional-expressive side of the letters. The consideration of features of the rhythm of the hero's words allowed to disclose more fully the artistic intent of the writer. The bright musical experiment is the final narrative, where each word is permeated by the sound of Beethoven's sonatas. The musical composition of the work aestheticizes the writer's language, fills the prose text by sound and rhythmic combinations. Due to the poetics of soundsymbolism, Kuprin's creativity reveals the influence of the concept of synthesis in arts, which enables the artistic heritage of the writer in the "dialogue" of Russian literature of the turn of the century.

KEY WORDS. soundsymbolism, phonosemantics, A.I. Kuprin, hero's word, musical composition.

Modern research interest in soundsymbolism and phonosemantics is still vivid. This issue was topical in works by A.P. Zhuravlev, S.V. Voronin, Y.V. Kazarin and others. Scientists define soundsymbolism as a natural spontaneous phonetically motivated link between the sound and semantics of a word [1]. The soundsymbolic (as well as onomatopoeic) subsystem of language is an object of phonosemantics. Its basis is formed by lexemes the sounding of which reflects the image, feeling and impression of the denoted object [2]. It helps authors of fiction to create necessary acoustic-symbolic images.

Within A.I. Kuprin's artistic legacy, the novel "The Garnet Bracelet" is the most bright and vivid example of work where music and sound are inherent in every word, where Beethoven's sonata reflects the polysemantic structure of the novel and appears to be the leitmotif of it, reaching its climax at the end. We will consider the image of Zheltkov from the point of view of its soundsymbolic representation, and by this we will continue the tradition of appealing to the theme of music in the novel "The Garnet bracelet" (cf. L.A. Kachaeva, L.V. Rasskazova).

The reader first meets Zheltkov as an author of the letter that is received by princess Vera Nikolaevna Sheina in her name day [3; 447-448]. Phonetic analysis of this

message helps to better expand the personality, thoughts and feelings of addresser. Studying the sound-letter image of the message, we should pay special attention to the sonorant sounds л, м, н, р. In the soft-hard pair the sound л' (soft) prevails over л (hard) — 34 to 20. This is the only case in this part of the novel where the soft variant of consonant dominates over the hard. The sonorant sound н appears in the text more often than other consonants – over 100 times. This sound is unique for it dominates in number (111 tokens) and in quality (н' prevails over other palatalized consonants — 50 tokens). The consonants м and р appear in the text the same amount of times (67 tokens). These features of sonorants in Zheltkov's letter point out that these consonants have some peculiar meaning: they are special in their usage, they actualize vocality and by this realize some exceptional sensual potential.

Let us turn to the semantics of these sounds that was offered by V.M. Frolov in his article «Смысловое значение звуков (букв)» (“Semantics of sounds (letters)”) [4]. According to this work, the sound л means vanishing, inaccessibility. We observe the realization of this semantic in the words of the addresser: Zheltkov does not want to bother Vera Nikolaevna any more and to intrude into her life. He decides to love her silently, selflessly and at a distance «Теперь во мне осталось только благоговение, вечное преклонение и рабская преданность» (“Now there is only awe, eternal adoration and slavish devotion left in me”) [3; 448]. The sound н means moving to the subject or from it at one time. The consonant's semantics gives us the opportunity to speak of the polysemy of this soundsymbol in the text. The senses are: the idea of continuity which is realized by the garnet bracelet that is passed from generation to generation through the female line; the internal intention that coerced the character to gift the family heirloom to the dear and beloved one; Zheltkov's change from one behavior model to another. The sound м symbolizes feminine gender and female features connected with providing future generations and creating material life; the sound р means masculine features that personalize not only the energetic, filling element, but the suppressing, aggressive one as well. Due to the same number of sonorants р and м in the letter, masculine and feminine elements are balanced.

Let us examine the consonant row of the pairs of sounds б/п, д/т, г/к, з/с, ж/ш. Voiceless consonants (285) vastly dominate over voiced ones (125). It should be noticed that noise consonants are produced without voice participation, they are formed only with noise. Their abundance in the passage means that in the process of uttering the text the main sound background is supposed to be silent humming, a half-whisper that transforms in some parts into loud and voiced speech. The entire letter is full of the addressant's admiration for the beloved which conditions the choice of sound-letter image of the message. This relation of sounds helps us to imagine the situation and condition of the character: his timidity, embarrassment and confusion.

The sharp quantitative contrast between whistling and hissing consonants also draws some attention (102/39). The associative row that appears due to their sounding creates the necessary acoustic-symbolic space of the text [5]. The whistle is a sharp, high-pitched sound. The main association with it is piercing. The whistle is connected

with music (artistic whistling is the art of whistling tunes), art and animals (the whistle of wind and birds). Hissing (a dull prolonged sound) is mainly associated with snakes, and contributes negative connotations to the sound of the passage. That is why the domination of whistling sounds in the text creates some peculiar musical tune which is close to the sounds of nature, and it is inherent in the entire letter.

The most singing potential is inherent in vowels [6], but their symbolism compared to consonants is rather wide and ambiguous. In this case we pay close attention to the quantitative aspect of sound-letters' usage, for the size of the text allows us to go deeper in the soundsymbolic space of the message. We have found that the most often-used vowel is o (151 tokens). According to the semantics offered by V.M. Frolov the sound o means admiration, delight and rapture [4].

The results of calculations and decoding the values of soundsymbolic dominants indicate that their ratio in Zheltkov's message is no accident, and the choice of sounds is connected with the contents of it. This soundsymbolic space helps to convey to the recipient the thoughts and feelings of the character, to imagine the inner world of a person that fights grief. The letter anticipates the reader's meeting Zheltkov. That is why the choice of sound-letter image, semantics of statements, construction of phrases and intonations are so important. All these features together create a first impression of the character and form some opinion on him.

A.I. Kuprin directly introduces Zheltkov to the reader and gives his portrait only in the tenth chapter, almost at the end of the novel. The first time we see the character in the episode of his meeting with Vera Nikolaevna's husband and brother. Zheltkov is portrayed as a weak and defenseless person: "the weak voice answered", "babbled with jellied lips", "dully said", "whispered", "replied silently" [3; 468-470]. Zheltkov's reactions from the phonic point of view are inarticulated, semi-tonal. In this way the author wanted to focus on the defenselessness of the character, to stress his vulnerability and oversensibility. Suppressed by the arrogant tone of Nikolay Nikolayevich and the importance of the social status of both guests the character gets shy and acts constrainedly. His speech reflects conscious inhibition of his usual phonical tonality.

But after Nikolay Nikolayevich's words about appealing to authorities, we see an absolutely different Zheltkov. The phrase of Vera Nikolaevna's brother affected the character's behavior, dramatically changed his way of interacting: Zheltkov laughs, interrupts Tuganovskiy. What is more, he ignores Nikolay Nikolayevich's statements. It is remarkable that Zheltkov was speaking "only with his jaws, while his lips were white and immobile, like a deadman's" [3; 471]. So, the reader's attention is again drawn to the deadness of the character's lips, and it forms a parallel with the ending of the novel: Zheltkov will be heard after his death, and "the word" will live on in the music of Beethoven's sonata.

The second letter that Vera Nikolaevna Sheina receives from Zheltkov is his last letter before his death [3; 474-475]. She receives it after the news of the "Chamber of Control official G.S. Zheltkov's" suicide. This letter holds first (after the epigraph) a mention of Ludwig van Beethoven and the second part of his Piano Sonata № 2.

Most often princess Sheina was seen by Zheltkov at Beethoven's concerts. The music of this composer secretly connected them for many years.

While calculating the sound-letter image of the deathbed letter, we noticed the amount of consonants ж and з (27 and 37 respectively). Both these numbers include the figure 7, and this focuses our attention on its symbolism. Seven is the number of spiritual order, most mysterious and supernatural. According to the Holy Scripture, this number is perfect for it rules time and space. In Egypt, seven is the sign of eternal life. In biblical symbolism, seven is the sign of God and man's alliance. In this novel by A.I. Kuprin, the number seven is closely connected with the main character: first, Zheltkov chases Vera Nikolaevna for already seven years, and, second, it is the time of Zheltkov's death. This numeral feature of the sound-letters ж and з separates them from other consonants.

Noticeably the sound ж is the first (stressed) one in the main character's last name (Желтков), and the lexeme жизнь (life) (which appears 5 times in the letter) contains both noise consonants. Although the letter was written shortly before death, there is no word about death in it. The character says in it that he is just departing and will never come back. That is why the word жизнь (life) has some peculiar stressing [7]. The final consonant н in this noun also is stressed and stands out in the consonant row of the second letter (134 tokens). First, the sound н dominates over other consonants quantitatively (compare with: т — 121, в — 108). Secondly, most often this sound appears in the combinations не and ни, that is why the melody of the letter's lines is created by the vowels е and и that create some softness and tenderness in the sounding, fluidity and length of pronouncing. The words where the consonant н dominates carry some peculiar sounding and meaning. D.A. Sergeev, in his work "Семантика звуков — звуко́смысл" ("Semantics of Sounds – Sound-Meaning") [8] says that the sound н is connected with estrangement, moving away and increasing distance. It is obvious that there is a gap between the characters, represented by social contradictions, Vera Nikolaevna's marriage, her misunderstanding and neglect of Zheltkov's feelings. The main character considers Vera Zheltkova as, generally, a fine lady, because their social inequality constantly interferes with his love for her. The character addresses Vera Nikolaevna as some godlike, distant and inaccessible one. It is no coincidence that in the letter he uses the personal pronoun вы (it is equal to English pronoun "you", but with much higher level of respect and homage) and possessive pronoun ваш (which is equal to English pronoun "yours") in different cases (total number is 34 tokens).

The peculiar rhythm of the deathbed letter should also be mentioned, for it is created by the stylistic device of lexical repetitions [9], and it is represented not only by constant repetition of the respectful address вы. The verb вспомнить (to remember) is repeated three times and thus stands out of the word stream. It is important and significant and tonally marked as a key word. The main character's love should be only a memory for Vera, because there will be no Zheltkov himself in her life. It is only a memory that is left of mad and crazy G.S. Z. The main character stresses in the letter that the princess was "his only joy, his only comfort,

his only thought” [3; 475]. Zheltkov lived only through his love for Vera, although this love was unrequited and unanswered. She was the ray of light, the sense of living for him.

It is remarkable that the addresser also reflected the tonal inconsistency of his own speech in the letter. It is presented by the arrangement of multiple dots: «В Вас как будто бы воплотилась вся красота земли...» (“It is like the whole beauty of the world is incarnated in you”) [3; 475]. This phrase by Zheltkov is followed by a new passage and sudden change of speech rhythm. The character addresses Vera with questions: «Подумайте, что мне нужно было делать? Убежать в другой город?» (“Think: what should I have done? To flee to another town?”) [3; 475]. The interrogative tone expresses the nervous state of Zheltkov and his intention to assure the princess in his sincerity, that is why sudden tonal changes are justified and natural. Multiple dots in the letter often interrupt long enumerative series followed by a significant final statement: «Все равно сердце было всегда около Вас, у Ваших ног, каждое мгновение дня заполнено Вами, мыслью о Вас, мечтами о Вас... сладким бредом» (“Anyway my heart has always been by your side, at your feet, every moment of my life has been filled by you, by my thoughts of you, my dreams of you... by sweet delirium”) [3; 475]. It also concerns the list of memorable things of Vera Nikolaevna burnt down by Zheltkov; the enumeration and description of them is interrupted by multiple dots and the impersonal sentence «Кончено» (“It is over”). Multiple dots in the text also stand before sudden thoughts by Zheltkov: «Если Вы обо мне вспомните, то... я знаю, что Вы очень музыкальны, я Вас видел чаще всего на бетховенских квартетах, — так вот, если Вы обо мне вспомните, то сыграйте или прикажите сыграть сонату D-dur № 2, op. 2.» (“If you once remember me, then... I know, you are very musical, most often I saw you at Beethoven’s quartets, — so please, if you remember me, then play or order to play the sonata D-dur № 2, op. 2.”) [3; 475]. In this case the character returns to his first thought after a dash. Expletive constructions in the letter are stressed with the help of dashes several times. Phrases «ну, что же?» («Well, what is to come?”), «о, как я ее целовал» (“Oh, how was I kissing it”) are also separated by double punctuation marks. Such stressing of separate statements by the character draws the reader’s attention and speaks of peculiar emotive components contained in that kind of constructions. It is also confirmed by the interjections ну (“well”), о (“oh”), used only in these two statements.

It is obvious that Zheltkov’s last letter is different from the congratulatory one. Prince Shein and Vera’s brother claim Zheltkov affected the manner of his writing. The farewell letter of the character is aimed to convince the princess of the sincerity of Zheltkov’s feelings, of his love «о которой грезят женщины и на которую больше не способны мужчины» (“that is dreamt of by women and is impossible for men to feel”) [3; 464]. That is why the rhythmical-tonal image of the letter is as significant as the soundsymbolic one. So the syntactical organization of the character’s speech determines the peculiar tone of the narration. Summed up, all these text features help to create a necessary image for the reader affecting his perception and calling for special associations.

Along with first mention of Beethoven's sonata, Zheltkov's second letter contains the phrase that will become a refrain at the end of the novel — «Да святится имя твое» ("Hallowed be thy name"). L.A.Kachaeva writes about the final scene of "The Garnet Bracelet" that A.I. Kuprin "Does not even portray or describe the music itself or speak of musical images and impressions, he just fixates the words that appear in Vera Nikolaevna's mind inspired by the music and originating from Zheltkov. These words are truly a prose poem and essentially musical". [10; 228]. The research points out the "peculiar musical orchestration of prose". Indeed, paragraphs' rhythm is based on even alteration of stressed syllables in not very long sentences, while interrogative and exclamatory repeating sentences break the sound and as well link musical phrases together. For the first time, Zheltkov's and Vera's words merge in the end when Beethoven's Largo Appassionato is played. Sonata № 2 discloses for Vera Nikolaevna the beauty of Zheltkov's love and helps her to understand everything and feel forgiven. It is no coincidence that the character of the novel by the author's will uses Beethoven's music "language". [11]. So the true meeting of Vera Nikolaevna and Zheltkov happened in the space of music.

The choice of sound-letter images for text serves as a very important component for translating the feelings and emotions of Zheltkov and his influence on Vera Nikolaevna's soul. The phonetic row deepens the sensual edge of his messages. It is no coincidence that after reading the last letter of Zheltkov, Vera Nikolaevna "came to her husband with her eyes reddened from crying and pouted lips". [3; 475]. She would never hear Zheltkov's voice and words anymore for it is his last letter, but it is not the last mention of him. He will now live eternally in Beethoven's sonata music. That is why it is important that this very music plays at the end of the novel. It acts as a healer of the human soul.

To sum up, turning to the sound imagery of the novel "The Garnet Bracelet", lets us see in this classic Russian work the inexhaustibility of artistic sense and include A.I.Kuprin's works in the turn-of-the-century Russian literature dialogue and study the influence of symbolism on art of the end of the 19th/early 20th centuries. [12].

REFERENCES

1. Kazarin, Ju.V. *Problemy fonosemantiki poeticheskogo teksta* [Problems of Phonosemantics of the Poetic Text] A learner's guide. Yekaterinburg: Ural University Press, 2000. 172 p. (in Russian)
2. Zhuravlev, A.P. *Zvuk i smysl* [Sound and Sense] A book for home reading for students of high school. 2nd ed., reviewed and with addition. Moscow: Prosveshhenie, 1991. 160 p. (in Russian)
3. Kuprin, A.I. *Granatovyyj braslet* [Garnet Bracelet] Works in 6 vol. Moscow: Hudozhestvennaja literatura, 1958. Vol. 4. Pp. 430–480 (in Russian).
4. Frolov, V.M. *Smyslovoe znachenie zvukov (bukv): tajna zvukov rechi* (The Meaning of Sounds (Letters): the Mystery of Speech Sounds). Available at: <http://frolov-vlad.narod.ru/letter.htm> <http://www.opentextnn.ru/> (date of access: 15.11.2012) (in Russian).
5. D'jakova, K.V. Sound Space of Prose. *Sb. nauch. tr. po m-lam mezhdunar. nauch.-praktich. konferencii "Sovremennye napravlenija teoreticheskikh i prikladnyh issledovanij*

2010” [Proceedings of the international scientific-practical conference “Modern Trends in Theoretical and Applied Research in 2010”]. Vol. 26. Philosophy and philology. Odessa. 2010. Pp. 46–50 (in Russian).

6. Rogacheva, N.A. Poetics of sound in the poem by I.F. Annenskiy “Cakewalk on cymbals”. *Kul'tura i tekst: kul'turnyj smysl i kommunikacionnye strategii — Culture and Text: the Cultural Meaning and Communication Strategies*. Barnaul: AltGPU, 2011. Pp. 235–241 (in Russian).

7. Lyubimova, N.A., Pinezhaninova N.P., Somova, E.G. *Zvukovaja metafora v pojeticheskom tekste* [Sound metaphor in a poetic text]. Saint-Petersburg: Sankt-Peterburgskij gosudarstvennyj universitet publ., 1996. 144 p. (in Russian)

8. Sergejev, D.A. Semantics of Sounds — sound-sense. rus33abc: Fonosemantika russkogo jazyka: personal'nyj sajt Dmitrija Sergeeva (rus33abc: Phonosemantics of Russian: a personal website of Dmitry Sergejev). Available at: <http://rus33abc.narod.ru/Zvukosmysl.html> <http://www.opentextnn.ru/> (date of access: 15.11.2012) (in Russian).

9. Girshman, M.M. *Ritm hudozhestvennoj prozy* [The Rhythm of Prose] Monograph. Moscow: Sovetskij pisatel', 1982. 367 p. (in Russian)

10. Kachaeva, L.A. Music in the works by Kuprin. *Pisatel' i zhizn': sbornik statej — A Writer and Life: a collection of articles*. Moscow: Sovetskij pisatel', 1986. Pp. 227–236 (in Russian).

11. Rasskazova, L.V. Semantic and compositional role of Beethoven's sonata in the story by A.I. Kuprin “Garnet Bracelet”. *Literatura v shkole — Literature at School*. 2007. No. 7. Pp. 8–12 (in Russian).

12. Jertner, E.N. “Silver Dove” by A. Beliy: phenomenology of province in the novel about an artist. *Vestnik Tjumenskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta — Tyumen State University Herald*. 2005. No. 2. Pp. 205–213 (in Russian).