



PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN "ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND".

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This article examines the translation of phraseological units in Chapter One, "Down the Rabbit-Hole", of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Phraseological units are expressions with a complete meaning, understood as a whole rather than word by word, and are closely linked to culture, traditions, and ways of thinking. The study focuses on Nina Demurova's Russian translation, which maintains the original meaning while making the text natural and readable for Russian audiences. The article analyzes how phraseological fusions, unities, and combinations are rendered in Russian, illustrating the challenges of translating idiomatic and creative expressions in literary texts.

Overall, translating phraseological units involves balancing literal meaning, figurative imagery, and natural expression in the target language, ensuring that the reader experiences both the content and the style of the original work. In this analysis of the first chapter, it was focused on how Demurova handled the rhythm and tone of Carroll's narrative style.

Phraseological units are expressions with a single, complete meaning, understood rather than word by word. For example, the English phrase "to let the cat out of the bag" means to reveal a secret, and "to break the ice" means to start a conversation in an uncomfortable situation. The literal translation of these phrases often sounds strange, making them difficult to translate. They are closely tied to culture, traditions, and ways of thinking in a particular country. In this research, special attention was paid to how these cultural elements appear in the translation of the first chapter of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

Russian linguist Viktor Vinogradov classified phraseological units into three groups based on how their overall meaning relates to the meanings of individual words¹. Later, Alexander Kunin expanded this theory and examined their use in actual communication². Their work helps explain why translating these expressions can be challenging.

This study focuses on Nina Demurova's Russian translation of Chapter One, "Down the Rabbit-Hole"³. She preserves the original meaning while making the text natural and readable for Russian audiences. The examples discussed illustrate general translation tendencies rather than providing a complete overview of the novel.

Before analyzing specific examples, it is important to understand what phraseological units are and how they function in language. V.V. Vinogradov distinguished three main types of phraseological units.

¹Виноградов В. В. Об основных типах фразеологических единиц в русском языке // Избранные труды. Лексикология и лексикография. М.: Наука, 1977. – 140-161 стр.

²Кунин А. В. Курс фразеологии современного английского языка. М.: Высшая школа, 1996. – 5-25 стр.

³Кэрролл Л. Алиса в Стране чудес / Пер. с англ. Н. М. Демуровой. М.: Наука, 1978. – 9-20 стр.



Phraseological fusions are fully idiomatic expressions whose meaning cannot be deduced from individual words. For example, *"to kick the bucket"* means *"to die"*, but there is no logical connection between kicking and dying. In Russian, a similar expression is *"сыграть в ящик"* literally *"to play into a box"*, which also conveys the meaning of death without a literal sense.

Phraseological unities are expressions with a figurative meaning that can be inferred through imagination or metaphor. For instance, *"to spill the beans"* means *"to reveal a secret"*. Although the literal meaning does not directly indicate this, one can imagine how spilling something might relate to revealing information. In Russian, similar expressions include *"проболтаться"* to blurt out or *"выдать секрет"* to give away a secret.

Phraseological combinations contain one word used literally and another used figuratively. For instance, *"to pay attention"* uses *"pay"* figuratively, while *"attention"* retains its literal meaning. In Russian, this becomes *"обращать внимание"* literally *"to turn attention"*, where *"turn"* is figurative⁴.

Vinogradov's classification is still widely used in Russian phraseology. Even today, many scholars rely on it when analyzing translation. However, in literary texts, especially in narrative prose, these categories are not always clear cut. Certain expressions may function differently depending on context. So instead of treating this classification as a strict system, it makes more sense to see it as a flexible guide.

In this research, it was found that A.V. Kunin expanded this idea and highlighted three main features of phraseological units. First, they must be stable — used consistently by speakers. Second, they function as complete semantic units. And third, they are reproducible, meaning people recall them as ready-made expressions rather than creating them from scratch each time.

Lewis Carroll is distinguished for inventing expressions and playing with language. These creative phrases pose challenges for translators. For instance, Carroll's understated British style in *"nothing so very remarkable"* is rendered as *"ничего особенно удивительного"*, toning down the words but still keeping the point. Repetitive expressions like *"Down, down, down"* are translated directly as *"Вниз, вниз, вниз"*, preserving rhythm and emphasis. Phrases expressing feelings, such as *"tired of sitting by her sister"*, are naturally adapted in Russian as *"надоело ей сидеть подле сестры"*⁵.

These examples demonstrate that literary translation involves more than direct equivalence. Translators must capture the author's voice, tone, and stylistic nuances, ensuring that the text is both natural and engaging in the target language⁶. As these specific cases were examined from Chapter One, it became clear that Demurova successfully balanced fidelity to the original with natural Russian expression. Even though Chapter One contains fewer phraseological expressions than later sections, their careful translation illustrates Carroll's

⁴Виноградов В. В. Об основных типах фразеологических единиц в русском языке // Избранные труды. Лексикология и лексикография. М.: Наука, 1977. – 140-161 стр.

⁵Carroll L. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. London: Macmillan, 1865. – Pp. 1-12.

⁶Комиссаров В. Н. Теория перевода (лингвистические аспекты). М.: Высшая школа, 1990. – 117-128, 135–157 стр.



combination of conventional narrative formulas with metaphorical imagery, forming the stylistic foundation of the narrative.

The exploration of phraseological units in Chapter One of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* demonstrates the complexity of translating idiomatic and creative expressions. Vinogradov's classification of fusions, unities, and combinations provides a useful framework for understanding these expressions, while Kunin's criteria of stability, semantic completeness, and reproducibility highlight why they are challenging to translate. Nina Demurova's Russian translation nails the real sense, also the style and literary voice of the original text, showing that effective literary translation requires not only linguistic competence but also cultural and contextual awareness. Overall, translating phraseological units involves not losing the straight expressions, like the pictures in your head, or how it actually sounds out loud in the target language, ensuring that the reader experiences both the content and the style of the original work.

In conclusion, this analysis of the first chapter confirms that successful translation of phraseological units requires not only linguistic skills but additionally a profound knowledge of the author's intent. This is exactly what Nina Demurova achieved in her version.

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