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VERTICAL CONTEXT AS THE FACTOR OF STYLISTIC TRANSLATION ADEQUACY

The article focuses on the vertical context interpretation in the artistic translation. The experiment proposed to the graduate students helps to outline the basic challenges brought about by the vertical context for the adequate interpretation of the author's and its further translation.

Key words: *vertical context, interpretation, experiment, meaning and sense, understanding, background knowledge, historical and linguistic commentary.*

Signs and their sense have become the research object in a number of humanitarian disciplines: linguistics, semantics, semiotics, cognitive studies, philosophy, cultural studies, sociology etc. The correlation of meaning and sense appears to be particularly topical for translator's texts, as long as the task of translation has to reproduce, first and foremost, all the explicit and implicit senses of the original text. However, it is not always possible for the translator to find adequate means in the target language to review the sense of the original, taking into account word meanings and norms of the target language. If the translator deals with texts aimed at unambiguous reception, then the polysemantic interpretation is quite unlikely, provided that the approach is meticulous, responsible and professional. Here we refer to texts of scientific and business discourse in which sense ambiguity is a sign of imperfection. As for fiction texts, the latent senses create some additional dimension, thus enriching inimitable artistic value. "The conflict between the explicit text and its latent sense is specifically characteristic of the literary text, – points out N.Valgina, – since external events described in the text very often conceal some inner sense, which is created by the motives underlying those events, by the motives that prompted the author to turn to those events rather than the events themselves" [Valgina 1998, 149]. Those motives can often turn out different for different readers since they are not so much read in the text as guessed to be hypothesized and reconstructed in the reader's mind. Each reader views the events in their own way, this viewing not

necessarily corresponding with author's. That is why the probability of forming identical concrete sense for both the author and the reader is fairly low. Sometimes reader can draw out of the text or a separate statement even more than the author might imply or, conversely, miss the sense the author had meant. The thorough understanding of the author's text requires its scrupulous analyses and comparison of all elements and components. Thus, the substitution of some language signs for others cannot be carried out outside the context, because the means of transferring of superficial meanings to the levels of latent sense can vary, including even non-verbalized means such as background knowledge, pauses, intonation, parcellation etc. I.Gubbenet proposes to designate this latent sense as vertical context: *"Vertical context is a philological problem resolving the ways and reasons for a writer to expect the ability of his readers to perceive historical and philological information which is endowed objectively in the text created by this writer"* [Gubbenet 1981, 8 – emphasised by the author]. This problem acquires particular significance for translation nowadays when the low general level of philological culture results in ruining the vertical context and reduces the reading of literature, particularly classic literature, to a primitive reception of the plot. At present the training of future translators is deficient in serious methods categories and parameters for the interpretation of literary text, which are indispensable for adequate translation. Needless to say, the degree and depth of the latent sense perception depends upon various factors inherent in the translator's personality. It is not just erudition and education, but also a subtle intuition, deep insights, spirituality as well as the flavour of words and intonation. However, background knowledge has to be founded on the capability to access, measure and interpret the underlying plot. I.Gubbenet defines background knowledge as a social-cultural stock to characterize artistic writing and can be regarded as a segment of language and cultural studies, while the vertical context is the historical and philological context of specific literary work, thus making it a segment of philology [ibid:5]. Translation students must be taught a least the historical and philological minimum to develop the skills of interpreting the literary text.

In order to find out whether our students can perceive the vertical context, we turned to the stories of the prominent American author

famous for creating latent senses – Ernest Hemingway. One hundred translation students (actually one hundred and three) of the III-V years of studying at the Taras Shevchenko National University in Kyiv were asked the following questions after reading one of the best known stories by Ernest Hemingway "Cat in the Rain":

1. *Where is the scene laid? Why do you think the American couple has arrived in this country? Justify your answers.*

2. *What historical period do the events of the story take place in? Find indications in the text.*

3. *How old are the husband and wife?*

4. *How can the relationship be defined:*

– *friendly;*

– *loving, tender, fond;*

– *indifferent;*

– *hostile.*

Substantiate your answers with references to the text.

5. *How long can they be married? Why do you think so?*

6. *What is the role of the hotel keeper in the story?*

7. *Do certain specific textual elements have a symbolic meaning?*

If so, which ones and why?

8. *Is 'the big tortoise-shell cat' the same 'cat in the rain'? Prove your points.*

9. *Does the story have a regular, canonical beginning and ending?*

10. *What do you think can happen with the couple in the future?*

Symptomatically, practically all the students outlined the action of the story as occurred a few years after the war, but very few realized that it was the First World War, not the Second. The text has a direct semantic marker – "**the war monument**", to look at which Italians came from long way off, so the monument is a new one freshly set up. Only 6 % of respondents recall the 'lost generation', only without understanding the essence of this social, historical and psychological phenomenon. But the "lost generation" is the key to understanding this story as well as Hemingway's whole work between the two world wars. All the students, without exception, define the relationship between the man and his wife in the story as indifferent, still their views on the reasons vary: some think that the main reason lies in their age disparity, others in the dulling of their feelings throughout their long marriage, still others – that they can't

have children, there was even a version that the American wife has cancer for her hair is bobbed (as if after chemotherapy), and she dreams of having long hair and making a big knot at the back that she can feel. It is sad, but even these painful problems of today cannot but tell on the interpretation of literary pieces. Perhaps this accounts for the high value of literature: each generation will find in the most significant works the reflection of acute problems, which forever make a designed emotional and aesthetical impact on the reader. The translator, however, cannot be guided by the emotional perception only: s/he should always remain a poised, sensible and thoughtful interpreter of the author's intent.

The questions asked at the experiment involve the knowledge of the historical and social atmosphere in Europe and the USA after the First World War which actually gave birth to the lost generation with its individual-psychological disharmony. This is Hemingway's recurrent motive which did not have to be brought home to his contemporaries, not to mention his countrymen. Understanding the situation by and large, the author's peers could easily restore the symbolic and psychological structure of whole work but in the course of time this understanding has undergone changes. The experiment has shown principal deviations.

Our respondents do not realize that George – "the American husband" – is embittered by the war and has lost his bearings in life, so, like Hemingway himself and a lot of other real and fictional men who went through the war, cannot find a secure place for himself and he travels from country to country, reluctant to get routed anywhere, to have children, to settle down in his own home. The bloody whirlpool of the First World War made them realize very painfully the fragility of human life, the flimsiness of shelter, which can be turned into a human slaughterhouse in no time. The war ruined all the ideals of the XIX century, destroyed the previous value system, with the new value system not having formed yet. Just that happened to George in the story. Bearing in mind the conditions under which the story was written and evaluating its place in E.Hemingway's entire work, in other words, taking into account extratextual and subtextual factors, we outline George's age as 25 or 26 not 40–45 as most students felt it, proceeding from his indifference and general despondency. The hotel owner, "padrone", on the contrary, is an old

man belonging to a different generation, has seen quite a number of social disasters, so the war has not shattered his ideas of the Good and the Evil. He remains faithful to his basic ethical principles, is committed to his essential life cause, respectful and sympathetic towards people. These two characters are based on contrast. However, it is only possible to see this contrast through assessing the vertical context. The "bloody wheel" of the war has rolled over both the padrone and George, but the effect was different. That the hotel owner felt the horrors of the war is signalled by the newly-erected war monument in his native town (Italy, as is known, was one of the major bridgeheads of the First World War).

Misunderstanding of the author's artistic scheme is also conducive to the wrong assessment by the respondents of George's wife's age and aspirations. She cannot be much older than 20–22, it is not for nothing that E.Hemingway refers to her as "girl" eight times and never refers to her as "woman". Upon returning from the battlefields of the world war yesterday's American soldiers were received as heroes at home, young girls were falling in love with them, they got married hastily – and reciprocal disappointment and alienation did not delay to come up. The girls could not comprehend their husbands' spiritual void and were dreaming about traditional, conventional relationship and setting:

"I want to pull my hair back tight and smooth and make a big knot at the back that I feel... I want to have a kitty to sit on my lap and purr when I stroke her... And I want to eat at a table with my own silver, and I want candles. And I want it to be spring and I want to brush up my hair out in front of the mirror and I want the kitty and I want some new clothes" [Hemingway 1993, 359] – *"Мені хочеться гладенько й туго зачесати коси назад і стягти їх у великий вузол на потилиці, щоб відчувати його... І хочеться посадити на коліна китцю і щоб вона муркотіла, коли я гладитиму її... А ще хочу їсти за своїм столом, і мати своє столове срібло, і щоб горіли свічки. Хочу, щоб була весна, і хочу розчісувати коси перед дзеркалом, і хочу китцю, і хочу мати нові сукні".*

[Хемінгуей 1978, 90–91]

But, instead, the young wives were taken to Europe, which seemed exciting at first, but became boring very soon. A lot of marriages got ruined at that time.

Gaps in knowledge of historical and cultural nature prevent the respondents from the correct estimation of the symbolic plane of the story. The key symbol is placed in the very title – "cat". It is worth mentioning, in passing, that all the translators on this story managed to convey its gender markedness: *кишка* (female), not *kim* (male). This translation gives the connotative meaning of cosiness, warmth and tenderness. This symbol is not unambiguous. The American girl wants to have "that kitty", although the couple's way of life on the move, their staying at the hotels could hardly make the little pet happy. Cat also symbolizes and personifies a baby, a little dependent creature, coveted by any married young woman. The very title of the story implies drama, if not tragedy – "Cat in the Rain". What can be less appealing for a warmth-loving cat than a cold rain? Incidentally, rain belongs to one of negative symbols in Hemingway's artistic system. But "cat" does not signify a baby only, but also the American girl herself: she, too, feels as unprotected and insecure in her life as a little cat in the rain. That is why she is so fond of the old *padrone*: she feels his reliability, supportiveness and integrity, which her husband George obviously lacks.

The historical and philological minimum is indispensable for realizing that the process of translation does not differ too much from the process of creating the original text, and is by no means simpler. The translator as the most attentive reader and the most scrupulous interpreter of any literary text, – particularly, a text written by such a sophisticated author as E. Hemingway, abound in latent meanings, – has to measure, first and foremost, the value of each verbal and imagery element of the work under translation and find an adequate correspondence, sometimes, perhaps, outside the text itself – in the commentary aimed at filling the gaps in the reader's background knowledge. Without this, E. Hemingway's work can turn into a cheap popular print or a number of puzzles (we'll dare to suppose, not for the second culture readers only). It means that the role of the translator becomes still more significant because s/he is responsible for the acceptance of the translated texts in the receiving culture.

The experiment under analysis proves that translation departments of most universities in Ukraine do not provide their students with the knowledge necessary to do a high-quality artistic translation. Paradoxically, some really good translations, not excepting the translations of poetry, are done by people with a different educational background but capable of and accustomed to self-development and continuous quest for sources of spiritual inspiration. The names of excellent translators Mykhaylo Moskalenko and Maksym Strikha will suffice. Meanwhile, translation departments are being turned into training courses of translation hacks ignorant of world literature, world arts and world history.

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Вертикальный контекст как фактор адекватности художественного перевода

Статья рассматривает проблему интерпретации вертикального контекста в переводе художественных текстов. На примере эксперимента, предложенного студентам 5 курса переводческого отделения, прослеживаются трудности, которые создает вертикальный контекст для адекватного восприятия авторского текста и, соответственно, перевода.

Ключевые слова: вертикальный контекст, интерпретация, эксперимент, значение и смысл, понимание, фоновые знания, историко-филологический минимум.

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Вертикальний контекст як передумова адекватності художнього перекладу

Стаття розглядає проблему інтерпретації вертикального контексту у перекладі художніх творів. На прикладі експерименту, який був запропонований

студентам 5 курсу перекладацького відділення, простежується, які саме перешкоди створює вертикальний контекст для адекватного сприйняття авторського тексту, а відтак і перекладу.

Ключові слова: вертикальний контекст, інтерпретація, експеримент, значення і смисл, розуміння, фонові знання, історико-філологічний мінімум.

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THE ROLE OF FORMAL EQUIVALENCE IN PROSE TRANSLATION

The article deals with the problem of formal equivalence in prose translation. Different theories of the concept of equivalence are discussed. The problems arising from the juxtaposition of the source and target contexts are summarized. The issue of a comparative norm by which the correctness or accuracy of a translation can be assessed in a valid manner is studied. The importance of the concept of equivalence is proved within the theoretical inquisition on translation.

Key words: *equivalence, translation, source text, target text, comparative norm.*

The presentation of the problem. The theory of equivalence is difficult to ignore while comparing texts in different languages. Equivalence can be considered to be one of the central notions in translation theory. But it should be mentioned that it causes tempestuous discussions which lead to elaboration of many different theories of this concept in past years.

The aim of this article is to evaluate the role formal equivalence plays in literary translation. To accomplish this, the concept of formal translation of a text from the source language into the target language must first be placed into context.

The evaluation of recent researches. A great deal of controversy has surrounded the issue of literary translation, both historically and today. Debate in this controversy typically focuses upon the strategy by which the translator seeks to replicate the text from the source language into the target language. A translation is generally regarded as "correct" or "accurate" when it sufficiently replicates the original, with respect to both form and transfer of intended meaning.