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PANCHENKO Olena

Doctor of Sciences (Philology), Professor, Head of the Department of Translation and Linguistic training of Foreigners, Oles Honchar Dnipro National University, Prospekt Gagarina 72, Dnipro 49010, Ukraine; tel.: +38(056) 374-98-86; e-mail: epanchenko2017@gmail.com; ORCID ID: 0000-0003-2217-5613

TRANSLATION STRATEGIES FOR CONTEXTUAL MEANING

Summary. The *aim* of the article is to analyze translational strategies used to render a contextual meaning of a lexical unit. The article deals with the general problem of studying word translation in artistic English texts. The *object* of the article is the novels by K. Vonnegut. The *subject* of the article is translational transformations, their frequency and reliability. This problem is a topical one as any type of meaning on the one hand is a certain translational problem, on the other hand, it creates a text specificity. The material of investigation includes abstracts from various artistic texts of classical English literature. The *methods* of investigation are descriptive and comparative one. Thus the *results* of the article are the description of stylistic and translational peculiarities of contextual meaning. The mechanism of its translation was studied by a few researchers and the peculiarities of their functioning were analyzed. Translation of contextual meaning is important enough. Every language combines a form and value arbitrary enough and has specific character. All types of meaning have such inherent feature that they contrast to each other, and there are a few expressions that have different values but identical or similar form. The conclusions state that analyzing the classical English literature we can specify such translational transformations as main ones: 1) analogous translation; 2) compensation; 3) replacement. The main ways of translating this kind of words are analogue, compensation, replacement and sometimes omission which is not desirable. Their choice to a certain extent depends on the register of the context: neutral narrative, scientific or colloquial. Their transformations in scientific context are less pronounced, there we can find analogues, antonymic translations and logical development. All types of replacements are traced in narrative register. The colloquial register may need all types of transformations, compensation among them. The prospects of our investigation are connected with studying possibilities of translating pragmatic meaning.

Keywords: translation, meaning, context, compensation, analogue, replacement.

Problem statement. The article deals with the general problem of translating various types of meaning from English into Ukrainian. This problem is a topical one as meaning assumes paramount importance in all fields of linguistics. This is so because the term 'meaning' is applied not only to words, word-combinations, sentences but also to the manner of expression into which the matter is cast. Thus, we are to look at meaning from the stylistic perspective.

Connections with former investigations. At some period in the development of a certain trend in linguistic theory meaning was excluded from observations in language science; it was considered an extralinguistic category. The tendency was so strong that R. Jakobson suggested the term "semantic invariant" as a substitute for "meaning". If, however, you dislike the word meaning because it is too ambiguous, writes R. Jakobson, then let us simply deal with semantic invariants, no less important for linguistic analysis than the phonemic invariants [7]. But this tendency has been ruled out by later research in language data. One of the prominent American scientists, Wallace L. Chafe, is right when he states that "...the data of meaning are both accessible to linguistic explanation and crucial to the investigation of language structure – in certain ways more 'crucial than the data of sound to which linguistic studies have given such unbalanced attention" [5].

The problem of meaning in general linguistics deals mainly with such aspects of the term as the interrelation between meaning and concept, meaning and sign, meaning and referent. The general tendency is to regard meaning as something stable at a given period of time. This is reasonable, otherwise no dictionary would be able to cope with the problem of defining the meaning of words. Moreover, no communication would be possible.

Aim and tasks of the investigation. The role of contextual meaning in translation has not been studied yet as new situations and new contexts set new aspects of the problem. Thus the aim of the article is to analyze stylistic and translational power of the contextual meaning in an artistic text. To achieve

the aim we are to solve the following tasks: to define typical translational transformations for translating contextual meaning; to accumulate the relevant factual material; to classify the obtained usages of contextual meaning and their translation.

The main part of the investigation. If we talk about words, we cannot avoid talking about the study of meaning (semantics). The meaning of a word is often complex, having such component as a picture, an idea, a quality, a relationship and personal feelings and association. Palmer [10] suggested that we should draw a distinction between sentence meaning and utterance meaning, the sentence meaning being directly predictable from the grammatical and lexical features of the sentence, while utterance meaning includes all the various types of meaning, then, is the part of meaning of a sentence that we are going to discuss next. He states that utterance meaning is the part of meaning of a sentence that is directly related to grammatical and lexical features, but is obtained either from associated prosodic and paralinguistic features or from the content, linguistic and non-linguistic [10].

Contextual meaning is widely assumed to be one of the central factors in linguistic communication. The sciences noted that this meaning involves an interconnection on the lexical level of language and arises in case of multiple conceptual meanings, when one sense of word forms part of our response to another sense. It is the first meaning or usage which a word will suggest to most people when the word occurs not in isolation [1; 4; 8].

The article deals with the mechanisms of realization of contextual nuances in translated utterances based on the comparative translation analysis of books by K. Vonnegut [11]. A particular text provides plentiful data for analysis and investigation, for it contains rather specific vocabulary and pragmatic intention. A lot of common words may acquire occasional meanings within the context. Both connotative and contextual meanings may pose a considerable challenge for a translator. Thus, we are to examine the approaches and solutions, offered by translators, whose texts are considered adequate and widely accepted ones. It would be useful to compare both Russian (by P. Zafirov [2]) and Ukrainian (by V. Khazin [3]) translations, for these languages have the similar structure and are genetically related. We have analyzed about a hundred of text fragments with special functioning of contextual meaning and summarized translational transformations used there. Here we present some samples to illustrate the most typical and successful results.

The fact that the artistic text under consideration is not uniformed from the point of view of its register is worth paying attention to. The whole artistic context can be split into 1) neutral, narrative; b) bookish, scientifically orientated; c) colloquial. As our observations show, some ways of translating contextual meaning in these registers coincide, the others differ.

Descriptive, narrative contexts can be illustrated in the following way. In the very beginning of the text we encounter the description of the setting, i.e. the seaport Guayaquil: *It was always very hot there, and humid, too, for the city was built in the **doldrums** – on a **springy marsh** through which the mingled waters of several rivers draining the mountains flowed. This seaport was several kilometers from the open sea. Rafts of **vegetable matter** often clogged the **soupy waters**, engulfing pilings and anchor lines.* It would be useful to look at different representations of this fictional reality in both translations. There are some notable moments in this excerpt we would like to concentrate our attention on, which are marked with bold letters for this purpose. In the Russian translation we read: *Царила там неизменная жара, да и влажность, так как город построен был в **безветренной экваториальной зоне**, на **пружинящем болоте**, которое образовывали, сливаясь, несколько сбегавших с гор рек. Открытое море начиналось в нескольких километрах от этого морского порта. Нередко **месиwo водорослей** заполняло **воды дельты**, **делая их студенистыми**, облепляя сваи причалов и якорные цепи.* V. Khazin provides the following variant: *Там завжди було спекно й вогко, бо місто стояло на **багnistій місцевості**, де били численні джерела і де зливалися перед впадінням в океан, який у тих місцях не знав **штормів**, кілька річок, що стікали з гір. Цей морський порт містився за кілька кілометрів од відкритого моря, і ті кілька кілометрів теплих, **наче бульйон**, вод звичайно були **вкриті рослинними рештками**, що прибивалися до пальових причалів та якірних ланцюгів.*

The word **'doldrums'** has no direct equivalent in Ukrainian as well as in Russian. The unilingual dictionary among other explanations suggests the meaning of *'a part of the ocean near the equator abounding in calms, squalls, and light shifting winds'*. This explanation obviously accounts for the appearance of the word 'океан' in the Ukrainian translation (which is absent in the original, although implied by the word used in the context), which is a typical example of concretization. Translators of the Russian text in this case preferred to keep the structure of the original sentence, and used mere descriptive approach – *безветренной экваториальной зоне*, which is a good solution in terms of space economy, and is often considered as a near equivalent of a word 'doldrums', and included to bilingual dictionaries as an analogue of this noun. The collocation 'springy marsh' preserves its literal meaning by means of word-for-word translation into Russian – *пружинящем болоте*; again Ukrainian text slightly modifies the original phrase, and omits the adjective 'springy', which however, does not violate the context. "Soupy waters" with the help of descriptive translation become *"наче бульйон"* in Ukrainian, and *"студенистыми"* in Russian; the former emphasizing the warm temperature of the waters, and the latter stressing their jelly-like state (due to abundance of vegetable matter). However, we cannot tell for sure, which of the abovementioned characteristics was originally meant by Vonnegut himself. Moreover, **"vegetable matter"** is of interest as well. The word vegetable has a generic dictionary meaning – *растение*, it is this meaning that is represented in the Ukrainian translation. Yet the translators of the Russian one applied concretization and specified the kind of plants or vegetables, having substituted it for *'месиво водорослей'* that is understandable and easily decoded by Russian speakers, for it is the specific type of plants *'водоросли'* (algae), that live in the water.

The phrase *'like amphibious infantry'* describes the way the visitors of Galapagos should climb the rocky slopes. The translators into Russian found a direct equivalent for the noun (infantry – пехота) and applied metonymy in place of its attribute (amphibia are, indeed, sea creatures), thus in translation we get – 'морская пехота'. The Ukrainian translator focuses his attention on the word "amphibious" and leaves it unchanged in translation, on the other hand he has chosen to generalize, selecting more generic concept of 'полки' (i.e. troops) – *"полчища амфібій"*. Both words belong to the same military semantic group, thus their mutual intelligibility within the context does not violate its communicative value. This particular example shows the importance of combinability in translation, different combinability patterns influence the choice of semantic variants.

The next example has to do with **scientific** register. The author gives a description of Galapagos landscape taken from the book by Charles Darwin called "The Voyage of the Beagle" which starts with the phrase: *"Nothing could be less inviting than the first appearance."* Its Ukrainian translation exemplifies a prominent example of such transformation as antonymic translation: *"Перше враження досить-таки гнітюче"*. The Ukrainian phrase sounds more appropriate and fits the contexts better than the one, suggested by the Russian text, even though the last abides by the original structure with the help of literal translation: *"На первый взгляд трудно представить себе что-либо более непривлекательное"*. The same abstract also contains the account of brushwood – *"stunted, sun-burnt brushwood, which shows little signs of life"* that is rendered identically in both translations using antonymic method as well: *"низкорослыми, випаленими на сонці кущами, які майже позбавлені ознак життя..." / "чахлой, выжженной солнцем порослью, почти не подает признаков какой-либо жизни"*.

When Kurt Vonnegut tells his readers about Darwin's most famous and influential scientific volume "The Origin of Species", he mentions the fact that: *"It did more to stabilize people's volatile opinions of how to identify success or failure than any other tome."* Actually this phrase presents no considerable challenge for translators, yet we cannot help noticing, that the literal or word-for-word translation thereof (*стабілізувати*) and even the slightly different in terms of connotative meaning *'систематизувати'* would not make much sense in Russian or Ukrainian. However, it is this verb that is used by translators Zdorovov and Zafirov: *"Трактат этот, более чем любой другой, способствовал стабилизации изменчивых человеческих представлений о том, как можно определить успех или неудачу"*. In Ukrainian variant by Khazin: *"Той трактат зробив більше, ніж будь-який інший, щоб звести до загального знаменника все розмаїття людських суджень щодо добра і зла, успіху і*

невдачі” the set expression is used – ‘звести до загального знаменника’ which actually denotes *systematization of acquired knowledge*; the popular expression is closer to the Ukrainian recipient and fully conveys the denotative meaning of original lexical item.

Logical development, contextual generalization and concretization are actually widely applied in the Ukrainian translation of the novel *Galapagos*. For instance, the word “тубільці” that have already been mentioned as an example of concretization, is extensively used throughout the Ukrainian text as a specifying device: “without safe anchorage or shade or sweet water or dangling fruit, **or human beings of any kind**” – “без пристойних бухт, природних укриттів і прісної води, без крилатих фруктових дерев і навіть без тубільців”. Pragmatic adaptation of the following sentence was a necessary convention for translators, otherwise it would astonish the target readership: *Only one English word adequately describes his transformation of the islands from worthless to priceless: magical*. As we may point out, “English word” could have easily become “українським” or “руським” in translation, yet translators omitted the attribute of the word in both cases: 1) Цю здійснену Дарвіном трансформацію нікчемних островів у неоціненні інакше, ніж магією, не назвеш. 2) Лишь одним словом можно верно охарактеризовать мгновенно пережитое островами превращение из ничего не стоящих в бесценные: волшебство. Moreover, antonymic relationship between the adjectives ‘worthless and priceless’ and their contradictory usage in this utterance is preserved only in Russian translation, the Ukrainian variant, indeed, contrasts two adjectives – one with positive and the other with negative meaning, yet they are not antonyms in traditional linguistic sense. Thus, the stylistic opposition is partly lost.

The following Ukrainian sentence is a typical example of such transformation as generalization: “Але мільйон років тому планета була така сама багата на воду й харчі, як і тепер, і щодо цього унікальна в усій **Галактиці**” (compared to the original “*But the planet a million years ago was as moist and nourishing as it is today – and unique, in that respect, in the entire Milky Way*”). The original item “*Milky Way*” (the galaxy that contains our Solar System) is substituted by more generic term “*Галактика*” (galaxy as such), even though there is a direct vocabulary equivalent for the original item, fixed not only in dictionaries, but also in scientific literature dealing with astronomy and space exploration (i. e. “*Чумацький Шлях*”). The Russian direct equivalent is, however, used by Zafirov and Zdorovov in their translation: “Однако в действительности Земля тогда, миллион лет назад, была столь же богата влагой и плодоносна, как и сегодня, – и в этом отношении ей не было равных на всем протяжении **Млечного Пути**”.

Next examples will illustrate the purely **colloquial** register. An interesting solution for the word ‘*drinker*’ is suggested by Khazin in the 3rd Chapter of K. Vonnegut’s novel: “**He was not a drinker**” – “**Уейт не схильний був чаркувати**”. As we observe, the denotative meaning is preserved, and is conveyed in a verb form. The Ukrainian verb “*чаркувати*” is a colloquial one, and according to Ukrainian explanatory dictionaries, indeed, has a meaning of drinking alcohol, but this usage is not common for the Ukrainian language. For this reason, translators of the Russian version might have been more precise, having translated the noun into Russian with its direct equivalent “*пьянчуга*”.

While the translator of the Ukrainian text decided to render the composite adjective ‘*nut-brown*’ word-for-word as ‘горіхово-брунатний’, translators Zafirov and Zdorovov substituted it with its analogue (the word with more or less the same connotative meaning) – ‘*смуглокожий*’. The translation of a substantivized adjective within the context also deserves attention – the neutral English ‘*natives*’ is conveyed in both translations similarly, using connotation to the region where these natives live, i. e. they are residents of the islands, who are commonly referred to in Russian and Ukrainian as ‘*туземці*’ or ‘*тубільці*’ correspondingly. What interests us most in the following sentence is the translation of denotative meaning of a word group “tone deaf” within this particular context: “*He could talk to birds in their own languages, for example, something she could never have done, since her ancestors were notoriously **tone deaf** on both sides of her family.*” Actually “*tone deafness*” is a peculiar type of deafness that lies in the lack of relative pitch, or the inability to distinguish between musical notes that is not due to the lack of musical training; tone deaf people seem disabled only when it comes to music. The term “*tone deafness*” belongs to the medical field, and has direct equivalents in both Ukrainian and Russian.

Khazin uses this equivalent in his translation: “Він, приміром, умів спілкуватися з птахами на їхніх власних мовах, чого Мері була позбавлена через цілковиту **музичну глухоту** – нею відзначались її предки з обох боків”. Unlike their colleague, Russian translators Zafirov and Zdorovov managed to find an adequate connotative equivalent, which fits the context even better, and is more understandable for Russian speakers, who may be unfamiliar with medical vocabulary: “Он умел, например, разговаривать с птицами на их наречии – чего не дано было ей, чьи предки по обеим линиям были абсолютно **лишены слуха**”. (Отсутствие слуха и есть музыкальная глухота). In another sentence: “The tests were incapable of detecting minor defects in the fetus, such as that it might be as **tone deaf** as Mary Hepburn”, the similar term is conveyed identically (as an absence of musical talent, i. e. ‘отсутствие музыкального слуха’) in both translations: 1) “Аналіз не міг виявити дрібних дефектів плоду – таких, наприклад, що дитина **не матиме**, як Мері Хепберн, **музичного слуху**”; 2) “При всем том анализы были не в состоянии выявить мелкие отклонения в развитии плода. К примеру, что ребенок может **родиться без музыкального слуха**, подобно Мэри Хепберн”.

Conclusions and prospects. Thus we can make the conclusion that the contextual meaning is one of the greatest problems in translating any text. The main ways of translating this kind of words are analogue, compensation, replacement and sometimes omission which is not desirable. Their choice to a certain extent depends on the register of the context: neutral narrative, scientific or colloquial. The transformations in scientific context are less pronounced, there we can find analogues, antonymic translations and logical development. Such types of replacements as generalization and concretization are traced in narrative register. The colloquial register may need all types of transformations, compensation among them. The prospects of our investigation are connected with studying possibilities of translating pragmatic meaning.

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ПАНЧЕНКО Олена Іванівна

доктор філологічних наук, професор, завідувач кафедри перекладу та лінгвістичної підготовки іноземців Дніпровського національного університету імені Олеся Гончара; пр. Гагаріна, 72, м. Дніпро, 49010, Україна; тел.: +38(056) 374-98-86; e-mail: epanchenko2017@gmail.com; ORCID ID: 0000-0003-2217-5613

СТРАТЕГІЇ ПЕРЕКЛАДУ КОНТЕКСТУАЛЬНОГО ЗНАЧЕННЯ

Анотація. *Метою* статті є аналіз трансляційних стратегій, що використовуються для відображення контекстуального значення лексичної одиниці. У статті розглянуто загальну проблему вивчення перекладу слів у художніх англійських текстах. *Об'єктом* статті є романи Ч. Діккенса, К. Воннегута, Дж. Остен. *Предметом* статті є трансляційні перетворення, їх частота та надійність. Ця проблема є актуальною, оскільки будь-який тип значення, з одного боку, є певною трансляційною проблемою, з іншого боку, створює специфіку тексту. *Матеріал* дослідження включає фрагменти з різних художніх текстів класичної англійської літератури. *Методи* дослідження є описовими і порівняльними. *Результати* статті описують стилістичні та трансляційні можливості контекстуального значення. Низка дослідників вивчали механізм його перекладу, проаналізували особливості функціонування цього значення. Переклад контекстуального значення достатньо важливий. Кожна мова поєднує в собі форму і значення довільно і має специфічний характер. Всі типи значення контрастують один з одним, і є кілька виразів, які мають різні значення, але однакові або подібні форми. Зроблені висновки стверджують, що, аналізуючи класичну англійську літературу, можна вказати такі трансляційні перетворення як основні: 1) аналогічний переклад; 2) компенсація; 3) заміна. Ми робимо висновок, що найкращим способом перекладу контекстуального значення є аналог, коли це можливо. Перспективи нашого дослідження пов'язані з вивченням шляхів перекладу прагматичного значення.

Ключові слова: переклад, значення, контекстуальне значення, компенсація, аналог, заміна.

ПАНЧЕНКО Елена Ивановна

доктор филологических наук, профессор, заведующая кафедрой перевода и лингвистической подготовки иностранцев Днепропетровского национального университета имени Олеся Гончара; пр. Гагарина, 72, г. Днепр, 49010, Украина; тел.: +38(056) 374-98-86; e-mail: epanchenko2017@gmail.com; ORCID ID: 0000-0003-2217-5613

СТРАТЕГИИ ПЕРЕВОДА КОНТЕКСТНОГО ЗНАЧЕНИЯ

Аннотация. *Целью* статьи является анализ трансляционных стратегий, используемых для передачи контекстуального значения лексической единицы. Рассматривается общая проблема изучения перевода слов в художественных текстах на английском языке. *Объектом* статьи являются романы Ч. Диккенса, К. Воннегута, Дж. Остин. *Предмет* статьи – трансляционные трансформации, их частота и достоверность. Эта проблема является актуальной, поскольку любой тип значения, с одной стороны, является определенной переводческой проблемой, с другой стороны, он создает специфичность текста. *Материал* исследования включает фрагменты из различных художественных текстов классической английской литературы. *Методы* исследования носят описательный и сравнительный характер. *Результатом* статьи является описание стилистических и переводческих возможностей контекстного значения. Механизм его перевода был изучен рядом исследователей, проанализировавшими особенности его функционирования. Перевод контекстуального значения достаточно важен. Каждый язык сочетает в себе форму и значение достаточно произвольно и имеет специфический характер. Все типы значений контрастируют друг с другом, и есть несколько выражений, которые имеют разные значения, но они идентичны или похожи по форме. В *выводах* утверждается, что, анализируя классическую английскую литературу, мы можем указать в качестве основных трансляционных преобразований: 1) аналогичный перевод; 2) компенсацию; 3) замену. Мы делаем вывод, что лучший способ перевода контекстуального значения – это аналог, когда это возможно. *Перспективы* нашего исследования связаны с изучением способов перевода прагматического значения.

Ключевые слова: перевод, значение, контекстуальное значение, компенсация, аналог, замена.

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