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Galina Petrovna Belinskaya – Doctor of philology, principal lecturer of the Russian and foreign languages chair of the Far-Eastern institute of management – branch of RANEPA (Khabarovsk). *E-mail: belinskaya.47@mail.ru*
Galina Yakovlevna Gaponova – principal lecturer of the Russian and foreign languages chair of the Far-Eastern institute of management – branch of RANEPA (Khabarovsk). *E-mail: ggaponova@bk.ru*
Ekaterina Aleksandrovna Nasonova – lecturer of the Russian and foreign languages chair of the Far-Eastern institute of management – branch of RANEPA (Khabarovsk). *E-mail: strelkova.kat@yandex.ru*

National and cultural peculiarities as a pragmatic aspect in translation process

The article deals with the issues of national and cultural peculiarities of the Russian language in the translation process. It is next to impossible to create the target text without considering these peculiarities. The national and cultural aspect is one of translation problems connected with pragmatic adaptation of the source text. A translator should possess both linguistic and extra-linguistic knowledge and use a number of translation mechanisms for preserving pragmatic aspect in the target text. The article presents translation techniques which help create a target text that meets the requirements of semantic, genre and stylistic, pragmatic equivalence. Special attention is paid to the theory of linguistic meaning, and in particular, to pragmatic meaning. It is impossible to achieve the desired effect on the recipient of the target text if pragmatic meaning is ignored. The research is based on examples taken from literary texts.

Национально-культурная специфика как прагматический аспект в процессе перевода

В статье затрагиваются вопросы национально-культурных особенностей русского языка, без учета которых невозможно создание полноценного текста на языке перевода. Национально-культурный аспект входит в круг проблем переводоведения, связанных с прагматической адаптацией исходного текста. Сохранение прагматического аспекта в тексте перевода требует от переводчика не только языковых, но и экстралингвистических знаний, а также использования ряда переводческих преобразований. В статье показан механизм, с помощью которого на языке перевода создается текст, отвечающий требованиям смысловой, семантической, жанрово-стилистической, прагматической эквивалентности. Особое внимание уделяется теории языковых значений, в частности прагматическому значению, без учета которого невозможно достичь желаемого воздействия на получателя переводимого текста.

Материалом исследования послужили примеры, взятые из художественных текстов.

Keywords: *source text, target text, equivalence in translation, linguistic sign, linguistic meaning, semiotics, referential meaning of the sign, pragmatic meaning of the sign, intralinguistic meaning of the sign, pragmatic aspect of translation, texts typology.*

Ключевые слова: *исходный текст, переводной текст, переводческая эквивалентность, языковой знак, языковое значение, семиотика, референциальное значение знака, прагматическое значение знака, внутрилингвистическое значение знака, прагматический аспект перевода, типология текста.*

The article is devoted to translation problems regarding the study of relations between the original and translated texts in the translation process. Translation is traditionally viewed as a special process of creating a secondary text, relating to the source text, and involves translation transformations which make for creating a text that meets the requirements of semantic and expressive equivalence.

In translation theory, there are many points of view on the concept of "equivalence". V. N. Komissarov believes that "translational equivalence limit is the maximum possible (linguistic) degree of preserving original content in the translated text", but points out that in every translation, semantic proximity of the translated text to the original text is (in varying degrees and in different ways) close to the maximum.

It can be assumed then that the translation equivalence may be based on preservation (or loss) of different elements of meaning contained in the original text. [4, p. 134] It is possible to come to the conclusion that "equivalence" is a measure of the evaluation of the target text and that the preservation or loss of meaning of various elements is the interpreter's action in the process of creating translation of the source text.

The equivalence problem affects issues related to linguistic meaning. According to L. S. Barkhudarov, in order to understand linguistic meaning you should understand the nature of the linguistic sign, which is studied by semiotics.

Semiotics or semiology is the science that studies the properties of signs and sign systems. In modern semiotics there are several approaches to determining the types of relations in which a linguistic sign is involved.

Semiotics is often divided into three branches: semantics which studies relations between signs and the things to which they refer, their signified *denotata*, or meaning; syntactics which studies relations among or between signs in formal structures (without reference to their meaning); and pragmatics studying relations between signs and sign-using agents or interpreters. [6, 7]

The first basic concepts of semiotics were developed by German logician and philosopher G. Frege [10], by the founder of phenomenology E. Husserl [3], and others.

In this research, the authors relied on the classification of L. S. Barkhudarov. [1, p. 64 – 67] He formulated in detail three main types of relations of the linguistic sign.

1. The relationship between the sign and the object it refers to. The objects can be both animate and inanimate; the sign may refer to actions and processes, qualities, abstract concepts, situations, etc.

Objects, processes, qualities, phenomena of reality denoted by the signs are called referents of signs, and the relationship between the sign and its referent is a referential meaning of the sign (for example, “home” - a sign denoting the concept of “place fit to live in”).

2. The relationship between the sign and the person using this sign. When using signs, participants of the speech process bring their own subjective attitude to these signs and through them to the referents denoted by these signs. These subjective relations are known as pragmatic relations. This type of linguistic meaning is called the pragmatic meaning of the sign. (e. g., «ребенок» - «ребятёнок», «лицо» - «харя», «спать» - «дрыхнуть», «еда» - «жратва», etc.). Pragmatic meanings of linguistic units express a certain attitude of the members of a linguistic community to the referents, giving them a subjective characteristic (in the last three examples – sharply negative subjective characteristic, meaning of roughness).

3. The relationship between the sign and other signs of the same sign system. Such relationships are called intralinguistic. The relations existing between the units of the language itself are varied. They may be relations of:

- sound similarity between the words (rhyme):

Почернел, искривился бревенчатый мост,

И стоят лопухи в человеческий рост

The word «мост» in the first line requires the rhyme «…ост»

- semantic similarity (words belonging to the same synonymic or lexical and semantic field)

“sail”, “float”, “swim”

- dissimilarity (antonymy)

“hot” – “cold”

- word collocations in a sentence (valence, control)

“to depend on”, “to run business”

It should be noted that each language has its own system of intralinguistic meanings.

All these types of meanings are closely related, because they are components of the semantic structure of the same unit (the sign).

The authors of the article are interested in issues related to the conveyance of pragmatic meanings in the translation process. However, pragmatic meanings are only part of the complex concept of pragmatics in linguistics as well as in the theory of translation. Pragmatics itself is a broader concept; it includes all issues connected with varying degrees of understanding linguistic units and speech compositions by the participants of the communication process. Besides, pragmatics analyzes how linguistic units and speech compositions are interpreted,

depending on the linguistic and non-linguistic experience of the people involved in the communication process. [1, p. 106]

Pragmatics in translation is determined by V. N. Komissarov as “influence of the necessity to reproduce the pragmatic potential of the original text on the course and the result of the translation process, and the intention to achieve the desired impact of the translated text on Receptor”. [4, p. 210]

V. N. Komissarov characterizes the pragmatic potential of the original text as its ability to produce communicative effect, and to perform pragmatic effect on the recipient of information. [4, p. 210]

Relying on his definition we can identify the following sequence of processes: reproducing the pragmatic potential of the source text → producing communicative effect on the recipient of the target text → recipient’s comprehending the translation of the source text.

Before translating it is necessary to determine a number of certain points that would contribute to reproducing the pragmatic potential of the source text with the aim of achieving the desired impact on the recipient of the target text.

First, the translator must understand the predetermined communicative intention of the author of the text. Second, he should understand the dominant text function. Each text has a dominant function aimed at producing certain pragmatic effect on the receptor of the text. Third, the pragmatic aspects of translation focus on the sender's communicative purposes. In this connection it is necessary to consider the type of the source text. There are different classifications of the translated texts typology, their characteristic features being taken into account.

Types of texts determine the approach to the process of translation aimed at meeting all translation requirements. Besides, the type of the text influences the choice of translation methods and measures the degree of equivalence between the source text and the target text.

The authors of the article believe the text-type classification by Katharina Reiss, [8, p. 202-208] to be the most detailed.

Katharina Reiss builds in the concept of equivalence but views the text (rather than word or sentence) as the level at which communication is achieved.

In Reiss’ model, the textual categories are:

- informative – a plain communication of facts, texts to transfer news, knowledge, opinions, etc. – in sum, to inform (lectures, press releases, reports, commercial texts, white papers, textbooks and specialized literature, dissertations, humanities, natural sciences and technical texts, etc.);
- expressive – mainly to transmit contents organized in an artistic fashion, consciously organizing the content according to aesthetic criteria (fiction, poetry, essays, biographies, etc.);
- operative – to transmit contents of persuasive character to induce the text’s receiver to act in the sense intended by the text’s sender – intention which corresponds to the appellative function of the language (advertisement, propaganda, preaching, polemics, etc.);
- audiomedial – translated material may not be narrowed only to autonomous written texts, but it should also include verbal texts which are

presented orally. Multi-medial texts constitute a part of a larger whole and are expressed with a view of additional information provided by a sign system different than that of language, for instance a text that is supplemented with pictures, music, gestures etc. Therefore, multi-medial or audiomedial texts are films and other visual and spoken advertisements (radio and television texts, stage works, etc.).

Because of a great variety of texts their classification becomes rather complicated. The text-type classification of V.S. Vinogradov is based on the separation of language and speech styles. Style is what differentiates a group of homogeneous texts (an individual text) from all other groups (other texts). Style can be roughly defined as the peculiarity, the set of specific features of a text type or of a specific text. Consequently, text classification should be based upon the particular functional type the text belongs to.

V. S. Vinogradov distinguishes six main functional and stylistic types of texts [2, 16].

1. Colloquial (conversational) texts. Among them one can distinguish conversational everyday texts, conversational-business texts, etc. The most general function of the colloquial (conversational) texts is communication, realization of practical activity of a person. Such texts are implemented in the form of oral dialogues and aimed at intercommunication to achieve certain goals.

2. Texts of official documents are represented by the texts of business documents; state, legal, diplomatic, military documents, etc. The most general function of the texts of official documents is message, information. As a rule, texts of official documents exist in a written form, which in certain types of documents confirms to strict rules.

3. Publicist texts. They contain a variety of information that passes through the channels of mass communication, newspapers, magazines, radio and television. Their main function is informing. The general aim of the publicist texts is to exert influence on public opinion, to convince the reader or the listener that the interpretation given by the writer or the speaker is the only correct one and to cause him to accept the point of view expressed in the speech, essay or article not merely by logical argumentation, but by emotional appeal as well. The form of these texts is often written. The development of radio and television has brought into being a new spoken variety – the radio and television commentary. The publicist style is used in public speeches and printed public works which are addressed to a broad audience and devoted to important social or political events, public problems of cultural or moral character. The sphere of application of oratory is confined to appeal to an audience. Direct contact with the listeners permits the combination of the syntactical, lexical and phonetic peculiarities of both the written and spoken varieties of language. In its leading feature, however, the oratorical style belongs to the written variety of language, though it is modified by the oral form of the utterance and the use of gestures.

4. Scientific texts, with many subtypes, depending on the spheres of professional knowledge and purpose. Among them one can point out special texts which are professionally-oriented and popular scientific prose for the general

reader. Their main functions are conveyance of logical intellectual information, rational cognition and linguistic presentation of the dynamics of thinking. These functions are characteristic of all genres of scientific prose. This style serves as an instrument for promoting scientific ideas and exchanging scientific information among people. Scientific texts exist mainly in a written form. They are characterized by precision, clarity, logical cohesion. At conferences, congresses, and symposiums their form may be oral.

5. The belles-lettres texts embrace all texts belonging to various sub-styles and genres of belles-lettres, literary criticism, journalism. These texts have two main interrelated text-building functions: voluntative and aesthetic. The form of presentation is very important in these types of texts. Of great significance is the common function, which may broadly be called "aesthetico-cognitive". This is a double function, which aims at the cognitive process, which secures the gradual unfolding of the idea to the reader and at the same time calls forth a feeling of pleasure, a pleasure, which is derived from the form in which the content is wrought. The belles-lettres texts employ units and stylistic means of all styles but all these style elements are included in a peculiar literary system and acquire a new aesthetic function. The belles-lettres texts can be divided into subtypes corresponding for example to literary genres – drama texts, poetic texts, fiction texts. Each genre has its own peculiar linguistic, literary and functional characteristic.

6. Religious texts. They may be characterized by special originality. The main place among them is occupied by the canonical books of the Holy Scripture, the Apocrypha, Lives of Saints, sermons, theological writings. The translations of bible books have centuries-old history. The bible translations are connected with exegetics — the section of theology that interprets the lexical and semantic ambiguity of some Bible texts.

The research is based on literary (texts) characterized by pragmatic relations. Literary texts in accordance with theory and practice of translation are objects for literary translation.

Literary texts are opposed to all other speech texts due to their communication function, namely aesthetic or poetic, to be considered the main functions. The main aim of any text of such type is to achieve certain aesthetic effect on the reader and to create literary image. Such aesthetic function distinguishes literary speech from other acts of verbal communication due to their information content being independent and primary. Translating parts of the literary speech one should take into consideration the fact that the main difference between literary translation and other types of translation is that a source text and target text comprise certain literary value.

The main goal of literary translation is to create a target text capable of producing aesthetic effect on a recipient.

The main difficulty in translation process is rendering and preserving pragmatic meaning of the source text. To exemplify this let us turn to Chekhov's stories which possess all aspects of linguistic meaning and prove our statement

about significance of pragmatic meanings causing difficulty during translation process.

All examples taken from Chekhov's stories are divided into groups (concepts) reflecting national and cultural peculiarities of the Russian language. One of the groups is a group reflecting "kindred relations" (ties of relationship)

«…Отопри, мать моя, и этот коробок» – the word «мать» in this sentence renders address to the housemaid and comprises connotation of disregard. The word «мать» in this sentence lacks semantic meaning of kindred relations and demands a proper equivalent rendering "address". For comparison we turn to the sentence «Его мать жила в далекой деревне» in which the word «мать» comprising semantic meaning of kindred relations and can be translated as "mother".

The list of examples can be continued:

«…У вас в Петербурге холодно? А у нас тут, батюшка мой, благорастворение воздухов и изобилие плодов земных» (address, positive connotation).

Here are some more examples of equal external nomination, but language meanings (referential and pragmatic) differ.

«Наш! Налимонился, брат? Ага-га, брат! Ничего, гуляй! Валяй! Не унывай, дядя!» Words «дядя» and «брат» in the above sentences undoubtedly will not be translated into the English language taking into consideration only referential meaning (sema of kindred relations – brother, uncle). It would distort the situation being described.

The following examples are also interesting regarding language meanings.

«…Я вас познакомлю с барышнями, а где же барыня?»

«…Из карет и саней глядели на Федора богатые барышни».

The underlined words is both examples comprise semantic meaning "youth", but the first underlined word «барышни» possesses semantic meaning of kindred relations (daughters).

«…Ей было семнадцать лет, и жила она у папаши и мамаши, торгующих мылом и свечами» – the underlined words comprise semantic meaning of kindred relation.

«…Ну-ну, папаша, – сказал художник и поцеловал Васильева». The underlined word lacks the semantic meaning of kindred relations and acquires semantic meaning of address with the connotation of disregard.

«…Твоя баба моего деда из Красного села за чуб вела». It`s clear from the context that the word «баба» comprises semantic meaning of kindred relations and can be translated as "wife".

«…Бабы со всей округи ненавидели Катю». The underlined word «бабы» lacks semantic meaning of kindred relations and can be translated as "women".

To render and preserve pragmatic meaning during target text creation a translator has to do his/her utmost to achieve equivalence at all levels – syntactic, semantic, stylistic and pragmatic.

It should be noted that inside pragmatic meaning of a sign one can create paradigm. Let us turn to the following words:

- «баба» which has several denotative (lexical) meanings: 1. married woman (low colloquial); 2. wife (low colloquial); 3. woman (colloquial, vulgarism).

This list can be extended: баба → бабенка → бабища.

- «папаша» has referential meanings: 1. father; 2 address.

This word allows the following paradigm: папаня (low colloquial) → папенька → папашка (vulgarism).

Variety of Russian forms makes the rendering of pragmatic meaning in the target text impossible.

Let us turn to the translation of Chekhov's story "Vanka" by T. Seltzer [11]

«Дождавшись, когда хозяева и подмастерья ушли к заутрене, он достал из хозяйского шкапа пузырек с чернилами ... и стал писать». "He waited till the master and mistress and the assistants had gone out to an early church-service, to procure from his employer's cupboard a small phial of ink … and began to write".

Our attention is focused on the translation of the words «хозяйский» и «шкап».

The translator used the words "employer's" and "cupboard", which do not render the pragmatic meaning of the source text.

"Employer" according to Random House Webster's College Dictionary means: (n) a person or business that employs one or more people for wages or salary, while Vanka was not paid for his work. The word "cupboard" renders only denotative meaning but doesn't render Vanka's illiberate speech («шкап»).

Such examples can be continued: «А вчерась (is rendered through "last night") мне была выволочка…»;

«Милый дедушка, сделай божецкую милость» – (dear Grandpa, for Heaven's sake); «ихнего ребятенка» (his brat).

The following example is also interesting from the viewpoint of translation practice because it doesn't render stylistic peculiarities of Vanka's illiterate speech and doesn't trigger emotions similar to those initiated by the source text.

«А на неделе хозяйка велела мне почистить селедку, а я начал с хвоста, а она взяла селедку и ейной мордой начала мне в харю тыкать». – "And during the week my mistress told me to clean a herring, and I began by its tail, so she took the herring and stick its snout into my face". The stylistic and pragmatic meaning of the worlds «ейный», «харя» is missing in the target text because they are translated by neutral words «its, face». Nevertheless the translator finds an equivalent (low colloquial) for the word «морда» ("snout").

The above mentioned examples are not aimed at criticizing demerits of translation. The article raises translation issues dealing with the difference between the Russian and English languages and speech peculiarities which shouldn't be ignored by a translator in creating a target text.

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