
Connotation and Language Culture

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Abstract:

Among an array of language skills, which students should obtain during their university education, there are translating skills that will help them to fully comprehend their potential and will promote their knowledge, academic and research mobility.

This paper addresses the problem of training and improvement of students' translating skills and its targets are to reveal peculiarities of non-equivalent vocabulary and transferring from one language into another without distorting reality and without losing characteristics of language society.

The leading approach to research is problem – thematic. The main results of research are in systematization of methods of translation. The materials of the article may be of interest for students and foreign language teachers.

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1. Introduction

The problem of interaction between culture of language society and the language content is of a considerable interest for various areas of linguistics. The practical implementation of the communicative orientation of foreign language teaching is one of the pressing issues of educational practice in higher education, since its results deepen, extend and elaborate the modern conception of learning foreign language communication on an intercultural level in the context of linguistic, pragmatic, ethical and aesthetic aspects (Kondrateva and Valeev, 2014).

According to Karasik (2002), language and culture are the most important concepts of humanities. The social essence of language is that it exists, primarily, in language consciousness – collective and individual. Respectively, language society, on the one hand, and an individual, on the other hand, are culture bearers in language (Karasik, 2002). Panfilov (1971) studied the relationship of a language and thinking process. The technique of studying of cultural dominants in language represents system of the research procedures directed at illumination of various parties of concepts, namely semantic potential of the corresponding concepts in this culture (Karasik, 2002). The acknowledgment of the intrinsic link between language and culture notwithstanding, it has been the case that most approaches associated with culturally responsive pedagogy have held on to, or, at the very least, have not questioned, a view of language as stable structural systems and of culture as fixed bodies of knowledge (Hall, 2008).

Active expansion of the boundaries of business communication with representatives of different countries, as well as the expansion of interpersonal contacts leads to the borrowing of foreign language vocabulary and influence on the formation of the cultural values of the society (Voronina and Ismagilova, 2016). The direction of a sight can also transfer even some additional information. Visual contact has the specific character connected with the emotional and cultural level of communication (Kondrateva and Ibatulina, 2016).

The questions connected with non-equivalent and Ivanov (2006) describes untranslatable vocabulary in translation and classification of non-equivalent lexicon, as well as the ways of the translation of its various types. Dependence of a word meaning on national specifics of culture is indisputable because each culture has the language system by means of which its representatives have an opportunity to communicate with each other.

The difficult structure of a word meaning according to many linguists contains various emotional, expressional, stylistic and estimated connotations accompanying denotation senses of the separate word or lexical semantic version of the word (if the word is poly-semantic).

As to the speech, when language must be not only recognized, but also has to be understood, the connotation and the component of a word meaning which is directly connected with culture of this society gets a great significance. We will call these connotations "a cultural component" of a word meaning (CC) (Language & Culture Worldwide, 2006).

The cultural component is not expressed brightly in material structure of a sign; it becomes actual during perception of the separate word or the whole statement and plays large role in formation of sense. It is possible to speak about sense at various levels:

- 1) at the level of formal or superficial meaning of the text the sense is output on the basis of only the language facts and corresponds to literal reading;
- 2) at the level of "deep" meaning of the text, none linguistic knowledge acquires great role.

It represents that volume of information, which each native speaker connects with the word or the whole statement, but language signs do not express this knowledge obviously. At this level of statements understanding, a cultural component of a word meaning as the socialized and typified element of substantial structure of the word plays large role. It is the reflection of this society culture as the sets of the material and spiritual phenomena, characteristic for it. For example, CC of such words as bank, office, and worker, etc. is clear to each Russian native speaker as the volume of the data expressed by these signs.

The cultural component of a word meaning gains special importance during the translation into other languages because CC of words - signs representing identical or similar material objects often can strongly vary in different languages. Because of the translation of a complex of meanings into other language, the word of original language (OL) does not correspond to a complex of meanings of target language (TL), and respectively, the recipient of the text from TL often attributes to the word in translation other CC not peculiar to this word in the original. For example, the Russian race club and its English equivalent of race club coincide by the formal concepts, but do not coincide by substantial meanings owing to distinctions of their cultural component. The Russian race club - the democratic mass sports organization uniting amateur athletes and available to everyone. English race club - the exclusive club uniting most often owners of expensive horses holding a high social status; such clubs are inaccessible to most of the population. The similar divergence of a cultural component causes noticeable distinctions at the level of "deep" judgment of the statement. The Russian phrase "*He is a member of race-club*" will contain the following elementary meanings:

- a) He is fond of horseracing.
- b) He loves animals.

The English phrase "*He is a member of race club*" along with the specified meanings will contain the new ones: he is rich and is able to afford to be a member of such exclusive and aristocratic sports club. Distinctions of CC of this couple of words not necessarily become known by comparison of contexts; it is rather opposite; the cultural component tends to be shown outside a context. Their distinctions will correspond to distinctions of concepts according to social functions, a role in society and other features.

2. Methodology

Differences in such CC do not always become clear when we compare texts in original language and target language; interrogatory is quite often necessary for full disclosure of substantial concepts of the compared words. Considerable distinctions in original language and target language obviously, must play an important role in formation of sense of the statement in general, especially when we translate fiction. Divergences of a cultural component in texts of original language and target language will demand the additional explanation, otherwise losses and distortions of meaning when transferring will be too considerable.

It is possible to speak about non-equivalent words of any language only when we compare a certain pair of languages and cultures. In this paper, we speak about non-equivalent words or, more precisely, concepts of Russian in relation to English.

In non-equivalent vocabulary, the cultural equivalent corresponds to all explanatory word meaning, and its volume in comparison with the volume of CC of other lexical groups the greatest.

The translations of the non-equivalent vocabulary by a tracing method are the most dangerous because they are formally exact, but do not transfer the adequately cultural component words for many reasons. For example, the traced translation into English, which became rather traditional in translation practice and fixed by lexicographic tradition can coincide with the lexical unit, which is already available in language differing in the substantial concept. Therefore, in Russian concept the national court has a traditional equivalent of People's Court. The lexical unit People's Court does not transfer the cultural component peculiar to the Russian word and gets another CC, characteristic for an English lexical unit. In England, it is the lowest judicial instance which competence includes analysis of small violations, thus, when transferring there is a shift of a cultural component that leads in turn to a distortion of meaning.

In several cases the translations - tracings, as they look unusual in structure of the English text, breaking the standard use of language units, get excessive semantic accent. They have new connotations, unusual for the original that brings in result to considerable distortions and losses of sense in the absence of the corresponding explanations. For example, such lexical units in translation as *kulak*, *Palace of*

Culture, workdays, socialist emulation etc., as it became clear because of interrogatory of the English, without the corresponding explanations are not clear to the interlocutor absolutely, or are followed by connotations, not characteristic for Russian words. The adequate translation requires perhaps fuller preservation of CC of the original. Such preservation is possible at the descriptive explaining translations for example, Russian traffic police - English Highway Inspection Department, and if there are explanations in the text or comments to it.

We will take the other group of words. In Russian language there are: sovietisms - *udarnik, partsobranie*; household items – *seni, uhvat*; historicisms - *kulak, sazhen*; phraseological units – *bit' chelom*; phrases of a literary origin – *chelovek v futlyare*. For English learners, cases of discrepancy of meaning volume in two languages represent difficulties – “to get married” value volume is wider, than *zhenitsya, vyhodit' zamuzh* in Russian. Thus, words, completely coinciding by the formal concepts and not coinciding by the substantial, belong to this group. Such discrepancy is caused by distinctions of cultural components of the compared words, the distinctions following from distinctions of the "background knowledge" standing behind these words. Background knowledge corresponds to that total amount of information, which participants of communication must possess.

For example, while translating the Russian lexical unit into English by functional analogs *institute - college, aspirant - postgraduate, kandidat nauk - Master of Science, tekhnikum - technological college* etc., the person who perceives text in target language attributes to English analogs the new cultural component peculiar to the English lexical unit caused by another background knowledge. Distinctions of CC of these words couples fluctuate in various limits and very often, they are quite great. The identity of these words consolidated by translation practice and consecrated with lexicographic tradition of bilingual dictionaries is unauthorized, and equating of such words as equivalents demands additional explanations. For example, formally correct translation of the Russian phrase without distinctions of a cultural component. English informants with big distortions perceive “He studies in the 7-th grade”. As at English schools there is no the seventh class; besides, the Russian pupils of the seventh class are about 14 years, the English pupils of the last sixth class can be from 16 to 18 years.

3. Results

The existence of the differing cultural components is the result of cultures national originality and therefore, by their comparison the cultural component of the word is of importance. Existence of CC can be found in substantial structure of the words relating to various lexical groups. There is the following classification of the words finding presence of CC:

- 1) Non-equivalent vocabulary;
- 2) Background vocabulary;

3) Connotative vocabulary.

The first group is made by words in which communication with culture is shown in the most obvious form as they designate non-equivalent cultural units, characteristic only for this culture, for example: Russian *borsch*, *perestroika*, *balalaika*; English *soccer*, *Halloween*, *parliament*.

Other group of words where it is possible to allocate a cultural component are so-called "background" words. To this group we attribute words, which in two compared languages designate identical or similar material objects that however differ in the functional role in society or in some other lines (Akhmanova, 2004).

In the group of connotative words, the cultural component covers the words of a connotation accompanying a lexical meaning. The CC attends the lexical meaning of these words and is caused not by features of the corresponding explanation, but those associations, which accompany the explanation and the corresponding word because of historical development. Transfer of a cultural component of such words is very difficult to us as their simple commenting will be obviously not enough, and it, apparently, represents not only the linguistic task, but also the literary one.

It is possible to assume that in group of "background words" the cultural component caused by background knowledge is very closely connected with the explaining word meaning, with its denotation and though the volume of a cultural component is much less, than in substantial structure of non-equivalent vocabulary, the cultural component of this group of words enters their lexical meaning.

Connotative vocabulary makes the third group of words where it is possible to allocate existence of a cultural component. Connotation in language involves the semantic or deep-structure of words, expressions and texts and is, therefore, strongly related to literature and culture (Ali, 2006). The words possessing the connotations connected with quite steady literary and historically national associations, characteristic for most of native speakers, belong to this group. At the same time, identical material objects in the compared cultures remain unchanged; the corresponding lexical units differ only in the accompanying values, which can be adequate in the text at big functional loading, and in this case, they must be explained by a saturated macro-context. We will consider the example. The word "establishment" in its direct meaning does not contain connotation.

One of many derivative values — ruling circles, the dominating top, system — is transferred by lexical-semantic option "*the Establishment*" and has accurately expressed connotation: If *the Establishment* means anything, it means big government and big business, and between them, they pay most of the bills of big science. Very rich connotations of historical and literary character creating a special national aura of words and at the same time intertwining with emotional connotations are available for such Russian words as a *birch*, a *bird cherry*,

mountain ash etc. In English, their equivalents have no such connotations. The Russian “*fiery bush of a mountain ash*” has very close and thin associations with the Russian poetry; the English equivalent “*bush of flaming mountain ash*” does not possess them. It is obviously that for creation of similar associations, the long literary tradition of the translation of the Russian poetry and prose, which could create steady associations at readers, is necessary. In this case, we speak not about subjective associations that can be very different, but about those associations, obligatory for each native speaker of Russian connected with the knowledge of Russian literature and history received at school.

We will take as an example the phrase from the novel “It Is Time, My Friend, it is Time” of V. Aksenov. – “I was captured suddenly by an inconceivable enthusiastic state, romanticism: scarlet sails seemed to me, and pulled me to the sea, to inflow.” The image of scarlet sails became a romantic symbol in Russian and is vividly connected with A. Green's novel “Scarlet sails”. In English translation this symbol escapes, connotations of the word are not clear, and the sense hidden behind this word is already inaccessible to the reader of the translation of “I saw rose-colored sails.”

4. Discussion

In linguistic literature, there are different types of classification of non-equivalent vocabulary. Translating concepts from one language to another requires much more than just a dictionary. It requires the ability to understand the written word, together with all of its nuances, and the ability to express those concepts with an entirely different set of words, phrases, and nuances in a different cultural context. Scientists Vinogradov (2001), Arnold (2002), Stoyanova (2002), Ivanov (2006), Akbari (2013) and many others have developed the problems of translation of the non-equivalent vocabulary. Vereshchagin and Kostomarov (2005) offered philological tools that really allow to define national culture through language, texts and to catch specifics of semantics of language in aspect of culture genesis and functioning. Alefirenko (2005) performed the analysis of modern Russian and world linguistics problems. At the same time, process of perception of such units in the text of target language is not considered. For example, the transliteration of such lexical units is admissible when the corresponding explanations are already known to the reader or are explained here in the text. The transliterated Russian word in the English text represents the exoticism transferring a national peculiarity of the original, for example a Russian *matryoshka*; English – *kilt* (The New Oxford Russian Dictionary, 2000).

5. Conclusions

In this article, we did not concern other lexical groups possessing a cultural component such as the proper names, which possess steady associations and have

become symbolical and set phrases. However, apparently, we can distribute them in three big lexical groups considered in the real work.

Because of consideration of three lexical groups having a cultural component, it is possible to draw a conclusion that, the culture of language society is connected by difficult and various communications with the substantial plan of the word. The considered lexical groups do not belong to the most frequency, their specific weight in language is not very great, for example, non-equivalent words make small percent of all vocabulary of Russian. However, the explanations designated by them represent the cultural units having great social value. Studying of such lexical units can have also practical importance for the translations of the Russian literature into English as they present difficulties. Such lexical units represent considerable interest also for a bilingual lexicography.

Recently language-operating conditions changed. They are in other meanings of earlier known words and set phrases, and in emergence of new lexical units and in their active use. First, it concerns the mass media language.

On pages of the English-speaking press, we can meet the words borrowed from informal conversation (*chelnok, tusovka*). There were steady combinations of words that became phraseological units (*new Russian, the Caucasian*).

To transfer national culture of the significant word successfully, the translator has to possess a certain fund of the knowledge connected both with norms of speech behavior, and with extra linguistic knowledge of various character: encyclopedic, background. Words: *agitpunkt, visotka, vertushka, massovka, migalka, nochlezhka, zemlyanka, telogreyka, tolkuchka, hozblok* and others do not cause any associations in consciousness of the person who has never seen the corresponding object.

6. Recommendations

To translate non-equivalent vocabulary of a certain language correctly, it is necessary to be familiar with traditions, cultural heritage of this country. Only that person, who lives in a certain country and is directly familiar with realities of its life, may have more detailed linguistic and cultural comment. The translator reveals the sense in which this word or the phrase is used taking into account modern national and cultural component. He tries to break a linguistic and ethnic barrier, imparting background knowledge of a subject and trying to get into an essence of one or another phenomenon.

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