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## RENDERING CULTURAL INFORMATION IN TRANSLATION: ENGLISH – UKRAINIAN DIRECTION

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### Abstract

The article deals with the issues of rendering cultural information in the source and target texts. Linguocultural phenomena and their adequate reproduction for the target receptor are considered in the paper as the ones that are of vital importance for the theory and practice of translation. The research is based on the assumption that translation can be viewed as intercultural communication which contrasts not only the languages, but cultures as well and where lack of knowledge about the cultural community results in misunderstanding and misinterpretation. A series of issues concerned with translation as intercultural communication is discussed. Cultural approach to translation developed in translation theory and practice is employed which allows taking into consideration the differences between source and target cultures in the process of translation. As a theoretical ground is used the idea that translation presupposes the contrast of two cultures and looking for the ways to render the ideas of the source text in such a way that the target text preserves them. The paper aims at specifying characteristic features of rendering cultural information in English-Ukrainian translation. It is argued that culture is coded and reflected in the language which leads to the conclusions that while translating languages we translate cultures as well. Rendering a dialogue between representatives of different cultural communities in translation is one of the important problems in translation practice as the task of the translator is complicated because of the necessity to reproduce in the translation the relations between the cultures communicants in the source text belong to. The paper argues that in case of realia translation the emphasis is laid on preserving the pragmatic and cultural effect which can be done at the expense of the form. Such a technique when additional information is given in the target text or a substitution occurs in order to prevent misinterpretation of the message can be fully justified as it enables the translator to preserve the pragmatic effect of the text in the translation.

### Keywords

Culture, translation, intercultural communication, realia, source language, target language, compensation, pragmatic adaptation, cultural adaptation, non-verbal communication.

**1. Introduction.** Intercultural communication occurs every time when representatives of different national cultures communicate. Lack of knowledge about the interlocutor's culture can lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretation. Translation is considered to be a form of intercultural communication as the translator should have an ability to interpret and reproduce adequately the message coded in a different language and in a different culture.

Scholars underline that in the process of translation "the greatest difficulty is not comprehending the author's thought: one usually attains that by the assistance of good editions, of commentaries, and above all, by examining the mutual relations and connection of the ideas. But when one comes to express, in another language, the things, the thoughts, the expressions, the turns, the tones of a work; the things, such

as they are, without adding, diminishing, or misplacing; the thoughts, in their colours, their degrees, their shades; the things which give fire, spirit, life, to the discourse; the expressions, natural figurative, strong, copious, genteel, delicate, etc.; and the whole after a model which commands with rigour, and would be obeyed without constraint; there is required, is not as much genius, at least as much taste, to translate well, as to compose. Perhaps even more necessary"<sup>3</sup>.

At the same time, the process of translation itself can be viewed as intercultural communication as the former includes an attempt to contrast not only two different languages, the source one and the target one, but the two cultures as well. Although the translator is looking for similarities between cultures, they constantly confront dissimilarities<sup>4</sup> acting as a special communication intermediary making it possible for the target audience to understand the message sent in a foreign language<sup>5</sup>. As a result, the content and the form of the message are often changed to conform to the receptor culture<sup>6</sup> and translation is viewed as culture confrontation, a site in which different cultures confront each other<sup>7</sup>. In other words, translation presupposes the comparison of two cultures singling out similarities and dissimilarities in order to find common ground for the source and target cultures perception.

According to the prevailing view every culture and every language comprise a combination of universal component which unites any culture and is known to all people serving as a basis for successful intercultural-

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<sup>3</sup> Batteux Ch.

<sup>4</sup> Venuti 2003, 306

<sup>5</sup> Kade 1981

<sup>6</sup> Nida & Taber 2003, 199

<sup>7</sup> Giovanni 2003, 216

al communication, and a specific one which accounts for cultural diversity in the world. The latter allows considering the process of translation to be a shift not only between two languages, but also between two cultures<sup>8</sup>. Hence, the necessity to find out the regularities of rendering culturally specific information in translation.

The **aim** of the paper is to specify the regularities and strategies in rendering cultural information in English – Ukrainian translation. The **object** of the research is cultural information coded in the original English texts. The **subject** of the paper is translation techniques of reproducing cultural information in English – Ukrainian translation.

**2. Methodology.** Methodological principles of the research are based on linguistic and translation theories. Principles of cultural linguistics<sup>9</sup> deal with the study and description of the correspondence of language and culture<sup>10</sup> in their synchronic interaction. Such objects of cultural linguistics are of special interest for the translator: 1) words and phrases, which have no equivalents in another language; 2) archetypes and "mythologemes", rituals, beliefs, and superstitions reflected in language; 3) proverbs and sayings; 4) idioms; symbols and stereotypes; 6) metaphors and images; 7) stylistic norms; 8) speech behavior; 9) speech etiquette<sup>11</sup>.

Methodological grounds of the research are also based on the principles of anthropocentrism, which are manifested in cultural identity, subjective interpretations and cognitive processes that determine translators' decisions.

According to P. Newmark there are two methods of translation – communicative and semantic. In communicative translation the translator attempts to produce the same effect on the target language (TL) readers as was produced by the original on the source language (SL) readers. In semantic translation the translator attempts, within the bare syntactic and semantic constraints of the TL, to reproduce the precise contextual meaning of the author. The concepts of communicative and semantic translation are based on a narrowing of the ancient and old distinction between free and literal translation<sup>12</sup>.

To reach the compromise a translator pays attention to the ideas, words and their arrangement. The strategy of compensation is quite appropriate especially if a translator deals with culture-oriented texts.

Eugene Nida's theory of dynamic equivalence<sup>13</sup> also serves as a methodological basis of the research. According to this theory, the target text is considered to be adequate to the original when the reaction of the target text reader coincides with that of the source text reader.

**2.1. Research Program** comprises the following steps:

- to specify the theoretical grounds of the research;
- to prove that translation practice can be viewed as intercultural communication;
- to single out cases of cultural information presentation in the source text;
- to find out regularities in rendering cultural information in the Ukrainian translation.

## **2.2. Research material.**

Research material is drawn from film scripts and their Ukrainian translations and English prose.

**2.3. Methods of analysis.** The research combines general scientific methods such as description, analysis, comparison together with specific linguistic and translation methods: translation analysis of the source text (ST) and target text (TT) aiming at specifying translation strategies employed by the translator, pragmatic analysis helping to compare the pragmatic potential of the ST and TT. Content analysis has been used to reveal and compare features of the original text and its Ukrainian version, to give the objective description of the cultural issues in the source and target texts.

## **3. Results and Discussion.**

**3.1. Theoretical grounds of the research.** In contemporary linguistic research language is viewed as a cultural activity and as an instrument for organizing other cultural domains.

At the same time culture structures discourses and texts according to the physical and socio-cultural experience the community has<sup>14</sup>. The fact that culture is coded and reflected in the language units is quite important for such a branch of knowledge as translation theory since translating languages we translate cultures as well.

The cultural approach to translation helps understand that there are lexemes and word combinations in the source language that cannot be translated into the target one because in the life of the community which the source language uses there exist unique phenomena which are absent from the life of any other community. The cultural approach is based on underlining that culture means patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting. These are usually acquired and transmitted to a younger generation by symbols<sup>15</sup> and are easily understood within the community. It is believed that culture organizes the life of people structuring the way they behave, speak, use gestures and facial expressions. Moreover, such patterns natural for every member within the community might look strange and inappropriate outside which

<sup>8</sup> Eco 2001, 17

<sup>9</sup> Dorda 2017, Teliya 1997

<sup>10</sup> Maslova, 2001, Vorobyov 2008

<sup>11</sup> Levytskyi, Borysenko, Savchuk 2011

<sup>12</sup> Newmark 1995, 19–21

<sup>13</sup> Nida 1964, 120–145

<sup>14</sup> Palmer 1996, Sharifian Palmer 2007

<sup>15</sup> Kluckhohn 1951

can comprise another cause of misunderstanding and misinterpretation.

Furthermore, culture comprises the way of life and its manifestations peculiar to a certain community which uses a language as a means of communication and as a code which preserves the information about the life and its specific features<sup>16</sup>. This, in its turn, leads to the difficulty in translation. Nevertheless, although cultural diversity makes translation a very difficult task, it is not impossible after all when the cultural specifics is taken into account. On the other hand, language itself as a reflection of culture provides a special way of looking at the world and organizing experiences that is often ignored in translating words from one language to another<sup>17</sup> which can be successfully overcome only if the specific cultural patterns are taken into account.

According to Edward Hall's classification of cultures we can speak of high-context communication and low-context communication. A high-context communication is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. Meaning does not always have to be put into words. Non-verbal clues are important, as is the context in which the situation takes place. Even the meaning of words can depend on the context. For example, 'yes' can mean anything from 'I agree', to 'I am listening', to 'no'. Relationship building is important in high-context cultures, and there is an emphasis on getting to know one's business partner. A low-context communication is just the opposite, i.e. the mass of information is vested in the explicit code. Meaning is made explicit, and put into words. These cultures tend to be task-centered rather than relationship-centered<sup>18</sup>.

The concept of culture is vitally important in translation theory and practice as the process of translation is viewed as culture-specific communication<sup>19</sup>. Thus, the scholars in the field of translation underline the necessity of not translating but re-creating or rendering a source text in the target language. L. Venuti signifies that in the act of translation a chain of signifiers constituting the source text is replaced by a chain of signifiers in a target text on the basis of interpretation<sup>20</sup>. A Polish scholar O. Wojtasiewicz adds that the mechanism of translating means formulating a target text in such a way that the reader of the source and target texts should have the same associations<sup>21</sup>. In this case both source and target texts are viewed as the same text written in different codes with the same pragmatic potential.

Analyzing culturally specific features in original and target texts both verbal and nonverbal communication of representatives of different cultures allows singling out correspondences and gaps between languages and cultures.

**3.2. Specific features of rendering intercultural communication in translation.** Rendering intercultural communication of the interlocutors one of whom belongs to the source culture and the other one to a foreign culture presents a special issue in translation practice as the task of the translator to reveal the specifics of the source culture is accompanied by the necessity to demonstrate the relations of the source culture and a foreign culture to which the second interlocutor belongs.

Cultural differences, for instance, can be observed in the famous film "*Love Actually*", that is to say the chasms that occur between the characters while a love story between an *Englishman* Jamie, played by Colin Firth and Aurelia, a *Portuguese* housekeeper, played by Lucia Moniz unfolds in the film. "*Love Actually*" is a 2003 Christmas-themed romantic comedy film written and directed by Richard Curtis. The screenplay delves into different aspects of love as shown through ten separate stories involving a wide variety of individuals, each of them being intermingled with another characters while the story progresses.

Jamie is despondent after his girlfriend cheats on him with his brother and decides to go to the South of France, where he meets a Portuguese housekeeper Aurélia, who does not speak English. Despite their inability to communicate, they become attracted to each other. As the story whirls around, Jamie proposes to Aurelia and she agrees to marry him. He even learns Portuguese to propose to her. There are a lot of scenes in the film which are interesting to analyse through the prism of intercultural communication. In the fragment given below Aurelia helps Jamie to collect his papers, which sunk in the river. The following dialogue takes place in the farmhouse living-room and is quite prominent from the standpoint of intercultural communication. Both Jamie and Aurelia do not understand each other, as Jamie speaks English and Aurelia speaks Portuguese. Despite this fact, through gestures and Aurelia's vivid facial expressions they get on in their conversation. Funnily enough, they even repeat the same phrases in the end, with a little bit of paraphrasing, but still, the gist of the sentence remains the same (table 1).

The example shows that Jamie tries to get closer to Aurelia, which can be shown in his attempts to speak Portuguese as little as he does (through specks of "Sim" that is "yes" in Portuguese). Aurelia, in her place, when asking about the book Jamie is working on gesticulates and names various book genres all in the Portuguese language, but then she blurts out English words of film genres, such as "crime", "romance".

<sup>16</sup> Newmark 1987

<sup>17</sup> Gollnick D.M., Chinn Ph.C. 2009, 6-7

<sup>18</sup> Hall

<sup>19</sup> Ginter 2002, 27

<sup>20</sup> Venuti 2003, 17

<sup>21</sup> Wojtasiewicz 1992, 26

Table 1

**FARMHOUSE IN FRANCE-LIVING ROOM, DAY**

Original	Translation
Jamie: Thank you. Thank you so much. I know. I'll name one of the characters after you.	Джеймі: Дякую. Дуже Вам дякую. Я назву в твою честь одну з моїх героїнь.
Aurelia: (Portuguese) Maybe you could name one of the characters after me. Or give me 50% of the profits.	Аурелія: Може Ви назвете в мою честь одну з героїнь? Або віддасте половину прибутків?
Jamie: Or I could give you 5% of the profits.	Д.: Чи віддам тобі 5 відсотків прибутків.
Aurelia: (Portuguese) What kind of book is it? Kind. Kind... Romance?	А.: А що це за книжка? Це... (показує слізливу сцену, потім сміється, натякаючи, що книга комічна, а потім робить вигляд, ніби книга про кохання). Роман?
Jamie: Yes. It's, erm...	Д.: Так, це... (показує сцену
Aurelia: Ah, er... (Portuguese) Thriller...crime...	вбивства). А.: Трилер? Детектив?
Jamie: (Portuguese) Yes. Si. (English) Crime. Crime, murder.	Д.: Детектив, детектив. Вбивства (імітує Джеймса Бонда).
Aurelia: (Portuguese) Frightening?	А.: Це страшно?
Jamie: Er, scary? Yes, sometimes scary. And, er, sometimes not. Mainly scary how bad the writing is.	Д.: Страшно? Так, страшно. Буває страшно, а буває і ні. Переважно лякає те, як паскудно написано.
Aurelia: Mm. (Portuguese) I'd better get back to work.	А.: Я краще повернуся до роботи.
Jamie: Ah.	Д.: Так.
Aurelia: (Portuguese) And then later you'll drive me home?	А.: А потім Ви відвезете мене додому?
Jamie: Sure. It's my favourite time of day... driving you.	Д.: Так, авжеж. Відвозити тебе мій найприємніший обов'язок.
Aurelia: (Portuguese) It's the saddest part of my day, leaving you <sup>22</sup> . (	А.: Їхати додому мій найсумніший обов'язок <sup>23</sup> .

Yet the most salient part of their interaction is gestures which speak for themselves. On the one hand, the British who are generally considered to be reserved tend to be restricted in their gestures and facial expressions. On the other hand, a lot of people believe that the representatives of Southern European cultures are very active in their gestures and the style of speaking. Apart from Spanish and Italians, what we can say of the Portuguese is that they traditionally do not use a lot of gestures. Being overly demonstrative with hand gestures or body language is regarded to give a bad impression. As for the communicative way, the Portuguese tend to be direct in their communication style saying what they really think, but in a polite manner. As one would expect, communication tends to be more on the formal side when in public and much less so in private. The Portuguese tend to speak quite fast and somewhat loudly. Such manifestation of emotion is quite common and is considered to be part of the Portuguese character, nevertheless it does not signify any anger or displeasure in general. In the film fragment in question both Jamie and Aurelia use gestures in order to communicate, sometimes they try to imitate the heroes or the well-known characters from different film and book genres.

As far as the personal space is regarded, it is usually defined as that of an arm's length. The Portuguese tends to touch the interlocutor a bit when conversing with good friends and family, but such displays are

quite inappropriate in business or formal situations. As Jamie is Aurelia's boss her behaviour can be considered as modest and she does not intrude into the personal space of her interlocutor.

The Ukrainian translation can be characterized as adequate, in general it produces the same effect on the receptor as the source text does, the register, style, pragmatic potential are preserved. But, specific features of a foreign speech have not been traced down in the Ukrainian version.

Of course, there are different approaches to the problem of reproducing language deviations, contaminated language of the original text, which mostly deal with the imitation of foreigners' speech in translation: some scholars believe that these deviations should not be reproduced in translation, others consider that they should. But, the expressive elements of the original text should draw a close attention on the part of the translator. In our case, the translator omits the Portuguese accent of Aurelia when she wedges one or two English words into her speech. In the original the audience is provided with English subtitles, so they can hear Aurelia's emotions through the Portuguese speech, whereas in the Ukrainian one the voice overlaps over the original and the receptor is unable to perceive the awkwardness of the situation. Proper interpretation is of great importance, so as it is necessary to preserve the cultural component and pragmatic potential in the target text.

**3.3. Pragmatic and cultural adaptation in English Ukrainian translations.** The pragmatic effect of the utterance which is determined by the content and form of the message can be lost upon certain

<sup>22</sup> Love actually

<sup>23</sup> Реальне кохання



groups of receptors as the pragmatic potential of the utterance is differently actualized under different circumstances or in different situations. In translation cultural adaptation occurs when the cultural information coded in the original text cannot be understood in the target community from which it is absent. It occurs every time we come across realia the names of the phenomena (objects of material culture, facts of history, state institutions, names of national and folk lore heroes etc.), which are present only in the life of a definite community. Realia belong to the vocabulary items which do not have equivalents in the foreign languages and are a part of background knowledge. As a rule, such words are borrowed or translated into a foreign language with the help of explanation, description or invention of neologisms. Compared with the other words of the language realia show tight links of the notion they denote with the life of the people and historical period. So these items have a peculiar national (local) or historical colouring<sup>24</sup>. Hence, the necessity to somehow modify the form of the message where realia are present to make it appropriate for the receptor if possible without distorting its meaning.

One of the ways to change the form in order to preserve the content is the addition in the Ukrainian translations of the appellative to the proper names designating hotels, streets, shops, cinema-houses. For instance, the title of the short story *The diamond as big as the Ritz*<sup>25</sup> in Ukrainian translation should sound like *Діамант завбільшки з готель Річ*<sup>26</sup>, where the appellative *готель* should make the name *Річ* and the size of the diamond clear for a Ukrainian reader, otherwise the proper name is lost upon them.

In the following sentence the name of the exclusive department store situated in New York can be absent from the background knowledge of the Ukrainian reader as well: *You remember that awful dinner dress we saw in Bonwit's window?*<sup>27</sup>. The Ukrainian translation should compensate for it: *Пам'ятаєш ту жахливу вечірню сукню, яку ми бачили у вітрині універсалу Бонвіт*<sup>28</sup> specifying that a department store is mentioned. It can be argued that the lexeme *вітри-*

*на* makes it clear that a shop is meant, but it does not help to state which kind of shop (a department store in this case) is mentioned.

The same problem arises when the appellative *avenue* is omitted in the following example: *Between Third and Lexington, she reached into her pocket for the purse and found the sandwich half*<sup>29</sup>. Thus, it is not clear which type of odonyms is meant until the appellative *авеню* is added in the Ukrainian translation: *Між Третьою та Лексингтон-авеню вона полізла до кишені за гаманцем та намацала половину бутерброда*<sup>30</sup>.

Another technique is connected with substituting unknown cultural realia in translation with the hypernym, a lexeme with a more general meaning. For instance, an unknown in Ukraine sort of brown bread as in the sentence *He was not so slim as in his youth and I was not surprised that when the waiter offered us rolls he asked for Rye-Vita*<sup>31</sup> can be translated as *житні хлібці*: *Він вже не був таким худорлявим як у молодості і я не здивувався, що, коли офіціант запропонував нам булочки, він замовив житні хлібці*<sup>32</sup>. And a piece of furniture popular in the USA: *A Philadelphia highboy had been moved out into the hall*<sup>33</sup> can be rendered as *а комод*: *Комод пересунули до передпокою*<sup>34</sup>. In such a case the translation is approximate as several characteristics of this very piece of furniture which means a rather expensive tall chest of drawers on legs from mahogany wood which was produced in Philadelphia around 18<sup>th</sup> cent. are ignored. Although there is an option to preserve a realia and use a phrase *філадельфійський комод* in the translation, it still does not give an idea of what kind of chest of drawers is meant and leaves several important characteristics of this piece of furniture out.

There are cases when we can substitute the cultural realia with synonymous hypernyms like in the following case where one hypernym (*biscuits*) is already present in the original text: *I began to feel rather hungry...and stole some biscuits from the sideboard. I had six of them. Bath Oliver's*<sup>35</sup>. *Я добряче зголоділа... і вкрала трохи галетного печива з буфету. Я взяла шість крекерів*<sup>36</sup>. In this case we substitute the proper name *Bath Oliver* with the appellative *крекери* which is quite well known in Ukrainian culture and is a synonym of the phrase *галетне печиво*. If the phrase is translated with the omission of the name of the hard dry biscuits *Bath Oliver* invented by physician William Oliver of Bath in the 1750s it allows avoiding unknown and not important details without distorting the sense and the effect of the phrase. Such type of adaptation leads to adequate understanding of the message and thus can be justified.

#### 4. Conclusions.

The closer the linguistic and cultural systems involved are, the easier it is to render the cultural information encoded in the source language and culture. Translation as a cultural intermediary of communica-

<sup>24</sup> Slavova, Borysenko 2016, 8

<sup>25</sup> Fitzgerald 1999

<sup>26</sup> L.S., N.B.

<sup>27</sup> Salinger 1982

<sup>28</sup> L.S., N.B.

<sup>29</sup> Salinger 1982

<sup>30</sup> L.S., N.B.

<sup>31</sup> Maugham 1980

<sup>32</sup> L.S., N.B.

<sup>33</sup> Salinger 1982

<sup>34</sup> L.S., N.B.

<sup>35</sup> du Maurier 1979, 158

<sup>36</sup> L.S., N.B.

tion between representatives of different nations is intended to provide linguistic and cultural equivalence. The translator/ interpreter presents another culture through translation, creates a text manifesting cultural differences in relation to the source culture. Within the framework of our research the regularities and strategies in rendering cultural information in English - Ukrainian translation have been specified on the material of film scripts and their Ukrainian translations and English prose. The emphasis has been put on cultural information coded in the original English texts as well

as on translation techniques of reproducing cultural information in English-Ukrainian translation. The strategy of compensation proves to be quite appropriate dealing with culture-oriented texts. To preserve the cultural component and pragmatic potential in the target text the following techniques can be used, inter alia, addition, omission, translation with the hypernym, i.e. a lexeme with a more general meaning. The prospects of the research are seen in the further development of the idea of linguistic and cultural untranslatability and suggesting the ways of dealing with the latter.

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## Анотація

Статтю присвячено проблемам відтворення культурної інформації у текстах оригіналу та текстах перекладу. У дослідженні лінгвокультурні явища та їх адекватне відтворення для цільової аудиторії потрактовані як такі, що мають важливе значення для теорії та практики перекладу. Переклад можна розглядати як міжкультурну комунікацію, у якій протиставлено не лише мови, але й культури, а відсутність знань про певну культурну спільноту призводить до непорозуміння і неправильного тлумачення повідомлення. Висвітлено низку питань, пов'язаних з перекладом як актом міжкультурного спілкування. Використано культурологічний підхід, розроблений в теорії та практиці перекладу, який дозволяє враховувати відмінності між двома культурами у процесі відтворення тексту іншою мовою. В основу теоретичного підґрунтя покладено ідею про те, що переклад передбачає врахування відмінностей між цими культурами та пошук способів відтворення вихідного тексту таким чином, щоб вони були збережені у тексті перекладу. Метою статті є визначення особливостей відтворення культурної інформації в англійсько-українському перекладі. Оскільки культура закодована та відображена у мові, то можна зробити висновок, що при перекладі з однієї мови на іншу, ми перекладаємо також культури. Адекватне відтворення діалогу між представниками різних культурних спільнот є однією з важливих проблем у перекладацькій практиці, оскільки завдання перекладача ускладнюється через необхідність відтворення у перекладі взаємозв'язку між культурами, до яких належать комуніканти у вихідному тексті. Зазначено, що при перекладі реалій акцент зроблено на збереженні прагматичного та культурного ефекту, який може бути здійснено за рахунок форми. Цілком обґрунтованою може бути така методика, коли додаткову інформацію наводять у тексті перекладу або здійснюють заміну, щоб запобігти неправильному тлумаченню повідомлення, що дозволяє перекладачу зберегти прагматичний ефект тексту при перекладі.

## Ключові слова

Культура, переклад, міжкультурна комунікація, реалія, мова оригіналу, мова перекладу, компенсація, прагматична адаптація, культурна адаптація, невербальне спілкування.