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## **THE PROBLEM OF UNTRANSLATABILITY: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES FOR SOLVING TRANSLATION DIFFICULTIES**

*The article is devoted to the phenomenon of untranslatability, non-equivalence in the lexical systems of the English and Ukrainian languages, an attempt is made to analyze the problems of foreign language reproduction of untranslatable linguistic units, and ways of solving difficulties when searching for equivalents and analogs of lacunae are considered. Untranslatability is mostly caused by the lack of a full equivalent or insufficient socio-cultural training of the translator. Untranslatability is a relative category that can be both linguistic and cultural. The studied phenomenon may be caused by such factors as the lack of appropriate ethno-cultural reality in the translation language. The issue of the existence of the problem of potential untranslatability in reality remains debatable. The main attention in the work is devoted to the principles of reproduction of English-language texts in the Ukrainian language, taking into account social, ethno-cultural, historical and other realities, which should be observed by the translator: linguistic and cultural adaptation, transfer of the unique atmosphere of the source text, broadening of personal worldview, formation of intercultural competence, since translation is a powerful factor of culture cooperation, as well as forms of intercultural exchange of ideas. It is the context that removes the ambiguity of the language unit that helps the translator to overcome the semantic differences between the units and forms of the original language and the language of translation. It is no accident that the translator turns out to be in a difficult position when the ambiguity of a linguistic unit turns out to be a functionally relevant feature of the original text. At the same time, content shifts are used, which lead to certain semantic losses, but at the same time make it possible to reproduce the functional dominance of the text. Translation transformations such as transliteration, compensation, descriptive translation and cultural domestication can be applied in order for the translator to achieve the adequacy of the translation of realia, idioms, slang, proverbs, etc.*

**Key words:** *untranslatability, translation transformation, translation adequacy, analogue, equivalent, translation method.*

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## **ПРОБЛЕМА НЕПЕРЕКЛАДНОСТІ: ВИКЛИКИ ТА СТРАТЕГІЇ ВИРІШЕННЯ ПЕРЕКЛАДАЦЬКИХ ТРУДНОЩІВ**

*У статті досліджено явище неперекладності, безеквівалентності в лексичних системах англійської та української мов, здійснена спроба аналізу проблем іншомовного відтворення неперекладних мовних одиниць, розглянуто шляхи вирішення труднощів під час пошуку еквівалентів та аналогів лакун. Неперекладність здебільшого зумовлена відсутністю повного еквіваленту або недостатньою соціокультурною підготовкою перекладача. Неперекладність – відносна категорія, яка може бути як мовною, так і культурною. Досліджуване явище може бути спричинене такими факторами, як відсутність відповідної етнокультурної реалії в мові перекладу. Питання існування проблеми потенційної неперекладності в реальності залишається дискусійним. Головна увага в роботі присвячена принципам відтворення англомовних текстів українською мовою з урахуванням соціальних, етнокультурних, історичних та інших реалій, яких варто дотримуватись перекладачеві: лінгвокультурної адаптації, передачі унікальної атмосфери вихідного тексту, розширення особистого світогляду, формування міжкультурної компетентності, оскільки переклад є потужним фактором культури співробітництва, а також форми міжкультурного обміну ідеями. Контекст, який позбавляє мовну одиницю від багатозначності, допомагає перекладачеві подолати семантичні відмінності одиниць та форм мови оригіналу та мови перекладу. Не випадково перед перекладачем постають виклики, коли багатозначність мовної одиниці виявляється функціонально релевантною ознакою тексту оригіналу. При цьому використовуються змістові зсуви, які призводять до певних семантичних втрат, але водночас дають змогу відтворити функціональну домінують тексту. Для досягнення перекладачем адекватності перекладу реалії, фразеологізмів, сленгу, прислів'їв тощо можуть бути застосовані такі перекладацькі трансформації як транслітерація, культурна доместикація, компенсація та описовий переклад.*

**Ключові слова:** *неперекладність, перекладацька трансформація, адекватність перекладу, аналог, еквівалент, перекладацький прийом.*

**Formulation of the problem.** The principle of translatability is the basis of a translator's professional outlook. The study of the problem of translatability is one of the main directions of the development of modern translation science. Translatability is always determined by the level of language development. Translatability is a key concept in translation theory. However, not all linguistic units have their equivalents in the target language, they are untranslatable.

One of the largest classes of untranslatable units is proper names. The absolute majority of geographic names which are transcoded in other languages are also untranslatable. The realities of the social and political life of every people create a corpus of untranslatable concepts, albeit of a special type. These concepts are mainly the names of national monetary units. Of course, the descriptive method always provides the most complete reproduction of the meaning of reality. Untranslatable language units also include national idioms, proverbs, sayings, as well as neologisms and archaisms.

**Analysis of the researches.** The study of the peculiarities of the phenomenon of non-equivalence in the lexical systems of different languages has gained great importance nowadays in the works of many linguists (F. S. Batsevych (Batsevych, 2004), A. V. Voloshyna (Voloshyna, 2000), O. Tupytsia (Tupytsia, 2017) and others).

Focusing on the analysis of numerous translations of literary works, Ukrainian researchers (R. Zorivchak (Zorivchak, 1994), N. P. Kotelenets (Kotelenets, 2011), O. Cherednychenko (Cherednychenko, 2010), etc.) show ways to overcome language barriers caused by cultural differences. Nonetheless, this problem cannot be called comprehensive, as this issue is characterized by multifaceted study of the methods of its solution. Therefore, the idea of untranslatability does not leave the realm of linguistic discourse.

**The objectives of the article. The aim of the research** is to establish the features of the concept of untranslatability and define the translation methods of achieving adequacy while translating. **The main task of the article** is to study the approaches to the problem of non-equivalence in translation in English and Ukrainian.

**Presentation of the main material of the study.** Non-equivalent lexeme is a special unit that reflects the national and cultural distinctiveness at the lexical level, nominates such phenomena in the sphere of a certain culture, which are not characteristic of others. Non-equivalent lexeme is a component of text imagery that carries emotional expressive subtext associated with the ideo-ethnic component of meaning. The ethnocultural component of semantics with-

out of an equivalent lexeme is universal and extends to the meaning-content of the entire text, since the non-equivalent lexical unit as a strong position enters into superstructural connections with other semantic elements of poetic composition. It is clear that the non-equivalent lexeme translation process should be considered, first of all, as a creative process that allows preserving the ethnic picture of the world, not ignoring the compositional and semantic basis of the poetic context (Tupytsia, 2017: 358–359).

According to M. Alioshyna, language lost its autonomy, began to be considered as a component of culture, and “the text is not a static and isolated linguistic fragment, but as something that primarily depends on the reader’s reception” (Alioshyna, 2014: 17). In the theory of translation, there was a reorientation from the original text to the culture of the language of translation, to the context, and therefore the postulate of untranslatability as the fundamental impossibility of translation lost all meaning. Untranslatability was transformed into relative translatability, into an untranslatable remnant of the author’s text projected onto another national culture. The connotative field of any language sometimes poses insurmountable difficulties for its assimilation by representatives of foreign cultures. Conceptual analysis shows that the lexical-semantic composition of the language is not only a linguistic, but also a mental factor. Therefore, the untranslatable remainder is justified.

In the case of contact with a “foreign” culture, the addressee intuitively compares it with his own culture. It is this factor that demonstrates erroneous interpretation, determines misunderstanding of peculiar manifestations and signs foreign culture. In this way, the translator may fail to convey the distinctive features of a foreign culture, and the subject will not be able to receive the message in full and correctly understand it (Batsevych, 2004: 240).

The task of the translator is to show knowledge of the necessary conventions, instead of offering a literal translation of certain expressions. The process of interpretation assumes that in the process a certain conceptual mastering of the meaning of a specific text is created, which is independent of the properties and various details of the two languages (Antoniuk, 2008: 47).

Researchers studying the problem of untranslatability consider it from different points of view, depending on the difficulties that arise during translation. The majority supports the position of the Scottish linguist J. Catford, who distinguishes between the concepts of linguistic and cultural untranslatability. At the same time, the first arises due to the impossibility of finding an equivalent in the translation lan-

guage due to formal differences in the two languages. In turn, cultural untranslatability is associated with the absence of certain concepts and phenomena in the target culture. J. Catford emphasizes that there is cultural untranslatability a “variant” of linguistic untranslatability. All examples of cultural untranslatability arise from the inability to find an equivalent compound in the target language (Catford, 2000: 144).

In Ukrainian classical tradition, O. Potebnia is stated to be one of the most famous supporters of untranslatability. The outstanding linguist emphasizes, first of all, the asymmetry of the sign systems of languages, which is expressed in the differences in the lexical, emotional, and stylistic structure of each language (Rebrii, 2012).

The unique structure and peculiarities of the grammatical structure of each language imply the fundamental impossibility of the identity of two texts written in different languages. Since at that stage it was believed that the translation should fully reproduce the original, it was considered fundamentally impossible for purely linguistic reasons, which was also aggravated by the impossibility of reproducing the unique originality of the author’s work. The problem of translatability / untranslatability is treated somewhat differently by the hypothesis of uncertainty of translation, which was put forward by the American philosopher W. Quine. In general, W. Quine’s theory can be reduced to the fact that any translation is fundamentally uncertain. According to W. Quine, we cannot succeed by giving preference to one version of the translation. Translation uncertainty is the question of how many synonymous variations may exist for the translation of a given text. The traditional characterization of synonyms as expressions that have the same thing meaning, does involve uncertainty. When considering the phenomenon of synonymy, W. Quine and his supporters actually demand formally clear criteria for synonymy. However, the problem of synonymy is not only a linguistic (semantic) problem, but, first of all, an epistemological one, it is related to the creative nature of thinking, the multifunctionality of natural language and its evolution. By its nature, W. Quine’s hypothesis is not aimed at proving the impossibility of translation, it only denies the possibility of identity in translation, just like other varieties of the theory of relativism (Quine, 2000: 103).

In modern translation studies, it is generally accepted that when translating an artistic text, the biggest difficulty is not the linguistic units of the text, but its color and the peculiarities of the cultural space from which it originates. Therefore, the inability to convey some features of the original during translation is only a partial manifestation of the dissimilarity

of the world pictures of the two texts in different languages, which does not cause complete untranslatability (Rebrii, 2012: 217).

Partly, the misunderstanding in communicating in different languages and translating texts is due to the fact that the same words reveal different meanings and have different meanings. For example, in Ukrainian folklore, “fox” symbolizes deceit, and in English-speaking culture, the concentration of deceit is “cat”. Similarly, the American word “coyote” has a secondary nomination, evokes different associations in the American reader, and implies more meaning than its Ukrainian translation “wolf”. In American culture, a coyote is a person with some negative traits of character.

A *black cat* in Ukrainian is considered to be a symbol of bad luck, and in English, on the contrary, it is a sign of good luck. In this case, an additional comment must be provided during the translation. The expression in German “*Schweinhaben*” is translated as “*to have luck*”, because the pig is a symbol of luck and success for the Germans. The *stork* evokes in Ukrainian people an association with sadness for one’s home. In China, the crane is a symbol of wisdom and caution, and longing for the homeland is *wild geese*. In the process of translation into Chinese, “*stork*” is translated as “*wild geese*”. This translation strategy is called cultural domestication, that is, the reception of translation, which is formed in the conditions of the host culture (Buchumash, Derik, 2022: 25).

The greatest difficulties are connected with the transfer of functional parameters of the text occupying a peripheral position, such as metalinguistic. At the same time, the components of these parameters that are difficult to translate or are generally untranslatable are compensated by other components. For instance, the untranslatable local component of a dialect language is compensated by the transmission of the social component. Quite often, the translator uses compensation while dealing with non-equivalent units. For example, instead of a pun, another stylistic device is used, which helps to preserve the original communicative effect (Zhulavska, 2015: 68).

#### **Conclusions and prospects for further research.**

The article attempts to analyze the main aspects of the problem of untranslatability. The research is connected with observing features of reproduction of non-equivalent lexis in English language texts. Thus, we conclude that the idea of untranslatability, which prevailed in the theory of translation, has lost its imperative in the postmodern discourse. The challenge might be considered not as untranslatability, but as the degree of transmission of all the meaningful richness and semantic load of the text in

the language of translation. Lexical voids (or lacunae), sayings or lexical units that the translator is unable to convey do not indicate the impossibility of translation, they draw attention to the lack of an equivalent, taking into account social, cultural, ethnic and historical features. First of all, the following groups of lexical voids cause difficulties in the translation process: scientific terminology, poetry, idioms, proverbs and sayings, etc. Different semantic uses of words give rise to different associations,

emotions that accompany the semantic movement of words in contextual circulation. In a special way, this applies to proverbs, sayings, slangisms, slogans, in the translation of which the correct disclosure of their semantic content in the translated and original languages is of primary importance. Such translation strategies as transliteration, cultural domestication, compensation and descriptive translation are determined to be successful. It must be noted that the problem of translatability is more extensive and deep.

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