

UDC 81'25

DOI <https://doi.org/10.32782/2522-4077-2023-206-10>

THE FEATURES OF CULTURE-BOUND WORDS TRANSLATING

ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ПЕРЕКЛАДУ СЛІВ-РЕАЛІЙ

Leleka T.O.,

*orcid.org/0000-0002-6134-4435**Scopus-Author ID: 58286055600**PhD in Philology, Associate Professor,**Associate Professor at the Department of Translation, Applied and General Linguistics**Volodymyr Vynnychenko Central Ukrainian State University*

The article is devoted to the study of the problem of national realities translating, which is due to the fact that this issue is one of the most difficult in translation practice. Different language pictures of the world divide the surrounding reality in different ways, which causes certain difficulties when translating lexical items denoting the phenomena inherent only in a particular culture. Therefore, a translator needs to know the national and cultural peculiarities of the region whose language he or she translates. It should be understood that translation of the culture-bound words requires the use of the various translation mechanisms.

The purpose of the study is to identify the peculiarities of translating the words which denote the national realities, as one of the translation problems. The main hypothesis of the study is that the national and cultural elements in the lexical system require additional knowledge and skills from the translator.

The main transformations used in the translation of the national and cultural realities include transcription, transliteration, synonymous translation, hyponymic or hypernymic substitutions, descriptive translation and others.

Since the texts containing the nationally specific components cannot be translated without the special research, the translator needs to acquire knowledge of a particular subject and immerse himself in another reality. Very often, the culture-bound items are replaced by the transcribed or transliterated units. In this case, it seems impossible to find a one word equivalent in the target language.

Some translators try to replace the reality of another culture with a familiar and specific one that has a corresponding equal semantic and stylistic charge. This technique is not always effective. Therefore, the use of the synonymous substitution and descriptive translation is justified.

Using hyponymic and hypernymic substitutions, the translator tries to provide a one-word translation, as this technique corresponds to the economy of language means.

Nowadays, there are many cases of writing a lexical item to denote a reality using the means of the recipient language, which is sometimes also maintained in view of the translator's desire to convey the meaning as strictly as possible.

Thus, giving the equivalents to the nationally specific words is a special area of the activity that requires additional study and is relevant in translation practice. The choice of translation techniques depends on the translator's experience and knowledge, as well as the intention and ultimate goal of the text being translated.

Key words: culture-bound items, national culture-bound items, translation transformation, target language, hyponymic substitution, hypernymic substitution, synonymous substitution, transcription, transliteration.

Стаття присвячена вивченню проблеми перекладу національних реалій, що обумовлено тим, що це питання є одним з найскладніших у практиці перекладу. Різні мовні картини світу неоднаково членують навколишню реальність, що викликає певні труднощі при перекладі лексичних одиниць, які позначають явища, притаманні лише певній культурі.

Метою дослідження є виявлення особливостей перекладу слів-реалій, що становить одну з перекладацьких проблем. Основною гіпотезою роботи є положення про те, що національно-культурні елементи в лексичній системі вимагають від перекладача додаткових знань та навичок.

Серед основних перекладацьких трансформацій, що використовуються при перекладі національно-культурних реалій, можна виділити: транскрипцію, транслітерацію, синонімічний переклад, гіперонімічні або гіпонімічні заміни, описовий переклад та інші.

Оскільки тексти, що містять національно специфічні компоненти, неможливо перекласти без спеціальної підготовки, перекладачеві необхідно отримати знання з певної галузі і зануритись в іншу реальність. Дуже часто слова-реалії перекладаються за допомогою транскрипції та транслітерації.

Багато перекладачів намагаються замінити реалію іншої культури знайомою одиницею, що має відповідне семантико-стилістичне навантаження. Такий прийом не завжди є дієвим. Тож використання синонімічної заміни та описового перекладу є обґрунтованим. Через гіпонімічні та гіперонімічні заміни перекладач намагається подати однослівний переклад, оскільки це пов'язано з економією мовних засобів.

На сьогоднішній день існують випадки написання лексичної одиниці на позначення реалії мовними засобами мови-реципієнта, що іноді також є єдиним можливим засобом зважаючи на прагнення перекладача найточніше передати зміст.

Отже, переклад національно специфічних слів-реалій – це особлива сфера перекладацької діяльності, що потребує додаткового вивчення та є актуальною у практиці перекладу. Вибір перекладацьких методик залежить від досвіду та обізнаності перекладача, а також наміру та кінцевої мети тексту, що перекладається.

Ключові слова: слово-реалія, національно-культурна реалія, перекладацька трансформація, мова-реципієнт, гіпонімічна заміна, гіперонімічна заміна, синонімічна заміна, транскрипція, транслітерація.

Statement and substantiation of the problem relevance. The realities are unique, specific for the certain country and its culture. They have national-cultural connotation, which means that not only nominative, but also onomastic lexicon with pronounced national-cultural associations should be included in their number [5, p. 187].

This understanding of the language phenomenon is characteristic of the new linguistic trends: linguo-country studies, linguo-cultural concepts, ethno-psycholinguistics and the theory of intercultural communication [4, p. 118].

According to this sciences, the understanding of the scope and content of the term culture-bound item does not always coincide among the different translators, which leads to an increase in the range of translation techniques [1, p. 75].

The translation of the realities is the part of the larger and more important problem of transmitting the original national and historical identity, which goes back to the very beginnings of the translation theory as an independent discipline.

We speak about the untranslatable text elements, which, despite not being terms, have international significance. The culture-bound items are vernacular words that are closely related to everyday life and worldview [3, p. 73].

The specific meaning of such words acquires due to the fact that their referent belongs to a certain people, a certain country or region, a certain historical epoch, as it is a characteristic of the culture, life, traditions, peculiarities of reality opposed to other countries, peoples and epochs.

The relevance of the problem is due to the need to identify the main problems in translating words denoting the realities of another country, since there are no clearly defined translation mechanisms for culture-bound words.

The role of cultural realities is significantly increased due to the international co-operation of the countries, their difficult situation in relations [7, p. 44].

The role of the cultural realities is greatly increased due to the international cooperation of the countries, their difficult situation in relations, and consequently the ability to achieve the best possible maximum communication is the main task of a specialist when translating realities.

Analysis of recent research and publications. In the scientific literature we can find different approaches to the classification of the language realities, showing a certain evolution of views. Thus, in the works of the second half of the XX century it was considered, that there are no sufficient grounds for the typology of the culture-bound items due to the uncertainty of the boundaries of the areal (local-geographical, socio-ethnic and cultural-genetic) peculiarities within which these objects are considered [7; 8].

The researchers distinguish three main groups of the referents and, accordingly, the language realities naming them [7, p. 46].

Many studies are devoted to the problem of translating non-equivalent vocabulary. In Ukrainian translation researches, this problem has not been studied in detail, but the scientific works of

O. Burdeina and R. Zovirchak K. Nevylna, N. Novikova, I. Korunets, M. Kocherhan, and N. Myropol-ska are important.

In many studies a comprehensive approach to the characteristics of the culture-bound words, their definition and functioning is firmly established [6, p. 131]. The scientists note that the concept of the reality is not without terminological deficiency, as it is multidimensional. In fact, it is a triad, according to which words relate not only with the subject of extra-linguistic phenomena, but also with its cultural concepts, lexemes or phrase-combinations.

The purpose of the article. The purpose of the study is to identify the peculiarities of translating the culture-bound words as one of the translation problems.

The defined goal requires solving the following tasks:

- to characterise the culture-bound items as a linguistic phenomenon;
- to identify the means of their translation;
- to outline the main difficulties in translating the words to denote the cultural phenomena.

The object of the study is non-equivalent vocabulary, the subject is the ways of the culture-bound words translating.

The main material of the study. The cultural realities are the elements of a language that do not coincide in another language and denote other concepts and perceptions.

The national culture-bound words have the additional meaning to the basic semantic one. It is appropriate to compare the culture-bound words with a specific national or historical components – with the connotative vocabulary – words that are lack of such meaning [1, p. 75].

There are several types of such words: a) the words with existing referents: English *baby-sitter*, *Halloween*; b) the words denoting the historical realities: English *priest's hole* (a priest's refuge during the persecution of Catholics).

They can be one-word elements: *sheriff*, *threepence*; phrases: *banana split*, *Sussex pudding*; realities-phraseologies: *to enter at the Stationers' hall*, *to reach the woolsack*.

Translation of the culturally specific words is a set of the translation techniques, which provide the linguo-cultural adaptation of the reality. Thus, the translation of such category of lexicon is not reduced to the search for the direct correspondences in the target language [2, p. 106]. It is a complex thought process, which consists of comprehending cultural equivalents, concepts and transfers of the forms, content, national and historical elements by the means of the target language [3, p. 73].

The main difficulties in conveying in the translation of the culture-bound words are:

1) the absence of a correspondence (equivalent, analogue) due to the absence of the denoted object (referent) in the target language;

2) the necessity to convey the connotation of such a word along with its subject meaning [4, p. 79].

Even when the word has a dictionary equivalent in the language and it is recorded in dictionaries, the translator cannot always be sure that this equivalent is a part of the receptive meaning (semantics). So the equivalent is included in the receptive vocabulary of the final recipient [5, p. 189].

The main problem faced by the translator in conveying meanings expressed in the source text is the mismatching between the range of meanings inherent in the units of the source language and the translator's language.

All the types of semantic correspondences between the lexical units of two items can be reduced to three main ones: the full compliance, partial conformity, absence of correspondence [1, p. 77].

In those cases when the correspondence of the lexical unit of one or another language in the vocabulary of another language is completely absent. It is accepted to speak about non-equivalent lexicon.

There is the classifications of the non-equivalent lexical material 1) the words of the national reality; 2) the temporarily non-equivalent terms; 3) the accidental non-equivalents; 4) the structural exotisms [6, p. 120].

As a rule, when translating the words denoting realities, two main problems arise either to convey all the meanings of the word and the loss of its meaning for the reader that makes it

impossible to translate it descriptively or to find a word in the target language that is close to it, its analogue.

According to these two problems, there are also two main ways of transmitting the realities – uninterrupted and uninterpreted.

Two main ways of transferring the realities are translationless transfer (transcription and transliteration) and translation: descriptive, approximate, transformational, hyponymic and calcification [4, p. 120].

These two concepts can be opposed to each other: translation endeavours to make the strange as much as possible own, while transcription seeks to preserve the foreign through the means of own [3, p. 76].

The scientists consider and describe the following techniques of transferring realities:

- 1) synonymic substitution: *prince* – князь;
- 2) descriptive translation: *National Health Service* – Національна служба охорони здоров'я у Великобританії;
- 3) stylistic abbreviations: *BFF* – найкращі друзі; *WTF* – що за дідько;
- 4) transcription: *wilton* – уїлтон (the name of the carpet);
- 5) compensation (a method of translation in which the elements of meaning are lost in the translation of a foreign language unit): *waspish remarks* – уїдливі зауваження.

Thus, the lost meaning is compensated, and, in general, the content of the translation is restored.

At the same time, the grammatical means of the original language are replaced by the lexical means, and vice versa. The compensation is used for the purpose of pragmatic adaptation of the original text [5, p. 188].

Depending on the way of conveying form and content, as well as preserving or erasing the national and historical elements, four main types of techniques for conveying the realities are identified:

- 1) the techniques of mechanical transfer;
- 2) the techniques of creating a new word;
- 3) the clarifying techniques;
- 4) the techniques of likening [7, p. 45].

In order to get the most complete idea about the system of the main types of translation techniques we can consider the advantages and disadvantages of each type.

1. The mechanical transfer techniques.

This type of techniques is an automatic transfer of the sound or graphic appearance of the source language reality into the target language. With the help of these techniques, the form of the reality is transmitted as accurately as possible to preserve its form, national and historical connotation, but the content of the new notion is revealed only through the context, briefly or inaccurately:

- direct transposition: *Elizabeth* – *Elizabeth*;
- transliteration: *Elizabeth* – *Елизабет*;
- transcribing: *Liz* – *Liz*.

2. The techniques of creating a new lexeme.

The techniques of creating a new word imply the formation of a new word or word combination according to the model of the original language or close in content with the help of the means of the target language. In this case the semantic content and form of the source language lexeme are preserved.

Over time, many neologisms are mastered and enrich the vocabulary of the target language:

- full calque: *skyscraper* – хмарочос, *Chamber of Deputies* – палата депутатів;
- partial calque: *the Gap Year* – a year between leaving school and starting university that is usually spent travelling or working.

3. Clarifying techniques.

Clarifying techniques reveal the semantic side of a phenomenon by the means of the extended description, interpretation, clarification in various forms: within the text, in the pages of the text.

In this case, the essence of the phenomenon is fully disclosed, but the form is changed, and the realities remain equivalent for the native speakers of the target language:

– description: *terraced houses* – *один із рядів будинків, які з'єднані між собою*.

4. The approximate translation of the realities is most often used despite its shortcomings.

The approximate translation helps convey the substantive meaning of the culture-bound item, but at the same time the whole national and historical connotation is lost. So the translator uses a word that is neutral in style and has zero connotation. One of the ways to approximate the translation is generalisation. The general name is replaced by with a specific, and the singular with the general. For example, *хата, котедж* can be translated as *house*.

These techniques include the substitutions of the analogues of the various kinds: own, foreign, or contextual, as well as generic ones: hyperonym or hyponym.

As a rule, the readers of the translation get an approximate or incorrect idea of the subject or phenomenon, as the form of the analogue is lost and the meaning is obliterated.

The analogue substitutions are used more often than any other techniques, especially in the fiction translation.

This is due to its brevity and accessibility for all the native speakers of the target language, but may lead to the unacceptable national-cultural assimilation:

– substitution by its analogue: *whisky* – *водка*;

– generic substitutions: *a flask of rum* – *алкоголь*;

– replacement by a hyperonym or hyponym: *sequoia* – *дерево*, *lunch* – *сніданок*, *nightmare* – *жахіття*.

5. Contextual analogue.

The contextual analogue means the replacement of a source-language word by the item of the target language that most accurately conveys its meaning in a given context. It is an irregular, exceptional variant of translation of the original unit, suitable only for a given context [4, p. 86].

The translation analogue is created by finding the closest in terms of the equivalent unit of the target language for the non-equivalent unit of the source language [5, p. 189].

This technique is also referred to as the associative translation [5, p. 190]: *in the country* – *на дачі*.

The most popular way of translating such realities that has been found is calquing. This can be explained by the fact that this type of vocabulary requires the unambiguous translation and such realities can be translated by the only way to avoid any inaccuracies, misunderstandings, and mistakes.

The main advantage of calquing is that the translation as a result turns out to be rather brief.

The main advantage of the calques is that the resulting translation is quite concise, but at the same time the author needs to be extremely careful and take into account the intellectual level of the reader to understand the meaning of the translated word.

The calques can also be used with other translation methods, such as other methods of translation, such as transliteration or transcribing. It is easy to see that the calque remains the main method, while the transliteration or transcribing is used for proper nouns, in this case names and geographical names, which is the main way of translation. It is capable of conveying the whole language picture, but at the same time, it conceals from the reader.

The transliteration is used by the authors quite often especially when we speak about geographical names. Another mode of translation that may be encountered when translating the culture-bound words of the various kinds is the descriptive translation.

However, the cases of descriptive translation are not very frequent, because such a translation is very often too cumbersome, much longer.

The hyponymic translation can be explained by the fact that in some cases it may even be wrong, as its essence is to replace a concept with a generic one, and any replacement in this kind of realities can have undesirable consequences, especially when it comes to any kind of documentation.

Conclusions and prospects for further researches of directions. The culture-bound items are the units of the national language that denote the unique referents, peculiar to a given linguo-culture and absent in the linguo-cultural community being compared. They reflect the close relationship between language and culture.

Translating such lexicon requires at least basic background knowledge, otherwise the ignorance of the cultural realities of different countries can lead to quite a lot of problems.

It should be noted that the various combinations are possible on their basis, which are the use of the several techniques of different types. Some linguists allow the possibility of the techniques of one type within one lexical unit, e.g. transcription with the elements of transliteration in the transmission of the proper names; others confirm the inappropriateness of the combination of the techniques of one type within one lexical unit.

When translating the culture-bound words, you need to pay attention to a number of the factors that can help choose the right translation method. After all, the translation will depend on the nature of the text, the significance of the reality in the context, the nature of the culture-bound item and its place in the lexical system, and the reader of the translation.

One of the main tasks of the translator is to adapt the translated text. It is the adjustment of the text to the level of competence of the recipient, to create the text that the reader will be able to comprehend without the need for assistance.

The further research perspectives can be related to the analysis of the other methods that can be applied to the translation of the culture-bound words.

REFERENCES:

1. Гавриленко А.В. Мовні реалії та проблема перекладу. *Філологічні трактати: Науковий журнал*. 2011. № 3. С. 74–78.
2. Зорівчак Р.П. Реалія в художньому мовленні: перекладознавчий аспект. *Іноземна філологія*. 1994. С. 104–111.
3. Котеленець Н. Особливості передачі українських реалій у сучасній англomовній прозі. *Держава та регіони. Серія: Гуманітарні науки*. 2011. № 1. С. 71–77.
4. Лабонська Ю. Г. Основні класифікаційні типи способів перекладу українських реалій англійською мовою. *Modern trends and innovations in teaching foreign languages*. Київ : НТУУ «КПІ», 2011. 249 с.
5. Чередниченко О. І. Про мову і переклад. Київ : Либідь, 2007. С. 186–192.
6. Chesterman, A. *Memes of Translation: the spread of Ideas in Translating Theory*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia : Benjamins Translation Library, 1997. 219 p
7. Johnston, J. Translation as simulacrum. *In Rethinking Translation*. Routledge, 2018. P. 42–56. URL: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429432385-3> (дата звернення: 12.09.2023).
8. Zhaleh, K., Ghonsooly, B., & Pishghadam, R. Effects of Conceptions of Intelligence and Ambiguity Tolerance on Teacher Burnout: A Case of Iranian EFL Teachers. *Research in Applied Linguistics*. 2018. № 9(2). P. 118–140.