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## NON-EQUIVALENT VOCABULARY AS A TRANSLATION PROBLEM

## БЕЗЕКВІВАЛЕНТНА ЛЕКСИКА ЯК ПЕРЕКЛАДАЦЬКА ПРОБЛЕМА

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The article is devoted to the research of the regularities of transferring non-equivalent vocabulary when translating from English into Ukrainian. Such vocabulary is one of the most difficult problems in translation, as there is no single strategy for transferring it to the target language. Everything related to the national peculiarities of the country does not have a full equivalent in another language. The hypothesis of the study is that when transferring culture-bearing information about England from English, a number of translation difficulties arise, which are eliminated with the help of certain translation tools, namely with the use of such a technique as transcription. The aim of the research is to study the peculiarities of preserving culture-bearing information in tourist texts about England when translating from English into Ukrainian. The non-equivalent vocabulary in the reviewed works includes proper names, systems of measures of another culture, monetary units, and names of holidays, toponyms and designation of phenomena first encountered in the language space of another culture.

The work clearly shows that the problem of translating non-equivalent vocabulary is a global one, as peoples exchange cultures and their own achievements on a daily basis. However, each culture has its own characteristics, something that it differs from another.

Speaking about the transformations used when translation of the non-equivalent vocabulary we can emphasize: transliteration; transcription; calquing; semi-calquing; assimilation; contextual translation; hyponymic translation.

The non-equivalent vocabulary exists in all the languages. In order to make a correct translation, it is necessary to check whether the concept denoted by a foreign word exists in the target language; analyse the meaning of this concept; choose a translation method from the existing ones that will reproduce this concept more fully and accurately; correctly convey not only the form of the word, but also its meaning, preserving the national specificity.

**Key words:** non-equivalent vocabulary target language, translation strategy, transliteration, transcription, calquing, semi-calquing, assimilation, contextual translation, hyponymic translation.

Стаття присвячена дослідженню закономірностей передачі безеквівалентної лексики при перекладі з англійської мови українською. Зазначена лексика є однією з найскладніших проблем у перекладі, оскільки не існує єдиної стратегії її передачі іншою мовою. Усе, що пов'язано з національними особливостями країни, не має в іншій мові повного еквіваленту. Гіпотеза дослідження полягає в тому, що при передачі культурологічної інформації про іноземну країну виникає безліч перекладацьких труднощів, які усуваються за допомогою певних перекладацьких засобів, а саме за допомогою такого прийому, як транскрипція. Метою дослідження є вивчення особливостей збереження культурологічної інформації в туристичних текстах про Великобританію при перекладі з англійської мови українською. До безеквівалентної лексики в розглянутих працях належать власні назви, системи мір іншої культури, грошові одиниці, назви свят, топоніми та позначення явищ, що вперше зустрічаються в мовному просторі іншої культури.

Робота наочно демонструє, що проблема перекладу безеквівалентної лексики є глобальною, оскільки народи щодня обмінюються культурами та власними досягненнями. Проте кожна культура має свої особливості, те, чим вона відрізняється від іншої.

Говорячи про трансформації, які використовуються при перекладі безеквівалентної лексики, можна виділити: транслітерацію; транскрипцію; калькування; напівкалька; асиміляцію; семантичні неологізми; переклад за аналогією; контекстуальний переклад; гіпонімічний переклад.

Безеквівалентна лексика існує в усіх мовах. Для того, щоб зробити правильний переклад, необхідно перевірити, чи існує поняття, позначене іноземним словом, у мові перекладу; проаналізувати значення цього поняття; вибрати такий спосіб перекладу з існуючих, який найбільш повно і точно відтворить це поняття; правильно передати не тільки форму слова, але також його колорит і національну специфіку.

**Ключові слова:** безеквівалентна лексика, мова перекладу, перекладацька стратегія, транслітерація, транскрипція, калькування, напівкалька, асиміляція, контекстуальний переклад, гіпонімічний переклад.

**Statement and substantiation of the problem relevance.** The translation of the communicative units expressing seemingly general cultural provisions, as in the case of the most non-equivalent vocabulary, often causes many difficulties for the translator, especially in the absence of some background knowledge. The main difficulty in translation is to identify the specific national-cultural components and, consequently, to transform them into an adequate word form [1, p. 244].

In order to fulfill this task, the translator must, first of all, analyse the conceptual content of the original language unit and all its possible variants in the target language in the light of the context of the given cultural language pair taking into account language and cultural communicative characteristics. Absolutely all the communicative language units interact and intersect with the components of the general system of the knowledge about the world with the background knowledge [2, p. 98]. Due to the fact that the meaning of the communicative unit conveyed by the language means is mostly explicit, the greatest difficulty for a professional translator is to identify the necessary background knowledge reflecting the national and cultural-historical exclusivity of this unit.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** In the linguistics and translation studies, non-equivalent vocabulary is the words and expressions denoting the national-cultural objects, as well as stable expressions containing such words.

The works on translation theory distinguish two main translation positions related to the peculiarities of transferring the cultural specificity of the source text in translation: orientation towards the transferring culture [3, p. 470] and to the original text [1; 4].

The concept of non-equivalent vocabulary have been worked out by such linguists as O. Bohai-chuk, L. Bronska, O. Voloshyna, O. Hasiuk, A. Kaplenko, V. Karaban, H. Miram, R. Izomovich, K. Mizin, C. Robinson, L. Venuti, M. Zitouni and others. They outline in detail both the theoretical and practical basis for the translation of non-equivalent vocabulary. In addition, their works fully and accurately classify the types of equivalent vocabulary and the ways of its translation.

Some linguists support the socio-cultural determination in choosing between the translation strategies of domestication and foreignisation where the domestication of translated texts is typical for English-speaking culture [2]. Some researcher, on the contrary, are the supporters of translation foreignisation and, in turn, advocate the tolerance towards the values of the original culture [4, p. 48].

It is worth noting that the problem described above has two alternative solutions: the translator should choose either the strategy of foreignisation or adhere to domestication in order to transfer substantive-factual and substantive-conceptual information from the original text. Considering translation as a driving force of acculturation [3, p. 474], some linguists put into the concepts of domestication and foreignisation, first of all, as an ethical assessment in relation to the foreign text and the culture of the target language [3, p. 475].

The present work focuses on the peculiarities of translating non-equivalent vocabulary from English into Ukrainian which is relevant in the situation of the world globalization. First of all, the issue of the definition of such lexicon is investigated, after which the subject and temporal classification of such vocabulary are proposed. Under the main feature of the non-equivalent lexicon is understood the colouring, the transfer of which is the main problem, in connection with which there is an opinion about the belonging of such lexical material as a special one.

**The purpose of the article.** The purpose of the article is to characterise the main translation techniques in the translation of non-equivalent vocabulary.

The goal is to achieve the following objectives:

- to classify non-equivalent vocabulary;
- to identify the translation transformations in the transmission of non-equivalent vocabulary;
- to show the main difficulties in translating this vocabulary.

**The main material of the study.** The non-equivalent vocabulary is close to the terms and proper names in their properties and functions. The researchers of culturally labelled units repeatedly note that the boundary between the terms and non-equivalent vocabulary is very conditional and very mobile. In some cases it is quite difficult to distinguish such vocabulary from the terms. However, there are signs by which it is quite possible to differentiate such words [1, p. 246].

It is worth noting that non-equivalent vocabulary is a part of the source text, and thus its transfer into the translation text is one of the conditions of translation adequacy. As a result, the question is not whether a reality can or cannot be translated, but how it should be translated [4, p. 46].

In our opinion, the most complete definition of non-equivalent vocabulary is the words and word combinations naming the objects characteristic of the life (culture, social and historical development) of one nation and alien to another, being carriers of the national and historical colouring [3, p. 471]. They, as a rule, do not have exact correspondences or equivalents in other languages, and, therefore, cannot be translated on a general basis, requiring a special approach [1, p. 245]. This definition is given according to the concept of non-equivalent vocabulary translation, so it is of great interest to us. In the process of translation, not only languages, but even texts, cultures and situations are opposed to each other [3, p. 246].

The researchers understand the concept of domestication as the orientation of the translation text towards the dominant values of the host culture [3; 4], and by foreignisation – a conscious disregard of the language and cultural norms of the target language [4] in order to give the translation of the connotation of foreignness and distance from its reader. Consequently, the translation domestication aims to give the primacy to the transmission in the translated text of axiological information about the socio-cultural space of the source language, while foreignisation aims to reflect the aesthetics of the original as a translation dominant [1].

To put it in other words, the differences presented can be described as follows: if the reader is transposed into the space of the original text, we talk about foreignisation; if the text is adjusted to the reader, we talk about domestication [5, p. 45].

As a linguistic phenomenon, such vocabulary belongs to the category of non-equivalent one. It is a part of background knowledge and is of considerable interest in the study of the interaction between language and culture. The specialists pay more and more attention to the social side of language, which directly reflects its interaction with the life activity of the people speaking it [4, p. 49].

The main problem faced by the translator when transferring the non-equivalent vocabulary expressed in the source text is the mismatch of the range of meanings inherent in the units of the source language and the target language. All the types of the semantic correspondences between lexical units of two items can be reduced to such groups: full compliance, partial compliance, no correspondence [5, p. 53].

Before proceeding directly to translation, it is necessary to comprehend the unfamiliar words in the original, their place in the context [1, p. 477].

International non-equivalent vocabulary does not need comprehension either, as the reader has already formed a certain idea about them and national reference due to their prevalence. All the unfamiliar words require the introduction of means of comprehension [4, p. 50].

There are two main difficulties in transferring non-equivalent vocabulary in translation: the absence of a correspondence (equivalent, analogue) in the target language due to the absence of the object (referent) denoted by the reality in the native speakers of this language and the need, along with the

subject meaning (semantics) of the word, to convey the colour (connotation) – its national and historical colouring [1, p. 247].

However, some words have the single correspondences in the target language (*House of Commons* – *Палата громад*). It means that in most cases a given unit of the source language is translated by the same unit of the target language [2]. There are practically no difficulties in translating such lexical material that has the single correspondences.

It seems possible to reduce the methods of transferring non-equivalent vocabulary in translation to two main ones: transcription and direct translation [2].

Transcription implies the introduction of the corresponding non-equivalent vocabulary into the translation text by the graphic means with maximum approximation of its phonetic essence to the original. The use of transcription in the transfer of non-equivalent vocabulary is due to the fact that in transcribing the translator manages to convey both the semantic content and the colour of the non-equivalent vocabulary. For example, *puzzle* – *пазл*.

Direct translation involves the several ways of dealing with the problem of realisation [1, p. 249]:

– calquing and semi-calquing (partial borrowing): *Easter Bunny* – *Великодній кролик*;

– replacement by the realisation of the target language: *a bank teller* – *касир банку*;

– adaptation with giving it the appearance of a native word on the material of a foreign language: *juicer* – *соковижмалка*.

Obviously, the ways of translation are not limited to such as descriptive translation, the translation with commentary are also possible. The translator must adequately assess the situation in which he has to translate and choose the most appropriate way to convey the reality.

It is not uncommon to encounter so-called socio-cultural vocabulary or the words which meanings are so capacious that they cannot be contained in a dictionary entry. Often these words convey social, cultural, or other information that may be characteristic only of a certain society. There are a large number of such words, because every country and social group has its own national, cultural peculiarities, history and customs, social and political system, often so far from our ideas that they seem something unimaginably wild and unacceptable at first glance [2].

These concepts, from the linguistic point of view, are the objects and phenomena that are specific to a certain social group, which are not characteristic and have no equivalents in other languages. They include political terms, geographical names, job titles, currency and measures, names of dishes/dances/clothes and many others.

The difficulty in translating such words is that it is not enough to translate them – you need to convey their national or ethnographic colouring [1, p. 249].

Since one of the most common ways of replenishing the language is borrowing, the most common way of translating such vocabulary is transliteration or transcribing. For example, the English political parties *tory* and *whigs* have the appropriate names *тори*, *віги*.

The same method is used to translate such titles as *solicitor* and *barrister* – *соліситор*, *баристер*. However, along with these translation equivalents in the Ukrainian language there is also a more familiar variant – *адвокат*. In such cases, the method of translation is chosen depending on the context and the significance of the concept. For example, if it is a text about the judicial system of Great Britain, it is desirable not only to translate these concepts, but also to give their definitions (*solicitor* – a lawyer who gives advice to the client, prepares cases for the barrister and acts only in lower courts; *barrister* – a lawyer who has the right to act in higher courts). For example, the English word *lobby* can be rendered not only by transliteration of *лоббі*, but also descriptively, as *тиск на членів англійського парламенту в кулуарах парламенту*; *wail* – *автомобіль з високими динамічними якостями*.

The example of the equal existence of two equivalents: in English the word *district*. It corresponds to the familiar to English speakers *district* and the transliterated as *округ*.

Transliteration is the best way of translation when there is a need to convey the national or ethnographic colouring. However, one should be careful about using a single transliteration without supporting it with a description – the reader's background knowledge is not as extensive to decipher cultural information [4, p. 50].

Another way of translating national concepts is calquing. This is also quite a successful method, as the words created by calquing are both understandable to the native speaker without additional descriptions and, at the same time, retain ethnographic colouring. For example, the concept of *span-glish*. Thus, the UK title *Chancellor of the Exchequer* is in some cases better translated as *Minister of Finance*, as well as the official title *Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs* – *Minister for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs*.

Calquing can be used when translating complex words or phrases. It can be in the combination with the correspondences, transformations or transcoding: *petrodollars* – *нафтодолари*, *slag yard* – *шлаковий двір*.

Calquing is often used to translate geographical names: *New South Wales* – *Новий Південний Уельс*, *St. Lawrence River* – *річка Св. Лаврентія*.

Most often the contextual substitution is used when translating measures and currencies. That is, if the original text speaks of feet and inches, the translation will be *metres* and *centimetres* – *метри*, *сантиметри*.

Somewhat similar to this method is the use of a broader or narrower concept for translation. This method includes the translation of *barrister* and *solicitor* as *адвокат*. It is important not to forget that the last two methods of translation often erase the stylistic colouring of the concepts.

Obviously, there are no strict rules for choosing the translation of socio-cultural information. When translating the cultural phenomena, it is necessary to take into account many factors, but the main thing is to determine the significance of the national colouring of the concept for the target text, and then choose the method of translation into the target language [2].

There are the examples:

- a) proper names (transliterations and hyphenates such a designation)
- b) toponyms (place names of streets, lakes, rivers, etc.)

*Just north is Meadow Lake, south is Queens Boulevard. And we're in the middle. 108th Street is our central thoroughfare* – *На північ від нас – озеро Мідоу, на південь – бульвар Квінз. А ми посередині. 108-а вулиця – наша центральна магістраль.*

- c) denoting a phenomenon encountered for the first time in English-speaking space:

*Buy [...] two countenances.* – *'Who is it: a countenance? – The hell he knows. Yeah it's got a label on it: glee* – *отримайте [...] два подарунки. – А що це за подарунки? – А чорт його знає. Так, на ньому є етикетка: Свято.*

The process of preserving the national identity of the original, which implies functionally correct perception and transmission of the whole combination of elements – is a task extremely difficult in terms of both its practical solution and theoretical analysis [1, p. 249].

Non-equivalent vocabulary is an object or thing that materially exists or existed. According to the definitions described in dictionaries, the material cultural objects can be considered as non-equivalent. In translation studies and the science of language, the words and expressions denoting these objects, as well as stable expressions containing such words, are translated in different ways.

Two distinctive features of such vocabulary are usually determined, namely the nature of its content (revealing the connection of the denoted object with a particular country, nation, social community) and its belonging to a certain period of time. On the basis of these distinctive features, scientists have proposed the subject, temporal and local classification of non-equivalent vocabulary. It includes:

- 1) geographical names, for example, names of objects of physical geography; names of objects related to human activity; and names of endemics.

2) ethnographic realities include concepts belonging to the everyday life and culture of the people, namely the following realities: household; labour; names of concepts of art and culture; ethnic concepts; and measures and money.

3) socio-political realities, which include notions related to administrative-territorial structure; designations of bearers and authorities; names of military; names of organisations, ranks, titles, estates, castes [5].

The temporal division of non-equivalent vocabulary includes:

1) contemporary phenomena, which are used by some language group and denote concepts existing at a given time.

2) historical concepts, which reflect concepts characteristic of the past of a particular social group [4].

In the field of one single language, one should take into account one's own and foreign national phenomena, which, in their turn, are subdivided into national (familiar to all the inhabitants of the state, and to the whole nation), local (belonging to the nation with one dialect or dialect), and microlocal (characteristic of a certain area) [1, p. 250].

When considering such vocabulary from the perspective of two languages, they can be divided into external words that are alien to the pair and ones that are alien to one language and native to the other.

In the process of considering several languages, regional and international peculiarities, which are present in the lexicon of many languages and have entered their vocabulary but retained their original colouring, are also distinguished [5, p. 54].

So, we can conclude that the main feature of the non-equivalent vocabulary is its colouring. It is the transfer of colouring in the process of translating a text from one language into another that is the main problem of the translator when working with it. However, it should be noted that some non-equivalent words have only single correspondences in the target language. A single correspondence means that in most cases a given unit of the source language will be translated by the same unit of the target language. There are practically no difficulties in the process of translating such words that have singular correspondences.

The possibilities of translating non-equivalent vocabulary actually encountered in translations can be reduced to the following main cases:

1) transcription or transliteration (*St. James's Street* – *СентДжеймс-стріт*, *Daimler Saloon* – *Даймлер-салон*),

2) creation of a new (or complex) word on the basis of elements already existing in the language, similar translation, clarified in the contextual conditions (*to dog-sit*, або *get-rich-quick* – *створений для швидкого отримання прибутку*),

3) hyponymic translation (*diner* – *забігайлівка* – *невелике кафе без зручностей*).

Preserving and conveying the national connotation can be considered as one of the most important tasks set before the translator. It is the problem that the translator is often faced with. The national connotation of the word which it acquires due to the fact that its referent, the object it denotes, belongs to a given people, a certain country or region, a particular historical epoch, due to the fact that it, this referent, is characteristic of the culture, everyday life, tradition, in a word, of the peculiarities of reality in a given country or region, in a given historical epoch, in contrast to other countries, peoples and epochs.

The colouring inherent in the majority of non-equivalent vocabulary is a feature that allows to distinguish this word from the whole mass of language units. Therefore, when translating such vocabulary, the translator should first of all take into account the specific features of these words, the nature of which determines the choice of the translation technique.

The techniques presented below also illustrate the additional three ways of transferring non-equivalent vocabulary into the target language despite the fact that they are not non-equivalent vocabulary translation techniques:

- 1) replacing a source language word with a target language word (*rip off artist* – *майстер на всі руки*);
- 2) transfer of the vocabulary alien to the source language and the target language (*ombudsman* – *омбудсмен*);
- 3) omission of the word.

It follows that the choice of a certain technique when translating the non-equivalent directly depends on the task set before the translator: whether the colouring of the linguistic unit should be preserved with possible damage to the semantics or whether it is worthwhile to convey the meaning of the non-equivalent vocabulary (if it is not known), but without losing the colouring.

It is also extremely important for the translator to resolve the dilemma and prioritise a certain style of work, in which he is obliged to either show specificity and fall into exoticism, or preserve the familiarity and lose specificity, replacing it with the specificity of one of the styles of the language into which the translation is made [5, p. 57].

**Conclusions and prospects for further researches of directions.** The problem of translating non-equivalent vocabulary is now a global one, as peoples exchange cultures and languages every day.

When translating non-equivalent vocabulary, the domestication strategy is used more often than the fornication. The method of domestication allows the translator to compare the original concepts of words. The strategy of fornication has the opposite goal – to preserve originality in the cultural connotations of the source culture.

Given the fact that new lexical items appear every day, there is a need to create new, more modern approaches to the translation and adaptation of this vocabulary into other languages. This is not an easy process, and therefore it requires further research and development.

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