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Language realities and the national picture of the world in the works of Charles Dickens

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Abstract

The article concerns the questions of language anthropocentrism and provides a brief survey of a new branch in linguistics – linguocultural studies. The author of the article describes the process of cross-cultural communication and the problem of equivalence/non-equivalence. Language non-equivalent units, being chosen out of Ch. Dickens works, are divided into several groups according to the classification of A.O. Ivanov (the semantic gap; compound words; archaisms and poeticisms; deviations from the linguistic norm; associative gaps; realities). The study of various types of non-equivalent vocabulary in the works of the classics of English literature, Charles Dickens may lead to a better understanding of national linguistic world English XIX century. Author comes to the conclusion of the specificity and uniqueness of the national picture of the world, represented in works of art of Charles Dickens.

Keywords

Linguocultural studies, cross-cultural communication, equivalence/non-equivalence, non-equivalent words, lacuna, culturally specific realia, cultural picture of the world.

Introduction

In modern linguistics the active and promising for the future development is the direction investigating a language primarily as a special cultural code of the nation, and not just as a means of communication. Such a change of a system-structural, static paradigm to anthropocentric, dynamic paradigm, that has shifted the interest of researchers from the object of knowledge on the subject, was the cause of a new branch of linguistics – the cultural linguistics.

Anthropocentric idea of language can now be considered as generally recognized: for many language constructions the idea of human being acts as a natural starting point.

Equivalence problem in the process of intercultural communication

It is known that the process of intercultural communication is carried out in continuous interaction of languages and cultures of communication participants correspondingly. In the course of this interaction at different levels appear some kind of discrepancies, as well as differences in the languages in contact are widely exhibited. Relating to dis-crepancies at lexical level of languages scientists use the term "culture-specific vocabulary" (hereinafter – CSV). CSV mostly understood as lexis containing national cultural component, in particular, national cultural semes. CSV is a group of units of one of the languages in contact that in the lexical system of another language have neither full nor partial equivalents (matches).

Equivalence / non-equivalence problem is not so simple. Often it is considered that if we take a word of a native language and find its literal equivalent in another language, this word would mean the same thing. But while there are many pairs of words denoting the same in different languages in general, these words often have different shades and connotations[1]. For instance, L.S. Barkhudarov in his article "Twelve titles and twelve things" notes that "the Russian word for "house" can be considered the equivalent of an English "house"; however, these words are the same in only two meanings : "building", "construction" (e.g., a stone house) and "dynasty" (e.g. , the House of Romanovs). All other meanings of these words are not the same. Russian "house" also has a meaning of "home-fire", "place

1   Alefirenko, N.F. (2013), *Linguocultural studies. Value-semantic language space* [*Lingvokul´turologiya. Tsennostno-smyslovoe prostranstvo yazyka*], Moscow, 282 p.

of residence", in which it corresponds to another English word, namely the word "home"[2].

Human being is between the reality and language. That is a man who perceives and understands the world through the senses and on this basis creates a system of beliefs about the world. Passing them through one's mind, comprehending the results of this perception, a man sends them to the other members of his speech community by means of language. It appears from this that CSV is primarily designations being specific to a given culture, which are the product of cumulative function of language and can be regarded as a container of background knowledge.

V.A. Maslova notes[3] that national cultural identity of nominative units can manifest itself not only in the presence of culture-specific units, but in the absence of words and meanings in this language expressed in other languages, i.e. *lacunae*. Native speakers of different languages variously divide the world into parts and fragments that get own name. This division depends on how important are these pieces for the nation, what role they play in their life. In Russian language, for obvious reasons, there are *blizzard*, *snowstorm*, *blinding snowstorm*, *snowslip*, *snow blast* and *drifting snow*, and all that is connected with the snow and winter, and in English this variety is expressed in a word *snowstorm*, which is sufficient for descriptions of all the problems with snow in the English-speaking world[4].

Consequently, the words *blizzard*, *snowstorm*, *blinding snowstorm*, *snowslip*, *snow blast*, *drifting snow* appear as culture-specific vocabulary in Russian and as lacunae in relation to English. Often the presence of lacune in one of the languages is explained not by the lack of an appropriate denotation, but by the fact as it is no matter how important this phenomenon for the specific culture. "Thus, lexical items *living*, *day and night*, *boiling water* do not have exact equivalents in English, German and French, but it would be unfair to say the absence of relevant concepts in cognitive worldviews of these peoples. Similarly, in Russian there is no special word for the concept of "living creature that kept at home for

2   Barkhudarov, L.S. (1969), "Twelve titles and twelve things" ["Dvenadtsat' nazvanii i dvenadtsat' veshei"], *Russkii yazyk za rubezhom*, No. 4, pp. 79-80.

3   Maslova, V.A. (2010), *Linguocultural studies* [*Lingvokulturologiya*], Moscow, 202 p.

4   Ter-Minasova, S.G. (2004), *Language and cross-cultural communication* [*Yazyk i mezhkul'turnaya kommunikatsiya*], Moscow, p. 56.

fun" (English word *pet*), but the concept exists for sure[5]. Lacunae constitute a significant proportion of the national specifics of any language. "Terms of socio-political, socio-economic, cultural life of the people, the uniqueness of its philosophy, psychology and traditions determine the occurrence of images and concepts fundamentally missing at speakers of other languages"[6].

Classification of culture-specific vocabulary in the works of Charles Dickens

As a result of interaction with the world human being forms his view of the world, forming a kind of model of the world, which is in the philosophical and linguistic literature entitled *the worldview*. Any language presents two aspects: universal-objective, associated

with its reflection of an objective reality and subjective-national (or idioethnic), reflecting not a real world, but a standpoint upon it from native speakers. The transition from one language to another seems to scientists as a replacement of one worldview to another.

"Language constructions and methods of the world conceptualization reflect the original archetypes of consciousness"[7]. We agree with the scientists that the language of the peoples performing a cumulative function stores the accumulated amount of information, which later serves as a major means of the formation of ethno-cultural experience of future generations.

Several modern authors (V.E. Chernikova, L.A. Nekhlyudova) argue that imaginative worldview of the author of one or another work cannot be presented without linguistic realities. National-cultural realities embodied in the structure of verbal language help to better understand the other worldview and, no less important, refer it to the worldview formed under the influence of the native language.

5   Smirnova, O.M. (2008), "Language lacunas and non-equivalent units as a key to understanding of a national concept sphere" ["Yazykovye lakuny I bezekvivalentnye leksicheskie edinitsy kak klyuch k ponimanizu spetsifiki natsional'noi kontseptosfery"], *Bulletin of Nizhny Novgorod State University* [*Vestnik Nizhegorodskogo universiteta im. N.I. Lobachevskogo*], No. 3, p. 242.

6   Dzida, N.N. (2010), "Lacunae issues in translation" ["Problema lakunarnosti v perevode"], *Bulletin of Tyumen State University* [*Byulleten' Tyumenskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*], No. 1, pp. 163.

7   Khokhlova, L.V., Dvornikova, N.A. (2012), "Mythmaking and poetry: the language problem in the Russian spiritual culture" ["Mifotvorchestvo i poeziya: problema yazyka v russkoi dukhovnoi kul'ture"], *Context and Reflection: Philosophy of the World and Human Being*, No. 4, p. 80.

We believe that the study of various types of culture-specific vocabulary in the works of the classics of English literature Charles Dickens may lead to a better understanding of national linguistic world of the English of XIX century. Famous English writer and literary critic G.K. Chesterton wrote about Dickens style: "...Dickens knew how to liven up the darkest, the most boring corner of London. There are details in his descriptions – window, banisters, keyhole – that are endowed with some devilish life. They are more real here than in reality. There is no such realism in the reality..."[8]

There is a number of classifications of culture-specific vocabulary, however, in this paper we will adhere to the classification proposed by A.O. Ivanov[9]:

1) semantic lacunae;

2) compound words;

3) archaisms and poeticisms;

4) deviations from language norm;

5) associative lacunae;

6) realities.

Semantic lacunae. As noted above, the lacuna is a lexical unit of the

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8   Chesterton, G.K. (1982), *Charles Dickens,* Moscow, p. 49.

9   Ivanov, A.O. (2006), *Non-equivalent words. Study guide.* [*Bezekvivalentnaya leksika: uchebnoe posobie*], St. Petersburg, 192 p.

target language (TL), while its referred object or concept occurs in the experience of TL carriers. It is also necessary to emphasize that in this case we can talk about the possibility of expressing this concept by means of TL, although the plane of expression may be different in translation. A.O. Ivanov notes that "the very existence of semantic lacunae clearly demonstrates a thesis of the worldview mismatch in different languages".

Fortnight – two weeks.

"Mater Davy, how should you like to go along with me and spend a ***fortnight*** *at my brother's at Yarmouth?" ("David Copperfield").*

Glance – to cast a look on, take a rapid glance, with one eye. Russian language has no lexical unit of a similar level to refer to this concept; however, it does not mean to express this concept by means of TL.

Compound words. This group of words is assigned to one of the types of CSV for the reason that often there is a more compact form of expression of the same concept in the original language (OL) than in TL. We agree with A.O. Ivanov that in this case it is impossible to talk about full equivalence in translation on the grounds that such compound words are not complete equivalents in TL. Translator often has to find his own

equivalents based on contextual conditions.

*"Joe and I being **fellow-sufferers** ..."* ("Great Expectations")

Adequacy of translation of sentences with such complex words is achieved either by full descriptive translation, or using different translational transformations. As a rule, bilingual English-Russian dictionary does not give equivalents to these words.

Archaisms and poeticisms. If the word is archaic in relation to the current state of the language, but was not archaic in relation to language at the time of work creation, such archaism in translation should sound modern. This can be clearly demonstrated by the following examples.

*"... much as the sun may, from the spongy fields, be seen to loom by **husbandman** and ploughboy"* ("Bleak house")

Deviations from language norm. Often at translation of literary works translators have to deal with deviations from language norm, which are expressed in wrong pronunciation, grammar errors, defects of speech. Heroes of Charles Dickens novels often in their speech and writing deviate from the accepted norms of the literary language. These deviations can occur at spelling

(example No. 3), phonetic (examples No. 1, 2), grammatical (example No. 3) and syntactic levels.

1) *"I'm much **obleeged** to her"* (instead of "obliged") ("David Copperfield")

2) *"**Mlud**, says Mr. Tangle"* (instead of "**milord**")

*"**Mlud**,* no-variety of points-feel it my duty **tsubmit – ludship"** (instead of "**to submit**" and "**your lordship**") ("Bleak House").

3) "I **never giv** him **no** name" ("David Copperfield").

Such a technique is often used by authors with certain stylistic and communicative goals. "Works of Charles Dickens are the epitome of critical realism, which recreates social processes of capitalist society. They display images of the common people, and, therefore, illiterate and uneducated people"[10].

Associative lacunae. This type of CSV segregates in a special group on the grounds of lack of special associations

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10 Odnorogova, Ya. L. (2009), "Deviations of an English language norm (on the basis of works of art in the second half of the XVIII-XIX centuries)" ["Otkloneniya ot normy angliiskogo literaturnogo yazyka (na materiale hudozhestvennyh proizvedenii vtoroi poloviny XVIII-XIX vekov)"], *Bulletin of the Chelyabinsk State University* [*Vestnik Chelyabinskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*], No. 7 (188), pp. 117-118.

(connotations) in TL, which are associated with a given word or concept by OL carriers.

For instance, in the novels "Bleak House" and "Great Expectations" we find a large number of toponyms.

Chancery Lane – a street in central London, where there are several judicial institutions and legal firms.

Lincoln's Inn Hall – one of the four legal schools (corporation or chamber) of London, which includes barristers-at-law of England and Wales.

Bow Street – a street in London, whereon located the building of the general criminal court.

Camberwell – residential area in the southern part of London.

Glastonbury – one of the oldest towns in England located in a hilly area of the Somersetshire county, at the foot of the 159 meter St. Michael's Hill.

"Mr. Wopsle died amiably at Camberwell, and exceedingly game on Bosworth Field, and in the greatest agonies at Glastonbury" ("Great Expectations")

Intimate connection of associative realities with a spiritual culture of the people and its language often makes translators resort to running commentaries, or at best, to the descriptive translation and various clarifications introduced in the translated text. Lacunar units amply demonstrate how deeply they go into the national language and national culture. Talking about the difference between associative lacunae from realities, it should be noted that the realities do not possess additional connotations in the form of associations in perception.

Realities. As mentioned above, the realities are words or combinations of words that are typical for the life of one nation, but missing in everyday language of another nation. A.O. Ivanov calls them "carriers of national and/or historical flavor". First of all, it relates to the names of monetary units, drinks and food, professions, titles and positions.

Thus, "pound", "guinea", "shilling" are UK monetary units.

*"I calculated the consequences of replying "Four hundred **pound**".* Although these words have become entrenched in Russian, but still are lacunae for this language, because there are no such units of currency in Russia. These words refer to the English ethnic group and its culture.

Ethnic realities with the meaning "alcoholic drinks": *brandy, sherry, port wine, gin, rum, rum-and-wate*r. Thus, one of the heroes of the novel "Great Expectations" Mr. Pumblechook, a grain trader, brings the Gargerys for Christmas

dinner a bottle of sherry and a bottle of port: *"I have brought, Mum, a bottle of sherry wine – and I have brought you, Mum, a bottle of port wine"*.

Based on the above examples, we can conclude on the specificity and uniqueness of the national worldview, represented in literary works of Charles Dickens. Represented in human mind, it can boldly be called a "second reality", secured in the language structure.

Conclusion

Study of CSV features enables to look at national culture from different perspectives, expand understanding of the literary text. Language as a unique part of culture reflects its national part, accumulates and preserves evidences of different cultural values in the texts, as well as constitutes a unique material for the creation of literary works.

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Языковые реалии и национальная языковая картина мира в произведениях Ч. Диккенса

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Аннотация

В статье рассматриваются вопросы антропоцентричности языка и даётся краткий обзор новой отрасли лингвистики – лингвокультурологии. Автор статьи описывает процесс межкультурной коммуникации и неотрывно связанную с этим проблему эквивалентности. Языковые безэквивалентные единицы, отобранные методом сплошной выборки из произведений Ч. Диккенса, разделены на группы согласно референциальному признаку.

Ключевые слова

Лингвокультурология, межкультурная коммуникация, эквивалентность / безэквивалентность, безэквивалентная лексика, лакуны, национально-культурные реалии, лингвокультурная картина мира.

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