

## Translation of Metaphors in Vladimir Nabokov's Works

One of the main problems of translating fiction works is translating the author's stylistic means, metaphors, similes, metonymies etc. When translating, an interpreter has to decide whether to reproduce the original construction or choose any equivalent. In many cases it's enough for communicative purpose to give the author's idea without reproducing stylistic means. When a skeleton in the family cupboard becomes a shameful family secret there is no doubt a certain lack of expression, but the main idea is preserved. In a work of fiction stylistic means are as important as the ideas they convey. It's especially important when an interpreter has to deal with a sustained metaphor or word play. In this case the absence of metaphor may lead to complete misunderstanding of a part of the text.

In the theory of translation there are conventional and creative metaphors and similes (V.N. Komissarov, A.L. Koralova, 1990: 115-116). Conventional stylistic means are widely used by native speakers and can be considered as idioms or phraseological units.

Russian equivalents for such metaphors can be based on the same image.

– broken English – ломаный английский

*I could have telephoned but fearing my voice might go out of control and lapse into coy croaks of broken English...* (V.Nabokov, *Lolita*)

*Я мог бы позвонить, но, боясь, что потеряю власть над голосом и разражусь жеманным кваканием на ломаном английском языке...* (В.Набоков, «Лолита»);

– barking laugh – лающий смех

*Her lips were like large crimson polyps, and when she emitted her special barking laugh, she showed large dull teeth and pale gums* (V.Nabokov, *Lolita*)

*Ее губы были как большие пунцовые слизни, и когда она разражалась своим характерным лающим смехом, то показывала крупные, тусклые зубы и бескровные десны* (В.Набоков, «Лолита»).

There are cases when in translation the metaphor is based on another but similar image:

– hot thunder of wisper – горячий гул шепота

*... but for quite a while my mind could not separate into words the hot thunder of her whisper* (V. Nabokov, *Lolita*);

*... но рассудок мой долго не мог разбить на слова жаркий гул ее шепота* (В. Набоков, «Лолита»).

Sometimes an original English metaphor is translated into Russian word by word:

– as black as a sin – черен как грех

*We did not see any next traffic light — in fact, The Park was as black as the sins it concealed* (V. Nabokov, *Lolita*);

*Никакого светофора мы не нашли — парк был черен как грех, которому он служил прикрытием* (В. Набоков, «Лолита»).

On the other hand there are cases where metaphorical meaning can be expressed only by non-metaphorical explanation:

– as large as life – в натуральную величину (рост)

*I kept telling myself, as I wielded my brand-new large-as-life wife, that biologically this was the nearest I could get to Lolita* (V. Nabokov, *Lolita*);

*Я все повторял себе, меж тем как орудовал моей только что сфабрикованной, в натуральный рост женой, что в биологическом смысле она собой представляет максимально доступное мне приближение к Лолите* (В. Набоков, «Лолита»).

The problem of translation of creative metaphors, made by the author's imagination in his native language, is much more complicated. Such metaphors are part of the authors style and are usually translated word by word.

Nevertheless some original images could not be represented in the language of translation, so the interpreter has to find a suitable occasional accordance:

*In order to break some pattern of fate in which I obscurely felt myself being enmeshed, I had decided — despite Lo's visible annoyance — to spend another night at Chestnut Court (V. Nabokov, Lolita).*

"Pattern" is usually translated as «узор, рисунок», but in Russian it's important to break (сломать) or enmesh (запутать) it. So in Russian it's translated by another image:

*Желая разорвать сеть судьбы, которая, как я смутно чувствовал, опутывала меня, я решил (несмотря на нескрываемую досаду Лолиты) провести лишнюю ночь в "Капитановых Коттеджах" (В. Набоков, «Лолита»).*

In the theory of translation there exist the following means of translating metaphorical expressions:

- 1) to find a figurative analogue;
- 2) to create a literal equivalent;
- 3) descriptive translation;
- 4) to change the original image into traditional equivalent of the language of translation.

In cognitive linguistics there is the other approach to the problem of metaphor which is considered the basic mental operation, an important way of conceptualization and categorization of the world. In this case metaphor does not only transfer meaning of words, but structuralizes one field of experience in the terms of another one. So an interpreter has to search for an according correlation between concepts of native and receiving cultures. One of the main problems is a national specification of concepts. In conceptual spheres of different countries there are more correlations than in their languages. These correlations make it possible to translate from one language into another. An interpreter comprehends the original concept and then tries to find language means that convey this concept in the language of translation (A. Wierzbicka, 1997).

It's known that in many languages some lexemes for some concepts are absent, and, besides there are words that have no equivalents in other languages. Such words show national concepts. For instance, in European languages there are no words for such Russian concepts as «земляк», «пошлость», «автолюбитель» etc. (A. Wierzbicka, 1997: 25).

A good example of such specific national concepts is a Russian word «пошлый» and its derivatives («пошлость», «пошляк»), which is well illustrated by Vladimir Nabokov (V. Nabokov, 1961):

«In Russian language with one relentless word you can express the essence of a wide-spread vice, whereas three other languages known to me have no ways to express it. Some, but not all, shades of "пошлость" can be conveyed by the following English words: cheap, sham, common, smutty, pink-and-blue, high falutin', in bad taste. But all of them contemplate only specific kinds of falsity demanding no special perspicacity to find them. As a matter of fact all these words create a simple classification of values in a separate period of time; but what is called "пошлость" in Russian is immune to time and is so trickily painted into protective coloration, that very often it's impossible to discover it (in a book, in one's soul and in hundreds of other places).

So some national concepts could not be adequately expressed in the language of another culture. Every culture has a special set of concepts, representing an interconnecting system. Metaphor joins two parts of this system by means of interpretation target domain as related to source domain. It's evident that if one of the parts is absent it's impossible to create the original metaphor in receiving culture.

Lakoff and Johnson in their theory of conceptual metaphor distinguish structural, orientational and ontological metaphors (J. Lakoff, M. Johnson, 2005). Every kind of metaphor has its own ways of translation.

Oriental metaphors are based on physical experience. Every man of every culture has a body of a definite shape, communicating with the outer world, that's why oriental metaphors are usually translated literally. For instance, both in Russian and English cultures are metaphors:

В частности, как в англоязычной, так и в русскоязычной культуре существуют MORE IS UP (БОЛЬШЕ ОРИЕНТИРОВАНО НАВЕРХ) LESS IS DOWN (МЕНЬШЕ – ВНИЗ). So we can translate these sentences in the following way:

*Her weekly allowance, paid to her under condition she fulfill her basic obligations, was twenty-one cents at the start of the Beardsley era — and went up to one dollar five before its end (V. Nabokov, Lolita).*

*Ее недельное жалование, выплачиваемое ей при условии, что она будет исполнять трижды в сутки основные свои обязанности, было, в начале Бердслейской эры, двадцать один цент (к концу этой эры оно дошло до доллара и пяти центов) (В. Набоков, «Лолита»).*

*I slowed down from a blind seventy to a purblind fifty (V. Nabokov, Lolita).*

*Я перешел со слепой скорости в семьдесят миль в час на полуслепую в пятьдесят (В. Набоков, «Лолита»).*

The basis of ontological metaphors is a representation of indiscrete entity in the terms of another, more discrete one. In this case it's important whether there is a corresponding concept in the receiving culture. Most often an interpreter has to find an equivalent more or less similar to that of the original language. For instance, English metaphor MIND IS A CONTAINER cannot be literally translated, because there is no one-word notion for English MIND, which is translated as «ум», «разум», or «дух», «душа» depending on the context. For example:

*Now, in perusing what follows, the reader should bear in mind not only the general circuit as adumbrated above (V. Nabokov, Lolita).*

*Просматривая следующие страницы, читатель должен считаться не только с общим маршрутом, намеченным выше (В. Набоков, «Лолита»)*

*Let's explore your mind (V. Nabokov, Lolita).*

*Посмотрим, насколько вы сообразительны (В. Набоков, «Лолита»).*

*There was but one thing in my mind and pulse (V. Nabokov, Lolita).*

*У меня было всего лишь одно на уме и в крови (В. Набоков, «Лолита»).*

Structural metaphors usually represent cultural specificities and it is necessary to find the same way of representation in receiving culture. Both in Russian and European cultures there is a tradition of understanding LIFE as a BRITTLE OBJECT:

*I leaf again and again through these miserable memories, and keep asking myself, was it then, in the glitter of that remote summer, that the rift in my life began (V. Nabokov, Lolita).*

*Снова и снова перелистываю эти жалкие воспоминания и все допытываюсь у самого себя, не оттуда ли, не из блеска ли того далекого лета пошла трещина через всю мою жизнь (В. Набоков, «Лолита»).*

*"You are ruining my life and yours," I said quietly (V. Nabokov, Lolita).*

*"Ты разбилаешь и мою жизнь и свою", — сказал я спокойно (В. Набоков, «Лолита»).*

Nevertheless if there is no such tradition of representing LIFE in receiving culture, literal translation will be impossible.

Thus translating metaphorical expressions an interpreter should take into account the achievements of cognitive linguistics that would make possible to make the translation more adequate.

## LITERATURE

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