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Connotative Equivalence in Literary Translation

Edebi Çeviride Konotatif Eşdeğerlik

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Abstract

The article deals with the issue of equivalency – the correct submission of language units with the connotative semantics in the translated texts. It is noted that the words of the different languages that are relevant on the denotate, i.e. denoting the same subject might differ from the standpoint of the connotative semantics – associative appraisal because of the differences between the national cultures. Presentation of the connotative semantics that reflects the national peculiarities just the way it is during translation of the artistic works is one of the conditions of the correct translation in that regard. The article refers the problems emerging during the translation of the appraisal vocabulary – the words with the connotative meaning – in the artistic texts. Difficulties arising during the accurate translation of the national-cultural connotation differing from the standpoint of the associative appraisal and their reasons are indicated. The special attention is also given to the problem of the accurate presentation of meanings of the words with the connotative senses during the translation of artistic works into the unrelated languages. As a result, the author concludes that a translator must know very well not only the culture of the other language but also the native culture in order to reveal the cultural connotations of the original language and achieve the connotative equivalence, and a translator must properly understand the author's intention.

Keywords: Connotation, Translation, Equivalent, Semantics, Association, Culture.

Özet

Makalede, çeviri metinlerde dil birimlerinin konotatif, yani yan anlamlarının doğru bir şekilde karşılanması – eşdeğerlik konusu incelenmektedir. Farklı milletlerin kültürleri arasında farklılıklar olduğu için, farklı dillerde aynı anlama gelen, düz anlam olarak uygun olan kelimeler, konotatif anlam – çağrışımsal değerlendirme açısından farklılık gösterebilir. Bu bakımdan edebî eserlerin tercümesinde millî özellikleri yansıtan konotatif anlamın sağlanması doğru tercümenin temel koşullarından biridir. Bu çalışma, edebî metinlerde değerlendirme sözlüğünün – konotatif anlamı olan kelimelerin çevirisi sırasında ortaya çıkan sorunları göstermektedir. Çağrışımsal değerlendirme açısından farklı ulusal-kültürel konotasyonların çeviride doğru bir şekilde

aktarılmasında daha fazla zorluk yaşanmasına ve bunun nedenlerine değinilmektedir. Edebi eserlerin akraba olmayan dillere çevrilmesi sırasında kelimelerin konotatif anlamlarının doğru bir şekilde verilmesi konusunda ortaya çıkan sorunlar ele alınmış ve çeviri eserin özgün dilinin kültürel konotasyonlarını başarılı bir şekilde ortaya koyabilmek ve yan anlamsal eşdeğerliği yakalayabilmek için çevirmenin sadece o dilin kültürünü değil, kendi ana kültürünü de bilmesi ve çeviriyi doğru bir şekilde anlaması gerektiği sonucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: : Konotasyon, Çeviri, Eşdeğerlik, Anlam, Asosiasyon, Kültür.

1. INTRODUCTION

Translation is one of the complicated spheres of human activities. It provides relation between the different nations and facilitates the exchange of information. Not only does a language is replaced by another one during translation, the different cultures, persons, views, periods, levels of development are matched.

The relationship between a language and culture is irrefutable, because any language reflects the peculiarities of culture and the changes taking place are reflected in the language. As there are distinctions between the different nations the words that are corresponding due to the denotate in the different languages, i.e. the words denoting the same subject can differ from the standpoint of the connotative semantics – associative appraisal. From this viewpoint, submission of the connotative semantics that reflects the national peculiarities as it is during translation is one the main conditions of the correct translation.

In Timko's opinion, the culturological content of the translated work can be given in several ways: by language units with the cultural components in the form of the denotative meaning, by the cultural component in the form of the connotative meaning and by description of the different objects, cultural events, cultural-historical events to some extent [Timko, 1958: 7].

In general, any cultural event has both verbal, mental and conceptual expression. Intercultural distinctions and issues connected with their conceptual and verbal expression manifest themselves more marked during the clash of the different ethnicities' mentalities. In this cases there is a need for a professional translator in order that the other ethnicities who do not know the original language of the literary work would be able to get to know this work.

Literary translation is one of the kinds of intercultural communication. An artistic work translated into the other language is perceived as a replacing, similar copy of the original work. However it is known that a translator is required to be professional in order to achieve a perfect result. Thus "both syntactic, lexical-syntactic, lexical and stylistic, connotative methods are very necessary for a translator of an artistic text" [Burukina, 2007: 75].

Unlike the other methods of translation the connotative method is based on connotation. "Any term is significant during translation of scientific texts and it must be taken into consideration. However it is difficult to translate "unscientific" texts without connotative methods" [Burukina, 2009].

Connotation is additional association formed in the nature speaker's mind. As is known, association is relation between the separate notions in mind. Possible associations of words form its connotations. Connotations are national and universal (international), commonly-used and contextual. National connotations are inherent in certain people, nation, but universal connotations are international. Usual, commonly-used connotations are products of any ethnicity's collective conscience, but occasional connotations are products of the individual conscience. Connotative semantics of words includes associative appraisal, emotionality, imagery. Positive appraisal is given by means of such positive emotions as praise, delight etc. and negative appraisal is given by such negative emotions as reproach, contempt etc.

In our opinion, there are often difficulties during the accurate giving of national-cultural connotations in translation. The reasons for this are the following: the native speakers do not know anything about the event or phenomenon of the foreign culture; the same cultural event is appreciated differently (positively or negatively) by the different peoples. In the second case the equivalence of translation is impossible because not only the difference between languages but also difference between cultures create serious obstacles to equivalence. Therefore, though common notions in the different languages are easily translated it is impossible to translate correctly national-cultural connotations not knowing the other people's culture. As there is no complete equivalent of any word in the other languages in some cases this raises the problem of incorrect reflection of emotional-appraisal vocabulary with the connotative meaning during translation of artistic texts of the other languages; the translation is unsuccessful.

The issue of equivalence has been an object of a number of scientific researches; types of equivalence have been shown [Timko, 2007; Bayramov, 2008; Asgarli, 2009; Zlobin, 2012; Khromova, Tokareva, 2017; Borisenko, 2017; etc.].

One of the types of equivalence is connotative equivalence. Connotative equivalence means the connection, conformity between the language units (words, word combinations, grammatical constructions) of the original language with their equivalents in the translated language. Connotative equivalence is a kind of semantic equivalence.

As connotation of language units consists of many components (imagery, emotionality, expressiveness, appraisal), honorific, parametric (intensity), national-cultural components and is substantiated by associative-metaphorical notions that are remarkable for their national-cultural originality, connotative equivalence of language units is possible only in the certain contextual environment and is not practically realized at the lexicographical level. Search of connotative equivalence is particularly difficult for idioms, occasional, metaphorical nominations.

2. REFLECTION OF CONNOTATION IN TRANSLATION

Emotional, stylistic and figurative elements of the word play a main role in giving its connotative meaning in translation. Emotional characteristic of the meaning of the word can be positive or negative. There are such words in any language that they are the same for their subject-logical meaning but they are different from the standpoint of the emotional component or its character in the semantic structure of the word. As a rule, the common character of emotionality is fully

preserved in translation. Usually it is possible to find the word that expresses the same or similar or negative attitude to the object described in the original work. However it should be taken into account that the emotional meaning of the word may change over time. Preservation of emotional nuances of expression during translation makes it possible to acquire connotative equivalence.

The other component of connotation-stylistic meaning of the word might create difficulties during translation. The stylistic meaning indicates belonging of the word to the sublime, poetic, bookish vocabulary, or to the conversational language, common language.

To give another component of connotation – the figurative meaning of the word – in the translation is also important. Any feature in the semantics of the word can be remarkable for its figurative expressiveness. For example, the word *hamam – баня* “bath-house” in the Azerbaijani and Russian languages is not only a place to bathe, it also means a very hot place, but this word does not have this peculiarity in English.

It should be noted that there is the problem of the correct, accurate giving of meanings of the words with the connotative senses during the translation of the works written in the unrelated languages. “Any people’s national peculiarities first of all mean their geographical territory, its flora and fauna, everyday life, clothes, ornamentals, musical instruments, names of cities, towns, villages, personal names, nicknames. Nevertheless, the people’s specific character, psychology mentality, language, religion, customs, traditions, ethnic and ethnic peculiarities are understood. Revival of these features and qualities during the translation does not create difficulties in the related languages, but we face some challenges during the translation from the unrelated languages” [Asgarli, 2009: 164-165].

Attention should be paid to the colouring of reality during the translation of the words with the connotative meanings that are means of emotional expression in the artistic texts into the unrelated languages. Giving of coloring during the translation of the text from one language into the other one is a translator’s main problem. “The national coloring is a system of the people’s thinking reflected in the figurative expressions. So any people’s history, mode of life, religion, geographical environment, customs, traditions, ethnic-ethnic and other peculiarities serve the creation of the national coloring. Thus, a translator’s creative laboratory must be active in order to give all these peculiarities in accessible form in the different languages” [Asgarli, 2009: 163-164]. A translator must understand the unknown reality in the original work, or rather its place in the context, i.e. its presentation by the author – author’s intention, the means used by the author before translation in order to convey to readers its semantic and connotative content in the correct form.

Connotative equivalence means giving all connotative meanings of the original text in the translated text. Use of the appropriate words with connotative meaning giving the emotional-appraisal character of the expression during the translation of artistic works makes it possible to achieve equivalence. Failure to do so, i.e. lack of knowledge of connotative semantics of word will result inequivalent (wrong) translation in the whole and weakening of the national specificity. For example, the word “*dəli*” in the epos “*Koroglu*”, the most valuable monument of the Azerbaijani people’s oral literature, has connotative meaning *daredevil, brave man, fearless man*,

strongman, hero. However in 1842 the Polish writer, orientalist and diplomat Aleksandr Chodzko translated the word “Koroğlunun dəliləri” as *the banditi of Kurroglou* not knowing the connotative meaning of this word [Chodzko, 1971]. We see the same incorrect translation in the work of Judith Wilkes. Not knowing the connotative semantics of the word *dəli* she named Koroglu’s brave men “bandit”, i.e. “robber” [Wilks, 2001; 2015]. Therefore, a translator must determine the meaning in which the word is used, and this can be clear from the environment in which the word is used – from the context, or rather from the narrow (word combination, sentence) and wide (several sentences, paragraph, the whole text), micro and macrocontext.

The broader context plays a more important role in achieving the correct translation. However in some cases a translator has to refer to the extralinguistic factors in order to give the correct meaning of a certain word, that is to say a translator must know “history, culture, geography, political system, customs, traditions of the country and the translated theme” [Bayramov, 2008: 49]. Even sometimes the mistranslation of the misunderstood word or expression can cause misunderstanding of the whole storyline of the work. In L.V. Ginzburg’s opinion, sometimes not only translation but also a translator’s creative fate depend on one word” [Ginzburg, 1959: 87].

Equivalence of the connotative meaning of the appropriate words in the original work and its translation also mean reflection of the associative-figurative components in the translation. Semantics of some words also includes the additional information connected with the certain associations in speakers’ mind. For example, *snow* is not only a form of precipitation for many peoples but also whiteness standard and other white subjects (hair, sugar etc.) are compared with it. Though chalk is white, too, only the colour of the pale face is compared with it. A *fox* is associated with cunning, a *lion* is associated with bravery, courage, boldness.

Nevertheless, there might be the different connotative component in the semantics of the words with the same lexical meaning, for example: the word *camel* has the connotation of *beauty, tenderness* in the Arabic language and the connotation of *rancour* in the other languages.

The different associations stabilize in the semantics of some words owing to the peculiarities of their use in folklore, artistic works and are widely disseminated in the language collective. For example: *Təpəgöz* “Cyclops”, *Hacı Qara* “Hacı Gara” (the name of miser man), *Qaloş* “Rubber” (the name of nasty, wicked man) etc. Preservation of imagery of such components in the original is a necessary condition for achievement of equivalency of translation.

Thus, a degree of proximity between the figurative words of two languages can be divided into three parts:

- The appropriate words in both languages (original and translation) might have the same associative-figurative peculiarities. In such cases the highest degree of equivalence is achieved by giving this component in the semantics of the word during the translation. Because the words have the same connotation in these languages, for example: there is a feature (connotation) of whiteness in the words *qar – снег* “snow” in the Azerbaijani and Russian languages;
- The different words that are not equivalents of each other in the original and translation have the same associative-figurative peculiarity. In such cases, the

reproduction of the figurative component of the value is achieved, as a rule, by replacing the image. For example: *siçan kimi qorxaq* “to be cowardly like a mouse” in the Azerbaijani language, *труслив как заяц* “to be cowardly like a hare” in the Russian language; *вынослив как лошадь* “to be hardly like a horse” in the Russian language, “to be hardly like a camel” in the Chinese language;

- The feature in the figurative component of the word in the original is not in the words of the translated language. In such cases to give this part of the meaning of the word in the translation is possible only partially, i.e. it is difficult to achieve equivalence completely. Sometimes it is impossible to reflect this component of the meaning and it is not given in the translation. For example: the word *hamam – баня* “bath-house” means both the place to bathe and very hot place in the Azerbaijani and Russian languages, but this word is used only in its first meaning in English.

Therefore, equivalence, hipoequivalent (incomplete equivalent – not from the standpoint of expression, only those that have semantic similarity), and inequivalent replacement of the words with the certain connotative meaning take place in giving the connotation during the translation.

3. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the appraisal component in the semantic structure of the word is a part of the connotative element and both equivalence, hipoequivalence and inequivalence can manifest themselves during the translation into the other language. To achieve the connotative equivalence in the translation is one of the main factors that determines the skill of translation. Thus, successful identifying the cultural connotations of the studied language is possible not only through the knowledge of the culture of this language but also through the knowledge of the native culture.

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