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## **The difficulties of translating Americanisms from English fiction into Russian**

В статье рассматриваются основные способы передачи американизмов на русский язык в художественной литературе. В качестве источника используются отрывки из романов Стивена Кинга и Н. Хорнби. Цель статьи – на основе анализа переводов романов на русский язык и оценки степени их эквивалентности оригиналам охарактеризовать основные переводческие проблемы, связанные с передачей американизмов в тексте-реципиенте.

**Ключевые слова:** американизмы, художественный текст, смысловое соответствие

The article examines the main ways of translating Americanisms into Russian in fiction texts. The sources of the research are excerpts from novels by Stephen King and N. Hornby. The article aims to describe the main translation problems associated with the transfer of Americanisms in the target text based on the analysis of translations of N. Hornby's novels into Russian and the assessment of the degree of their equivalence to the fragments of the source text.

**Keywords:** Americanisms, fiction text, semantic correspondence

A people's culture is an expression of its identity, experience and history. It predetermines the difference of cultures. The 'dialogue' of cultures is a complex process that takes place constantly and continuously, and the result is the influence of cultures on each other, the borrowing of certain elements from each other, and sometimes a complete fusion. That is why the study of different variants of the same language is of particular interest, especially for translators.

An 'Americanism', a term first used by John Witherspoon, president of Princeton University, in 1781, designates (a) any word or combination of words which taken into the English language in the United States, has not gained acceptance in England, or, if accepted, has retained its sense of foreignness; and (b) any word or combination of words which, becoming archaic in England, has continued in good usage in the United States [1].

Linguists and translators use a few common ways to translate Americanisms: (1) transliteration (at the grapheme level), e.g. **Lincoln** – *Линкольн*; (2) transcription (at the phoneme level), e.g. **hot-dog** – *хот-дог*; (3) tracing (translating individual

word elements), e.g. **White House** – *Белый Дом*; (4) descriptive or expository translation, e.g. **coroner** – *следователь* in the case of violent or sudden death [10].

By using information expansion techniques (explaining realia in the translation text, explaining the historical situation, etc.), the translator can use a foreign-language realia while retaining the national coloring in the target language, e.g.: “*Instead of rejoicing over the very modest gains, the Democrats should have been sad about the landslide (i.e. the overwhelming majority victory) that was lost*” [10].

In a stereotypical context, words and phrases denoting **realia** are used without any commentary. In an explanatory context, there is a commentary or a detailed definition of the realia itself, e.g.: “*Having succeeded in getting the issue of a nuclear weapons freeze on the agenda ..., the “freezing” supporters ...*” [10]. In cases where the author focuses on a given realia, he or she may give a more detailed explanation in the text itself, up to and including etymology: “*...freeway, that tangible and symbolic image of Los Angeles*” [10] (**freeway** – a path free of traffic lights and other speed restrictions). Realia words can be used in a figurative sense that is only realized in a situational context.

I. Stephen King is hugely popular and is currently the most widely-read writer in the United States. He masterfully portrays ordinary life in modern America - especially in small towns. Below we focus on some examples of translations of Americanisms appearing in the following works by Stephen King, ‘It’ (1986), ‘Misery’ (1987), ‘The Green Mile’ (1996) and ‘The Shining’ (1977).

*‘Then Richie Tozier, leaning back against the wall, grinned again and said: Oh my, look at this – Bill Denbrough went for the chrome dome look. How long you been Turtle Waxing your head, Big Bill?’* [7]. «*А потом Ричи Тозиер, прислонившись к стене, вновь ухмыльнулся: – Боже мой, только посмотрите на это: Билл Денбро обзавелся хромированной крышей. И сколько же времени ты полировал ее автомобильной пастой, Большой Билл?»* [17].

The most difficult word combination here is ‘**Turtle Waxing**’. When rendering it into Russian, it is preferable to use generalization, i.e. to replace a particular concept with a general one. It is well known that ‘**Turtle Wax**’ is a large American company producing car cosmetics, and its name has become a common noun for high-quality polishes, so in this context, Turtle Waxing can be translated as ‘*to polish with car paste*’.

*‘If it had stopped ringing just then he would have slipped back down into sleep without a hitch; he would have done it as simply and easily as he had once slipped down the snow-covered hills in McCarron Park on his Flexible Flyer’* [5]. «*Если бы звонки прекратились, он бы моментально провалился в сон, скользнул в него легко и просто, как когда-то скользил по заснеженным горкам на санках в Маккэррон-парк*» [15].

The term ‘**Flexible Flyer**’ also needs to be generalized. It is the name of a special model of the steerable wooden sled on thin metal skids, developed by the Ameri-

can engineer Samuel Allen. Using a word with a more general meaning («**санки**»), in our opinion, saves the translator from having to specify details.

*'The torches were **Louisville Sluggers** with big hunks of burlap snugged down over the fat parts with red rubber gaskets, the kind ladies use when they put up preserves'* [5]. «Факелы представляли собой **бейсбольные биты**, толстая часть которых была обмотана рогожей с натянутыми на нее красными резиновыми кольцами, которые домохозяйки используют при консервировании» [15].

Another example of generalization would be the translation of the word combination '**Louisville Sluggers**'. The Louisville Slugger, based in Kentucky, is one of the leading suppliers of baseball equipment. In particular, the company's name is associated with baseball bats.

II. The texts of six novels by the British writer N. Hornby and their Russian translations were used as other material for analysis: 'High Fidelity' (1995) 'Hi-Fi', 'About a Boy' (1998) «Мой мальчик», 'How to Be Good' (2001) «Как стать добрым», 'A Long Way Down' (2005) «Долгое падение», 'Slam' (2007) «Слэм», 'Juliet, Naked' (2009) «Голая Джульетта».

The article aims to describe the main translation problems associated with the transfer of Americanisms in the recipient text based on the analysis of translations of N. Hornby's novels into Russian and the assessment of the degree of their equivalence to the fragments of the source-text.

The work of the translators was, undoubtedly, of great importance in introducing N. Hornby's work to Russian readers. Admittedly, translation studies have not mastered the specifics of Americanisms as a textual phenomenon yet, a stylistic technique, which is used in the works of N. Hornby. Violations in the translation of Americanisms into Russian, found in the analysis of translations of N. Hornby's novels, can be reduced to four types: (1) the absence of an equivalent in the translation text, (2) the choice of an equivalent not corresponding to the translated word by its status in the lexical system, (3) the choice of an equivalent from another national-territorial language variant, and (4) the inaccurate style qualification of the lexeme.

(1) The first type of irregularity is related to the lack of an equivalent in the translation text, i.e. omitting an Americanism present in the original. Let us illustrate this type of violation with an example. The Americanism **dude**, *парень, чувак, старик, братан* is found in the speech of the American J.J. in 'A Long Way Down' (2005). The word belongs to the lexicon of low style; there are the informality and familiarity of American communication in the text. The translation, however, omits the word '**dude**' and adds encyclopaedic information missing from the original (from 'David Copperfield'), thus replacing the stylistically marked section of the original text with a Russian neutral, e.g. *'I wanted to say something about that Micawber **dude** in Dickens, but I didn't want Ed to get on my case even before we'd talked'* [2]. «Я хотел было добавить еще про диккенсовского Микобера из «Дэвида Кон-

перфилда», но передумал – мне не хотелось, чтобы Эд взъелся на меня еще до того, как мы успеем поговорить» [12].

In our opinion, to preserve the author's style when translating the American expressive address '**dude**', a functional equivalent in Russian should be chosen, for example, '*about that Dickensian **dude** Micawber*', and the encyclopaedic information is preferably given in a footnote.

(2) The second type of violation is caused by choosing an equivalent that does not correspond to the translated word in terms of its status in the lexical system. In other words, Americanism is translated into Russian in one way or another, but the original unit is replaced by a word with a different meaning, which can be regarded as an unjustified deviation from the translated text. The American grungy '**neglected, dirty, overgrown with dirt**' is used by the American Tucker in the novel 'Naked Juliet' (2009), as a function of strengthening expression. E.g. '*Where are you? – I'm in this weird little seaside town on the east coast of England called Gooleness. It's great. You'd dig it. **Grungy**, but kind of cool*' [4]. «Где ты? – «В маленьком городке на восточном берегу Англии. Гулнесс называется. **Скучноватый** городок, но забавный. Тебе бы понравился» [14].

The translation of **grungy but kind of cool** with the words *скучноватый городок, но забавный* is not very good, as it does not convey the meaning of 'dirty' and the author's style ('**grungy**' and '**cool**' are elements of colloquialism and slang), and also sounds somewhat illogical. A more accurate translation seems «Городок **обшарпанный**, но все равно классный»<sup>1</sup>.

(3) The third type of violation, caused by choosing an equivalent from another national-territorial language variant or mixing variant and invariant can be regarded as a professional mistake of the translator. These are lexical-semantic divergences (Schweitzer's term), i.e. words "which reveal known differences in their semantic structure while sharing a common sound shell" [11].

We understand violations when translating oppositions with one-sided local marking as a mixture of variant and invariant. An example is the word '**deck**'. The common English meaning of the word is '*the **deck** of a ship*'. However, this noun is used in skateboarding slang to mean '*board, skateboard*'. The word '**deck**' is used in the speech of teenage skateboarder Sam in the novel Slam, e.g. '*Oi!* I shouted at the kid. *'Will you watch my stuff?'* I pointed at the skateboard and my bag, and he nodded. <...> I went back to the bench and spent a happy thirty minutes on my **deck**' [3]. «Эй!» – сказал я этому парню. – «Ты что, разглядываешь мою штуковину?» Я указал на доску в мешке, и он кивнул. <...> Я вернулся на скамейку и провел счастливые тридцать минут, глядя на море будто с **палубы корабля**» [13].

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<sup>1</sup> The translation is provided by the authors of the paper. – D. A., M. A.

Given the American meaning of the word **deck**, the sentence should be translated: «Я забрал свои вещи и провел счастливые полчаса на **скейтборд**»<sup>2</sup>.

(4) The fourth type includes violations due to inaccurate stylistic qualification of the lexeme. As a rule, an Americanism, which has a bright expressive and stylistic colouring and which fulfils the function of enhancing expression in the original text, as well as an emblem of a social group, is unreasonably replaced in the translation text by a stylistically neutral unit, which leads to distortion of the character's speech portrait.

The Americanism **cuss (out)** – ‘swearing, cursing, shouting swear words’ (Amer. colloquial, youth slang), accompanied in the dictionaries by ‘colloquial, slang and youth’, is used in teenager Sam's speech in the novel ‘Slam’ (2007) as an expression enhancement and as an emblem of the youth group. In the translation, the Americanism is conveyed by the neutral word *ругать*. E.g. ‘You see kids at school, and they’re **cussing out** the teachers, and picking fights with other kids <...> or picking fights with the teachers, and **cussing out** the kids who are supposed to be gay’ [3]. «Вы встречаете в школе ребят, которые **ругают** учителей и собачатся с другими ребятами <...> или **ругают** ребят, которых считают геями, и собачатся с учителями...» [13].

Thus, the analysis of N. Hornby's novels and their translations revealed a significant number of irregularities related to the translation of Americanisms into Russian. Among them prevail the violations explained by the choice of an equivalent from another national-territorial variant or the mixing of American and common English meanings of the words. The presence of such violations indicates that not all translators are yet fully aware of the difficulties associated with the use of Americanisms in the British text. As a result of the study, we can conclude that the training of translators of Germanic languages should pay the peculiarities of the translation of Americanisms and the need to use not only general English explanatory dictionaries, but also special dictionaries of Americanisms.

Conclusion. Thus, it has become apparent that Americanisms do represent the peculiarities of realia of a given nationality, namely, features of culture, way of life, socio-political system. On the pages of fiction works, with their help the author creates a cultural background, guides the reader through time and place, and gives the narrative a certain stylistic coloring. During the analysis of works of fiction, we can state the fact that due to the lack of concepts and phenomena denoted by Americanisms in the Russian language, their rendering into Russian is highly difficult. The translator has a great responsibility to maintain measure when translating Americanisms in fiction. The task of the author is not to reproduce the language accurately, but to create an artistic image of the language that would point the reader to the unique national flavor that stands behind the given language.

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<sup>2</sup> The translation is provided by the authors of the paper. – D. A., M. A.

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### **Передача комического эффекта при переводе с английского языка на русский (на материале сказки Р. Даля «Чарли и шоколадная фабрика»)**

В статье проводится сопоставительный анализ средств создания комического эффекта в оригинале и переводе на примере авторской сказки Р. Даля «Чарли и шоколадная фабрика». В сказках Р. Даля при помощи комического часто высмеивается темная сторона человеческой природы, поэтому в переводе требуется сохранение комического эффекта как важной составляющей авторского стиля. В проанализированных переводах переводчикам не всегда удалось сохранить без потерь авторский замысел, что говорит о необходимости выработки стратегий адекватной передачи комического эффекта для детской аудитории.

**Ключевые слова:** комический эффект, перевод, авторская сказка, стиль Р. Даля, детская аудитория