

SEMANTIC-SEMIOTIC TRANSLATION MODEL AS A CRITERION FOR THE SEARCH FOR A TRANSLATION SOLUTION

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Abstract. *The authors turn to the problem of the translation model, which can be relevant to overcoming its lexical difficulties, to the issue of highlighting semantic elements (semes) in the source text and selecting units of the translation language containing the same semes (semantic-semiotic translation model), and identifying factors that make it possible to optimize this process in teaching translation. The authors consider the semantic-semiotic translation model as a criterion for the optimal translation solution for translating polysemants and offer to use the principles of onomasiological analysis of the sentence that is to be translated.*

Key words: *German language, translation, linguistic translation model, semantic-semiotic translation model, context, lexical context, collocation, differential seme, potential seme*

INTRODUCTION

Identifying the most common patterns of translation as a mediating activity, or identifying translation universals¹ are the issues that have always enjoyed special attention by linguists. Scientists study the genre features of translated texts, various forms and types of translations, machine or automatic translation; identify pragmatic and sociolinguistic factors of translation. The task of the translation theory, according to A. Fedorov, is: “1) to reveal regularity in the ratio between the original and the translation; 2) to be able to summarize, in the light of scientific evidence, conclusions from observations of individual particular cases of translation; 3) to indirectly contribute to translation practice, which could draw in it arguments and evidence to find the necessary means of expression and in favor of specific problems solution”².

Translation theory is trying to create a translation model that would show the ratio between the original text and the translation text in linguistic terms. This model allows us to study the laws of translation, the ratio of intra- and extra-linguistic factors. Currently, linguists distinguish: semantic-semiotic translation model, situational (denotative) translation model, functional-pragmatic (dynamic) translation model, hermeneutic translation model. They all reflect a schematic representation of the translation process. German linguists develop, for

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¹ Nelyubin, Lev, *Introduction to the Translation Technique* (Moscow: “Flinta”, 2018), 8

² Fyodorov, Andrej, *Fundamentals of the General Theory of Translation* (Moscow, St. Petersburg: Publishing House of St. Petersburg University, 2002), 14

example, a two-phase translation model, a three-phase (communicative) translation model, a stratification translation model, a functional (factorial) translation model³. There is an opinion that “the object of translation studies should be a virtual taxonomic model of the translation process. It is taxonomic because it allows describing all the principal types of translation. It is virtual because the translation process is always the relationship between the original text and the translation”⁴. Despite the presence of a variety of models of the translation process, which reflect a particular aspect of the analysis, currently there is no universal model of translation. The linguistic model of translation has the consequence of the widespread use of already recognized linguistic laws of translation as the basis for constructing teaching methods.

The relevance of the study is due to the authors’ appeal to the translation model problem, which is relevant for overcoming its lexical difficulties, to the issue of distinguishing semantic elements (semes) in the source text and selecting units of the translation language containing the same seme (semantic-semiotic translation model), and identifying factors that allow to optimize this process in the practice of teaching translation. Scientific novelty consists in considering the semantic-semiotic translation model as a criterion for the optimal translation solution when translating polysemantic words, in using onomasiological analysis of a sentence, componential analysis to determine the change in the semes composition of verbs in a nuclear position in a sentence. The methodological basis of the study was the research of domestic and foreign scientists in the field of general translation theory and didactics of translation (A. Schweitzer, A. Fedorov, L. Latyshev, V. Komissarov, L. Nelyubin, N. Garbovsky, Ch. Bnini, W. Koller, E. Prunč, J. Stegeman), semiotics of the text (U. Eco, J. Lotman, A. Shelkownikov), linguosemiotic aspects of translation theory (P. Torop, N. Garbovsky.), research of the sentence as a complex sign (E. Krivchenko, E. Kubryakova). According to A. D. Schweitzer, it is the “complete sign” corresponding to the statement in its form that is understood in the theory of translation by the language sign. There is an opinion that the activity of the translator involves the simultaneous use of procedures and semasiological and onomasiological analysis: extraction of the content of the source text (analysis of the linguistic semantic functions of the means of language A and their meanings - semasiological analysis), transfer of these meanings by the means of language B with their semantic functions (onomasiological analysis)⁵. The object of the study is polysemantic words.

The peculiarity of the translation process is pointed out in many works. For example, V. Komissarov, observing the translation process, believes that there is no reason to distinguish between the stages “with equivalence established at one level at each of them”⁶. A. Schweitzer formulates it as follows: “The translation process can be characterized as the process of finding a solution that meets a certain set of varying functional criteria”⁷.

³ Bokova, Olga, “Translation model”, in *Basic Concepts of German-language Translation Studies: Terminological Dictionary-reference Book* (Moscow: INION RAN, 2013), 191.

⁴ Shtanov, Andrej *Translation technology and teaching methods (competence approach)* (Moscow: MGIMO – University, 2011), 99.

⁵ Kubryakova, Elena, *Nominative aspect of speech activity* (Moscow: Nauka, 1985), 34.

⁶ Komissarov, Vilen, *Word about the Translation* (Moscow: International Relations publishing house, 1973), 162.

⁷ Schweitzer, Aleksandr, *Translation and Linguistics* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1973), 264.

LINGUOSEMIOTIC ASPECTS OF TRANSLATION

Consideration of a linguistic sign as an element of a dynamic system which is the process of transferring information reveals three plans: a plan of expression and a plan of content, as well as a plan for interpreting a message by a recipient⁸. The process of translation from the point of view of semiotics is not only the transfer of a text to another sign system, “it is not reduced to re-coding, but also represents an explanation, clarification, interpretation”⁹, it is a process in which the content is reproduced with certain changes, since linguistic meanings are variable, “to translate means to find for already identified designations of the source text such meanings in the target language that can express precisely these meanings”¹⁰, while maintaining the stylistic, pragmatic and communicative characteristics of the original text. N.Garbovsky speaks in this regard of the semiotic model of translation equivalence, highlighting three levels: pragmatic, semantic and syntactic ones¹¹. A. Kataev talks about the semantic basis of understanding in translation, and calls interpretation an indispensable condition for translation variability. He emphasizes that the object of interpretation can only be another sign (text), but not an object of the surrounding world, it reflects the fundamental inter-sign relationship and symbolic function. The symbolic function of interpretation creates conditions for the free development of the semantic content of the sign. When the sign of the target language replaces the sign of the source language, interpretation arises¹².

The translator, deciphering the meanings of the combinations of signs of the original text, which he has taken as a unit of orientation, performs at least three semasiological operations, following from signs to meanings. He/she determines the subject correlation of the sign (denotative meaning); understands general, objective information about an object (meaning, significative meaning); tries to reveal the subjective meaning of the sign, the information about the subject that the specific author of a specific speech work wanted to convey.

According to P. Torop, the adequacy of translation as a semiotic concept lies in the correspondence of all the components of the sign in both languages, that is, the identity of the described reality in the form as it is extracted from the work itself (denotation identity), the proximity of the description method (identity of the peripheral sense), the conformity of the poetic model (proximity of categorical meaning)¹³.

⁸ Lebedev, Maxim, *Language Value Stability* (Moscow: Editorial, 1998), 38

⁹ Fyodorov, Andrej, *Fundamentals of the General Theory of Translation* (Moscow, St. Petersburg: Publishing House of St. Petersburg University, 2002), 36.

¹⁰ Fyodorov, Andrej, *Fundamentals of the General Theory of Translation* (Moscow, St. Petersburg: Publishing House of St. Petersburg University, 2002), 38.

¹¹ Garbovsky, Nikolaj, *Translation Theory* (Moscow: Moscow University Press, 2007), 27.

¹² Kataev, Aleksej, “Language sign as a category of philosophy, linguistics and theory of translation” in *RUDN Journal of language studies, semiotics and semantics* (Moscow: RUDN Publishing House, 2016), 22.

¹³ Torop, Peeter “New translation status” in *Intermezzo festoso. Liber amicorum in honorem Lea Pild* (Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2019), 378.

PROBLEMS OF POLYSEMANTIC WORDS TRANSLATION

The polysemant values in the source language and in the target language can only partially coincide. Translation of such words requires reference to context analysis, as the main translation device of polysemantic words is differentiation of meanings. The context determining semantic components of the word sets direction for interpretation of meanings. The context refers to the verbal environment in which one or another lexical unit under analysis is used. This is usually a fragment of the text in which the meaning of the word is specified. It is the context that helps to find among the synonyms the correct version of the translation of a polysemantic word or to select an adequate lexical unit in the absence of an equivalent in the translation language.

The subject of a study of translation theory includes the following: situational or extra-linguistic context caused by facts of reality, background knowledge, speech situation; linguistic (lexical and syntactic), logical-semantic context, clarifying the semantics of the analyzed linguistic unit, and stylistic, revealing the connections of the poetic word given by the thesaurus, as well as micro- (phrase or sentence) and macro context (wide context, language environment that goes beyond the scope of the sentence) related to the volume of the statement in question.

The linguistic context, in its lexical (phonetic context, phonemic context, morphemic context) and syntactic aspect, allows us to analyze the lexeme that is significant for translation to identify the specifics of its linguistic environment and to analyze the syntactic structure in which it is used. Let us turn to the concepts of lexical and semantic compatibility, which are of interest from the point of view of the translation of polysemantic words. Compatibility is generally possible on each language tier to create units of an overlying tier, and each tier can be characterized by its own compatibility rules. Studies on the combinatorial analysis of words have found expression in the valency theory at both the syntactic and semantic levels. Actualization of the semantic component obeys the law of syntagmatic coordination or the law of semantic combination of words.¹⁴ It is the actualization of potential seme that makes up the semantic content of the process of transferring the meaning of words. The component analysis method allows determining the seme composition of a language unit. According to the principles of component analysis, a semiotic expression keeps an organized and analyzed content, formed according to certain linguistic conventions as a certain complex (or hierarchy) of elementary semantic features¹⁵. For example, a component analysis of the meaning of the verb reveals its semantic microstructure, distinguishes between differential and potential seme, and determines the compatibility features of this verb¹⁶.

“The lexical side of the organization of the statement is both a process of grammatically combining selected lexemes, and a process in which the chosen lexical element is determined

¹⁴ Gack, Vladimir, “On the Problem of Semantic Syntagmatics”, in *Language Transformations: Several Aspects of Linguistic Science at the End of the XX Century. From Situation to Statement* (Moscow: Publishing House LIBROKOM, 2009), 279.

¹⁵ Eco, Umberto, *The Role of the reader. Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (St. Petersburg: «Simposium», 2005) 290.

¹⁶ Sakovets, Svetlana, *Nominative Features of State and Causative Verbs of the German Language* (Dissertation of Candidate of Philological Sciences. Saratov, 2003), 151.

by both pragmatic relationships and its relationships with surrounding words.”¹⁷ Semantic coordination within the framework of syntagma assumes the presence of an identical seme within the framework of the main and dependent members of the syntagma. The concept of seme is the leading one in the semantic translation model. According to U. Eco, “the sememe itself [as such] is a potential (or embryonic text), and the text is an expanded sememe”¹⁸. Possible errors may be associated with a violation of the norms of compatibility due to differences in the volume of the meaning of the original lexeme of the source and translation texts, since in the translation the semantic structure of the signs of the original speech work cannot be repeated or cloned¹⁹. In our opinion, one of the ways to overcome this kind of errors can be the use of the technique of onomasiological analysis of linguistic phenomena. It involves the definition of what a given unit stands for and how the naming takes place, which makes it possible to reveal the linguistic foundations of the nomination mechanism, linguistic technique used to designate certain situations in the practice of teaching translation in order to analyze each of the components of the semantic structure of sentences.

From a semiotic point of view, a sentence to be translated is a complex sign that represents a complete act of semiosis in the language system, which has a holistic event as an object of designation. This is a chain of symbolic units, represented by words of different classes, in some roughness – by words of a certain part of speech. The sign units that make up the sentence are organized according to the laws of the given language and the organizing center is the properties of the verb as a certain class of words²⁰. In this aspect, the concept of a situation, as an object of designation, as a referent of a statement, is relevant. The situation is viewed as a system in which elements of different types interact, referring to a variety of objects and a variety of attributes, or a subject and attribute component. From the point of view of Gack, a situation as a referent of an utterance is “a set of elements presented in the consciousness of the speaker in objective reality, at the moment of ‘speaking’ and determining to a certain extent the selection of linguistic elements in the formation of the utterance itself”. The method of component analysis is relevant for determining the change in the seme composition of verbs in the nuclear position, since the determining factor in establishing the types of situations denoted by sentences with a certain verb in the nuclear position is the denotative relativity of the names that fill the syntactic positions in the sentence.

For example, the component analysis of the meaning of the verb *stehen* allows revealing its semantic microstructure, highlighting the differential and potential semes, determining the compatibility features of this verb, determining the types of situations called sentences with the given verb in the nuclear position²¹. For example, the differential seme of the verb *stehen* – ‘vertical orientation’ is realized if the verb *stehen* is combined with animate nouns or inanimate nouns denoting objects that can be upright, for example: *die Zuschauer standen dicht gedrängt, Kopf an Kopf; auf dem Schreibtisch steht eine Fotografie, in der Vase stehen Blumen. Eine, die vorn steht, sagt diesen Satz, und ordnet*

¹⁷ Gack, Vladimir, “On the Problem of Semantic Syntagmatics,” in *Language Transformations: Several Aspects of Linguistic Science at the End of the XX Century. From Situation to Statement* (Moscow: Publishing House LIBROKOM, 2009), 277.

¹⁸ Eco, Umberto *The Role of the reader. Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (St. Petersburg: «Simposium», 2005) 289.

¹⁹ Garbovsky, Nikolaj, *Translation Theory* (Moscow: Moscow University Press, 2007), 399.

²⁰ Lomtev, Timofej. *The sentence and its grammatical categories* (Moscow: Publishing House of Moscow State University, 1972) 31.

²¹ Sakovets, Svetlana, *Nominative Features of State and Causative Verbs of the German Language* (Dissertation of Candidate of Philological Science, Saratov, 2003), 70.

damit unsere Blicke. Im Auge der Stadt, auf dem großen Platz, steht der Obelisk. Sentences indicate the situation of finding a person, an object in an upright position at a certain point in space. The differential seme ‘vertical orientation’ loses its communicative significance and the seme ‘height’ becomes actualized if this verb is combined, for example, with nouns denoting a space object: *die Sonne, der Mond steht am Himmel*. Actualization of the potential seme ‘immobility’ is observed in the case of a combination of this verb with nouns denoting a vehicle, a mechanism, the situation when a vehicle (or mechanism) is inactive is set, for example, *Mein Vater trägt nie eine Uniform, und die Wagen, die vor dem Haus stehen, sind grau-weiß, ohne Blaulicht*. Seme ‘presence’, if the position of the subject in the sentence is taken by an abstract noun denoting a phenomenon, a state of nature (the situation of the presence of a certain state perceived by a person), for example, *das Dunkel stand feindlich hinter den Fenstern*,²².

The algorithm for analyzing the compatibility of the lexical unit in the sentence for educational purposes can be presented as follows: analysis of the sentence in terms of its syntactic structure, semantic functioning of the components of the syntactic structure and formation of the semantic structure of the sentence (since the sentence is primarily a formally organized unit, the value of which depends to a greater extent on the lexico-semantic material filling this form), determining the type of situation indicated by the analyzed sentence by means of identifying the denotative attribution of names in the structural scheme of the analyzed sentence (subject, object, instrument, addressee, predicate, semantic specifier (spatial or temporal)), selection of possible equivalent in the target language. In our opinion, the proposed algorithm can be used in an arbitrary pair of languages.

Linguistic corpus of texts can be used to illustrate the features of the usage of a particular lexical unit through authentic material²³, as well as official translations of texts (for example, texts of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the Basic Law of Germany, etc.), parallel texts corpus.

CONCLUSION

The correct choice of words is determined by their stylistic affiliation and emotionally expressive coloring. The selection of vocabulary, morphological forms, the compatibility of words, the syntactic structure of the sentence, the phonetic design of speech determine the specifics of the functioning of language tools within the framework of a certain functional style. It must be remembered that equivalence at the level of semantics of words is the least degree of semantic commonality, which is hardly possible between the source language and the target language²⁴. The ability to correlate the linguistic means of the source language and the translating language, to determine the necessary equivalent in accordance with the communicative task of the source text characterizes the linguistic competence of the translator.

²² Digitales Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache - DWDS. URL: <https://www.dwds.de/wb/stehen>.

²³ Sakovets, Svetlana, “On the Use of the Linguistic Corpus in the Practice of the German Language Teaching,” in *The Russian Language and Literature in Professional Communication and Multicultural Space* (Moscow: Publishing house “Pero”, Saratov: Amirit 2018), 296.

²⁴ Komissarov, Vilen, *General Theory of Translation (linguistic aspects): Textbook for foreign languages institutes and faculties* (Moscow: Publishing house Vysshayashkola, 1990), 79.

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