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LANGUAGE GAME AND ITS INTERPRETATION IN MEDIA TEXTS

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Abstract

The article considers the factors which are relevant for the interpretation of language game; an attempt has been made to analyze the methods of translating a language game from German into Russian. Language game is widely used in publicist works of the Russian and German languages. In this connection, it is necessary to highlight the incentives which motivate the writers to use this stylistic phenomenon: the need to express a thought clearly; the author's desire to express the idea briefly; the need to emphasize one's attitude towards the subject of speech, to give it its own characteristic ad evaluation; the desire to achieve a comic effect. Language game in word formation is determined by its exceptional mobility and the impossibility of carrying out rigid boundaries between potencies and actual realization. Language in the author's derivational work is considered as a building material. The description of the methods of translating a language game from German into Russian is the task that can be solved step by step on a specific text material. This article is one of these steps in this solving problem. The author puts an accent to such methods as translation transliteration, calquing and descriptive technique which the translator usually uses to convey the original intention and form the certain imagery in the recipient's mind. Since the recipient does not always manage to decode the language game in a proper way, it is necessary to consider it in context, both in the original language and in the target language.

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1. Introduction

The study of the language game in the journalistic media texts is of current interest today, since these texts contain a rich arsenal of language material that promotes the study of translation concepts and generalization of positive practice in translation theory and practice as the media performs not only as the instrument of power and information pressure but also as the method of cognitive processing of society and the individual with the goal of forming a special worldview.

Kuzmina (2011) believes that in modern media the act of communication itself is built on the principle of language game. A specific game consisting in an unusual selection of sources of metaphorization is designed complicating the way to meaning to encode information in such a way that the decoding becomes an entertaining game for the recipient of the message. Interest in this game is stirred up by the fact that the decoding of such information requires the recipient with certain intertextual knowledge (Kuzmina, 2011).

The components which determine the interpretation of the language game are the situation, the context, the presence of words with common semantic elements as well as the distinction of the word – formation model. The processes of explanation and interpretation rely on either grammatical, lexico – grammatical and semantic – pragmatic knowledge or require the presence of a certain amount of background knowledge or knowledge of the world picture.

By Furmanova's (1994) definition background knowledge are: 1) historical and cultural background, including information about the culture of society in the process of its historical development; 2) sociocultural background; 3) ethnocultural background, including information on everyday life, traditions, holidays; 4) semiotic background containing information about symbols, features of foreign language environment.

The paper is structured as follows. In introduction we define the phenomenon of language game and its importance in the sphere of journalistic media, determining elements for the interpretation of language game. In section 2 we state the problem by stressing the importance of accurate translation of language game for keeping the content of the original text. In section 3 we define a range of research questions and in section 4 the purpose of the study is grounded. In section 5 the methods for the research were outlined. In section 6 we present the results of the research devoted to clarifying the techniques for the translation of the language game in the Russian and German media texts and in section 7 we provide a conclusion.

2. Problem Statement

The increasing interest of linguistics in the language game in the texts of journalistic media is determined by its insufficient knowledge in texts of this format. To date, there is no single mechanism for its translation, and each time the translator has to look for a new way to solve this problem. Translation of the text can lose a lot if it does not have an adequate translation of the language game. The theory and practice of translation have developed a number of approaches to convey the language game, which are more or less conducive to preserve the content and pragmatics of the original text when it is translated

into another language. In this paper, the language game and the methods of its translation from German into Russian are considered.

3. Research Questions

In the paper an attempt has been made to characterize the determining factors for the interpretation of the language game and describe the methods of translating the language game from German into Russian on the material of the texts of journalistic media.

4. Purpose of the Study

This study aims at studying the language game in the texts of journalistic media and revealing the most frequent methods of its interpretation from German into Russian at derivational level.

5. Research Methods

Methodology of studying is integrated and involves the use of the following methods: the method of continuous sampling, contextual analysis, semantic-stylistic analysis, and a descriptive method with the use of techniques of comparison.

6. Findings

This study considers the language game as a manifestation of individual and author's creativity translation methods of which are analyzed in the following examples in German comparing them with those in the original text:

“Alexej Kowaljow ist Redakteur bei der “Moscow Times” und schreibt auch für Zeitungen außerhalb Russlands, darunter “The Guardian” und “Die Zeit”. Auf seinem Blog “noodleremover-news” bemüht er sich und seine Mitstreiter sich als “Nudelentferner” und decken Lügen und Fehlinformationen in russischen Medien auf. Denn wer anderen “Nudelntüber das Ohrhängt”, so einerussische Ausdrucksweise, der belügselt” (Kowaljow, 2017, p. 9).

In an interview “Focus” the Russian journalist, editor of “Moscow Times”, the author of articles in “The Guardian” and “Die Zeit”, a media expert Alexey Kovalev talks about why Kremlin propaganda is not capable of damaging the West. Kovalev, as the publication notes, became the author of the project “Лапшеснималочная” (“Noodleremover-news”) – in his blog he exposes lies and fake news that appear in the Russian media” (Bula, p. 1).

The language game in this example is built on the syntactic type of compounding, where the word – hybrid is formed by the fusion of the Russian expression “veshat’ lapshu na ushi” which means “to deceive someone”. The author of the article using this fusion conveys the moments of exposing fabricated news in the press. The translator maintains a humorous effect with the help of calquing.

In our opinion, an interesting example is the translation of the column heading of the article that describes the work of the candidate for the presidency of France E. Macron. “Macron, das Werbe-Ass” (Joeres, 2017a, p. 9) / “Макрон, рекламный асс” (“Macron, Advertising Ace”) (Joeres, 2017b, p. 7). So

the author of the article named the fifth reason of independent candidate's success. Macron brilliantly sells a product called "Macron". He bet on what the French expected: social Europe, the end of the domination of the bipartisan system, conciliatory statements. The translator used the method of calquing that gave the expression a tinge of irony.

The translation of language game by calquing can be seen in the following sentence "Trump nannte China einen «Währungsmanipulator» (Chinese military expects war against the United States under Trump, 2017, p. 7) / "Takzhe Tramp nazval Kitai "valyutnym manipulyatorom" ("Also Trump called China "currency manipulator") (Chinese military believe in the inevitable war with the US, 2017, p. 4). The article deals with a long – lasting dispute between the United States and China over the South China Seas. China lays claim to them, while the US and the nearest states insist on maintaining free sea routes. In the past Trump repeatedly criticized Beijing. For example, in a December interview, he accused the PRC of building a "fortress" on the disputed islands of the South China Sea and reluctance to support the deterrence of North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

Hebel (2017a, 2017b) in the article "With all the cruelty against the protests" published on the website of the magazine "Der Spiegel", writes about the numerous arrests of demonstrators who protest against the so-called "tax on parasites" that Lukashenko introduced by decree. The decree is that those citizens who worked less than 183 days a year should pay the fine behindhand.

The correspondent tries to express her resentment to these events through a language game comparing unemployed people (including students and elderly people) with parasites. The police indiscriminately attacked demonstrators, bystanders using brute force. In this case the translator used calquing: "Since mid – February 2017 up to 1000 people gathered in different cities of the country and protested against the so – called "tax on parasites"" (Hebel, 2017b, p. 7). "Seit Mitte Februar 2017 haben sich an fast jedem Wochenende bis zu 1000 Menschen an verschiedenen Orten des Landes versammelt und gegen die so genannte Schmarotzer-Steuer demonstriert" (Hebel, 2017a, p. 11).

An inexhaustible source of language game in German is stem – composition where the components themselves are independent units. Composites are characterized by a wide semantic variability which often have a very close connection with the context. In this case, without this context semantization is impossible. For example, the Swiss newspaper "Tagesanzeiger" published an article stating that "the parliament of the American state of Illinois has passed a bill according to which October will be officially called "the month of readiness for the invasion of zombies" (State of Illinois is officially preparing for a zombie apocalypse, 2017, p. 8) / «Das Parlament des US – Bundesstaats Illinois hat einen «Zombie-Vorbereitungsmonat» ausgerufen» (Illinois is officially preparing for Zombie apocalypse, 2017, p. 6). The month of preparation for the zombie apocalypse is conceived as a PR-measure; if the inhabitants of Illinois are ready for the invasion of zombies, then they will be ready for other cataclysms as well.

Nowadays, situations connected with political leaders are often played out; their personal life and behavior in the political arena are widely discussed. For instance, after D. Trump's accession to presidency a lot of judgments about his reign appeared. There are situations in which his personal qualities are evidenced as causing controversy among psychologists, some of whom believe that D. Trump has a strong leaning to narcissism that leads to a violation of adequate behaviour, while others do not see any signs of antisocial disorder in him. Specialists who are involved in the comprehensive study

of D. Trump's personality are playfully called by the correspondent of the magazine "Focus" K – J. Zander "Trumpologen" (Trumpologists) by analogy with other professions such as philologists, psychologists, cardiologists, etc. The translator used a descriptive translation technique, retaining, however, the ironic overtones and extending to some extent the designation of these specialists to "the experts in the field of "Trampology": "Die Trumpologen sind sich ja einig, dass Herr Trump eine ausgewachsene narzisstische Persönlichkeitsstörung haben könnte" (Zander, 2017, p. 18) / "The experts in the field of "Trampology" agree that Donald Trump can have mental deviations in the form of tendency to narcissism" (Shertel, 2017, p. 9).

The translator also referred to the descriptive method in the following example where the attitude of American President D. Trump to China is discussed. China regards the state of Taiwan as its "insubordinate province" which must be integrated into the PRC. Because of this reason, China refuses to have diplomatic relations with countries which recognize Taiwan. But last December Trump had a telephone conversation with the head of Taiwan, thus questioning the course. That seriously angered Chinese: "Aus chinesischer Sicht noch gravierender sind Trumps Zweifel an der Ein-China-Politik der USA unter Barack Obama" (Chinese military expects war against the United States under Trump, 2017, p. 12) / "But far more seriously, from a Chinese point of view, is that Trump can abandon the "one China" policy which was held by its predecessor Barack Obama" (Chinese military believe in the inevitable war with the US, 2017, p. 6).

The decision of the jury at the Eurovision Song Contest – 2016 in Stockholm (when the TV audience gave the majority of votes to the Russian singer S. Lazarev but the jury defined him only the third place) caused a wide resonance and a storm indignation. Even German viewers put 12 points. The users of social networks around the world discussed the results of the finals and noted that this year's contest was a political show. Thus, Eurovision turned into Politvision [Politik + Vision] Политвидение [политика + видение] (Politvision [Politics + Vision]). "Was wir nicht im Bildungsfunk und in den Konzernmedien erfahren: Politvision: Teil I: «..» Politvision: Teil II: «..» Hoffe, ihr könnt das alle sehen" (Wie der ESC für Propaganda instrumentalisiert wird, 2016, p. 2) / ("Politvision: Users of social networks are indignant at the results of voting at Eurovision Song Contest" (Politvision: Social network users are indignant at the results of voting at Eurovision, 2016, p. 7). This type of contamination is called "inclusion" in which elements of another word are put into the "basic" word. It turns out to be a hybrid, which has not only the formal, but also the semantic relationship of these words. However, it gives the word a discrediting shade. In our example, users of social networks criticize the jury's decision in which a negative attitude is traced not to a singer himself but to Russia as the whole country. The translator, in turn, appreciated the creative vision of this event and used the method of calquing.

A peculiar language game is observed in the title of the article "Macronomics" – die Zauberformel der Zukunft" (Straubhaar, 2017a, p. 1). "Macromonomics is the magic formula of the future" (Straubhaar, 2017b, p. 1), where the author with the help of contamination of "Macronomics" [Macron + economics] conveys the enthusiasm of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who after the election of a new president of France E. Macron hopes for good relations between Germany and France in the field of economy and politics in general. The author of translation decided to keep the original idea and convey the language

game using transliteration “Макрономика” [Макрон + экономика] (“Macronomics” [Macron + Economics]).

Occasionally, language game acts as a means of fighting in order to expose human vices. For example, there were reports of consumption of alcohol-containing liquids, including cosmetic and perfume, which led to mass poisoning during the New Year’s Eve in the news of media. The journalist I. Mijnsen – on the pages of the Swiss newspaper “Neue Zürcher Zeitung” – writes that as a result of poisoning with the concentrate for the baths that is called “Hawthorn” people died. “Dennoch hat der Konsum von sogenanntem Ersatz-Alkohol in Kosmetika oder Parfums epidemieartige Ausmasse angenommen: Laut Schätzungen machen sie in zwischen ein Fünftel des harten Alkohols aus, den die Russentrinken“ (Mijnsen, 2016b, p. 12) / “Nevertheless, according to estimates, out of all the “amount of strong alcohol that Russians drink, the fraction of ersatz – alcohol accounts for one – fifth” (Mijnsen, 2016a, p. 11). The author of the translation conveyed the tragedy of the events with the help of transliteration.

The names of former political leaders often become common names when it is about activities related to prominent representatives of the political elite of the past. In the magazine of “Focus” political analysts discussed the policy of V. Putin in relation to the situation in Europe, mentioning the former Federal Chancellor of Germany H. Schröder and hinting at the corruption component in his policy.

With the help of the suffix -ierung the humorous effect was achieved in the word “Schröderisierung”. The translator used the suffix –ция which is Russian journalism is used to denote negative actions and deeds that cause negative emotions with a shade of irony. Compare: Idealziel von Putin istes, in Europa die Rolle zuspiesen, die bisjetzt die USA innehaben: Die «Schutzmacht», die bei wesentlichen Entscheidungen mitredet. Wir brauchen keine Angst vor russischen Panzern und Soldaten zu haben, eher vor einer massive Einflussnahme hinter den Kulissen. Die Russen nennen das «Schröderisierung»: Die gezielte Korrumpierung der Eliten (Haltaufderheide, 2016a, p. 10) / The most cherished Putin’s desire, according to the political analyst’s opinion, is “to play in Europe the role that the Unites States is now playing – the role of protecting state which takes part in making important decisions”: “We need not to be afraid of Russian tanks and soldiers but wide – scale backstage influence. The Russians themselves call it “shröderization” which means targeted corruption of elites” (Haltaufderheide, 2016b, p. 7).

The prefix –анти (-anti) is used in the language game to give a connotative meaning with a shade of irony to a phrase or for greater expressiveness. For instance, in the headline of the article of the newspaper “Die Welt” “Ukraine hofft auf deutsch-französische Anti-Putin-Achse” (Geiger, 2017b, p. 6) / “Ukraine hopes for the German-French anti-Putin axis” (Geiger, 2017a, p. 4) a subtle irony concerning the issue that Ukraine is happy about the fact that E. Macron has won in the presidential elections in France.

It is assumed that E. Macron will continue the policy of the former president of France F. Hollande who, like A. Merkel, insisted on the return of the Crimea annexed by Russia. Ukraine urged Germany and France to collaboration in defence of the continent from the Russian threat represented by the Russian president V. Putin. The translator calqued a complex noun, replacing the part of the word with an adjective, but the semantic meaning of the word remained unchanged.

The translation of language game is a complicated task because the solution of this problem is quite debatable. Quite often it is impossible to find the appropriate translation of it. The situation when the translator does not see any play on words in the original text and therefore simply resorts to the descriptive method in the target text leads to the negative results.

7. Conclusion

Thus, taking the research results into consideration one can conclude that the translators use various methods for the translation of language game in media publicist texts. The analyzed examples show that mostly the translators resort to such techniques as calquing and transliteration.

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