

**SCTMG 2020****International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the  
Context of Modern Globalism»****METAPHOR AS A THREE-COMPONENT STRUCTURE:  
TRANSLATION ASPECT**

Vered Valeriya Tarasovna (a)\*, Vered Yulia Tarasovna (b)

\*Corresponding author

(a) Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, 6, Miklukho-Maklay Str., Moscow, Russia, val.pradap940@gmail.com

(b) Moscow State University of Foreign Affairs, 76, Vernadsky Ave., Moscow, Russia  
juliavered@gmail.com***Abstract***

This paper sets an objective to study on literary material a degree of communicative-pragmatic correspondence between English metaphors and their Russian equivalents. The study uses a three-dimensional model of metaphor as a synthesis of language, thought and communication related aspects. The linguistic aspect is understood as a logical-semantic structure of a metaphor; tenor (reference), vehicle (agent) and ground (foundation) of a metaphor are distinguished, being understood as the properties of an object and its reflection, which are common due to the similarity principle. Communicative aspect supposes studying the metaphor from the point of view of its functioning in speech; speaker's pragmatic goal is identified as defined by the content and form of utterance. Semantic equivalence of metaphors between the original text and translation is established by component analysis. The results obtained are classified in accordance with two criteria: 1) keeping the implicitness principle of the metaphoric reinterpretation, and 2) sameness of meanings actualized during the renomination, thus allowing identifying cases of complete and partial translation of the metaphor and describing accompanying lexical and grammatical interlinguistic transformations. Partial translation shall be considered as the most common phenomenon in translation of metaphoric expressions. Features of internal linguistic development as well as features of linguistic consciousness of the two peoples explain inability of a complete translation of a source text into a target text. Lack of translation is considered a factor reducing the functional equivalence of texts.

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**Keywords:** Metaphor, pragmatics, translation transformations, translation, equivalency.

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## 1. Introduction

Commonality of Earth-based civilization, unity of human cognition laws, well-known similarities of human experiences and existence of linguistic universalia together form a foundation that makes it possible to have bilingual communication, comparison between facts of differently structured languages, translation of literary works from one language into another. Any well-developed modern language has a sufficient range of means to relay content expressed in another language of the same level of development in its integration with the form.

Possibility to transfer nomination from one object to another is a structural feature of all natural languages; in systems of expressive means it appears as metaphor, a stylistic tool. At that, the phenomenon of metaphorization goes far beyond the boundaries of language and is characterized as a basic practice in understanding of surrounding reality, as a tool for generation of new meanings.

Lakoff and Johnson (2003), who initiated the cognitive studies of metaphor, specify that “metaphors as linguistic expressions are possible precisely because there are metaphors in a person’s conceptual system” (p. 39). Thus, metaphor gets a status of a universal cognitive mechanism typical of all humans independent of their race, gender, social and economic status, etc.

However, it should be noted that a metaphor inevitably brings in a nationally specific content. Each culture is characterized with its unique set of linguistic concepts and symbols that form a special system of codes that a person uses to describe and interpret their internal and external world. Metaphor is understood against the background of the culture that gave it birth and is related to a set of “conceptual mappings that frame our thinking, reasoning, and understanding” (Gibbs, 2002, p.24).

## 2. Problem Statement

The authors deem it interesting to analyze functioning of metaphors in literary text as a “secondary modeling system” (Lotman, 2016). Any textual work exhibit functional duality: on the one hand, it shall reliably convey primary meanings of the units, while on the other hand, it shall generate new meanings.

In a literary work, these functions resonate, amplifying each other, largely due to presence of metaphors that serve as an essential element of linguistic composition of text and a tool for construction of artistic images. At that, both functions are best performed on condition of complete identity between the codes of speaker and addressee resulting in maximal unambiguity of text.

However, how can we reach unambiguity of text if its author and reader belong to different linguistic collectives, if they are separated not only by space but by time as well? Due to this question, there is a pressing issue in both theory and practice of literary translation related to recreation of speech imagery of the source text in its translation into a different linguistic and cultural space.

We hold that a complete translation is such where close alignment to source and aesthetic efficacy are interconnected: it is beautiful because it is accurate and it is accurate because it is beautiful. A way to achieve this ideal is not a compromise of the Golden Rule, but rather a creative resolution of dialectic opposition: between the extremes, there is no truth, but a problem. Failure of sanctions for breaking the artistic nature in favor of literal accuracy is obvious: literalism is devoid of imagery and thus ignominious. As for linguistic inaccuracy in the name of artistic license, ideas do not exist in separation

from language: “content is nothing but a transition of form into content, while form is a transition of content into form” (Hegel, 1974, p. 62).

### **3. Research Questions**

It is hard to find a study in contemporary Russian and foreign linguistics that is not in some way related to problems of transmitting meanings, creation, functioning and perception of metaphoric imagery. Studies of a number of extremely complex linguistic categories – such as evaluativity, expressivity, presupposition, association, reference, nomination – are largely supported by analysis of principal laws of metaphorization. Moreover, metaphor is becoming a kind of interdisciplinary phenomenon that is studied by not only linguistics, but by sociology, literature studies and aesthetics as well.

Relation in the foundation of the metaphorization process are of universal, associative-logical nature. Human associative thinking creates an unlimited number of images using lexical units already present in the language. “From times immemorial, the words denoting the most well-known concepts and things surrounding humans were subjected to metaphorization” (Gak, 2010, p. 62).

The foundation of the metaphorization process is one or several components of the word’s semantic structure; that is why units devoid of lexical meaning are never involved in metaphorization. We assume there are three components in a metaphor’s logical structure: tenor, vehicle and ground (Cameron, 2008; Richards & Dolch, 1936). Russian scholarly tradition uses corresponding terms of referent (object being reflected), agent (reflected form of the object) and foundation, the latter being understood as common properties between the object and its reflection resulting from the similarity principle (Mezenin, 1983; Shelestiuk, 2004).

In this paper, the authors consider metaphor in the classical key, following Dickens (2005), as a «figure of speech in which a word or phrase is used in a non-basic sense, this non-basic sense suggesting a likeness or analogy (whether real or not) with another more basic sense of the same word or phrase». However, we are not limiting ourselves to a strictly intralinguistic approach.

The study also gives importance to cognitive and communicative components that allow analyzing metaphor in its functional-pragmatic aspect. Thus, we share the understanding of metaphor as a three-dimensional structure, consisting of linguistic, cognitive and communicative dimensions (Steen, 2011; 2015). Such all-encompassing study of metaphor ensure the fullest and deepest analysis of «the structure of language systems, the structure of the human conceptual system, as well as the function of these systems in communication and reasoning» (Thibodeau, 2017).

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study lies in revealing semantic processes in the foundation of metaphorization and demonstrating their nature as linguo-cognitive mechanism, study of general regularities in perception of metaphor by participants of a bilingual communicative act, as well as description of the main types of lexico-grammatical interlinguistic transformations, facilitating reaching functional adequacy in recreation of metaphor in translation from English into Russian. The material of the research is represented by

English metaphors in *The Great Gatsby* by F.S. Fitzgerald (2015) and their Russian equivalents proposed by E. Kalashnikova, the work's translator.

## 5. Research Methods

When revealing semantic correspondence in translation of metaphors from English into Russian, we are going to draw upon component analysis, including comparative study of meaningful content of the two texts. Adequacy of translation depends on whether the communicatively relevant semes of the source text find their reflection in translation. The semantic model of translation is especially well-suited to metaphoric material, allowing to illustratively reveal which seme is actualized during the metaphorization, with which denotate's property it is correlated and whether the Russian recreation is adequate. The results from the semantic analysis are classified in accordance with two criteria: 1) preservation of the implicitness principle of metaphoric reinterpretation, and 2) sameness of meanings actualized during the renomination.

## 6. Findings

Depending on meeting the above criteria, we identified the following cases: 1) complete translation of a metaphor, that is, maximum preservation of its communicative-pragmatic effect in the target text; 2) partial translation, when the metaphor in the target text induces a similar, but not identical reaction in reader; 3) omission, lack of translation of the metaphoric image.

The first type of translation equivalents is a literal translation of the metaphor from the source language to the target one. For instance, literal translation of metaphor may be seen in the following examples: *silver peppers of the stars* – *серебряные перчинки звезд*, *the ripple of her voice* – *журчание ее голоса*, where the basis of the figurative meaning is formed by similarity in size and impression, correspondingly. In these expressions, the metaphoric image is created by genitive structure that implies an implicit comparison and identification of the two objects. In translation of the original metaphor into the Russian linguistic and cultural context, the original motivating image is kept in full. Such translation ensures the most complete and accurate communicative, pragmatic and aesthetic influence over a speaker of another language.

Let us consider the mechanism of figurative shift in the following sentence that represents an extended metaphor:

*Conduct may be founded on the hard rock or the wet marshes.*

*Поведение человека может иметь под собой разную почву – твердый гранит или вязкую трясиину.*

Lit: *Human behavior may have different soil under it – (either) hard granite, or wet marches.*

In this sentence, the noun *conduct* undergoes metaphoric substantiation, resulting in physical characteristics of real-life objects being ascribed to an abstract concept. Thus, person's knowledge about environment helps them provide structure to a more complex conceptual sphere by means of shifting the characteristic properties from one object to another. Such a metaphoric projection is the essence of metaphor's cognitive resource.

Returning back to translation transformations, we may note that in this sentence, the translator used specification, transforming *hard rock* → *твёрдый гранит (hard granite)* (a generic concept is substituted with a more specific one), as well as semantic modulation *wet marshes* → *вязкая трясуна (viscous swamp)* (replacement of a collocation with a similar analog). These methods of pragmatic adaptation do not require significant changes to utterances during the translation, and just facilitate bringing the text into such a form that is the easiest for perception, while having an adequate communicative and aesthetic effect on a foreign reader.

Partial translation of metaphor is demonstrative on the example of a conventional expression *to get roaring drunk*, which is included into dictionaries, but has been preserving its initial brightness and lively imagery. For instance, Cambridge Dictionary (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2013) provides the following definition: *to get very drunk and noisy*, that is, the person is not just in the state of strong alcoholic intoxication, but is also a source of noise and commotion. In the Russian version, this metaphor is translated with *напиться вдребезгу*, which is one of its many equivalents. Ushakov's Thesaurus (Ushakov, 2017) gives several meanings for the adverb *вдребезгу*: 1) into small piece; 2) in combination with words meaning "intoxication" – to the maximum degree, until loss of consciousness. Thus, in the Russian translation of this metaphor, there is no semantic component speaking of noisy behavior of the drunk person. Consequently, in this example we see only partial translation of metaphor from the source text to the target text, which results in weaker communicative-pragmatic effect and foreign reader getting only part of the initial information.

Metaphoric image in this sentence requires a more detailed analysis:

*It was a factual imitation of some Hotel de Ville in Normandy, with a tower on one side, spanking new under a thin beard of raw ivy.*

*Это была точная копия какого-нибудь Hotel de Ville в Нормандии, с угловой башней, где новенькая кладка просвечивала сквозь редкую еще завесу плюща*

Lit: *It was an exact copy of some Hotel de Ville in Normandy, with a corner tower where brand-new masonry shines through a still rare veil of ivy.*

The sentence describing the protagonist's mansion includes a significant detail allowing reader to understand at once that the character is a *nouveau riche*. The mansion's tower is covered with *a thin beard of raw ivy*, typical for houses of American new money of the Roaring Twenties – unlike owners of ancestral homes, enjoying a thick carpet of ivy on the walls of their houses. This genitive metaphor *thin beard of raw ivy* is translated into Russian with significant semantic losses. In particular, the unique metaphoric expression is lost in the Russian text of the novel, and its place is taken by a transitional semantic component initially used for actualization of the metaphoric meaning (beard – veil – ivy). Besides, the adjective *raw* is also omitted, while in the original text it was aiming to create and support the metaphoric image. In this example, the principle of implicit nature of metaphoric reinterpretation is broken, as is the sameness of meanings involved into renomination; as a result, we have an almost complete loss of metaphor. The metaphoric image is so weak that the translation in question is close to lack of translation of the metaphor.

Lack of translation of a metaphoric image in the target text is considered a rather rare phenomenon, as translation theory postulates a law of preservation of metaphors, according to which the

original imagery shall be if possible recreated in the secondary text. Contravention of this principle leads to a significant reduction in aesthetic and pragmatic effect of a phrase.

For example, in the novel in question, we may find an example of omitted metaphor in the following phrase:

... *there were twinkle bells of sunshine in the room.*

... *по комнате прыгают солнечные зайчики.*

*Lit: sunlight rabbits (meaning dapples) are jumping through the room*

The authorial genitive metaphor *twinkle bells of sunshine* is translated into Russian with a dictionary phrase *солнечный зайчик*, resulting in a complete loss of original imagery and zeroing pragmatic effect of the metaphor. *There is* of the original is transformed into the action verb *прыгать* (jump). Thus, the seme of movement is actualized and the inner form of the Russian linguistic metaphor is expanded (light is jumping like a rabbit). However, such translation strategy does not correspond to the initial authorial idea.

Such situations are inevitable in translation practice, due to specifics of internal development of different languages, as well as due to a nature of linguistic thought of various peoples. The longer is the cultural distance between two contacting peoples, the higher is the level of interference during their communication and the higher is the rate of incongruities and lacunae revealed in the linguistic worldview of speakers of the two languages. Perceiving phenomena of a different culture, the recipient is interpreting them in the images and categories of their own culture, thus determining a degree of understanding of a foreign culture.

The following vivid example of omitting a metaphor may be found in the translation of a phrase that references us to the image of the novel's protagonist:

*I was looking at an elegant young roughneck...*

*Передо мною был просто расфранченный хлыщ...*

*Lit: In front of me, there was just an overdressed popinjay.*

The noun *roughneck* has two meanings: 1. *a rough or violent person*; 2. *a worker in an oil-drilling operation* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2013). At that, historically, the first meaning have developed from the second, initially denoting a sturdy person involved in hard physical labor. In the sentence in question, the polysemic noun *roughneck* is actualized in the second meaning, characterizing the protagonist as a person of simple worker descent that gained success due to their own everyday hard work. In the Russian variant of the novel, the ground of the metaphor is completely substituted (*roughneck* → *хлыщ (popinjay)*), most probably under the influence of neighboring adjectives *young* and *elegant*. The word *хлыщ* in Russian has a meaning of “overdressed and futile young man” (Ushakov, 2017), which is contrary to the authorial assessment of the protagonist. Thus, there is no functional equivalency in this translation.

## 7. Conclusion

General patterns of the metaphorization process in the pair of languages in question turned out to be identical, that is, metaphors were based on a common scheme; however, metaphorization in each of the languages differed due to linguistic and national specifics. It supports a thesis that metaphor is a dialectic

union of universal (universal human ability for metaphoric thought) and specific (specifics of ethnic mentality of a certain linguistic community).

Identification and translation of a property serving as a ground for analog, which is understood as any similarity between objects and phenomena otherwise different, is a leading element, a lever, leading to selection of a relevant metaphoric image. Transferring nomination of one object onto another, human mind conducts a certain comparative operation where a psychological stock of the nation and distinctive character of its popular culture are reflected. Thus, identification of the property that becomes the inner form of nomination during the metaphorization is linked to national specifics of perception of the world around.

Analysis of specific linguistic material allowed identifying the principal types of translation transformations. For example, the cases of complete translation of a metaphor are accompanied with its literal translation. However, it is possible only in cases where the metaphoric image in question is similarly close to both linguistic cultures, while component composition of words involved in formation of the metaphoric expression is the same in English and Russian.

The most typical occurrence is a partial translation of an original metaphor into the target text implemented by means of various lexical substitutions and selection of variable correspondences that are based on a different image with a similar motivation. In most cases, analyzed interlinguistic lexical-grammatical transformations allow attaining a high degree of functional equivalency in translation of metaphors.

The process of literary translation from one linguistic-cultural environment to another is complicated by presence of metaphors with vivid national specific and lack of available matches in the target language and culture. In such cases, the leading type of transformation is paraphrasing translation or a complete omission of the metaphor, which usually is accompanied with communicative-pragmatic losses in the form of losing the metaphoric image and its substitution with linguistic means of different component meaning.

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