

Ways of Transferring Implicit Information in English-Russian Fiction Translations

Liya A. Kornilova and Farida B. Sitdikova
Kazan Federal University, Kremliovskaya Str. 18, 420008 Kazan, Russian Federation

Abstract: The study presents a research in the field of translation studies and deals with the problem of transferring implicit meanings from the original language to the target language. Every person who has some practical experience in fiction translating realizes the importance of this problem. The presence of implicit meanings in all languages is one of the most important features of the verbal communication process. By implicit meaning, we understand the meaning of a statement that is not expressed in a verbal way but can be drawn by the recipient on the basis of the context, situation or background knowledge. The research has been made using original American fiction samples and comparing them with their Russian translations. As a result, we have made the following conclusions: when trying to translate implicit components of a statement, translators use the following methods: leaving these components without any change and letting the reader to draw the implicit meaning; replacing them by equivalents in the target language; partial or complete explication which might result in the loss of the statement implicitness in the target language.

Key words: Implicit meaning, implicitness, explicit, explication, American fiction

INTRODUCTION

In all languages, the meaning of a statement is formed both from explicitly expressed and unexpressed but implied components. By implicit meaning of a statement, we understand the meaning that is not expressed in a verbal way but can be drawn by the recipient on the basis of the context, situation or background knowledge. In other words, it is created from the interaction of language units with the cognitive sphere. Thus, the statement can be considered as spoken impetus fetching knowledge from the cognitive sphere for the derivation of meaning (Kashichkin, 2003). The presence of implicit meanings in statements is one of the main characteristics of the verbal communicational process. According to modern approach, implicit meaning is referred to as a complicated multilevel semantic formation which is assembled from presupposition, specific contextual meaning and statement's implicature.

Transferring implicit meanings from original language into target language has always remained an acute problem for interpreters because the correlation of implicitness and explicitness in languages differs. Each language uses its own forms which allow a certain part of information to be left implicit. That is why, in original and target languages the methods of presenting information are different and it is the translator who is to make a decision which method to choose.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Our research compares American fiction samples with their Russian translations made by professional translators. As the source of language examples, we have used a novel by J.D. Salinger "The Catcher in the Rye" and short stories "What we talk about when we talk about love" written by R. Carver. On the other hand, we have made use of their Russian translations made by R. Right-Kovaleva and I. Yushenko. Comparative analysis method is applied to show the ways of transferring implicit meaning from English into Russian. After examining dozens of language examples the following cases have been revealed:

- The implicit components of a statement are left without any change letting the reader to draw the implicit meaning
- The translator replaces the implicit components of a statement by equivalents in the target language
- Partial or complete explication of implicit components which might result in the loss of the statement implicitness in the target language

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Let us examine all above-mentioned cases in detail. It often happens that the adequate translation of the

language content is quite enough for the recipients (readers) to draw the certain contextual meanings of the statement. For example: “Hey”, I said. “I’ve read this same sentence about twenty times since you came in. Anybody else except Ackley would’ve taken the goddam hint” (Salinger, 2004b, 2001b). In this example, the interpreter has hardly ever changed the original text but it is clear that the highlighted phrase means: Ackley’s presence distracts Holden from reading. Universal human skills allow us to draw an implicit meaning from expressed contents due to some common components in the cognitive sphere of the original and target languages.

In some cases, the translator has to replace the expressed verbally content in order to preserve the original style and natural sounding. At the same time, the recipients (readers) of translated version can understand the hidden meaning: “He never exactly broke your heart when he went back to his own room” (Salinger 2004d, 2001d). The highlighted phrase means: nobody felt regret when he went back to his own room.

There are a lot of slang expressions and phrasemes in Salinger (2004a, 2001a) ’s Novel which have been brilliantly translated by R. Right-Kovaleva into Russian. The above mentioned translation has been made with full stylistic preservation of the original meaning and balance between its explicit and implicit components. Here is one more example of the expressed components’ replacement: You take somebody old as hell, like old Spencer and they can get a big bang out of buying a blanket. We should certainly mention that phrasemes and other image-bearing expressions are considered by us as containing implicit meaning because there is a definite asymmetry between the means of expression and the content.

The third case makes interest for interpreters. It is related to situations, when the interpreter has to express some implicit information in a verbal way (completely or partially), i.e. to apply the explication method. This method can be used for transferring different components of implicit meaning of the original statement: presuppositions, specific contextual meaning and implicatures.

Here is an example of using explication when translating into Russian some presuppositions, namely cultural and day-to-day realities: “for desert you got Brown Betty which nobody ate” (Salinger, 2004f). It is clear that we cannot simply inform that pupils in school were treated with “red-haired Betty”. The translation is as follows: “red-haired Betty, pudding with patokoy, only he was not eating” (Salinger, 2001f). The translator’s explanation (that is, explication) is completely justified not to cause misunderstanding of the translated text by Russian readers.

In another example, we also cannot get along without explication because, it helps the recipients of the Russian translation to derive a definite contextual meaning of the highlighted phrase: “We had a terrific guy on the team, Howie Coyle that could sink them from the middle of the floor, without even touching the backboard or anything” (Salinger, 2004e, 2001e).

High qualified professional translators can see the necessity of either a complete explication or cases when a partial explication is enough to draw an unexpressed implicit meaning. Here follows the example of a partial explication of a specific contextual meaning: “He never sat down in a chair. Just always on the arm” (Salinger, 2004c, 2001c). In this example, the translator has emphasized Holden’s irritation and disgust to his roommate by means of additional verbalization.

When fiction translators make a decision about using the explication technique, very often they run to extremes: they either do not give enough explicit information (i.e., do not compensate omitted, implicit components of a statement), so that readers are not able to understand the translated text; or they overload the text by giving too much explicit information. M.L. Larson is giving the following recommendations about using explication:

- It is required by the target language grammar structure
- It is necessary for clear expressing ideas contained in the original text
- It is important for keeping the original style in the translated text or make the same emotional impact that was intended in the source text
- All these are possible only the implicit information is really contained in the original text (Larson, 1993b)

We managed to find an example when the translator has avoided using explication, producing too long Russian sentence that does not sound very natural: “As for Rae, she hadn’t been to school for weeks. She said no one could make her go. Maxine said it was another tragedy in a long line of low-rent tragedies” (Carver, 1989b, 1987b). In this example, the word combination in bold type translated by calquing method, in our opinion, does not look like Russian at all and need additional verbalization.

Apart from the three above mentioned cases, sometimes over-translation is also possible. By over-translation we mean redundant explication of the original content and unreasonable increasing of the original text volume. Many translation experts emphasize that a translator must not enter their own additional information that is not contained in the source text (Larson, 1993a).

We have not been able to find any examples of over-translation in the fiction samples under consideration which is probably the evidence of translators' high level professional skill. For this reason, we are giving the example by Komissarov (1999), who is in turn citing this example from the Chukchi writer Yuri Rytkeu. He tells about his school teacher who was trying hard to introduce the famous poem by Pushkin to his students striving to explain all items which seemed not clear. The translation looked as follows: "We shore outlines which were similar to the bending bow, It is a green tree from which to make Kopylov sledges. On this tree hanging chain of monetary metal from the same from which two teeth from our principal. And day and night walks around the tree animal, like a dog but smaller and very nimble. This is an animal scientist, saying", "At the coast, the outlines of which were similar to the curve of the bow, standing green tree from which to make Kopylov sledges. On this tree hanging chain of monetary metal, from the same from which two teeth from our principal. And day and night walks around the tree animal, like a dog but smaller and very nimble. This is an animal scientist, saying". Komissarov comments that there was not much left from the original poem but still it was possible to recognize it.

We would also like to touch upon the problem that all translators come face to face sooner or later. It is referred to as the problem of different arrangement of information models related to different languages. Every language creates its own picture of the world and professional translators can often see the differences in both in language systems and in the ways of constructing statements that can be explained by the fact that when describing the same situation different languages use their own set of features (characteristics) of this situation. It might happen that the features which are not expressed in original language will be absolutely indispensable in the target language. Many English-Russian translators come to conclusion that English statements and texts compared with their Russian translations often include less features of situations in other words, it can be claimed that generally speaking, statements which are constructed according to English Grammar rules are more implicit than Russian ones (Komissarov, 1969). As a result, translators quite often have to specify the meaning of phrases and sentences using additional verbalization for those situation features that remain implicit (i.e., not expressed) in English original texts or statements.

We are supplying a couple of examples demonstrating the necessity of additional verbalization while translating into Russian: "In the lamplight, there was something about their faces. It was nice or it was nasty"

(Carver, 1989a). "Something cute or ugly" (Carver, 1987a). "She shook her head at his simplicity" (Carver, 1989c, 1987c).

Most translators will agree that upon the fact that most of the times additional verbalization is necessary when translating from English into Russian. But, within the framework of this study, we are not going to prove the point of the English language's higher implicit degree, it should be the topic of a special detailed research.

CONCLUSION

To sum it up, we can draw the following conclusions: when trying to translate implicit components of a statement, translators use the following methods:

- Leaving these components and letting the reader to draw the meaning
- Replacing them by equivalents in the target language
- Partial or complete explication which might result in the loss of the statement implicit

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The research is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

REFERENCES

- Carver, R., 1987a. Stories. Trans. I. Yushchenko., pp: 11.
Carver, R., 1987b. Stories. Trans. I. Yushchenko. M.: Proceedings, pp: 102.
Carver, R., 1987c. Stories. Trans. I. Yushchenko, pp: 106.
Carver, R., 1989a. What we talk about when we talk about love. New York: Vintage Books Edition, pp: 7.
Carver, R., 1989b. What we talk about when we talk about love. New York: Vintage Books Edition, pp: 98.
Carver R., 1989c. What we talk about when we talk about love. New York: Vintage Books Edition, pp: 156.
Kashichkin, A.V., 2003. Implicitly in the context of the translation: Dissertation, pp: 9.
Komissarov, V.N., 1999. Modern Translation: The course lectures. M.: ETS, pp: 117.
Komissarov, V.N., 1969. Explication as a transfer problem. Problems of Applied Linguistics, pp: 159.
Larson M.M., 1993a. Semantic Translation: A Guide to cross-language equivalence theory and its practical application. SPb, pp: 38.
Larson, M.M., 1993b. Semantic Translation: A Guide to cross-language equivalence theory and its practical application. SPb, pp: 397.

- Salinger, J.D., 2001a. *The Catcher in the Rye*. M.: Eksmo-Press, pp: 12.
- Salinger, J.D., 2001b. *The Catcher in the Rye*. M.: Eksmo-Press, pp: 24.
- Salinger, J.D., 2001c. *The Catcher in the Rye*. M.: Eksmo-Press, pp: 29.
- Salinger, J.D., 2001d. *The Catcher in the Rye*. M.: Eksmo-Press, pp: 26.
- Salinger, J.D., 2001e. *The Catcher in the Rye*. M.: Eksmo-Press, pp: 31.
- Salinger, J.D., 2001f. *The Catcher in the Rye*. M.: Eksmo-Press, pp: 37.
- Salinger, J.D., 2004a. *The Catcher in the Rye*. St. Petersburg, pp: 45.
- Salinger, J.D., 2004b. *The Catcher in the Rye*. St. Petersburg, pp: 57.
- Salinger, J.D., 2004c. *The Catcher in the Rye*. St. Petersburg, pp: 62.
- Salinger, J.D., 2004d. *The Catcher in the Rye*. St. Petersburg, pp: 59.
- Salinger, J.D., 2004e. *The Catcher in the Rye*. St. Petersburg, pp: 65.
- Salinger, J.D., 2004f. *The Catcher in the Rye*. St. Petersburg, pp: 70.