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Translation of professionally-oriented texts: lexical and grammatical problems

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Abstract

This paper is devoted to the specifics of translation of professionally-oriented texts with regard to grammar and vocabulary and covers the main translation problems. The typical difficulties encountered in the translation of specialized texts on servicing of motor vehicles and road construction were analyzed. In addition, factors that contribute to high-quality translation were identified. In this paper, a comparative analysis of translations done by the students trained in automotive specialties was carried out. The analysis of translations made it possible to find out what difficulties arise in translating professionally-oriented texts and what possible way are there for students to cope with them. The choice of the translation method or technique depends to a certain extent on the qualifications and individual abilities of students. The subjectivity of translation is limited by the need to reproduce the content of the original text as accurately as possible, and the possibility of such reproduction depends on the skills and correct use of professional and supplementary literature, e.g. bilingual (namely English-Russian and Russian-English) learner`s dictionaries and terminology glossaries. The purpose of this analysis is to identify and improve students` skills and knowledge of the translation of professionally-oriented texts, conclude the authors of the paper.

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Keywords

Translation, vocational-oriented text, lexical difficulties of translation, grammatical difficulties of translation, grammar.

Introduction

Language is a prerequisite for the existence and development of human society. If there had been no language, there would have been no society; if there had been no society, there would have been no opportunities for the existence and development of language. This explains the fact that being outside of society, a person ceases to use his or her own language: there is simply no need for this. The language itself arose only as a natural need for one person to explain something to others, to deliver a particular message.

Therefore, language and society are inseparable and interdependent concepts. As time went on, there appeared a need for translation, which is an accurate reproduction of the original text by means of another language. Preserving the unity of content and style makes translation different from retelling due to the fact that the latter usually implies conveying the general gist, while omitting details and not being very careful about the style. By checking and analyzing students' written works, the main lexical and grammatical problems of translation were identified

Lexical translation problems

Doing their translations, students are faced with the problem of conveying the meaning and sense of the text with accuracy including the use of special terminology. Taking into account the technical orientation of the university, in particular automotive engineering, students were encouraged to use professional literature and glossaries. The translations were done by students studying in different academic years and specializing in different fields. All the works having been checked, the following lexical problems have been identified: problems in translating highly specialized terms, abbreviations, general scientific vocabulary and complex words. Particular attention was paid to the selection and use of the correct term and the identification of four main problems:

1) Synonymy of the term.

For example, «коробка передач» in English can be translated by the word gearbox, speed-change transmission, speed shifting box, wheelbox; «датчик» – sensor, pick-off, clicker, actuating device, transducer, conversion element, sensing element.

2) Ambiguity of the term.

For example, "nut" – гайка, муфта; "pulley" – ролик, шкиф; "lead (n)" – подводящий провод, проводник, ход (винта, резьбы), подъем резьбы; "joint" – шов, стык, шарнир, паз, прокладка; "strainer" – сетчатый фильтр, фильтр предварительной очистки, перколятор; "sensor" – датчик, приемная антенна, прибор обнаружения, сенсорное устройство

3) Selection of the term translation technique.

The most common techniques used to translate terms are:

- 1) To find in the target language an equivalent of the term used in the source language. This technique can be applied only if both countries – that of the target language and that of the source language – have reached the same level of their technological or social development or have already passed this level at some time in their history. Another particular feature of such terms is the fact that equivalent terms already existed in both languages at the time of translation. (heater – нагреватель, flywheel – маховик).
- 2) To create a new term in the target language by conveying a word or phrase existing in this language a different meaning under the influence of the source language. Such a translation technique can be called semantic convergence.

- 3) When searching for equivalent and semantic convergence, the translation of terms does not create new lexical items, but uses previously existing ones in the language. The use of this translation leads to the formation of new words or phrases. This process is called calque translation (blueprint, or loan translation). There are two types of calques:
- If the structure of a translated lexical unit coincides in both languages (the target and the source language) that is semantic calques. Semantic calques can be applied when the meaning of a foreign term and that of a term in the target language are close or coincide (direct digital control).
 - If the structure of a complex lexical item is borrowed being translated together with this item, that is structural calques. At the same time, a new, alien model of a word or phrase (gearbox – коробка передач) appears in the target language.
- 4) When the lexical item is transferred from the source language into the target language, with all its content and formal features (semantics, word formation structure, sound composition and writing) remained unchanged, it is called borrowing.
- 5) In some cases, the term may be translated by a descriptive construction. This translation technique is used for equivalent terms reflecting the realities of a certain country (overhaul period – интервал между переборками двигателя) [Polyakova et al., 2014, 44].
- 6) Translation of abbreviations and reductions. A/C – система кондиционирования воздуха; EGR – рециркуляция выхлопных газов; NVH – шум, вибрации, неплавность движения; Rpm – число оборотов в минуту; HFC-134a – фреон 134a. Terms are classified into single-word (single-component) and multi-word (multi-component) terms. Single-word terms are divided into
- simple or non-derivatives terms: wheel – колесо, fuel – топливо, clutch – сцепление;
 - derivatives formed from single-root words and affixes: ventilation – система вентиляции, heater – обогреватель, cylinder – цилиндр;
 - complex terms having at least two roots in their composition: crankshaft-коленчатый вал, gearbox – коробка передач, automobile – автомобиль.
- Multi-word terms are divided into:
- adjoining terms, in which attributive and some relative (mainly adverbial) components are combined with each other, as well as with the defined component, and form terminological phrases: steel body – стальной кузов, power plant – силовая установка, rear axle – задний мост;
 - terms with various grammatical means, among which the main role is played by prepositions: gasket of oil pump – прокладка масляного насоса, screen of oil strainer – сетка маслоприемника.

Grammatical translation problems

English is a global language. Qualifications in English are essential for graduates. Translation is to enable effective cross-language communication, so that the document or text of the target language would be a complete semantic substitution for the source document or text in its functional, structural and semantic characteristics [Barkhudarov, 1975, 53].

Grammatical problems of translation are caused by the fact that grammatical phenomena of different languages are different too, although in some cases they may represent some similarity. The exact copy of the grammatical form of the original text cannot be the purpose of translation, since its purpose is to convey the original intent of a message. And only when certain features of the grammatical

form of the source language perform a stylistic function, their correct rendering becomes an area of the translation focus.

Usually this is not a direct reproduction of features, but a reconstruction of their functions. The identically equal grammatical translation cannot be usually done due to the lack of corresponding forms in the target language. Often, it does not meet the standard language. And in some cases, an accurate translation in terms of grammar turns out to be stylistically unacceptable. Therefore, even for the most accurate translation, changes in grammatical categories of a word are typical, small permutations or additions within small phrases, and deviations from grammatical accuracy are quite normal and logical. Three main types of grammatical divergence between the original language and the translation language are given.

The first type implies the presence in the original of an element that does not have a formal grammatical matching in the target language. In this respect, special attention should be given to the translation into Russian of such grammatical units and structures as definite/ indefinite articles or passive constructions (The clutch is controlled by the clutch pedal) [Slyakhova, 2019, 45].

The second type of grammatical divergence is characterized by the presence in the target language of elements that have no equivalents in the original language. Moreover, the use of such elements in the target language is indispensable. The presence of such features in the target language gives many advantages, it acquires an additional means for translating the original text, which performs a crucial role in transmitting the semantic function of specific elements of the original language. In this regard, the category of aspect and the variety of participle forms in the Russian language must be mentioned. (Conventional frames are made of steel channel sections welded or riveted together. – Стандартные рамы изготовлены из стальных полых секций, сваренных или склепанных вместе.) [ibid., 38]

The third type is the formal correspondence of the grammatical elements of the original and the translation, but their difference in functions. This case requires special care in translation.

To correctly cope with this problem, elements formally different from the original should be used in translation, but those that could perform the same functions in the context and correspond to the original in their meaning and stylistic nuance. (Некоторые компьютеры обладают способностью запоминать. Это относится к адаптивной памяти. – Some computers have the ability to learn. This is referred to as an adaptive memory) [ibid., 65].

Conclusions

Based on the analysis of the material discussed in this article, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- 1) Attempts to reproduce word for word a professional-oriented text or a passage of text lead whether to distortion or complete loss of meaning of the text.
- 2) Transferring the meaning of a term, it is necessary to opt for the accurate word or phrase of the target language. Thus, it is necessary to use terminology glossaries for a more exact, "clear" interpretation of terms.
- 3) Divergences in the grammatical system of two languages and, as a result, inability to convey the accurate meaning of a particular grammatical form are constantly compensated by other grammatical or lexical transformations.
- 4) Being unable to opt for the particular translation technique calls for the need to follow general principles of translation and always bear in mind that the meaning of the whole is more important than the meanings of the parts.

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Лексические и грамматические трудности перевода профессионально ориентированных текстов

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Аннотация

Данная статья посвящена проблеме перевода профессионально ориентированных текстов, в ней рассмотрены основные лексические и грамматические трудности. Произведен анализ наиболее типичных трудностей, возникающих при переводе текстов по направлениям «Автомобильный сервис» и «Автомобильные дороги», кроме того, выявлены аспекты, способствующие качественному переводу. В данной статье был проведен сравнительный анализ переводов, выполненных студентами автомобильных специальностей. Анализ переводов позволил выяснить, какие трудности возникают при переводе профессионально-ориентированных текстов и как с ними справляются студенты. Выбор метода или техники

перевода в определенной степени зависит от квалификации и индивидуальных способностей студентов. Субъективность перевода ограничивается необходимостью максимально точного воспроизведения содержания исходного текста, а возможность такого воспроизведения зависит от навыков и правильного использования профессиональной и дополнительной литературы. Цель проведенного анализа – выявить и улучшить навыки и знания студентов в области перевода профессионально ориентированных текстов, заключают авторы статьи.

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Ключевые слова

Перевод, профессионально-ориентированный текст, лексические трудности, грамматические трудности, грамматика.

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