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PREUDO INTERNATIONAL LEXICON UNITS VERBAL TRANSLATION IMPROPRIETY

Подается фундаментальный та порівняльний аналіз методологічних підходів щодо визначення, класифікації та пояснення псевдоінтернаціональної лексики. Автор досліджує помилки, що призводять до незрозумілості значення спільнокореневих слів, та пропонує методи щодо уникнення подібних проблем.

Ключові слова: денотати, комбінаторність, псевдоінтернаціоналізми, семантика, спільнокореневі слова, супутнє значення.

Предоставляется фундаментальный и сравнительный анализ методологических подходов к определению, классификации и объяснению псевдоинтернациональной лексики. Автор изучает ошибки, которые ведут к непонятности значения родственных слов, и предлагает методы избегания подобных проблем.

Ключевые слова: денотаты, комбинаторность, псевдоинтернационализмы, родственный, семантика, сопутствующее значение.

The article provides the fundamental and comparative analysis and the variety of methodological approaches that are relevant for the identification, classification, explanation and evaluation of the units of pseudo international lexicon on the basis of related languages, linguistic and informational sources. The author investigates the significant mistakes that lead to the obscurity of false cognates' meaning and establishes proper ways and methods that help to avoid the problem.

Key words: cognates, combinability, connotative meaning, denotations, pseudo internationalisms, semantics.

When for different reasons a close relationship springs up between two languages, they usually exert an enduring influence upon each other. Great mutual interferences, that take place, lead to the occurrence of language borrowings and lexical resemblances between the languages. These resemblances, having established the so called international lexicon and 'lexical cognates', result to be quite an issue for language learners and language users. Being absolutely identical in pronunciation and spelling, they often contain cardinally opposite meanings, creating the communication problems that may arise from the misuse of such pseudo international words.

False cognates have been studied by eminent linguists like Associate Professor of Southwestern Psychological Association S. M. Kennison (who investigated hemispheric differences in word processing in monolinguals and bilinguals, the cognitive processes involved in reading, language acquisition, and bilingualism), free-lance linguist and lexicogra-

pher Diane Nicholls (“Digging deeper into false friends”), German researchers B. Dretzke and M. I. Nester (“Student’s Guide to False Friends, New Friends and Old Friends”), even by psycholinguists and cognitive psychologists, as well as by researchers investigating the word recognition process in bilinguals and the relative activation levels of each lexicon as many studies have used interlingual homographs (Pedro J. Chamizo Dominguez, Brigitte Nerlich in their research “False friends: their origin and semantics in some selected languages”, Raul Guerrero in “Bilingualism’s False Friends” Anette de Groot in “Lexical representation of cognates and non-cognates in compound bilinguals”). Cognitive psychologists have suggested that cognates are pre-existing schemas which cause the automatic pairing of stimulus and response without allowing the speaker to pay any attention to the semantic differences between the stimulus and the response (Baddeley, Shiffrin and Schneider, both cited in Shlesinger and Malkiel). Michal Kirsner proposed a model of bilingual lexical representation, according to which, words with common morphology, and not exclusively cognates, are stored together in clusters.

Besides, the origin of lexical cognates has been studied within the peculiar “Japhetic theory” of Soviet scientist Nikolas Marr who, searching for the answers, hypothesized that ‘there were no proto languages, but numerous tribal dialects ...’ [2].

A lot of dictionaries were compiled devoted to convey the etymology and meanings of various types of lexical cognates.

Nevertheless, despite all the multitudinous researches carried out within this problematic sphere, pseudo international lexical cognates still belong to one of the most significant fields of difficulties faced by translators. According to Karen Zethsen (“The Dogmas of Translation”), the phenomenon of false cognates is more subtle than has been so far implied.

The actuality of chosen subject consists in remaining necessity for the pseudo international lexicon studying in order to avoid disorientation that its reliance may cause. Indeed, when it comes to these words usage, the threat of confusion remains in abeyance, the trap is still open and the adequate translation is still hindered.

The article aims at investigating the significant mistakes that lead to the obscurity of false cognates’ meaning, and confuse the learner, and establishing proper ways and methods that help to avoid the problem.

The task of the research is to study the origin of pseudo internationalisms, analyzing them in related languages, and to identify the problems they constitute in translation.

Pseudo internationalisms (false cognates, faux amis, deceptive doubles, paronyms) regard to a sphere of linguistics where problems of translation, learning and contrastive semantic studies interface. *Pseudo internationalisms* are words pairs that have similar spelling and pronunciation but different meaning. The similarity leads to false associations, wrong usage or misunderstanding, or in the best case distortion of context, imprecision, disregard for the right stylistic colouring. Contrastive analysis of both related and not related languages presents a large corpus of similar or identical lexemes – words similar in spelling, pronunciation and often in meaning. Even in many non-related languages this phenomenon would reach the proportion of 10 to 20%. It is much higher in terminological corpora where there is a high percentage of international words. A considerable share of these lexemes are pseudo international.

Language material, coupled with actual usage, shows that FFs can be divided into several types:

- a) false friends proper (absolute pseudo internationalisms);
- b) occasional or accidental false friends;
- c) pseudo false friends [4, p. 11].

False friends proper can be *complete (absolute) false friends* (pairs of words in the respective languages which are monosemantic in both or one language and this meaning differs from that of its counterpart), *partial false friends* (pairs of words in the respective languages where the Language One word is more polysemantic than Language Two word, i.e. in one or several meanings the words are identical but in some meaning they are different), and *nuance differentiated word pairs* (have the same denotative meaning, yet have slight semantic, usually connotative differences). The difference can have a variety of reasons and features: semantic limits, register (stylistic) differences, frequency of use, collocation limitations, diachronic digression [4, p. 13].

Occasional FFs could be defined as word pairs that are similar by almost pure coincidence, not by common etymology – these are non-cognate interlingual analogues. They lack the etymological link and normally belong to a different logico-subject group which usually helps differentiate them, especially because they stand isolated only in dictionaries, while context usually helps avoid misunderstanding, acts as a life saver.

Pseudo false friends are non-existent word pairs and accordingly rarely discussed. The language learner builds a nonexistent word on the basis of the native word, usually believing that the native word

must have a corresponding identical foreign word. Though theoretically hypothetical, any teacher will have met these in the speech of the students. The pseudo friend is usually created on the basis of false analogy, belief that lexeme (usually international) must have the same use in other language. For example, there is no *blocade* in French while Latvian *blokade* (a loan from German *die Blockade*), being similar to loans from French *kanonade* (*cannonade*), *glisade* (*glissade*), traditionally leads to the pseudo friend use.

Pseudo friends are normally not represented in dictionaries. In theory their number could be dramatically high, in practice it is rather limited [4, p. 17].

It is important to investigate how various (related) languages, such as Spanish, French, German, and English, exploit the meaning potential of words in different ways by looking at the metaphorical, metonymical, etc. structures that underlie false friends and structure diachronic changes over time which lead to false friends. This has implications not only for research into meaning and understanding, for comparative research into semantic and conceptual networks, but also for the teaching and translating of foreign languages, as will be demonstrated with the following examples.

Take the German word *Flanell* and the English word *flannel*. In German *Flanell* is used to refer to a certain type of cloth, in English to a certain of cloth, but also to a cloth with a certain function (a washcloth for washing the body). The metonymic link that is exploited is the one between material and function. Furthermore, *flannel* can be used metaphorically in English to mean ‘evasive talk’. As this example shows, the two languages seem to have exploited certain meaning potentials in different ways: whereas ‘the German language’ stayed with the ‘literal’ meaning of *flannel* and did not venture any further into semantic space, ‘the English language’ moved along a metonymically and metaphorically structured semantic path and produced a word with multiple meanings.

Since ‘the context might offer no hint’, a pragmatic strategy is needed to resolve this sometimes hidden semantic problem. This can be especially problematic when reading a badly translated text. Translation of false friends can lead to certain ambiguities which can, however, be exploited themselves in literature to achieve certain effects. Analysing this type of ambiguity can, therefore, not only contribute to pragmatics of conversations (and misunderstandings),

but also to pragmatics of literature, and to pragmatics of translation.

The translator should bear in mind that a number of factors can preclude the possibility of using the formally similar word as an equivalent. Among these factors the following are the most important:

1. The semantic factor resulting from the different subsequent development of the words borrowed by the two languages from the same source. For instance, the English ‘idiom’ can be well rendered by its Ukrainian counterpart to convey the idea of an expression whose meaning cannot be derived from the conjoined meanings of its elements but has developed such additional meanings as dialect (local idiom) and individual style (Shakespeare’s idiom). When the word is used in either of these meanings its equivalent in Ukrainian will not be *ідіома*, but *діалект*, *наріччя* or *стиль*, respectively.

Very often the translator may opt for the **method of occasional equivalent** to a pseudointernational word just as he may do while dealing with any other type of the word:

‘South Vietnam was a vast laboratory for the testing of weapons of counter-guerrilla warfare.’ – ‘Південний В’єтнам став полігоном для випробувань зброї, що використовується на війні проти партизан.’

2. The stylistic factor resulting from the difference in the emotive or stylistic connotation of the correlated words. For example, the English *career* is neutral while the Ukrainian *кар’єра* is largely negative. The translator has to beware of the pseudo similarity, and to look for another way out, like using the **method of semantic substitution**, e.g.:

‘Davy took on Faraday as his assistant and thereby opened a scientific career for him.’ – ‘Деві взяв Фарадея до себе в асистенти, і тим самим відкрив йому шлях до науки.’

3. The co-occurrence factor requires the **method of lexical combinability** that reflects the rules of lexical co-occurrence in the two languages. The choice of an equivalent is often influenced by the usage preferring a standard combination of words to the normally similar substitute. So, a *defect* has a formal counterpart in the Ukrainian *дефект* but *theoretical and organizational defects* will be rather *теоретичні та організаційні прорахунки*. A *gesture* is usually translated as *жест* but the Ukrainian word will not be used to translate the following sentence for the combinability factor:

‘The reason for including only minor gestures of reforms in the program...’ – ‘Причина включення в програму лише жалюгідної подоби реформ...’

4. The pragmatic factor reflecting the difference in the background knowledge of the members of the two language communities which makes the translator reject the formal equivalent in favour of the more explicit or familiar variant, and use the **method of descriptive translation**. The reader of the English original will usually need no explanation concerning the meaning of such terms as *the American Revolution*, *the Reconstruction* or *the Emancipation Proclamation* which refer to the familiar facts of the US history. In the Ukrainian translation, however, these terms are usually not replaced by their pseudo international equivalents. Instead, there is a frequent use of the descriptive terms better known to the Ukrainian reader:

'The Senator knew Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation by heart.' – *'Сенатор знав напам'ять проголошену Лінкольном декларацію щодо скасування рабства'* [3, p. 44].

With the knowledge of, and due regard to, these factors and methods of conveying the meanings of pseudo international lexica, the translator stands a good chance of making these false lexical cognates his good friends and allies.

Now let's make the comparative analysis of pseudo international lexicon units within the limits of the English and Ukrainian languages, on the bulk of the novel "The Picture of Dorian Grey", written by Oscar Wilde, and its translated equivalent, made by R. Dotsenko.

Concerning the influencing factors that predetermine the ways of conveying the meanings of pseudo international units (mentioned above), we will provide the causal research on the lexico-semantic deviations of pseudo internationalisms of English and Ukrainian lexicon. The test units will be divided into three groups: words with similar morphological forms but different concept; words with the same form that differ in denotative meaning but coincide in one of their connotations; words that contain different concept due to their emotive or stylistic characteristics.

1. Pseudo international words that are similar in form but have different semantics are probably the most frequent and confusing elements of pseudo international lexicon. Literal translating is inappropriate in this case, because these words cannot be treated as semantic equivalents.

The most frequently used in our test context word *artist* has such secondary connotations in English vocabulary as *actor*, *artiste*, *performer*. Nevertheless, naturally it is not employed in this sense when translated into Ukrainian:

‘An artist should create beautiful things, but should put nothing of his own life into them’ [6, p. 1]. – ‘Митець повинен творити прекрасне, але не повинен у нього нічого вкладати із свого власного життя.’ [5, p. 1]

‘If a man treats life artistically, his brain is his heart’ [6, p. 19]. – ‘Коли людина бере життя як митець, її серцем стає мозок’ [5, p. 19].

In this case we can see how the adverb *artistically*, which derives from the pseudo international word *artist*, is correctly expressed in Ukrainian variant as *як митець*. The use of its transliterated equivalent *артистично* would completely pervert the sense of the context.

In all the examples the English word *artist* has such denotative translation into Ukrainian as *художник (митець)* and not as *артист*. Although, the further comparison of semantic structure of both English *artist* and Ukrainian *артист* will show that the English *artist* names any representative of art, while the Ukrainian word *артист* firstly obtains the notion of a profession of an actor:

‘But you are quite right, Dorian. I should have shown myself more of an artist’ [6, p. 7]. – ‘Ваша правда, Доріане, – мені не слід було забувати, що я актриса’ [5, p. 7].

We should admit, that the transferred meaning of pseudo international components *artist* – *артист*, which obtains the meaning of *майстер своєї справи*, coincides within the both languages.

The precedents, when two languages borrow the same word from the third language, are of quite frequent occurrence. As well as the cases, when the borrowed word, remaining its morphological structure, ends up appearing with an absolutely different meaning in each language. Thus, the verbs *to pretend* and *претендувати* are both of Latin origin, due to the differences in development of the English and Ukrainian languages, they finally received different notions. And this way these two words turned into the translator’s false friends.

Among the synonyms of the English verb *to pretend* can be mentioned the concepts of *imitation*, *make-believe*, *simulation*. And its Ukrainian counterpart *претендувати* comprises the notion of *a claim*.

The adjective *genial* also coincides in morphological form with the Ukrainian word *геніальний*, and also represents its pseudo international cognate. In English this word can be used to describe something *affable*, *gentle*, *warm*. Normally, it expresses a notion of feeling and not the physical feature of the thing. It does not possess the quality of *genius*, and should be translated into Ukrainian as *привітний, ласкавий, м’який* (climate, weather).

'The sky was bright, and there was a genial warmth in the air' [6, p. 26]. – 'Небо було погідне, в повітрі м'яка теплінь' [5, p. 26].

'... to call on his uncle Lord Fermor, a genial if somewhat rough-mannered old bachelor' [6, p. 3]. – '... відвідати свого дядечка, лорда Фермора, цього добродушного, хоч і грубуватого трохи старого парубка' [5, p. 3].

'There will be no difficulty, sir', said the genial frame-maker' [6, p. 10]. – 'Нічого тут немає складного, сер', люб'язно сказав майстер' [5, p. 10].

The translator has mistreated the genuine concept of the word *genial*, having translated it by *люб'язно*. The meaning of the word *genial* does not include the notion of provenance, and thus the true shade of the meaning has been corrupted. To our mind, the equivalents *доброзичливо* or *привітно* would be more appropriate here.

2. There are words with the same form and dissimilar denotations, which stop being pseudo international in some of their connotative meanings. Although, considering such parameter as the frequency of use, we should admit that such lexical cognates do not coincide in their primary meaning, and that's why cannot be transliterated.

The lexico-semantic concept of the noun *climax* is *culmination, a decisive moment of something*. Thesaurus defines this word by four connotations, and only the last of them has sexual implication, which, actually, represents the main characteristic of the meaning of Ukrainian word *клімакс*. The most frequent use of this word in English can be found in sphere that reflects the development in dramatic or literary work, political or social field of people's activity.

'Romantic art begins with its climax' [6, p. 17]. – 'Романтичне мистецтво з кульмінаційної точки й починається' [5, p. 17].

There are examples when pseudo international words represent etymological doublets. Thus, the pairs *audience* – *аудієнція* and *auditorium* – *аудиторія*, were derived from the same origin – Latin verb *audio* 'listen'. Although, these words have different denotations, and neither of them can perfectly substitute another one in any of their combinations. But sometimes they appear to have similar connotative, and figurative, meanings, which have to be carefully studied by attentive translators.

'The audience probably thought it was a duet' [6, p. 2]. – 'Публіка, певно, вважала, що грало двоє' [5, p. 2].

'He felt that the eyes of Dorian Grey were fixed on him, and the consciousness that amongst his audience there was one whose

temperament, he wished to fascinate, seemed to give his wit keenness and to lend colour to his imagination' [6, p. 5]. – 'Лорд Генрі відчував на собі зосереджені очі Доріана Грея, і усвідомлення того, що серед аудиторії є душа, яку він прагне заповнити, наснажувало його дотепністю і забарвлювало йому уяву' [5, p. 5].

The last example shows a successful substitution of words of pseudo international etymology, despite the fact that it might look surprising for an inexperienced translator, according to the laws of logic. The morphological form of the nouns *auditorium* and *аудиторія* coincides, but the English word means a building or a part of it, where the audience sits. Thus we see that the semantic range of the Ukrainian *аудиторія* is wider than even comprised meanings of both English *audience* and *auditorium*.

The conceptual distinction between the English word *instrument* and its Ukrainian counterpart *інструмент* finds its roots in the disability of the Ukrainian word to obtain a figurative meaning. Thus, when translating *instrument* into Ukrainian within the metaphoric context, we recommend selecting transformations among the secondary connotations of this word.

'*Thought and language are to the artist instruments of art*' [6, p. 1]. – 'Думка і мова для митця – знаряддя мистецтва' [5, p. 1].

It is a rough-made translation. *Знаряддя* is the variation of *ammunition*, and thus cannot be associated with the *instrument of art*. We would like to offer a more appropriate translation, without a hint of military formality: 'Думка і мова – творчі принади митця.'

3. The stylistic factor results from the difference in the emotive and stylistic connotations of the correlated words. When, for example, the English word is neutral and its Ukrainian formal counterpart is negative, this pseudo international substitution is inappropriate, and the translator should look for another way out. For instance, the borrowed neologism *кар'єра* is used in Ukrainian only with the notion of *професійний піст*, although, the English *career* has wider application.

'*What about Lord Kent's only son, and his career?*' [6, p. 12]. – 'А одинак-син лорда Кента – яке його майбутнє?' [5, p. 2].

The word *scholar*, originated from Greek (*schole* 'lecture, school'), has its Ukrainian pseudo cognate *школяр* (*схолост*). Semantically these words are not adequate. Historically, the Ukrainian noun has apparently negative shade of meaning, while the English *scholar* is applied to people with considerable knowledge, and always taken as a compliment.

We have drawn a conclusion, that translators should certainly pay close attention while conveying the meanings of such words; study not only their primary meaning, given in the vocabulary, but also get acquainted with their secondary connotations; provide diachronic research on this problem in order to ascertain the historical background of pseudo internationalisms' etymological distinctions. Indeed, the irrelevant translation sometimes can cause serious confusion and misunderstanding, and entirely pervert the meaning of the context.

Upon the results of our cross-linguistic examination of pseudo internationalisms, we can make **final conclusions**, that phenomenon of the translator's false friends should be of interest not only for linguists but also for the philosophy of language, the sociology of language, and the psychology of language. We are also convinced, that thorough analysis on this subject has wider implications for other fields of language study. Especially, for translation studies, since false friends are perhaps the main enemy of translators; for language teaching, because knowledge about false friends is obviously necessary when teaching a foreign language; for contrastive analysis on the ways in which speakers of different languages and societies conceptualize reality by means of words that had the same meaning in the past; for the pragmatics of cross-linguistic understanding and misunderstanding.

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