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Cross-languages Figurativeness in Translator's Speech (Based on the Russian Translation of Turkish Novel «The Black Book» by Orhan Pamuk)

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Abstract

The study deals with the cross-languages figurativeness as a meta-language category characterizing the speech of a bilingual speaker. The examination of the meta-language category is based on the material of the Russian translation of Orhan Pamuk's novel «The Black Book». Russian variants of the Turkish image-bearing vocabulary units and text fragments, proposed by a professional translator V. Feonova, are evaluated in terms of their structural and semantic equivalency to the original.

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1. Introduction

The figurative aspect of language means viewed as explicators of a national language world image as well as figurativeness of the language created by the author (author's linguistic world image) in a literary work to reflect his/her personal image of the world is a topical research issue in modern linguistics. The national language world picture determines the cultural and associative background of a literary text as the author is regarded as a native speaker and a representative of the culture he/she belongs to. This background is transparent for the readers – native speakers and representatives of the same culture. However, some serious problems concerning the task of an adequate transfer of the author's images expressed in the text by linguistic means of the native language into a

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foreign language (especially if a language does not belong to the same language family) may arise because it eventually can affect the accuracy of conceptual meaning as well as figurative and symbolic cultural associations. A translator of a literary text has to be aware of the figurative vocabulary and stylistic means that bring the figurative charge to a literary piece while producing an adequate translation.

Figurativeness as a linguistic category is defined as a quality of language and text units to denote a fragment of reality (object, quality, process, situation) allegorically based on the analogy with a definite fragment of reality (object, quality, process, situation). Words and expressions are considered figurative if they are characterized by two dimensional semantics. Their relational notional meaning is expressed metaphorically or metonymically: by pointing at the original perceptual image, expressing meaningful characteristics of the denoted phenomena, allegorically. Typical figurative representations of a national culture communicated by the semantics of figurative lexical and phraseological units are based on the universal cognitive metaphorical and metonymical models which are characteristic to human cognition (Yurina, 2005).

Semasiological and cognitive-discourse theory of figurativeness is discussed in Russian linguistics in the works of such authors as N. F. Alefirenko (2008), N. A. Ilyukhina (1998), N. A. Lukyanova (1986), G. N. Sklyarevskaya (1993), V. N. Teliya (1996), as well as representatives of the Tomsk linguistic school founded by O. I. Blinova (2008) and E. A. Yurina (2005, 2008). The concept of language figurativeness is also presented in the works of foreign linguists, such as V. Evans (2009), S. Glucksberg (2001), R. Gibbs (2001). Cognitive aspect of figurativeness theory is based on the widely recognized ideas by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson (1980), which were further developed in the framework of modern cognitive theory of metaphor by R. Gibbs (1992), A. Barcelona (2000), A. N. Baranov (1991), A. P. Chudinov (2005) and others.

Cross-language translation of figurativeness in a literary work is one of the most challenging and important tasks for a translator. Various aspects of this problem are presented in the concept of cross-language lexical and phraseological equivalency in translation theory (Agayan, 2006; Breeva, Butenko, 1999; Komissarov, 1990; Kolganova, 2000; Chervenkova, 2004; Shveyzer, 1988), as well as in the works dealing with the typological study of metaphors and figurative systems of different languages (Imametdinova, 2009, Memetov, 2010, Nemirovskaya, 2008, Schäffner, 2004, Saygin, 2001 and others).

The purpose of this article is to present research results of the interaction of the figurative systems of different languages in the process of translation. The interaction is defined as decoding of the figurative system of the source-language and its conversion to the figurative system of the target-language – the native language of a translator. The original text of the Turkish novel written by Orhan Pamuk «The Black Book» (2000) and the text of its translation into Russian made by V. Feonova (2000) serve as material sources for the study. The original text and the translation of the novel are rich in figurative language units and are highly metaphorical. It can be explained by the semantic and stylistic multilayered nature of the novel whose detective plot is combined with a sketch-publicistic analysis of the history and current situation in Turkey and with the symbolic, mythological cultural context of the Islamic East. As a result, the translator had to preserve the metaphorical nature and figurativeness of the original text in condition of the structural and typological language difference as well as Slavic and Turkic cultural mismatch.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Key terms

Russian and Turkish pairs of identical or semantically close figurative words and expressions proposed by a translator as cross language equivalents are regarded as the smallest units for the analysis. All in all, 1089 Russian figurative words and expressions were collected by continuous sampling from the target text, these units were matched with their Turkish equivalents from the source text and their cross language figurative equivalency was evaluated. The units under analysis were represented by the figurative lexemes, language metaphors, set figurative comparisons, figurative idioms and author's metaphors, which either match or differ structurally in two languages.

Language metaphors – are semantically motivated image-bearing units with the figurative metaphorical meaning. As a rule, language metaphors are presented in the dictionary and have a fixed meaning. For example, rus. *issyaknut'* 'to end up, to run dry' cf. 'the water ran dry in the spring' (in the translated text – *issyaklo voobrazhenie*) which is used by the translator for the Turkish metaphor turk. *kurumak* (lit.: 'dry up') in the

expression *hayâlgücü kuruduğu* (lit.: ‘imagination dried up’); the Russian metaphor *krutitsya v golove* ‘to appear in one’s mind’ (about thoughts and images) literally matches the Turkish metaphor *aklının içinde olup biten harika şeyleri* (lit.: ‘wonderful things that are spinning in the head’); the Turkish metaphor *o sihir liilacı* (lit.: ‘magic medicine’) is translated by a figurative word *chudodeystvennoe lekarstvo* (‘wonder drug’).

Speech metaphors – context defined metaphorical text word-usages, which are not registered in the dictionary but are constructed in accordance with the typical metaphorical models and are easily recognized and interpreted, for example: rus. *byutsya drug o druga bukvy* ‘letters hit one another’ – in Turkish is *harflerin birbirine nasıl vurulacağını*; rus. *bezdonnyy kolodez ikh pamyati* ‘bottomless memory well’ – *hafızalarının dipsiz kuyusuna*; rus. *on byl spuschen na vodu voennym perevorotom* ‘it was put afloat as a result of a military coup’ – *askeri darbenin denize indirildiği*.

Author’s metaphors – occasional metaphors which are unique by their metaphoric transfer and are not a part of the language conventional conceptual system; such metaphors reflect the author’s personal aesthetic image of the world: rus. *Pamyat’ – eto sad* ‘memory is a garden’ – turk. *Hafıza bir bahçedir*; rus. *gorod–son* ‘city is a dream’ – turk. *rüya şehirden*; rus. *boyus’ videt’ na litsach mrachnyie bukvy* ‘I am afraid to see gloomy letters on faces’ – turk. *harflerin karanlık yüzlerinden korkuyorum*.

Phraseological units – semantically indivisible, fixed combinations which are characterized by the stable holistic meaning of a component structure: rus. *kozha da kosti* ‘very skinny (about a person)’; rus. *chto igolkoy kolodets kopat’* ‘to do a labor-intensive and time-consuming activity’ – turk. *ığneyle kuyu kazar gib*; rus. *peresazhivaemysya s loshadi na ishaka!* ‘to descend to a lower level (about quality of life)’ – turk. *attan inip eşeğe biniyoruz, hayırlı olsun!*

2.2. Research hypothesis

A comparative study of the Russian-Turkish image-bearing vocabulary units allows to present the cross language figurativeness as a mental category characterizing the interplay of figurative verbalizing codes reflecting some vision of the world. These codes are in the meta-linguistic perception of the translator and belong to different language systems. The issue of the cross-languages figurativeness was addressed in the works by E. V. Karmazkaya (2007), where it was presented as a unity of representations in the form of images, pictures, frames appearing in the mind of a non-native speaker perceiving image-bearing vocabulary units of a foreign language. Developing this idea, N. F. Aliferenko speaks about the cross-language figurativeness of phraseological units which ensure the «possibility of phraseological figurativeness transfer cross-linguistically» (2008, p. 52). According to N. F. Aliferenko, cross-language phraseological figurativeness «is based on the reference ability of mental modeling in the cognition of native speakers of different languages during the perception of cognitive discourse contour of related phrasemes» (ibid, p. 53).

We understand cross-language figurativeness as a metalinguistic and meta-text category that is a part of the language cognition of a bilingual person that is actualized during the process of decoding of figurative system of a native or a second language into another language correspondingly during cross language communication. Decoding of the native language figurativeness is done automatically without any cognitive effort, while decoding of the foreign language figurativeness can be communicatively difficult due to incomplete or inadequate knowledge of language and culture. Only in case of high communicative competence in the foreign language will the decoding of figurativeness into the native language be successful. The decoding process of the native language figurativeness into a foreign language is seen as the most difficult which is proved by the results of A. P. Saygin’s psycholinguistic translation study involving Turkish and English metaphors (Saygin, 2001). The difficulty is explained by the fact that the language cognition of a native speaker incorporates the whole system of metaphorical models and figurative meanings (typical for a particular lingua-culture), which are transmitted by the system of figurative means of a native language. In the context of a foreign language the speaker perceiving the conceptual meaning of a foreign language easily finds an equivalent for an image-bearing vocabulary unit in the native system of metaphorical models and figurative meanings. The situation is reverse in case of decoding the native figurativeness into a foreign language: without possessing the figurative code of a foreign language in full, the speaker has to use extended descriptions to convey the figurative meaning which can lead to an inevitable loss of expressive and cultural

connotations.

Translation of metaphorically loaded texts emphasizes the cross-language figurativeness as a cognitive category which determines the tactics and strategies of the translator's speech activity. The strategy aimed at the preservation of figurative meaning of the text determines the tactics of equivalent translation of an image-bearing vocabulary unit and search for such foreign language image-bearing units which are capable to create the same effect of figurativeness which the native reader obtains while reading the original.

2.3. Research purpose

The purpose of the research was to conduct a comparative analysis of the image-bearing vocabulary units presented in the target text in terms of their structural, semantic, stylistic and cultural equivalency to the language units of the source text. The analysis of such kind will help reveal the type of cross language figurativeness explicated in the speech activity of the Russian translator while working with the Turkish literary text.

2.4. Research Design

At the first stage of the analysis image-bearing lexical and phraseological units were identified in the source and target texts. Then semantically related Russian-Turkish matching pairs were selected which were explicated in the translator's activity as image-bearing equivalents. For example, the Russian image-bearing unit rus. *unizit'* 'offend, insult, figuratively, place in a lower position by means of offensive words and actions' is an equivalent to the Turkish image-bearing unit *küçümsemek* 'offend, insult, figuratively, make smaller by offensive words and actions'.

At the second stage a comparative analysis of the semantics of the Russian-Turkish equivalents as well as their text realization was done to measure the degree of equivalency between lexical figurative systems of the source and the target texts in terms of language and literary image translation accuracy.

At the next stage semantics and text realization of related Turkish image-bearing units from the source text were evaluated in accordance with the following criteria: 1) match or mismatch of the image-bearing language units used by both the author and the translator; 2) match or mismatch of the direct concept meaning of the image-bearing language units; 3) match or mismatch of an image ground of the units in the source and target texts; 4) match or mismatch of the evaluative connotations; 5) match or mismatch of the cultural and symbolic associations.

3. Discussion of Results

A complete semantic and structural match was found in such metaphors as rus. *utonut' v podushke* 'to sink in a pillow' – turk. *yastığa gömülmek*; rus. *proskol'znut'* 'to pass by unnoticed' – turk. *süzülmek*; rus. *rayskoe mesto* 'a place of paradise' – turk. *cennet yer*; such image-bearing words with a metaphoric inner form as rus. *nevyinosimiyi chelovek* 'with unbearable character, which is figuratively impossible to bear (about a person)' – turk. *dayanılmaz kişi olacağıma* that originated from a Turkish verb *dayanmak* 'to hold, to bear some weight', lit.: a person whom it is impossible to hold; such phraseological units as rus. *kozha da kosti* 'about someone who is very skinny' turk. *bir deri bir kemik*, lit.: 'just skin, just bones'; such author's metaphors as rus. *neterpenie, kotoroe, kazalos', vot vot perel'yotsya cherez kray, kak sbezhavshee moloko*, lit. 'impatience which looks as if it will slip over like a run-away milk' – turk. *kaynayarak birdenbire taşan bir tencere sütün tatsızlığıyla içinde hissetti*.

Lack of structural equivalency was found in cases of formal structural mismatch of the image-bearing language units in the source and target texts. For example, an image-bearing comparison in the source text is translated by means of a language metaphor: turk. *nefesi tikanır gibi* lit.: 'as if gasping' – rus. *perehvatyivalo dyihanie* 'took one's breath away' (about delight, excitement).

There are cases in the target text where the Turkish metaphor is translated with the Russian one which is its full conceptual equivalent but there is a mismatch in their image grounding. For example, Turkish *kendi iradesinin saflığını bozan* – rus. lit.: 'were breaking cleanness of his will' is translated as *razrushali tvyordost' ego voli* 'were breaking his tenacity'. The translator could have been motivated by a common collocational use of the Russian metaphors: *tvoyordaya volya* 'hard will', but *chistota pomyislov* 'heavenly thoughts'. As a result, despite high

degree of equivalency in the conceptual meaning, the difference in image grounding causes differences in the shades of meaning. For example, the character in the source text betrays his principles because of bad influence and it is stressed that something had spoiled him, destroyed his innate purity while in the target text it was the ability of the character to counter bad influence that deteriorated and his will weakened.

The analysis resulted in distinguishing the following 5 levels of equivalency:

1. Complete equivalency – the translation and the original are semantically, structurally and pragmatically identical. For example, the Russian phraseological unit *odnim machom* ‘quickly, instantly’, lit.: ‘for the period of a hand wave’ totally corresponds to the Turkish phraseologism *bir çarpıda* due to the same image grounding. Comparative structure rus. *slasche myoda* ‘about the feeling of emotional pleasure compared with a pleasant taste of honey’ is identical to the Turkish *baldan tatlı*.

2. Equivalency of high degree is ensured by the match in characteristic features of an image-bearing unit, unity of conceptual meaning, proximity of connotations along with the mismatch of initial image grounding. Rus. *tyordo znal* (originally from the adjective *hard* ‘resisting mechanical deformation, retaining its structure’) corresponds to *adı gibi biliyordu* (lit.: ‘knew as his own name’); rus. *chudodeystvennoe lekarstvo* – turk. *sihirli ilaç* (lit.: ‘magic medicine’).

3. Partial equivalency is determined by the image bearing characteristics of a language unit in the source and the target texts and preservation of conceptual meaning but there is a mismatch in the original image grounding: rus. *ubit' beskonechnyie chasy* ‘to kill infinite hours’ – turk. *sonsuzluk saatini doldurmaya* (lit.: ‘to fill in infinite time’); rus. *ostro oschutil* lit.: ‘to sense sharply’ – turk. *duygusuna kapıldı* (lit.: ‘appeared in the flow of feelings’); rus. *iz kozhi von lezut* lit. ‘crawling out of their skin’ – turk. *can attıklarını* (lit.: ‘ready to give their souls away’).

4. Equivalency of low degree is found in cases when only general meaning is conveyed with the help of image-bearing language units which do not have direct equivalents in the source language: rus. *predal smerti* (lit. ‘brought to death’) – turk. *idam ettirdiğini* (lit.: ‘ordered to kill them’); rus. *prokruchival v golove* (lit. ‘spinned in his head’) – turk. *yenidenkuruyordu* ‘thought constantly’ (lit.: ‘wound like watch in his head’).

5. Zero equivalency (absence of equivalency) is found when the image-bearing language unit is translated descriptively as there is no corresponding image-bearing language unit in Russian: *emu stalo strashno* (lit. ‘he got scared’) – turk. *bu anlamlar arasında kaybolabileceği de geldi aklına* (lit.: ‘he can get lost in this meanings/thoughts’); rus. *on ne umeet rasskazyvat'* ‘he can’t tell stories’ – turk. *parlak olabilmeyi bilmiyor* (lit.: ‘he can’t be bright’).

The analysis allowed to reveal that while translating units of the figurative system of the Turkish language the Russian translator decoded allegorically (figuratively, metaphorically, symbolically) the expressed meanings using the Russian language image-bearing vocabulary recourses. This process revealed some universal and culturally specific features of cross-language figurativeness within the two studied systems. The universal status of cross language figurativeness is assured, firstly, by the presence of basic metaphorical models, singled out by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), which assure similarity of images grounded on the same mental schemes. Orientational and container metaphors are among these (rus. *ogranichivat'* lit. ‘to border’ – turk. *kısıtlamak* ‘to deprive of freedom’; rus. *opustoshennyi* ‘desolated’ – turk. *boşalmış* ‘disappointed, the one who lost his ideal (about a person)’). Secondly, it is achieved by the similarity of sentient experience, similarity of physiological, psychological and social qualities being universal for all people (rus. *gorech'* ‘bitterness’ – turk. *acıyla* ‘a sense of sadness, grief, having a bitter taste’; rus. *oslepyonnyiy* ‘blinded’ – turk. *körolmuştu* ‘being totally influenced by smb., lacking critical mind’).

The differences in the figurative systems are rooted in the peculiar ways of linguistic coding of universal meanings (rus. *ih snyi perepletalis'* ‘their dreams interwove’ – turk. *rüyalarının birbirine karıştığına* (lit.: ‘their dreams was mixed’), with the national peculiarity of cultural tradition (rus. *litso stalo pustyim* ‘the face got empty’ – turk. *huzurla bakan yüzü, kınalar sürülmüş kurbanlık bir koyunununki kadar boşmuş artık* (lit.: ‘the face looks calmly as if a sheep daubed by alcanna, which will be sacrificed’).

Structural and semantic similarity is the highest while translating linguistic, speech and author’s metaphors, i.e. the Russian image-bearing language unit matches the Turkish image-bearing language unit structurally in the translation. There is only partial equivalency; high equivalency is rare among translated linguistic metaphors from Turkish into Russian. It is explained by the fact that Turkish metaphors are culturally marked and are not registered

in dictionaries and other written sources. Typical images represented by the Turkish metaphors do not often match the images of the native Russians. As a result, there is incomplete equivalency in translation. For example, Russian language metaphor *vospominaniya uskol'zayut ot menya* 'memories slide away from me', used in the target text, is only partially equivalent to *benden kaçan anılarının* (lit.: 'ran away from me memories').

The translator managed to reach complete equivalency while translating the author's metaphors. Despite the fact that such metaphors reflect aesthetic vision of the author and are fresh and original, their translation does not require much effort. Translation of speech metaphors is characterized by the same feature. Speech metaphors are also occasional and are not registered in the language system, and the translator easily translates their meaning in a relatively full manner. For example, rus. *vyirastaet ego istinnyiy golos* 'individual writing manner, original vision and evaluation of the situation is strengthened' (about the work of the reporter, his articles) literally corresponds to the Turkish metaphorical construction *kendi gerçek sesinin yükselişine*, having the same semantics.

Phraseological units having no equivalents are the most difficult to translate. Thus, while translating idioms the translator changes them into the Russian metaphors carrying a similar image. For example, such Turkish idiom as *yüreklerine ateşler düşüren* 'inspire by ideas' (lit.: 'throw fire in their hearts') is translated by personification *tronut' serdtsa* (lit.: 'to touch hearts'). In some cases figurativeness of the source text is lost as only the conceptual meaning of an image-bearing language unit is translated. For example, turk. *ayağı kesilince* (lit.: 'legs cut into ground' meaning 'somebody stayed at some place for a long time, 'got stuck somewhere', that is why he stopped appearing in public') in the following context "*saat tamircisinin pavyondan ayağı kesilince*" is translated into Russian as *chasovoy master vdruk propal* 'watch repairer suddenly disappeared'.

Direct conceptual meaning of image-bearing words and expressions is translated accurately in the majority of the analyzed contexts. Image grounding of the corresponding units in the source and target texts match completely or partially.

Image-bearing vocabulary of a literary text, as a rule, serve to express evaluation and to create expressiveness, therefore, a match/mismatch of expressiveness and evaluation of the Russian and Turkish image-bearing unit of the text during translation is seen as an important feature of equivalency. As a rule, the translator tries to choose the image-bearing vocabulary unit which matches the original unit in emotional, evaluation and expressive connotations.

The degree of equivalency for image-bearing vocabulary units in different languages depends on the match or mismatch of culture and symbolic associations. Similarity of a stable cultural background withdraws the search for alternative ways of its presentation in the other language. Thus, many organs and parts of human body are symbolically represented in a universal, common to all people way. For example, in both Russian and Turkish such expression as rus. *u nego pod nosom* – turk. *burnu dibindeki* (lit.: 'under the nose') means 'near, close'.

Cultural and symbolic connotations of precedent personal names, geographic names in particular, which are abundant in the novel (*Istanbul, Bosporus, Beyoğlu, etc.*), have some peculiarities in translation. Thus, the central street *Beyoğlu* in *Istanbul*, where all modern business centers, offices, banks, shopping malls are situated, is associated with the western civilization for the native speakers of Turkish and symbolizes the destruction of traditional culture and as result, basics of public morals. This toponym has a negative culture-symbolic connotation associated with the desire to be modern and comply with the western trend, which in reality means to live an immoral, criminal and evil life. To convey the same connotation in translation the translator uses the image-bearing unit *na hanzheskom ryinke pokazuchi pod nazvaniem «Beyoğlu»* 'on the sanctimonious market of showing-off called *Beyoğlu*', which is absent in the source text.

4. Conclusion

Summing up the results of the analysis we can conclude that the author's images found in the source text are translated successfully and the equivalents chosen satisfy the goals and objectives of the literary text. The emotional effect of the source and the target texts is similar. Basic concepts constituting the author's model of the world and based on the key categories and images of Turkish culture are preserved. Despite some differences in details (on structural and semantic level of some vocabulary units, especially idioms) the target text is equivalent to the source text in terms of its figurativeness, metaphorical characteristics and expressiveness due to a large number of image-bearing vocabulary units and other language structures aimed to convey the key images of the Turkish culture into

Russian.

Abbreviations

lit.	literally
rus.	Russian
turk.	Turkish

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