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Analysis of neologisms in the prologue to the poem of v. Mayakovsky “cloud in trousers”

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Abstract

The article is dedicated to the analysis of translation of neologisms in the prologue to the poem of a famous Soviet futurist poet Vladimir Mayakovsky - “Cloud in Trousers”. The poem, which was written in 1914, is rich in neologisms, and their translation may cause some difficulties – especially taking into account Mayakovsky’s peculiar style. The translators had not only to save the original rhymes and rhythm, but also to manage to find appropriate equivalents to the poet’s neologisms. They are extremely important for the translations of the poem, since all of them have their own meaning and help the readers to make the poem more vivid and picturesque. The author analyzes the original neologisms and their translations in the English, Turkish and Spanish translations. The aim of the work determined the following objectives: to determine presence or absence of the original neologisms in the translations required and the way of their translation.

Key words: Mayakovsky, Cloud in Trousers, neologisms, comparative analysis, stylistic figures.



Introduction

Mayakovsky's art always stood out among his contemporaries. He was famous not only in Russia, but also abroad. The work upon the translation of his poems began during his lifetime, in 1930s – we should also mention, that in the 1930s translated literature was one of the main forms of the Soviet Union's cultural dialogue with the West (Safiullina, 2012). One of the most outstanding features of the poet's art are neologisms – new words created by the poet. The futurist poet, who was ahead of his time, easily and seamlessly weaved unusual words into the fabric of his poems, thus creating the same unique style. This is the most vivid feature of Mayakovsky's language (Vinogradova et al, 1995).

When talking about neologisms in the poetry of Mayakovsky, the researchers often mean not neologisms, but nonce words (also called occasionalisms) which have a very disputable character in linguistics (Smirnova et al, 2015). According to the glossary of linguistic terms, a nonce word (occasionalism) is a word, used only in this context (Rozenal & Telenkova, 1976), unlike a neologism, the emergence of which must be justified by a necessity, which is usually lack of a word for denoting the concept in the language required. That is what we observe while reading the poetry of Mayakovsky – he created new words not while searching for new concepts, but rather while searching for a new form of expressing his thoughts and ideas. Nevertheless, we should also mention the fact that Mayakovsky's neologisms and occasionalisms are always recognizable and characteristic – they carry a deep meaning, and the author did not always care about how to take them into an appropriate form. Many of his works are rich in neologisms, including ‘Cloud in Trousers’ – according to Mihail L. Gasparov, a literary researcher, there are 63 of them in this poem. Interestingly, most of them carry negative meanings, and the readers experience displeasing images and associations.

In this work, we will study how the poet's neologisms were translated into English, Turkish and Spanish languages. Translating poetry has always been difficult, and the presence of neologisms in the text can only make this work much more challenging. Nevertheless, translating poems is necessary to give foreign readers a chance to get acquainted with different authors and their literature works. Researchers note that translation, being one of the forms of existence of a work of literature, brings to light new meanings in the original text, thus to a considerable extent determining the fate of a work of literature in a cultural tradition receiving it (Galieva & Nagumanova, 2014).

As we have already mentioned above, there are 63 neologisms in the full text of the poem. Since it is quite a large number, we will only analyze the neologisms present in the prologue to the poem. To make the analysis more convenient, the prologue will be divided into several parts. In each part we will examine the original neologism, its presence or absence in the translation into the English, Turkish or Spanish languages and the way it was translated.

Nowadays, there has been a noticeable development of such a direction as communicative linguistics, so the comparison of the ways of translating into different languages is becoming more relevant.



Materials and methods

The data has been collected by using the following groups of research methods: component analysis, content analysis, comparison, observation.

While working on the paper, we used the translations of Vladimir Mayakovsky by Herbert Marshall into English, Ataol Behramoglu into Turkish and Jose Manuel Prietu (Herbert, 1955).

Table 1. The prologue to the poem “Clous in Trousers”, Part 1.

Vashu mysl', mechtayushchuyu na razmyagchennom mozgu, kak vyzhiredshij lakej na zasalennoj kushetke, budu draznit' ob okrovavlennyj serdca loskut; dosyta iz"izdevayus', nahal'nyj i edkij.	Your thoughts, dreaming on a softened brain, like an over-fed lackey on a greasy settee, with my heart's bloody tatters I'll mock again; impudent and caustic, I'll jeer to superfluity.	Düşünceniz Sünepe beyninizde yatar ya miskin miskin Yağ bağlamış bir uşak yatar gibi pis bir yataкта Çileden çıkarak kanlı paçavralarıyla yüreğimin Alaya alacağım onu, hınzır ve hayta.	A vuestros pensamientos que sueñan sobre sus sesos reblandecidos como un gordo lacayo sobre un sofá grasiento quiero irritarlos con un jirón sangriento de mi corazón, me burlaré hasta hartarme, mordaz y atrevido.
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In the first extract we can two neologisms - ‘vyzhiredshij’ and ‘iz"izdevayus‘. The participle ‘vyzhiredshij’ immediately creates a vivid image for the reader – not just plump, fat or obese (there are many synonyms for this word), so the author uses a new word for the existing concept. The word causes negative associations just by the way it sounds, and this highlights Mayakovsky’s talent, his virtuoso ability to use his mother tongue for presenting his thought clearly, distinctly and precisely. As we have already mentioned above, ‘vyzhiredshij’ is a participle, which was derived from the verb ‘zhiret’. In the translations studied in our work, this neologism was not saved. In the English translation another participle was used – it is ‘overfed’, which means ‘too well nourished’. The participle is not a neologism, and Collins English Dictionary proves this fact. Moreover, we should also mention, that the difference between the original variant and the translation can also be seen in the meaning. The image laid by Mayakovsky originally is much more colourful than its translations. In the Turkish translation there is another expression - ‘yağ bağlamış’ - ‘fat, obese’. It is not a neologism either, and this slightly changes the image created by the author. While translating into Spanish, the interpreter used the word ‘gordo’ - ‘fat, plump, obese’. Besides the fact that it is not a neologism, we should also mention



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that the word has quite a neutral undertone – there is no contempt that the author tried to put into his occasionalism. That means that the image the reader should imagine suffers and become less picturesque.

The next neologism is ‘iz’izdevayus’, meaning ‘I will mock entirely, completely’. This verb emphasizes the enhancement of the image – I will not just mock, but I will do it to the last. The word is derived with the prefix ‘iz’, meaning that the action will be brought to the utmost degree (Yefremova, 2002). The author talks contemptuously and pejoratively about the way he will treat the philistines he addresses. While analyzing the neologism the English, Turkish and Spanish translations of the neologism we can see that the interpreters used existing future forms – ‘I’ll mock’, ‘alaya alacağım’ and ‘me burlaré’, meaning ‘I will mock’. The neologism has been lost within the process of translation again, and the image was significantly weakened – there is no shade of contempt, which can easily be captured in the original text.

Table 2. The prologue to the poem “Clous in Trousers’, Part 2.

<p>U menya v dushe ni odnogo sedogo volosa, i starcheskoj nezhnosti net v nej! Mir ogrómov moshch'yu golosa, idu — krasivyj, dvadcatidvuhletnij.</p> <p>Nezhnye! Vy lyubov' na skripki lozhite. Lyubov' na litavry lozhit grubyj. A sebya, kak ya, vyvernut' ne mozhete, chtoby byli odni sploshnye guby!</p>	<p>Of Grandfatherly gentleness I'm devoid, there's not a single grey hair in my soul! Thundering the world with the might of my voice, I go by - handsome, twenty-two-year-old. Gentle ones! You lay your love on a violin. The crude lay their love on a drum. but you can't, like me, turn inside out entirely, and nothing but human lips become!</p>	<p>Ne gönlüme tek bir ak düştü, Ne ihtiyar bir sevecenlik başımda! Tuttu bütün dünyayı sesim, o korkunç gümbürtü; Yakışıklı yürürüm şimdi Yirmi iki yaşımda. Siz çitkırıldılar! Kemanlara geçirenler sevdayı. Siz geçiren hamhalatlar dümbeklere. Derinizi kolaysa tersyüz edin benim gibi, Ortada baştan aşağı dudaklar kalsın bir kere!</p>	<p>¡No tengo en el alma ni una sola cana ni tampoco hay en ella ternura senil! Ensordeciendo al mundo con el poder de mi voz avanzo hermoso, con mis veintidós años de existencia.</p> <p>¡Los delicados tocan el amor con tiernos violines! Pero el rudo se sirve de timbales. Prueben, como yo, a darse vuelta como un guante y ser todo labios.</p>
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The only neologism here is a transgressive ‘ogromiv’. Here we can see another vivid example of how Mayakovsky managed to express a lot of meaning in only one word. We can immediately imagine a picture of how the poet walks the planet, filling the space around him with his loud and sonorous voice. Unfortunately, the interpreters were not able to save the neologism. In the English translation the interpreter used the word ‘thundering’ - ‘very large; thumping; whopping’. The Spanish translation is quite similar. The participle



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used - ‘ensordeciendo’ - means ‘muffling’. Unlike previous translations, the Turkish one shows us an expressive means – a metaphor ‘sesim [dünyayı] tuttu’ - “my voice [seized] the world’. Comparing the variants of translation, we can come to the conclusion that using an expressive means instead of a single word can help to live up the image.

Table 3. The prologue to the poem “Clous in Trousers’, Part 3.

<p>Prihodite učit'sya — iz gostinoj batistovaya, chinnaya chinovnica angel'skoj ligi.</p> <p>I kotoraya guby spokojno perelistyvaet, kak kuharka stranicy povarennoj knigi.</p> <p>Hotite — budu ot myasa beshenyj — i, kak nebo, menyaya tona — hotite — budu bezukoriznenno nezhnyj, ne muzhchina, a — oblako v shtanah!</p> <p>Ne veryu, chto est' cvetochnaya Nicca! Mnoyu opyat' slavoslovyatsya muzhchiny, zalezhannye, kak bol'nica, i zhenshchiny, istrepannye, kak poslovica.</p>	<p>Out of chintz-covered drawing-rooms, come and learn- decorous bureaucrats of angelic leagues.</p> <p>And you whose lips are calmly thumbed, as a cook turns over cookery-book leaves.</p> <p>If you like- I'll be furiously flesh elemental, or - changing to tones that the sunset arouses</p> <p>If you like - I'll be extraordinary gentle, not a man, but - a cloud in trousers! Flowery Nice doesn't exist Again I sing to praise Men used as hospital beds Women worn out as clichés.</p>	<p>Gelin de görün – Melekler takımında görevli bir hanım var salonda, Keten gibi düzgün.</p> <p>Ahçı nasıl çevirirse yemek kitabını Dudaklar çeviriyor yollu yordamlı o da.</p> <p>İsterseniz Ben çılgına dönerim tenden, -ya da renk değiştiren bir gök gibi ufukta- isterseniz öyle çıtıktırıldım olurum öyle incelirim ki çıkardım insanlıktan, dönerim pantolonlu bir buluta!</p> <p>İnanıyorum çiçekler içindeki bir Nis'e! Yine herkes benim yüzümde tafrı sahibi, Bir hastane gibi köhne erkekler de, Yıpranmış kadınlar da bir atasözü gibi.</p>	<p>Salga a aprender desde su sala de batista la ceremoniosa funcionaria de liga angelical.</p> <p>Y también la que hojea en silencio sus labios como una cocinera un libro de recetas. Si lo desean comeré carne hasta ponerme rabioso -y, como el cielo, mudaré de tonos-; si lo desean seré impecablemente tierno.</p> <p>No un hombre, ¡sino una nube en pantalones! No creo que exista una Niza florida. Por mi conducto otra vez serán loados todos los hombres que yacen como un hospital y todas las mujeres gastadas como un refrán.</p>
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In the last extract two neologisms will be examined - ‘slavoslovyatsya’ and ‘zalyozhannye’. The first one of them – ‘slavoslovyatsya’ was derived from an archaic verb ‘slavoslovit’ - ‘to praise in a prayer’ with the help of a reflexive particle ‘sya’. In the English, Turkish and Spanish translations there is no similar construction. Moreover, in the English translation the original expression was also changed – ‘I sing to praise’ denotes a



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slightly different idea. In the Turkish and Spanish translations the meaning is also quite different – for example, we see a Turkish expression ‘herkes...tafra sahibi’ - ‘everyone ... is proud’ and a Spanish one - ‘otra vez serán loados’ - ‘they will be appreciated again’. According to the author in the original poem, the protagonist says that the men will be praised due to him, but in all the translations above this idea was not saved.

The last neologism under study is ‘zalyozhannye’. Despite of the fact that there is a similar word ‘zalezhavshiesya’ in the Russian language, the author preferred to create another word, which expressed the author’s image more clearly. Unfortunately, the neologism also was not translated precisely – in the English translation we see the expression ‘hastane gibi köhne erkekler’ - ‘men stale as a hospital’. While translating into Spanish, the interpreter also limited himself to a comparison ‘hombres que yacen como...’ - ‘men lie like...’. We can see again that due to lack of appropriate expressive means and stylistic devices in the translations of the poem, the author’s images and ideas were changed but not for the better, since the poet’s original ideas are lost.

Results

Thus, we can conclude that unfortunately none of Mayakovsky’s neologisms were translated properly or kept close to its original meaning and look, and this fact negatively impacted the author’s idea and did not allow the interpreters to transfer the poet’s precise images to foreign readers. While translating neologisms and occasionalisms the interpreters generally rendered the sense with the help of the words already existing in their languages, only using other expressive means and stylistic devices in some exceptional cases. Lack of each neologism leads to the change in meaning of the original ideas of Mayakovsky. We know that each of his words, especially the ones that were created by him, carries a deep meaning and is very important for the whole author’s image. If there are neologisms in the translations, it makes the translated image weaker and less eloquent.

Nevertheless, we should also mention that poetry is always very difficult to translate, and often it is not even possible to save the original thoughts of the author fully. This is very relevant to such an extraordinary poet as Mayakovsky, whose poems can seem peculiar even to most of Russian readers, and it is quite natural, that translating his poetry into any other language is quite a challenging task. Every translator has his own way of work, and a translator having perfect knowledge about all models of analysis usually does not follow any exact model, but he utilizes questions from different models according to the situation or depending on the text to be translated (Ayupova, 2014).

Neologisms are a unique structure, a special feature of a language, which often cannot be translated precisely and competently due to grammar and lexical characteristics of the language they are being translated into, since any language is perceived as a nation’s cultural phenomena. Moreover, while translating poetry, an interpreter is always restricted to the frames of rhymes and rhythm laid by the author, which do not allow him to save all the original ideas and images of the poet.



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Discussion

The purpose of our study was to determine presence or absence of the original neologisms in the translations required and the way of their translation. Having examined in detail the original prologue and its translations into English, Turkish and Spanish language, we made conclusions about some features and peculiarities of translating neologisms and occasionalisms in this very extract. Firstly, we made conclusions about presence or absence of an exact neologism or occasionalism while comparing the original material and its translations, If the neologism or occasionalism was present in at least one of the translations, we tried to analyze the way the interpreter translated the word. Finally, we came to the conclusion, that none of Mayakovsky’s neologisms were translated properly or kept close to its original meaning and look.

Conclusions

As we have already mentioned above, the interpreters were not able to save most of the poet’s neologisms and occasionalisms when translating this very extract into the languages required. We have also supposed that this might be caused by several reasons: firstly, the peculiar language and style the author had; secondly, grammar and lexical characteristics of the languages required; thirdly, the original rhymes and rhythm that the interpreters had to save.

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