Translation of Structures with Social and Grammatical Gender in the English Language (Based on Feature Film Scripts)

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Abstract

The paper analyzes the features of the transmission of gender-marked language structures in translation from English into Russian. The research object is the linguistic manifestation of gender-generic relations in the text of feature film scripts and their translation. The author describes the structure of scripts, which, in order to express the emotionality of the characters, must contain the relationship of events, descriptions of the environment, and brief notes. At the level of translation analysis, the author presents strategies, methods, and methods of translation, considering social and grammatical gender relations in the language. When translating, it is necessary to qualitatively convey the interpretation and understanding of the system and norms of the text of the source language, along with an explanation of its linguistic structures. The paper considers contemporary approaches to understanding the correlation between the semantic category of gender and the socio-cultural category of gender, which are especially significant in translation activities in the film industry. It should be noted that within the framework of the spread of globalization and the struggle for political influence between women and men, gender manifestations in the language in the context of socio-political discourse become the starting point for controversy. An appropriate understanding of the extralinguistic realities of the social and grammatical gender structures of the language will help the translator create an image that is as close as possible to the original and does not contradict the socio-cultural realities of the country of the target language.

Keywords

Social gender · Society · Translation · Grammatical gender · Script · Movie · Language

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1 Introduction

The translation is a complex, cumulative process that includes many activities based on other disciplines related to language, writing, linguistics, and culture.

As a means of communication, translation plays an important role because the translated text must convey the same intentions as the original. To achieve this goal, translators must develop their linguistic competence; that is, translators must be aware that differences between language construction and language use can affect the message of the text.

In addition to conveying the semantic information contained in the text, denotational meanings, and emotional and stylistic connotations, the translator must consider the communicative intent of the author, the type of audience for which the message is intended, and socio-psychological characteristics and background knowledge of this audience. A process driven by so many variables cannot have a single outcome. Moreover, the synonymic and paraphrasing potential of the language is so high that there can be several ways of describing the same extralinguistic situation, and even if they may not be exactly identical, the differences can be neutralized by the context. It should also be remembered that the translator's decision may vary depending on the receptor and the purpose of the translation.

Most authors of the translation theory agree that before starting any translation, the translator should analyze the text comprehensively because this is the only way to convey an adequate perception of the source text.

The problem of the correlation of social and grammatical gender relations in the translation of feature films from English into Russian is still relevant. Even though it is being studied from different perspectives (linguistic,

psycho-linguistic, social, cultural, anthropological, etc.), a universal solution has not yet been found.

In connection with the growing world political, social, and economic transformations, the semantic realization of gender roles is also subject to a certain transformation. In many countries, it is generally accepted that men and women have incompatible, opposite personal and behavioral characteristics.

The male gender appears as aggressive, strong, independent, intelligent, and creative, while the feminine is submissive, emotional, conservative, and weak. Currently, the definition of masculinity only as "male" and femininity as "female" is stereotypical and forms false conservative ideas (Ibragimov, 2009).

Speaking about the origin of the text of scripts, let us turn to the etymology of this language unit. "Script" goes back to the Latin *scriptum*—scripture, text. A script or screenplay is the written work of screenwriters in a film or television production.

According to tradition, the script is like a play, in which all the plots and dialogues of the characters are described in detail with notes. It can sometimes represent an adaptation of a separate literary work for cinema, in which case the novel's author acts as a screenwriter (screenwriter). It is divided into sequences or scenes and the actions and dialogues that take place between characters (Metz, 1974). The following main elements are distinguished in the script: descriptive part (script prose, notes, or stage direction), dialog, credits, and voiceover.

A well-written literary script must convey all information necessary (theme, plot, issues, and characters of the main characters are defined) so that readers can visualize the full development of the film in their imagination: how the dialogue proceeds, how the characters act, and what objects they interact with. Typically, a script describes all elements (audio, visual, behavioral, and dialogue) needed to tell a movie story.

The script also contains the relationship of events, descriptions of the environment, and any brief notes that can be made to describe the characters' emotions. Over time, certain format requirements in scripts have been standardized. These requirements, which the film industry expects to find in a professional script, range from typography to margins to how scene changes are marked.

2 Methodology

The text translation strategy is an essential aspect of the translation analysis of the text. In recent decades, extensive research has been carried out in the field of translation strategies. However, each author reflects their own position in the description.

A translation strategy is a model of translation implementation based on the translator's general approach to translation in a specific communicative situation, formalized by the specific circumstances of this situation; a translation goal that clarifies the application of the translator's professional skills within a specific situation.

When translating, syntactic analysis is also important because the order of sentences in English does not always coincide with the same order in Russian. For example: (1) And, what he did was, he started up his club called the Ku Klux Klan—"*И он был человеком, который основал клуб Ку Клукс Клан*" (Roth, 1992). We see that for the convenience of translation, there is a simplification of the introductory emphatic construction "what he did was."

An important role is played by the analysis of the genre of the translated text. Genre analysis aims to explain the socio-cultural, institutional, and organizational limitations regarding communication, as well as to identify common patterns in communication.

Taking into account the lexicological aspect, translators must be aware of the formation of words in the languages with which they work, as well as of the semantic relationships between these words, primarily in specialized contexts (Karpov, 2003; Zaretskaya, 2010).

Language units expressing social and grammatical gender relations are analyzed using the cognitive-semantic approach. Cognitive semantics is a field of study that examines the relationship between human experience, the conceptual system, and the semantic structure encoded in language (Ibragimov, 2009). The direct object of study of cognitive semantics is the conceptual content of language, or how human thinking uses language in its connection with meaning or sense (Croft & Cruse, 2004).

3 Results

The period of the previous few decades of translational analysis is marked by the concentration of a large amount of scientific research and literature around the concept of "sex" or "gender." L. Chamberlain notes that many issues related to gender in translation practice can be divided according to the type and kind of source text, language, cultural tradition, and other features (Chamberlain, 1988).

The translation process includes the entire linguistic context, text analysis, the amount of translation and any information and facts:

- Socio-economic situation (role, status, and economic condition)
- Socio-cultural and cognitive-intellectual context (text and world knowledge, education, experience, and structures of reality)

- Biographical-psychic conditions (individual abilities, dispositions, current curriculum vitae, and intentions)

Gender translation usually raises some concerns among translators when translating from source languages where biological gender is grammatically different from the target language. Often, these difficulties are more pronounced when the grammatical gender matches the gender of the object's referent.

To consider this issue, we can turn to the film "Forrest Gump." Reading the script of this film, one often encounters gender-specific occupational names, such as a nurse, milkman, anchorman, doctor, newsman, policeman, and weatherman. Some of these job titles have female variants because women did not traditionally hold the positions in question.

Consider: (2) A milkman steps down from the porch—"*Молочник спускается с крыльца*" (Roth, 1992).

As is known, the profession "milkman" is characteristic of the male sex; therefore, it is translated as "*молочник*" [milkman] and not "*молочница*" [thrushmaid]. Watching English-language films, one can hardly notice a woman carrying milk because this profession is considered primordially masculine. However, in Russia, this profession is mainly performed by women. In this regard, it is worth considering the country and its cultural values when translating the names of such professions.

After years of debating this issue, some gender-based positions are falling out of fashion. Barman and barmaid have become bartenders, a firefighter is now used instead of a fireman, and there is still a push to replace a mailman with a more widely known word such as post worker or letter carrier. There are also cases where there is a specific feminine form, but the main (or "masculine") form does not indicate a male and can apply equally to any member of a particular profession, male or female. Examples include actor and actress [*актёр и актриса*]; usher and usherette [*билетёр и билетёрша*]; comedian and comedienne [*комик и комедийная актриса*].

Consider the translation of the following sentence: (3) But his back is as crooked as a politician—"*Но его спина такая кривая, каким бывает политик*" (Roth, 1992).

At first glance, the translator will not be able to understand why the crooked back is associated with a politician. When studying the definition of the adjective crooked, which has three meanings (1. bent, twisted; 2. at an angle, angled, tilted; 3. dishonest, criminal, illegal) (Crooked, n.d.), we can conclude that a figurative comparison of human curvature is used as a deviation from traditional values. In this case, more interesting for us is the correlation of the social and grammatical gender of the referent of the word "back" with the referent of the word politician. Based on the meaning of the word "back," as a powerful and strong organ of the body that supports the body in its functioning, the politician also expresses "support" and "strength." However, a straight back is considered standard and healthy for a person, and curvature is a disease. Respectively, a politician who does not adhere to traditional values, morality, and disposition can become deceitful and corrupt. Therefore, the translation of our example can be presented as an addition: "*Но его спина такая кривая, каким бывает политик—лжив*й и *коррумпированн*й*" [But his back is as crooked as a politician—lying and corrupt].

When translating the script of the film "Non-Stop", the following example can be distinguished: (4) Flight attendants, please be seated for takeoff—"*Борт проводникам занять места для взлёта*" (Richardson et al., 2014).

In this case, in order not to focus on the field of the employee, a gender-neutral word such as flight attendants is used instead of steward or stewardess.

Flight attendants became associated with the negative impression that they served as nothing more than models in the sky. The drive to eliminate gender bias in job descriptions in the 1960s and 1970s, combined with an increase in the number of men tripling to work, made the term "flight attendants" more appropriate and preferred. Nowadays, this term is recognized internationally and is used in life much more often. On the other hand, due to gender stereotypes and the increased attention this issue has received, there are some names that were not originally gendered, which we tied to gender: for example, male nurse (nurse), female judge (judge), or male model (model). Referring back to the film "Forrest Gump," consider the following example: (5) The male nurse sets Lt Dan down on the rolling bed (Roth, 1992)—"*Санитар усаживает лейтенанта Дэна на раскладушку.*"

In this example, the author, on the contrary, wanted to pay attention to the gender of the character.

Another interesting fact is that in English, nouns denoting ships, such as ship and boat, are usually expressed with the pronoun she and therefore are feminine. As an example, let us turn to the film "Adrift," where such examples are quite common. The main characters, when talking about the boat, throughout the film, use the possessive pronoun "her":

- (7) All on this **boat**?—"*И всё на этой лодке?*"
- Uh, just me and **her**—"*Да, только мы вдвоём*"
- Where did you find **her**?—"*Где ты её нашел?*"
- I actually built her, when I was working in a boat yard in South Africa (Kandell et al., 2018)—"*Я построил её сам, во время работы на верфи в Южной Африке.*"
- Do you want to take her out? (Kandell et al., 2018)—"*Хотела бы выйти на ней?*"

So why is it customary to classify ships as feminine?

Indeed, the ship in the Middle Ages was considered a masculine object. However, by the sixteenth century, the third person singular pronoun "she" was assigned to the referent of this object, and ships started to be perceived as objects with feminine/feminine characteristics (Bloch, 1976; Ganshina & Vasilevskaya, 1964). Studying contemporary English, we note that the referent of any sea vessel, mainly in works of art, corresponds to the pronoun "she."

One plausible theory is that boats are traditionally given female names, usually the name of an important woman in the boat owner's life, such as his mother. It has also been suggested that all ships were once dedicated to goddesses and later to important mortal women when belief in goddesses waned.

The second theory points to the existence of grammatical gender in most Indo-European languages. While contemporary English hardly has any grammatical gender, limited for the most part to natural gender cases, such as the nouns "woman" and "man" called "she" and "he," there is evidence that English once had a more extensive gender system similar to that of languages such as German and French (Bloch, 1976; Rosario, 1972; Quirk et al., 1982).

Some scientists offer the following explanation: there is always a lot of fuss around the ship; there is usually a crowd of male sailors who look after it and the captain who leads it forward. It takes a lot of paint to keep it beautiful and a skilled person to handle it properly. And without a man at the helm, a ship is absolutely uncontrollable. As they say—"It is not the initial expense that breaks you, it is the upkeep"—"It is not the upfront expenses that will break you, but the further maintenance." That is why the ship is often associated with a woman.

More recently, advocates of gender-neutral or non-sexist language have suggested naming ships the same as any other inanimate object. The same goes for cars. Usually, the use of "she" or "he" means a special personal relationship to the object.

In the film "Leap Year," we can trace the following example: (8) I will have you know that is a Renault 4. She is classic! (Elfont & Kaplan, 2018).—"*Имей ввиду, это Рено-4. Классика!*"

Both the character in the film and many other men become obsessed with their cars, and it becomes a source of pride for them, in connection with which they treat their car as an animated object.

However, contemporary English does not allow for a clear dividing line between personified objects (i.e., animate), which correspond to the pronouns "he" or "she," and inanimate, traditionally correlated with the third person singular pronoun "it." The pronoun "it" in English is also used in relation to a small child or animal if the gender of the animal or child is unknown to the speaker. Cases are indicative when the speaker shows interest in a particular child or animal and tries to specify their gender.

As for animals, in films, we can often find the pronouns "he" and "she" in relation to our smaller brothers.

In the film "Marley and Me," the main characters treat their dog not as an animal but as a family member; he becomes a close friend to them, as a result of which it would be foolish to call him using the pronoun "they." Consider the following example: (9) He just wants to say hello here. He loves people (Frank & Roos, 2008)—"*Он просто хочет поздороваться с тобой. Он любит людей.*"

Therefore, it is certainly fair, given a pet's ability to love, think, be sad, rejoice, and yearn, it is impossible to use a singular third-person pronoun "he" to denote an animal.

We see the same example in the film "Monte Carlo." In this film, the girl, having become attached to the horse and, of course, distinguishing it from the general mass, endows it with human qualities, using the pronouns "he" and "she": (10) Is it all right if I take her? I would love to brush her down. Is not she a beauty? (Bezucha et al., 2011)—"*Могу я её взять? Я её почищу. Разве она не красотка?*"

However, when translating some feature films, in particular gender pronouns, we are faced with the problem of correct transmission of contextual information. So, for example, in the film "The Meg," the protagonist uses the pronoun "he" in relation to the shark. Since imagining a shark, we subconsciously draw the image of a large predator. The same characteristic can be attributed to people, namely to the male sex. Unconsciously, a person attributes everything large and fearful to men, and women are considered to be fragile and vulnerable. Therefore, at a moment of emotional stress, the hero of the film used exactly "he" when talking about a shark, letting us know that he was scared and did not expect anything "cute" and "fragile" from this creature. This stereotype is caused by a long-term patriarchal system and is now only vestiges of the past.

When translated into Russian, the meaning of his exclamation is lost because in Russian, all words, one way or another, initially have a gender. Therefore, no word can be gender-neutral, and, as a result, the meaning of translation from one language to another is lost. From this, we have the following: (11) You are down there and you make **him** angry. Now **he** will kill us (Georgaris et al., 2015)—"*Вы были там, и вы разозлили её. Теперь она вернётся и убьёт нас.*"

To keep the meaning, the following translation can be offered as an alternative: "*Вы были там, и вы разозлили этого монстра. Теперь он вернётся и убьёт нас.*"

4   Conclusions

Translators, as linguistic and communication intermediaries, should understand the structure of the text in the source language so that to decode the message and simultaneously encode it in the target language.

Sometimes translators cannot find a suitable linguistic resource in the target language that conveys the message correctly. Therefore, as linguistic and communicative intermediaries in both languages, translators can use neologisms that allow them to solve language problems (such as lack of equivalence, an abundance of equivalence; semantic problems—problems associated with a lack of knowledge of the semantic coverage of some language means in the original language; practical problems—lack of knowledge about the pragmatic value of linguistic means available in the source language).

Text analysis during translation should be carried out not only at the linguistic level but also to explore the pragmatic value of the text. This is essential because it is not the words or sentences that are important for constructing the text but the interpretation of this text by the translator.

Based on the analyzed feature films, the following lexical means for expressing gender in English can be distinguished:

- Pronominal correlations—the use of personal pronouns "he," "she," and "it" (a person can be replaced by "he")
- Word combination: male nurse, female judge, male model
- Personification is a stylistic device when human properties are attributed to inanimate objects: a ship—she, a car—she

In order not to focus on the gender of a person, gender-neutral words are often used, for example, flight attendant, firefighter, bartender, mailman, post worker, or letter carrier.

Even though in English it is customary to use the pronoun "it" when describing animals, in most feature films, the main characters, endowing their pet with the ability to love, think, be sad, rejoice, and yearn, use the pronouns "he" or "she."

Thus, the task of translation becomes a complex process when linguistic or non-linguistic elements give the text that nuance that makes it unique. For this reason, translators must demonstrate that they have developed both linguistic and communicative competence in the languages used in their translation activities to solve possible problems that they may encounter during their professional practice.

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