

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18454/RULB.2022.29.1.30>**НАРУШЕНИЕ ПРАВИЛ РЕЧЕВОЙ КОММУНИКАЦИИ ПЕРСОНАЖА-РЕБЕНКА: ОРИГИНАЛ И ПЕРЕВОД**

Научная статья

Абаева Е.С.^{1*}, Канунникова А.С.²^{1,2} Московский городской педагогический университет, Москва, Россия

* Корреспондирующий автор (abaevaes[at]bk.ru)

Аннотация

В статье поднимается проблематика межъязыковой передачи речи персонажа-ребенка в художественном тексте. В качестве речевой особенности указывается нарушение постулатов Г.П. Грайса и максим Дж. Лича. Источником материала исследования послужил текст романа Д.С. Фоера «Жутко громко и запрительно близко» и его перевод на русский язык. В качестве основных методов выступил: метод сплошной выборки, метод сопоставительного анализа, метод классификации и ряд других. Авторы указывают, что особенности использования нарушений правил речевой коммуникации в качестве характеристики персонажа позволяют создать необходимый автору образ. При межъязыковой передаче этих особенностей большую роль играет анализ прагматической ситуации с учетом стереотипных правил речевого поведения, характеристики героев, языковой асимметрии и контекста разного рода.

Ключевые слова: речевая характеристика, перевод, персонаж-ребенок, максимы Дж. Лича, постулаты Г.П. Грайса.

A CHILD CHARACTER'S VIOLATION OF COMMUNICATION RULES: ORIGINAL TEXT AND TRANSLATION

Research article

Abaeva E.S.^{1*}, Kanunnikova A.S.²^{1,2} Moscow City University, Moscow, Russia

* Corresponding author (abaevaes[at]bk.ru)

Abstract

The article raises a problem of literary translation, a child character's speech translation in particular. The violation of Grice's principle and Leech's maxims is indicated as a peculiar feature of the child's speech. The source of the material for the study is the text of the novel by Jonathan Safran Foer "Extremely loud and incredibly close" and its translation into Russian. The major methods for the study are the method of continuous sampling, the method of comparative analysis, the method of classification etc. The authors point out that some peculiarities of using violation in communication as speech characteristics of a hero help create the necessary image. The analysis of the pragmatic situation, as well as the stereotypical rules of speech behavior, characters peculiarities, linguistic asymmetry and different types of context, plays an important role.

Keywords: speech characteristics, translation, child character, Leech's maxims, Grice's principle.

Introduction

The peculiar features of a character's speech in a literary text have already been the object of analysis in different papers [3]. It is known that speech characteristics include both social and psychological aspects of a person, as well as peculiarities of his speech activity and speech behavior.

It is worth noticing that a child character appears quite often in literary texts. The reasons for using a child, for example, as a storyteller differ. This may be a desire to strengthen or, conversely, to soften the emotional impact on a reader. The child narrator also allows the authors to consider some situations or subjects from a new angle, encouraging the reader to take a fresh look at them. The strategies of the authors when creating a speech image of children's heroes also vary. Some prefer to use a narrative style characteristic of an adult rather than a child. Others, on the contrary, try to imitate children's speech by recreating its peculiar nuances. The speech of the child character in this case may be generally similar to the speech of an adult with some specific features of a child's speech only. Some researchers - such as William O'Grady (2005), Michael Tomasello (2009), Kristin Denham (2013), Anne Lobeck (2013), Tseytlin S.N. (1989), Chebotareva I.M. (1996), Solntseva K.V (2013) and others - distinguish various characteristics of a child's speech: mistakenly formed irregular verbs, excessive generalization, inversion errors, abbreviations, comparisons and personifications, etc.

Moreover, it is important to note that "the speech of a child character is presented in a stylized form, which presupposes the selection of certain speech features by the writer that, in their opinion, may be a part of a child's vocabulary" [5].

The problematic area of a child's speech characteristics could be of great interest not only for cultural, behavioral or just linguistic reasons, but for a purpose of translation as well. For example, answering the question about the problems of a child's speech translation, the translator of "The Dead Fathers Club" (Matt Haig, 2006) told that the difficulty was to recreate the "stream of consciousness of an eleven-year-old boy experiencing a personal tragedy" and her desire to preserve "rhythm and flow of the text, its continuity". She is aware of the ambiguous nature of her choice to use punctuation marks and dialogues but refers it to the well-known inevitability of losses in translation [4].

For that reason, the knowledge of some speech patterns, mistakes, or peculiar language usage in a child's speech is crucial, especially when systematically and logically organized and described.

The texts of the novel "Extremely loud and incredibly close" written by Jonathan Safran Foer (2005) [7] and its translation (2007) [6] were taken as a material for the study. The narration is by a nine-year-old boy named Oskar, whose dad died in the terrorist attack (11.09.2001). The novel is included into the group of prosaic works of 9/11 and was analyzed from the trauma perspective a lot [8].

One of the peculiar things about Oskar is that he hates lies and tries to tell the truth only. What is more, due to his age he doesn't know some basic rules of communication which on the one hand can cause misunderstandings or create a humorous

effect, but on the other hand provide an atmosphere of naivete. The translator in turn had to recreate the same things in the text of translation that, in our opinion, was not an easy task.

Thus, the aim of our paper is to enumerate, classify and decompose the cases when the rules of communication [2] are broken by Oskar and analyze the ways and methods of their translation.

Research methods and principles

To make the study more coherent in the methodological base, some methods should be introduced in this section. First, the continuous sampling method with the help of the pragmatic analyses was applied to find out all the cases of the communication rules violation. The method of classification was used not only to group the cases according to the famous classifications, but to classify the ways and methods of translation as well. The method of comparative analyses was used in a traditional way to compare and contrast the original text and the text of translation.

The base for the study from the pragmatic point of view is represented by the rules of communications: Grice's cooperative principle – "make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" [9, P. 45], which falls into four conversational categories (quantity, quality, relation and manner), and six Leech's maxims of politeness [10].

To begin with, there are lots of dialogues in the novel with different people: relatives (Oskar/mother, Oskar/father, Oskar/grandmother, Oskar/grandfather), acquaintances (Oskar/the postman), people Oskar doesn't know at all (for example, people with a family name "Black"). Thus, because of the difference in relationships the communicative fails differ. For example, Oskar's father used to play with the son, so lots of misunderstandings were created by him on purpose to make Oskar think and analyze. In dialogues with women Oskar sometimes wants to pay a compliment, but as he lacks experience, the intention leads to misunderstandings as well. All these pragmatic nuances should be taken into consideration while translating the novel.

Results and Discussion

The process of translating when a translator has to deal with the area of pragmatics is rather complex. It is even more complex than the problem of lacunas or grammatic asymmetry between the languages because the area in discussion is rather vague and everything is based on the relationships between different people, as well as on the analyses of the situation and context in general.

For our study we are to enumerate the maxims which make up the cooperative principle and the ones which constitute the politeness principle to show how they are violated in the context of the novel and analyze if there are any significant changes in the text of the translation to preserve the violation.

I. The violation of the cooperative principle

The **category of quantity** could be divided into following maxims:

"Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of the exchange).

Do not make your contribution more informative than is required" [9, P. 45].

The first maxim is violated when Oskar gives less information because he doesn't want to explain or doesn't have enough knowledge about the subject as in the following example: "Don't cry," I told her. "Why not?" she asked. "Because," I told her. "Because what?" [7].

We do have the same pattern in communication between adults and children in Russia (почему – потому), so the lines were easily translated: «Не плачьте», – сказал я. «Почему нет?» – спросила она. «Потому», – сказал я. «Что потому?» – спросила она. [6]

The second maxim is violated because of the boy's desire to explain what is going on in his life, to share his interests. As in the example below where the redundancy is obvious to any reader and is clearly transferred into the text of translation:

"I'm an amateur epidemiologist." "There aren't many of those." "Yeah. And I conducted a pretty fascinating experiment once where I told Feliz to save all the dust from our apartment for a year in a garbage bag for me. Then I weighed it. It weighed 112 pounds. Then I figured out that seventy percent of 112 pounds is 78.4 pounds. I weigh 76 pounds, 78 pounds when I'm sopping wet. That doesn't actually prove anything, but it's weird. Where can I put this?" [7] // «Я эпидемиолог-любитель». – «Это большая редкость». – «Ага. И я провел один довольно-таки обалденный эксперимент, попросил Фелиза весь год собирать пыль из нашей квартиры в отдельный пакет. Потом я его взвесил. Он весил 51 килограмм. Потом я подсчитал, что семьдесят процентов от 51 килограмма – это 35,7 килограмма. Я вешу 34,5 килограмма, или 35,3, если в мокрой одежде. Это, конечно, ничего не доказывает, но прикольно. Куда это можно выбросить?» [6]

Sometimes Oskar tries to motivate people to ask a question he likes to answer himself.

So what's actually going on?" "I don't know." "How do they do it?" "It?" "How do they set up meetings if they don't have E.S.P.?" "You're asking me?" "Yes." "I don't know." "Do you want to know?" "Sure." "A lot?" "Sure." "They're making very, very, very, very deep calls, way deeper than what humans can hear. They're talking to each other. Isn't that so awesome?" "It is. I ate a strawberry. [7] // Никто не мог понять, как им это удается. Какой механизм?» – «Я не знаю». – «Как им это удается?» – «Что именно?» – «Договариваться о встречах без Э.С.В.» – «Ты меня спрашиваешь?» – «Да». – «Я не знаю». – «А хотите узнать?» – «Конечно». – «Очень?» – «Очень». – «Они издают низкие-пренизкие позывные, намного ниже тех, что могут слышать люди. Они разговаривают друг с другом. Скажите, клево?» – «Клево». Я съел клубничину. [6]

The translator, as he is Russian, is aware of the cliches and usual speech patterns, like repetition in conversations with children (Очень? – Очень.). He works brilliantly with word order and add, for example, a conjunction (А хотите?) to make the child's speech sound more natural.

The **category of quality** – “try to make your contribution one that is true” – is also violated by Oskar. It falls into two more specific maxims: “Do not say what you believe to be false” [9, P. 46] and “Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence” [9, P. 46].

On the one hand, the character’s essential features do not allow him to violate this rule even when it contradicts to the maxims of politeness. That could be illustrated by the following example:

He said, “Do you have dreams of becoming a jujitsu master?” “No,” I told him, even though I don’t have dreams of running the family jewelry business any-more. [7] // Он сказал: «Разве ты не мечтаешь о том, чтобы стать мастером дзю-джитсу?» «Нет», – сказал я, хотя о том, чтобы возглавить ювелирный бизнес нашей семьи, я тоже перестал мечтать. [6]

But at the same time Oskar tells lies to some people in order to reach his goal. As it hurts him, he counts how many times he is unfair to people: Lie #3, Lie #4 etc. Once he tells his mother that his temperature is one hundred point seven degrees. The boy does not realize that the temperature he is talking about is fatal, but his mother does. In order to make the lie clear for a Russian reader, the equivalent to the system was found («У меня сорок два» [6]).

This category is also violated because Oskar is apt to romance, as in the example when he is suggesting something absolutely unbelievable in a real world:

“What I’ll do is, I’ll invent an invisibility suit that has a camera on my back that takes video of everything behind me and plays it on a plasma screen that I’ll wear on my front, which will cover everything except my face. It’ll look like I’m not there at all.” She said, “Nifty.” [7] // «А давайте я изобрету костюм-невидимку со встроенной камерой на спине, чтобы она снимала все, что за мной, и показывала это на плоском экране передо мной, но чтобы экран закрывал меня целиком, все, кроме лица. Будет полное впечатление, что меня там вообще нет». Она сказала: «Стильно». [6]

Oskar is a nine-year boy only, so it is a problem for him to be relevant, for example, to the topic of conversation all the time. Thus, **the category of relation** – “be relevant” – is violated when, for example, he does not answer his mother’s question (“*Is everything OK?*” [7]) with obvious “Yes, sure”. Instead, he starts his own conversation with “I’m gonna need a laminator.” [7]

He usually changes the topic of conversation and makes the dialogue unclear for people around. He makes strange skips which distort the usual flow of thoughts and talks about things people even do not like as in the example below. It is his granny (or mom) who must explain Oskar’s intentions to people.

Here, the conversation is about the limousines and life in general, but then of a sudden Oskar decides to tell a joke (1).

Mom squeezed, and Grandma knitted, and I told Gerald, “I kicked a French chicken in the stomach once,” because I wanted to make him crack up, because if I could make him crack up, my boots could be a little lighter. He didn’t say anything, probably because he didn’t hear me, so I said, “I said I kicked a French chicken in the stomach once. (1)” “Huh?” “It said, ‘Oeuf.’” “What is that?” “It’s a joke. Do you want to hear another, or have you already had un oeuf?” (2) [7] // Мама все сжимала, бабушка все вязала, а я сказал Джеральду: «Встречаются на парижской улице две курицы», – мне хотелось, чтобы он по-настоящему раскололся, потому что, если бы у меня получилось по-настоящему его расколоть, гири на сердце стали бы чуть-чуть полегче. Он ничего не сказал, может, просто потому, что не услышал, поэтому я сказал: «Я сказал: на парижской улице встречаются две курицы» (1). – «А?» – «Одна нормальная, а у другой две головы и восемь крыльев. И та, которая нормальная, говорит: Bonjour, ma tante». – «Ну и что?» – «Это шутка такая. Рассказывать следующую или вы тоже та tante?» (2) [6]

Oskar violates the rules unintentionally because, as we can see from the context, he is upset and wants to cope with his emotions. But he does it with the real joke which includes a word play, which makes the passage problematic for translation. The decision of the translator to use another joke is supported by its function [1] – to change the subject: the real sense of the joke is not so valuable. But we should underline the skills and creativity of the translator who could find the joke with almost the same lexical elements (парижская, курицы) and the final wordplay where the boy’s speech feature, French language, is used (2).

The next category we are going to discuss is the **category of manner** – be perspicuous – consists of four maxims: “avoid obscurity of expression; avoid ambiguity; be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity); be orderly” [9, P. 47].

In the next example Oskar intentionally does not want to answer straightforwardly and explain why he gave the key to a stranger. He is rather ambiguous and gives unnecessary details, focusing on the gender of a receiver to avoid the obvious question “why”.

“Did you give a copy of our apartment key to the mailman?” <...> “The mailperson is a mailwoman.” [7] // «Это ты дал запасной ключ от нашей квартиры почтальону?» <...> «Не почтальону, а почтальонице». [6]

In Russian there is no word to denote a person who delivers post without gender characteristics, so the choice of translation is supported by the language asymmetry.

II. The violation of the politeness principle

The second set of rules that are always violated by the main character of the novel is the politeness principle of Geoffrey Leech which consists of six maxims: the tact maxim, the generosity maxim, the approbation maxim, the modesty maxim, the agreement maxim and the sympathy maxim [10].

Oskar is naïve and doesn’t know all the rules of communication, so it is obvious for him to ask a married woman for a kiss because he likes her (that is a violation of the tact maxim). He seems rude to a postman when he is in a blue mood, although they are friends (the violation of the approbation maxim). He even seems absolutely unpolite when he talks to strangers and tries to be truthful enough.

Everyone understands that not always we need to say what we really think because we might hurt someone’s feelings. Because of his age, Oskar cannot always follow the rule as in the example below when he says to his mother:

“So it will be OK if I throw away all of your things and forget about you after you die?” [7] // «Значит, нормально, если я выкину все твои вещи и забуду про тебя, когда ты умрешь?» [6]

The illustration of the violation of the sympathy maxim is given above. As English and Russian cultural norms are similar in the situation, all the methods of translation can be explained by the language asymmetry.

Sometimes Oskar violates the norms because of his impulse behavior (1) but then tries to make things better (2).

“Grandma?” “Yes, darling?” “It’s just that where’s the plate block?” <...> “The plate block! These stamps. Aren’t Valuable!” (1) She looked at me for a few seconds. “Yeah,” she said, “I guess I heard of that. So I’ll go back to the stamp shop tomorrow and get another sheet. These we can use for the mail.” “There’s no reason to get another.” (2) I told her, wanting to take back the last few things I said and try them again, being nicer this time, being a better grandson or just a silent one. [7]// «Бабушка?» – «Да, лапонька?» – «А где же тут серыйный штамп?» <...> «Серыйный штамп! Без него. Эти марки. Не стоят. Ни цента!» (1) Она смотрела на меня несколько секунд. «Ну, да, – сказала она. – Кажется, я про это слышала. Завтра же снова зайду в филателию и куплю тебе другой блок. А эти марки пустим на конверты». – «Не надо другой» (2), – сказал я, потому что уже хотел взять все сказанное назад и попробовать заново, как воспитанный хороший внук или хотя бы как молчаливый. «Надо, Оскар». – «Я в порядке». [6]

Parcellation in the first example is also used in the text of translation to underline the anger of the boy and preserve his usual way of speaking (he uses parcellation in many cases): *These stamps / aren’t / valuable! = Эти марки / не стоят / ни цента!* In the second example the changes are reasonable due to the cohesion/coherence of the text in general (wide context): *get another sheet – There’s no reason to get another = куплю тебе другой блок – Не надо другой.*

The example above shows us his good nature. The same thing we can see in some dialogues when Oskar tries to pay compliments, even if they are not contextually approved. He is willing to follow the maxims, to be polite, but unfortunately fails to do it:

“What can I do for you?” “You’re incredibly beautiful,” I told her, because she was fat, so I thought it would be an especially nice compliment, and also make her like me again, even though I was sexist. [7] // «Я могу чем-нибудь помочь?» – «Вы запредельно красивая», – сказал я, потому что она была толстая, и я решил, что ей это будет особенно приятно услышать, и еще для того, чтобы ей снова понравиться, хоть я и вел себя, как сексист. [6]

The question in the example below sounds very rude, but the violation is not intentional, too. Oskar perceives the world rather straight, and this is a perfect illustration of his naivete and straightforwardness:

Mom said that school wasn’t on the way, and we couldn’t be late to the cemetery. “Why not?” I asked, which I actually thought was a good question, because if you think about it, why not? [7] // Мама сказала, что школа не по пути и что нам нельзя опоздать на кладбище. «Почему нельзя?» – спросил я, что, по-моему, было хорошим вопросом, потому что, если подумать, то действительно – почему нельзя? [6]

The translation is justified here by the repetition (as a pattern of a child’s speech), variability of the language means (не должны опоздать / не можем опоздать / нельзя опоздать) and, finally, general cohesion/coherence of the text (нельзя – почему нельзя).

The climax of the rudeness is the fictional dialogue during the stage play. Oskar imagines the way he could fight his co-student Jimmy Snyder changing the lines in a dialogue to offend him greatly, for example, using such degraded words as “a jerk of infinite stupidity”, accusing him of having abused those less strong and so on. But everything is in his head only.

When it comes to the problematic area of communication rules violation we need to deal with pragmatics, which is not a purely linguistic thing. The ways and methods of translation are caused by the dialogical structure, the image of a child, the language asymmetry and so on. As the violations are clearly transmitted into the frames of Russian culture, all the transformations were induced not to adapt, not to create the violence, but to make it clear to see and to read.

Conclusion

Analyzing the novel and its translation, we could see the violation of all the maxims which is usually unintentional and creates the image of a young boy through his speech characteristics: he is naïve, unexperienced, likes truth. The convergence of his age and all the enumerated individual traits gives the writer the opportunity to vividly delineate the character.

Summarizing the violation in translation, first and foremost, we should underline that as two linguacultures have much in common, no significant changes in meaning to adopt the violation to the system of the Russian language and culture were made. No losses in translation were found. In most cases the choice of the translator is based on the textual characteristics and wide context.

In general, it could be noted that not to lose the pragmatic nuances in translation it is vital to include such details as socio-cultural context, clichés, patterns, stereotypes, norms of communication, languages asymmetry, cohesion/coherence, as well as wide context into consideration.

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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