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THE CONCEPT ECOCIDE: THE LEXICAL AND STYLISTIC MEANS OF ITS VERBALIZATION IN THE ORIGINAL AND TRANSLATION

The article considers the lexical units and stylistic devices which are used for verbalization of the concept ECOCIDE. The research is based on the articles in the British, American and Ukrainian mass media of the last two years. The conceptual models of translation of the lexical and stylistic devices are investigated. The algorithm of investigation includes the following stages. 1. determining the concept of the article; 2. defining the lexical means of its verbalization, in particular the core units; 3. formulating the conceptual metaphor. In the process of translation it is necessary to retain the conceptual idea. While investigating the concept ECOCIDE, three main groups of lexical units have been singled out which belong to the semantic fields NATURE, WAR, CRIME. These semantic fields are interconnected because the journalists describe ecocide as crimes against nature during the war. The study shows that the lexical units belonging to the semantic group CRIME (ECOLOGICAL CRIME) are emotionally colored and express negative evaluative connotations. The most widely used words of these three groups verbalizing the concept are trees, plants, animals, ecocide, disaster, death, mine, destroy, kill. The concept ECOCIDE is also verbalized with the help of anthropomorphic metaphors which ascribe the properties of human beings to the objects of nature. Such stylistic devices reflect the emotional attitude of the journalists to the death of nature, their bitterness and anger caused by the Russian aggression and destruction. Other aspects of the concept are described in the articles such as the tragic consequences of the destruction of the Kakhovka hydropower plant, the use of mines, the occupation of biospheric reserves and parks. One journalist compares the occupation of the Zaporizhzhya atomic power plant with the menace of Armageddon, using a mythological allusion. The major conceptual model of our translation was retaining the conceptual idea of the source text and using the same or somewhat different linguistic expressions which help to render the emotional, image-making and even passionate style of the journalists, their sympathy to our country, our people, our nature.

Key words: concept, verbalization, conceptual analysis, lexical unit, metaphor, conceptual metaphor, core, conceptual model of translation.

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КОНЦЕПТ ЕКОЦИД: ЛЕКСИЧНІ ТА СТИЛІСТИЧНІ ЗАСОБИ ЙОГО ВЕРБАЛІЗАЦІЇ В ОРИГІНАЛІ ТА ПЕРЕКЛАДІ

У статті розглядаються засоби вербалізації концепту ЕКОЦИД (ECOCIDE) у статтях британських, американських та українських ЗМІ останніх двох років. Запропоновано алгоритм концептуального аналізу, який включає три етапи. У ході дослідження виявлено три основні групи лексичних одиниць, які вербалізують вказаний концепт і становлять його ядро. Такими семантичними групами є ПРИРОДА, ВІЙНА, ЗЛОЧИН, лексичні одиниці яких пов'язані між собою. Крім того, концепт ЕКОЦИД вербалізується за допомогою антропоморфних метафор, які наділяють природні об'єкти людськими якостями. Такі стилістичні засоби надають статтям особливої емоційності та значного прагматичного ефекту. У процесі перекладу застосовано концептуальну модель збереження авторської ідеї оригіналу з вналогічним мовним виразом та використанням синонімічної заміни, що дозволяє вірно відтворювати емоційний та образний стиль журналістських статей.

Ключові слова: концепт, вербалізація, концептуальний аналіз, лексична одиниця, метафора, концептуальна метафора, ядро, концептуальна модель перекладу.

FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM

The investigation of concepts remains one of the most common and topical issues in linguistics and literary criticism. The knowledge received from such investigation can be applied not only to the analysis of fiction, i.e. prose and poetry, but also to the analysis of political speeches, mass media articles, scientific texts. Concepts arise from the interaction of people with the world, they reflect the obtained knowledge and experience. One of the definitions of concepts runs as follows: "Concepts are mental constructs which a person uses in the process of thinking" [6, p. 245]. Or, as it is suggested in Wikipedia, concepts are fundamental building blocks of our thoughts and beliefs. For example, spatial concepts UP-DOWN, FRONT-BACK, FAR-NEAR are connected with our everyday body functioning, with our interaction with the physical environment. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, the authors of the theory of conceptual metaphor, "concepts that emerge in this way are concepts we live by" [3]. But we can perceive our conceptual system if we look at language. Because communication is based on the same conceptual system that we use in thinking and acting.

Concepts are verbalized in language. Verbalization is the process of expressing our thoughts, our concepts in language. We can distinguish lexical and grammatical concepts. Lexical concepts are social phenomena (WAR, PEACE, FREEDOM), moral concepts (TRUTH, HONESTY), natural phenomena (NATURE, TREE, PLANTS, SNOW), concepts of people (HERO, COWARD, LEADER), etc. But concepts are also reflected in grammar, e.g. TIME is reflected in verb tenses; QUALITY is realized in degrees of comparison, NUMBER in the number of nouns.

In this article we will consider such lexical concept as ECOCIDE which can be considered a microconcept in relation to a wider concept CRIME.

Concept is regarded by scientists as a mental unit consisting of several layers. The most important elements for native speakers are called the core (the nucleus), less important, having only occasional associations with the core elements, are referred to as periphery. Understanding the core and identifying the language units which verbalize the core is essential in doing conceptual analysis and translating a text.

ANALYSIS OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Concepts in literary texts were investigated by such famous Ukrainian linguists as V. G. Nikonova and O. M. Kaganovska. In the recent years, because of the Russian aggression, the analysis of the concept WAR has been done in the works of L. V. Zinevich and V. V. Krasavina (2017), O. Bartashuk and other (2020), N. M. Kostusyak and others (2022). These papers concentrate of the investigation of the concept WAR in the Ukrainian fiction and in the contemporary political discourse. N. M. Kostusyak considers the semantic types of metaphors in the Ukrainian mass media articles which is an original approach to the topic [2].

FORMULATION OF THE AIM OF THE ARTICLE

As it was noted, the majority of the authors deal with the verbalization of the concept WAR in the Ukrainian media discourse. At the same time, the ecological aspect of war crimes committed by the Russian troops in Ukraine and the linguistic analysis of its description in the British and American mass media has not been investigated. That is why **the aim of our paper** is to determine what lexical means and stylistic devices are used by the British, American and Ukrainian mass media to verbalize the concept ECOCIDE concerning the Russian-Ukrainian war.

The methods used in this research include the contextual analysis of lexical units and stylistic devices, the conceptual method and the comparative method of analyzing the source and target texts.

PRESENTATION OF THE MAIN MATERIAL

Conceptual analysis is intended to reveal the content of the concept, to determine the specific means of verbalization in the context. It is also an important criterion of the quality and adequacy of translation, especially in case of literary texts. V. A. Maslova suggested a logical and comprehensive system of conceptual analysis which includes several stages. The first stage involves the referential situation, the second consists in studying the dictionary definitions of the core lexical unit, and the third includes studying the etymology of this lexical unit. The fourth and the fifth stages consist in studying the concept in various contexts and associations [4, p. 45-46]. In our opinion, to study the etymology of the core lexical item is not as significant as we need understanding the concept and its units from synchronic point of view

We suggest a somewhat different algorithm of conceptual analysis. The first stage consists in determining the main concept (concepts) of the text. The second stage includes revealing the major lexical and stylistic means of the concept verbalization. This analysis can involve the understanding of the core lexical units. Very important is the next stage when we should formulate the main conceptual metaphor of the text or its fragment. It can be less subjective due to the second stage when the core units are determined. The relation between these units and their connection with the periphery can help better understand the author's conceptual idea and, correspondingly, conceptual metaphor [7, p. 200].

Several years ago the American newspaper "The Washington Post" published an obituary to a well-known woman-journalist Meg Greenfield. This article is still interesting, particularly its title: "*No Star, Just a Bright Sun of Journalism, Fader Out*". In this title the traditional (conventional) metaphor *star of journalism* is substituted by the original metaphor which has conceptual character and foregrounds the importance of the journalist.

From translation point of view, we can see two approaches which are different mainly in terminology. Some scientists such as A. M. Naumenko use the term "conceptual translation" [5], while others, including A. P. Havrylyuk, consider conceptual analysis as a preliminary stage in translation [1]. Thus, A. P. Havrylyuk suggests three conceptual models in translation: 1) translation with retaining the conceptual model of the original and the same linguistic expression; 2) translation with retaining the conceptual model of the original but using another linguistic expression; 3) translation with the change of conceptual model in translation [1, p. 19]. The second variant involves the use of synonyms in translation.

At the beginning of the famous poem "In Memory of William Butler Yeats" W. H. Auden expresses the conceptual idea with the help of the lexis from the semantic field "Death":

He disappeared in the dead of winter [...]

The day of his death was a dark cold day.

The outstanding Ukrainian translator Maksym Strikha reproduced the conceptual metaphor DEATH IS WINTER in a very skillful way and retained the conceptual model, using only the lexical replacement:

Він відійшов у безоміння зимове [...]

День його смерті був темним, холодним днем.

The translator reproduced the emotional effect as well as the alliterations.

This paper contains the analysis of the concept ECOCODE. This concept can be considered the variation of a more general concept CRIME and close to the microconcept ECOLOGICAL CRIME. Our research is based on the articles from the British and American mass media “The Guardian”, “The Washington Post”, CNN, BBC, Reuters, the electronic magazine LitHub and the Ukrainian English-language sites. We followed the suggested algorithm of conceptual analysis and its application in translation.

The word *ecocide* is present in the Ukrainian legislation and means “mass destruction of flora and fauna, poisoning the atmosphere or water resources, as well as the commitment of other actions which may cause ecological disasters” (Article 441 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine). So, the first stage of investigation included determining the lexical and stylistic means of verbalization of this concept in mass media.

In the process of investigation we analyzed 25 fragments from the British and American mass media articles which contain lexical means of verbalizing the concept ECOCIDE. All in all, 145 lexical units were selected. We divided them into three groups according to their semantics and pragmatics. The first group of words (40 units) belongs to the semantic field “Nature”. These lexical units are mostly stylistically neutral, the most widely used among them are nouns *plants, animals, trees, habitat* and *ecosystem*. The second group includes the units of the semantic field “War” (60 words), among them the core word *war*, also *mine, death, bomb, explosion, casualties*, etc. These words have negative connotative meanings and denote different military actions, types of weapons (*cruise missiles*) and places of military operations. The third group is not the most numerous (45 lexical units), but the most important for our research. It can be called “Ecological crime”. The most widely used lexical units *ecocide* (10 times), *destroy* (11 times), *poison, disaster, killed* possess emotional and evaluative connotative meanings.

An essential feature of some articles is the use of tropes such as similes and metaphors. Such semasiological expressive means make the texts more emotional and foregrounded: *In the face of war, nature is always defenseless and unarmed. Since, for instance, trees, grasses and flowers cannot pull their own roots out of the Ukrainian soil, they cannot run away to safer places, becoming refugees* [9, p. 1]. In this fragment of the article entitled “Ecocide” the authors I. Kiva and A. Badkhen compare nature, trees, flowers with people, but these objects of nature cannot leave their country. The journalists use an anthropomorphic metaphor which verbalizes the conceptual metaphor NATURE IS HUMAN BEING.

In translation, we retained the conceptual model and the lexical content, including the metaphor: *Перед лицем війни природа завжди беззахисна і беззбройна. Оскільки дерева, трава та квіти не можуть висмикнути свої корені з української землі, вони не можуть втекти у більш безпечні місця і стати біженцями*. To emphasize the negative pragmatic effect and to create foregrounding, we replaced the adjective and the past participle with negative affixes by two adjectives with the same prefix – *без*.

The word *mine* is one of the most common lexical units verbalizing the concept ECOCIDE. A very expressive and emotional comparison of a war with a dragon and mines with dragon teeth is made by the journalist Z. Zabrisky: *The extracted mines, piled by the blown-up bridge, look like jagged dragon teeth, metallic hellish seeds. I always see war as a dragon. The dragon craves immortality. It destroys life. Its teeth will live in the injured soil, grow into an invisible army of killers* [12, p. 6]. The key conceptual metaphor in this fragment is WAR IS A DRAGON. Analyzing the ecological aspect of the quotation, we can deduce the conceptual metaphor ECOCIDE IS MINING THE SOIL.

The journalist makes use of an extended zoomorphic metaphor with mythological background. In such way she expresses her negative emotional evaluation of this ecological crime, her personal vision. In the target text we retained the conceptual model *Витягнуті міни, складені біля підірваного мосту, схожі на загострені зуби дракона, на диявольське металеве насіння. Я завжди сприймаю війну як дракона. Дракон жадає безсмертя. Він руйнує життя. Його зуби будуть жити у пораненій землі, проростати у невидиму армію вбивць*.

The core lexical units of the concept – *ecocide, ecoterrorism* – can be found in strong positions, in the titles of the articles: “Ecocide and crimes against the environment” (“The Guardian”, November 8, 2023); “Ukraine to launch “ecocide” case” (Euronews, December 10, 2023). It is important to note that Greta Thunberg, the famous Swedish ecological activist, used the same word about the ecological crimes by the Russians: “*I do not think that the world reaction to this ecocide was enough*”. Greta Thunberg slams world response to the dam collapse as “ecocide” during Kyiv visit (Reuters) [8]. The world *ecocide* was frequently applied last year in connection with the destruction of the Kakhovka dam. The Euronews comment on the disaster called the destroyed Kakhovka as part of an “ecocide case” against Russia. The agency states the great damage to the environment: *Dozens of people were killed as entire villages were submerged by the flood water which the United Nations said caused 13 billion euros of destruction. Billions of living organisms were killed suddenly* [9]. Among the major lexical units verbalizing the concept WAR are nouns and verbs *death, kill, wound, destroy, poison*. They are used to describe war crimes against people. But, in the description of ecological crimes, such lexical units denote the death and suffering of natural objects. Anna Badkhen, the journalist and translator, tells about the death of trees and plants as if they were human (living) beings, with bitterness and sadness: *This is precisely why photographs of wounded, broken, charred and destroyed trees are the signs of death by which the entire world recognizes a war. Does anyone count the number of plants killed and wounded in the war? I am afraid not* [9, p. 2]. In these very emotional sentences the concept ECOCIDE is realized by such conceptual metaphors as WAR IS DEATH (which can refer to all types of war) and ECOCIDE IS THE DESTRUCTION OF NATURE.

We retained the conceptual model in the target text as well as its emotional character: *Саме тому фотографії поранених, поламаних та зруйнованих дерев є ознаками смерті. Саме за ними весь світ розпізнає війну. Чи хтось зможе підрахувати кількість загиблих і поранених дерев і рослин під час війни? Боюсь, що ні* (translated by Maryna Baran and Oleksandr Yemets). The anthropomorphic character of lexical units and metaphors is reproduced in this translation. Besides, we used partitioning of the first sentence, as well as modulation: *killed – загиблих*.

The journalists of very respectable American and British newspapers describe the death of animals as ecocide. M. Santora in “The New York Times” entitles his article “As Dead Dolphins Wash Ashore, Ukraine Builds a Case of Ecocide Against Russia” [10]. More expressive is Charles Digges who in his article in “Lit Hub” speaks about the military takeover of the Zaporizhya nuclear power plant as the menace of Armageddon, using a mythological allusion.

Among other acts of ecocide or ecoterrorism the journalists, scientists and politicians name the occupation of biosphere reserves such as Askania-Nova, sending missiles to the places where dangerous substances, chemicals are stored. The Ukrainian newspaper “The Kyiv Independent” quotes the Ukrainian Prosecutor General Andriy Kostin who said: “Ukraine is the first country in history to investigate the mass destruction of the environment, also known as ecocide, as a war crime. By purposefully destroying the environment, Russia is trying to destroy the future life of Ukrainians”.

CONCLUSIONS

The concept ECOCIDE has been investigated in the articles of the British, American and Ukrainian mass media 145 lexical units have been selected which verbalize this concept. The three main semantic groups to which these words belong are NATURE, WAR and CRIME (more exactly, ECOLOGICAL CRIME). The most widely used lexical units are *plants, trees, animals, death, mine, destroy, ecocide, kill*. The three mentioned semantic fields are interconnected because crimes against nature are the result of the war, the Russian aggression. The lexical units belonging to the semantic group CRIME possess emotional and expressive connotations (*disaster, poison, damage*). The journalists also verbalize this concept with the help of metaphors, especially anthropomorphic metaphors which describe the objects of nature as human beings.

The concept ECOCIDE is described as the death of plants and animals, the danger to the life of Ukrainians because of the flood, mines, dangerous chemicals, and even as the menace of Armageddon because of the occupation of the Zaporizhya nuclear power plant by the Russian army.

In the target texts two conceptual models of translation have been applied: retaining the conceptual idea (conceptual metaphor) of the source text with the same linguistic expression and retaining the conceptual idea with somewhat different linguistic expression (synonymic replacement). These models helped to reproduce the emotional, image-making and logical style of the journalists.

The prospects of further research lie in the analysis of other concepts verbalized in the mass media.

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