TIME CATEGORY IN ENGLISH AND GERMAN LANGUAGE WORLD VIEWS THROUGH METAPHOR TRANSLATION ANALYSIS IN “MOMO” BY M. ENDE

Abstract: This paper is devoted to the linguistic analysis of the time metaphors translation based on the novel of the 20th century German writer. There presented groups of metaphors most occurring in the work and characterizing the author’s view on time category. A number of characteristic features which time possesses in the representation of native English and German language speakers is listed here.

Keywords: metaphor, concept of time, language, translation, time, source language (SL), translating language (TL).

Time concept is one of the most significant in English and German language consciousness. It is also possible to claim that time and space concepts are fundamental in a person’s exist. Therefore, it is easy to explain an undying researcher’s interest to the time concept representation problems in language and speech. The sign theory of the time was formed in the late seventies and in the early eighties of the 20th century in works on semiotics (St Augustine, Ch. Pearce) [Merrell 1985: 5-21; Uspensky 1979: 142-148]. Linguistic time (lexical, grammatical and syntactic) also receives semiotic interpretation. Linguistic time is the language form and concept unity consisting of a certain space-time event. Time concept is not homogeneous. It contains different representations belonging to the physical, spiritual, ordinary, scientific, verbal worlds. But it is not a set or sum of separate representations, but the unity synthesizing material (external) and ideal (internal) experience of a person.

The concept "time" is multifaceted. It is confirmed by existence of various time interpretations occurring in the statements of different times and nations, and in time images created by authors. [Nilsen 2006: 50]. As a whole, the noun "time" is an
extremely abstract name. It means the taking by trust the designation by native speakers because through empirical way this essence cannot be comprehended. "Abstract grounding" and abstract adaptation to its concrete happens in metaphor. [Chernyeyko 2009: 200] Charles Fillmore they claim that time appears to have two contradictory organizations. In the first, the future is in front and the past is behind.

In the weeks ahead of us ... (future)
That’s all behind us now. (past)
In the second, the future is behind and the past is in front:
In the following weeks ... (future)
In the preceding weeks ... (past)

Moreover, English time is structured in terms of the TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT metaphor, with future moving towards these, time receives a front – back orientation facing in the direction of motion, just as any moving object would [Lakoff, Johnson 1980: 41-42].

These is also one more way in which we conceptualize the passing of time: TIME IS STRATIONARIS AND WE MOVE THROUGH IT. [Lakoff, Johnson 1980: 43-44].

We have chosen the German writer's book of the 20th century Michael Ende "Momo" because of the use of various metaphors and symbols. “Time” is the central theme of novel-tale, a fight subject of the main character and gray men stealing the people’s time. "The Living time", according to M. Ende is one of the main values of the person. "Time" in M. Ende's novel "Momo" is represented by different essences and introduced in various deployed metaphors, which can be divided into two big metaphorical blocks: 1) Time – the living being and Time – the lifeless object; 2) Time – the non-material value and Time – the material value with some allocated subgroups. [Trofimova 2013: 191]

The article purpose is to answer the question how the translator transfers various time metaphors from German into English taking into account the writer's idea and temporary category features of each language. Do the original sense change by its transferring to the other language? Is it possible completely transfer the essence of the time representation of one culture to other language without losing all connotations?

I. Let's consider the first metaphor group "Time – the living being and Time – lifeless object".

1) "Time as the living being" blossoms all colours and represents the living being.

A) "Aber die Stunden-Blumen, die so herausgerissen sind aus dem Herzen eines Menschen, koennen nicht sterben, den sie sind ja nicht wirklich vergange. Sie koennen aber nicht leben, den sie sind ja von ihrem wirklichen Eigentuemer getrennt... "[Ende 1973: 198]. This metaphor enlivens time in an image of "Stunden-Blumen", drawing a parallel between the nature and abstract concept, and in that way representing and giving it features of the living being.

In English-speaking translation, this metaphor sounds so:

B) "But hour-lilies plucked from a person's heart can't die, because they've never really withered. They can't live, either, because they've been parted from their rightful owner." [Ende /Brownjohn 1973: 195]
In translation from German into English, we can pay attention to the sentence volume of SL and TL. The original is more widespread due to the sentence creation, inserting interjection “so” and connective words “die, den”; the TL is more squeezed due to laconic phrases and linguistic economy of the English language. In the SL the author uses Perfect in the first attributive clause (die so herausgerissen sind) and then Presents (koennen nicht sterben). In English it is rendered with a passive construction (plucked from a person's heart), thereby the translator avoids uses a passive construction common for the English language. The meaning is rendered correctly, but the events in SL are more colorful then in TL. Despite the usage of different grammatical time categories in the English and German languages, the general feeling of time prevails both in SL and in TL.

This is definitely an original author's metaphor. However, the translator preserves of the time concept in TL. It "goes, flows, leaves" and so on, it can't be stopped as it is always on the move. Probably, such time idea is the most frequent and most visual analogy of time in many cultures.

For example: A) 1. die Zeit fließt; [Ende 1973: 110] B) 1. the time flows; [Ende /Brownjohn 1973: 100]

These metaphors are equally widespread in both languages. That is way there are difficulties in translation.

II. Let's consider the second group of metaphors "Time – the non-material value; Time – the material value".

Along with the connection of nature and man, “I we time” is attributed movement.

1) "Time – the material value" (The value that can be counted, saved up, economized.) Many scientists noted the frequency of metaphorical transfer "time – money" both in English and in German [Lakoff 2007: 391-392]. It, in particular, is reflected in proverb Time is money. In the novel time is represented as something important, having the price. It can be compared with money, gold, natural resources, valuable things, etc.

B) 1."Nobody knew the value of an hour or a minute, or even of a single second."; [Ende /Brownjohn 1973: 261]

This metaphor draws our attention to the importance of each interval of time in human life. This metaphor is not difficult for translation and it does not lose any additional shades of metaphor.


In our opinion, the translation of this metaphor is correct; it is capable to create a similar image in TL.

This metaphor is an appeal, direct comparison or a parallel between time and money, as though concepts “time” and money are synonyms. We will pay your attention to a choice by the translator of the word "WASTE" – to spend empty, to waste, lose. In German “VERLIERE” – to lose. It seems these words, are synonyms, however, their meanings have a small difference that can change the perception of the reader. The same happens with words "SPAREN" – "SAVE" in this and subsequent example of this section "time-non-material value". The German word SPAREN means not to waste, not save; and English option “SAVE” – to keep, preserve. The meaning of metaphor is conveyed, but taking into account cultural specifics, the translator consciously changes German cultural values into English ones, thereby making it more understandable for the English renders.

2) "Time – non-material value" is considered by M. Ende as slowness, full enjoinder of life.

For example: A) 1. "Zeit ist Leben. Und je mehr die Menschen daran sparten, desto weniger hatten sie", [Ende 1973: 306] B) "Time is live. And the more the people saved it, the less they had" [Ende /Brownjohn 1973: 308]

This metaphor is opposed to materiality, It is proved by the word “sparen”, which is used with material things (money, savings etc.), thereby the author shows that such time loses any value for a man, and she loses it irrevocably.

The subsequent examples are an addition to the first metaphor. "Time as a living being in the novel is such time which we spend on people and ourselves.

2) A) "Wir haben im Moment wahrhaftig keine Zeit fuer dich", 4)" meine Arbeit lässt mir keine Zeit". [Ende 1973: 315] B) "We have at the moment really no time for you", 4)" my work gives no time to me" [Ende /Brownjohn 1973: 318].

Along with the models given above M. Ende describes also other models of the time. For example, concepts of ontological space and time take central part in the system of basic representations of the world order of a man. A person comprehends time intuitively rather, than by means of reason. As usual, in such situations people resort to the help of metaphors for explanation of difficult concepts; “time goes by / passes by” / “die Zeit geht” (the subjective experience of time: "die Zeit fliest / time flies / time has stopped" etc.). [Nilsen 2006: 51]

The author uses the image of arrow, as a symbol of irreversibility of time. That is typical metaphor of unidirectional vector processes – we know that time is. It has the beginning and the end. It is limited and at the same time, it has only one direction, forward, lie to the future. There is no opportunity, to repeat, to return back or to correct something. Every day, minute, hour are unique and finite. Everything that has the beginning has also the end. For example: A) “Die Vergangenheit sind ja die gewesenen Augenblicke und die Zukunft sind die, die kommen! Also gab es beide nicht, wenn es die Gegenwart nicht gäbe ... Das heißt also, dass es die Gegenwart nur gibt, weil sich die Zukunft in Vergangenheit verwandelt!..."[Ende 1973: 268].

B) "The past consists of moments gone by and the future of moments to come, so neither of them could exist without the present. That's it! ... present exists only because the future turns into the past. "[Ende /Brownjohn 1973: 266]. The translation of this metaphor into English conveyed its meaning and the author’s conception keeps without losses of any connotations.
Having analyzed these examples, it is possible to draw a conclusion that representation in the German and English languages have such characteristics as irreversibility, one-wayness, transience, value, ability to change the reality. Analyzing the translation of metaphors from German into English, we can precisely tell that those temporary grammatical categories which create the developed metaphors of time in German are not always identical in English, however they can create similar images and betray the sense hidden by the author in the original. The choice of adjectives or verbs in TL isn't always completely capable to transmit all values in lexicon chosen by the author of SL that promotes loss of individual author's style.

Both English and German are languages characterized by careful attitude to time concept because people realize its rapidity, impossibility to stop or turn back. This fact proves the inclination of these cultures to punctuality as the highest benefactor. The peoples also associate time with money, which is to be treated economical and rational. Both cultures personify time.

References