

## SPECIFICS OF MODALITY TRANSLATION OF THE XIXth CENTURY AMERICAN LITERATURE INTO RUSSIAN

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### Abstract

The beginning of the XXI century in linguistics was marked by increase of interest in the language not as a sign system, but as an anthropocentric one aiming to study verbal and cogitative activity of a person. For several years great effort has been devoted to the study of mental processes, processes of information acquisition from the outside world and socially important activities of people reflecting their relation to world. These mental processes are inseparably connected with a linguistic category of modality. It is considered one of the most difficult and contradictory in interpretation. Despite of numerous scientific works devoted to modality, it remains topical issue of studying of modern linguistics, there are still some interesting and relevant problems to be discussed. Translation cannot be considered equivalent if it does not reflect modality, which is presented in the original message. This paper concentrates on the specifics of modality expression in the process of equivalent literary translation. As no translation can be considered equivalent if it does not reflect modality presented in the original message. The paper develops previous linguistic ideas about modality revealing similarity and difference of modality expression in the English and Russian languages, considering ways of modal meanings transfer. Selection of literary material (works of O'Henry), the subsequent research and systematization of the results were carried out by means of a continuous sampling method, a descriptive method, a component analysis, comparative and contextual analysis. The results obtained can be used in practice of teaching English, in particular, in translation and interpretation studies and in further development of theoretical questions of this functional semantic category.

**Keywords:** English language, modality, equivalent translation, intercultural education, student.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The urgency of the stated in the article problem is determined, on the one hand, by the fact that the modality is important for the investigation category transmitting an attitude of the speaker to the content of the statement and how the statement relates to reality. On the other hand, it requires a further study of the nature of modality and its subtypes, the connection between logical and language modalities.

With the appearance in linguistics such synthetic directions as cognitive linguistics, cultural linguistics, ethno psycholinguistics, psycholinguistics, intercultural communication studying the relationship of language, thinking and consciousness, human speech falls into the focus of research attention as a result

of mental-psychological processes that reflect the attitude to the outside world and directly associated with the modality. At the beginning of the XIX century German scientist Wilhelm von Humboldt wrote that language, like all human activities, laced with feelings, emotions, that person always expresses with the help of language means (Vinogradov, 1960). This phenomenon, from the ordinary point of view, is called the attitude of the speaker to reality and from linguistically viewpoint is called modal.

In the history of Russian linguistics the first comprehensive description of the modality belongs to academician V.V. Vinogradov. In his work "On the category of modality and modal words in the Russian language," the academician writes: "Since the sentence, reflecting the reality in its practical public consciousness naturally reflects the relatedness (attitude) of content speech to reality, so the sentence, with its diversity of types, is closely connected with such a category as modality" (Vinogradov, 1975). Thus, this category is included by the scientist in the sphere of syntax, where manifests itself in the modal relation to reality from the speaker's position.

In Western European linguistics the founder of modality concept was Sh.Balli, according to him "modality is the soul of the sentence; like the idea, it is formed mainly due to the active operation of the speaker. Therefore, you can not attach importance of the sentence to the saying, if it does not have at least any expression of modality" (Bally, 2001). In any language there is a category of modality transmitting these relationships by different linguistic means.

It should be noted that the globalization of the economy and integration processes in the culture, scientific and technical fields have led to an increase of multilingual contacts (Ghali, 2015). Dynamically changing society also implies the readiness of a modern person to the processes of intercultural and international communication (Fakhrutdinova, 2015). In this connection there is much concern about the level of the foreign language skills so to have a clear idea about the features of people's mentality, their lifestyle and beliefs, in order to avoid distortion in the perception of linguistic units as in translated and translating language. In English the modality distortion mostly occurs while using the modal verbs and modal words. Firstly, since specifically this category bears relation to the action and reality and, secondly, due to the individual perception of reality.

The desire to be polite and considerate, to express a request and an offer, to order, to wish, to suggest, to emphasize a special attitude in the same situation, the ability to perceive the speech of the speaker in another one, make it necessary to study a problem of adequacy of perception and interpretation of the foreign-language statements modality. If we talk about the adequacy of the translation, then it requires a correct interpretation of the modality, otherwise the communication becomes difficult.

## **2. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The methodology of the research approaches allows broadening and deepening of linguistic ideas of the modality in general. The leading method of the study is the methodology of context and comparative analysis, translation methods that allow considering specific character of modal constructions translation into the Russian and English languages. The category of modality being an important part of the information contained in the message, reveals the characteristic features and structure of the languages, covers a wide range of its aspects.

Factual material was demarcated in accordance with the means of modality expression in English and their equivalents in Russian. Seven groups were identified:

### **2.1. The First Group. The Modal Verb «Must».**

In the works of O. Henry the verb **must** express the commitment, necessity of an action: «You will excuse me, Chunk», said Ikey. «I must make a prescription that is to be called for soon.» (Henry, 1949). («Извини, Чанк, - сказал Айки, - мне надо приготовить лекарства по срочному рецепту, за ним должны скоро прийти.») (Henry, 2006). I must hand those drawings in by tomorrow (Henry, 1949). (Я должна сдать эти иллюстрации завтра.) (Henry, 1978). These examples demonstrate the use of this verb to express the obligation of the request accomplishment. And the use of verb **to be** in the first example has a significant categorical tone and expresses the need determined by the preliminary plan. While translating into Russian we can observe the full compliance with the meaning inherent in the original language.

Comparative analysis of the Russian translation has revealed that modality can be translated into the Russian language with introductory words and express assumption that the speaker considers plausible, as shown in the examples below: «If you take the papers», interrupted the Westerner, «you must have

read of Pete Webster's daughter.» (Henry, 1949) («Если вы читаете газеты, - прервал его западник, - вы, наверное, читали о дочери Пита Вебстера?») (Henry, 2006).

Another feature of the modality expression at translation into the Russian language is its omission: You must keep the boy amused and quiet till I return. (Henry, 1949). (Твое дело заниматься и успокаивать ребенка, пока я не вернусь.) (Henry, 2006).

## 2.2. The Second Group. The Modal Verb «have to».

**Have to** is used with the same meaning as the verb **must** but sometimes it can be translated metaphorically. And now will you take me home, or will I have to call a cop? (Henry, 1949). (А теперь будьте любезны, проводите меня домой или, может, позвать полисмена?) (Henry, 2008). And the next sentence in the translation the translator uses the phrase sustainable Russian language - "the end is near": I knew I had to go before long and I was tired of waiting. (Henry, 1949). (Я ведь знаю, что конец близок, и уже устал ждать.) (Henry, 1986).

## 2.3. The Third Group. The Modal Verb «Can/ Could».

In most cases, the verb **can** express a person's ability to perform an action: Jud, can you make pancakes? (Henry, 1949). (Джед, ты умеешь печь блинчики?) (Henry, 1978).

**Can/could** in the meaning of supposition is generally used in negative sentences: «Couldn't you draw in the other room?», asked Johnsy coldly (Henry, 1949). («Разве ты не можешь рисовать в другой комнате?» – холодно спросила Джонси.) (Henry, 1978). Couldn't you go with us, uncle? (Henry, 1949). (А вы, дядя, не можете поехать с нами?) (Henry, 1978).

When translating English modal verbs Russian equivalent is not always expresses the modal meaning. The verb **can/could** is a striking confirmation of this phenomenon: «So do I», said Bob, heartily, «but it can't be helped.» (Henry, 1949). («Еще бы не жалко, - простодушно ответил Боб, - да ведь с этим ничего не поделаешь».) (Henry, 1978).

Like in the first group, here is highlighted an example where at translation into Russian modality is expressed by parenthesis: You can scarcely find a poor beggar whom they are willing to let enjoy the spoils unsuccored, nor a wrecked unfortunate upon whom they will not reshower the means of fresh misfortune. (Henry, 1949). (Вряд ли найдется в Багдаде хоть один смиренный нищий, которому они позволили бы без участия с их стороны наслаждаться своей дневной добычей, или хоть один горемычный банкрот, которого они не пожелали бы снабдить средствами для новых злоключений.) (Henry, 1986).

## 2.4. The Forth Group. The Modal Verb «May/Might».

**May/might** is used to express a permission, a request: «Mayn't I have something to drink?», she asked (Henry, 1949). («Вы не возражаете, если мне принесут что-нибудь выпить?» - сверкнув улыбкой, спросила мисс Эшер.) (Henry, 2008).

With the help of constructions **may/might + Perfect Infinitive** it is showed the possibility or probability that would have occurred in the past, **may / might** can mean the supposition of the possibility of an action which may or may not occur, expresses the guess about the possibility of something: You might have noticed that I would, long ago (Henry, 1949). (Вы давно могли заметить, что я согласна.) (Henry, 2006).

At translation into Russian the modal verb is often translated with the help of the subjunctive mood: If I wasn't a married man, I might. (Henry, 1949). (Если бы я был холостой, я бы пожалуй...) (Henry, 2008).

## 2.5. The Fifth Group. The Modal Verb «Shall/Should» And «Ought To».

**Should** and **ought to** are used to express the advice, desirability, supposition based on facts or recommendations: Why should I have given you any such instructions? (Henry, 1949). (Как я мог дать вам такое распоряжение?) (Henry, 2006).

**Should** can be used in interrogative constructions, usually after interrogative words to express a bewilderment, a strong surprise, an indignation: Why should there be a lady? (Henry, 1949). (Ну на что тебе женщина?) (Henry, 2008). This example is translated metaphorically.

In the example below, is used the inversion, whereas in the Russian version it is used the construction of an impulse to action: «Saw it?», said the man from Topaz city, «but you ought to come out our way.» (Henry, 1949). («Видел? - сказал человек из Топаз-Сити, - но вам следует побывать в наших краях».) (Henry, 2006).

It is interesting to note that at translation into Russian it is often used the subjunctive mood to express a polite request or a wish: «Shall I keep some soup hot for Mr. Tatum till he comes back?», she asks. (Henry, 1949). («Не оставить ли на огне немного супу для мистера Татама?» - спрашивает она.) (Henry, 1986).

## 2.6. The Sixth Group. The Modal Verb «Will/Would».

**Will/would** serves for the expression:

- **request**: «Would you mind saying that over again once more, Uncle Emsley?», say I. (Henry, 1949). («Не можешь ли ты повторить еще раз, дядюшка Эмсли», - говорю я (Henry, 2006). I would like to have you visit my house.» (Henry, 1949). (Заходите как-нибудь ко мне.) (Henry, 1986). In the latter example the translator with the help of a modal verb is trying to soften the tone of the sentence.

- **probability**: I would like to know when men like old Jerome get what is due them? (Henry, 1949). (Я хотел бы знать, когда люди, подобные Джерому, получают то, что им причитается?) (Henry, 2006). In this example the translator using the subjunctive mood has showed the attitude of the speaker to the next character.

- **advice**: «You'd better keep him interested», said I, «till we get the scheme going.» (Henry, 1949). («Ты уж лучше займи его, - сказал я, - пока наш план не будет приведен в действие.») (Henry, 1986). In this example the translator used the colloquial interjection "уж" to give expressiveness to the statement.

- **intention**: You wouldn't go to work now, and impair and disfigure snoozers, would you, that eat on tables and wear little shoes and speak to you on subjects. (Henry, 1949). (Очень мне нужно уродовать и калечить плюгавцев, которые едят за столом, носят штиблеты и говорят с тобой на всякие темы.) (Henry, 2006).

- **emotions**: What would I do with a wife? [Henry, 1949] (К чему мне жена?) (Henry, 2006). What would I do? (Henry, 1949). (Что будет со мной?) (Henry, 2006) In the above example, the author used the will to express a particular state of the heroine stories, but when translated into Russian emotionality transmission has not been saved.

- **an attitude to the action of another person**: He wouldn't write anything to anybody that wasn't exactly—mean that everybody couldn't know and read, would he? (Henry, 1949). (Он ведь никому не станет писать ничего такого, что было бы не совсем...я хочу сказать, чего нельзя было бы знать и прочесть каждому?) (Henry, 2006). In the Russian translation the modality is preserved, the translator uses the introductory word "ведь" that conveys the attitude of one person to another.

At translation of modal verbs will/would the translator often expresses modality in the Russian language by the subjunctive mood, "ли" particle: «Would she go?», repeated Zizzbaum, with uplifted eyebrows. «Sure, she would go.» (Henry, 1949). («Согласится ли?» - переспросил Зиззбаум, подняв брови, - «Конечно, согласится.») (Henry, 2008)

As in the previous groups at translation structures with would there occur the omission of modality: There are not many young men I would care to have call on her (Henry, 1949). (Заметьте, что я далеко не всякому позволил бы ее посещать.) (Henry, 1986).

## 2.7. The Seventh Group. Modal Words.

The comparative translation of O. Henry's works into Russian demonstrates the widespread use of modal words expressing:

- **wish**: «I wish you success in a praiseworthy attempt», she said, with a sudden coldness. (Henry, 1949). («Желаю успеха в похвальном начинании», сказала она с неожиданной холодностью.) (Henry, 1986)

- **doubt**: «Perhaps», said I to myself, «it has not yet been discovered that the wolves have borne away the tender lambkin from the fold.» (Henry, 1949). («Может быть, - сказал я самому себе, - еще не обнаружено, что волки унесли ягнечка из загона.») (Henry, 1986).

- **supposition**: Besides, you was once the life partner of one of my best friends. (Henry, 1949) (Кроме того, вы были когда-то спутницей жизни одного из моих лучших друзей.) (Henry, 1986).

## 3. RESULTS

There was carried out a context-comparative analysis of the category of modality on the example of American writer O. Henry's works. The form and content of the translated text were analyzed in relation to

the form and content of the original. The analysis was in identifying the modal units that make up the original text and the translated one, and in understanding the transformations performed by the translator in the process of translation.

After analyzing the methods of expression modalities on the examples from the works of O. Henry, it was concluded that, firstly, there are no hard rules in choosing one or another way to transfer the modality at the bilingual translation, secondly, in many cases this choice is mediated by the standards of a translating language.

In the translation of modal units from English into Russian the translators used the following types of changes:

- the complete accordance to the equivalent of the original language: «If you take the papers», interrupted the Westerner, «you must have read of Pete Webster's daughter.» «If you take the papers», interrupted the Westerner, «you must have read of Pete Webster's daughter.» («Если вы читаете газеты, - прервал его западник, - вы, наверное, читали о дочери Пита Вебстера?»),
- omission of modality: «You *must* keep the boy amused and quiet till I return.» (Твое дело заниматься и успокаивать ребенка, пока я не вернусь.),
- translation by subjunctive mood: «Shall I keep some soup hot for Mr. Tatum till he comes back?», she asks. («Не оставить *ли* на огне немного супу для мистера Татама?» - спрашивает она.),
- inversion: «Saw *it*?», said the man from Topaz city, «but you ought to come out our way.» («Видел? - сказал человек из Топаз-Сити, - но вам следует побывать в наших краях.»),
- stylistic transformations at the level of vocabulary: «I knew I had to go before long and I was tired of waiting. (Я ведь знаю, что *конец близок*, и уже устал ждать.), «You'd better keep him interested», said I, «till we get the scheme going.» («Ты уж лучше займи его, - сказал я, - пока наш план не будет приведен в действие.»),
- parenthesis: «You can scarcely find a poor beggar whom they are willing to let enjoy the spoils unsuccored, nor a wrecked unfortunate upon whom they will not reshower the means of fresh misfortune.» («*Вряд ли* найдется в Багдаде хоть один смиренный нищий, которому они позволили бы без участия с их стороны наслаждаться своей дневной добычей, или хоть один горемычный банкрот, которого они не пожелали бы снабдить средствами для новых злоключений»).

In the result of context-comparative analysis of 60 translation units from the works of O. Henry, it was revealed that 16% were grammatical transformations, 21% - lexical, 9% - phonemic, 12% - the omission of modality, 42% - unchanged.

#### 4. DISCUSSIONS

The researchers conducted by I. R. Galperin, E. Sepiro, D. Layonz, M. Swan are devoted to consideration and the analysis of a category of modality in general. I.R. Galperin noted that modern English grammarians "in general avoid giving definition to this category, obviously, considering it as a reality, and are limited only to the indication of forms in which the modality is represented". (Galperin, 1980). E. Sepir wrote that: "A modality, roughly speaking, that grammatical category (or those concepts relating to it) which by tradition are known as an inclination, I understand not the actual ascertaining under "modalities", say, of denial or uncertainty, but rather their formal representation". (Hemp, 1964). M. Swan specifies that in the English grammar only the following notions as will (volition), an opportunity or need are considered modal. Thus, it follows that the verbs expressing these notions are called modal auxiliary verbs. (Swan, 1995).

Among Russian researchers it is necessary to mark out V. N. Meshcheryakov. He refers a category of modality to the categories having the semiotic nature (Meshcheryakov, 2001). Modality as a pragmatical category is implemented on grammatical, lexical or phonemic levels, on the part of the text or in the text in general.

Other authors believe that definition of modality as the statement attitude towards reality from the remitter narrows its concept and creates prerequisites for the respondent's exception of the act of communication. (Getman, 2006).

A quite difficult picture is represented by a text modality. "As soon as a text modality becomes a subject of consideration, - L. G. Babenko notes, - symmetry and clearness of differentiation of modal values is lost, their borders are washed away, their interaction is observed" (Babenko, 2009).

In case of bilingual translation of O. Henry, the analysis of modality transference in many respects depending on individuality of grammatical and lexical units of the language, helps not only understand the essence of modality, but also give a new look at the ways of its representation through a set of means of art expressiveness characteristic to the translation of creative heritage of the writer.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Thus, the contextual and comparative analysis of the ways of modal relations representation reveals characteristic features and structure of the English and Russian languages that have specific grammatical and lexical units. The modality covers a wide range of categories. Between the statement and denial, you observe opportunity and impossibility, probability and incredibility, assumption and doubt. The modal relations make an important part of information of the message. The translation can't be considered correct if it doesn't reflect the modality which is present the original message.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The article is of especial interest for linguists in further development of theoretical issues on language modality and for the university English language teachers researching and giving lectures on the topic. It is also relevant for university students in the course of practical translation.

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