

NOTE-TAKING AND SYMBOLS AS MEANS OF MINIMIZING SEMANTIC LOSS IN ORAL TRANSLATION

ЗНАКИ И СИМВОЛЫ, СРЕДСТВА МИНИМИЗАЦИИ СЕМАНТИЧЕСКИХ ПОТЕРЬ В УСТНОМ ПЕРЕВОДЕ

***Аннотациясы:** Макалада ырааттуу которуу учурунда кыскартып жазып алууда колдонулган белги жана символдордун колдонулушу, алардын мааниси жана чечмелениши, жана ошондой эле кыскартып жазып алуудагы алардын орду изилденген. Оозэки котормодо ар кандай символ жана белгилерди колдонуу котормо сапатын жогорулатат, жана так туура которууга өбөлгө түзөт. Котормо процесси курч жана аналитикалык ой жүгүртүүнү, тилдик компетенцияны, мыкты эске тутуу жөндөмдүүлүктү жана, албетте, котормо чеберчилигин талап кылган өтө татаал баарлашуу акты. Котормонун негизги максаты түпнуска тилинде берилген маалыматты котормо тилине которууда, сөздүн лексикалык жана семантикалык маанисин сактап туура жана так которуп берүү болуп эсептелгендиктен, ар түрдүү символдордун жана атайын белгилердин колдонулушу котормо сапатына кепилдик берет жана семантикалык жоготууларды минималдаштырат. Ушул себептен улам, оозэки котормо практикасында символдордун колдонулушу котормо процессинин багытын дээрлик өзгөрттү. Котормочу символдордун жардамы менен көлөмдүү маалыматты кагаз бетине түшүрүп кыска убакыттын ичинде ассоциативдүү ой жүгүтүүнүн жардамы менен деталдуу түрдө түпнуска тилинде бере алат. Окумуштуулар котормо сапатына таасирин тийгизген жана аны арттырган факторлорду изилдеп келишкен. XIX кылымдын экинчи жарымында гана кыскартып жазып алууда колдонулган символдорду классификациялоо жана колдонулушу жагынан топторгоо бөлүү иш аракеттери орун алган.*

***Негизги сөздөр:** котормо, символ, кыскартып жазып алуу, түпнуска/котормо тилдери, жөндөмдүүлүк*

Аннотация: В статье рассматриваются знаки и символы используемые при устном последовательном переводе, их значения и интерпретация, а также их роль в переводе. Использование символов и знаков способствует качеству перевода и его адекватности. Процесс перевода – это сложный коммуникативный акт, требующий глубокого мыслительного процесса и аналитических навыков, языковой компетенции, отличной памяти и, несомненно, навыков перевода. Так как основной целью перевода является передача языковых единиц исходного языка на язык перевода, при котором немаловажно сохранить лексическое и семантическое значение слов, использование символов и знаков способствует полноте перевода и его адекватности, при котором семантические потери сводятся к минимуму. Именно по этой причине, использование символов и знаков в устном переводе, значительно изменили подходы и технику в переводе. Символы стали неотъемлемой частью устного перевода, позволив переводчику использовать минимальное время, но добиться максимальной передачи информации на языке перевода, и воспроизвести конечный продукт – перевод, с помощью ассоциативного мышления. На протяжении многих лет учёные и лингвисты изучали различные факторы влияющие на качество перевода. И только во второй половине XIX-века имело место систематизация и классификация знаков и символов, используемых в устном переводе.

Ключевые слова: перевод, символы, переводческая скоропись, язык источник\язык перевода, переводческие навыки

Abstract: This article investigates signs and symbols used in note-taking techniques during consecutive translation, the meaning of symbols and their interpretation, and the role of symbols in note-taking as well. The use of special signs and symbols promotes achieving translation adequacy and quality in the process of translation. Translation process is a complex communicative act which requires acute mental activity and analytical skills, language competence and good memory and, certainly, translation skills. Since the main objective of translation is rendering language units of source text into target one preserving its lexical and semantic meaning, the use of symbols and signs in consecutive translation ensures adequate translation with maximum preservation of the Source text units, and minimum semantic loss. Therefore the usage of symbols and signs and introduction of note-taking techniques in translation has drastically changed the translation course. Symbols have become an indispensable tool in consecutive translation and has made possible for an interpreter to use minimal time but have maximal output, restore details of the source utterance, and reproduce the final product relying on associative thinking. It requires special writing skills or note-taking skills. Scholars and linguists have been studying factors influencing translation quality and adequacy from different prospective. And only in the second half of XIX century, the attempts were made to systematize and classify symbols used in note taking.

Key words: translation, symbols, note-taking, SL/TL, translation skills

Oral translation has always been considered as consuming type of translation hence it requires excellent memory skills, perfect public speaking skills and professional translation competence. Translation requires acute mental activity, analytical and translation skills, language competence and good memory. Since the main objective of translation is rendering language units of source text into target one with maximum preservation of its lexical and semantic meaning, there is no doubt that the use of symbols and signs in consecutive translation ensures adequate translation and minimum semantic loss.

The study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation – Semiotics, defines symbol as a sign, which presupposes the use of its primary meaning or denotatum as a means to generate more abstract and general meaning. Any sign may be considered

as a symbol if it is figurative, that is if it has a sense and reflects the meaning of objects and phenomena of reality; if it is motivated – general, concise and observable to a highest degree; if it is polysemantic – may have different meanings in different contexts and conventional – association of a symbol with definite notion or meaning generated in the mind of an interpreter (Alikina, 2007; Shelestyuk, 1997; 125-142) .

Therefore the usage of symbols and signs and introduction of note-taking techniques in translation has drastically changed the translation course. The first person to advance a theory on the application of symbols and notations in translation was J. Herbert, a representative of Geneva school of interpreting. According to him notations and symbols used in note-taking ensures detailed reproduction of a source

utterance in target language, serving as language markers employed for better retrieval of information (Herbert, 1952; 34-37) . J. Herbert in his Practical manual for interpreters (*Manuel de l'interpréte*) divides interpretation process into 3 stages: understanding, transmission and production; emphasizes the significance of note-taking in consecutive interpretation and offers the individual types of symbols used in various fields of human activities, like mathematics, physics etc. (Siantova, 2015; 45)

J. Herbert's theory was further developed by Danica Seleskovitch in which she emphasizes the difference between the meaning and the sense of individual words they acquire in a definite contextual situation. In order to choose a correct notation an analysis of a discourse should be done, since the context and situation impact the choice of translation unit or an equivalent. D. Seleskovitch distinguishes two kinds of notes – concretely translated or not translated word or association to source utterance. According to her, symbols in notation should be fully automatized and interpreters should not be limited by a number of symbols, but use abbreviations and arrows to note links and relation as well (Siantova, 2015; 2) .

According to the scholar who had made a great contribution to consecutive translation techniques – Miňjar-Beloručev – the text preserves its originality only partially due to the interaction of two different languages and cultures, and presumably the problem of information losses arises. He distinguishes 3 stages of interpreting: 1) active listening analysis and comprehension; 2) memorization of informa-

tion and note-taking; and 3) decoding the notation, or in other words reproduction in target language. Miňjar-Beloručev considers note-taking technique as a memory pillar and suggests basic principles of note-taking emphasizing on: 1) rendering of an idea using minimum expressive means, that is to say discourse elements that are difficult to store in memory or remember and they become supporting memory points during reproduction; 2) shortened notation of words relying on theory of redundancy in language; 3) vertical layout of notation with regard on syntactical relations; 4) maximal use of symbols and abbreviations with invariant meaning which substitute several concepts (Miňjar-Beloručev, 2005; 110-115) .

Representatives of Russian school of interpreters – Chuzhakin A. P. and Spirina S. G. have made a great contribution to the further evolvement and practical application of note-taking techniques. They consider note-taking as means of interpreting or “universal cursive” but flexible and purely individual tool used by each interpreter during translation process. As stated by authors, note taking impacts translation adequacy, reduces memory stress, and enhances reproduction (Chuzhakin, Spirina 2007; 63-66) . They suggest diagonal SPO structure, referring to the vertical layout of notes introduced by Rozan J.F. (Alikina, 2007; 13), where the notes are taken from the left to the right, and from the top to the bottom, that is, the subject group is written in first line on the left, the predicate group is noted in the middle, second line, and the object group in the third line, on the bottom, as given below:

Subject

KG PM

Predicate

=^d *offic vzt*

Object (direct/indirect)

Ru, March '14

JK

OK

*draft law,
♂&♀= in South*

If we decode notes, we will have the following sentences: *Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic paid an official visit to Russian Federation in March 2014 and Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic (Jokorku Kenesh) approved a draft law on granting equal rights to men and women in Southern regions of country* consequently.

Rozan J.F. based his note-taking on linguistic, semantic and cognitive analysis of the source text and stressed the importance of abbreviating intelligently using sufficient number of symbols. According to him, interpreter should translate the meaning, not word by word, use abbreviations, note the sequence of ideas and the links between them,







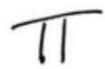



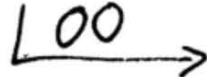















always note the negation, use emphasis, and take notes vertically (Gerard, et al, 1996; 71).

There are the variety of signs and symbols commonly used in note-taking:

- shortenings: omission of vowels (*cnfrnc* for conference, *ppl* for people, *rprdctn* for reproduction etc);
- standard shortenings (*p* – for page, *info* – for information, *ex* – for for example etc);
- substitution of prefixes (θ for *-tion*, λ for *-logy*, ϕ for *-philo*, Ψ for *psycho*, *t* for *-ment*, *g* for *-age*, *d* for *-ed*, η for *-ing*);
- abbreviations (*UN*, *WHO*, *ABR*, *NASA* etc);
- mathematic signs ($\%$ for *percent*, $\$$ for

money, *capital*, *means*, \neq for *isn't* or *not equal*, \times for *war*, *conflict*, \square for *more*, \square for *less*, Σ for *total sum/amount*, \approx for *approximately* etc);

- figures and symbols ($'15$ – for *2015*, $1'5$ – for *the middle of a year*, $15'$ – for *the end of a year*, $\&$ – for *and*, $:$ – for *say*, \rightarrow – for *next*, *subsequent*, \leftrightarrow – for *both sides*, *bilateral*, *reciprocal*, \perp – for *tomorrow*, \lrcorner – for *yesterday*, \perp – for *today*, *present*, $\text{\textcircled{f}}$ – for *woman*, *girl*, $\text{\textcircled{m}}$ – for *man*, *boy*, \square – for *nation*, *country*, **PM** – for *Prime Minister*, **P** – for *president*, *project*, **ad** – for *advertisement*, **b4** – for *before* etc) and the following symbols:

	relations		consequences
	development		industry
	inflation		money
	*medicine		trade
	politics		success
	energy		join, together
	Look forward		talks,
	meeting, discussion		listen, hear
	agree		to ban, to restrict
	lead to, cause		continue
	deficit		surplus
	on the one hand		on the other hand
	agriculture		repression

Each symbol and notation generates a definite association in the minds of interpreters. Due to the association each of them encloses and depicts, it is possible to retrieve information hidden in this sign or encoded in it. If we refer to the definition of an association, it says that it “is a more or less regular connection established between the given and the other mental concepts in the minds of a language speakers” (Miram, et al, 2006; p.10). Therefore, there should be drawn a division line between denotation and contextual meaning of an utterance encoded in symbol. Decoding of a sign and choice of lexical equivalent depends on situation and context the word has been used in, and translation competence of an interpreter as well. Symbols and notations are used to restore information and reproduce source utterance in the target language in details, so we may say that it ensures detailed reproduction of the source message and prevents information loss. The problem of translation ambiguity and translation loss may undoubtedly lie in polysemantic nature of the language signs either. Generating this idea we may say that, one may associate *W* with *work*, the other one with *war*, the third person with *weapon*, or *ψ* with *agriculture*, and the other with *field works* or *equipment* etc. The number of regular well-established associations is rather limited and individual, so that any interpreter may have his/her own system of symbols and signs that initiate definite mental concept. Moreover, we should not forget that the number of associations might be different in different languages.

Note-taking is closely associated with comprehension and memory, which are two indivisible elements in cognitive perception and that makes rendering of the source message possible without any semantic loss. Memory plays a great role in interpretation and the basis of transference of source language units into the target language. J. McShane distinguishes two types of memory – episodic and semantic. He describes episodic memory as memory for personal experience and semantic memory as a memory for facts, concepts and notions, whilst in consecutive interpreting, names and titles, figures, signs and symbols, dates and time should be stored in interpreter’s memory, so that they might be used during translation process for adequate rendering (Ji Kangi, 1995; 7).

We can, conditionally, decompose translation into mental operations: an interpreter perceives information, then the information is selected and

retained in cognitive system, encoded in symbols and is retrieved to produce a final product. In other words, an interpreter perceives information in source language, analyses it, memorizes meaningful components, encodes information, synthesizes the translation model, verifies the semantic, grammatical and stylistic contexts, and finally, reproduces it in target language. In oral translation details are traced back through our short-term memory. It is highly important to note a core message, in other words, invariant information, since an interpreter transforms a source text mainly focusing on it.

Let’s consider few examples:

We can encode a sentence “*A shortage of water leads to poverty, social strife, growth of ethnic tensions and to the outbreak of armed conflicts*” (L.Visson; 119) by the following way:

Lack H₂O

→

pvrtty, soc strife, ↑ ethnic tenθ, start W^d X²

It is clearly seen that several types of notation were used – *lack* is a synonym of shortage, deficit; *H₂O* stands for water; → symbol means further, lead to; *pvrtty* – poverty; *soc* – shortening of social; ↑ symbol means up, rise, high; *tenθ* stands for tensions; *start* is a synonym of outbreak; *W^d* means armed; *X* means conflict, confrontation; mathematic symbol of *power*² denotes plural form of a word it is used in, consequently conflicts.

The sentence “*Moreover, mortality in Russia from infectious diseases is mainly to tuberculosis, from 70 to 90 % among men, and from 40-70% among women*” (L.Visson; 128) may be encoded as: + **death Ru**

=

TB, 70-90% – ♂, 40-70% – ♀

Where + symbol is used to denote in addition to; *death* is used for mortality rate; *Ru* – shortening of Russia, Russian; = – to be, present simple; *TB* stands for tuberculosis; underlining means main or importance; ♂ – man and ♀- woman.

Next example “*...The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is one of the most outstanding events in strengthening of the regime for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.*” (L.Visson; 70) may be encoded as:

NPT

=

an event (!), strngtη W WMD’ regime

And let's interpret symbols used in the sentence – NPT – short form for non-proliferation treaty; = – verb to be, in present simple; (!) – exclamation mark means the most important; strengtη – strengthening; W – w stands for arms, weapon, consequently w – disarmament; WMD – acronym for weapons of mass destruction; apostrophe ' – means possession, stands for preposition *of*;

There is no need to overemphasize the importance the symbols and signs used in note-taking, since symbolization and notation has become a unique tool in consecutive translation practice to retrieve source information in details with minimum time waste and maximum translation adequacy and output. Strong associative thinking and memory ensure translation quality, relevant and timely reproduction of source message, and promote professionalism. The situation, context, and translation competence of an interpreter, background knowledge of both an interpreter, on the one hand, and of participants of communication act, on the other hand, should also be considered as factors influencing translation quality.

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