

## SOCIAL DIALECT OF BUCCANEERS' SOCIETY REVEALED IN “TREASURE ISLAND” BY R. L. STEVENSON

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În ultimii ani, un interes deosebit se acordă aspectelor sociolingvistice ale traducerii. În articolul de față se tratează problema sociodialectului în textul literar, și anume aspecte cu caracter sociocultural care reflectă trăsături caracteristice ale societății piraților din „Insula Comorii” și deseori prezintă dificultăți în traducere.

Dialectul social reflectă experiența din viața de zi cu zi; inclusiv istoria, viața socială, religia, tradiții și obiceiuri, limbajul vorbit. Este foarte dificil a înțelege esența acestui fenomen în întregime.

În ciuda tuturor dificultăților de traducere, studierea acestui fenomen este mai mult ca necesară și trebuie să fie cultivată, fiindcă el reflectă trăsături caracteristice ale societății reprezentate în lucrarea artistică și în așa fel formează mesajul autorului. Substituirea incorectă sau neglijarea acestuia în traducere poate duce la distrugerea totală a imaginii societății create de autor.

Cu toate acestea, este important a conștientiza faptul că limba ca instrument este împluternicită a reda orice realități sociolingvistice care aparțin diferitelor limbi și culturi străine. Traducătorul trebuie să ia în considerație și să aplice mijloacele lingvistice asemănătoare sau paralele existente în subcultura literară a limbii-țintă.

Translator's activity as any other sphere of human activity has its pitfalls due to which the text translated into a foreign language may lose the function it was meant to fulfill and thus fails to produce the effect forethought by the author. Therefore the message of the text becomes ineffective and destroys communication.

Very often such problem arises when texts created in one culture have to be translated for perception in another culture. Here the process of translation does not merely imply finding linguistic equivalents in the target language but also social and cultural frame of reference which has to be recreated in another culture, which is not an easy task at all.

Many factors are crucial to the process of translating and should be systematically considered. This short paper will not be able to cover all of them exhaustively due to the great subtlety and complexity of the factors in question, so we will focus our attention on linguistic means creating the atmosphere of certain society described in a literary work.

Successful translation of a literary work implies taking decisions which can be subdivided into two types – strategic decisions and decisions of detail. The first category requires first of all understanding of the author's intentions and message. For instance while describing the world of piracy the author's intention was to create the atmosphere of mystery and secrecy understood only by those devoted and belonging to this world, in other words to make the reader feel as being a part of this reality. This is achieved by different linguistic means among which we can single out proper names, titles of address, names of objects related to everyday activity, specific language implying either social background or professional activity, use of cultural symbols etc. Decisions of detail are relevant to particular contextual situation, audience, available linguistic means in the target language and other factors. It is very difficult to decide which category has the priority in case one should choose either the first or the second type - ideally both of them should be observed.

In real life texts and objects which have cultural implicature are, as a rule, multifunctional. So, the medieval icon, antique temple or Renaissance architecture carry out both religious and aesthetic function, military charters and the governmental acts of Peter I were both legal and publicistic documents, appeals of famous generals can be considered as military and historical texts and as monuments of publicism, public speaking and prose. In certain conditions such overlapping of functions is considered natural and necessary phenomenon: for the text to be able to implement its function, it should carry some additional functions. This concerns mainly literature. Combination of artistic function with magic, legal, moral, philosophical, political constitutes the integral feature of social functioning of this or that literary text. Therefore, we can observe bilateral inter-connection of text functioning: to fulfill certain artistic function, the text should as well carry moral, political, philosophical, publicistic functions. And vice versa, to fulfill certain purpose, for example political, the text should realize aesthetic function.

These functions are realized by means of communication. We can assume that communication differs in different social groups. These differences vary from society to society and such phenomenon is known as

social dialect. This term has arisen not so long ago – in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The concept of social dialect comprises a set of linguistic peculiarities characteristic to a certain social group having common professional, class, age or social status within the system of national language. Examples of social dialects can be found among different types of social groups – soldiers, criminals, tradesmen, teenagers etc. Social dialects do not represent complete systems of the communications. They embody features of speech – such as words, word-combinations, syntactic structures, accent etc.

As it is known, a word carries not only the present-day information conveyed through daily speech communication; it also accumulates social and historical, intellectual, expressive and emotional information and in particular information revealing national identity and speech community. Such information represents nationally coloured cultural component of semantic structure of a word.

The cultural component of word semantics comes to light in texts which refer to certain historical epoch, reveal and compare mentalities, speech of the representatives of different layers of society, trades, political groups, etc. The cultural component of word semantics becomes obvious while analyzing speech of characters represented by the author.

“Treasure Island” by R.L.Stevenson concerns the society of buccaneers and piracy, characterized by multi-culturalism and language specific to pirates. Buccaneers got their name from the French word *boucan* which means barbecue. Buccaneers were originally pig and cattle farmers and the term referred to the way they barbecued their meat on grills as taught to them by the local natives. Buccaneer referred to the pirates and privateers who were based out of the West Indies.

Among the cultural components characteristic to this literary work we can observe the following categories of words:

- 1) Proper names, forms of address, titles.
- 2) Names of objects representing everyday life within the society.
- 3) Specific language used within buccaneers society.

While speaking about proper names based on associations it is important to distinguish associations based on traditional, social and historical judgments, representations and concepts which are nationally inherent only to the speakers of the given language, and associations of literary origin. The minimum function of personal names is nominal; some designation must be fixed to a person. Moreover, the formal attributes of proper names can play an important role in literature by evoking, for example, an epoch, social status, or nationality of the characters. Along with their nominal function, names often perform a descriptive or characterizing function. If a personal name characterizes its bearer, the expressive and stylistic function may dominate the nominal one. Therefore, proper name is a linguistic cultural element, and the author uses it for its associative value. If it resists translation its evocative value is lost.

Life of pirates is also full of proper names having evocative value. The majority of them are explained as their etymology is obscure and semantics is not familiar to general public.

E.g. **Jolly Roger**                      **Черное, пиратское знамя**

Jolly Roger is the pirates' flag: the flag traditionally flown by a pirate ship, depicting white skull and crossbones against a black background.

In translation this proper name is not preserved as this allusion is not familiar to the Russian reader, instead the explanation of its meaning is given, though the dictionary suggests another variant of translation – Веселый Роджер.

Everyday life of the pirates, though it is specific, is not imaginary. The majority of objects have either equivalents or analogues in the target language and the task of the translator is to find appropriate concept in the target language.

E.g. **Jolly-boat**                      **Ялик**

- a sailing vessel's small boat, usually carried on the stern.

“Waiting was a strain; and it was decided that Hunter and I should go ashore with the jolly-boat, in quest of information” [1].

“Ждать становилось невыносимо, и мы решили, что я с Хантером поеду на разведку в ялике” [2].

Another example illustrates terminology used in sailing:

E.g. **mizzen-top** крьюс-марс [наблюдательная площадка на бизань-мачте (кормовой мачте корабля)]  
**fore-sail** фок-зейл [нижний прямой парус фок-мачты (первой мачты корабля)]

“Just then a sort of brightness fell upon me in the barrel and looking up, I found the moon had risen, and was silvering, the mizzen-top and shining white on the luff of the fore-sail” [3].

“В бочке стало светло. Взглянув вверх, я увидел, что поднялся месяц, посеребрив крюйс-марс [наблюдательная площадка на бизань-мачте (кормовой мачте корабля)] и вздувшийся фок-зейл [нижний прямой парус фок-мачты (первой мачты корабля)]” [4].

The translator gives both the equivalent and explanation. The reason for that is quite obvious – not all readers possess sufficient knowledge in this sphere to understand such terms. Though explanation can be as well omitted thus making curious readers find out the meaning of these nautical terms in the explanatory dictionary.

The next category under discussion is the use of specific language which helps to describe the characters of the story and events indirectly, through their language. Certainly colloquial speech presents greater difficulty for translation as in this case the translator should find out in the target language the corresponding slang or colloquial expression. In some cases specific language use tells about social background of the speaker. In “Treasure Island” low social status of pirates is revealed through their speech.

E.g. “We was a-talkin' of keel-hauling, 'answered Morgan 'Keel-hauling, was you? and a mighty suitable thing, too and you may lay to that. Get back to your place for a lubber Tom” [5].

“Мы говорили о том, как людей под килем протягивают [протягивание под килем - вид наказания в английском флоте в XVIII веке], - ответил Морган. - Под килем! Вполне подходящий для тебя разговор. Эх, ты! Ну, садись на место, Том, дуралей...” [6].

But in translation this is not preserved. The only reference to the background of the speaker is the word “дуралей” (fool). We may criticize such translation as involving the loss of stylistic effect of the phrase.

One of the main goals of literary translation is to initiate the target-language reader into the sensibilities of the source-language culture which can be based on different sociolinguistic phenomena vitally important for creating special atmosphere of the literary work. The creative translator's ability to capture and project them is of primary importance for, and should be reflected in, the translated work. Otherwise the essential component of the author's message will be lost in translation.

There are both linguistic and extralinguistic aspects that hinder to reach adequacy in fiction translation. Semantic information of the text differs essentially from the expressive-emotional information of the text but they have one common trait: both can bear and render extralinguistic information. Extralinguistic information often becomes a stone to stumble over by a translator, as it is a lingvoethnic barrier for a fiction translator.

The process of transmitting sociolinguistic elements through literary translation is a complicated and vital task. Social dialect reflects complex collection of experiences which condition daily life; it includes history, social structure, religion, traditional customs and everyday usage. This is difficult to comprehend completely. Especially in relation to a target language, one important question is whether the translation will have any readership at all, as the specific reality being portrayed is not quite familiar to the reader.

Such transfer requires a multi-pronged approach. It is concerned with the author's relationship to his subject matter and with the author's relationship to his reader. These should be reflected in a good translation. The translator must transmit this special linguistic phenomenon from one language to another. Caught between the need to capture the local colour and the need to be understood by an audience outside the original cultural and linguistic situation, a translator must be aware of both cultures and societies.

Thorough knowledge of a foreign language, its vocabulary, and grammar is not sufficient to make qualitative translation. One should be familiar with one's own culture and be aware of the source-language culture before attempting to build any bridge between them.

If the reality being represented is not familiar to the audience, the translation stumbles and becomes difficult to read. The translator would have to consider whether similar or parallel language resources exist in the literary subculture of the target language. A translator has to look for equivalents in terms of relevance in the target language and exercise discretion by substituting rather than translating certain elements in a work. Even with all the apparent cultural hurdles, a translator can create equivalence by the judicious use of resources.

Translation is an intellectual activity that will continue to thrive, deriving inspiration from fiction in the source language and passing on such inspiration, or at least appreciation, to target-language readers.

#### References:

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3. Stevenson R.L. Treasure Island, p.50.
4. Стивенсон Роберт Луис. Остров сокровищ, p.52.
5. Stevenson R.L. Treasure Island, p.68.
6. Стивенсон Роберт Луис. Остров сокровищ, p.71.

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