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GORBYLEVA D. R.

Truthfulness in science-fiction literature: Douglas Adams' «Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy» in Russian translation

Here is analyzed and attributed truthfulness in science-fiction which influences all levels of a literary piece of work. The purpose of this research is to investigate how this feature is realized in Russian translations of science-fiction. The first phase of the project involves the research of realization of the characteristic and its elements in a text. The final phase refers to the analysis of the revealed elements in a chosen novel and its translation.

This research looks at «Hitch-hikers Guide to the Galaxy» of a well-known English writer and dramatist Douglas Adams and its Russian translations, made by V. Bakanow and V. Philippov. The work performs the main features of science-fiction, including truthfulness. For the first time the paper shows the overview and the comparative analysis of the parts of this novel and their Russian translations where the realization of this characteristic can be found.

Keywords: science-fiction literature, truthfulness, Douglas Adams, comparative studies.

Introduction. Under conditions of globalization many scientists and researchers focus their attention on cultural channels or media, a certain way of information transmission. Science fiction is a part of mass culture, and an essential sphere of cross-cultural communication. In addition, nowadays science fiction has become one of the most popular genres.

The focus of the recent research has been on the one of the main characteristics of science-fiction genre – truthfulness.

The aim of this research is to indicate the main components of truthfulness and analyze how they are realized in translations.

Truthfulness in a science-fiction work

The main function of truthfulness is to create true-to-life atmosphere within unreal events and make the reader believe in what is actually not true. To support this characteristic the author uses some artistic hooks. Firstly, to describe the events authentically but not to focus only on the problem, the writer attracts attention to a certain situation, for example he emphasizes a similarity, his feelings and experiences. Secondly, the author creates reliable character using the speech characteristics (the words, particular to a certain epoch) and the description of the behavior. Also he uses an «anthropomorphism» technique, and endues extraterrestrial characters and robots with human feelings and emotions, in order to make their images reliable and close to the reader. Thirdly, to support truthfulness, the author uses the concepts and terms which are typical to the

created epoch, at the same time reflecting the scientific basis of the time in which a writer and his readers live.

Truthfulness in «Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy» by Douglas Adams and its translation

The translation is the first medium, transmitting a text to the host culture. In order to analyze how these elements, transmitting truthfulness, can be translated, we have chosen “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy” by Douglas Adams and its translation into Russian, made by V.I. Bakanov and V.E. Philippov. The reason to the choice is due to the fact that the novel embodies many of science fiction basic components, and it also remains one of the most popular works all over the world. The works of the interpreters belong to the first period of this novel reception, as they were published from 1995 to 1997, but at the same time they are the most controversial among Russian readers that was concluded while analyzing the receptions made by users of «livelibe» and «fantalab» sites. To learn how the characteristics of truthfulness appeared in the novel, the current research deals with the analysis of three main components: the system of characters, the use of terms and calculations, and the Encyclopedia Galactica.

The 1st part of the research is referred to the main hero, Arthur Dent, an Englishman, who loves comfort and peaceful life. The topos of home and Arthur’s connection with his planet is a key point, which helps to reveal the main features of his character. As the story unfolds, Arthur loses the connection with his home and become indifferent to his planet. Thus in the first part of the book the author describes the physical condition of the character when he is thinking about what has happened to the Earth. In order to show Arthur levelness, the author selects neutral expressions. Philippov keeps physical statement of the character, but his descriptions are very emotional. Bakanov emphasizes the strong feelings of the protagonist. This shows that the character is experiencing strong emotions. In both translations Arthur Dent’s image is transformed, and the character still has the connection with the house.

The 2nd part of the report is devoted to the very special character of the novel, to Marvin, extra-sensitive and «manically depressed» robot, is the character which was created on the idea of anthropomorphism. In order to express that the robot is an apparatus, the author shows that all its components are independent using descriptions such as «*the robot’s head swung up*» and the calculation «*I’m fifty thousand times more intelligent than you*». At the same time, Adams gives it the characteristics of a living being: the robot can feel physical pain «it gives me a headache». In both translations the transformation of the character is obvious, in Philippov’s translation the human side of the character is emphasized, while Bakanov omits feelings and the physical characteristics.

The 3rd part is referring to the use of terms and calculations. Basically, in this novel Douglas Adams mentions the exact distance. Philippov translates all the terms and calculations. While Bakanov has hardly mentioned the distance

calculation and omitted some phenomena when translating them, the novel loses certain elements.

The last part is devoted to the «Galaxy Encyclopedia», a small device that gives explanations of the basic phenomena and inventions. For example, to present various phenomena the author describes the mechanism of the device: «it absorbs all unconscious mental frequencies from this brainwave energy to nourish itself with». Philippov translates all these elements equivalently, preserving the style of their descriptions. Bakanov hardly translates scientific data in this encyclopedia, and pays special attention to the artistic descriptions or to parts with humorous additions. For example, the passage, where the author gave the explanation of Babel fish work, is omitted, but the interpreter fully translates the next paragraph, showing a humorous scene.

Conclusion. It can be concluded that truthfulness helps a reader to understand and to believe in the reality of fantastic events. When having analyzed «Hitchhikers' Guide to the Galaxy» one can understand that translations tend to omit or exaggerate this essential element that leads to the transformation of the protagonist's image. Also, there is an imbalance of anthropomorphic characteristics. In Philippov's translations, we can observe a shift to description of the robot's feelings and physical states, while Bakanov omits Marvin's emotions, and pays attention only to its technical features. It should be mentioned that scientific works have a lot of terms, definitions and calculations. Philippov fully translates these elements, but also employs new descriptions and it leads to transforming the scientific style into the more artistic. Bakanov does not translate calculations and terminology and loses the characteristics of certainty.

Endnotes

1. Adams, D. (1979) *The Hitchhikers' Guide to the Galaxy*. London: Pan Books.
2. Adams, D. (1995) *Putevoditel' khitch-khajkera po Galaktike* [The Hitchhikers' Guide to the Galaxy]. Trans. by Philippov V. Kiev: Moj drug fantastika.
3. Adams, D. (1997) *Avtostopom po galaktike* [The Hitchhikers' Guide to the Galaxy] Trans. by Bakanov V. Moscow: AST.

GORIUNOVA P. F.

Postmodern Drama: Aspects of Translation

This study delves into various aspects of postmodern drama and its translation. The object of the study is the play by Stephen Fry «Latin! Or Tobacco and Boys» and its translation implemented by Sergei Illin («Латынь! Или Табак и Мальчики»).

Keywords: postmodern drama, drama translation, Stephen Fry.

Postmodern drama unlike the novel has received little critical attention. Among some of the foremost postmodern critics and dramatists are Linda Hutcheon¹, Jeanette Malkin² and Deborah Geis³. Postmodern theatre appeared