

**Slangisms as the Means of Conveying the Author's and Character's  
Figurative Information in Some Countrys of the Danube Region:  
Translation Aspect**

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**Abstract:** Slang as a term is used in two ways: either as a synonym for jargon, or as the whole stock of the jargon words and jargon meaning of the neutral lexis, jargon expressions etymologically belonging to various jargons, so that they get commonly used or understandable at least to a wide circle of certain language speakers. *Slangisms* of the general slang as well as “low” *colloquial words* (two lexical layers which have a blurred distinction between them) comprise the constituent of the common national word-stock called by the researchers an “*expressive vernacular*”. This constituent belongs to stylistically low constructs of the literary standard. It has a status of the functional and stylistic category which is defined by a certain amount of stylistic means of the colloquial variation of the national literary standard. Also it occupies the mid-position between literary standard word-stock and non-literary manifestations of the language.

**Keywords:** the German language of the Danube Region; slangisms; colloquial words; jargons; literary standard; communication; functional and stylistic category; translation

When we study interpersonal, particularly informal, communication closely, we will get to notice that recently colloquial lexis and phraseology has gained much prominence, especially among the youth. This “mode of speech” peculiar of the so called non-standard embraces surprise categories of population such as women or school-girls who had been considered as most conservative social groups in this respect until recently. Thus one can claim the research that has been performed within this article is *timely*.

The processes denoted above are rather prominent in the language of books, printed mass media, motion pictures, online-mass media, and public speeches of various nature, postmodernist fiction, latest playwriting and theatrical releases.

The “New Wave” writers express their argumentation as for the usage of the colloquialisms and claim this is the way to protest “hypocrisy”, “concealment”, and

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“formalities” in the literature of recent years. The scholars also support this point of view (Korunets, 2008, p. 317).

We can also see negative responses to such tendencies, though we shouldn't forget that any work of fiction, belles-lettres (moreover, the author's text which belongs to naturalism literary trend) is an important linguistic and cultural marker of times empowering the researcher of language to study linguistic phenomena pertaining to the characters' speech. In his/her turn a translator can study the ways to render relevant language units.

The scholars subdivide all the word-stock into standard and non-standard. The standard lexis comprises bookish words, standard colloquialisms, and neutral lexis. These word-groups are used either in literature or in formal oral speech. There is also non-standard word-stock subdivided into professional lexis, vulgar, jargon, argot and slang words all of which constitute the *subject matter* of research. The latter kind of word-stock has colloquial, informal nature and emotional colouring (Kyiak, Naumenko & Ohui, 2014, p. 148).

Let's consider the definitions of the most widely used notions for the non-standard lexis groups. *Professional lexis* is the words used by small groups of people representing the same profession<sup>1</sup>. *Jargon words* make the social dialect different from the literary standard in respect of the specific words and their pronunciation, but jargon has neither proper phonetic nor grammatical systems. Generally, this is the colloquial word-stock of people representing common interests<sup>2</sup>. *Argot* is the language of some limited social or professional group, artificially coined for the sake of lingual separatism and is mostly characterized by words which remain incomprehensible for the outsiders<sup>3</sup>. In the English lexicology the secret jargons are usually called *cant*, in German they are *Rotwelsch*, and in French – *argot*. Argot is a professional jargon speech of thieves, gangsters, and other social groups (like street mongers). Vulgar words are represented by rude, pejorative lexemes usually not to be used by educated people, but otherwise employed by socially challenged classes: convicts, drug dealers, homeless persons etc.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Contemporary Thesaurus of the Ukrainian Language: 65,000 words (2006)/Сучасний тлумачний словник української мови: 65 000 слів/За заг. ред. д-ра філолог. наук, проф. В.В.Дубічинського. – Х.: ВД «ШКОЛА», 2006. – 1008 с., р. 737.

<sup>2</sup> Contemporary Thesaurus of the Ukrainian Language: 65,000 words (2006)/Сучасний тлумачний словник української мови: 65 000 слів/За заг. ред. д-ра філолог. наук, проф. В.В.Дубічинського. – Х.: ВД «ШКОЛА», 2006. – 1008 с., р. 297.

<sup>3</sup> Contemporary Thesaurus of the Ukrainian Language: 65,000 words (2006) / Сучасний тлумачний словник української мови: 65 000 слів / За заг. ред. д-ра філолог. наук, проф. В.В.Дубічинського. – Х.: ВД «ШКОЛА», 2006. – 1008 с., р. 34.

<sup>4</sup> Contemporary Thesaurus of the Ukrainian Language: 65,000 words (2006). Сучасний тлумачний словник української мови: 65 000 слів/За заг. ред. д-ра філолог. наук, проф. В.В.Дубічинського. – Х.: ВД «ШКОЛА», 2006. – 1008 с., р. 28.

The most widespread use recently has been gained by the term *slang*. *Slang* is the jargon word-stock, any colloquial variant of various social/professional groups' speech<sup>1</sup>. *Slang* words are the words usually seen as the deviation from the literary standard. They are expressive, somehow ironic and serve to denote phenomena of the everyday life (Wahrig, 2002 p. 1163). The term *slang* itself has several meanings: 1) *language of the socially or professionally distinct group of people as opposed to the literary standard*; 2) *colloquial language variations (particularly, emotionally coloured units of language) that do not meet the literary standard*<sup>2</sup>. The *slang* is made up of words and idioms (set expressions) which firstly appeared and were used only within some certain social groups. The *slang* made the life position of such groups outward. When such words get into the everyday usage they still keep their emotional and evaluative nature.

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One should point out that lexical means of ethical and stylistic marking as usually tend to evaluative and derogatory, general negative expressiveness though they are not considered as vulgar. Low-scaled lexis provide for language familiarity, although there are cases when much depends on the field of the certain word usage complicated by social meanings, emotional and stylistic colouring, context.

Non-standard elements of the literary language have their certain communicative status and lingual value, first of all as the generally accepted expressive means for creation of the stylistically low speech which provide for the functional and stylistic variation of the national standard word-stock. Thus kind of variation is different from the argot and jargon word-stock variation because the main markers

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<sup>1</sup> Contemporary Thesaurus of the Ukrainian Language: 65,000 words (2006). Сучасний тлумачний словник української мови: 65 000 слів/За заг. ред. д-ра філолог. наук, проф. В.В.Дубічинського. – Х.: ВД «ШКОЛА», 2006. – 1008 с., р. 810.

<sup>2</sup> The Great Thesaurus of Contemporary Ukrainian (2001). Великий тлумачний словник сучасної української мови/Уклад. і голов. ред. В.Т.Бусел. – К.: Ірпінь: ВТФ «Перун», 2001. – 1440 с., р. 1147.

of the expressive lexis are the common usage and its “low” ethic and stylistic nature aimed at creating of the certain stylistic effect.

So, in our times when literary translation faces no censorship requirements a translator needs to resolve several problematic issues of the non-standard lexis rendering. On the one hand, translators often deal the source text in the manner described by Korney Chukovsky in his *Vysokoye iskusstvo* [The High Art]: “... The fear to be understood as awkwardly vulgar prevents our translators from using of colloquial word-stock in the target texts” (Chukovskiy, 2016, pp. 136 – 137). On the other hand, there are numerous cases when such kind of words are really “awkward and irreflective” in translations which do not count for a number of aspects characterizing the words under consideration: 1) semantics, 2) field of usage, 3) how much “low” it could be seen in the source language, 4) degree of expressiveness in precise context (Chukovskiy, 2016, pp. 136 – 137). The researcher points out that prior to translating such words the translator should define the foreign author’s style and the system of his/her imagery. Only in case if the choice of the way of translation is right, if it is based on the source text, author’s stylistic devices detailed analysis as opposed to the possible ways of translation in the target text, it will be possible to render the degree of the source text reader’s impact precisely. That’s the only criterion for the qualified translation (Chukovskiy, 2016, p. 146).

By no means occasional was the researcher’s choice of the *object to study*, i.e. works by the Austrian writer Astrid Hornby in which the characters speak in teenagers’ vernacular rich in jargon, colloquial and taboo words having little in common with bookish language.

The usage of the non-standard lexis in the works of fiction by no means can be considered as such contradicting to its literary value. Such a word-stock is aesthetically and communicatively motivated because the criminal jargon and its phraseology as well as teenagers’ slang are widely used in the texts of various fields, in both formal and informal speech of people representing different social groups, of different age and cultural background. One cannot imagine contemporary human environment devoid of such lexis no matter how much negative it may seem to the conservative recipients.

Numerous slangisms bring negative perception of life into contemporary communicative environment as well as rude, naturalistic nominations and evaluations, primitive, low means of expressing thoughts and emotions, although the most often reason for their usage in youth speech, slang is *pragmatic*: i.e. necessity to express some idea quickly and precisely, to render the information in minimum number of words and to be understood correctly and instantly. Hence tendencies toward abbreviations, acronyms, shorter jargon and regional alternative words drifting from idiolect into the standard can be observed: *die Bihü* instead of *Büffelhüpfе* (*sehr breite Hüpfе, dicke Person*), *fjen* (*auf jeden Fall*), *telen*

(telefonieren), voll nich (auf gar keinen Fall), nix (nichts), Koks (Kokain), X-Man instead of Mathelehrer, Akne-X (eine Person mit vielen Pickeln im Gesicht); ABM (arbeiten bis Mittag), AIJ (Bin ich Jesus?), BD (bekloppt, blöd), BMW (Bemme mit Wurst, Wurstbrot), DVD (Depp vom Dienst, gutmütiger, naiver Mensch), KA (keine Ahnung), KDS-Diät (Kack-Dich-Schlank-Diät, Durchfall), KP (kein Plan), MOF (Mensch ohne Freunde), PP (persönliches Pech)<sup>1</sup>. So, the task of this research paper is to analyze the source text pragmatic aspect rendering by the translators.

Let us have a look at some examples of the non-standard word-stock translation taken from the Astrid Hornby's collection *Zwielichtgedämmere* (Hornby, 2003) in Ukrainian<sup>2</sup>. In the sentence "Sein Gesicht war zur Tanzfläche geneigt, und er beobachtete die Party-Meute" (Hornby, 2003, p. 31) the compound noun *Party-Meute* has the following meaning "Party – zwanglose Gesellschaft, geselliges Beisammensein" (Wahrig, 2002, p. 959) and "Meute – (fig.) Schar zügelloser Menschen, wilde Horde, Bande." (Wahrig, 2002, p. 871).

The Ukrainian translation contains the following words respectively: *вечірка* and *суматоха*. Cf. "Його обличчя було повернуто до танцмайданчика, і він спостерігав за запальною вечіркою"<sup>3</sup>, "Його погляд був спрямований на танцювальний майданчик, на суматоху на ньому"<sup>4</sup>. The word *вечірка* is used in the meaning "1. вечірнє зібрання, гулянка з частуванням у вузькому колі"<sup>5</sup>, the word *суматоха* is a calque of the Russian one and it means "беспорядочная беготня, беспокойная торопливость в действиях" (Ozhegov, 2006, p. 693).

As we see the semantic features of the German word *Party* – "free-and-easy/informal meeting with friends" is almost a complete equivalent in its relation to the Ukrainian word *вечірка*, but it is quite contrary to the semantic features of the German word *Meute* – "a crowd of unrestrained (spoiled) people", "wild crowd (people)", "a gang" which are not equivalent to the Ukrainian lexeme *вечірка* and the Russian-based calque *суматоха*.

<sup>1</sup> PONS Dictionary of Youth Language (2006). PONS. Wörterbuch der Jugendsprache. Deutsch–Englisch/Französisch/Spanisch. – Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Sprachen GmbH, 142 S.

<sup>2</sup> A Collection of Translations of Astrid Hornby's Works (2006). Збірка перекладів творів Астрід Хорнбі українською мовою // Перекладачі – магістранти факультету іноземних мов КДПУ. – Кіровоград: РВВ КДПУ ім. В.Винниченка, р. 98 с.

<sup>3</sup> A Collection of Translations of Astrid Hornby's Works (2006). Збірка перекладів творів Астрід Хорнбі українською мовою//Перекладачі – магістранти факультету іноземних мов КДПУ. – Кіровоград: РВВ КДПУ ім. В.Винниченка, р. 35.

<sup>4</sup> A Collection of Translations of Astrid Hornby's Works (2006) / Збірка перекладів творів Астрід Хорнбі українською мовою//Перекладачі – магістранти факультету іноземних мов КДПУ. – Кіровоград: РВВ КДПУ ім. В.Винниченка, р. 41.

<sup>5</sup> The Great Thesaurus of Contemporary Ukrainian (2001) / Великий тлумачний словник сучасної української мови / Уклад. і голов. ред. В.Т.Бусел. – К.: Ірпінь: ВТФ «Перун», р. 85.

One can claim that a well-known Ukrainian and Russian youth slang word *тусовка* – «(coll.) a company of friends, a social network» derived from the verb *тусоватися* – «(coll.) to constantly appear in some place, at some meetings »<sup>1</sup>.

There are some explication cases in the translation as well: “*Trotzdem, die Party war ein riesengroßer Erfolg. Und das, obwohl er so ein Freak war. Ein richtig seltsamer Kerl!*” (Hornby, 2003, p. 31), with nouns *Freak* [fri:k] and *seltsamer Kerl* which are used to denote: *Freak* – (umg.) 1) unangepasster, verrückter Mensch; 2) jemand, der eine bestimmte Sache intensiv, fanatisch betreibt; 3) (Jargon) jemand, der in maßloser und gefährlicher Weise Drogen konsumiert (Wahrig, 2002, p. 497), it is derived from the adjective *freakig* – (Jugendsprache) in der Art eines Freaks, unangepasst, verrückt a *seltsamer Kerl* – (umg.) 1. Mensch, Mann, Bursche, Junge (oft abwertend in Verbindung mit Adj.) (Wahrig, 2002, p. 727).

The Ukrainian translation expressed the same message in the following way: “*Та все ж, вечірка мала величезний успіх. І це, незважаючи на те, що він був не таким, як усі. А був справжнім диваком*”<sup>2</sup>, the word combination *бути не таким, як усі (бути дивним)* means – 1) який викликає подив//незвичайний якими-небудь якостями; чудний, незрозумілий//який не має подібних собі; рідкісний, кумедний, а *дивак* – той, хто своєю поведінкою і вчинками викликає здивування<sup>3</sup>, *komischer Kauz* (Muller, 2005, p. 365).

The German text has an informal word *Freak* with the semantic features “an unadapted, crazy person”, “the one who solves the problem in a phrenetic way”, (jargon) “a drug-addict who dangerously overdoses drugs” which is missed from the target text. The semantic features of the word *дивак* do not correlate with the semantic features of the word *Freak* which leads to the considerable loss of the source text imagery. To support this claim as for the target text irreparable loss one can deliver the following source text fragment: “*Was ihm aber den Ruf eines seltsamen Vogels eingebracht hatte, war die Tatsache, dass er Käfer und Schmetterlinge sammelte und sie dann an einer Nadel aufspießte und sie in einen Glaskasten gab. Zum Anschauen. Außerdem kletterte er gerne auf Bäume und saß dort lange. Wie ein kleines Kind. In den Augen der anderen wohl schon ungewöhnlich*”<sup>4</sup> in which *eines seltsamen Vogels* means the same with the *eines*

<sup>1</sup> The Great Thesaurus of Contemporary Ukrainian (2001). Великий тлумачний словник сучасної української мови/Уклад. і голов. ред. В.Т.Бусел. – К.: Ірпінь: ВТФ «Перун», р. 1277.

<sup>2</sup> A Collection of Translations of Astrid Hornby’s Works (2006). Збірка перекладів творів Астрід Хорнбі українською мовою//Перекладачі – магістранти факультету іноземних мов КДПУ. – Кіровоград: РВВ КДПУ ім. В.Винниченка, р. 60.

<sup>3</sup> The Great Thesaurus of Contemporary Ukrainian (2001) / Великий тлумачний словник сучасної української мови / Уклад. і голов. ред. В.Т.Бусел. – К.: Ірпінь: ВТФ «Перун», р. 220.

<sup>4</sup> PONS Dictionary of Youth Language (2006) / PONS. Wörterbuch der Jugendsprache. Deutsch–Englisch/Französisch/Spanisch. – Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Sprachen GmbH, 2006. – 142 S.

*seltsamen Kerl*, particularly розм. *дивак*, *чудна людина* (Havrys & Prorochenko, 1981, p. 289).

The context clearly states the protagonist of the novella as being *freak*, so the author uses such stylistically marked lexical units as *Freak*, *seltsamer Kerl*, *ein seltsamer Vogel* not without a purpose. So, they are to be rendered in the target language by all means: “А славу дивака йому принесло те, що він ловив жуків і метеликів, наколював їх на голки і складав у скляний ящик. На показ. Крім того, йому подобалося залазити на дерева і довго там сидіти, як роблять це малі діти. В очах інших це було досить незвично”<sup>1</sup>.

Instead of the author’s synonymic chain *Freak*, *seltsamer Kerl*, *ein seltsamer Vogel* the translator uses just one word *дивак* which is responsible for the biased losses in the translation, although Ukrainian youth language avails of a good number of relevant synonyms such as *лівий* – (молод., сленг) *не такий, як усі*; *біла ворона* – перен. розм. *людина, яка різко відрізняється від інших* (нім. *ein weißer Rabe, ein weißes Schaf*) (Havrys & Prorochenko, 1981, p. 119); *чудак / чудило* – *те саме, що дивак*<sup>2</sup>; *оригінал* – 2) розм. *людина, що вирізняється своєю незвичайною вдачею, поведінкою*; *дивак*<sup>3</sup>; *витівник/хімерник* – *людина, схильна до витівок*<sup>4</sup>; *кумедник* – розм. *те саме, що жартівник // те саме, що дивак*<sup>5</sup> etc.

So, to deliver the meaning of the slang word *Freak* the translator applies the descriptive method – *бути не таким, як усі* (*бути дивним*). Umberto Eco believes that explication method (Eco, 2014, pp. 262-263) can be used to render any meaning of the source text non-equivalent lexical unit, though its basic drawback remains to be some clumsiness and verbosity of the target text equivalent. That’s why the most useful way to apply this method coincides with the cases when one could avail of a relatively short explication or the absence of any other alternative way out (Eco, 2014, pp. 111-116).

The substandard vocabulary can perform different functions in the youth speech. The language users define the functional bearing of the lexemes on a subconscious level when participating in communication. The intention (*the affect to be achieved by the speaker as defined by him- or herself in oral or written communication*) can

<sup>1</sup> A Collection of Translations of Astrid Hornby’s Works (2006). Збірка перекладів творів Астрід Хорнбі українською мовою//Перекладачі – магістранти факультету іноземних мов КДПУ. – Кіровоград: РВВ КДПУ ім. В.Винниченка, р. 86.

<sup>2</sup> The Great Thesaurus of Contemporary Ukrainian (2001). Великий тлумачний словник сучасної української мови / Уклад. і голов. ред. В.Т.Бусел. – К.: Ірпінь: ВТФ «Перун», р. 1384.

<sup>3</sup> The Great Thesaurus of Contemporary Ukrainian (2001) / Великий тлумачний словник сучасної української мови / Уклад. і голов. ред. В.Т.Бусел. – К.: Ірпінь: ВТФ «Перун», р. 680.

<sup>4</sup> The Great Thesaurus of Contemporary Ukrainian (2001). Великий тлумачний словник сучасної української мови/Уклад. і голов. ред. В.Т.Бусел. – К.: Ірпінь: ВТФ «Перун», р. 115.

<sup>5</sup> The Great Thesaurus of Contemporary Ukrainian (2001). Великий тлумачний словник сучасної української мови/Уклад. і голов. ред. В.Т.Бусел. – К.: Ірпінь: ВТФ «Перун», р. 472.

be various from the extremely offensive one to the friendly one. So the translator (*in prospect*) should very careful to define the functional bearing of the lexeme in a correct way and to find its adequate counterpart without any adding or losing its emotional colouring and expressiveness in the source text. Only context or the situation linguistic analysis can help the translator in decoding the expressive components, imagery, and message of the expressively marked lexemes in the source text. The youth speech rendering can cause a number of difficulties in the work of a translator. It is next to impossible to achieve adequate translation without any translator's transformations.

In respect of the analyzed translations it is possible to claim that lexical and semantic substitution as well as explication or descriptive translation are most widely applied in the slang word-stock translation. At the same time the inability to define it and find the relevant counterpart in the target text constitute the basic translator's mistake when dealing with youth slang register of the target language.

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