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**ELEMENTS OF MILITARY AND CHURCH VOCABULARY AS
IMPORTANT MEANS OF STYLIZATION IN THE PROSE OF ANDREY
PLATONOV AND THE ISSUES OF THEIR LITERARY TRANSLATION
INTO ENGLISH**

**ЭЛЕМЕНТЫ ВОЕННОЙ И ЦЕРКОВНОЙ ЛЕКСИКИ КАК ВАЖНЫЕ
СРЕДСТВА СТИЛИЗАЦИИ В ПРОЗЕ АНДРЕЯ ПЛАТОНОВА И
ВОПРОСЫ ИХ ЛИТЕРАТУРНОГО ПЕРЕВОДА НА АНГЛИЙСКИЙ
ЯЗЫК**

Abstract:

The language of Andrei Platonov appears in a certain social sphere of public speech practice and accumulates different types of social consciousness and social relations. The speech of Platonov's characters can be considered as an example of deliberate and successful stylization, focused on the characteristic external speech features of conventional human characters, representatives of various social strata, as a conscious authorial imitation of the stylistic and genre features of the oral and written speech communication of characters with an artistic reproduction of the stylistic features of this communication. In most cases, because of Platonov's lexical and stylistic transformations, new meaning-forming formations appear that arise contrary to linguistic norms and are enriched with many connotations. This, in turn, poses the problem of conveying the entire spectrum of stylistic and semantic features of the author's, mainly non-conventional intra-textual elements, when translating Platonov's text into a foreign language.

Keywords: Andrei Platonov's idiostyle, the new Soviet era with its all-encompassing Novoyaz, literary clash of Utopia and Anti-Utopia/Dystopia, quasi-language of Utopia, military vocabulary, ideological clichés, Platonov's occasional formations, the implicativity of Platonov's text, literary translation as an intercultural project, the active use of the foreignization strategy, linguacultural adaptation, foreign dictionary equivalents with new semantic contents and meanings for the English language, literal translation and lexical calques, the humanistic idea of life for the Future, Childhood as the symbol of the Future

Аннотация:

Язык Андрея Платонова выступает в определенной социальной сфере общественно-речевой практики и аккумулирует в себе разные типы общественного сознания и социальных отношений. Речь платоновских персонажей можно рассматривать как образец намеренной и успешной стилизации, ориентированной на характерные внешние речевые приметы условных человеческих характеров, представителей различных социальных слоев, как сознательное авторское подражание стилевым и жанровым особенностям устной и письменной речевой коммуникации персонажей с художественным воспроизведением стилизованных черт этой коммуникации. В большинстве случаев в результате платоновских лексико-стилистических трансформаций получаются новые, возникшие вопреки языковым нормам смыслообразующие образования, обогащенные многими коннотациями. Это, в свою очередь, ставит проблему передачи всего спектра стилистических и семантических особенностей авторских, в основном, неконвенциональных внутритекстовых элементов при переводе платоновского текста на иностранный язык.

Ключевые слова: Идиостиль Андрея Платонова, новая советская эпоха с её всеобъемлющим Новоязом, литературное столкновение Утопии и Антиутопии/Дистопии, квазиязык Утопии, военная лексика, идеологические штампы, окказиональные образования Платонова, имплицативность текста Платонова, художественный перевод как межкультурный проект, активное использование стратегии фореизации, лингвокультурная адаптация, иностранные словарные эквиваленты с новым для английского языка смысловым содержанием и значениями, буквальный перевод и лексические кальки, гуманистическая идея жизни ради Будущего, Детство как символ Будущего

Introduction

In examining the idiostyle of Andrei Platonov based on one of his most conceptual works, the short novel “The Foundation Pit”, [10], this article traces a pattern associated with the purely Platonov use of various lexical and stylistic means acting as the author’s lexical means of increasing linguistic expressiveness. The speech of his characters is perfectly oriented towards speech situations typical for a particular sphere, successfully representing different types of communication. The use of pastiche as a stylized artistic imitation, various means of artistic and linguistic expression creates for the writer the opportunity not only for a satirical analysis of the reality surrounding him but also allows him to make certain ethical and philosophical conclusions.

Carrying out in this article also a partial lingua-translatological analysis of English translation of Thomas Whitney's translation of Andrei Platonov's short novel The Foundation Pit, the present research considers to which extent the translator succeeded in choosing a most faithful translation strategy in transmitting the author’s coded artistic information through the search for the most acceptable translation option [1, p. 2].

The research material in this article is the text of Andrei Platonov’s story The Foundation Pit and the text of the very first translation of this short novel into English, carried out in 1973 by Thomas P. Whitney. In this article the original Platonov’s text is quoted from the source: [10]. The English translation of the story is quoted from the source: [9].

In the preface to the publication of the translation of *The Foundation Pit* by Ann Arbor Publishing House in 1973 [9], Thomas Whitney is introduced as an experienced translator of Russian literature who worked in the Soviet Union for many years as a diplomat and a correspondent. [2, p. 2]. The Preface to the publication of this translation was written by Joseph Brodsky [4]. Among his most important publications are two major anthologies *The New Writing in Russia* [15] and *The Young Russians* [16], his book *Russia in My Life* [14], as well as his English translations of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's novel *In the First Circle* [12], the memoirs of dissident General Pyotr Grigorenko *Only Rats* [5] and Yuri Orlov's book *Dangerous Thoughts. Memoirs from Russian Life* [7].

The active participation of Joseph Brodsky in this translation project as an outstanding "Master of Word" was the defining moment in choosing Thomas Whitney's translation as the material for the translation studies presented here. In this context, Whitney's translation - in the absence of previous translations and any translation decisions and strategy for working with *The Foundation Pit* - deserves special attention [2, p. 2].

Discussion

Elements of military vocabulary

Platonov's stylization includes various elements of popular speech, folklore, bureaucratic language, the language of propaganda, etc. The writer resorts to stylization when imitating the speech of representatives of various social groups, and particularly speech of representatives of the administrative-party elite. V.A. Svitelsky [13] notes in his article "The Concrete and the Abstract in the Thinking of A. Platonov the Artist" that "A. Platonov aestheticizes layers in the speech of the era that were subjected to an unprecedented invasion of generalized concepts and ideas, rally and propaganda phrases, newspaper and officious stereotypes" [13, p. 1].

At the same time, Platonov's stylized recreation of the characteristic features of living folk speech sharply contrasts with the stylized reproduction in the text of the story of the ideological speech of representatives of the official authorities. Thus, Platonov's introduction of military vocabulary into the text of *The Foundation Pit* also serves the purpose of a stylized transmission of the clichéd speech of the ideology practiced in the new state, which declaratively, in a command-and-control manner, proclaimed itself ideal and put Utopia on stream.

When it is used in *The Foundation Pit*, the emphasis is on the imperative-command discourse of the military-structured and unquestionable speech of circulars, orders and totalitarian propaganda. This new society is organized according to the principle of a strict army hierarchy and has a military-calibrated vertical chain of command and a structure of unquestioned execution of orders and subordination to the General Secretary of the Party, who is also the Generalissimo and Supreme Commander-in-Chief.

The party as a pyramid of power and a powerful paramilitary structure. War communism as a form of government. It is no coincidence that many party leaders of that time, described in *The Foundation Pit*, and, in fact, Stalin himself, preferred to wear jackets, tunics, uniforms with military insignia, and even sword belts with combat weapons not only in official settings, but also in civilian life. And the main set of party rules was called, in military terms, *Устав Партии/the Party Charter*.

R. Lehtikoinen (Pyykkö)[6] speaks of "the use since the 1920s of the military term **штаб/the headquarters** as the name of the highest governing body in general [**штаб/the headquarters** of the world revolution, **штаб/the headquarters** of the old Bolshevik guard] and the term **штурм/storm** to designate decisive, active actions to achieve something [**штурм общества/storming** society, **штурм капиталистического мира/storming** the capitalist world, **штурм трудностей/ storming** difficulties, **штурм хозяйственных высот/storming** economic heights] <...>" [6, p. 149-150].

In the text of *The Foundation Pit* military vocabulary is used everywhere. For example, Platonov uses the words **строй/formation**, **мобилизация/ mobilization**, **мобилизовать/mobilize**, **фронт/front**, **шторм/storm**, **плен/ captivity** as productively as possible as the main lexical components of set phrases and the author's occasional constructions, built in the likeness of Soviet propaganda clichés:

*А деревья эти – моя плоть, и пускай она теперь мучается, ей же скучно обобществляться **в плен!*** [10, p. 72]

*<...> передняя лошадь толкнула головой ворота нараспашку и весь конский **строй** ушел с кормом на двор.* [10, p. 65]

*<...> по улице двинулся из глубины города **строй** детей-пионеров <...>* [10, p. 18]

*Каждая девочка, двигаясь в меру общего **строя**, улыбалась от чувства своего значения, от сознания серьезности жизни, необходимой для непрерывности **строя** и силы похода.* [10, p. 18]

[In all quotes highlighted in italics, bold italics were introduced by the author of the article – V.B.]

The characteristic of the text of *The Foundation Pit* is the use of the noun **авангард/vanguard/avant-garde** to nominate (often ironically in Platonov's works) representatives of the Communist Party of various ranks and the Soviet economic and administrative activists. Lehtikoinen explains this tendency, connected with the rapid spread of the use of the word **авангард/vanguard/avant-garde** in Soviet times:

*“The military term **авангард/vanguard/avant-garde**, borrowed from the French language, has been used since the beginning of the 20th century to designate the advanced part of any social group or class: **авангард народов/the vanguard** of the peoples, **авангард пролетариата/the vanguard** of the proletariat, **авангард рабочего класса/the vanguard** of the working class, **авангард труженников/the vanguard** of the workers <...> The military term **авангард/vanguard/avant-garde** can also be included in constructions where its meaning is close to the adverb “ahead.”* [6, p. 146].

[The cited text is translated into English by Vassili Bouilov. In all quotes highlighted in italics, bold italics were also introduced by the author of the article - V.B.]

Lehtikoinen defines the semantic transformations that the word **фронт/front**, also borrowed from the French language, underwent in the Soviet era:

*“The ability to designate the area of active military operations led to the word coming to designate an area, a sphere of state or public activity where energetic work is taking place: культурный **фронт/the cultural front**, посевной **фронт/the sowing front**, угольный **фронт/the coal front**, фронт труда/**the labor front**, фронт социалистического строительства/**the front** of socialist construction <...>”* [6, p. 149].

The evolution of the military term **front**, which is used in the construction **на фронт социалистического строительства/to the front of socialist construction**, is indicative of the language of the revolutionary era. Platonov's multi-layered creative irony, realized in the following slogan phrase, is a figurative artistic example of propaganda ideological clichés in action and gives rise to a general connotation of Platonov's sharp sarcasm:

Товарищи, мы должны мобилизовать крапиву на фронт социалистического строительства! Крапива есть ни что иное, как предмет нужды заграницы [10, p. 46].

«Comrades, we must mobilize the nettles on the front of socialist construction! Nettles are nothing less than an object needed abroad <...>» [9, p. 62].

In the fragment under consideration, the phrase *мобилизовать крапиву/mobilize nettle* ironically plays on the unnatural meaning of the combination of the military vocabulary verb *мобилизовать/mobilize* with the commonly used vocabulary word *крапива/nettle*. This use of a military vocabulary word *мобилизовать/mobilize* in a situation where we are talking about *крапива/nettles* and their large-scale agricultural utilization, which is already strange, contradicts logic and creates a special sarcastic expression, built on the illogicality and semantic surrealism of the situation, introducing into the text the motif of carnivalization of the narrative and the life described in it.

This impression of absurdity is significantly reinforced by the no less casuistic clarification that the *крапива/nettles* must be mobilized *на фронт социалистического строительства/to the front of socialist construction*. As a result of the author's stylistic, unconventional use of such broken lexical compatibility and "connection of the incompatible," a connotation is born that relates to the striking, but in form and meaning casuistic symbolism of Soviet poster and slogan propaganda.

Elements of church vocabulary

This subsection of the article will examine Andrei Platonov's use of elements of **church vocabulary** in the text of *The Foundation Pit* in a new semantic application determined by the new Soviet era. The attention will be also paid to Thomas Whitney's literary translation of fragments of the short novel *The Foundation Pit* into English with the participation of elements of church vocabulary in this new application.

A little more detail will be touched upon some of the most interesting aspects of the translation into English of certain ecclesiastical words and terms used in a purely Platonov's context, determined by the Soviet era in which Platonov wrote.

The use of a deliberate mixture of styles and various means of artistic expression as a stylistic device, in addition to directly achieving a deliberate satirical effect, allows Platonov to rise to a qualitatively different height of the author's ideological-aesthetic and philosophical generalization.

Church vocabulary serves as one of the lexical components of such a mixture. Moreover, in the appropriate contexts, the "confrontation" of church vocabulary with elements of official-bureaucratic speech, clericalisms, etc. allows Platonov to create a text of high emotional-expressive saturation and gives the text the characteristic features of the clichéd speech of ideology associated with the use of church vocabulary, a mention of which can be found in the works of A.M. Selishchev [11, p. 141-147].

For example, in the following fragment, by combining in one speech flow the words of church vocabulary, *ангел/angel* and *вознесение/ascension*, with newspaper, publicistic and office styles, Platonov achieves a connotation of the bombastic pathos inherent in the phraseology of the party nomenklatura. This mixture of styles gives rise to the connotation of the false speech of nomenklatura people, who pronounce a set of words in their false sense and in their own soulless, atheistic understanding:

– *Прощай, – сказал ему Сафронов, – ты теперь как передовой ангел от рабочего состава, ввиду вознесения его в служебные учреждения <...>* [10, p. 42].

«Farewell», said Safronov to him. «You are now like a vanguard angel from the working staff, in view of your ascension into government institutions <...> [9, p. 54].

The introduction of church vocabulary into the clichéd speech of Safronov, an ambitious and impudent party careerist, comes into logical conflict with its atheistic, godless content. The stylistic clash of church vocabulary with the official phraseology of war communism sounds frankly grotesque.

The translation of this fragment complies with the norms of the English language. Whitney translates church vocabulary **literally** with its direct dictionary equivalents. The entire sentence in the translation sounds elevated and, as Platonov intended, pathos-poetic in the spirit of the dominant ideology. The clash of church vocabulary with words of official style in Whitney's English translation creates a connotation of false grandiloquence of the clichéd speech of ideology.

In the following fragment, in the context of the description of a nameless activist, a party nominee, a militant illiterate atheist, a mercenary and low person known in the district, the use of **Church Slavicism** and **poetism** *ycma/mouth* [8, p. 838], which has a high, solemnly bookish expressive coloring, gives the narrative a sharply sarcastic tinge:

Сдерживая силу своей инициативы, неподвижно стоял активист среди всеобщей тишины колхоза, и его подручные товарищи глядели на его смолкшие уста, не зная, куда им двинуться. [10, p. 65].

Restraining the strength of his initiative, the activist stood there immobile in the midst of the general silence of the collective farm, and his assistant comrades gazed upon his silenced lips, not knowing which direction they should move in. [9, p. 96]

The author's stylistic combination of church vocabulary and poeticized expressions of high style with clichés of official style in one speech flow gives rise to a connotation of sarcasm. Such allegorical and stylistically conscious reduction of words of different styles in Platonov's speech creates the impression of illogicality of the situation described. Such an allegorical and stylistically conscious combination of words of different styles in Platonov's speech creates the impression of illogicality of the situation described. This impression is strengthened in the context of communicative tension and silent threat to those around him, which comes from the activist, who has gone too far in his unlimited power over people.

Whitney's translation complies with the norms of the English language and is consistent. The Church Slavonic word *ycma/mouth* is translated with the stylistically neutral word *lips*. The entire sentence is translated **literally** and **with the preservation of the mixture of styles** present in the original.

In the next episode of *The Foundation Pit*, Platonov, with obvious pain in his heart, gives a tragic description of the scene of the peasants saying goodbye to each other during the brutal reprisal against them, organized by an activist, by means of the fatal descent of a raft-scaffold with them down the river into the open sea. Drowning people, soldiers and class enemies by the hundreds in tightly packed barges was a common form of reprisal in the brutal years of the Civil War preceding the events in *The Foundation Pit*.

Platonov's entire life, filled with suffering and deprivation, and this literary, hard-won description of the image of a raft-scaffold with peasants on it, doomed to certain death, is an artistic and tragic testimony to the real Stalinist repressions in the USSR, reprisals and executions with millions of victims, which were distinguished by their mass scale during the time of Stalin's collectivization [**collectivization**, policy adopted by the Soviet government, pursued most intensively between 1929 and 1933, to transform traditional agriculture in the Soviet Union and to reduce the economic power of the kulaks (prosperous peasants). Under collectivization the peasantry were forced to give up their individual farms and join large collective farms (kolkhozy)] [3, p. 1].

Collectivization in the USSR is comprehensively reflected not only in this artistically symbolic terrible episode from *The Foundation Pit* but is also confirmed in many hundreds of thousands of archival documents, in written and oral testimonies of

participants in these events and surviving victims. In The Foundation Pit, these unfortunate peasants are sentenced by a mentally weak upstart activist to physical extermination as “class enemies” by being lowered on a raft-scaffold down the river into the sea, where they are all to perish:

*Каждый начал целоваться со всею очередью людей, обнимая чужое доселе тело, и все **уста** грустно и дружески целовали каждого. [10, p. 74]*

Platonov’s use of the Church Slavonic word **уста** [*usta*] in the author’s poetically felt description of this scene gives the entire action a sublimely penetrating, highly spiritual and existentially tragic meaning. The introduction of church vocabulary into this fatal context for the peasants significantly expands the range of the author’s expression in the dramatic depiction of their spiritual strength and the purity of their integral human characters, conveying the atmosphere of a solemn, tragic unity of people in the face of their collective death.

In the following fragment, Platonov’s use of several words and phrases from church vocabulary at once when describing one of the key moments of the narrative of The Foundation Pit is stylistically completely justified and contributes to the highly poetic transmission in the text of the bright and elevated feelings and emotions of the main character, which were evoked in him by the spiritual purity and nobility of the girl Nastya:

Вощев попробовал девочку за руку и рассмотрел ее всю, как в детстве он глядел на ангела на церковной стене <...> ум ее увидит время, подобное первому исконному дню. [10, p. 51]

*Voshchev felt the girl by the hand and looked her all over just as in childhood he had looked upon **the angel up on the church wall**; ...and her mind would see a time which was like **the first primeval day**. [9, p. 71]*

Whitney's translation does not comply with the norms of the English language. The translation shows **an expansion of the collocation** of some words. For example, the phrase *felt the girl by the hand* deviates somewhat from the norm *felt the girl's hand*. By such a deliberate violation of lexical collocation, the translator creates a sense of non-standard narration, emotional uplift of the described situation. **The church vocabulary** present in the original **is rendered by its direct dictionary equivalents**. The entire translated sentence sounds very poetic, preserving the connotation of spiritual elevation inherent in the original.

Conclusion

Platonov’s language in The Foundation Pit is actively saturated with such military vocabulary, already widely used in Soviet times, in such new, specific, unusual, unconventional meanings for the lexical tradition, which have already become an integral part of the vocabulary of the new Soviet era with its all-encompassing Novoyaz. The translation of military vocabulary with new semantic content into English, reflecting Platonov’s artistic use of his occasional expressions in the image and likeness of Soviet propaganda clichés, is a very interesting challenge for a literary translator.

In general, the translation of **military vocabulary** words used in a special way by Platonov is carried out mainly by using their **foreign dictionary equivalents with new semantic contents and meanings for the English language**. This circumstance, in turn, determines that to reflect the peculiarities of Platonov’s use of the language of the new Soviet society, Thomas Whitney consciously resorts to the active use of **the foreignization strategy**.

Thus, the "newfangled" political and ideological clichés deliberately introduced by Platonov into the text of The Foundation Pit, imposed by force, sound in Whitney's

translation as casuistically absurd as in Platonov's original. In many cases Thomas Whitney uses the strategy of **literal translation and lexical calques**. To the same extent, not corresponding to the norms of the English language, they are conveyed in translation quite successfully by using mostly translational tracing of the meanings of new words and phrases. The connotation of sharp Platonov's sarcasm is preserved in the translation.

The highly spiritual image of the girl Nastya occupies a special symbolic place in *The Foundation Pit*. She personifies the Future, the dream of this Future, on which the Utopia depicted in the short novel *The Foundation Pit* is partly based - children are obliged to live to preserve in themselves the humanistic idea of life for the Future. At the same time, Platonov psychologically subtly conveys the charm of the noble character of the girl, who became one of the many victims of Utopia and symbolizes the collapse of this Utopia with her tragic death. Nastya also symbolizes Childhood, the Future and the Dream in *The Foundation Pit* - she must live in the Present to preserve it for the Future.

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