

## РАЗДЕЛ IV. МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНАЯ КОММУНИКАЦИЯ И ПЕРЕВОД

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### **TRANSLATING METAPHORS IN LITERARY DISCOURSE**

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### АБСТРАКТ

The paper presents a contextual analysis of metaphor translation in literary discourse with reference to Edgar Allan Poe's "Ligeia" (Castle Books, 2009). Due to its highly vivid imagery, this work of fiction raises a number of interesting issues in its translation. Quite a few distinguished Russian (Soviet) translators such as Vladimir Rogov, Irina Gurova, Mikhail Engelhardt, Konstantin Balmont, Vitaliy Mikhalkuk, Nikolai Shelgunov attempted to translate this mystic piece of fiction. However, our focus is on how linguistic metaphors in Edgar Allan Poe's "Ligeia" were rendered into the target language by Irina Gurova and Konstantin Balmont. Edgar Allan Poe's "Ligeia" is considered to be a sophisticated complexity of technique, style, and meaning. Metaphor, being innovative, helps Poe to evoke and preserve the images and the atmosphere of suspense and mysticism, thus demanding from a translator all the skillfulness, knowledge and strategy to make the target text easier to understand, to adapt the translation to the target language conventions, to bring about the author's message. In order to articulate this point, some examples have been drawn from a well-known translations of "Ligeia" by Irina Gurova and Konstantin Balmont.

**Key words:** metaphor; translation; translatability; literary discourse; Edgar Allan Poe; "Ligeia".

## SECTION III. ETHNOLINGUISTICS AND CULTURAL LINGUISTICS

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### Аннотация

В статье рассматривается контекстуальный анализ перевода метафор в литературном дискурсе на примере произведения Эдгара Алана По «Лигейя» (Castle Books, 2009). Благодаря наличию ярких образов, это произведение поднимает много вопросов по поводу его перевода. Многие выдающиеся российские (советские) переводчики, такие как Владимир Рогов, Ирина Гурова, Михаил Энгельгардт, Константин Бальмонт, Виталий Михалюк, Николай Шелгунов пытались перевести это мистическое художественное произведение. В данной статье рассматривается, каким образом лингвистические метафоры произведения Эдгара Алана По были переданы на язык перевода Ириной Гуровой и Константином Бальмонтом. «Лигейя» считается произведением, сложным в плане техники написания, стиля и значения. Оригинальные метафоры помогают По создать и сохранить образы и атмосферу неизвестности и мистики, что требует от переводчика особого мастерства, знаний и стратегий, которые позволят создать легкий для понимания текст, адаптировать его для целевой аудитории, правильно передав авторскую мысль. В качестве материала исследования были взяты переводы «Лигейи» известных переводчиков Ирины Гуровой и Константина Бальмонта.

**Ключевые слова:** метафора; перевод; переводимость; литературный дискурс; Эдгар Алан По; «Лигейя».

## INTRODUCTION

Metaphor has been attracting the attention of many scientists from a variety of fields. Recent studies in linguistics, psychology, marketing, sociology, economics, et cetera show that metaphor is not only a figure of speech, but also a cognitive operation, a strategy.

Metaphor translation has been connected with the issue of its translatability limits (Van den Broeck, 1981; Newmark, 1988; Monti, 2006; Burmakova, Marugina, 2014, et al.) and has intrigued a number of scholars in Translation Studies who have approached the issue from different angles (perspective, contextual, descriptive and cognitive) [7, p.117].

Elena A. Burmakova and Nadezhda I. Marugina generalize it this way:

... metaphor translation is centered around three points: transfer procedures, text-typologies, and cultural specificity [2, p. 528].

Metaphor is generally seen as reaching its most sophisticated forms in literary language [14]. According to Elena Semino and Gerard Steen's *Metaphor and Literature*,

...most scholars seem to agree that the metaphorical expressions found in literature are more creative, novel, original, striking, rich, interesting, complex, difficult and interpretable than we come across in non-literary texts. Moreover, literary writers use metaphor to go beyond and extend our ordinary linguistic and/or conceptual resources, and to provide novel insights and perspectives into human experience [2, p.233].

M. Crofts suggests that metaphors are used for three main reasons:

- 1) to explain the unfamiliar which is already known;
- 2) to bring a group of connotations in mind;
- 3) to please the literary palate by introducing vividness and color [3].

The choice of the literary corpus, namely Edgar Allan Poe's "Ligeia" will show how metaphors in a literary text enrich its aesthetics, its internal coherence and its cognitive strength. In this case

...the translation of metaphors becomes a challenge in which the translator's goal is the recreation of an equally coherent and evocative system of images and connections in the target language [7, p. 118].

Edgar Allan Poe is considered to be one of the most mysterious writers of the 19th century. An explanation can be found in his complicated and full of strange consequences biography and his works with mystic metaphysical images and fantastic plots.

"Ligeia" is a short story written by Edgar Allan Poe in 1838. According to Edgar Poe, his best short story is "Ligeia". He noticed it in a letter to Griswold that "Ligeia" was the "loftiest" of his tales, requiring for its composition "the highest imagination" [qtd. in 4, p. 170]. Like many of his tales, it is told from the perspective of an unnamed narrator. This gives Poe the freedom in the storytelling and the ability to plunge the reader into the atmosphere of obsession and opium haze.

There are two main categories that the criticism of "Ligeia" falls under, i.e. literal and psychological. From the literal perspective, it is a "tale of the supernatural", whereas the psychological interpretation views the story as taking place on two levels – in reality and in the narrator's mind [4, p. 170]. It is not clear whether the lady under the question is a "real person" or the narrator's imaginative invention.

The story is a weird and mindbinding case happened to a man, who had lost his beloved wife Ligeia, and soon married Lady Rowena, his second wife. Shortly after that Rowena became ill and died as well. The grief-stricken narrator stayed with her body overnight and witnessed as Rowena came back from the dead though after the death she had transformed into his lost sweetheart, Ligeia.

You will not find bright stylistics in "Ligeia". In "Ligeia" the world is gray and everything is old and decaying. And it is seen in the choice of metaphors.

This tale was translated into Russian by a great amount of distinguished Russian (Soviet) translators such as Vladimir Rogov, Irina Gurova, Mikhail Engelhardt, Konstantin Balmont, Vitaliy Mikhalkuk, Nikolai Shelgunov. The most well-known translations by Irina Gurova and Konstantin Balmont will be analyzed further in the paper.

## MAIN PART

Edgar Poe uses numerous lexical and stylistic devices in all his works including "Ligeia". Within the framework of this paper, we will envisage only metaphors and how they are rendered into the target language (TL).

In its most general way, a metaphor can be described as a means of expressing one thing in terms of another, i.e. it "compares two unlike objects or ideas and illuminates the similarities between them" [12]. The process of metaphor translation is the creation of an original metaphor in new including but no limited to cultural conditions when there is no corresponding metaphor in a language and culture of the TL. Every time a translator has to make a decision and it proves the difficulties of such a creative work. Some scholars claim that "however culture specific, metaphor is not a case of untranslatability, but a challenging phenomenon in term of unpacking its complexity in a source language and culture and re-packing it in a target language and culture" [13, p. 6].

The paper discusses the features of translatability, above all, of an individual author's metaphor (a 'bold' / private / original metaphor). Under the original [copyright] metaphors, for example, Peter Newmark (2008) understands metaphors which are created by the writer or speaker usually to make the narration more interesting and are often used to highlight particular points or as a vivid reiteration. P. Newmark believes that original metaphors should be translated literally as they "contain the core of an important writer's message..." [8, p. 112]. However, if in the opinion of a translator metaphor contains cultural elements that may not be clear to a recipient, it should be replaced with a descriptive metaphor or reduced to sense. Reduction and modification of metaphor are also possible if the metaphor is obscure [ibid.].

Raymond van den Broeck presents his own classification of metaphors dividing them into three types:

1) lexicalized metaphors, which include expressions which have "lost their uniqueness" and become part of the lexicon in a particular language (cf. Newmark's dead metaphor);

2) traditional or conventional metaphors, which include expressions that are the products of a particular literary period;

3) private and individual metaphors, which include expressions revealing the innovative creativity of their authors [1, p. 75].

Van den Broeck outlines three major procedures of translating metaphors:

- Translation *Sensu Stricto*: The translator keeps the same tenor and vehicle of the source text's expression.
- Substitution: The translator replaces the vehicle of the source text expression with another vehicle but at the same time keeps the same tenor.
- Paraphrase: Here the translator uses not a metaphorical expression but a literal one [ibid, p.77].

According to Raymond van den Broeck, while transferring metaphor the following things must be taken into account in TL and SL (source language):

1) collocation rules and morphological potentialities;

2) extra-linguistic factors, the so-called cultural context;

3) aesthetic convention and tradition, the differences in aesthetic and moral standards [ibid, p. 80-81].

To follow their footsteps, Christina Schäffner suggests a number of translation procedures to deal with the problem of metaphor translation, e.g. substitution (metaphor into different metaphor), paraphrase (metaphor into sense), or deletion [11].

To begin with, one of the first metaphors found in the text of TL that is "*her marble hand*" [9, p. 89] that Gurova translates as "*belomramornuyu ruku*" [6, p. 123], while Balmont substitutes it for a simile "*slovo vytochennoi iz mramora rukoi*" [5, p. 36]. While portraying Lady Ligeia Poe uses a great deal of metaphors (allusions) from ancient literature and mythology, however, they can be rendered descriptively.

Notwithstanding, one should pay attention to such expressions as '*twin stars of Leda*' [9, p. 90], which Gurova translates as "*vyvozdy-bliznetsy, rozhdennye Ledoi*" [6, p.

124], thus already giving some clue to the etymology of the said expression. Konstantine Balmont, on the contrary, gives to his translation a more “mundane” coloring *‘dvumya sozvyozdnymi bliznetsami Ledy’* [5, p. 37]. The etymology of the expression goes back to ancient Greek mythology, already mentioned above, where the Dioscuri twins were the children of Leda, an ancient beauty, who attracted Zeus. This explanation once again proves that Poe’s metaphors are multifaceted and have deep roots and meaning.

While describing Leda’s death-pangs, the author mentions the words of comfort Leda used speaking to her beloved. E. Poe uses the metaphor *‘a melody more than mortal’* [9, p. 95] to give a complete picture of how her voice correlates with the meaning of the spoken words. In her translation Gurova extends the metaphor to *‘melodii, nedostupnoi smertnym’* [6, p. 129], while Balmont uses a slightly different variation *‘sverhchelovecheskaya melodiya’* [5, p. 41]. Therefore, both translators attempt to preserve and render a mystical stylistic nuance that characterizes the metaphor in the SL.

Furthermore, speaking of his second young wife, Lady Rowena, the author chooses the metaphor *‘the successor of the unforgotten Ligeia’* [9, p. 96], and thus making the reader to foresee the fate of the girl. Irina Gurova offers the following version of the translation *‘preemnitsa nezabytoi Ligei’* [6, p. 132], which is consistent with the meaning of the chosen metaphor. Konstantine Balmont in his turn uses the same word *‘preemnitsa’* [5, p. 42].

One of the original Poe’s metaphors *‘untrodden path’* [9, p. 93], representing the perspective of a thought that leads to knowledge, Gurova translates as *‘nehozhenay tropa’* [6, p. 130]. Such translation fully preserves the original metaphor. Balmont translates the metaphor as *‘devstvenny put’* [5, p. 40], which also preserves the image of the metaphor, but gives it a peculiar shade of the Silver Age perception.

At the moments when there was no Ligeia – his advisor, companion and lover – beside him,

the main hero calls himself *‘a child groping benighted’* [9, p. 40]. In Irina Gurova’s translation the metaphor rendered as *‘rebyonok, oschup’yu brodyaschii vo t’me’* [6, p. 129], while Konstantine Balmont develops the image *‘bespomoshnym rebyonkom, kotoryi v nochnom mrake oschup’yu otyskivaet svoyu dorogu i ne nachodit’* [5, p. 39]. K. Balmont extends the metaphor for the completeness of understanding and details the image of the author’s original version.

After Ligeia’s death, the second wife of the hero fell sick, and it was a long recovery. Suddenly Lady Rowena fell ill for the second time. To display the strength of her illness Poe uses the metaphor *‘a bed of suffering’* [9, p. 45]. Konstantine Balmont translates the expression significantly expanding the image, which is, alas, through personification metaphorically dissolved: *‘Odnako, cherez samyi korotkii promezhutok vremeni, vtorichnyi pripadok, eschyo bole sil’ny, snova ulozhil ee v postel’* [5, p. 42]. Irina Gurova tries to preserve the original author’s metaphor giving it word-for-word *‘lozhe stradaniy’* [6, p. 132], that helps to retain the most sacred mystery of the author’s intention, implying not only the physical ailment of his young wife.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, briefly comparing these metaphor translations of the two outstanding masters of interpreting it can be mentioned that Irina Gurova’s translation is more literal and goes well with Peter Newmark’s theory, the main idea of which is the preservation of the author’s original metaphor. As for Konstantin Balmont’s translation, he tends to extend original metaphors to exploit their full meaning and better convey the author’s intentions. However, both translators not in the least disrupt the integrity of the source text which is the most important translator’s responsibility.

Metaphor by all means is a challenge to a translator as well as a theoretical problem in Translation Studies and, therefore, a phenomenon worth studying, since rendering metaphors across languages and cultures is a complex and complicated task.

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