

The rendering of structural and paradigmatic features of colloquial lexemes in the Ukrainian translation of “The Elementary Particles” by Michel Houellebecq

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Abstract. The article deals with paradigmatics in low colloquial language as a translation problem. The matter of translatability of French structurally marked low colloquial words is examined. The ways and methods of rendering the structural connotation expressively charged colloquial component of M. Houellebecq’s novel “The Elementary Particles” in the Ukrainian translation are analysed.

Keywords: *low colloquial language, structural connotation, translation, functionality, transformation, paradigmatics, affixes, truncation, rendering.*

Introduction. The democratization of the modern novel language has become a noticeable trend of the late XX – early XXI century. Functionally developed languages have a wide range of using colloquial speech with its usual broad palette of elements of different registers, including argot and vernacular. Today they are known to enrich the language of literature, which is becoming more colloquial due to the presence of expressive-evaluative vocabulary including coarse language [5, p. 94].

A brief review of publications on the subject. The importance of considering the possibility of translating semantically important formal peculiarities of foreign language elements into the target language is pointed out by such researchers as O. Cherednychenko [5], R. Zorivchak [1]. The form is important in terms of translation not only in itself, but because “the form is the content” [2, p. 22]. So the representation of structurally marked low colloquial elements on the basis of the novel «The Elementary Particles» by M. Houellebecq [8] has become an important translation issue and the fact that it has not been studied yet determines the aim of this article. The poetics and substandard language of the novels by M. Houellebecq are analyzed by both Ukrainian and foreign linguists, namely: J. Carlson [6], B. Viard [12], R. Schober [9; 10], M. Smeets [11], V. Miroshnychenko [3]. The juxtaposition of a vocabulary of idealist connotations with a lexicon of abjection is characteristic of almost all texts of M. Houellebecq. It is like the mixture of hyperbole and phrases containing often bitter irony [6, p. 52].

The goal. The issue of finding adequate translation equivalents for structurally marked French colloquial units of different registers is still actual and has become the subject of this article.

Materials and methods. Structurally marked low colloquial elements of the novel “The Elementary Particles” by M. Houellebecq make the material of this research. A descriptive method with some techniques of contextual analysis and synthesis is used for the systematic description of illustrative and theoretical material. The method of translation studies analysis was used to identify regular matches and translation deviations from the original text. The sample collection method gave an opportunity to identify and organize the necessary language units. The methods of linguistic, stylistic and comparative analysis were applied to determine the typical paradigmatic and stylistic features of the low colloquial elements and their

translation. The contextual analysis and the method of component analysis helped to determine the explicit and implicit connotative components of the structure of the studied units in the original text and the specifics of their reproduction in translation.

Results and discussion. In the second half of the twentieth century low colloquial units appeared in French literature that was treated like a kind of its dysphemisation. With the appearance of now popular novels by M. Houellebecq, F. Beigbeder and other French writers of this kind in the second half of the XX – early XXI centuries there was a new stage of “revival” of French literature to some extent, which was not always adequately perceived by the public. Indeed, the use of “obscene” words is not only on the part of characters, but in the author’s language. This complicates the understanding of communicative and aesthetic function of low colloquial units in text by French speaking people and especially by foreign recipients.

The issues of solving morphological, morphological and syntactic, lexical and syntactic problems of translating units of French colloquial speech take an important place in the theory of translation. As the style or literary form of the original text is always meaningful, any modification of it certainly affects the perception of the main discursive content [5, p. 91], especially in the translated text.

Attention to the connotative component in the semantics of grammatical and word-formative elements is a necessary condition for a full faithful translation [1, p. 158]. To indicate conversational forms that reflect the peculiarity of the source language and do not have direct equivalents in the target language we use the term “structural connotative colloquial lexeme” which is transformed from the concept of “structural connotative realia” (after R. Zorivchak [1, p. 157]). A “*structural connotative colloquial lexeme*” is understood as word-formative elements that render nationally coloured expression of national language and additional information. Structural and connotative colloquial lexemes are distinguished by generalized nature and much poorer and more modest capability to render their functions by means of the target language.

The cold rude language of M. Houellebecq immerses a reader in a world where the body is destroyed, and the flesh becomes a source of desire or aversion, soaking every cell of mankind, which plunged into carnality. One can be shocked by M. Houellebecq’s cold description of

such beloved woman's body [7, p. 41, 54]. In general critics often establish a relationship between M. Houellebecq's writing and works of such French writers as H. de Balzac, G. Flaubert and É. Zola who were exponents of literary realism and naturalism. For example, V. Viard wrote that "Houellebecq's realism fits into the channel of Balzac's realism" [12, p. 140]. In return R. Schober established a clear relation between M. Houellebecq and É. Zola [9, p. 333-344] calling it "provocative neo-naturalism" [10, p. 515].

The distinguishing feature of French low colloquial speech is a large number of special affixes, mostly suffixes, which help convey denotative semantics and the subtlest shades of feelings, assessment and low colouring expressively. Often the suffixation of the French low colloquial units is done with the help of *-erie*, *-ier*, *-eur*, *-euse*, *-er*, *-ade*, *-fard*, *-asse*, *-age*, *-aille* and others, which creates difficulties for the translator.

Translating M. Houellebecq's novel «The Elementary Particles» R. Marder uses the neutral lexeme *мотоциклісти* to render the low colloquial lexeme *motards* which belongs to the paradigm on the basis of the colloquial suffix *-ard*, that by the way is the most frequently used in the language of the novel (19 units). And in this way not only the structural marker (suffix *-ard*) but also the expressive evaluating connotation (colloquial) are lost: *Je ne savais rien de lui, sinon qu'il faisait du rock ; il était avec des types plutôt inquiétants, des motards américains tatoués, habillés de cuir* [8]. – *Я нічого про нього не знала, тільки те, що він рок-музикант; з ним були різні підозрілі суб'єкти, американські мотоциклісти, вкриті татуюванням, усі в шкірі* [4, p. 183]. Maybe it would be better to render the colloquialism *motards* by the Ukrainian functional equivalent *байкери*, which is the colloquial variant of the lexeme *мотоциклісти*, and is borrowed from English (*biker*) and has vivid stylistic colouring. It should be mentioned that the translated text has still preserved its emotive characteristic and colloquial colouring though the translator could not preserve the structural marker of the French colloquial discourse, namely suffix *-ard* (*moto+ard*).

There were noticed both functional stylistic and semantic changes in rendering the lexeme *peinard*. The Ukrainian translator used a technique of meaning development (*мирне життя*) in the episode where the brothers Michel and Bruno said farewells to each other at the station in Nice without realizing that they would never meet again: «*Ça va bien, à ta clinique ? demanda Michel. – Ouais ouais, tranquille peinard j'ai mon lithium. » Bruno sourit d'un air rusé. « Je vais pas rentrer tout de suite à la clinique, j'ai une nuit de battement. Je vais aller dans un bar à putes, il y en a plein à Nice. » Il plissa le front, se rembrunit* [8].

– *Тобі непогано живеться у твоїй лікарні? – спитав Мішель.*

– *Ну так, звісно, мирне життя, мій літій завжди зі мною. – Брюно змовницьки хихикнув. – Я не одразу повернуся туди, влаштую собі бурхливу нічку. Піду в бар зі шльондрами, їх у Ніцці хоч греблю гати. – Він наморщив лоба, спохмурнів* [4, p. 241].

We think that the word *peinard* is an addressing word (*старий* meaning "friend", "brother"), though it is not set off with commas. Besides *peinard* is part of the incom-

plete sentence *tranquille* (*Sois tranquille, peinard*). So it would be better to translate like this: *Спокійно, старий. Мій літій завжди зі мною*. Here *старий* is an adequate translation equivalent.

In some cases R. Marder uses the target language words that carry more or less expression, with more or less "depth" of low status, with the change of the register. But in this case the word *оpecьки* is as expressive and "deep" as the widely used French familiarism *moutards*: *La squaw se précipita et ressortit avec deux moutards minuscules, un sur chaque hanche, qu'elle se mit à balancer mollement* [8]. – *Скво рвонула туди й одразу ж повернулася з двома малими оpecьками, по одному на кожному стегні, й почала похитувати стегнами* [4, p. 83]. The morphological feature of both the source and target words is identical that is the words are formed by the means of suffixation: *-ard* and *-ок*.

The inter-language pair *pocharde* – *п'яна тімка* seems very interesting in terms of translation studies analysis. The source lexeme belongs to the paradigm on the basis of the suffix *-ard*, and the target equivalent has a descriptive characteristic with some colloquial colouring due to using a vernacular unit *тімка* which is a pejorative name of a woman: *Allongé sur le tatami crasseux, Bruno sentait ses dents vibrer d'agacement ; la pocharde à ses côtés rotait avec régularité* [8]. – *Розтягнувшись на засаленому татамі, Брюно відчував, як від роздратування у нього скрегоцуть зуби; поруч з рівномірними інтервалами блювала п'яна тімка* [4, p. 93]. But from our point of view the word *пиячка*, a derivative from *пьяк*, is a more adequate equivalent that could be found in the Ukrainian colloquial speech.

In another excerpt R. Marder could not show creativity in rendering pejorative low marking of a structural connotative familiarism *blondasse*, formed from *blond* by means of the suffix *-asse*: *Mis à part Hippie-le-Noir, la pièce principale était occupée par une créature indistincte et blondasse, vraisemblablement hollandaise, qui tricotaient un poncho près de la cheminée, et par un hippie plus âgé, aux longs cheveux gris, à la barbiche également grise, au fin visage de chèvre intelligente* [8]. – *Окрім Чорного Хіні, у головній кімнаті була білява непоказна істота, яка в'язала пончо, сидючи біля каміна, і, мабуть, була голландського походження, а також ще один хіні, підстаркуватий, з довгим сивим волоссям і такою ж сивою бородою, з гострою фізіономією розумної кози* [4, p. 233]. We want to offer *облізла біла* as a variant of translation to preserve the colloquial element *blondasse* as a part of the textual expression of Houellebecq's provocative naturalistic novel: *Окрім Чорного Хіні, у головній кімнаті була облізла біла непоказна істота, яка в'язала пончо, сидючи біля каміна, і, мабуть, була голландського походження...*

At first glance, R. Marder seems to gain success in rendering the functions (vernacular and pejorative) of the structural and connotative colloquial lexeme *routard* (*route+ard*) – *бродяга* in the author's speech: *Selon le Guide du routard qu'il avait acheté à l'aéroport d'Orly, le village de Saorge, avec ses maisons hautes étagées en gradins, dominant la vallée en un à pic vertigineux, avait quelque chose de tibétain ; c'était bien possible* [8]. – *Згідно з «Путівником бродяги», що його Брюно купив в аеропорту Орлі, селище Саорж, яке нависало над*

долиною, з його стрімкими будиночками, що, мов східці, здіймаються схилами до запаморочливих верховин, справляє враження «чогось тибетського»; мабуть, так воно й було [4, p. 230]. But, firstly, the word *бродяга* is a Russian word and we think that the Ukrainian equivalent is *волоцюга*, as both words mean “a homeless poor person who has no steady home, job”. Secondly, we want to highlight the same “travelling” as dominant in the colloquial word *мандрьоха*. Our variant: *Згідно з «Путівником мандрьохи», що його Брюно купив в аеропорту Орлі...*

The functions of common literally and vernacular suffixes that have different connotative features (from fun making to comicality and pejoration) can sometimes be rendered at least partially. But the functions of argotic and so called “free” noun suffixes (-*ouse*, -*touze*, -*ance*, -*anche*, -*caille*, -*mar(e)*, -*pince*, -*tuche* (-*uche*), -*oche*, -*dinque* (*inque*), -*ton*, -*toc*, -*tocque*, *aga*, -*du*, -*go(t)*, -*ouille*) are not rendered properly by units of the Ukrainian language and this causes great difficulties for translators who have to use neutral stylistic substitutes or descriptive words. In the following example the vernacular lexeme *partouzes* (from *partie* + argotic suffix -*ouze*) is rendered by a descriptive equivalent *груповий секс*: *Elle avait vécu, elle avait pris de la coke, participé à des partouzes, dormi dans des hôtels de luxe* [8]. – *Вона жила, як усі; нюхала кокаїн, брала участь у груповому сексі, проводила ночі в розкішних готелях* [4, p. 215]. But more often R. Marder uses a Ukrainian vernacular unit *груповуха* which adequately renders the argotic colouring of the lexeme *partouzes*: *Mais il fallait déjà une vraie partouze, et là il y avait sélection à l'entrée, en général on venait en couple* [8]. – *Але це тільки коли влаштовувалася справжня груповуха, до того ж відбувався попередній відбір: зазвичай люди приходили парами* [4, p. 120]. This equivalent is used one more time on the same page.

The paradigm of structural connotative low colloquial units is characterized by word-formative peculiarities on the basis of prefixation with the help of *dé-*, *re-(r)-*, *méga-*, *super-*, *supra-*, *hypo-*, *hyper-*, *hypra-*, *extra-*: *dégaubouler* – *казати, розказувати, говорити багато*; *rechauder* – *вбивати*; *mégalo* – *мегаломан*; *supermarca* – *супермаркет*. Low colloquial words with prefixes are not so often as those ones with suffixes. However the problem of their rendering is still relevant. The contrastive analysis of French low colloquial units with prefix *dé-* and their Ukrainian substitutes allows to assume that it is easier to translate the lexemes with a prefix that indicates the opposite action.

R. Marder chose not a good enough option to render the colloquial familiarism *dénicha* which is characterized by a marked prefix: *Il dénicha un emplacement entre deux Canadiennes des cousines ? des sœurs ? des copines de lycée ?) et se mit au travail* [8]. – *Він [Брюно] віднайшов місце між наметами двох канадок (кузин? сестер? ліцейських подруг?) і взявся до роботи* [4, p. 83]. As we can see, the lexeme *віднайшов* renders only the denotative information. It does not take into consideration the functional stylistic feature of the source word as familiarism. That is why such translation can be described as neutralization of the social functional load of the word-source. It would be better to use a Ukrainian colloquial

word *відкопати*: *Він відкопав місце між наметами двох канадок (кузин? сестер? ліцейських подруг?) і взявся до роботи*.

Probably the task of a translator of a text with low colloquial units is not rendering, for example, the vernacular on a morphemic level that could be hypothetically seen while rendering the function of expressive enhancement of a lexeme meaning. This function is performed particularly by a prefix *dé-*. That is why we think that rendering of a low colloquialism *se démerder* (“прокрутитися”) by a polylexical partial equivalent *не ловити тав* is not quite correct and it can be called an antonymic translation with some morphological-syntactic transformations: *Mais bon, deux femmes pour un mec, il avait sa chance ; en se démerdant bien, il pourrait même en tirer deux* [8]. – *Ну то й що, дві на одного — це його шанс; якщо не ловити тав, хтозна, можливо, він зможе витягти обидва щасливих білети* [4, p. 86].

Rendering phonetic and spelling peculiarities the French low colloquial lexical corpus units remains a difficult task for a translator. Different kinds of truncation and reduplication are the most common. So, translators have some difficulties in rendering different types of French truncated colloquial lexemes. Particularly the translator of Houellebecq's novel uses full forms of the truncated words that causes the loss of colloquial colouring not only of a separate word but also of the whole text and it can be illustrated by the truncated unit *sympa*: *Il avait demandé la brochure pour les vacances d'été : sympa, associatif, libertaire, il voyait le genre* [8]. – *Він попросив дати йому брошуру про літній відпочинок, побачив, що за стилем він дуже симпатичний, тяжіє до культурної відкритості з анархічним відтінком* [4, p. 86].

In some cases the translator uses descriptive paraphrase to render structural connotative colloquial lexemes. It can be illustrated by the truncated word *démo*, which was used by the author to describe the creative pursuit of David who did not give up, who changed groups three times in four years, used different playing techniques, tried to find his happiness even in Europe and in the end got an invitation to one of the clubs on the Azure Coast: *Mais personne, dans aucune maison de disques, ne prétait la moindre attention à ses démos* [8]. – *Ось тільки видавничі фірми не виявляли аніякого інтересу до його музичних опусів* [4, p. 72]. And this is not a very good variant as the colloquial word *démo* (apocope of *démonstration*) has a Ukrainian equivalent (*демо*). But even if it could be hypothetically used the reaction of a common reader would be inadequate as the Ukrainian word *демо* (*демо* or *демка*, also *музична демонстрація* – a genre of the computer art – a program that shows graphic effects to music) belongs to computer slang which is not familiar to all users of colloquial discourse though it has the same “music demonstration”. Another variant of translation substitute is possible here, namely *демо-запис*, that is a song or group of songs recorded for limited circulation.

Rendering low colloquialisms on the basis of reduplication seems to be difficult. R. Marder prefers rendering the stylistic peculiarities of the structurally marked low colloquial words. For example, the low colloquial lexeme *nana* (a truncated diminutive of *Anne* with a doubled syllable *na-*) is rendered by the Ukrainian colloquial *кряля* which is an adequate stylistically functional

equivalent but it does not fully reflect the semantics of the original word that names a woman or a girl: *Il y avait une seule nana potable dans cet atelier : une petite rousse en jean et tee-shirt, pas mal roulée, répondant au prénom d'Emma et auteur d'un poème parfaitement naïfs où il était question de moutons lunaires* [8]. – Дали йшов сеанс написання композицій, за яким – загальна вступна промова та читання текстів. На цьому занятті була лиш одна більш-менш терпима **кряля**: гарнесенька руда крихітка у джинсах і футболці, яка віджукувала на ім'я Емма і створила бездоганно дурний віршик про місячних баранів [4, р. 93].

Conclusions. Full structural and formal equivalence of the original and translated texts is not achieved in most

cases. Nevertheless, this does not prevent assuming that adequate translation is realized on lexical-semantic and stylistic and functional levels, and also by means of compensation. Rendering structural connotative colloquial lexemes causes some inevitable losses that are compensated on the functional level, which does not always lead to a decrease in perception of the original text by a reader.

The adequacy of rendering structurally marked low colloquialisms may be provided by method of transformation (stylistic, morphological, word-formative, syntactic, and lexical) and by following techniques: elimination of national cultural peculiarity, hyperonymic/hyponymic translation, contextual translation, compensation, calque, descriptive paraphrase, euphemistic interpretation.

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Воспроизведение структурно-парадигматических особенностей разговорных лексем в украинском переводе романа М. Уэльбека “Элементарные частицы”

А. Билас

Аннотация. Стаття посвящена парадигматике сниженной разговорной речи как переводческой проблеме. Рассмотрены вопросы переводимости французских структурно маркированных сниженных разговорных единиц. Проанализированы способы и приемы воспроизведения структурно- коннотированного экспрессивно заряженного разговорного компонента романа М. Уэльбека “Элементарные частицы” в украинском переводе.

Ключевые слова: сниженная разговорная речь, структурная коннотация, перевод, функциональность, трансформации, парадигматика, аффиксы, усечение, воспроизведения.