

REALIA AS A CULTURAL PHENOMENON

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Annotation: In this article, you can learn about origin of realia and its history. As well as to translate it in understandable way to others who are from another culture and country.

Key words : Realia, phenomenon, lexical category, notion

Introduction : Every language reflects the phenomena and processes taking place in the world, as well as specific objects and processes that exist in every nation on the territory of its residence. Although the vision of the world is equal among all the nations, however in the culture of every nation, there are concepts, phenomena, objects, that are inherent only to this certain nation and connected with its historical and geographical, socio-political, and other conditions of existence. In the study of the national-cultural content of a language, features of social organization, customs, art, science, literature, everyday life and epos many scientists attached much importance to the realia. The question of relations between culture in the broadest sense of the word and the information that is contained, stored and conveyed in the words represented as language elements, since olden times has attracted not only linguists, but also representatives of other sciences. All features of the life of the people such as natural conditions, geographical location, historical development, social structure, the tendency of social thought, science, and art are necessarily reflected in the language of the people.

Origin of “realia”

The word “realia” is the Latin neuter plural (realis, -e, plural “realia” — “real”, «true»), which was turned into a feminine noun under the influence of similar lexical categories. In terms of philology realia are the subjects, things, existing or existed materially, often tying within the meaning of the concept of “life”; for example, “Realities of European (social) life”. According to the dictionary definition, realia are “any objects of material culture”, “in the classical grammar a variety of factors... such as the state system of the country, history and culture of the nation, linguistic communication between the native speakers in terms of their reflection in this language”, “the objects of material culture that serve as the basis for the nominative meaning of the word”. Realia as a subject, even in the framework of geography, has a broad meaning, which does not always fit into the realia-word framework, being an

element of extralinguistic reality; realia-word as part of the vocabulary of a language is a sign by which such things — their referents — can get their linguistic appearance. The word “realia” comes from medieval Latin, in which it originally meant “the real things”, i.e. material things, as opposed to abstract ones. The Bulgarian translators S.Vlahov and S.Florin, who were the first to carry out an in-depth study of realia, coined the modern sense of the word. They believe that realia are the words and phrases denoting the objects typical for the life (household, culture, social and historical development) of one nation and alien and unfamiliar for another, being the bearers of national and historical colour, they do not have exact accordance (equivalents) in other languages, and therefore cannot be translated on the general basis, requiring a specific approach. Scholars also point that since realia carry a very local overtone, they often pose a challenge for translation. Realia must not be confused with terminology: the latter is primarily used in the scientific literature to designate things that pertain to the scientific sphere, and usually only appears in other kinds of texts to serve a very specific stylistic purpose. Realia, on the other hand, are born in popular culture, and are increasingly found in very diverse kinds of texts. Fiction, in particular, is fond of realia for the exotic touch they bring. The notion of “realia” should be distinguished from the concept of “term”. The realia are characteristic of the sub-language of belles-lettres and media, and are inseparably connected with the culture of a particular nation, they are commonly used for the language of this nation and alien to other languages. The terms that are devoid of any national coloring and primarily related to the sphere of science, created artificially, only in order to name an object or phenomenon. The first thing that stands out is the resemblance of realia and the term. Unlike most of the lexical units, the terms refer to precisely defined concepts, objects and phenomena; ideally these are unambiguous words (or phrases), devoid of synonyms, often of foreign origin; among them there are also the ones which have historically restricted values. All this can be said about realia. Moreover, at the junction of these two categories there are a number of units, which are difficult to define as a term or as realia, and quite a few that can be “legally” considered at the same time as terms and as realia.

Strategies to translate realia

There are various strategies that help to translate realia: they range from phonetic transcription to translation of the overall meaning. According to Israeli scholar Gideon Toury’s characterization, each of these can be placed between two extremes: adequacy (closeness to the original) and acceptability (making the word entirely consistent with the target culture). Here are various possibilities at hand for translating realia:

– Transcribing (i.e. copying) the word, character by character. This is called transliteration when the original word is written in a different alphabet;

- Transcribing according to the target language’s pronunciation rules. For instance, the Hindi word “Kašmir” becomes “cachemire” in French;
- Creating a new word or a calque, such as the English “flea market” inspired by the French “marché aux puces”;
- Creating a new word, analogous to the original one, but which has a more local facet to it, e.g. “muezzin” from the Arabic “mu'adhdhin”;
- Using a different but related word from the source language, passing it off as the original word. For instance, the Italian word “cappuccino” is often translated into English as “latte”, which in Italian means “milk”;
- Making the meaning explicit, such as “jewish temple” for “synagogue”;
- Replacing the word with one that is more generic or international, such as “red wine” for “Beaujolais”;
- Adding an adjective to help the reader identify the origin of the element of realia, as in the “Argentine pampa”.

Conclusion

As a conclusion it ought to be remarked that linguistic visions of the world reflect all existing laws caused by the unity of human existence, and also have a specific national content. However, the reality is refracted when it is being conveyed through a set of signs, tools and techniques that are common for the members of the particular society. Thus, the language pictures are reflections of worldviews, and as pointed by W. von Humboldt, every language indicating the certain things, in reality forms the whole picture of the world for those who speak it [6, p. 353]. It is traditionally believed that realia as objects of material and spiritual culture reflect the lifestyle and the way of thinking of a particular society and have no analogues in other cultures and respectively there are no lexical units denoting them. If, for example, in the source text or in the original language they are invisible, it means that in translation they always are contrasted to the context, being bright exponents of the national identity of another culture, which significantly increases their stylistic load.

References

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