

**LINGUISTIC USAGE (USUS) AS A POTENTIALLY NEGATIVE FACTOR  
IN LITERARY TRANSLATION**

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**Abstract:** Contrary to the prevalent approach in modern translatology, the author argues that high-frequency usage of a target language (most commonly known by the Latin term of *usus*) can influence literary translation in a negative way.

**Key words:** linguistic usage (*usus*), literary translation, target language, linguistic memory, translational adequacy.

Though challenging the dominant view, advocated by modern Ukrainian translation studies [1, p. 77–78], it can be argued that when translating a piece of fiction – the process having its immanent and rather multi-faceted specificity – the high-frequency usage of a target language (so-termed *usus*) not infrequently happens to play a potentially negative role by subconsciously prompting to those translating (and thereby inevitably interpreting) [2] the original seemingly promising but, in fact, erroneous equivalents. Developing his previously posited thesis as to the danger of ‘*usus* interference’ threatening each literary translator, the author believes that, despite undeniable positive results for translational adequacy, the *usus* of a target language can potentially become the notorious ‘false friend of a translator’ by suggesting, via the psychological mechanisms of linguistic memory, mere high-frequency wordings, replicated by the *usus*, rather than full-blooded translational options as would be fit *ad hoc* [3].

The situation may be occasionally worsened by possible historical or cross-cultural factors being at work, thereby creating contradictions between the translational logic as suggested by *usus*, on the one hand, and what should have been

suggested in its place by keen and penetrating interpretation of the original and proper ‘contextual correction,’ on the other hand. In the author’s view, a way to damp out the ‘momentum of *usus*’ may be to adopt the methods of a meticulous commentator as would allow to locate all sorts of ‘tricky’ wordings and, by tracing back the true meanings of corresponding unclarities, render them into the target language as adequately as possible [4]. The author believes the study of psychological mechanisms employed in linguistic memory to be exceptionally promising, especially if aimed at perceptual de-automation of the whole scale of potential senses generated by a hypothetical translational equivalent.

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