

ТЕОРИЯ І ПРАКТИКА ПЕРЕКЛАДУ

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**ON POSSIBLE CONTEXTUAL EQUIVALENTS
FOR CERTAIN TERMS IN MIKHAIL BULGAKOV'S NOVEL
'THE MASTER AND MARGARITA'
AS TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH**

As is common knowledge, the novel in question was and remains popular with modern Western readers and has been translated into a vast number of languages, English among them. And yet, in many cases there arise certain doubts as to either the 'unclearities' of the original [7, p. 124] or whether corresponding translations are fully convincing. The three translations selected for the present analysis are chosen on purpose to represent a *British* version, an *American* version, and a more contemporary translation done in part by a *native speaker* (all marked below as, accordingly, translation 1, translation 2, and translation 3). Whereas in terms of particular lexemes analyzed, it is of interest to consider some cases of what might be called 'Soviet Newspeak' which, for obvious reasons, lack established English equivalents. For example:

№	Vocabulary unit and the original context	Translation 1 (by Michael Glenny)	Translation 2 (by Diana Burgin and Katherine O'Connor)	Translation 3 (by Richard Pevar and Larissa Volokhonsky)
1.	«За <i>квартирным</i> <i>вопросом</i> открывался роскошный плакат, на котором изображена	«Past the housing problem hung a gorgeous poster showing a cliff, alongside whose summit rode a man <i>on a</i>	«Behind «Housing Concerns» was a lush poster depicting a horseman in a <i>Caucasian cloak</i> riding	«Beyond the housing question there opened out a luxurious poster on which a cliff was depicted and, riding on

2.	была скала, а по гребню ее ехал всадник в <i>бурке</i> и с винтовкой за плечами» [2, р. 383].	<i>chestnut horse</i> with a rifle slung over his shoulder» [3, р. 58].	along the crest of a mountain cliff with a rifle slung over his shoulders» [4, р. 46].	its crest, a horseman in a <i>felt cloak</i> with a rifle on his shoulder» [1].
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While *бурка* in the sartorial sense presents an obvious case of *realia* proper (following R. Zorivchak, it seems worthwhile to use the late Latin *realis* – ‘related to things’ by way of ascribing to it the same meaning as is peculiar to its Ukrainian counterpart) [6, p. 56] and is fairly well rendered as «Caucasian felt cloak», the characteristic blunder made by Michael Glenny – apart from its being a symptom of the translator’s inattentiveness or poor command of the source language – serves as a vivid illustration of *realia* homonymy. And whereas *сивка-бурка* (*вещая каурка*) – ‘a horse from Russian fairy-tales giving its master pieces of advice and having the magical property of changing the latter’s look and traveling through the air to a desired place’ – should also be classified with *realia* proper, when used in the figurative sense it becomes an example of pseudo *realia*, thus making the suggested variant of its rendition, if not for the wrong preposition in the original, not so utterly and completely erroneous.

Another characteristic instance of pseudo *realia* is found in the Soviet Newspeak locution *квартирный вопрос* (probably, best rendered as «Housing Concerns») its *realodesignatum* devoid of cultural, but not *social* specificity (for *квартирный вопрос* was about a free, state-allotted domicile, peculiar to the Soviet setup; mark S. Vlahov and S. Florin’s perspicacious observation: «Thus, in addition to the connotative meaning and the *national coloration* of ordinary *realia*, Sovietisms possess a specific *social coloration* peculiar to the Soviet setup and it is in this that they, in a number of cases, differ from other *realia*») [5, p. 143]. Compare a similar instance presented by the vocabulary unit *жипплощадь*, which, in its turn, can be typologically compared to the Nazi-era German term *Lebensraum*:

3.	«...с заявлениями, в которых содержались претензии на жилплощадь покойного» [2, p. 422].	«...written pleas of their urgent need of <i>vacant housing space</i> » [3, p. 103].	«...to submit claims for the <i>vacated rooms</i> » [4, p. 78].	«...with declarations containing claims to the deceased's <i>living space</i> » [1].
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Another example may be as follows:

4.	«Он хотел позвать домработницу Груню и потребовать у нее <i>пирамидону...</i> » [2, p. 404]; «Придя, был встречен домработницей Груней, которая объяснила, что сама она только что пришла, что она приходящая... » [2, p. 408].	«He wanted to call his <i>maid</i> , Grunya, and ask her for an <i>aspirin...</i> » [3, p. 83]; «When he arrived he had been met by Grunya the <i>maid</i> , who explained that she herself had only just arrived because <i>she lived out...</i> » [3, p. 87].	«He wanted to call Grunya the <i>maid</i> and ask her for some <i>Pyramidon...</i> » [4, p. 64]; «When he arrived he was met by the <i>maid</i> Grunya, who explained that <i>she came in daily</i> and had only just arrived herself...» [4, p. 66].	«He wanted to call the <i>housekeeper</i> Grunya and ask her for <i>aspirin...</i> » [1]; «Having come, he was met by the <i>housekeeper</i> Grunya, who explained that she had just come herself, that she was <i>not a live-in maid...</i> » [1].
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Despite the general contextual equivalence of words such as *служанка* («maid»), *экономка* («housekeeper»), and (*приходящая*) *домработница*, there feels to be a marked culture-specific difference in their connotations. Whereas the former two can be seen as distinctly «bourgeois,» the latter one (mark the Soviet Newspeak abbreviation-and-composition pattern of its formation and the «proud-sounding» constituent *работница*) smacks of the dawning social – or socialist – era, in this way being rather similar in function to such relatively modern name-lifting neologisms as *interior care provider*, *facility manager*, *sanitary engineer* etc. In view of that, it wouldn't be out-of-place to use (*live-out*) *domestic worker* as accurate in terms of both duties and connotations.

5.	«...тут же мысленно окрестил кабинет « <i>фабрикой-кухней</i> » [2, р. 414].	«...and he at once mentally christened this room 'factory kitchen': 95	«...Ivan mentally christened the office 'factory-kitchen'» [4, р. 72].	«...at once mentally christened this room the 'industrial kitchen'» [1].
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While *фабрика-кухня* presents a rather simple case of *realia* proper, of interest, nevertheless, are variants of its translation into English, by far the best one among those available being «industrial kitchen,» whereas the other two sound either artificial (mark the inauthentic hyphenation of two nouns in «factory-kitchen») or misleading (for «factory kitchen» would be taken by many to mean ‘the kitchen of a factory’ rather than anything else). However, what seems to be lost even in the most convincing of them all is the idea why the association suggests itself to the character as *ironic*. For one thing, the figurative usage of the term can be accounted for by the general impression of immaculate novelty and increased automation (cf. «Ишь ты! Как в «Метрополе!») [2, р. 413], regrettably accompanied by uncooperative ways of the staff (cf. «В самом деле, засадили здорового человека в лечебницу, да еще делают вид, что это так и нужно!») [2, р. 413]. And yet, for another thing, the answer may also lie in the potential ambiguity of such wording, since *фабрика* simultaneously implies fabrication (cf. *фабрика липовых дел* and «Целое дело сшили!») [2, р. 416], while *кухня* conveys the parallel meaning of ‘specifically «technical», offstage, and rather unsightly part of some process’ (cf. *Я всей этой кухни не знаю!* etc.). In view of that, it seems rather preferable to use «cooking factory» as suggestive of similar implications (cf. *to cook (up)* – ‘to fabricate,’ *to be cooked* – ‘to be in an inescapably bad situation,’ *to be cooking* – ‘to be happening or planned (*esp. of something undesirable*)’ etc.).

Thus, the question of contextual equivalents to Soviet-time neologisms is far from closed and awaits further research.

References:

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