COLLOQUIUM AREA "MODERN STUDIES IN FICTION LITERATURE TRANSLATION"

PRAGMALINGUISTIC ANALYSIS AS MODERN STUDY IN FICTION LITERARY TRANSLATION



Irina ZYUBINA, Professor, PhD
(Doctor of Philology)
(Southern Federal University, Russian Federation)
iazyubina@sfedu.ru,
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1265-8366

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Abstract

The research is devoted to a new approach to the fiction literature translation study based on the analysis of the speech behavior of Vladimir Nabokov and the translators of his novel "Lolita". The methodological basis of the study is a pragmalinguistic experiment with elements of modified content analysis. The study was conducted within the framework of Implicit Pragmalinguistics. To analyze the original text and its translations, the implicit speech strategy "Participation / non-participation of communicants in a speech event" was chosen. The main conclusion: translators should minimize their interference so that addressees see the author's intention, and not the translator's individuality.

Keywords: *literature translation, pragmalinguistic experiment, speech behavior, speech strategy, addresser, addressee*

Literary translation is a complex process consisting of many stages of interpretation. The usual method of comparing the original with different translations helps the translator choose the best option and improve their version, but such an assessment is not enough for a complete and objective idea of the translation quality. That is why additional methods of analysis should be used. One of such methods is a pragmalinguistic experiment. We will apply it to the texts of the novel "Lolita" and its two translations into French. This approach will provide an additional assessment of the quality of the performed translations.

The aim of the work is to study the speech behavior of V. Nabokov as a bilingual writer and at the same time a translator of his own work and to study the speech behavior of the translators of his novel "Lolita", then to compare the results of these analyses. The material of the study was four

versions of the novel: the English original by V. Nabokov, the Russian version written by V. Nabokov himself and two translations into French. Thus, our study is aimed at identifying the individual features of Nabokov's speech behavior and the influence of these characteristics on the quality of the translations.

But first, let us stipulate that the personality of the famous writer Vladimir Nabokov is more than interesting in itself. Vladimir Nabokov was born on April 10 (22), 1899, into the family of the influential Russian politician Vladimir Dmitrievich Nabokov. The Nabokov family came from a prominent noble lineage and possessed considerable wealth. One of Nabokov's peculiarity is that he was fluent in three languages: Russian, English and French, which he mastered in his childhood. Despite his knowledge of many languages, Russian and English became his main creative means. V. Nabokov could write equally well in both Russian and English. However, he translated his novel "Lolita" into Russian himself only because even the translations of his relatives, whom he trusted, turned out to be unsatisfactory. Nabokov's relatives, his sister Elena Sikorskaya and brother Kirill, offered to translate the novel "Lolita" into Russian. The writer asked them to make a small fragment. When he saw the translation he received in 1963, Nabokov was extremely dissatisfied with the result and decided to take on the translation himself. He completed the work in 1964. This translation became Nabokov's last book in Russian and required a great deal of effort over the course of two years (Zyubina & Kumpan, 2015, pp. 343-344).

Experts point out that independent translation of works is complicated by the mixing of languages in the writer's mind, which creates difficulties in preserving the integrity of the work. The famous critic Z.A. Shakhovskaya noted the uniqueness of Nabokov, emphasizing that "literature knows no analogues to a writer who managed to achieve the heights of mastery simultaneously in two completely different languages" (Shakhovskaya, 1991). Nabokov himself jokingly described his cultural background as follows: "I am an American born in Russia, studied French literature in England, and then lived in Germany... My thoughts sound in English, my heart beats in Russian, and my hearing is accustomed to the French language" (Naptsok, 2008).

The main objective of our research is to analyze four variants of the novel "Lolita": its original English lines, the translation made by Nabokov himself into Russian, as well as the translations into French by Eric Kahan and Maurice Couturier. It is important to emphasize that any fiction literature translation requires enormous emotional investment because the translator seems to sacrifice a part of themselves for the sake of someone else's work, losing the opportunity to express their own creativity.

In order to perform such work qualitatively, it is important to understand the features of the author's speech behavior, therefore the study of the quali-

ty of translations in this work is carried out within the framework of Implicit Pragmalinguistics. This direction focuses on the analysis of unconscious elements of speech, allowing to reveal the internal characteristics of the author. The article is devoted to the study of the speech features of Vladimir Nabokov as a bilingual writer and the features of the translators of his novel "Lolita". The study is based on the comparison of four versions of the novel: the original English version, the author's translation into Russian and two French translations. Thus, by comparing the original text with the translations it is possible to find out how closely the translated work conveys the intentions and emotions of the original.

Pragmalinguistics is a branch of linguistics that studies the use of language in real communicative situations, taking into account the goals, motives, and impact on the addressee. Unlike traditional linguistics, which focuses on the structure of language, pragmalinguistics views language as a tool for interaction among people. It arose as a response to the need to study the "human factor" in language, that is, how native speakers choose language tools to achieve specific communicative goals.

The basis of pragmalinguistics is the semiotic triad of Ch. W. Morris, which includes:

- Semantics – the study of the relationship of signs to objects.
- Syntactics – the study of formal relationships between signs.
- Pragmatics – the study of the relationship of signs to their interpreters (speakers, listeners, etc.) (Morris, 1983, p. 42).

Pragmalinguistics is divided into two main areas: 1) Functional Pragmalinguistics that studies the conscious use of linguistic means to achieve communicative goals; 2) Implicit Pragmalinguistics – studies unconscious, automated speech habits and their influence on communication.

Functional Pragmalinguistics focuses on the conscious choice of language means to achieve specific goals in communication. Its main objects of study are speech activity, speech acts and communicative strategies. Speech activity is understood as a purposeful process in which the speaker selects language means, taking into account the communication situation, goals and motives. The criterion for the success of such activity is the effectiveness of the impact on the addressee. For example, in political discourse, the choice of certain words or formulations can be aimed at forming the desired impression on the audience.

The subject of Implicit Pragmalinguistics is the actualization of spontaneous unmotivated speech behavior. Let us remind that in Functional Pragmalinguistics the focus is on the implementation of communicative activity, that is, purposeful motivated communication. The main goal of Implicit Pragmalinguistics is to determine the author's personal characteristics based on his or her communication style. People, without realizing it, choose cer-

tain speech signals that allow researchers to build a speech portrait of the author and identify his or her individual traits. In Implicit Pragmalinguistics, regular, automatic preferences in the choice of language forms used by people in everyday communication are studied. These habits are called speech behavior. Speech behavior differs from conscious speech activity, which is based on specific goals and intentions.

A speech act it the minimal unit of speech activity that includes three stages: 1) a locutionary act – the utterance of a statement with a specific meaning and reference; 2) an illocutionary act – the communicative intention embedded in the statement (e.g., a request, a question, a statement); 3) a perlocutionary act – the impact of the statement on the addressee (e.g., persuasion, motivation to action). Speech acts can be direct (when the illocutionary effect corresponds to the direct meaning of the utterance) or indirect (when the effect is achieved through implicit meanings). For example, the phrase "Can you open the window?" can be either a question or a request depending on the context. However, in real communication, individual speech acts rarely exist in isolation – they are combined into more complex structures, forming a communicative strategy, that is, a plane of speech behavior aimed at achieving a global goal. It includes the choice of linguistic means and the sequence of speech acts. Tactics, in turn, are specific steps for implementing the strategy. For example, in media discourse, a dominance strategy may include such tactics as using authoritative sources to strengthen one's position, using rhetorical questions to create pressure on the opponent, repeating key theses to consolidate them in the minds of the audience (Zyubina, 2024). Strategies can be cooperative (aimed at cooperation) or confrontational (aimed at dominating or suppressing the opponent). In the British media, for example, confrontational strategies are often used in political debates or analytical articles to discredit the opposing point of view.

So, in addition to conscious communication tactics, there are also less obvious mechanisms of influence that are studied by Implicit Pragmalinguistics – a field that studies unconscious aspects of speech behavior, such as automated speech habits that are formed under the influence of social, cultural and psychological factors. The main concepts of this area are: 1) speech behavior – automated speech acts that do not require conscious control; 2) a speech act – the smallest unit of speech behavior that reflects habitual choices of linguistic means; 3) a speech signal – a grammatical or textual element that unconsciously conveys additional information about the speaker (e.g. level of education, social status). For example, the use of certain grammatical constructions or vocabulary can unconsciously signal the speaker's belonging to a certain social group.

Implicit Pragmalinguistics studies how a person expresses their individuality through speech in a specific communication situation "here and now". It pays attention to the language features, such as the choice of certain

grammatical forms that help convey not only the essence of an event, but also the environment around it, the participants' attitude to the event, and additional information. These characteristics can be identified by analyzing the grammatical categories used by a person (Matveeva & Zyubina, 2016, p. 64).

To study the implicit aspects of speech in Pragmalinguistics, the method of modified content analysis is used. This method is often used in various sciences – pedagogy, psychology, sociology – to draw conclusions about real events and processes occurring outside the text based on the number of repetitions of certain words or ideas in the text. For example, in Sweden, the degree of heresy was previously determined based on the frequency of mentions of certain topics in books. In Implicit Pragmalinguistics, this method has been adapted in such a way that specific grammatical forms are used as key elements of analysis. One grammatical category can manifest itself in different ways. For example, modality is expressed not only by verb forms (mood), but also by individual modal words that convey the speaker's attitude. The choice of certain grammatical forms becomes a characteristic feature of the individual manner of speech. Speech behavior is defined as "an automated, stereotypical speech manifestation devoid of conscious motivation due to the typical attachment of such a manifestation to a typical, frequently repeated communication situation" (Formanovskaya, 1989, p. 28), as well as a habitual individual speech manifestation. Speech behavior should be distinguished from speech activity, which is a "motivated, goal-dependent speech manifestation" (Matveeva, 1998, p. 14). Various types of speech behavior are called implicit strategies of the author's influence on the addressee. They can be divided into two large groups: emotive-oriented and conative-oriented.

Emotive strategies are aimed at expressing the personal feelings and emotions of the addresser (in our case, the author of the novel "Lolita" and its translators), they reflect the internal psychological state of the author and translators of the text, their experiences and personal perception of the events described. Through such a strategy, the addressers evoke an emotional response in the reader, share their thoughts and feelings, demonstrate their own need to be understood and accepted (Kunitsyna et alii, 2002, p. 61). There are three main types of emotive strategies:

- Participation/non-participation strategy: shows how actively the author is involved in the conversation or narrative.
- Certainty/uncertainty strategy: reflects the author's confidence or doubts regarding the facts presented or their own statements.
- Probabilistic assessment of reality: allows you to assess whether an event is perceived as having actually happened or as imaginary.

Conative strategies are aimed directly at the addressee and are associated with the regulatory function of speech. This means that such a strategy is

aimed at controlling the behavior of another person, influencing them in order to achieve some specific goal. This reflects the author's need to influence the thoughts, feelings or actions of the interlocutor or reader (Kunitsyna et alii, 2002, p. 61). The following strategies are considered conative:

- Formation of attitude: the author creates a certain perception of the text in the reader by evaluating events.
- Emphasizing attention: key elements of the narrative are highlighted in order to attract the reader's special attention.
- Satisfaction of expectations: the reader's reaction is formed depending on how much the author's intentions correspond to the addressee's expectations (Matveeva, 1998, pp. 44-45).

Using the methodology of Implicit Pragmalinguistics the study is conducted according to the strategy "Participation / non-participation of communicants in a speech event". The analysis is based on the principle of identifying implicit emotions in speech, based on the participation or absence of participation of interlocutors in the dialogue. The essence of this strategy is that the authors of the texts show their psychological experiences and personal attitude to the subject of discussion. The emotional side of speech is important because it reflects the inner world of the speaker, their self-perception and the need to be understood by the listeners.

The implicit speech strategy "Participation / non-participation of communicants in a speech event" is manifested in three planes: personal, social and objective. Speech signals of the personal plane indicate that only the addresser or only the addressee participates in the speech event. The following markers of the personal plane exist: exclusive pronouns (for example, I, you); indirect forms of exclusive personal pronouns or possessive pronouns (for example, me, my, your); addressing to someone (for example, Dear friend!); imperative exclusive forms of the verb (for example, Do it!); verb lexemes that can be correlated with one of the participants in the speech event, for example, "it seems", "it is necessary"; introductory words (for example, to my mind, in my opinion, fortunately). The social plane assumes the simultaneous involvement of both participants in communication in the speech event. There are some examples of speech signals of this plane: inclusive personal pronouns (for example, we, us, our); nouns that correspond to inclusive pronouns (for example, all the nation, the USA); indefinite and negative pronouns (for example, someone, nobody); impersonal sentences (for example, It is clear); imperative inclusive forms of the verb (for example, Let us do it); adjectives with the suffixes *-able, -ible*. As for the speech signals of the subjective plane they indicate the objectivity of the events taking place and include markers that are not in the personal and social planes.

The unit of the analysis is a minor syntactic group (MSG) which has modality and predicativity (Matveeva, 2001, pp. 51-53). MSG is a minimal

actualized predicative-modal syntactic unit. This unit is 'actualized' because it is used in the text, and 'predicative' because it reflects the ability of the verb to act in the text as a predicate. And since it expresses the author's attitude to the topic of the message, to objective reality and to the recipient of the text, it is also a modal unit. MSG can be considered a syntactic unit because it corresponds to a minimal syntactic construction. So, in the the MSG, which linguistically formalizes a speech act, several shades of implicit meaning appear (Matveeva & Zyubina, 2019). At the same time, the semantic meaning is preserved, syntactic correctness is observed, as well as the communicative intention of the author of the text.

An objective pragmalinguistic experiment is conducted according to a generally accepted experimental plan: preparation of parameters for the experiment, the actual conduct of the experiment, interpretation of the data obtained. Preparation of parameters consists of formulating the goal, hypothesis, strategy for analysis, speech signals for actualizing a specific strategy; then selecting authors to study their different individual and specific speech behavior (however, their social and situational parameters must correspond). Then texts of these authors are selected, which must coincide in speech genre and size, and texts are prepared.

The results of the study are presented in Table 1: *Speech Behavior of the Addressers* which records the percentage of the cases of this strategy actualization:

Plane / **Language, Text Author**	**Personal**	**Social**	**Subjective**
English, V. Nabokov	45%	14%	41%
Russian, V. Nabokov	44%	14%	42%
French, E. Kahane	43%	15%	42%
French, M. Couturier	38%	15%	47%

Table 1: *Speech Behavior of the Addressers*

Let us show the results of the pragmalinguistic analysis. It is interesting that the indicators of V. Nabokov in the English original and in the Russian translation are almost identical: the difference is only 1% in the personal and subjective planes. The situation is completely different for the translators: their indicators differ more from the original work than those of the author-translator V. Nabokov. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that Eric Kahane manages to convey Nabokov's speech behavior, his indicators are similar to the original text: the difference is 2% in the personal plane, and only 1% each in the social and subjective planes. Although Maurice Couturier claimed that the first official translation of Eric Kahane contains many errors and distortions, despite the author's verification. But it should be noted that this applies to the choice of words, and not to grammatical signals. Maurice Couturier noticed the shortcomings of the previous French translation and

wanted to correct the situation himself by preparing a new translation of "Lolita". His version differs significantly from the original in the style of presentation. For example, M. Couturier uses a much less frequent expression of the personal plane (only 38% versus 45% in V. Nabokov's original text) (Zyubina & Kumpan, 2015). Perhaps this is due to Couturier's desire to remain inconspicuous, to avoid demonstrating his own importance and confidence. The rarer use of the personal plane by the translator compared to the original work may indicate modesty, some uncertainty and the tendency to submit to the opinions of others. Probably, M. Couturier was afraid to declare his own views openly and to focus the addressee's attention on his personal participation in the speech event.

Having analyzed the speech behavior of the translators of the novel "Lolita", let us turn to what the author himself saw as the translator's role. In the article "The Art of Translation" (1941), V. Nabokov identified the key points that a good translator should have (Naptsok, 2008):

1. Talent: The translator must be as talented as the author of the original, or at least must have a similar gift. A good example is a pair of translators like Baudelaire and Edgar Poe, Zhukovsky and Schiller.
2. Education: You need to have an excellent understanding of the culture of both countries, be fluent in both languages, have a subtle sense of the style and specifics of the author, including the history of the origin of words and subtext.
3. Imitation: The most important feature of translators is the ability to imitate the author's style so naturally, as if they were the creators of the text. It is necessary to be able to reproduce not only the words, but also the entire set of cultural features, habits and thoughts of the author.

So, the main conclusion of V. Nabokov is that a high-quality translation is impossible without a deep knowledge of the psychology, behavioral characteristics and speech habits of the author of the original text. The third quality of the translator seems to be the most important, since it is the subjective interpretation of the original that greatly influences the final translation. The more vividly the personality of the translator is revealed, the more difficult it is to perceive the original intention of the author. Consequently, the translator's task is to minimise their influence on the reader's understanding of the original text.

Our analysis of Nabokov's speech behavior confirms that his knowledge of several languages had a significant impact on his work. This circumstance should be taken into account especially carefully when translating. Translators are obliged to strive for complete immersion in the role of the author, preserving their manner of speech, behavior and worldview in order to ensure maximum reliability of the text transmission. To do this, it is necessary to take into account the signals of implicit speech strategies. In this work, the analysis of only one strategy (Participation / non-participation of communi-

cants in a speech event) was carried out, but there were also developed other implicit speech strategies (Matveeva, 2022; Zyubina 2024), which must be taken into account when translating from one language to another.

Thus, the study was aimed at identifying the individual features of V. Nabokov's speech behavior and the influence of these characteristics on the quality of translation. We hope that the data obtained will allow us to more precisely assess the accuracy and expressiveness of literary translations. As a result of the study, the following conclusions were made: the speech behavior of V. Nabokov in the English and Russian versions of the novel is similar; the translators demonstrate different approaches: one is closer to the original, the other allows for deviations. The peculiarities of V. Nabokov's bilingualism have a great influence on his creative style and require a careful approach when translating; the subjectivity of the translators' perception affects the final product: the stronger the influence of the translator's personality, the more noticeable the differences from the original. The main conclusion: translators should minimize their interference so that readers see the author's intention, and not the translator's individuality.

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