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# MACHINE TRANSLATORS – ASSISTANTS OF FALSE FRIENDS FOR STUDENTS?

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*Abstract. The article presents the results of studies on the influence of machine translators on the "translating abilities" of students. It is established that the use of auxiliary electronic resources for translation purposes decreases the quality of the translated text, while increasing the number of grammatical, phonetic, lexical, and other errors.*
*Keywords: polysemy, homonymy, noun chains, word formation, context, terminology, phraseological units and idioms, machine translation.*
*Аннотация. В этой статье представлены результаты исследования о влиянии электронных переводчиков на «переводческие способности» студентов. Было выявлено, что использование вспомогательных электронных ресурсов для перевода понижает качество переводимых текстов и увеличивает количество грамматических, фонетических, лексических и иных ошибок.*
*Ключевые слова: полисемия, омонимия, цепочки существительных, словообразование, контекст, терминология, фразеологические обороты и идиомы, машинный перевод.*

**Introduction.** The relevance of the topic is justified by the fact that translation is one of the means of mastering a foreign language. However, nowadays, when information technologies are being introduced into the educational process, various electronic means are employed on even wider scale, but the training quality becomes questionable. In particular, special attention should be paid to rechecking the machine-assisted translation results, since a great number of

various errors occur regularly and remain unnoticed by students.

As the learning experience shows, very often students translate specialized texts in a foreign language using a computer-based translator without the proper analysis and editing of the final translated text. As a rule, they do not pay attention to the fact that seemingly the same Russian word can be translated into a foreign language in different ways, so that the meaning of each English term is revealed in conditions of real speech use, depending on the context and field of knowledge. A separate problem is the observance of stylistic norms in translation.

**Research material.** Polysemy and homonymy are common phenomena that cause errors in translation by electronic translators. Polysemy is the ability of one term to express two or more concepts, so electronic translators often make a mistake, using the wrong lexical meaning of the word. Homonymy is the external (sound) coincidence of two different words whose meanings are not related to each other. Therefore, semantic errors arise due to an incorrectly selected translation [1].

Based on the findings of this research, we have distinguished the most common causes of translation problems:

1) a situation when one Russian term can be translated into English in different ways;

2) a situation when the meaning of each English term is revealed in the conditions of the real speech use, depending on the context and the field of knowledge.

Having analyzed the most common mistakes, we can identify several cases of translation that should be given special attention when checking after using machine translators (Table 1).

**Table 1 − Specific difficult cases of translation**

| Names of books, magazines, organizations, geographical names | **Brown University**<br>Incorrect: университет в городе Браун<br>Correct: Брауновский университет |
| --- | --- |
| Contextual use of words | **"King and his partners introduced a new product..."**<br>Incorrect: Король и его партнеры внедрили новый алгоритм…<br>Correct: King (фамилия)-Брэдли Кинг. |
| Proper names | **"…Davies & Partners director Richard Mellon explained…"**<br>Incorrect: руководитель компании Девиса и Партнеров Ричард Меллон...<br>Correct: руководитель компании «Дэвис энд Партнерс» Ричард Меллон объяснил... |
| Idiomatic phrases and phraseological units | "People and companies go to great lengths to be valued by Google."<br>Incorrect: идти на большие длины<br>Correct: прикладывать больше усилий |

For most electronic translators, it is difficult to see the difference between the concepts of polysemy and homonymy. We can consider this by an example of the word 'cell', which can have different lexical meanings. In Russian it sounds the same, but can be translated differently depending on the meaning. The first translation variant is a scientific (biological) term (cell), and the second one is an object in which we keep animals (cage).

Frequent mistakes that students do not pay attention to are associated with a violation of the norms of word usage. This is due to the fact that in the Russian language there are a huge number of verb forms that must be combined with the subject correctly[3] (Table 2).

**Table 2 − Typical example of the violation of the Russian language norms**

| | |
| --- | --- |
| *Farming and its products are crucial to all economies, and frequently big export earners; it is of particular importance to the livelihoods of large parts of the population of developing countries* | *Сельское хозяйство и его **продукции имеют** решающее значение для **экономик** всех стран и часто **является** крупными экспортными товарами; **они** имеет особое значение для обеспечения **средства существования** значительной части населения развивающихся стран* |

Electronic translators also have difficulties when translating noun chains, as they translate words separately, losing logical coherence. Special attention should be paid to the translation of terminological words, since often the terms are not translated verbatim and must retain their original meaning [2]. Many students tend not to delve into the terminology, thinking that such mistakes will go unnoticed by the reader, but this is not quite so.

**Conclusion.** In conclusion, we should stress that according to this research, the pattern of mistakes made when translating texts using electronic resources was revealed. Careful analysis of errors of this kind helps to show students how important it is to choose the correct equivalent of polysemantic terms instead of putting blind trust on machine translators. Based on the analysis, it is possible to formulate several tips that will help students avoid mistakes in translation and improve their skills.

1) Firstly, it is worth paying attention to the conditions of using a particular term and the context, in which the term has a particular meaning.

2) Secondly, reading books and articles from the professional area of communication will help you choose the most suitable translation options.

3) Do not forget to competently use special dictionaries, be able to read stylistic marks indicating the sphere of word usage, learn to recognize the specific meaning implied by the context that should be chosen for each particular case.

**List of sources**

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