

РОМАНСЬКІ ТА ГЕРМАНСЬКІ МОВИ

UDC 811. 111. 81'42

DOI <https://doi.org/10.32782/2710-4656/2025.1.1/17>**Arkhipova I. M.**

State Higher Educational Institution “Donbas State Pedagogical University”

SEMANTIC ASPECTS OF COMMENTARY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CONCEPTUAL SYSTEMS OF THE ADDRESSEE AND THE ADDRESSER

The article examines the role of commentary as an important tool for overcoming intercultural, linguistic, and temporal gaps in the perception of literary texts by a foreign-language audience. It is noted that the process of understanding a literary work can be complicated due to differences in cultural contexts, linguistic traditions, and perceptions of time, often leading to misunderstandings or difficulties in the translation or interpretation of texts.

Authors of commentaries must take into account the ethnic consciousness of the target audience, the temporal context of the work, as well as the individual characteristics of the reader, as these factors significantly influence the way information is presented. The article emphasizes that effective commentary should consider cultural and historical realities, linguistic features, and the cognitive needs of the audience, ensuring a more complete and accurate understanding of the text.

Particular attention is given to the temporal factor, which significantly affects the understanding of literary works, as texts created in different eras carry specific cultural and social realities that may be unclear to a modern reader. Special focus is placed on the adaptation and creation of commentaries to meet the needs of diverse audiences. Based on the analysis of classical and contemporary English-language literary works, typical intercultural gaps encountered during the perception of texts by representatives of another culture have been identified. The provided examples demonstrate the necessity of detailing and explaining linguistic and cultural phenomena in literary texts that are unfamiliar or unclear to the reader. Emphasis is placed on the importance of an individual approach to the creation of commentary that considers the conceptual framework of both the author and the audience.

The study has practical significance for translation studies, intercultural communication, and foreign language teaching. The proposed recommendations contribute to improving the methodology for creating commentaries, particularly in the context of intercultural learning and communication.

Key words: commentary, intercultural gaps, linguistic units, ethnic consciousness, temporal context, target audience, intercultural communication.

Statement of the problem. Intercultural communication is one of the most important areas of interaction in the globalised world. A literary text contains numerous cultural, linguistic, and temporal phenomena that may be incomprehensible to a foreign-language reader. This is especially true for works that belong to a different cultural tradition or era. The question arises as to how to organise the commentary in such a way that it is accessible to the addressee, taking into account their individual and ethno-cultural characteristics. Commentary in this context is a key tool that helps to overcome language and cultural barriers. The study of the

structural and semantic parameters of a comment allows us to better understand the mechanisms of its construction and its impact on intercultural communication.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The theoretical foundations of textual commentary were established in the works of such scholars as Wilhelm von Humboldt, Edward Sapir, and Benjamin Lee Whorf, who studied language as a tool for reflecting culture. Western researchers, such as Gideon Toury and Christiane Nord, have focused on the role of translation and commentary in the intercultural adaptation of texts.

The issue of adapting commentaries for different categories of readers has been explored within translation studies, particularly in the works of Katharina Reiss and Peter Newmark. Their ideas on functional equivalence laid the groundwork for the development of modern approaches to commentary creation. The questions of text perception and understanding, as well as the role of the linguistic personality, were examined in the works of David Crystal and Alan Duff, who highlighted the influence of cultural and linguistic factors on text interpretation.

These approaches form the theoretical basis for analysing commentary as a tool for intercultural text adaptation, offering a deeper insight into its structural and semantic parameters.

Task statement. The purpose of this article is to determine the structural and semantic parameters of a commentary that ensure its adaptation to the specifics of the addresser's and addressee's conceptual systems. The study is aimed at identifying the key factors influencing the organisation of the commentary, in particular the addressee's ethnic consciousness, the temporal aspect of the work, and the reader's individual characteristics.

Outline of the main material of the study. When composing a commentary, the commentator is guided by the linguistic personality of the potential reader. The characteristics of the addressee's conceptual system determine the choice of units for commentary, the structural design of explanations, and the nature of the information being commented on. The linguistic personality consists of an invariant core—linguistic and cultural knowledge shared by representatives of a single nation—and a variable part, shaped by the individual linguistic and cultural experience of each person.

Considering the structural features of the linguistic personality, we identify three components related to the addressee factor that must be taken into account in the organisation of the commentary: the ethnic consciousness of the inophone, the temporal factor (related to the time of writing and the time of reception of the work), and the individual factor, which encompasses the reader's personal characteristics.

Commentary and the addressee's ethnic consciousness. Taking ethnic consciousness into consideration involves addressing culturally specific phenomena – commenting on aspects that are unclear to a non-native speaker. Thus, considering the addressee factor, particularly in terms of a linguistic personality with a distinct ethnic consciousness, serves as the foundation for uncovering various linguistic and cultural gaps in the commentary.

Among cultural gaps, subjective gaps pertain to the description of the national character and temperament of representatives of different cultures and emerge due to differences in the national and psychological profiles of the participants in communication. It should be noted that subjective gaps are relatively rarely addressed in commentary. This type of gap is often resolved directly within the text of the translation; in some cases, it remains unnoticed by the commentator or is not given significant attention.

It is assumed that the characterological and emotional traits of a given nation should become evident directly from the story itself. This makes the attempt to address a characterisation gap in the commentary on Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice" particularly intriguing. In one scene at the ball, the protagonist, Mr. Darcy, when asked why he does not dance, replies: "*I am not a fan of dancing, Miss Bingley*" [1, p. 72]. This phrase was interpreted as an example of British restraint, particularly within the aristocracy of the time, where the public display of emotions was discouraged. For readers unfamiliar with the social norms of that era, it is important to note that restraint in social interactions, especially among the upper classes, was a defining characteristic. The commentary explains that it was not customary for the English of that time to openly express emotions, and at events such as balls, their responses and behaviour were marked by maximum restraint.

Another example of a subjective gap, resulting from differences in knowledge about the national characteristics of representatives of two cultures, involves the name of the protagonist in Charles Dickens's novel "Great Expectations". The name "Pip" is understood as a colloquial and diminutive form of "Philip", serving as an ironic commentary on the character's personality. Pip frequently finds himself in a state of self-denial and struggles with feelings of inferiority. To correctly interpret this character, the reader must recognise that the name reflects the protagonist's inner insecurity. This is a characteristic feature of 19th-century English literary tradition, where characters are often given names that symbolise their inner emotional state or social standing [4].

In H. Melville's story "Moby-Dick", the author describes his time aboard the ship: "*I pace the sleety deck, weathering Cape Horn*" [8]. In this context, for a modern reader unfamiliar with the geographical background, it is important to explain that Cape Horn is a famous southern point through which maritime routes to the Pacific Ocean passed. In this context, "weathering" can be interpreted not only as a physical

struggle against the elements but also as a metaphor for the protagonist's trials and hardships in life.

Ethnographic gaps arise from the absence of phenomena characteristic of one culture in another. These include numerous groups of objects, concepts, or phenomena represented by place names, proper names, cultural, historical, political, and military events, zoonyms, floristic terminology, household items, customs, and traditions. All these objects and phenomena are usually known only to a limited number of people living within a particular linguistic and cultural community, so their interpretation is essential for the inophone, who lacks knowledge about these realities.

Thus, the selection of commentary units and the ways in which they are interpreted are influenced by the national-territorial parameter: the factor of accounting for a different ethnic consciousness dictates the inclusion of nationally specific units in the commentary. While these phenomena are common knowledge in the source audience, they may be completely or partially lacunarized in another linguistic and cultural community and, therefore, require interpretation.

Temporal Factor as One of the Parameters of Commentary Organization. The dynamic nature of a commentary, its discursive quality as one of its primary features, is revealed depending on a variety of contextual factors. Taking the temporal factor into account in the organization of a commentary involves crafting the commentary in accordance with the time frames of both the creation and reception of the work. Any work of art is never identical to itself [9; 14].

The perception of a work may differ significantly across different time periods. This is primarily due to the evolving human consciousness and, consequently, the changing multi-faceted view of the world.

Taking into account the temporal parameters in the organization of a commentary allows for the identification of two key trends. The first trend is linked to the increase in the amount of information along the timeline and the inability of human consciousness to retain all the information accumulated by humanity over time. As a result, those objects and phenomena that fall out of use are gradually pushed out of collective memory. Archaic words and realities require mandatory commentary. The earlier a work was written, or the more historically distant the era it describes, the more archaic the text will appear to a modern reader. Both linguistic and cultural phenomena may become lacunarized.

For example, in Jane Austen's novel "Pride and Prejudice", the custom of holding balls in eighteenth-

century England is mentioned. For a modern reader, it is difficult to grasp the social significance of such events. The commentary explains that balls were not only a form of entertainment but also an essential part of social interaction, particularly for introducing young people to potential marriage partners [1].

The next example comes from William Shakespeare's play "Hamlet": "*The time is out of joint*" [11]. This line can be interpreted as a metaphorical description of Hamlet's personal crisis, but the commentary clarifies that it also reflects the chaos and political instability of the time of Elizabeth I.

In Mary Shelley's novel "Frankenstein", there is a scene depicting the creation of the monster: "*It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils*" [12]. For a modern reader, this phrase might appear to be merely a description of the weather, but the commentary explains that the November atmosphere symbolizes death and endings, which intensify the drama of the moment.

Recovering information from another era is incredibly difficult without specialized education or focused research. In this case, the commentary serves as an indispensable source of information, helping modern readers recreate the worldview of past eras.

The second trend is also related to the growth of information, but it highlights the opposite aspect of this process. Over time, a person's knowledge base potentially expands. In this regard, when creating new commentaries for old works, the commentator should be attuned to the changes in the modern reader's worldview and reconsider the need to explain certain phenomena. For example, terms like "*spaghetti*" or "*martini*" no longer require explanation in many cultures, as these concepts have become part of global knowledge.

Thus, changes in the temporal factor directly affect the reading experience, with the dynamic nature of perception becoming evident when analyzing a number of semantic units within a temporal context.

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A literary text intended for any audience, however, requires some processing and adaptation in special editions when it is aimed at a narrow group of readers, such as children or professionals. The commentary for such editions has its own specific features.

An explanatory article in the commentary to a fiction text for a children's audience is characterized by simple syntactic structures, straightforward vocabulary, and possible visual aids. The choice of

items to comment on is also dictated by the need to consider the mindset of a young reader, who may not be familiar with many concepts and phenomena that are more or less known to an adult audience.

For example, in the commentary to Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland", aimed at younger children, terms such as "Cheshire Cat" and "mad hatter" are explained. The commentary clarifies that the "Cheshire Cat" is a fictional character known for its ability to gradually disappear, leaving only its smile, which symbolizes the absurdity and mystery that are characteristic of the work. The "mad hatter" is explained as a reference to the real historical issue of mercury poisoning, which caused behavioural changes in workers involved in hat production [3].

Commentaries aimed at specialized professional groups have their own peculiarities. For example, in editions for philology students, the focus is on linguistic difficulties—such as peculiarities in word usage, grammatical and stylistic challenges, and the specifics of translating certain phrases. In James Joyce's "Dubliners", the term "*paralysis*" is included in the commentary with an explanation that it is a key concept for understanding the overall theme of the work, where the author uses it to denote the moral stagnation and hopelessness of the characters [5].

Special attention is also given to cultural phenomena associated with the country of the target language, such as historical realities, place names, and cultural vocabulary. For example, Charles Dickens' novel "Great Expectations" mentions the London "Newgate Prison" [4]. The commentary explains that this is a famous nineteenth-century prison that became a symbol of crime and punishment in Victorian society.

In addition to the hermeneutical goal, the inclusion of these units in the commentary also serves a didactic purpose—providing students with linguistic and cultural information necessary for their professional development.

The linguistic personality of the addressee is another factor considered when composing a commentary. The parameter of the message sender is an important component of the communicative act. While the problem of selecting linguistic units for commentary, structural and functional types of commentary, and consideration of the addressee factor have been studied in detail [13; 14], the reflection of the writer's linguistic personality in the commentary is presented in a fragmented manner.

Meanwhile, the information provided in the commentary, aimed at revealing the passions, images, experiences, and everything that forms the author's

conceptual system, helps to understand the motivation behind the choice of form to present meaning. This reveals the writer's idiosyncrasy not only as a systemic-linguistic category but also as a motivational and activity-based one [15].

A preliminary study of the writer's autobiography sets the commentator up for a sensitive perception of those semantic units, literary images, compositional, and semantic structures that correlate with the components of the writer's personal meanings. Their explication in the commentary is important not so much for semantic and cognitive understanding of the text – the text can be understood without such commentary – but for the formation of readiness for "de-objectification of textual means", allowing for deeper reflection on the meanings of the text and the experience of all the connections and relations between the text and its creator [4].

The commentary focused on the personality of the addressee was called *idiolectal* in the typology of comments presented earlier. Let's look at examples of how the author's individual system of meanings is reflected in this type of commentary, and how linguistic units acquire meaning within the author's system of meanings.

For example, in George Orwell's novel "1984", the term "*doublethink*" is used: "*The power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them*" [10]. To understand this concept, we need to consider Orwell's biography, particularly his disillusionment with totalitarianism. The commentary explains that 'doublethink' reflects the author's experience as a witness to the manipulations of ruling regimes that suppressed individuality.

Another example is James Joyce's short story "Giacomo Joyce", which uses the expression "*here and now*", central to the author's aesthetic concept: "*The transient, the fleeting, is all that matters*" [6]. The commentary notes that for Joyce, this phrase reflects his belief in the importance of reproducing ordinary life material, focusing on the everyday and fleeting moments.

Virginia Woolf's novel "To the Lighthouse" also features the phrase "*Time passes*" [16]. This simple expression hides a complex idea about the passage of time and its impact on human relationships. The commentary may highlight the autobiographical aspect of the work, as many events reflect Woolf's personal experiences.

The following example illustrates how the use of autobiographical motifs shapes the author's idiom. In Margaret Atwood's "The Handmaid's Tale", a scene

is described: “*We slept in what had once been the gymnasium*” [2]. This detail underscores a sense of loss and societal transformation, which Atwood connects to her observations of changing gender roles in the 1980s.

The information gathered about the linguistic personality of the writer allows us to delve deeper into the writer’s conceptual system, gaining insight into the nature of their choice of specific linguistic units. These units acquire meaning only within the context of the writer’s conceptual system, which influences and motivates the “structure” of the text at all stages of its creation and functioning – from the idea and compositional structure to its verbal embodiment and the direction in which it is perceived and understood by the reader.

The following commentary on Rudyard Kipling’s novel reflects the writer’s literary tastes: “*Tomo’s Bedlam’s Song*” – the epigraph cites the final stanza of an unknown author from the early seventeenth century; it is one of Kipling’s favorite poems, which he learned in school [7].

Some commentators believe that it is unnecessary to burden the commentary with additional information about the author, and consider it more appropriate to present this information in other supplementary texts, such as the preface or afterword. However, even though information about the author may be placed in a different area of the text’s semantic space, it remains present and serves an important function. Information about the author broadens the reader’s potential for

meaning-making, as it helps them perceive personal meanings relevant to the author. These meanings, when ‘used’ through the author’s conceptual system, become a motivating factor influencing the peculiarities of the work’s composition, its system of expressive means, character selection, and so on.

Conclusions. The analysis conducted demonstrates that commentary is an important tool for overcoming intercultural, linguistic, and temporal gaps that arise when artistic texts are perceived by a foreign audience.

It has been established that the main factors influencing the construction of commentary are the ethnic consciousness of the addressee, the temporal context of the work, and the individual characteristics of the reader. The study reveals that an effective commentary must consider cultural and historical realities, the specifics of the linguistic environment, and the cognitive features of the audience. The research emphasizes the importance of considering the temporal factor, which affects the perception of the text depending on the era and cultural context. Examples from both modern and classical English-language literature confirm the significance of commentary as a means of explaining complex linguistic and cultural phenomena.

Further research could focus on expanding the use of commentaries in digital educational platforms and interactive environments to enhance intercultural interaction more effectively.

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**Архіпова І. М. СЕМАНТИЧНІ АСПЕКТИ КОМЕНТАРЯ
З УРАХУВАННЯМ КОНЦЕПТУАЛЬНИХ СИСТЕМ АДРЕСАТА ТА АДРЕСАНТА**

У статті розглядається роль коментаря як важливого інструмента для подолання міжкультурних, мовних і темпоральних лакун під час сприйняття художніх текстів іношомовною аудиторією.

Зазначено, що процес розуміння художнього твору може бути ускладнений через різницю в культурних контекстах, мовних традиціях і сприйнятті часу, що часто призводить до непорозуміння або утруднень у перекладі чи інтерпретації текстів. Автори коментарів повинні враховувати етнічну свідомість адресата, часовий контекст твору, а також індивідуальні характеристики читача, оскільки ці чинники суттєво впливають на спосіб подачі інформації. Стаття підкреслює, що ефективний коментар повинен враховувати культурно-історичні реалії, мовні особливості, а також когнітивні потреби аудиторії, що забезпечує повніше та точніше сприйняття тексту.

Окрему увагу приділено темпоральному фактору, який суттєво впливає на розуміння літературних творів, оскільки тексти, створені в різні епохи, несуть у собі специфічні культурні й соціальні реалії, що можуть бути незрозумілими для сучасного читача. Особливу увагу приділено адаптації й створенню коментарів до потреб різних аудиторій. На основі аналізу класичних і сучасних англomовних літературних творів виявлено типові міжкультурні лакуни, що виникають у процесі сприйняття тексту представниками іншої культури. Наведені приклади демонструють необхідність деталізації та пояснення мовних і культурних явищ у художніх текстах, які є невідомими або незрозумілими для читача. Акцентується увага на значенні індивідуального підходу під час створення коментаря, що враховує концептуальну систему як автора, так і адресата.

Дослідження має практичне значення для перекладознавства, міжкультурної комунікації та викладання іноземних мов. Запропоновані рекомендації сприяють вдосконаленню методології створення коментарів, зокрема в контексті міжкультурного навчання та комунікації.

Ключові слова: коментар, міжкультурні лакуни, мовні одиниці, етнічна свідомість, темпоральний контекст, адресат, міжкультурна комунікація.