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COMMON ERRORS RESULTING FROM THE NEGLECT OF BROADER CONTEXT IN TRANSLATION

The **broader context** in translation encompasses not only linguistic features but also the genre of the text, the sociocultural environment, the communicative situation, and the author's intent. These factors determine how a translation will sound and function in real-life communication. As V. I. Karaban notes, translation is not merely a search for lexical equivalents; it also involves understanding the functional purpose of the text in the full range of its contextual relationships (Карабан, 2004).

Research in translation studies shows that most significant errors do not arise from insufficient language proficiency. More often, they result from neglecting the specifics of context. As a consequence, such translations may be grammatically correct but pragmatically inappropriate and misaligned with the communicative situation.

The aim of this paper is to generalize typical errors caused by ignoring the broader context and to demonstrate their impact through examples drawn from real translation practice.

One of the most common consequences of ignoring the broader context is the misinterpretation of terms. This is particularly typical of pseudo-internationalisms or interlingual homonyms – words that appear similar across languages but differ in meaning. These are commonly referred to as “false friends of the translator” (Fr. *faux amis*). The term was introduced by the French linguists M. Koessler and J. Derocquigny in 1928, and since then the phenomenon has been extensively studied by scholars such as V. Karaban, I. Korunets, and others (Корунець, 2003).

According to V. Karaban (2004), such units can be classified into full pseudo-internationalisms (with no shared meanings) and partial internationalisms (with only partial semantic overlap). The most misleading are the full pseudo-internationalisms, as translators often fail to verify their meanings in dictionaries, relying instead on their formal similarity.

For example, in English, *decade* means “a period of ten years”, whereas the Ukrainian word *декада* refers to “a ten-day period”. Thus, the phrase *over the past decade*, if translated as «*протягом останньої декади*», significantly distorts the meaning: instead of ten years, it implies only ten days.

For instance, in a sentence such as “*Significant changes have occurred over the past decade*”, the incorrect translation «*значні зміни відбулися протягом останньої декади*» creates a false temporal frame, misleading the reader about the duration of the processes described. The correct rendering would be «*протягом останнього десятиріччя*».

Without considering the genre (e.g., a scientific article dealing with long-term phenomena), the translator may lack the contextual cue necessary to verify the term. Similar difficulties arise with words such as *expertise* (which should be translated not as «*експертиза*», but as «*компетентність*» or «*фаховість*») and *order* (not «*ордер*», but «*порядок*», «*наказ*», or «*замовлення*» depending on context). These issues are particularly common in business and legal texts, where meaning is highly context-dependent.

Documented observations by the translation agency Profpereklad indicate that similar errors frequently occur in financial and legal texts. For example, the word *interest* may denote “interest”, “rate of interest”, or “equity stake”, depending on the context. Likewise, *redemption* is translated as “redemption” in a religious context but as “repayment” or “redemption (of securities)” in a financial one. A translator who relies solely on dictionary meanings without analyzing the genre of the document will

typically choose the most common equivalent, thereby distorting the meaning of a contract or report.

A particularly illustrative phenomenon is literal (word-for-word) translation. It arises when the translator reproduces the structure and vocabulary of the source text without regard for the genre-specific, cultural, and pragmatic norms of the target language. Such literalism may manifest as the direct rendering of individual lexical items or as the calquing of syntactic patterns. In both cases, the underlying cause is the lack of proper orientation toward the broader context.

One of the most well-known cases in the history of translation is associated with a speech by Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev at a reception at the Polish embassy on November 18, 1956 (Wikipedia, 2024). His interpreter, Viktor Sukhodrev, rendered the phrase «*Mu vas noxovaeemo!*» as “*We will bury you!*” – a literal translation that failed to account for its idiomatic and ideological context.

In Soviet rhetoric, this expression did not constitute a direct threat but rather paraphrased a Marxist idea that socialism would outlast capitalism – that is, not “we will bury you,” but “we will outlive you”. Khrushchev later clarified this meaning, stating: “Your working class will bury you”. As a result, the literal translation transformed a metaphor into a perceived threat and contributed to heightened tensions during the Cold War for decades (Language Doctors, 2025).

The case of Willie Ramirez is frequently cited in leading translation studies literature as evidence of the potentially catastrophic consequences of ignoring terminological context (Ulatius, 2025). In 1980, 18-year-old Willie Ramirez was admitted to a hospital unconscious. His Spanish-speaking family described his condition using the word *intoxicado*, which in Spanish refers to “food poisoning”. However, it was translated as *intoxicated* (“under the influence of alcohol or drugs”) without consideration of the context. As a result, doctors treated the wrong condition and only later discovered an intracerebral hemorrhage. Due to the delay in appropriate treatment,

the patient was left quadriplegic. The court subsequently ordered the hospital to pay substantial compensation (Wikipedia, 2024). This case demonstrates that translation errors may have not only linguistic but also serious real-world consequences.

The analysis of the examples presented shows that translators often focus on details (individual words or sentences) while overlooking the broader picture (genre, function, and cultural context), or they may lack sufficient background knowledge. I. Korunets conceptualizes such errors as “contextual incompetence” (Korunets, 2003).

The consequences of such errors manifest across various domains: from distorted chronology (*decade*) in scientific texts and inaccurately conveyed cultural meanings to diplomatic incidents involving Nikita Khrushchev, financial losses, and even medical errors with severe outcomes, as in the case of Willie Ramirez. This indicates that the problem is systematic rather than incidental.

To avoid such situations, it is recommended to conduct thorough pre-translation analysis, consult specialized dictionaries and domain-specific texts, and avoid settling for the first dictionary equivalent. In high-stakes fields, involving a native speaker or subject-matter expert is advisable.

The analysis demonstrates that ignoring the broader context remains one of the key challenges in translation practice. The errors discussed can be broadly classified into two types: misinterpretation of terms and literal translation. Examples from medical, diplomatic, and economic domains show that such mistakes may lead to both financial losses and life-threatening consequences. It is important to emphasize that these cases are often associated with a narrowed focus on individual words or sentences at the expense of the overall communicative context.

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INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN TIMES OF WAR: THE ROLE OF THE TRANSLATOR IN SHAPING GLOBAL NARRATIVES

This paper investigates the role of translation in shaping global narratives during wartime. It argues that translation is not neutral but ideologically and culturally embedded. The study combines discourse analysis and translation studies to demonstrate how linguistic choices influence international perception.

Globalization has transformed war into a global communicative phenomenon. Information about conflicts spreads instantly through media and digital platforms. Translation becomes a key mechanism through which these events are interpreted worldwide (Baker, 2020, 50–60). As a result, translators act as mediators between cultures and as agents influencing meaning construction.

War discourse is characterized by deliberate lexical choices. Terms such as “operation,” “intervention,” “invasion,” or “liberation” are not neutral but reflect ideological positions. For instance, the same event can be described as “defence” or “aggression,” depending on the perspective. Translators must decide whether to preserve the original framing or adapt it for the target audience.