THE EPIDIGMATIC ASPECTS OF TRANSLATION: ENGLISH-UKRAINIAN CORRESPONDENCES

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The article explores the epidigmatic aspects of translation between English and Ukrainian, focusing on the complexities of rendering polysemous words across languages. It highlights how meaning is context-dependent and shaped by cultural factors, making translation a dynamic process of negotiation rather than a straightforward transfer of meaning. The study demonstrates that the epidigmatic approach enhances translation accuracy by considering multi-layered semantic correspondences and contextual dependencies.
Keywords: epidigmatic approach, translation studies, semantics, polysemy, English-Ukrainian correspondences.

Деменчук О.В. Епідигматичні аспекти перекладу: англійсько-українські відповідності
У статті схарактеризовано епідигматичні аспекти перекладу, визначено особливості відтворення англійських багатозначних слів українською мовою. Акцентується увага на тому, що значення є контекстно-залежним і формується під впливом культурних чинників, що робить переклад динамічним процесом узгодження значень. Результати дослідження підтверджують, що епідигматичний підхід сприяє підвищенню точності перекладу завдяки урахуванню багаторівневих семантичних відповідностей та контекстуальних залежностей.
Ключові слова: епідигматичний підхід, перекладознавство, семантика, полісемія, англійсько-українські відповідності.

Introduction. One of the central challenges in translation is that words and expressions do not have fixed, universal meanings; instead, they derive significance from the cultural framework in which they are used. For example, idioms, metaphors, and culturally specific references often pose difficulties because their meanings cannot be directly transferred from one language to another without adaptation. This challenge aligns with Antoine Berman's (1984) view that translation is inevitably shaped by an ethnocentric impulse, which can distort the

source text's meaning. Another key issue is the instability of meaning, as described by Jacques Derrida (1982), who argued that meaning is always deferred and contingent on its context. This suggests that translation is not merely a transfer of fixed meanings but an act of interpretation that varies based on the translator's choices and assumptions. "A foreign text is the site of many different semantic possibilities that are fixed only provisionally in any one translation, on the basis of varying cultural assumptions and interpretive choices, in specific social situations, in different historical periods. Meaning is a plural and contingent relation, not an unchanging unified essence, and therefore a translation cannot be judged according to mathematics-based concepts of semantic equivalence or one-to-one correspondence" (Venuti, 2008, p. 13).

One approach that considers translation as a complex negotiation of meaning, shaped by historical, social, and ideological factors, is the epidigmatic approach. The approach revolves around recognizing and navigating the complexities of words or phrases that have multiple meanings or senses. This requires a comprehensive grasp of the source and target cultures, as well as the specific situational or textual context: "Beyond the notion stressed by the narrowly linguistic approach, that translation involves the transfer of 'meaning' contained in one set of language signs into another set of language signs through competent use of the dictionary and grammar, the process involves a whole set of extra-linguistic criteria also" (Bassnett, 1991, p. 22).

Theoretical background. The epidigmatic approach towards translation underwent developments from *linguistic-centric* – "linguistic untranslatability" (Catford, 1965); "figurative extensions" (Nida & Taber, 1982), "communicative and semantic translation" (Newmark, 1981) to *cognitive-corpus* – "semantic mirrors method" (Dyvik, 2005; Vandevoorde, 2020), "gravitational pull hypothesis" (Halverson, 2017; Lefer & Sutter, 2022), aspects. The contemporary epidigmatic approach to translation is in line with these trends. By acknowledging the plurality of meaning and the influence of social and historical factors, the approach offers a more nuanced, accurate, and ethical way to navigate linguistic exchanges across cultures.

Methodological Framework. The conception underlying this study is founded on the presumption of the multidimensionality of semantic space. The initial hypothesis posits that the semantics of a linguistic item is modeled through a complex system of hierarchically structured semantic representations encompassing both linguistic and extra-linguistic dimensions. Accordingly, the

epidigmatic approach to translation emphasizes the interdependence of linguistic, situational, and cultural contexts in the translation process.

The translation of polysemous words requires a methodical approach, as illustrated by the translation of the polysemous verb *red-card* in *Price was red-carded for a foul on Ferguson*. The process involves several key steps:

a) linguistic (semantic) – list out all possible meanings of the word based on available resources, like dictionaries, and translate the sentence using the dictionary information as a reference, cf.: *red-card* "(a) *Sport* (of a referee) to signal the dismissal of (a player) from the field by the showing of a red card; (b) to boycott or disallow; to exclude" (Oxford English Dictionary);

b) situational (contextual) – consider the broader context in which the word appears. The sentence *Price was red-carded for a foul on Ferguson* sounds ambiguous if taken out of context, though *red-carded* and *foul* are terms strongly associated with sports, particularly football (soccer). In football, a *red card* is issued by the referee to signify a serious offence, resulting in the immediate expulsion of the player from the game. A *foul* refers to an unfair or illegal action towards another player during the game. The translation might emphasize either the referee's action (showing the red card) or the consequence (the player's removal from the game). When reporting on a game in real-time (live broadcast) or summarizing key events (match report), the focus is likely to be on the gameplay and its consequences rather than the officiating procedure, cf.:

(a) *Прайса **видалили з поля** через неспортивну поведінку стосовно до Фергюсона.*

In formal football regulations, disciplinary records, or referee reports, it is crucial to state the official action taken rather than just its outcome, cf.:

(b) *Прайсу **показали червону картку** через неспортивну поведінку стосовно до Фергюсона.*

c) cultural (social) – adapt the meaning to the cultural and social realities of the target language. In English, *red-carded* is a well-known sports metaphor, whereas in Ukrainian, exclusion is often expressed through social or legal terms rather than sports metaphors. In broader social or professional settings, *to be red-carded* could mean: 'being expelled from a group or organization', 'facing public backlash or ostracization', 'being banned from a platform or event', etc. The level of formality and setting (corporate, social, online) influence word choice in translation, cf.:

(a) *Прайса **позбавили** членства в організації через дискредитацію Фергюсона.*

(b) *Прайса **виключили** з групи через обман Фергюсона.*

(c) *Із Прайсом **припинили всілякі стосунки** через наклеп на Фергюсона.*

(d) *Прайса **забанили** на форумі через непристойні репліки в бік Фергюсона.*

The purpose of the study is to analyze how semantic shifts, cultural influences, and contextual dependencies impact translation choices of polysemous words (phrases) from English into Ukrainian. The purpose is threefold: to characterize key cultural factors that influence translation choices; to establish key contextual dependencies that influence translation choices; to elaborate on the practical applications relevant to the epidigmatic aspect of translation.

The research material comprises words and phrases with multiple meanings, which describe specific (contextual- and culture-based) situations or their fragments. The denominations are selected from representative explanatory dictionaries of the English language (Oxford English Dictionary, Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged). The English illustrations are either taken from the above-mentioned dictionaries or generated by ChatGPT or Copilot.

Results and discussions

This study examines how cultural nuances and contextual dependencies influence the translation of polysemous words (phrases).

A. Cultural nuances. When translating polysemous words, cultural nuances play a crucial role in selecting the most appropriate meaning. The key cultural factors that influence translation choices include:

1. Culturally specific concepts – some words (phrases) carry meanings unique to a particular culture. Terms like that have no equivalent in the target culture and necessitate cultural adaptation or explanation to ensure the target audience understands the reference. For example, the polysemous term *greenwash* refers to the practice of companies or organizations making misleading or unsubstantiated claims about the environmental benefits of their products, services, or practices, essentially presenting a more environmentally friendly image than is warranted. This term combines *green*, indicating environmental friendliness, and *whitewash*, suggesting a cover-up. When translating *greenwash* into Ukrainian, it is crucial to convey both the environmental aspect and the deceptive implication. A

direct translation might not always capture the term's full breadth, especially if the concept of greenwashing is not as widely recognized or discussed in Ukrainian media or public discourse. Thus, providing additional context or choosing a term that reflects both the environmental and deceptive aspects is important. Besides, capturing the cultural and connotative nuances of *greenwash* is essential for conveying its critical and somewhat negative implications, cf.:

Many consumers are becoming savvy about spotting **greenwash** *in advertising and demand genuine sustainability.*

Зростає кількість споживачів, які розуміють, що **екологічний маркетинг** *використовує* **оманливі методи** *в рекламі, і тому вони все частіше вимагають надати докази екологічності продукції або послуг.*

Here, an explanatory approach is used to ensure clarity for a general audience. The phrase *екологічний маркетинг використовує оманливі методи* explains what greenwashing entails, avoiding ambiguity.

Regulators are cracking down on **greenwash**, *imposing fines on companies that make false environmental claims.*

Регулятори вживають всі необхідні заходи, щоб запобігти **фальсифікаціям у сфері екологічного виробництва**, *тому вони накладають неабиякі штрафи на компанії, які подають неправдиву інформацію щодо екологічності своєї продукції.*

The phrase *фальсифікації у сфері екологічного виробництва* emphasizes regulatory violations, making it more appropriate for a legal context. This translation avoids informal terms and aligns with formal discourse used by officials and regulatory bodies.

The company was accused of **greenwashing** *after promoting its new product as 'eco-friendly' without any substantial environmental benefits.*

Після реклами нового екологічного продукту компанію звинуватили у **недобросовісності** *та* **використанні маніпулятивних технологій** *– з'ясувалося, що у продукті насправді немає нічого "екологічно чистого".*

The phrases *недобросовісність* and *маніпулятивні технології* work well when discussing corporate ethics and public criticism. This translation emphasizes dishonest marketing tactics rather than fraud or legal violations.

2. **Culturally specific referents** – some words (phrases) refer to the entities (objects) that are deeply rooted in a particular culture, history, or society and may not have a direct equivalent in another language or culture. They often require adaptation, explanation, or substitution when translated to ensure that the intended

meaning is conveyed to a different audience, cf. *black-and-tan* "(a) (of a kind of terrier dog): having black hair upon the back, and tan (yellowish-brown) hair upon the face, flanks, and the legs; (b) a drink composed of porter (or stout) and ale; (c) frequented by both Black and white people; (d) popular name for an armed force specially recruited to combat the Sinn-Feiners in 1921; (e) favoring or practicing proportional representation of Black and white people in politics" (Oxford English Dictionary; Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged):

(a) *She adopted a lovely **black-and-tan** puppy from the shelter.*

*У вольєрі вона вибрала для себе миле **чорне з рудими підпалинами** цуценя.*

The term refers to the coat coloration in dogs, such as the black-and-tan Coonhound or Doberman Pinscher, where the fur is predominantly black with tan markings. Since the entity is universal and recognized in both English and Ukrainian-speaking cultures, the translation retains the descriptive meaning, ensuring accuracy in describing the color pattern.

(b) *At the pub, he ordered a refreshing **black-and-tan** made with ale and stout.*

*У пабі він замовив освіжаючий **мікс еля зі стаутом (бірмікс)**.*

Since there is no direct equivalent in Ukrainian, the term may be explained or paraphrased as a loanblend *бірмікс*.

(c) *The jazz club was known as a **black-and-tan** venue, where people of all backgrounds mingled.*

*Цей джазовий клуб був однією з тих **мультиетнічних** локацій, де можна було зустріти людей із різних соціально-культурних середовищ.*

Since the phrase may be unfamiliar to Ukrainian audiences, it is best paraphrased.

(d) *The **Black and Tans** were sent by the British government to suppress revolutionary activity in Ireland.*

*Британський уряд відправив **загони Королівської Ірландської поліції** для придушення революційних виступів в Ірландії.*

Since the phrase refers to a specific historical entity, it is best translated using historical terminology rather than a literal color-based phrase.

(e) *During Reconstruction, the **black-and-tan** Republicans worked tirelessly to secure voting rights for African Americans in the South.*

У період реінтеграції південних штатів **члени** *Республіканської партії* **США, які виступали за пропорційне расове представництво у політиці***, завзято відстоювали виборчі права афроамериканців на Півдні.*

Since there is no direct equivalent, the phrase should be explained rather than translated literally.

3. Culturally specific environment – some words (phrases) carry unique meanings that may not be universally understood outside that environment. It is shaped by shared experiences, traditions, ideologies, and historical events within a particular society or group, cf. *redshirt* "(a) in more general use, a revolutionary, an anarchist, a communist; (b) a member of a Pathan nationalist organization formed in North-West Province in 1921 and lasting until the creation of Pakistan in 1947" (Oxford English Dictionary):

(a) *You remember this place – before the **Red Shirts** came.*

Пам'ятаєш це місце ще до приходу **комуністів**.

The translation reflects a specific cultural environment where the term *Red Shirts* is associated with communists. This translation is appropriate in contexts where *Red Shirts* refers to communist movements, such as in Soviet history, the Cold War, or regions where communist factions were known as *Red Shirts*.

(b) *In Mardan and Charsadda the activities of the 'Red Shirts' have again increased.*

У Мардані та Чарсадді знову зросла активність **"червоносорочечників"**.

The translation preserves the name *Red Shirts* as *червоносорочечники*, which accurately conveys the historical identity of the movement without imposing an unrelated Ukrainian or Soviet meaning (vide supra, 'communists'). The name *Red Shirts* (or *Surkh Posh*) came from the movement's symbolic red uniforms.

B. Contextual dependencies. The meaning of polysemous words is often determined by context, which can vary across different situations. Key contextual dependencies that influence translation choices include:

1. Linguistic context – refers to the way meanings are shaped by surrounding discourse (wordplay, figurative meanings, and idioms), cf.:

In a library, Sam and Olivia are whispering about their favourite science fiction books.

Sam: *I heard this book can teleport you to another world. It's literally out of this world!*

Olivia: *Well, I hope it brings me back in time for dinner. I don't want to miss out on earthly delights.*

The wordplay in this dialogue involves puns related to science fiction concepts: (a) *out of this world*: Sam says the book is *literally out of this world*, which is a pun. *Out of this world* is a common phrase meaning something is extraordinary, but in the context of science fiction, it also hints at something literally beyond Earth, like in space or another dimension; (b) *brings me back in time*: Olivia's response, *I hope it brings me back in time for dinner*, plays on the idea of time travel, a common theme in science fiction. The phrase *back in time* refers both to the literal concept of traveling through time and to the practical concern of returning to the present moment for dinner; (c) *earthly delights*: Olivia's mention of *earthly delights* is a pun on the idea of staying grounded on Earth versus experiencing otherworldly (or *out of this world*) adventures. It contrasts the fantastical elements of science fiction with the simple pleasures of life on Earth, like enjoying a meal. The wordplay combines science fiction concepts with everyday expressions, creating a playful dialogue, cf.:

Сем: *Ця книга може перенести тебе в інший світ. Це справжнє **диво**!* (диво '= те, що викликає подив, здивування; чудо').

Олівія: *Що ж, сподіваюся, вона поверне мене вчасно до вечері, щоб я змогла насолодитися кулінарним **дивом** у цьому світі.* (диво '= про те, що дивує, захоплює своїми якостями, достоїнствами і т. ін.').

2. Situational context – the real-world scenario or setting in which the word (phrase) is used affects its interpretation. Consider the publication from *Naval Aviation News*, which explains why a ship is referred to as "she", cf.:

Because there's always a bustle around her; because there's usually a gang of men with her; because she has waist and stays; because it takes a good man to handle her right; because she shows her topsides, hides her bottom and when coming into port, always heads for the buyos (O'Connor, 1960, p. 32).

Тому що навколо нього, як і біля жінки, постійна метушня, галас, бійки та натовп чоловіків; у нього рельєфна корма і витончені форми; тому що кораблем, як і жінкою, може керувати лише справжній чоловік; за його ефектною зовнішністю часто не видно того, що відбувається всередині; коли ж з'являється в порту – відразу прямує на побачення з докерами.

The ambiguity of the passage arises from multiple meanings of words and phrases that apply to both ships and women. This pun-based humor plays on

nautical terminology, human characteristics, and gender stereotypes, making the passage a classic example of double entendre and figurative language.

The passage from *Naval Aviation News* contains several instances of ambiguity, primarily due to double meanings and wordplay, which are characteristic of puns. Here are the specific ambiguous elements: (a) *bustle around her* – this may refer to the activity around a ship (e.g., sailors working, loading cargo, maintenance) and the bustle in women's fashion (a padded undergarment used in historical dresses), reinforcing the comparison between a ship and a woman; (b) *a gang of men with her* – this could mean a crew of sailors working on the ship and a group of men accompanying a woman, playing on the idea of attraction or dependence; (c) *waist and stays* – these terms have meanings in both shipbuilding and fashion. In nautical terms, the *waist* is the central part of the ship's deck, *stays* are ropes or cables that support a ship's mast. In clothing, a *waist* is part of the human body, often emphasized in women's fashion, *stays* were rigid corset-like supports worn to shape the waist; (d) *it takes a good man to handle her right* – this phrase plays on the skill required to navigate and control a ship and the traditional (and now outdated) notion that handling a woman properly requires a skilled or strong man, reinforcing the ship-as-woman analogy; (e) *shows her topsides, hides her bottom* – this phrase can mean a ship's topside (deck and visible part) is exposed, while its hull (bottom) is underwater and unseen, and a playful reference to modesty or suggestiveness in human terms, as "topside" could imply outward appearance and "bottom" could have a risqué connotation; (f) *heads for the buyos* – in navigation it is a ship heading for *buoys* means approaching a harbor or safe waters, and as a pun, it could suggest a play on *boys*, implying that, like a woman, the ship is attracted to or drawn toward men.

3. Historical context – refers to the influence of past events, ideologies, and socio-political conditions on the meaning of words and phrases. Understanding historical context ensures that translations reflect the accurate temporal, cultural, and ideological significance of terms rather than relying on their modern or surface-level meanings, cf. *Black Hand* "(a) defining a Spanish revolutionary society of anarchists; (b) defining a secret society of Italian immigrants in U.S., concerned chiefly in levying blackmail" (Oxford English Dictionary):

(a) *The **Black Hand** sought to challenge the existing social order through acts of sabotage and rebellion.*

***Іспанські анархісти** прагнули дестабілізувати існуючий соціальний порядок, удаючись до саботажу та організації заколотів.*

The phrase *іспанські анархісти* appropriately replaces *Black Hand*, ensuring clarity for a Ukrainian-speaking audience unfamiliar with the specific group's name. The choice of *дестабілізувати* instead of a direct equivalent for *challenge* is effective in capturing the subversive intent.

(b) *Law enforcement struggled to dismantle the **Black Hand**'s network of extortion and violence.*

*Правоохоронні органи США намагалися приборкати хвилю вимагань та насильства з боку членів **таємної організації італійських імігрантів**.*

The translation contextualizes *Black Hand* as referring to an extortion ring associated with Italian immigrants in the U.S., rather than anarchist movements or political groups. The phrase *таємна організація італійських імігрантів* is a clear and culturally appropriate way to introduce Black Hand to Ukrainian readers unfamiliar with this historical criminal network.

4. Evaluative context – refers to the way a word or phrase carries positive, negative, or neutral connotations within a given context, influencing its interpretation and translation. The essence of evaluative context in translation lies in ensuring that the tone, connotation, and implicit judgment of a word align with the original meaning in the target language. This requires considering semantic polarity and collocational influences to avoid misinterpretation or distortion of meaning. Translators must be sensitive to the ethical implications of translation choices, especially in contexts where multiple meanings might have significant cultural, political, or social implications, cf. *lily-white* "(a) irreproachable, lacking faults or imperfections; (b) pertaining to a policy of racial segregation" (Oxford English Dictionary):

*The college administration is **lily-white**.*

(a) *Адміністрація коледжу має **бездоганну репутацію**.*

The translation presents a positive, moral, or ethical connotation, emphasizing the institution's clean reputation, integrity, and faultlessness.

(b) *Адміністрація коледжу **підтримує політику расової сегрегації**.*

This interpretation conveys a negative socio-political meaning, referring to racial exclusion or discriminatory policies.

5. Spacial context – refers to the geographical and regional factors that influence meaning in translation. Words and phrases often carry region-specific connotations, making it necessary for translators to consider local usage, dialectal variations, and sociocultural implications when adapting texts into another

language, cf. *yellowbelly* "(a) *dialect* a native of Lincolnshire; (b) *Southwest, disparaging, offensive* Mexican" (Oxford English Dictionary; Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged):

*In the quaint village of Woodhall Spa, you'll find friendly **Yellowbellies** who love sharing stories about the area.*

*Лише у химерному селі Вудголл-Спа можна зустріти справжніх доброзичливих **лінкольнширців**, які з радістю перекажуть вам безліч історій про цю місцину.*

Instead of translating literally (e.g., *жовтобрюхи*), which would make no sense to a Ukrainian reader, it is preferable to uses the term *лінкольнширці*, directly linking the identity to geographical location. In that way, the tone and cultural familiarity remain well preserved, making the translation natural for the target audience.

Yellow bellies – *a name given by soldiers of the U.S.A. to the Mexicans.*

Жовтопузі – *так солдати армії США називали мексиканців.*

The translation preserves the offensive and disparaging nature of the term, reflecting its pejorative use in the U.S.-Mexico conflict. The term *жовтопузі* is a direct and appropriately informal equivalent, capturing the derogatory tone in Ukrainian.

Conclusions and perspectives. This study has demonstrated that the translation of polysemous words from English into Ukrainian – and, presumably, other language pairs – requires a nuanced approach that accounts for semantic shifts, cultural influences, and contextual dependencies. By employing the epidigmatic approach, the research has highlighted the importance of considering the multi-layered nature of meaning, ensuring that translation is not merely a direct lexical substitution but an interpretative process shaped by linguistic, situational, and cultural factors. The study identified that cultural background plays a crucial role in determining translation equivalences. Words with historical, regional, or ideological connotations require careful adaptation to maintain meaning in the target language. The findings confirm that linguistic, situational, historical, spatial, and evaluative contexts shape how polysemous words are rendered in translation. The study has shown that translators must assess polysemous words through a process that involves identifying all potential meanings within dictionaries and corpora, analyzing linguistic and extra-linguistic factors influencing the word's use, choosing translation strategies that align with

the intended meaning in the target language, considering ethical implications in cases of politically or socially charged terms.

Future research on the epidigmatic aspect of translation could focus on investigating larger English-Ukrainian bilingual corpora to refine patterns of polysemy translation and using computational tools (e.g., semantic mirroring, AI-driven corpus analysis) to map cross-linguistic polysemy correspondences.

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