NEOLOGISMS IN SCI-TECH TEXTS: WAYS OF FORMATION AND TRANSLATION

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Annotation: In the given article the reasons responsible for the creating neologisms in sci-tech texts are described; the types and patterns according to which neologisms are formed are analyzed; the specific ways of their translation are proposed.

Key words: neologisms, scientific and technical texts, formation, ways of translation, word-building patterns.

Languages are changing as the world is constantly changing. New vocabulary came into existence due to new technologies and new discoveries such as computing, Internet, cell phones. Indeed, new words are invented rapidly and are developed quickly thanks to mass communication. They appear and fall into disuse when they have served their momentary purpose. Only a few of them will get recorded in glossaries of neologisms of general dictionaries.

The matter of neologism becomes a new hot spot of linguistic research. The study of neologisms evoked a whole cluster of questions: what are the reasons for the rise of new lexicon, why are some new words just a flash in a pan, why are other words successful, and what are the qualities that make a word successful?

In linguistics, a neologism is a recently-coined word, or the act of inventing a word or phrase. Additionally, it can imply the use of old words in a new sense. Neologisms are especially useful in identifying new inventions, new phenomena, or old ideas which have taken on a new cultural context. No new science is possible without neologisms, new
words or new interpretations of old words to describe and explain reality in new ways. To reject neologisms is to reject scientific development.

The word “neologism” was coined around 1800 and was, at that time, a neologism itself. A jump of several decades has shown us more research on neologisms. In Modern English one can find some synonyms to the word “neologism” such as slang, coinage, buzzword, jargon, singleton, pidgin, terminology, lingo, argot and even language.

Quite a lot of reasons are responsible for the creating English neologisms: the rise of new concepts and new ideas in social culture; new discoveries in science and technology; the manufacture of new products in economy, and the events in the field of politics.

Development in the science and technology has brought tremendous energy to the improvement of our civilization. And we can’t but agree that these achievements also find their reflections in language. Technical advancements in a society demand new designator terms, many of which can be found in linguistics such as hypercorrection, phoneme, allomorph, etc. The progress of science and technology gives occasion for the large majority of new words; for a new thing we must have a new name.

Today linguists distinguish the following types of neologisms:
– scientific (created to describe scientific inventions and discoveries);
– political (created to convey some political or rhetorical point, often negative);
– pop-culture (created to describe pop-culture phenomena);
– imported (loan words, used to express ideas that don’t have an equivalent in the native language);
– trademarks (genericized trademarks);
– nonce words (created for a proper literary effect);
– inverted (derived from spelling or pronouncing a word backwards);
– paleologisms (created long ago to be a neologism but now having a
definition or implication different from that of any earlier usage).

There is one more classification of neologisms due to their language
acceptance and usage:
– unstable (extremely new);
– diffused (known by people but not yet having gained acceptance);
– stable (recognizable and accepted).

Neologisms appear in a language in 3 following ways:
1. The old words are changed in meaning.
2. New words are borrowed.
3. New words are coined out of the existing language material
according to the patterns and ways productive in the language at a given
stage of its development.

There are three patterns according to which neologisms are formed:
1. The change of meaning, or rather the introduction of a new,
additional meaning to existing words: computer-literate, computer
science, computer virus, net-work, screams bubble, messenger).

2. Coinage of new words: derivation (hacker, supersonic, googlers);
compounding (website, ransomware, phablet, cryptocurrency,
cyberattack, hashtag, bitcoin, coronavirus, homeware, checkout-free
technology, devtools, infosec); conversion (motor - to motor, generator
-to generator, power – to power, rocket - to rocket, Google – to google).

3. Combining forms from Latin or Greek (technoetics, robotarium,
metaverse, crypto).

New objects are continually created in technology. Each language
acquires 3000 new words annually, but in fact, neologisms cannot be
accurately quantified, since so many hover between acceptance and
oblivion and many are short-lived, individual creations. A problem of their
translation ranks high on the list of challenges facing translators because
such words are not readily found in ordinary dictionaries and even in the newest specialized dictionaries.

Translators who specialize in the sci-tech field come across difficult words to translate almost on a daily basis. This is not just because of the specificity of the text. Most discoveries and research usually come from foreign countries so quickly that there is not enough time for the target language to find an appropriate term to describe such events.

The presence of neologisms in the sci-tech field is fairly common, but we really translate neologisms? No, precisely speaking, we convey their meaning. There are some specific ways to do this:


The presence of English terms is more than evident in the technical-scientific field since most discoveries are usually published in this language. Thus, Russian translations for these terms often lead to direct translations, or the use of loanwords from English.
To convey the meaning of a neologism we should, firstly, analyze its morphological structure to discover its meaning and secondly, study the word in its textual environment or context.

The analysis of the actual language material brings us to the fact that translators resort to using foreign words, or most often, leave a given term in English, not being able to find a better option. They probably think that the professionals who will read the translation will be familiar with English words.

Although language professionals try to convey the meaning of the term through an explanation or definition, this would not be appropriate since in most cases the translation would be too wordy, especially in documents where certain technical terms are repeated many times.

Unfortunately, there is no organization to regulate this type of terminology, and when the translator tries to consult with a technical or scientific professional, looking for an equivalent in Russian he will usually say that it is best to keep the term in English. Thus, the translator does not have a real and reliable source to resolve these issues. So, there is a tendency to leave the terms in the source language or use some sort of direct translation.