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## LINGUOCULTURAL ASPECTS OF TRANSLATION OF MODERN AMERICAN GONZO-REPORTING

### Abstract

This article discusses linguistic and cultural aspects of translation of modern American gonzo-reporting on the example of the book written by Thompson Hunter, who is father founder of genre “gonzo”. The genre “gonzo” appeared first in the USA within the new branch of journalism, which is called “New Journalism” and it developed there as well. Gonzo-reporting is a type of a text, where author uses subjective 1<sup>st</sup> person narration. He actively participates in the event that he describes. Gonzo-text has its specific stylistic and linguistic peculiarities, due to the fact that author speaks mind freely, uses humor, sarcasm, irony, jargons, slangs etc. Gonzo-texts contain deep descriptions of many details, explanations to author’s actions in reality. The translator’s main aim in translation of gonzo-reporting is to conduct adequate translation from linguistic and cultural aspects. The article provides a comparative and contrastive analysis of translations and the original; it discusses various approaches and criticism to the translation text.

**Keywords:** gonzo reporting, gonzo-text, new journalism, translation, translation skills, translation transformations

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## ЗАМАНАУИ АМЕРИКАНДЫҚ ГОНЗО-РЕПОРТАЖ АУДАРУ ТӘЖІРИБЕСІНІҢ ЛИНГВОМӘДЕНИ АСПЕКТІСІ

### Аңдатпа

Мақалада гонзо жанрының негізін қалаушы Томпсон Хантердың кітаптарының негізінде заманауи американдық гонзо-репортажды аударудың лингвистикалық және мәдени аспектілері қарастырылады. Гонзо жанры алғаш рет АҚШ-та пайда болып, «жаңа журналистика» деп

аталынатын журналистиканың бір түрі аясында дамыған. Гонзо-репортаж дегеніміз мәтіннің бір түрі, онда автор орын алып отырған жағдайдың тікелей қатысушысы ретінде сол жағдайға қатысты өзінің субъективті пікірін жазады. Гонзо-мәтіннің өзіндік стилистикалық және лингвистикалық ерекшеліктері бар, себебі онда автор ауыз-екі тілді, юморды, сарказмды, иронияны, жаргонды, сленгті және т.б. сөздерді жиі қолданады. Аталмыш мәтіндерде автор шынайы өмірде орын алып жатқан іс-әрекеттерге егжей-тегжейлі сипаттама береді. Гонзо-репортажды аударуда аудармашының басты мақсаты мәтінді лингвистикалық және мәдени тұрғыдан дұрыс аудару. Мақалада аударма мәтініне қатысты салыстырмалы, салғастырмалы талдау жасалып, түрлі сыни пікірлер талқыланады.

**Түйін сөздер:** гонзо-репортаж, гонзо-мәтін, жаңа журналистика, аударма, аударма шеберлігі, аударма трансформациялары

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## ЛИНГВОКУЛЬТУРОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ АСПЕКТЫ ПЕРЕВОДА СОВРЕМЕННОГО АМЕРИКАНСКОГО ГОНЗО-РЕПОРТАЖА

### *Аннотация*

В данной статье рассматриваются лингвистические и культурологические аспекты перевода современного американского гонзо-репортажа на примере книг Томпсона Хантера, который является основателем жанра гонзо. Жанр гонзо появился и развивался в США под одним из направлений журналистики, которую называют «новой журналистикой». Гонзо-репортаж - это вид текста, в котором автор использует субъективный стиль повествования от первого лица, он вымывает ступает в качестве участника событий, которые он описывает. Гонзо-текст имеет свои стилистические и лингвистические особенности, так как в нем автор часто использует свободную лексику, юмор, сарказм, иронию, жаргоны, сленги т.д. В подобном тексте присутствует огромное количество деталей, подробных описаний авторских действий в реальности. В переводе гонзо-репортажа лингвистические и культурные корректно переданное сообщение является главной задачей переводчика. В статье производится сравнительный и сопоставительный анализ переводов и оригинала, рассматриваются различные подходы и критика к переводному тексту.

**Ключевые слова:** гонзо-репортаж, гонзо-текст, новая журналистика, перевод, мастерство перевода, переводческая трансформация

**Introduction.** Gonzo-text is a type of a text, where author uses subjective 1<sup>st</sup> person narration. He actively participates in the event that he describes. Gonzo-text has its specific stylistic and linguistic peculiarities, due to the fact that author speaks mind freely, uses humor, sarcasm, irony, jargons, slangs etc. Gonzo-texts contain deep descriptions of many details, explanations to author's actions in reality, however these kind of descriptions and explanations are not valuable in presenting the main idea. Therefore, text covers events from the very beginning until the end. This approach allows the reader to be certain of information reliability.

Gonzo-text is mostly peculiar to American media. However, since the beginning of XXI century, it has become popular among post-soviet journalists. The term “gonzo” was used in journalism for the first time in the beginning of 1960s. The word “gonzo” stands for the meaning as “crazy”, “freaky”, “cracked” [1,1p]. Thus, we may say gonzo-journalism is “crazy journalism”, this is the most appropriate description for this genre. Gonzo-journalism – is a branch of journalism, known for the fact that all journalistic material is written in the genre of subjective and emotionally colored reporting. Author there presented not only as a participant of the event, but its' main hero [1,3p]. Author describes event as a reporting. Therefore, gonzo-text becomes visual, a phased description of the event makes it dynamic and specifications make it informative. Excellent gonzo-text should cause participation effect on reader. Because author does not only retell the event, but also he presents to the reader his attitude to this event and show his reaction.

Cinema industry and printed media supported further development and spread of gonzo-journalism in the USA and all over the world. “Thompson Hunter's article “Derby in Kentucky” is considered to be the first work in gonzo style, it was published in the magazine “Scanlan's Monthly” in 1970” [3,1p]. In this

article journalist, Thompson Hunter used unusual and new writing style in his descriptions of certain event that readers used to see at the pages of newspapers. Thus, his writings were of interest. He described not an event directly, for what he was sent there for, he mostly described the crowd that gathered in that place to see the event and clearly expressed his attitude to each person of this crowd.

Thompson Hunter wrote variety of articles for the magazine “Rolling Stones”, those articles were popular enough among readers of that time. Later he wrote a book “Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas”, it was partly published in abovementioned magazine.

**Methods.** Many articles written in gonzo style were related and devoted to the politics, there gonzo-authors judged and criticized existing government and officials. There is an example from T.S. Hunter’s book “Kingdom of fear”:

“- *George Bush is far greater than Roosecelt, said my lawyer. I wish we could be with him now.*

- *You fool, I snorted. If Teddy Roosevelt were alive today, he would be so ashamed of this country that he would slit own wrists*” [4,14p], it should be mentioned that gonzo-authors considered to be the enemy of political world.

Here is one more example,

“*It would be easy to say that we owe it all to the Bush family from Texas, but that would be too simplistic. They are only errand boys for the vengeful, bloodthirsty cartel of raving Jesus-freaks and super-rich money mongers who have ruled this country for at least the last 20 years, and arguably for the past 200. They take orders well, and they don’t ask too many questions*” [4,18p].

Saying “Buches” the author meant both USA presidents, father and son – George Bush. He publically announces that the president of the country is “errand boys” and a certain third power manages the government by controlling the president. In the majority of world countries, the government would impose severe punishment to the author of these words, but not in the USA, where freedom of expression is fundamental law. However, T.S. Hunter challenges this law,

“*The real power in America is held by a fast-emerging new Oilgarchy of pimps and preachers who see no need for Democracy or fairness or even trees, except maybe the ones in their own yards, and they don’t mind admitting it. They worship money and power and death. Their ideal solution to all the nation’s problems would be another 100 Year War*” [4,18p]. – there the author believes that money controls the government. It means the power is in hands of rich men. The author concludes, “*I like this book, and I especially like the title, which pretty well sums up the foul nature of life in the U.S.A. in these first few bloody years of the post-American century. Only a fool or a whore would call it anything else*” [4,19p]. This is how the author condemns and blames that the power is not in president’s hands, notions as “democracy” and “freedom” are not milestones of the state law, and people are not the only source of power. This is what T.S. Hunter calls gonzo style.

Gonzo-authors’ articles and stories are rarely translated in Russian language. There are some reasons of this tendency. Gonzo-journalism is cultural phenomenon in journalism, which is peculiar to certain countries and nation. Because gonzo-journalism describes events that took place in certain country, even city. These events are regional, so understandable only for people of that region, while others may get confused, misunderstood or even experience severe cultural shock while hearing it. This cultural aspect is one of translation challenges to the other languages. In this case, difficulty is not caused by language units, it is caused because of adequacy of translation of cultural aspect of the material to the other language as well as to its’culture. It is important to note, that gonzo style is new genre among CIS country authors, however since 2000, it has become popular and crucial within this region. Russian translators lately translated T.S. Hunter’s many works to Russian language from English. For example, one of the most popular books “Fear and loathing in Las Vegas”, which was published in 1971 in the USA, was translated in Russian language in 2019 by translator Alex Kervy. Another book called “Better that S\*x”, which was published in 1994, was translated in Russian language in 2009 by translator A. Skobina. One of the latest T.S. Hunter’s book “Kingdom of Fear” published more recently in 2003, translation in Russian language appeared only in 2018 by Russian translator D. Veber.

There is a comparison of original English book and its’ translation in Russian language. We have analyzed the book “Generaltion of swine” written by T.S. Hunter in 1988 and its’ translation in Russian language by V.B. Skobin.

“- *He is quitting the race,*” he said. “*We just got the word. He’s going on TV in Boston in 10 minutes to announce his final decision.*

- *You lying swine! I shouted. Why do you bother me with these cheap political rumors?*

- *This one's true, he said. The man is pulling out. The whole campaign staff is terminated as of 10 o'clock this morning. People are weeping and clinging to each other. I just lost \$500 a day for the next two years.*

- *Never mind the money. What's happening?*

- *Madness, hereplied*" [5,57p].

Translation:

“- <http://loveread.ec/notes.php?id=34331>Кеннеди вышел из гонки, - сказал Скиннер. - Он только что сообщил нам об этом. Через десять минут он поедет в Бостон, чтобы зачитать свое окончательное решение в прямом эфире.

- *Врешь, свинья!* - закричал я. - *Опять ты злишь меня своими дешевыми политическими сплетнями?*

- *На этот раз слухи соответствуют действительности, — сказал он. — Парень прыгнул с поезда. Сегодня в десять утра уволили всю команду. Расставаясь, люди обнимают друг друга и плачут. Я только что потерял пятьсот долларов в день — зарплату, которую я рассчитывал получать следующие два года.*

- *Плевать на деньги! Что случилось?*

- *Безумие, -ответилон*" [6,13p].

It is peculiar to gonzo-text to provide information in the format of dialogue. This approach is used to easily explain position of each person, their attitude to each other and character of participants. In this dialogue, two people discuss political changes in the country. One person tells the news, and persuades the other participant to believe in something.

The translator V.B. Skobin used several translation transformations. For example, in the sentence, “*He is quitting the race*” - pronoun “*He*” is replaced by proper names “*Кеннеди*” и “*Скиннер*” - this transformation is called modulation, it is used to let Russian reader easily understand who are participants of dialogue, and avoid confusion. Also the part “*This one's true*” - is translated “*На этот раз слухи соответствуют действительности*”, and the part “*The man is pulling out*” sounds as “*Парень прыгнул с поезда*” - there we may notice one more transformation – addition. In the original text words as “*слухи*” and “*поезд*” are not mentioned. Translator intentionally added this information to present completed and full idea in Russian language. English sentence “*Never mind the money*” translated as “*Плевать на деньги*” - there translator delivered not direct meaning of the word “*never mind*”, which in Russian has meaning as “*необращайвнимания*”, “*забудь*”. Therefore, translator could save situational intention of speech author and translation is adequate.

**Results.**As we mentioned above author expresses his own personal point of view and describes the situation from 1<sup>st</sup> person narration. We will consider one more example from the book “*Generation of swine*” chapter “*Saturday night in The City*” as well as its translation:

“- *I dropped Maria off in front of the tattoo parlor just before midnight. There was no place to park on the street, so I sent her inside and found a place on the sidewalk, in front of a house with no lights*” [5,14p].

“- *Why not? I figured. Black car, dark sidewalk, nothing but cranked Chinese teen-agers on the street...and we did, in fact, need the story. The week had been too long and fast for wise and considered reflection. I had lectured for something like 166 straight hours on morals and manners and politics, in addition to drugs and violence. I had been awake for too long*”[5,15p].

V.B. Skobin's translation:

“- *Я высадил Марию перед тату-салонем незадолго до полуночи. Места для парковки на улице не было, поэтому я отправил ее в салон, а сам припарковался на боковой дорожке, перед домом с темными окнами.*

- *Почему бы и нет. Прикинем. Черная машина, темная боковая дорожка, на улице никого, кроме психованных китайских подростков... а нам необходим сюжет. Слишком долгая и чумовая неделя не располагала к мудрым, спокойным размышлениям. Примерно 166 часов подряд я читал лекции о морали, нравах и политике — в дополнение к наркотикам и насилию. Яслишкомдолго неспал*” [6,2p].

In this part, the phrase “*found a place*” is translated as “*припарковался*”. Translator paraphrased English phrase, and used translation transformation exactly in this part “*There was no place to park on the street*”, main character was looking for a place for the specific purpose – parking.

These words “*cranked Chinese teen-agers*”- “*психованныхкитайскихподростков*”, “*figured*” - “*Прикинем*”, “*fast*” - “*чумовая*” - translated in these ways to underline author's way of speaking.

Gonzo-author's frequently use descriptive sentences to explain whole situation. Through description author vividly presents characters and situation that occurred. Moreover, descriptive sentences emphasize author's attitude to the object, therefore, help to express author's personal point of view in extended way. There is an example:

“- *Huge brains, small necks, weak muscles and fat wallets – these are the dominant physical characteristics of the '80s . . . The generation of swine.*

- *We had barely settled in – with a flagon of iced Near Beer and a full dinner of Spicy Hot nuggets from the Kentucky Fried Chicken people in lower Daly City – when a series of horrible beatings climaxed abruptly in a frenzy of teen-age political blather from Sylvester Stallone, and then the movie was over” [5, 27 p].*

V. B. Skobin's translation:

- *Большие головы, тонкие шеи, слабые мускулы и толстые бумажники — вот преобладающие физические признаки восьмидесятых... Поколение Свиней.*

- *Только мы расположились с кувшином ледяного пива и хорошим ужином — а мы взяли по порции “острого цыпленка” от “Кентукки ФрайдЧикен” из Дэйли-Сити — как сцены жестоких избиений внезапно завершились оргазмом подростково-политической болтовни Сильвестра Сталлоне. На этом картина кончилась” [6,25p].*

There author provides detailed description of representatives' appearance - Generation of swine. “*Huge brains, small necks, weak muscles and fat wallets – these are the dominant physical characteristics of the '80s . . . The generation of swine*” - through this sentence reader may imagine character of those representatives of generation of swine. The following part “*with a flagon of iced Near Beer*” is translated as “*скувшином ледяного пива*”, here we notice that beer producer company “Near” is omitted in translation. This translation transformation is used intentionally, because the company's name “Near” does not bear any important information to the Russian reader, this omission also helps translator to avoid confusion. This technique is called pragmatic translation adaptation. However, the name of fast food producer “Kentucky Fried chicken” sounds in translation.

In this part, the author used vulgar words as “*series of horrible beatings climaxed abruptly in a frenzy of teen-age political blather from Sylvester Stallone*” to describe the situation. Translation sounds as “*как сцены жестоких избиений внезапно завершились оргазмом подростково-политической болтовни Сильвестра Сталлоне*” - this translation is adequate and fully satisfies author's intention.

Vulgar words frequently used in gonzo-texts. This peculiarity adds expressiveness to the situation. It stimulates reader's emotions. There is an example:

“- *How long, O .Lord, how long? Are these TV preachers all degenerates? Are they wallowing and whooping with harlots whenever they're not on camera? Are they all thieves and charlatans and whoremongers?*

- *Their only “crimes”, after all, have involved low rumors and innuendo and being seen in public with sluts and half-naked bimbos” [5,21p].*

Translation:

“- *Доколе, о Господи, доколе? Неужели все телепроповедники — дегенераты? Неужели они барахтаются в грязи и развлекаются со шлюхами каждый раз, когда телекамеры смотрят не на них? Неужели они все — воры, шарлатаны и содержатели публичных домов?*

- *Ведь на самом деле их единственное «преступление» заключается в том, что они дали повод дурным слухам и инсинуациям, засветившись в общественных местах со шлюхами и голыми девками” [6,8p].*

Author used vulgar words as “*thieves and charlatans and whoremonger*”, translation “*воры, шарлатаны и содержатели публичных домов*”, and “*wallowing and whooping with harlots*” – “*барахтаются в грязи и развлекаются со шлюхами*”. In this case, translator translated directly without any changes and additions.

**Discussion.** Evaluative statements are peculiar to gonzo-texts. Author to show his attitude to the object of research uses those evaluative statements. This writing method usually is subjective and written to explain only author's attitude and opinion. Here is an example from the book “Generation of swine” chapters “Gary Hart Talks Politics” and “The Geek from Coral Gables”:

“*Gary is still the brightest and shrewdest of all the presidential candidates, and he will make a run at it.*” © Gary Hart Talks Politics.

“*That's ridiculous,*” I said, *you people like pigs in the wilderness. Get a grip on yourself* The Geek from Coral Gables [5,26p].

Translation:

“Гэри - по-прежнему самый блестящий и самый умный из сегодняшних кандидатов в президенты. Сейчас он собирается заново начать предвыборную кампанию.”

“Это же смешно, - сказал я. - Вы, люди, ведете себя, как поросята в лесу. Возьмисебявруки” [6, 17 p].

In the first example author evaluates one of the candidates to the president of the USA from his point of view, he says “the brightest and shrewdest of all the presidential candidates”, and translation sounds as “самый блестящий и самый умный из сегодняшних кандидатов в президенты”. Thus, translator translated evaluative statement directly, without any additions and changes.

In the second example, author’s words “That’s ridiculous” is evaluative statement as well in this context. Then he explains the reason why he thinks so “you people like pigs in the wilderness”. Translator used directly evaluative statement, translation sounds as “Этажесмешно”, author’s intention translated correctly.

Gonzo-authors frequently use idioms. Idioms are used in gonzo-texts not only to make it emotionally colored, but also to enrich and neat gonzo language. Here is an example,

“We had just watched Gorbachev on TV in the lounge at Lindbergh Field, and he was clearly on the roll...” [5,35p].

Translation:

“В холле “ЛиндбергФилд”, незадолго до нашего разговора, мы с Уиллисом видели Горбачева по телевизору; без сомнения, он находился на гребне успеха” [6,28p].

Translator correctly adapted idiom to the target language “to be on the roll” in Russian “бытьнагребнеуспеха”.

**Conclusion.** Gonzo-texts are mostly used in belles-letters style and in journalism. This is one of genres of new journalism. Gonzo-texts are rarely translated due to linguistic and cultural peculiarities of this genre. American realias should be taken into consideration to conduct successful translation. Gonzo-texts contain deep descriptions of many details, explanations to author’s actions in reality. The translator’s main aim in translation of gonzo-reporting is to conduct adequate translation from linguistic and cultural aspects. Comparative and contrastive analysis of translations and the original should be done where various approaches and criticism to the translation text is discussed.

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