Models and methods of translation of literary texts in the contemporary humanitarian research paradigm

Abstract. The article presents argumentative issues related to both the fundamental problems of translation studies and the practical aspects. The work briefly highlights the processes of translation modeling and the functional application of various approaches in the process of literary text translation. The author gives as an example D. Kharms’ “Cases” and its fragments translations into Korean. Accordingly, it demonstrates how the translator successfully used creative tools usage. A comparative analysis of the original and translated parts of the text allows us to draw a primary conclusion about various models which the translator of literary texts refers to in order to preserve both the unique originality of the source and the adequacy of the target text.

Keywords: translation theory, translation model, literary translation, linguistic approach, comparative analysis

Introduction

Over the years, translation has become the subject of research in many scientific works both as an instrument of intercultural communication and as a kind of measurable quantitative and qualitative skill. There are varied and innumerable definitions of translation, and its number has still been increasing. Many outstanding Soviet and Russian scientists (Ya.I. Retsker, A.V. Fedorov, A.D.Sweitzer, L.S. Barkhudarov, V.N. Komissarov, L.K. Latyshev, R.K. Minyar-Beloruchev, I. S. Alekseeva, N. S. Avtonomova) and Western researchers (J.P. Vinet and J. Darbelne, J. Catford, G. Mounin, E. Nida, J. Holmes, G. Toury, P. Newmark, K. Rice, G. Vermeer, D. Seleskovich, M. Lederer, K. Scheffner, M. Baker) of the late XX – early XXI centuries have raised and discussed translation studies issues. And there are presented quite different perspectives.

This ambiguity can be explained by the short duration of existing the translation theory itself. Moreover, in translation studies, the theory did not precede practice unlike natural sciences. On the contrary, it followed it. George Mounin, a French linguist and translator, highlighted the translation as an “activity, stating a theoretical
problem,” and given the contradiction between the theses put forward by linguistic theory and refuted by translation practice, translation can even be considered as a “scandal” for linguistics [1, p. 40].

Although the theory of translation was initially formed “to understand the essence of translation as a practical activity, the matter of the tasks solved by the translator, and the methods translators apply, to consider the main approaches to the implementation of translation” [2, p. 72], it had been perceived strictly in the context of a linguistic phenomenon for a long time. At the same time, it was considered as a process of conveying the actual meanings using lexico-syntactic and semantic transformations to recreate texts written in one language using the units of another language [3, p. 285].

That was the reason why the linguistic theory of translation focused on the process of “replacing textual material in one language with equivalent textual material in another language,” as described by J. Catford [4, p. 20]. Accordingly, such a narrow and controversial attitude had attracted criticism against the linguistic approach, and it led to the need to go beyond this approach.

In the preface to the fourth edition of his book “Foundations of the General Theory of Translation” A.V. Fedorov describes in detail the path of development of Soviet and Russian translation studies. The author notes the opinions of scientific critics as they often hesitated from the accusations the research he proposed (at the time of writing the first edition it was practically unique) “is too much linguistic” to reproaches that it is “insufficiently linguistic” [5, p.6]. Fedorov emphasized that “all facts from the field of translation cannot be explained in a linguistic way”, but “a linguistic way of study, which is not sufficient for posing and solving all translation problems (particularly, literary translation), is undoubtedly necessary for the matter of their complex research” in the second edition of his another book which was published in 1958 [6, p. 24].

Currently, the interdisciplinary nature of translation theory, which has absorbed many elements and concepts from related disciplines, is no longer disputed. And it cannot be considered complete in isolation from other linguistic disciplines. The reasons why this relationship is obvious are as follows:

- “linguistic heredity” is traced in the translation, the key components refer back to the origins of the formation of structural linguistics;
- translation is built around an activity, the focus of which lies within the processes associated with language and its manifestation in speech;
- translation defines the basic concepts and defines the basic notions used by translators-researchers and practitioners when working with a variety of language pairs;
- translation is in a relationship of interdependence with other linguistic sciences, it immediately responds to the emergence of new trends in them;
- finally, one of the obvious reasons - the object of translation is the text (and discourse), including its understanding as a linguistic phenomenon.

**Methodology**

Specifically, one of the aspects of translation studies directly demonstrates the close connection between the practice of translation and linguistic theory. At the same time, it proves the influence of other disciplines, namely, the connection with modeling theories. In particular, we are interested both in functioning and possibly will-be-developed translation models that could be applied with literary texts.

The very concept of “translation model” was introduced by E. Nida, implying the use of methods of linguistic analysis, and understanding the translation process as a series of transformations of units of the source text into units of the target text [7].

V.N. Komissarov noted the development and specification of translation models representing implicit features of the translation process “in the form of a series of mental operations on linguistic or speech units” as well. Precisely, in the form
of linguistic operations, which are selected in accordance with the “linguistic characteristics of the original and the corresponding phenomena in the target language”, as one of the “most important tasks of the linguistic theory of translation” [8, p. 158].

Modeling assumes that, although the direct translation process is not subject to direct observation, it seems possible to study it by constructing various hypothetical structures. A.M. Tyutebaeva notes that the currently proposed models are sometimes based only on speculative conclusions, on recording the results of translation reflection, but at the same time it is impossible to single out one dominant model or derive from it one priority and most effective method [9, p. 207].

The description of the translation process using models includes two interrelated aspects: 1) general characteristics of the model, indicating the possible scope of its application (explanatory power of the model); 2) types of translation operations carried out within the framework of this model.

Taking into account the availability of rich material on the topic of translation models and the limitations by volume of an article, it narrows the filter down to models that seemed functional in the practice of translation, while translation itself, according to a quotation of N.S. Avtonomova, is an “analytical and synthetic, scientific and artistic act” [10, p. 145].

As N.S. Avtonomova notes, “in the dynamics of culture, translation is a special phenomenon. While simultaneously touching on many of culture areas <...> translation practice <...> provides valuable material that cannot be obtained in any other way. Translation work and discussion with specialists (native speakers of the original language) convince that <...> it is necessary to operate with semantic elements that are not recorded in any dictionaries: these elements, as if for the first time are realized in the discussions of speakers of different languages, each of which can transport the translated meaning only to the middle of the river separating the source from the target text” [11, p. 6].

Discussion

At this stage, it becomes obvious that “the comparative linguistic analysis that prevailed until recently revealed only the formal degree of semantic and stylistic equivalence of the source and translated texts”, and therefore is no longer able to offer effective tools for translation processes evaluation and justified criticism of their results. As G.G. Gizdatov and A.A. Aldabergenova note in their article, “the linguistic translation studies are being replaced by “cultural translation”, which has proposed certain criteria for category and assessment” [12, p.162].

Thus, we turn to translation approaches associated with the transformation of the meanings of a literary text, taking into account the parallel processes of crossing not only linguistic, but also cultural boundaries. The main question, which then sets the tone for further potential research, is formed on this stage: “What methods and models are effective in transferring literary texts into a foreign language reality, which themselves contain not only informative, but also creative, cultural, and deep semantic components?”

In this context, appears to be an interesting so-called transcreation approach to translation, described by E.D. Malyonova, who points out that within the framework of this approach, translation is viewed as “a tool for reconstructing the ideas and images of the original in the context of the host culture”. The cultural distance influencing the translation process determines the use of such creative practices as transcreation, transadaptation, and transculturation in translation.

At the same time, according to the author of the noted ideas, transcreation in translation means “a strategy of creative rethinking of a segment of the original text with the subsequent creation of a new text by means of the target language, taking into account the polymodal and culturally specific context of the text”. Transadaptation is presented as a method by which the translator “changes various elements of cultural, visual, auditory and other codes in order to integrate the original work deeper into the matrix of the host culture”. And
finally transculturation allows to reach the effect of the “maximum immersion of the original work in the host culture” - thus, we are talking about the process of “complete change of the source text in the process of its translation and creation on its basis of a new product of creative activity”, which, importantly, often “is not perceived by the bearers of the receiving culture as an alien object” [13, p. 54].

It is necessary to separately highlight the semiotic theory of C. Peirce, which includes the concept of interpretant as a particularly important moment in the translation process for the production and perception of a sign, and from this point of view, the communication process is a verbal semiotic act. A sign is addressed to someone in such a way that it creates in the mind of another person an equivalent or possibly more refined sign. The translator is faced with the task of understanding how to act in order to create a certain type of interpretant of the final text in the brain of the recipient [14, p. 115]. This point of view is valid for translations of literary texts, taking into account the fact that the translator is faced with the challenge of transferring not only linguistic signs into a foreign language and foreign cultural context, but also keeping the image and atmosphere intact during the transfer process which should be created in the reader’s head in the process of reading or listening of final text.

Results

In the article, “Cases” by D. Kharms and its fragments translated into Korean is cited as an example. The given version of Korean translation was made by Kim Jong A. O. D. Burenina-Petrova notes, Kharms’s prose as the brightest representative of the Russian literature of the absurd, and, according to R. Caillios, in its stylistic and semantic content, it is an example of “dizziness” as a category of games [15, p. 67]. Other motives are clearly traced in the writer’s prose as well. For example, the sacred perception of reality and its “gradually disappearing” objects. Kharms repeatedly presented the situation of the disappearance of an object, even the whole world, and after, as it was assumed, the appearance of this object in its «true» form followed [16, p. 171].

In “Blue Notebook No. 10”, the first of the “Cases”, we read about a man who did not have “eyes and ears ... and hair ... did not have a mouth ... a nose”, and further, increasing the pace of the narrative (as when playing with dizziness), it is narrated that a person had no belly, no back, no other organs and parts of the body, which ultimately leads to his complete disappearance from the matter of reality: “There was nothing! So it is not clear who we are talking about” [17, p. 4].

Interestingly enough, the longest sentence of the story (25 words) is translated into Korean by a sentence with only 10 words:

그리고 배도 없었고, 등도 없었고, 척추도 없었고, 내장기관도 하나도 없었다. (Geurigo baedo eopseossgo, deungdo eopseossgo, cheokchudo eopseossgo, naejanggigwando hanado eopseossda) [18, p. 142].

The translator applied a widely used calquing method, and the shortening is related to the peculiarities of the syntactic structure of the sentence in Korean. Nevertheless, the sentence does not lose its meaning as could be seen.

Indicating the translations of titles of thirty miniatures in “Cases” cycle, we see the calquing method was used in 21 out of 30 cases. The name of the cycle itself and of the miniature No 2, which sets the main character (“Cases”), is translated with the addition of “accidental” (in Korean 우연한 / uyeonhan). As a result, the cycle got the title “Accidental Accidents” in Korean [18, p.143]

The addition as a translation transformation is also used by the translator when working with the heading of case No. 6 “Optical illusion”. In the Korean translation, the title appears as “Optical Illusion Phenomenon” (착시 현상 / chaksi hyeonsang, where “hyeonsang” is phenomenon) [18, p.146].

Telling about the title of the story “Carpenter Kushakov” (No. 8 out of 30), the translator, maintaining the same sequence (profession...
- surname), sacrificed the sequence which is typical for the Korean language. It is the rule while writing down the position/profession and surname, the latter is put in the first place: the usually correct version will be “Kim teacher” (Kim seonsaengnim) rather than “teacher Kim”. Thus, a more authentic version could be “Kushakov the carpenter” (Kushakov moksu).

On the contrary, the title of the story “The Lynch Court” translated with the omission of the “court”, in one word «린치» (Lynch) [18, p.168]. Actually in Korean, “Lynch” is both a transcribed surname of a historical person and a verb denoting the massacre of the accused by the independent forces of the crowd.

There are fragments where the transfer of deep meaning or paronomasia requires the use of more complex methods. For example, the hero of the story “About balance” created the expression “кавео” (rus.) - which means “камни внутри опасно” (“stones inside are dangerous”). In Korean version, the phrase-invention of the the hero sounds like “돌 삼위” (dolsamwi), and here is the approach with which it is customary to compose abbreviations in Korean. Since in Korean the minimum units into which a word can be divided are not individual letters, but syllables (from two to four letters in one), the translator makes an abbreviation of three syllables (dol’ is a “stone”, sam is the base of the verb ‘samda’ (“to swallow”) and wi – is a syllable coming from the hieroglyph which means “danger”).

The situation with the translation of the mini-story “Petrov and Kamaroff” was different. The original text is composed in form of dialogue written in punning style:

ПЕТРОВ:
Эй, Камаров!
(Hey, Kamaroff!)
Давай ловить комаров!
(Let’s go catch some mosquitos!)
КАМАРОВ:
Нет, я к этому еще не готов.
(No, I’m not ready to this)
Давай лучше ловить котов!
(Let’s go catch some cats!)

The author purposely reproduces punning combinations of rhymes (Kamaroff as a surname and “to catch kamarov (mosquitos)” (deliberately admitted author’s spelling distortion), as well as the alternation of voiced and voiceless consonants in the words “голос” [gotov] and “короб” [kotov]), but unfortunately, the translator did not find suitable language means. As a result, the translation into Korean is just a dialogue-retelling, the essence of which is as follows: “Kamaroff was offered to catch mosquitoes, but he offered to catch cats”. To keep the idiostyle specifics, the translator formalized the pun-story using transcription, without translating the nouns “mosquitos” and “cats” into Korean: in the Korean-language text, they appear before the reader in the original sound shell. And while the translated “case-story” may end up being perceived as exotic, it is highly unlikely that the Korean reader will truly appreciate the story’s uniqueness, which was lost in the translation process.

Conclusion

Thus, when translating literary texts, especially if they are illogical or contain a language game, we are talking about an approach in which the translator is puzzled by the ways of transferring unique realities and meanings hidden in the original context to another language and to a different culture. Indeed, according to the provisions of the cognitive approach, the key and turning point in the translation process is the stage of understanding - at which the translator extracts the external and internal meanings from the translated text.

In her article considering integration of approaches to modeling the translation process T. A. Volkova notes the need to form new approaches to modeling the translation process, taking into account “the diversity of existing models and in the light of the new paradigm of language research”, and also argues that it is necessary to develop “the theoretical foundations of a modern integral approach to modeling the translation process, to systematize the general principles of modeling in translation, to conduct a detailed
review of traditional (classical) translation models and a review of modern paradigms” [19, p. 212].

In other words, the modern processes taking place in the translational science, undoubtedly, under the influence of the processes developing in related disciplines, as well as the urgent need for a new look at already functioning models and completed translations from the point of view of researchers and practitioners, make it necessary to revise the accepted approaches. The currently functioning translation schools (Russian and Western) are in need of new integrative holistic approaches, with the help of which the prospect of developing new strategies can be opened and, in general, new directions of scientific research can be formed.

As for translation models applicable in translating texts with a pronounced author’s style, theorists and practitioners will have to both continue to explore and test existing models and develop new versions of translation models, relying not only on linguistic but also on cognitive, psychological, intercultural and semiotic aspects.

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С.К. Ким

Абылай хан атындағы қазақ халықаралық қатынастар және елмен тілдері университеті, Алматы, Қазақстан

Аннотация. В статье представлены дискуссионные вопросы, имеющие отношение как к фундаментальным проблемам переводоведения, так и к практическим аспектам переводческой практики. В работе кратко освещаются процессы переводческого моделирования и функционального применения различных подходов в процессе работы над художественным текстом. В качестве примеров применения креативных средств рассматриваются переводы на корейский язык фрагментов текстов и заголовков рассказов из цикла «Случай» Д. Хармса. Сравнительный анализ исходных и переведенных единиц текста позволяет сделать первоначальные выводы о моделях, к которым обращается переводчик литературных текстов с целью сохранить и уникальное своеобразие оригинала, и адекватность перевода.

Ключевые слова: теория перевода, модель перевода, художественный перевод, лингвистический подход, сравнительный анализ.

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Ким С.К. – Шығыстану ғылымдарының магистрі, Абылай хан атындағы Қазақ халықаралық қатынастар және елмен тілдері университеті, Шығыс тілдерінің аудармасы кафедрасының оқытушысы, Алматы, Қазақстан.