THEORY OF SIGNS. THEORY OF TRANSLATION. STANDARDIZATION. USAGE. GEOGRAPHICAL LINGUISTICS (UDC 81`2)

ПРАГМАТИЧЕСКАЯ И СОЦИОКУЛЬТУРНАЯ АДАПТАЦИЯ В ПЕРЕВОДЕ: К ВОПРОСУ О СТАТУСЕ ПЕРЕВОДЧИКА
Научная статья

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Аннотация

Социологический поворот в переводоведении в начале 2000-х сопровождался возросшим интересом к посреднической деятельности переводчика, с одной стороны, а также к переводу как виду социальной деятельности в рамках определенного социального контекста, с другой. В статье представлен теоретический обзор современных подходов к определению статуса переводчика и обсуждаются прагматические и социокультурные критерии, влияющие на процесс перевода и роль его автора. В работе также рассмотрены прагматические и социокультурные критерии исходного текста (региональные, возрастные, статусные, гендерные компоненты), которые препятствуют процессу перевода и вызывают необходимость социокультурной адаптации.

Ключевые слова: перевод, адаптация, статус переводчика.

PRAGMATIC AND SOCIOCULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS IN TRANSLATION: RETHINKING TRANSLATOR'S STATUS
Research article

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Abstract

The sociological turn in Translation Studies at the beginning of the XXI century has been accompanied by growing attention to inter/intra-social agency of translators, on the one hand, and to the mechanisms underlying the translation activity in its societal context, on the other. This article gives a theoretical overview of contemporary approaches to defining the status of the translator and discusses pragmatic and sociocultural criteria, affecting the translation process and the role of its agent. Pragmatic and sociocultural source text criteria, such as regional, age-related, status-marked, gender components, hindering the process of translation and triggering sociocultural adaptation are defined.

Keywords: translation, adaptation, translator's status.

Introduction

Translation has traditionally been considered within the realm of linguistics. The attention of the researchers was focused almost exclusively on the translation equivalence and on the evaluation of the authenticity and faithfulness of a translated text to the original. Translation was perceived as the act of substitution between source and target languages, or as defined by J. Catford [4, P. 20], as 'the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)'. Though the notion of equivalence has been a part of contentious debates since ancient times, Catford's approach to equivalence as the central problem of translation practice 'unleashed' further fierce discussion. Consequently, there was an enormous increase in publications on equivalence in translation and gradually the translation process began to be seen not as a mere interlingual transformation, but as a more complex phenomenon. As M. Snell-Hornby [20, P.166] has rightly pointed out 'in attempting to understand and make sense of the source text, the translator tunes in to the other side… and in creating the target text, s/he formulates a message for the target audience which should be coherent with the target culture'.

In the 1960s, there was an increase in the number of recipient-specific translations studies. Their main aim was to analyze the pragmatic effect of the translation on its readers. The publication in 1968 of Neubert's work *Pragmatische Aspekte der Übersetzung* [14] marked the pragmatic turn in Translation Studies. Pragmatic adequacy of translation assumed semantic equivalence of texts in the source language and in the target language from communication perspective, not from the formal one, resulting in translated texts being evaluated primarily in terms of communicative efficacy. The pragmatic turn was subsequently followed by the cultural turn [3], [13], [9], and the sociological turn (e.g. [5], [20], [1]).

Paradigm shifts in Translation Studies naturally resulted in a change of general assumptions about the role of translators: from historical invisibility and neutrality of translators to a more interculturally and socially aware perspective of 'cultural mediators' and even 'social agents' (e.g., *Habitus and the "activist turn"* by M. Wolf 2014 [28]). Even though the recent sociological turn has been accompanied by increasing attention to translators and their role in the translation process, the term 'translator's status' remains fuzzy. A. Chestrman [6, P. 13] believes that the need to focus on the translator has currently

gained momentum and now we are witnessing the development of a new branch, which the author suggested to call 'TranslaTOR Studies'. This article offers an overview of the approaches to defining the translator's status and an analysis of pragmatic and sociocultural criteria, affecting the translation process and the role of its agent.

Research method

In order to shed light on the 'evolution' of the translator's image, it is necessary to reveal the criteria that have led to the transition from linguistics-oriented research to socio-cultural approach to translation. At the same time our perspective aims not at opposing these approaches, but at integrating them as complementary facets, each contributing to a better understanding of the relations between source and target texts, as well as of the 'outside' factors, influencing the translation procedure. Thus, methodology applied in the research centers rounds the textual factors, discourse and communication analysis.

Theoretical Framework

Even a cursory glance at the research material suggests that translations have traditionally been evaluated from two mutually exclusive perspectives, which resonate with the well-known] 'paradoxes of translation' suggested by T. Savori [18, P. 52]: a translation may add to or omit from the original vs. a translation may never add or omit to the original. The parallel existence in the theory of literary translation of two dialectically contradictory principles brought the general assumption that the translator is to choose between the two alternatives: either, as F. Stratford [23, P. 16], metaphorically described it, to walk together with the author, 'not just side by side, but stride matching stride... adjusting his gait, *le rythme de sa démarche*, to match perfectly the gait of the other writer' or to bring his or her own creativity into play and to become a co-author himself/herself. In this regard, the definitions of the translator's personality presented in N. Garbovsky's *Theory of Translation* [8, P.18] are quite indicative: 'a slavish translator, submissively following the author vs. an outstanding writer, a rival to the author only; a traitor, distorting the source text out of sheer incompetence vs. an intellectual with deep knowledge of Linguistics, Ethnography, Philosophy, Psychology and History; an arrogant creator of 'beautiful infidels', improving and correcting the source text to please and conform to the taste and decorum of the time vs. a master aiming at conveying the original to people of another culture as accurately and fully as possible'.

Casting the translator in one of the roles assigned to him or her can hardly be justified. Any rivalry between the translator and the author is out of the question, as translation cannot surpass the original, because when it happens, we are not dealing with translation as such, but with a different type of text (reminiscent translation, imitation, etc.). The translator does not intend to deceive the author or the reader by taking a deliberate gamble (see more about translation as 'a game/gamble': [11, P. 15]). Instead, the translator 'wants to force the two sides, force his language so that it is filled with incongruity, force the other language so that it is interned [*se dé-porter*] in his mother tongue' [16, P. 8]. This translator's 'ambivalence' is one of the reasons that cause certain adjustments in the translation process, generally referred to as adaptation.

Even though adaptation in translation has been the subject of extensive research there is still considerable controversy about its role in the translation process. The relationship between adaptation and translation still 'seems to be uneasy' [25, P. 89]. The degree of 'freedom' at which the translator is allowed to work with the source text, adapting it to the needs of the recipients, reflects the theoretical approach underpinning it. In classical translation theory, adaptation was severely criticized and defined as 'an abusive form of translation' [25, P. 89]. Paradigm shift in Translation Studies brought a new vision, outlining translation not as a mechanical act of linguistic 'substitution', but as a far more complex phenomenon of interaction between two cultures. It was finally agreed that translation entailed 'a process of cultural de-coding, re-coding and en-coding [10], an approach, underlining the crucial role of adaptation. To stop this endless discussion on the interrelations between translation and adaptation, Y. Gambier [7, P. 178] suggested in November 2003 in the special issue of *The Translator*, dealing with screen translation, the term 'Transadaptation' (in English) and 'Tradaptation' (in French), to stress the idea that there is always adaptation, to a certain extent, in translation and it is a question of degree, and not a difference of nature.

Sociological turn changed the role of the translator as well, who turned from a mediator of cultures who is expected to be both bilingual and bicultural, to a social agent, 'a link in the communication chain', meaning that translators 'have to be grounded in many social networks' within the source and target cultures [17, P. 169]. The aim of the present study is to analyze the issues related to the status of the translator within the latest paradigm, as well as to study sociocultural and pragmatic factors that permeate the translation process.

Discussion

Within the frameworks of cultural paradigm in translation, one of the main insights was the assumption that in order to be an effective mediator, the translator necessarily must be bicultural to some extent. However, as S. Bassnett [2] rightly states, this reduces culture to a homogeneous concept that does not take into account the vast differences between the individuals who claim to belong to a certain culture, differences of age, class, gender, race, religion, education, and so forth. The sociological perspective, on the contrary, approaches translation as an activity deeply affected by social factors. Further on we intend to illustrate the way how these 'outside' factors influence the translation procedure.

In the process of communication, the speaker acts as an individual who reveals one or more of his or her social functions and psychological characteristics which depend on the specific conditions of communication.

According to the sign theory any object is indicated not by the sign itself, but by the person who uses this sign. Thus, interaction in verbal communication corresponds to social interaction [12]. Interlocutors take communicative actions considering their social roles. In other words, verbal communication finds its embodiment in the social communication process [15, P. 14-15]. Consequently, an utterance is not so much a lexical or grammatical phenomenon as a pragmatic one. It bears a certain communicative intention of the author and the task of the translator is to reveal this intention of the author, or as S. Bassnett [2] metaphorically described it, the translator 'is expected to go far beyond what is actually expressed and has to endeavour to second-guess the unexpressed'.

It goes without saying, that interpreting 'the intentions, perceptions, and expectations' is much more problematic. This task requires considerable ingenuity on behalf of the translator. Taking into consideration certain pragmatic parameters of the

source text may, to a certain degree, facilitate the translation process. Further on we intend to show the importance of giving attention to the source text pragmatic potential using examples from modern English fiction and their translations into Russian.

T. Volkova and M. Zubenina [25, P. 96-97] provide a deep analysis of lexical, semantic, grammatical, stylistic and extratextual factors which may cause pragmatic adaptation in translation. Thus, we will concentrate more on such social parameters, implicitly expressed in a text, as regional identity, age, gender, social status and the situation of communication. Let us consider the following examples:

– *Skeeter, those poplin pants are just the cutest thing, why haven't I seen those before? Carroll Ringer says a few chairs away and I look up at her and smile, thinking Because I wouldn't dare wear old clothes to a meeting and neither would you…»* [21, P. 207].

In this example it is important to focus attention on the use of the word 'pants' in the communication between the Americans, NOT the British. In American English 'pants' is used to refer to trousers, a bifurcated outer garment covering the body and each leg from waist to ankle [24]. The translator successfully adapted translation of the word 'pants' in accordance with character's regional identity: «*…эти поплиновые брюки просто очаровательны*» [22].

Another example from Stockett's novel [21, P. 185] '*This Sarah Ross. I like her stories. She likes to kvetch without complaining too much*' illustrates the importance of the status-marked identity study as one more constituent part of pragmatic adaptation. The author used the word 'kvetch', which was deliberately italicized to express the identity of the character who belonged to a lower social class in the official situation of asymmetrical communication. *Kvetch* (Yiddish) is a lesser form of complaining, never done with that well-known whiny voice of complaint [24]. The translator resorted to the transliteration, though it was possible to find an equivalent of the American slang word «kvetch» in Russian meaning 'to complain (informal)'. So, the sentence 'She likes to kvetch without complaining too much' can be translated the following way: 'Она, конечно, нытик, но не действует на нервы' instead of the alternative 'Она, конечно, любит кветч, но не бьет на жалость' [22].

In the next example taken from a historical novel by S. Waters *Tipping the Velvet* [26, P. 276] '*At length she laughed and moved again against my hip*.

– *Oh, you exquisite little tart! she said*' the author uses the word *'tart'* in an exclamatory sentence. A tart is a female who is attractive and has the air of being promiscuous, even if she isn't. A tart is a girl likely to get disapproving looks from old people. In short, a tart is more of a tease and a flirt than, say, a whore, skank, or slut [24]. This slang word is frequently used by the representatives of female homosexual identity that should be considered by the translator as a specific gender marker, triggering pragmatic adaptation. L. Brilova attempted to translate the phrase «*exquisite little tart*» as «*мой чудный шлюшонок*» [27]. However, the usage of a taboo word in the translation seems rather unreasonable. The translator might have adapted the translation to the situation of communication: the informal situation of flirtation between the characters belonging to the homosexual identity. Besides, the author intended to show these characters as prone to use standard vocabulary with lots of stylistic devices. Therefore, it would be more reasonable to translate the phrase '*exquisite little tart*' as '*прелестная распутница*'.

Let us consider one more example from a novel by British author Z. Smith *NW* [19, P. 118] '*Your man's got his feet on her seat, blud*'. The word 'blud' is used in the expression, identifying character's age-related identity. 'Blud' is mainly used in the UK, comes from 'bredrin' (brother) or 'blood brother'. In communication between the young 'blud' doesn't have to mean a brother, perceived more like a friend [24]. Apparently, age-related aspect of pragmatic criterion in adaptation is either essential. The London slang word 'blud' may be translated as «братан» with due consideration of the identity of teenagers and informal symmetrical situation of communication.

Consequently, the translator should attend to both pragmatic and sociocultural criteria, including regional, age-related, status-marked and gender aspects, since each of these aspects demonstrates the specific features of a character that reflect his or her identity and should not be overlooked in order to convey the correct illocutionary force of the utterance.

Interpreting 'the intentions, perceptions, and expectations' requires from the translator taking into account the specific social contexts in which that text is embedded and illustrates the fact that translators have acquired the status of social agents, besides the role of 'cultural mediators' assigned to them within the frameworks of cultural turn. An increasing number of current studies point to the interdisciplinarity of Translation Studies, which has become more evident today than ever before. Both the process and the result of the translation are viewed not in a simple linguistic framework for the assessment of errors through inter-textual comparison but in a more complex milieu, considering the issues related to Cultural Studies, Sociolinguistics, Cognitive Sciences, etc. Versatility of tasks confronting translators in their work undermine the notion of 'supposed neutrality and invisibility" and compel them "to assume responsibility for their cultural and social practice' [28, P. 14].

Conclusion

Throughout its short history the discipline of Translation Studies has witnessed several paradigm shifts/turns. Each consecutive turn implied a certain change in the basic assumptions about the translation process in general, and about the role of its main agent, the translator. Within the frameworks of the latest sociological turn the primary focus of research gradually has moved to translators, rather than for example translations or translating. The growing number of recent research tendencies show that the status of the translator is being currently reconsidered within the frameworks of 'social agency' and 'sociocultural mediation', contesting the traditional view of the translator as invisible and neutral intermediary who strives to make the ultimate reader unaware of his/her presence. The task of mediating between different cultures and subcultures requires from the translator the skills of inter/intra-social agency which calls for further profound research.

Конфликт интересов	**Conflict of Interest**
Не указан.	None declared.

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