

LITERARY TRANSLATION: TECHNIQUES AND PROBLEMS

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DOI:10.24412/2500-1000-2021-6-1-36-39

Abstract. *There are many procedures, which are used in translating. The article deals with the features of the most prominent methods, such as borrowing, adaptation, and compensation. The problems of these methods as well as its features and advantages are studied. The analysis considers the combination of different techniques as an effective way of literary translation.*

Keywords: *translation technique, literary translation, translation method, translation strategy, semantic loss.*

Today's multicultural society demands effective and efficient communication between cultures and languages, so it is hardly surprising that the significance of translation grows every day. Evidently, the translation process is a complex phenomenon. Translation theorists around the world have not arrived at a complete agreement about the definition of translation yet. The basic reason of it is that the term could not be reduced to a fixed concept. Various definitions of translation declare that it is not only transferring information from one language into another one, and all of them accentuate the importance of equivalence. However, strict, word-for-word translation could not produce an appropriate version of the original. It could be explained by the fact that different (especially unrelated) languages have different rules: for example, the word order or idioms in two languages are frequently not compatible, and, of course, not every word has a single equivalent in another language [1, pp. 1–2]. It is especially right for translation of literary texts, since «literal translations cannot be successful with literary works» [2, p. xi]. From my point of view, the most appropriate definition of literary translation is given by Peter Newmark who focuses on translating the author's intention. In his opinion, through the literary translation the meaning of a text renders into another language reflecting the author's intent [3, p. 5].

Each definition considers to the process of translation from a different angle and focuses on the different aspects of this process. As an example, for Mildred Larson translation is a

process that consists of transferring, first of all, the real meaning of the original into another language [4, p. 3]. According to Eugene Nida and Charles Taber, it reproduces «the closest natural equivalent» [5, p. 12] of the original message «in terms of meaning and style» [5, p. 12]. Of course, a number of changes that might occur during the process of translation should also be in harmony with the spirit of the original text. Summing up, it could be said that translation involves semantics, linguistics, grammar, style, register, and the other aspects of the original text. Additionally, the cultural divergence is the factor that must be taken into account. The translator, being the bridge between two languages (or two cultures), should consider not only the target text structure but also its culture. In Nida's opinion, a careful consideration of cultural components should be the aim of the translator, because the translation might be exacerbated by cultural remoteness between two languages [6]. To solve these problems, translators use special procedures namely borrowing, transposition, literal translation, modulation, calque, equivalence, and adaptation [7, pp. 85–93]. Dealing with the particular problem as cultural divergence, translators apply such techniques as borrowing, adaptation, and compensation, most frequently used in literary translation.

Using the literary adaptation technique, the translator has to take into consideration the cultural divergence while translating a piece of literature from one language system into a foreign one. According to Lucía Molina and Amparo Hurtado Albir, due to adaptation we

can replace the elements of one culture by other ones, more typical for the receiving culture. In their opinion, the focus on the maintenance of meaning of the translated text is a key advantage of this technique [8, p. 509]. Nevertheless, there are lots of other opportunities that this method can give us. According to Jean-Claude Margot, adaptation could be used not only for items unknown by the other culture, but for describing the situation uncommon to the target audience [9, pp. 90–94]. Applying adaptation, the translator substitutes some cultural realities, for which there are no references in the language chosen for translation, and creates recognized equivalent between two situations. It could be described as an extreme limit of translation that creates a new equivalent. As Lauro Maia Amorim admits, adaptation recreates «new wordplay and situations» [10, p. 196] that restore «parallel, reciprocal meaning effects» [10, p. 196].

The technique could be particularly useful in case of translating the pieces of children literature, when translators try to adapt the text avoiding inappropriate language, or to prepare a censored adaptation. For instance, adaptation will help to eliminate those words that are too difficult for a child.

Another prominent technique is borrowing. Generally borrowing is a significant method appropriate for dealing with the cultural concept of words, since this technique helps solving the cultural gap between original language and target language. However, there is always a possibility of misunderstanding, so translators frequently provide footnotes in order to deliver the correct message to the foreign reader. The key problem of translation based on borrowing comes up due to a variety of meanings that occur during the translation process. As Basil Hatim and Jeremy Munday admit, the problem lays in difficulty to determine was the original text meaning transferred into the new version of the text accurately or not [11, p. 34].

As it mentioned above, some words and expressions do not always have exact equivalents in the particular language, therefore not all of the source language terms can be translated literally or be adapted. As a method, borrowing involves using a word or an expres-

sion from the original text without modifying it. For instance, it could be an untranslatable expression, or an expression taken from a third language, mainly used by translators to preserve the tone of the source language color. It is, first of all, a matter of style, but it could also have a significant effect on the message contained. For example, according to Shana Poplack, the term «borrowing» refers to the lexical level of languages. She emphasizes that the words and the phrases could be adapted (morphologically, syntactically, and phonologically) to the recipient language [12, p. 52].

There are two kinds of borrowing: pure borrowing and naturalized one. The first way means that something is taken from the original text and used without any adjustment. The second way implies that it is used in naturalized form that is adjusted with the rules of the target language [8, p. 510].

Sometimes such methods as borrowing or adaptation could be ineffective in dealing with some cultural differences. When it happens, the production of the translated version of the text requires some other compromises that might be reached with a use of compensation. Compensation is a technique that is intended to compensate for the loss of meaning of the text when it is translated. With a use of compensation the elements lost from the original text will be recreated in the new version of the piece in a similar way, making up the semantic losses. As some theorists inferred, this technique «involves making up for the loss of a source text effect by creating a similar effect in the target text» through the specific means of the chosen language (or the text) [13, p. 37]. This method is usually used when a word or a phrase can actually be translated, but its dictionary equivalent sounds unnatural in the particular situation depicted in the text. In that case translator must withdraw from using dictionary correspondences. With a use of this technique, we could also compensate the loss of metaphor (or sound effect) occurred in one part of a sentence by placing it in another location, situated in the text or in the sentence. In situations like these, the stylistic device (or some other elements) moves to another place in the text, because it will not have the same effect

if it stays where it was placed in the original text. As some scholars admit, compensation is a stylistic translation technique that implies that a word or a phrase is put at another point of the sentence, thereby keeping the overall tone [14, p. 341].

Generally this method allows the translator not only to find the appropriate ways to make up for the inevitable losses – it also helps to make the language of the translated text as colorful as the original source. Like adaptation, this technique is incredibly useful for wordplay. For instance, when the translator cannot directly adapt a pun, then he or she can create another play on words in another place of the text. However, this technique implies that the translator doesn't use conventional phrases – he or she looks for the new, non-standard ways of expression.

The feature of this method is that a translator's task primarily involves seeking a solution to the problem from the position of the whole: the content, the idea and the style of the source text. Using compensation, the translator continually subtracts some elements from one part of the text and adds the other ones in the other place of a translated piece. Thus, compensation could be described as the

ongoing process of weighing and choosing that allows keeping a balance between gains and losses declared in the whole text, which turns translating into a creative activity.

A variety of grammatical, syntactic, and lexical means of any language, individual artistic manner of writers are the characteristics that complicate the process of literary translation. Today we know different kinds of translation techniques. The application of such techniques as borrowing, adaptation, or compensation is warranted while dealing with such elements as dialectal expressions, colloquial speech, jargon and slang, parlance, puns, and other elements of language that do not have regular equivalents in chosen language. Every method fulfils the particular task: adaptation can help with some cultural references that should be adapted for foreign audiences while borrowing might diversify the vocabulary of a foreign speaker, and compensation is focused on extracting the meaning of words in a particular situation according to the cultural context. Despite severe difficulties that translators face recreating the originality of the particular text, the goals of translation could be contributed by using the combination of different techniques.

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ЛИТЕРАТУРНЫЙ ПЕРЕВОД: ТЕХНИКИ И ПРОБЛЕМЫ

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Аннотация. На сегодняшний день те или иные виды перевода осуществляются с помощью различных техник. В статье рассматриваются наиболее известные техники, используемые для художественного перевода, такие как заимствование, адаптация и компенсация. Анализируются проблемы, связанные с применением этих техник, а также их особенности и преимущества. Делается вывод о необходимости комбинации разных техник в рамках художественного перевода.

Ключевые слова: техника перевода, художественный перевод, методы перевода, стратегия перевода, семантические потери.