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TRANSLATION AS A MEANS OF INTER-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Summary. This paper deals with problematic aspects of intercultural communication in the context of cultural and linguistic barriers encountered in translations. It illustrates the problems of translation and stresses the importance of knowledge of the culture during communication. The work touches upon some problems of literary translation. It shows the importance of cultural background and the role of context in translation. It also considers the effect of idiomatic expressions on cross-cultural communication.

Keywords: translation, cross-cultural communication, translation equivalents, culture, collocations, idiomatic expressions.

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ПЕРЕКЛАД ЯК ЗАСІБ МІЖКУЛЬТУРНОЇ КОМУНІКАЦІЇ

Анотація. Дана стаття пов'язана з проблемними аспектами міжкультурної комунікації у контексті культурних та мовних бар'єрів, які зустрічаються у перекладі. Стаття пов'язана з проблемними аспектами міжкультурної комунікації в контексті культурних і лінгвістичних бар'єрів, які зустрічаються при перекладі. Стаття ілюструє проблеми перекладу і підкреслює важливість знання культури у процесі комунікації. Вона порушує деякі проблеми дослівного перекладу. Стаття показує важливість знання і розуміння культурного фону і ролі контексту у перекладі. У статті також аналізується вплив ідіоматичних висловів і сталих словосполучень на міжкультурну комунікацію і переклад.

Ключові слова: переклад, міжкультурна комунікація, перекладацькі еквіваленти, культура, сталі словосполучення, ідіоматичні вислови.

Introduction. In our multicultural world whenever we communicate with foreigners, we inevitably face challenges both in oral and written translation caused by cultural differences. Therefore, the question arises whether we can resolve this problem or, if it is unavoidable, to minimize it as far as possible. In addition, recent studies show quite clearly that it is quite possible. Here is the survey of some problems of cross-cultural communication raised and proposed solutions.

Problem status. Discussing the problems of correspondence in translation. Nida confers equal importance to both linguistic and cultural differences between the SL and the TL and concludes that "differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure" [1, p. 43]. It is further explained that parallels in culture often provide a common understanding despite significant formal shifts in the translation. The cultural implications for translation are thus of significant importance as well as lexical concerns.

But, when translating, it is important to consider not only the lexical impact on the TL reader, but also the manner in which cultural aspects may be perceived and make translating decisions accordingly.

As Venuti notes, "translation is a process that involves looking for similarities between language and culture – particularly similar messages and formal techniques – but it does this because it is constantly confronting dissimilarities. It can never and should never aim to remove these dissimilarities entirely [2, p. 84].

As Sapir claims, "no two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality, and even a lexical item seen as having an apparently simple translation may have a considerably different signification" [3, p. 3–16]. The lack of historical background information is the obstacle for understanding many phrases. A variety of different approaches have been examined in relation to the cross-cultural communication through translation. These approaches show the inevitability of translation loss when the text is, in some parts, culture bound.

As it can be concluded from the analysis that an important aspect is to determine how much missing background information should be provided by the translator using these methods. It has been recognized that in order to preserve specific cultural references certain additions need to be brought to the TT. Therefore, the core social and cultural aspects remain problematic when considering the cultural implications for translation. Sometimes the successful cross-cultural communication through translation requires a full understanding of the notion rather than an emphasis on the original ST reference. While using strictly formal equivalence, all meaning would be lost.

Pending problems. However, the problem of cross-cultural communication and translation lies not only in semantic, linguistic, psychological or even mental differences, it can be and perhaps must be viewed through the polysemantic and contextual prism.

This paper focuses on the analysis of some problems of intercultural communication and translation in our multicultural world where the key role for adequate understanding and proper communication is played by the context, connotations and idiomatic expressions.

Problem analysis. The cultural implications for translation may take several forms ranging from lexical content and syntax to ideologies and ways of life in a given culture. Thus, when translating, it is important to consider not only the lexical impact on the TL reader, but also the manner in which cultural aspects may be perceived and make translating decisions accordingly. One must reproduce as literally and meaningfully the form and content of the original, and make as close an approximation as possible. One should identify with the person in the source language, understand his or her customs, manner of thought, and means of expression. A good translation should fulfill the same purpose in the new language as the original did in the source language. It should have the feel of the original.

Some Problems in Literary Text Translations should be characterized by "naturalness of expression" in the translation and that it should relate to the culture of the "receptor". The translation must make sense and convey the spirit and manner of the original, being sensitive to the style of the original, and should have the same effect upon the receiving audience as the original had on its audience. The translator should use to get the closest approximation of the SL, including using footnotes to illuminate cultural differences when close approximations cannot be found. How close can any translation come to the original text or statement? Since no two languages are identical either in meanings given to corresponding symbols, or in ways in which such symbols are arranged in phrases and sentences, it stands to reason that there can be no absolute correspondence between languages, no fully exact translation may be reasonably close to the original but there should be no identity in detail.

Therefore, the process of translation must involve a certain degree of interpretation on the part of the translator. When a text is retranslated at a latter period in time, it frequently differs from the first translation because of the changes in the historical and cultural context.

In translating the literary texts, there is no need for translator to take over the source in order to improve and civilize it. The translator should carefully appreciate the tone and spirit of the completely original work through words, sentences and paragraphs it is made up of and determine what kind of style it reflects from both the literary and linguistic points of view, with the reproduction of the original style kept in mind.

The lack of historical background information is the obstacle for understanding many phrases. By using strictly formal equivalence, all meaning would be lost. The above-mentioned example points to some of the possible lexical problems in translation indicating the level of translatability of literary styles: idiomatic expressions being translated literally, collocations restricting certain usages, disregarding polysemy and contextually conditioned meaning.

Thus, the cross-cultural communication of this kind tends to correspond to the approach, which attempts to ensure that content, and language pres-

ent in the SL context is fully acceptable and comprehensible to the TL readership.

Hence, translation becomes the act of transferring one culture into another culture. People are traveling world over due to various reasons and confrontation of cultures is an inevitable event. Different cultures getting contact through various ways–books, media, internet and it needs a lingua franca; hence, translation can play the same role. Cross-cultural communication often happens between two or more cultures and languages. In such communication, one culture is interpreted with the base of another culture. e.g. the English culture of England and world culture. The process of cross-cultural communication is highly complex– some cultural items existed in particular culture do not exist in another culture and hence some cultural items are untranslatable.

As we can see globalization is a process affecting cultures, economies, societies, nation policies, a change in every field. No nation in the world can achieve the highest end of development without translation because global communication is possible only through translation. The need is not only felt in the literary area but also in science, technology, industry, economic, political and other levels. In multilingual, multicultural and multiethnic countries translation can play and is playing a very crucial role in establishing the national integrity and development activities among the parts of the country. Without translation, a large number of masterpieces will remain locked up treasures to readers not acquainted with the languages in which they are written."

The globalization of cultures actualizes the concept of intercultural communication. The political and social situation in the modern world generates the problem of adequate communication, but speaking about adequacy is possible only under condition of full mutual understanding of the representatives of different cultures speaking in different languages. Serving as a means of communication between people of various ethnic groups, translation is a means of interlingual and intercultural communication.

The cultural factor in translation is obvious and undeniable. Communication is impossible unless the message is transmitted and is understood by the communicants. People speaking one language are the representatives of a certain culture. They have many common traditions, habits and ways to do and to speak about things. They possess the common knowledge about their country, its geography, history, climate and its political, economic, social and cultural institutions.

Not only two languages interact in translation process, but also two cultures. The translator plays an important role in the process of intercultural communication, since he/she has frequently not only to translate sentences, but also to interpret the cultures of the communicants. The translator should pick up an equivalent for the language phenomenon, which directly reflects another culture. It is the ability to imagine oneself in the place of another person, attempt to see the world with his eyes. And if the translator manages to do it, the translation process is full-fledged and successful. The insufficient knowledge of history of a country, traditions and culture lead to misunderstanding of comparisons, historical references, to wrong understanding even in daily conversation, in other words, to language incompetence.

Discussing the problems of correspondence in translation, Nida confers equal importance to both linguistic and cultural differences between the SL and the TL and concludes that "differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure" [Nida 4, c. 36]. It is well known that parallels in culture often provide a common understanding. The cultural implications for translation are thus of significant importance as well as lexical concerns. The translated message is transferred not only to another language but also to another culture. In addition to overcoming the linguistic barrier, the translator has to surmount the cultural barrier. Differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure. Cultural borrowings are very frequent in history, legal, social, political texts. In such cases, the translator substitutes SL word with an existing concept in target culture. The literal translation here may sound comic. When the cultures are similar, there is less difficulty in translating. This is because both languages will probably have terms that more or less equivalent for the various aspects of the culture. When the cultures are very different, it is often difficult to find equivalent lexical items. Thus, a translator who uses a cultural approach is simply recognizing that each language contains elements derived from its culture, and every text is anchored in a specific culture, and that conventions of text production and reception vary from culture to culture.

Taking into account cultural differences language substitutions are justified as they are functional and aim at achieving equivalence. Equivalent texts in the two languages do not have semantically identical signs and grammatical structures. It is widely recognized that equivalent texts in the two languages are not necessarily made up of semantically identical signs and grammatical structures and equivalence should not be confused with identity. The degree of equivalence depends on the linguistic means used in the SL texts and on the functional style to which the text belongs.

In this connection, the role of idiomatic expressions and culture-loaded words in cross-cultural communication can hardly be exaggerated. As we know, people of different languages have their unique cultures. Because of cultural differences, misunderstandings may often arise when people with different cultural backgrounds communicate, although the language used in communication may be faultless. The same words or expressions may not mean the same things to different peoples. Because of cultural differences, a serious question may cause amusement or laughter; a harmless statement may cause displeasure or anger. Because of cultural differences, jokes by a native English speaker may be received with blank faces and stony silence in non-English speaking countries. Lexical cultural items include single words and phrases (idioms, proverbs and sayings, etc.) On rare occasions the lexical meaning of idiomatically bound expressions can coincide with their direct, i.e., not transferred meaning, which facilitates their understanding.

In English, as in other languages, there are many fixed, identifiable, non-idiomatic phrases and constructions. Such groups of words are called recurrent combinations, fixed combinations, or collocations. Collocations are in effect partly or fully fixed expressions that become established through repeated context-dependent use. Such terms as 'crystal clear', 'middle management', 'nuclear family', and 'cosmetic surgery' are examples of collocated pairs of words. Knowledge of collocations is vital for the competent use of a language: a grammatically correct sentence will stand out as awkward if collocational preferences are violated. A collocation is two or more words that often go together. These combinations just sound "right" to native English speakers, who use them all the time.

The decisive role of context to play in the selection of TL equivalents to the words of the original Translation is often thought to be primarily about words and their meanings: what the words in the source text mean, and what words in the target language will best capture or convey that meaning. While words and meanings are unquestionably important, however, they are really important for the translator in the context of using them, speaking or writing them to someone else.

Most words in the English vocabulary whose meaning in any sentence largely depends on the context in which they are used. All words have meanings of their own, which are defined in dictionaries but the context may specify or modify the word's meaning, neutralize or emphasize some part of its semantics. In addition, before looking for an equivalent, the translator has to make a careful study of the context to identify the contextual meaning of the word that should be rendered in translation. This meaning is the result of the interaction between the word semantics and the methods of its actualization in the speech act.

Most of the words are polysemantic, that is, they have several meanings. As a rule, the word is used in the sentence in one of its meanings and the context must show what meaning has been selected by the speaker and cut off all other meanings irrelevant for the particular act of communication. The context has also a decisive role to play in the selection of TL equivalents to the words of the original. We know that in most cases, the meaning of a SL word can be rendered in TL by a number of regular equivalents. Variable equivalents can be found not only to the polysemantic words but also to the monosemantic words as well as to a semantic variant of a polysemantic word, that is, to one of its meanings which can be actualized in the course of communication.

In such cases after the translator has ascertained what meaning the word has in the original text he still has to choose one of the regular equivalents which fits the context best of all. In other words, the role of the context is even greater for the translator than for an ordinary SL receptor. Context-bound words are difficult to translate as they are characterized by partial correspondence to the words of TL. Such words are mostly polysemantic.

Hence, the translator has to find the appropriate occasional equivalent in each particular context. As the most reliable indicator in this case is the context in which the word is used. Very often the meaning of a word is revealed in the minimum context, i.e. in a phrase. However, there are such cases when we need at least a sentence to see what the word means. Sometimes linguistic context is closely connected with extralinguistic factors. The context of the situation becomes especially important if the linguistic context is not sufficient for revealing the meaning of the word.

Therefore, translation of any word begins with contextual analysis of its meaning after which it becomes possible to choose correctly the corresponding word of TL. All types of context can help to identify the meaning of words in SL characterized by partial correspondence to the words of TL, as well as the meaning of words that do not correspond to any words of TL. The context may modify the meaning of a word to such an extent that its regular equivalents will not fit TT. The ability to render the contextual meanings is an essential element of the translator's professional skill. Sometimes the context tells the translator that one of the dictionary equivalents to the given word can be well used in TT. Even if the entry in his dictionary does not provide him with an equivalent that fits his context, the translator can use the dictionary data to facilitate the solution. Still the translator should consult the context with special care if his dictionary suggests only one equivalent, which is usually context-free.

Conclusion. The translator must recognize that in the language there is always a residue that cannot be conveyed. In thinking about theories of translation, it should be remembered that languages are not static and the same words do not always convey the same things, even within the same language. They are always evolving and changing form. A good translator constantly needs to be aware of these nuances. It is not simply a matter of transposition therefore, but translation should strive.

Translation is a discipline that calls, therefore, for an understanding of the complexity of the differences that exist, not only between different languages, but also between different cultures. Good translation does not emerge from bilingual capability the translator has to find the appropriate occasional equivalent in each particular context.

The context shows what meaning has been selected by the speaker and cuts off all other meanings irrelevant for the particular act of communication. The context has also a decisive role to play in the selection of TL equivalents to the words of the original. The translator should as well be familiar with SL and TL cultures, know the purpose of the communication and the audience for correct and on-time decision making to do his/her translation as effective cross-cultural communication. In order to preserve specific cultural references no formal equivalence should be sought as this is not justified when considering the expectations of the TT reader.

At the same time, dynamic equivalence does not seem very desirable either as cultural elements have been kept in order to preserve the original aim of the text. Translation of idiomatic expressions, collocations and specific cultural expressions should be contextually conditioned.

Thus, the cross-cultural communication of this kind should correspond to the approach, which attempts to ensure that content and language present in the SL context is fully acceptable and comprehensible to the TL readership.

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