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## CULTURAL MEDIATION: TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES, APPROACHES AND CHALLENGES

*The article highlights the role of a translator as intercultural mediator in the linguistic cross-cultural paradigm of translation studies. The present research paper seeks to figure out how the manifestations of intercultural mediation are achieved via translation techniques and approaches suggested by foreign and Ukrainian scientists in the last decades of the XX – at the beginning of the XXI centuries. Emphasizing intercultural interaction as an element of translator's work, the act of mediation has sometimes been conceptualised as a constitutive element in the meaning-making process, in which the translator makes sense of meanings to be understood by others (the target audience). Thus, the translator is seen as a 'mediator', an intermediary "halfway between two cultures or two worlds".*

*The rationale for focusing on the strategies applied lies in the fact that translators often facilitate the process of intercultural communication enhancing linguistic competence in theoretical and practical perspective.*

*Filtering down to the specifics of discourse, mediation applied in translation meets the readers' needs to negotiate culture-biased lexis to overcome semantic gaps between languages, cultures and communicative situations. To mitigate the gap between the meaning and purpose is the urgent task of the translator dependant on the author's intended program of efficiency and reader's competence.*

*Based on the study, mediation is a significant process that influences the formation of cultural communicative competence. It contributes to the development of interpersonal cooperation, intercultural communication, applicable translation approaches in learning foreign languages and compensation of semantic and ethno specific losses.*

**Key words:** intercultural mediator; translation techniques; mediational strategies; cross-cultural competence.

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## КУЛЬТУРНА МЕДІАЦІЯ: ПЕРЕКЛАДАЦЬКІ ТЕХНІКИ, ПІДХОДИ ТА ВИКЛИКИ

*У статті висвітлена роль перекладача як міжкультурного посередника у лінгвістичній крос-культурній перекладознавчій парадигмі. Праця має на меті з'ясувати, як реалізуються вияви міжкультурного посередництва за допомогою перекладацьких прийомів та підходів, запропонованих зарубіжними та українськими вченими в останні десятиліття XX – на початку XXI століття. Наголошуючи на міжкультурній інтерації як необхідному аспекті роботи перекладача, акт посередництва почасти концептуалізують у межах процесу смислотворення, в якому перекладач створює смисли, що мають бути зрозумілими для цільової аудиторії. Таким чином, перекладач виступає «медіатором», посередником «на півдорозі між двома культурами або двома світами».*

*Запропоновані у статті стратегії та підходи значною мірою полегшують процес міжкультурної комунікації, підвищуючи рівень лінгвістичної компетенції у теоретичній та практичній перспективі.*

*Медіація, що застосовується у перекладі з огляду на специфіку дискурсу, задовольняє потреби читача щодо кореляції культурно маркованої лексики задля подолання семантичних лакун між мовами, культурами та комунікативними ситуаціями.*

*Пом'якшення розриву між значенням і прагматичною метою є нагальним завданням перекладача, яке залежить від авторської програми ефективності в цілому та компетентності читача зокрема. На основі проведеного дослідження можна зробити висновок, що медіація є важливим процесом, який впливає на формування культурної комунікативної компетенції. Вона сприяє розвитку міжособистісного співробітництва, міжкультурної комунікації, застосуванню перекладацьких підходів у вивченні іноземних мов та компенсує семантичні та етноспецифічні втрати у процесі перекладу.*

**Ключові слова:** міжкультурний посередник, техніка перекладу, медіаційні стратегії, крос-культурна компетенція.

**Problem statement.** The focus of scientific and practical attention on the cultural aspect of communicative approach in translation has led to a view that translators, not as mere transferers of words meanings and messages, but as cultural mediators take responsibility for successful cross-cultural communication and for the creation an optimum level of target texts composition. The emphasis on the importance of thorough consideration of both linguistic and cultural competence as well as the variety of translator's choices and new techniques and strategy deployment contribute to enhancing the role of a translator as a mediator between two languages, two cultures and two communicative situations.

Viewing translation as an act of intercultural communication means that translators themselves need to be understood in more elaborated ways than the authors of texts re-linguaging. Emphasizing intercultural interaction as an element of translator's work, however, the act of mediation has sometimes been conceptualised not as an activity inherent in translation, but as something additional.

It is the translator and interpreter's function to reformulate a message, to communicate ideas and information from cultural context to another without altering what is expressed in the original text or speech through the language of the writer or speaker. This is the main reason why translators actually mediate rather than merely translate, as their task is to facilitate the process of intercultural communication.

By doing so, they create a dichotomy between a translation, which presumably in this context is a linguistic act of rewording and mediation, and culturally biased action of meaning making. Such a dichotomisation is potentially problematic as it tends to reduce the complexity involved in any act of translation within operations with language and meaning transference, recognising the inherent role of culture. Thus, it is much more important to see mediation as a constitutive element in the meaning-making process, in which the translator makes sense of meanings to be understood by others (Katan, 2004).

**Analysis of the recent research and publications.** In modern scientific studies mediation is often encountered in connection with the elucidation of the mediating role of a translator, and special emphasis is placed on cultural mediation. Thus, the translator is seen as a 'mediator', an intermediary "halfway between two cultures or two worlds" (Castellano, 2019, Guidère, 2010, Martin, 2010). Translators are nowadays perceived as cultural mediators responsible for successful intercultural communication and the creation of functionally optimal target texts in target cultures (Bedeker, 2006, Valero-Garcés, 2018, Wang, 2017).

**Goal of the article.** The initial and primary goal of this paper is to emphasize the nature and function of mediation in the scope of translation studies. Moreover, this article covers relevant and helpful translation strategies applied to facilitate the process of intercultural communication enhancing linguistic competence in theoretical and practical perspective.

**Presenting main material.** Mediation is understood as interpersonal activity focused on interpretation and representation of meanings that takes place in the communicative space between writers and readers. The interpersonal dimension may be made more complex and problematic by pressure on the translator to become invisible and to make the act of translation transparent (Venuti, 2006), in which the audience reads a translated text as a product of another culture. Filtering down to the specifics, mediation applied in translation meets the readers' needs to negotiate culture-biased lexis to overcome semantic gaps between languages, cultures and communicative situations.

The significance of translation in the history of mankind is really huge. Interlingual and intercultural communication used to be and still is made possible only due to translation approaches, techniques and strategies applied by competent translators / interpreters.

Every language contains overwhelming available resources of potential opportunities that have been consistently implemented via creative efforts of writers of original and translated genres.

The theory of translation of the previous decades was primarily based on the principles of traditional translation studies and performed as a separate scientific school with systemic character of investigations. Our era is the time of incredible science collaboration. Thus, interdisciplinary approach has been implemented into the sphere of science.

Quite inquiring model of strategies and tactics was suggested by O. Selivanova. According to her theory the essence of generative and interpretive discourse lies in the confluence of two stages. The first stage deals with interpretation when translator or interpreter becomes an analytical center as a creative and person with analytical thinking. He or she is determined by the purpose, meaning and value of the text. The second stage is generation which employs the rectifying and correction of the interpreted algorithmic source program. To overcome the gap between the meaning and purpose is the urgent task of the translator that depends on the author's intended program of efficiency and reader's competence. This approach allows to tackle the translation challenging issues from the perspective of interdisciplinary vision

covering different industry-specific fields which help to extend and expand the range of tasks and results obtained (Selivanova, 2008).

The investigation of such an integrated super-system seems possible in terms of dynamic, semiotic and anthropic modules. Anthropic module combines cognitive insight and psychological aptitudes of the author, addressee and interpreter. The function of a dynamic correlates with a cultural factor. The module of semiotics embraces the features of globalization and ethnicisation.

So, the translator has to be not only bilingual, bicultural and biethnic, but at the same time should be able to conduct a dialogue, establish and maintain the balance between various theories in the scope of two or more cultures.

According to Prof. Zorivchak, the translation culture should be investigated in close connection with the history of the source language, its vocabulary, image fund, phraseological means and syntax. As a phenomenon of art, any translated text has to influence reader's feelings and mind. The translation activity is, first of all, the work with the word. That is why, the translations are considered to be of high quality only in case they adequately convey ideological and aesthetic value of the original. Such translations become a significant part of the national literary artistic process of texts creation, establishing interrelations between different types of literature and providing intercultural communication all over the world. The task of the translator / interpreter as a mediator is to take into account all prerequisites and necessary conditions for providing the effectiveness of this process.

Thus, translation is defined as a one-way, bi-phase process of interlingual and intercultural communication, when on the basis of original text the metatext is being produced. This text substitutes the original in a new language and cultural environment; such a process is particularly modified by the divergence and discrepancies between two languages, two cultures and two communicative situations.

Therefore, the artistic interpretation is subordinated to the system of target language. Thus, the translated text is usually influenced by a certain period of time as the moment of the society development to which the translator / interpreter belongs, gender characteristics, the level of his or her intelligence, life and translation experience, literary and artistic tastes. That is why, understanding of one and the same literary work in different cultures varies greatly. It is caused by social and cultural divergences, translator's individual skills and professional style which has nothing in common with the author's individual approach. One more source of decreasing the equivalence level is a

vertical context that presumably employs numerous allusions, hints, symbols and phenomena, having no compliance with realia in the target language.

Particular relevance in this context belongs to the translation in skopos-theory (*skopos* – aim) by K. Reiss and H. Vermeer. According to this theory, the translator's activity is determined by the aim of communication. For instance, while translating Gothic novels one of the pragmatic translator's aim is to evoke the same feeling of the irrational and mysterious, to make the Ukrainian reader to anticipate something inevitable and frightful as the English-speaking reader does.

One of the most important aspects of the skopos theory is the **loyalty principle** (term of K. Nord), dealing with the point that the translator should take into account cultural norms and conditions of translation which influence the participants of interaction, their expectations towards the situation, and concern the text correlation in the source and target language. According to this principle, in case of any contradictions the translator is allowed to add some modifications or explanations in the form of preface, for instance. It demonstrates the translator's responsibility before the author and the recipient at the same time.

It is a well-known fact that not all the scientists support this theory. Thus, A. Kelletat considers it as a principle of "purpose-justifies-the-means" and a step backward. In his opinion, the skopos theory as a tool and strategy has nothing in common with the artistic translation as it deals with trivial, craft aspects of the **pragmatic translation** (Kelletat).

The concept of pragmatics is not reduced to the concept of pragmatic meaning of lexical units. It embraces all the problems connected with different levels of understanding signs or messages within the variety of perception, which depends on lingual and extralingual experience of the communicative situation participants (background knowledge). The problem of translation can deal with the situation when extralingual information in target language doesn't coincide with the same in source language and vice versa. It's a real hardship as the translation is not considered to be done if the recipient is out of subject matter field. Hence, the pragmatic factor is a significant condition for the translation adequacy.

Thus, there are the following components of a translation pragmatic factor:

- emotional which shows author's attitude to the message;
- the component of social status which includes cultural and historical aspects of a wide context;
- the components of the key situation, stylistic reference and textual organization;

- register peculiarities;
- dominant concepts of the text which determine the genre of a literary work (Yeshchenko).

But not all the types of material for translation need the pragmatic factor embracement. Prof. A. Neubert divides the whole “translation material” into four groups according to the involvement of a pragmatic aspect in the process of their translation:

1) scientific literature – people speaking different languages usually possess the same level of its understanding, as this type of literature is for experts in different fields of knowledge;

2) local media material for “inner consumer”. It is translated in foreign languages quite seldom, so the consideration of the pragmatic factor is not acute;

3) fiction (pragmatic aspect is not involved);

4) material of political promotion and advertisement of goods for export (pragmatic factor consideration is decisive).

The works of fiction are opposed to all the other lingual objects due to the predominant role of the artistic and aesthetic functions. The main aim of any type of such a work is to achieve an aesthetic impact and to create the artistic image. This specific marks out an artistic language among other acts of communication with independent informative contents.

The contents of a fiction text consist of functions of formal elements, but are not run out by meanings of symbols which intercorrelate. This process may be complicated by the information towards logic and semantic centre of the utterance, cohesion, aim, coherence. Besides, a special meaning acquires the form of presentation. In other words, artistic translation is the type of translation, the main task of which is a creation of work by means of target language, aiming at producing the same aesthetic impact on the reader as the original does.

The process of translation is divided into two levels. At the first level the translator performs the function of the recipient trying to understand the utterance/text perfectly well. So, he has to possess good background knowledge in history, culture, traditions, customs of the source language representatives. Besides, he has to be able to clarify the meaning of unknown concepts, not substituting them with already known ones. It can distort the content of the original. On the other hand, the translator, of course, may have his own opinion towards the text, but he must be loyal and neutral while translating, aiming at avoiding a possible conflict.

At the second level the translator should provide the understanding of a source text for the recipient, considering that he or she is a representative of another culture, belongs to different language group, has own life experience and may possess different kinds of knowledge. Thus, making corrections, additions, explanations, omission of some details, substitution of the implicit information by the explicit one, generalization and concretization in translation may become quite helpful “to deliver” the message not only accurately, but appropriately.

Pragmatic challenges of translation are usually connected with genre peculiarities of the original text. To overcome language and ethnic barriers the translator should obey the following (sometimes mutually exclusive) principles of:

1) motivation of transformation usage (necessity to achieve the equivalence in the scope of co-influence of the source and target texts);

2) the minimal quantity of transformation (due to smaller structural and semantic deviations from the original);

3) fundamental limitation of transformations.

Over all, it is crucial to remember that every culture expresses its own peculiarities of one and the same concept presentation.

**Conclusions.** The present article aimed at consideration the role of intercultural mediation, deployed within translation approaches and techniques, as “an active engagement in diversity as a meaning making activity” or the interpretive activity (Liddicoat 2016, p. 54). In this regard, communicated interaction appeared to be perceived and claimed as cross-cultural mediation and the primary and ultimate goal of the translator as mediator is to reconcile, analyse and carry out the interpretation across cultures. In translation the original text is deprived of its context and the information it carries is encoded in an entirely different language with an entirely different context. The translator’s job is to overcome this gap and facilitate the process of communication and understanding a cultural text written for the audience of another culture. All the translator must do is to prepare the ground for the audience – especially one with lesser knowledge of a culture – to perceive other cultures, since more profound knowledge requires less mediation activity in the scope of translation. Therefore, for truly successful translation biculturalism is even more important than bilingualism, otherwise the translator has to choose various strategies to cope with the cultural clash.

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