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Cross-Cultural Interpretation as the Strategy for Pre-Translation Text Analysis

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This article is devoted to the application of cross-cultural approach in training future translators to conduct a pre-translation analysis of the text in the source language. The essence of intercultural competence of an interpreter as well as its specific features are determined on the stage of pre-translation analysis of the source text. The author reveals the features and workflow of an interpreter in the process of implementing strategies of intercultural interpretation of the text. The didactic status of strategies for intercultural interpretation regarded as components of the content of the training of future translators is determined.

Keywords: cross-cultural communication, translation strategies, cross-cultural interpretation, pre-translation analysis.

Point

Processes, related to the phenomenon of globalization, often involve regular contacts in various fields between different cultures. In general, cross cultural contacts are no longer a kind of elitism; they become more frequent and continued. This situation requires the solution of practical problems as well as raising issues of cultural adaptation, which may not always be done easily. Cross cultural competence, in its turn, helps to develop practical skills of communication with other cultures representatives, minimizing the possibility of disturbance of their feelings and maximizing cooperation and understanding.

The intensity of cross-cultural contacts is becoming more and more apparent, increasing the range of spheres of interaction between representatives of different countries, and

therefore increasing the number of situations that require participation of an interpreter. The propagation of the English language as a tool for global communication among people speaking that language, but not belonging to the English culture (English as “lingua franca”), does not diminish the role of interpreter and relevance of its activities to ensure the effectiveness and usefulness of communication between interlocutors that belong to different language communities. Moreover, during the period of massive penetration of English as the language of global communication into intercultural space it is necessary to improve the quality of an interpreter, and this imposes on him special obligations – to serve as an adequate retranslator of the message from the sender to the recipient, a transmitter of information expressed in one language by means

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of another language. We know that interpreters play an important role as a bridge between intercultural communications.

Because of different cultural backgrounds, intercultural communication experiences, ways of thinking, norms of behaviors and customs people have many difficulties and obstacles in communicating and understanding each other. Interpreters from different cultures have their own cultural perception, beliefs, values and social customs which greatly determine their communicative way – interpreting way. It is cultural difference that gives rise to many miscommunications. Therefore, interpreters should raise intercultural awareness of “the other culture” to build bridges across misunderstanding among different cultures.

Translation is considered as interlingual transformation of oral statements or written text, necessitated by the presence of bilingual situation where the communication process occurs within two language systems. Translator is a professional who has the ability to such cross-language transformations, and this ability is called translation competence / competency / capability.

Approaches to examining the nature and content of the translation competence/competency, considered as a whole, and depending on the type of translation, are quite diverse. The number and content of the components of translation competence / competency are immense. The scientific world is far from being able to reach a unanimous verdict on the issue of unification of its elements.

Recently there was a tendency to identify as part of translation competence intercultural component. This component, because of its weak (so far) didactic explication, attracts a special attention of researchers. This paper raises the problem of defining the specifics and the nature of **intercultural communicative competence of**

an interpreter, with an emphasis on the potential of the first phase of his activity – **pre-translation analysis of the source text**. The choice of this stage is not accidental. It is here, as one might expect, the translator immerses in bicultural space where coexist and interact actively culturally different meanings and values. Consideration of this interaction can have a decisive influence on the efficiency and quality of the process and the product of translation.

This problem compels us to focus on solving several issues. Firstly, it is necessary to establish the basis for the interpretation of the didactic parameters of intercultural competence of an interpreter, secondly, to reveal the specifics of his activity during pre-translation analysis, and thirdly, to establish the range of strategies for cross-cultural interpretation, important for realization of the pre-translation analysis of the text.

Example

J. Walravens (1999) reminds of the difficulty in reaching a consensus over the very definition of “cross-cultural capability”. He refers to a “new interdisciplinary discipline”, perhaps illustrated by the variety of jargon applied to naming it. The list includes: “cross-cultural capability”, “cross-cultural skills”, “cross-cultural competence”, “cross-cultural awareness”, “inter-cultural studies”, “intercultural communication”, “intercultural effectiveness”, “intercultural awareness” and “intercultural communicative competence”.

Intercultural communicative competence as a concept of theory, practice and didactics of translation is the reality of today. For a long time with regard to assessing the level of training of translators, scientists were focusing attention on the second language identity (“вторичная языковая личность”) (I.I. Khaleeva), on translation competence (I.S. Alexeeva, N.N. Gavrilenko,

V.A. Iovenko, V.N. Komissarov, L.K. Latyshev, E.R. Porshneva, V.I. Provotorov, R. K. Miniar-Beloruhev, I.I. Khaleeva, A.D. Shweitzer and others), some of its properties.

The mentioned above researchers paid much attention to the role of culturally significant component. They emphasize that the “translation competence includes the elements of two contiguous in the process of translation cultures” (Nelubin, 2003, p. 149). According to I.I. Khaleeva, “professionally competent translator as a mediator and a participant of international and intercultural communication, is intended to promote understanding between the carriers of not just different languages, but also, as a rule, different “socio-cultural codes”” (Khaleeva, 1996, p. 7).

Culturally dependent analysis of the interpreter’s activity is very popular in the researches at different periods of translation and didactics of translation studies (V.I. Khairullin, R.K. Miniar-Beloruhev, I.I. Khaleeva, T.V. Kryukov, A.P. Chuzhakin, V.N. Komissarov, I.S. Alexeeva, E.A. Gematudinova). V.N. Komissarov writes, “although usually they speak about the translation” from one language to another, “but, in reality, <...> in the translation there face different cultures, different personalities, different mindsets” (Komissarov, 2004, p. 23). The same is said by R.K. Miniar-Beloruhev, pointing out that “the translation will be complete if the translator succeeded to learn the depth of the culture of the people, the language of which he claims to know” (Miniar-Beloruhev, 1999, p. 75).

As we can see successful interpreting is the result of accurate comprehension and reconstruction and application of various skills and techniques in a professional manner and to a professional standard that will be achieved at both discourse and cultural level.

We can see the established and widely accepted the culturological concept of translation

(V.I. Khairullin), according to which the translation from text to text involves transition from source language to target language, as well as the transition from source culture to target culture. According to this concept the cultural specificity is realized in two possible plans:

- as a “culture in language” by which we mean a special language world, accumulating specific cognitive-semantic structures representing the original structures of mentality of different cultures;
- as “culture, described by the language”, which involves representation in the content of the text actual cultural factors: cultural traits, markers, artifacts (Khairullin, 1995).

That demands the interpreters should not only master source language and target language and relevant fields and different professional knowledge, but also be familiar with the two different kinds of cultures and the reflection of the differences in languages expression. As it is not only a translation between two languages, but also a kind of cross-cultural communication, interpretation is full of challenges. During the interpretation, what interpreters should do is not only to translate the languages, but also to explain rich and multiple cultural connotations.

As can be seen from the above quotations, the practice of taking culture into account in the translation process has a long tradition. The new term “transcreation” has recently emerged to denote this practice. “Transcreation” means not just direct translation of words, but development of culturally accurate materials adopted for cross cultural communication.

So, the cultural component of the interpreter is one of the most important in the structure of his professional competence. Commending the results of research, however, we see the inclination of the scientists to emphasize more

the importance of an adequate transfer of **another** culture, another world view, namely, the features (stereotypes, values, behavioral, social) of native speakers. This is the manifestation of a culture-centered approach, which is oriented at acquisition of both real cultural, and cognitive-semantic facts of another cultural community. In this case, the native culture acts only as a means of “immersion” in a different culture, a way of revealing the universal (general) and differential (unique).

Unfortunately, beyond the sphere of attention of the experts in the field of translation and didactics of translation is the cross-cultural component of translation competence that involves “dialogical” consciousness of the interpreter as a second language identity characterized by equal interaction of two cultures within his cognitive structure. The significance of this component of translation competence is described by A.P. Chuzhakin: “One of the major problems of the formation of translation competence – the cross-cultural differences, knowledge of traditions, customs and mentality of the target language country. Because cross-cultural differences can pose a serious translation problems, knowledge of cultural character should be an integral part of the translator’s thesaurus” (Chuzhakin, 2002, p. 14).

As the result, the interpreters must pay more attention to the cultural differences while doing interpretation. What the interpreters need to do is to find a common joint point in native culture and foreign culture and make a proper adjustment according to the occasion so as to achieve the communication effect. Interpretation as an intercultural communication bridge requires the interpreters not only master exquisite language techniques, but also rich knowledge of different culture backgrounds.

Cross-cultural competence involves not only translation initiation to different reality, but also

the expansion of the existing worldview at the expense of understanding the facts of the native culture that had previously (prior to interaction with a different cultural reality) not been understood. This is the process of alignment of “inherent” and “alien” (that implies the rejection of old habits and changing ideas about the assumptions and limitations within their own system settings). It becomes possible to realize “alien” ways of perceiving reality, thinking and acting, which are included in the usual living space of an interpreter, and he should understand that and his own, and “another” orientation systems (world view) are only the variants of a huge number of possible conceptual spheres. It is this possibility of two-dimensional perception of cultural reality that can provide an effective translation.

On this basis, we conclude that **the intercultural competence of an interpreter – is the ability to recognize, understand, and interpret his own and another picture of the world in their interaction with the aim of ensuring quality transformation the source text into target language text.**

As part of translation competence intercultural component integrates with other sub-competencies: bilingual, information and technological, strategic, etc. Functioning in conjunction, these competencies help to create a secondary text to replace the primary one in another language and culture.

Creating a product of translation is always based on a specially organized purposeful (“translation”) analysis of the source text (Nelubin, 2003, p. 140).

It is difficult to overestimate the role **pre-translation analysis** of the text, which precedes the creation of the translated text. The main aim of this phase of translation is to identify the major landmarks of the translation to ensure its adequacy. As it is stipulated in the theory of

translation, “the general principles pre-translation analysis allow us to make the text (in terms of its structure and language) more observable, outline the contours of communicative, i.e. semantic organization of the text, help to understand that the main difficulty of translation is the transfer of the entire meaning” (Brandes, Provotorov, 2001, p. 5). This is the pre-translation analysis that allows the the interpreter to determine:

- the correct vectors of translation,
- translation strategy,
- landmarks of translation,
- what type of text he deals with, its typical structure and peculiarities,
- the variety of linguistic features that absolutely must be rendered in the translation, should be paid special attention to, what of language means and syntactic structures should be preferred,
- informational value of the text segments,
- what is acceptable and what is not for translation, and so on.

The objects of pre-translation analysis are treated and differentiated by scientists in different ways. It is proposed to conduct pre-translation analysis of the following:

- external information about the text, components and density of the information, communication purpose, genre of speech (I.S. Alexeeva),
- genre and style of the source text (M.P. Brandes, V.I. Provotorov),
- key, additional, specifying, repeating, zero information (R.K. Miniar-Belorutchev),
- communication, composition and semantic, and pragmatic structures of the text, with the first involving the analysis of the parameters of the communicative situation, the second – the nature of compositional forms of speech, semantic blocks in terms of their construction and links, and the third – the communicative

intentions of the author, communicative effect and characteristics of the sender and the recipient.

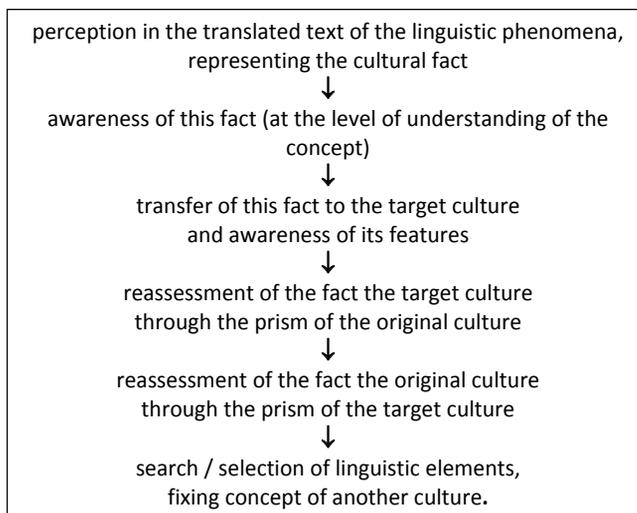
Thus, pre-translation analysis allows us to extract from the original text the information about all the elements that must be translated, as well as additional information, even if it is “insignificant for the act of communication and is not perceived by the original receptor» (Komissarov, 1973, p. 47). The translator must bear in mind that the text in its composition, structure, definitions and functions of the elements is effective as a whole due to combination of internal and external systematic conditionality. It is this holistic approach that is provided by pre-translation text analysis.

Taking into account the importance of cross-cultural competence of the interpreter, the spectrum of the objects of pre-translation analysis should be expanded. It is reasonable to include the components that inevitably exist in the mind and activities of a mediator of intercultural communication as the result of their (components) correlation in two cultures. This means that the source text should be interpreted as if “it is seen by the eyes of the speaker of another language and another culture» (L.L. Nelubin). In this case, such activities are realized in any direction of translation: to the native or foreign language. The strategies for intercultural pre-translation analysis, of course, vary, but the essence and purpose of interpreter’s actions remain unchanged: perceiving the source text and analyzing it, he should disclose its cultural background and to correlate this information with the images of a picture of the world (concepts), which are inherent to the recipient. There occurs a kind of dialogue between cultures, which makes it possible to establish the correct orientation to create the translated text.

This allows us to define list of components for training translators, which includes **cross-**

cultural interpretation strategies. To determine their nomenclature it is important to understand what actions must perform a translator on the stage of pre-translation analysis of the source text.

Intercultural orientation of pre-translation analysis presupposes the following sequence of actions of an interpreter:



These actions can be represented didactically in the form of strategies for pre-translation analysis, aimed at implementing of one of its stages – the stage of cross-cultural interpretation. That is, these strategies should be incorporated into the training content of translators.

When specifying the list of strategies it is necessary to keep in mind that the comparison of information belonging to interacting cultures can be implemented in two possible ways:

1) when translating from a foreign language to the mother tongue: cultural information is detected in the original text, then there is a comparison of this information with the relevant information from the native culture, this information, in its turn, reinterpreted as being perceived through the vision of the native speaker, and this

reassessment determines revision of that information;

2) when translating from the mother tongue to a foreign language: the facts of the native culture, appearing in the source text, are being revealed, then comes the search for similar elements in the different culture. After that these

two are compared, and the facts of the native culture are revised (rethought) and reevaluated in terms of “Alien”.

Such a complex cognitive activity results in understanding of correspondence/non-correspondence of pictures of the world in two linguocultural realities involved in the translation. This will ensure the adequacy of pre-translation analysis, since the translator is able to penetrate deeper into the sense of the source text that will certainly affect the efficiency of translation. It is exactly the format of one of the stages of pre-translation analysis that helps to realize the most important strategy for training translators, was stipulated by I.I. Khaleeva: “... teaching secondary cognitive code, whether in a practical course of mastering a new language culture or in the process of teaching translation from one code to another, involves serious study

and disclosure of national-cultural specificity of language and cognitive mechanisms of conscious specific for representatives of multilingual speech communities” (Khaleeva, 1996, p. 75).

Resume

Culturally centered linguistic, didactical and translational paradigm forces us to seek new ways to improve the training of translators – mediators in intercultural communication. Interpretation must be instrumental in transmitting culture. Indeed, interpretation is a very important medium for cultural exchange between people using different languages.

Formed at a high level of intercultural strategies for pre-translation analysis of a source text provide adequate translation activities and promote the act of dialogue between cultures, an important role in which plays a translator – retranslator of sense, expressed in one language, by means of another verbal code. The interaction of concepts (fragments of pictures of the world in contacting linguistic cultures) provides insight into the value systems of not only another, but also the native community. And on this basis, the interpreter is able to better determine the means of transferring information from the speaker to the recipient.

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Межкультурная интерпретация как стратегия предпереводческого анализа текста

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В данной статье ставится вопрос о межкультурном подходе к обучению будущих переводчиков стратегиям предпереводческого анализа исходного текста. Рассматривается сущность межкультурной компетенции переводчика, определяется её специфика на этапе предпереводческого анализа исходного текста. Автор раскрывает особенности и последовательность действий переводчика в процессе реализации стратегий межкультурной интерпретации текста. Определяется лингводидактический статус стратегий межкультурной интерпретации как компонентов содержания обучения будущих переводчиков.

Ключевые слова: межкультурная коммуникация, переводческие стратегии, межкультурная интерпретация, предпереводческий анализ текста.
