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The Text as the Dominant Feature of Translation

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In the article the pre-requisites for forming a new scholarly field in the theory of translation – translatology of the text – are explained, the aspects of the text-centric approach to the phenomenon of the text in general linguistic, typological and translational perspectives, and the TT-ST dialogue are described, and also a description of several scientific and critical models based on a concept of this dialogue is given.

Keywords: text-centric approach, translatology of the text, translation strategy, secondary text, scientific translation criticism, systematic didactic model.

Introduction

The concept of the “text” occupies a central place in modern translatology. Both theoreticians and practitioners of translation have come to the realization that it is not languages and individual words that are translated, but texts. The decisive breakthrough came in the 1970s, when special text-centric disciplines began to be formed, which took their main object of study as being the text as such. The appearance in the 1970s and 1980s of theories of text, in particular the linguistics of the text and textual typology, had a whole range of fruitful consequences for the development of translation studies:

- it led to communicative linguistics moving to a new stage of development, which in its turn made it possible to create a communicative model of translation on the level of the text;

- it stimulated attempts to create textual typologies focused on translation;
- it made it possible to develop a mechanism of a special applied area of linguistic analysis of the text focused on translation;
- it laid the foundation for the concept of “translation strategy”, and the development of translation strategies in translating various texts;
- it served as the basis for developing a systemic didactic model, giving a theoretical foundation to translator training;
- it prepared the theoretical bases for developing objective criteria for translation quality evaluation.

However, all of these positive trends only marked the paths for the further development of

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translatology as a special scholarly discipline. They may be seen as pre-requisites for forming a new scholarly field within this discipline – **translatology of the text**, and this task seems extremely relevant to us today.

In the scholarly literature of recent decades, both Russian and foreign, there is no systematic outline of the theory of translation focused on the text, although there is no shortage of works devoted to individual components of this theory. In his famous work that has already gone through seven editions, *Introduction to the Science of Translation*, the renowned translation scholar Werner Koller notes the need to single out and develop this field in translation theory, and notes the following main tasks:

- develop theoretical and methodological bases for describing relations of equivalence, dependent on the text and its type;
- develop a method of analysis of the text focused on translation;
- analyze and describe problems of translation connected with the type of text;
- make a comparative analysis of the original and translation, with the aim of establishing relations of equivalence on the level of linguistic-stylistic microstructures, and at the same time textual macrostructures;
- analyze the culturally dependent perception of types of text in the receiving culture;
- develop specific theories of translation of individual types of text. (Koller, 2001: 126)

If we now look at the according latest scientific literature, we will find a very small amount of works devoted to developing this field. The greatest success has been attained in developing the method of analysis of text

focused on translations. The essential works by K. Nord, H. Henig, P. Kusmaul, N. Newmark et. al, and also works by Russian authors – M.S. Brandes, N. A. Kashirina, L.K. Latyshev and V.I. Provotorov – allow us to talk not only of the sufficient theoretical foundation of this field, but also the creation of a streamlined system of methodical methods for training the translator using these studies.

A solution to other tasks in this field formulated by Koller cannot however be called satisfactory in any way. And for good reason, the last of the tasks they name: creation of translation theories of individual types of text – was only realized consistently in one work entitled *Text Type and Translation Method. Operative Text* which was written in early 1980s by one of the most important translation theorists of the 20th century, Katharina Reiss (Reiss, 1983).

In order to create a theory of an individual type of text which is focused on its translation, it is necessary to develop a general foundation base for these types of specific studies, and this has not yet been created (on Koller's list this is the primary task).

Translatology, which touches on textual problems of translation in passing, has examined active (social-professional), mental and cognitive aspects of it, leaving a whole range of translational theories of the text without any answer, and many claims are dubious or unproved.

Thus, the need has arisen to answer the most important of these issues concerning the theory of text focused on translation, and try to create a single, non-contradictory concept of translational theory of the text.

The following **tasks** are of top priority in this aim:

- single out the theoretical components of the new field which are designed to form its conceptual core;

- study possible parameters for forming a unified objective base of translational typology of texts, and justify the selection of necessary and sufficient parameters;
- study and describe on the basis of the selected parameters individual translational types of text;
- study resources for applying results of the study carried out to improve the unified systematic didactic model of teaching oral and written translation.

At the same time, from the scientific point of view it is not just the posing and solution of the tasks listed that are fundamentally **new**, but also the equal inclusion in examination, besides written texts, of oral texts, as these texts are not taken into account at all by researchers as an object of translational textual analysis.

Aspects of the text-centric approach

We will only examine several key provisions of the new approach. The first of them is a new vector of perception of the text.

As is widely known, since the 1970s linguistics has devoted considerable attention to structures that go outside the level of the sentence, and has begun to analyze the phenomenon of the text. Based on the concept developed by semiotics – the science of signs as communicative symbols (Stolze, 1994: 34), the first postulates of which were developed by Charles William Morris in 1938 (Моррис 2001: 5-97), P. Hartman, E. Gülich, V. Raible and others, examine the text as a complex linguistic sign, and in their first works devoted to the text, determine the phenomenon of the text in the following way:

“The text is understood as a linguistic sign, which in its turn consists of smaller linguistic signs. Texts, or “speech events” modeled as texts, are thus examined not in the sphere of

“linguistique de la parole”, but as formations in which the constituent elements are described as units of the level of “langue”. (Gülich/Raible, 1977: 5)

“The text, understood as the fundamental possibility of realizing language in the manifested form of its appearance, and accordingly each time the certain text as an individual manifested appearance of language, possessing a functional ability, forms the initial language sign”. (Hartmann, 1971: 10)

What was fundamentally new in this approach was the understanding of the text as a **primary** sign, i.e. a change of the reference point in studying the text: it is not phenomena-morphemes-words-sentences that make up a text, but on the contrary, the text as a communicative unit may be divided into segments in the form of chapters, paragraphs, sentences and words, and all these segments in this case will have a certain incompleteness in relation to the text as a sign; they may only be examined in their relation to the text as a whole.

In this case, the text as a complex sign, like simple linguistic signs, has three semiotic parameters: syntactical, that express the relation of the signs between one another and their connection: semantic, that express the relation between the sign and the meaning, and pragmatic, that reflect the relations between the source and the recipient of the sign (Stolze, 1994: 98).

At the same time, in linguistics there is another more traditional viewpoint, according to which the sign is interpreted as a two-sided unit of language with a durable, constant link between its form and its content, and as a component of the sign system – the language. This view is shared to one degree or another by the majority of Russian scholars, who see the full significance only in the word and morpheme, which is described in detail by K. A. Filippov (Филиппов, 2003: 66-68) in his study, giving as an example the concept of the

sign of Yu. S. Maslov and the interpretation of the text of V.B. Kasevich.

We should note, however, that the concept of the text as a functional signal-sign described above does not contradict the definition of Yu. S. Maslov. If, according to Yu. S. Maslov, the bilateral nature of the language sign is characterized by stability, based on the reproductivity of communications acts, and the connection between the exponent of the sign and its content is conditional and based on social agreement, the content itself is generalized, and schematically reflects reality (Маслов 1987: 26), then we also find these characteristics in the text as a sign in the form of a potential possibility. Types of text and conventions of texts formed in the process of social and communicative experience are also distinguished by the generalized, sign character of reflection of reality, and used in accordance with unwritten socially conditioned rules. Evidently, here it is necessary to introduce a division of language and speech (functional) signs. It is as a speech sign that the text could be examined, in our opinion.

It is this approach that makes it possible to move on to justify both the common linguistic picture of the phenomenon of the text and form the typological matrix, and to create an applied translational classification of individual types of text. Singling out significant parameters for dividing types of text depending on their translation makes it possible to draw conclusions about the specifics of translation of each specific text, thus overcoming the divide between the rich practice of translation and the new theory, which has at last reached the creation of an optimum didactic model of translation study.

Application of the theory of the text in translatology also opens up another perspective for its applied use: it makes it possible to develop basic criteria for scientific criticism of translation.

However, in order to approach this way of examining the text, we must change the vector to

the opposite: if translatology of the text proceeds from the potential possibility of its translation, then now we will proceed from the concept of the text as the result of a translation, of a secondary text that is the result of the transformation of the initial text of the original. In other words, we will replace prospection in studying the text with retrospection.

This backward view leads us to the problem of the secondary text in its general form, for the text of a translation as a variety of a secondary text should contain the basic features which any secondary text contains.

The main quality of the text of translation as a secondary text seems to us to be its lack of independence, the fact that it is produced. Putting forward the sign of non-independence as the main characteristic of secondary texts, M. V. Verbitskaya, relying on the material of literary texts, means an independent stylistic characteristic (Вербитская, 2000: 3), but applied to translation, we may also talk – more widely – of a text (textual) non-independence, dependence. We should add that this dependence is one-sided, as the text of the original (text before translation) is capable of existing, and exists independently, and the translated text (text after translation) by its nature is always genetically connected with the text of the original.

At the same time, in verbal communication both texts may function synchronically, i.e. in the same range of time; but it cannot be ruled out that the original loses its communicative and cultural relevance, or will be simply lost, and the text of the translation will continue its existence. In regards to imaginative texts, these specifics were described in detail in 1923 by Walter Benjamin: “The translation arises after the original, and for significant works which never find worthy translations in the period that they arise, it means the stage of their subsequent life” (Беньямин, 2004: 30).

Another quality of the secondary text, which is potentially inherent, evidently, not only to the text of the translation, but to other secondary texts, is its ability for multiple reproduction. This quality was also noted by W. Benjamin, who said that in translation, “the life of the original acquires its constantly updated, most exhaustive and latest flourishing” (Беньямин, 2004: 31). Thus, there is always one original (we now intentionally exclude from examination the creation of parodies etc. on the basis of the original within the boundaries of one language culture), but there may be many translations. To use the term of Roland Barthes, with which he characterized the text in the process of its perception, “re-reading”, we may say that the text of the translation is “not a ‘true’ but multiple text” (Барт, 2001: 42).

Based on the previous statements, we come to a concept of the dynamic model of the co-existence of the texts of the original and the translation in time and space. This co-existence may well be called a dialogue between the original and translation. The famous term of M. Bakhtin, which described what was later called the intertext, is applicable here because in both cases we are dealing with a two-sided connection of the primary (precedent) and secondary texts.

We may well agree with the viewpoint of G.V. Denisova, who sees the relevance of studying the problems of the ST-TT dialogue of texts as a general task of studying secondary texts (in her terminology, ‘metatexts’): “The problem of creating a model for describing contacts between texts is very relevant, as metatexts activate the structure, by activating a certain text in the mind (memory) of the addressee, and as the text is always a process that takes place between two minds (the addresser and the addressee), the irreducibility of metatextual components excludes the code that offers the key to the interpretation. Metatexts exist everywhere where an addressee and addresser exist, which connect

their channel and the semiotic space into which they are immersed” (Denisova, 2001: 113). As we see, G.V. Denisova is also a supporter of the construction of the dynamic model.

From this viewpoint, the theoretical discipline of Translation Studies examines translated texts (A. Lefevre, G. Lambert, T. Hermans, S. Bassnett, G. Toury), whose representatives study the effect of TT on the literature and culture of the translated text, stressing the innovative rule of TT within the boundaries of the national literature of the translated text. Within this discipline, only texts of imaginative literature are examined, which are included in a common system of receiving literature and its gigantic “hypertext”, regardless of the extent to which the translation reflects the original. As G. Toury notes, any text may be recognized as a translation of another text, if it is indicated as such (Toury, 1980: 47). Researchers of this discipline are more interested in the dialogue between the translated texts and other texts of the receiving culture than the dialogue of the translated text with the original, i.e. the hypostasis which reveals signs of the primary text in it. However, recently works have appeared where the authors try to combine both tasks: to find the measure to which the translation deviates from the original – and at the same time to analyze its new connections in the receiving literature, which turns it into a primary text. These studies include the extensive monograph by I.M. Mikhailova (Михайлова, 2007), which is devoted to translations of Dutch literary (poetic) texts into Russian. On the one hand, the author compares the translations with the originals, using a prospective direction of analysis (initially an analysis of the original, and then an analysis of the translation, see for example pp. 96 and 102 of this work), and on the other hand, she studies the cultural and social context of the appearance of these texts in Russia. A logical continuation of this “two directional nature” may be the

systematic comparison of two concept spheres – the culture of the original and the culture of the translation, in connection with the participation of the given text in them.

Evidently, this approach to examining the multi-vector connections of TT is also proposed by G.V. Denisova, who discusses the specifics of translating an intext: “In discussing the possibilities and methods of translating an intext into another language / culture, it is necessary to proceed from the fact that culture itself is intertextual, and translation (in the broad understanding of this word) is a constant sign of inter-textual relations both within one culture and in intercultural contact. Therefore, the ontological nature of translation is not only connected with the unlimited number of different translations of the same text, but also with its function of and independent work (and not just a “replacement” of the original), within the receiving culture, i.e. with its inclusion in this culture” (Денисова, 2001: 124), and further, based on this interpretation of intertextual relations, requirements for the translation are formed: from the author’s viewpoint, it is important “that the translated text in the result of an encounter with other semiotic systems gives birth to a “third” intertextual space, which is fundamentally new and unpredictable, and also becomes a “generator of new meanings” within the culture of another language” (Денисова, 2001: 125)

The concept of representation that is also used in modern translation theory is connected with the TT-ST dialogue, and we find a detailed description of this in the work of S.V. Tyulenev. Giving convincing proof of the connection of the concept of representativeness with the theory of information, according to which the translation should only reflect the necessary part of information of the original (which is different for different texts), i.e. its

representativeness, the author puts forward four criteria of representativeness (Тюленев, 2004: 146-147): the reflection of the plan of contents, the goal of creating the text of the original, its “tone”, and the author’s relation. S.V. Tyulenev, unfortunately, does not argue his viewpoint and the reason for putting forward these criteria, but the idea of representativeness of translation in itself uncovers wide possibilities for the further study of TT-ST dialogue on the basis of the theory of information, and in a number of cases seems to us to be more convenient than the concept of equivalence.

Thus, a retrospective look at the text allows us to detect the logical connections of TT and ST, and thus develop objective grounds to assess the quality of translation. The importance of the tasks of an objective assessment of translated texts and a developing of scientific criteria of the criticism of translation was first outlined by Katharina Reiss, who named 3 important functions of translation criticism: 1) improving the quality of the translation; 2) forming a demand in society for high-quality translation; 3) using the instruments of translation criticism in training translators (Reiss, 1971: 7). The list of these functions is naturally incomplete, and there should be added, for example, the need to develop standards of translation quality, which could be used for an expert assessment of the work of translators in different spheres of human activity. However, for us today the theoretical bases of this criticism seem more important, and the level of their development and resources for further elaboration. The fundamental need for these foundations is stressed by M. Ammann, J. House etc. (see Ammann, 1990: 213, House, 1997: 1).

Among the models of scientific criticism existing in modern translation theory, models predominate that are based on analysis of ST and an assessment of the level of preservation

of revealed features in TT. Thus, K. Reiss proposes to rely on the dominating criterion of the communicative function of the text, and in accordance with this determines the dominating invariant methods for each of the three groups of texts according to the translational classification of texts she proposes (see above): for informative texts, preservation of informative elements; for expressive texts, preservation of the analogy of form and aesthetic effect; for appellative texts, an identical extralinguistic effect (Reiss, 1971: 52). Reiss subsequently proposes, based on the linguistic methods of organizing a text of a certain type, to create a scientific and critical analysis on the basis of the development of semantic, lexical, grammatical and stylistic instructions (Reiss, 1971: 54-69). As the third component of the scientific and critical model, Reiss puts forward the pragmatic parameter in the form of extralinguistic determinants of the subject situation (theme of the text), or the subject situation. Outside of the model remain the aforesaid parameters of arranging a translational classification of types of text, such as the source, recipient and goal of the text, the secondary nature of TT, the convention of the text, and the issue of including them in this model remains open.

The pragmalinguistic model of the scientific and critical analysis of TT was developed by J. House. She proposes to rely on the initial ST base and divide it into three spheres that are relevant from the view point of scientific criticism of translation: 1) stylistic register; 2) genre; 3) individual function of text (House, 1997: 108). The register, in its turn, is also divided into three areas: 1) the content and theme area (field), 2) the relation of the sender to the topic and its communicative intension (tenor) and 3) forms of communication (mode); the genre in House's interpretation is similar to the type of text in

Reiss, and following M. Halliday (Halliday, 1973), House separates the function of the text into two sub-types: referential-content and interpersonal (House, 1997: 35). On the basis of these criteria, House proposes to compare texts and study the extent of their equivalence, introducing another qualifying criterion to them – type of translation. Separating covert translation, when the translation does not have clear signs of a translated text and takes on the status of original in the receiving culture (primary text in our terminology), and overt translation, when the translated nature of the text is obvious, House proposes to assess translations of the first type, taking into account the “cultural filter” (House, 1997: 115), and expresses the opinion that a scientific and critical analysis in this case is only limited to an assessment of equivalence on the level of the genre and function of the text. A critical assessment of the cultural component remains an unstudied lacuna, and its further elaboration is evidently only possible on the basis of a study of the cultural component of TT, above all with the use of the instruments described above that are directed to an extensive description of the TT-ST dialogue on the basis of the concepts of Translation Studies that propose a comparative polysystemic approach (see for example Broek, 1985), cognitive science and intertextual theory.

At the same time, in modern translation theory we may find attempts to build a scientific and critical model that rests entirely on the text of the translation (TT). For example, M. Ammann, using the theory of “skopos”, insists on the prospective assessment of the quality of the translation, proceeding entirely from the reality of the TT. In fact, the authors of the “skopos” theory themselves stress the need of this approach of scientific criticism of translation: ‘An assessment is required firstly (and in most cases primarily) of the translatum as such. And secondarily, there is

a need to assess the translatum as a translation of the ST” (Reiss/Vermeer, 1984: 113). M. Ammann outlines the aspects and order (plan) of this assessment (Ammann, 1990: 212):

- 1) determination of the function of translatum (=TT);
- 2) determination of the intertextual coherence of the translatum;
- 3) determination of the function of ST;
- 4) determination of the intertextual coherence of ST;
- 5) determination of the intertextual coherence between the translatum and ST.

M. Ammann develops this model of analysis applied to texts of imaginative literature.

Conclusion

A brief survey of the aspects of the text-centric approach to the phenomenon of the text in general linguistic, typological and translational perspectives, an examination of the TT-ST dialogue, and also a description of several scientific and critical models based on a concept of this dialogue, has revealed a low level of development of this field. There are so far more questions than answers in this sphere, and not all the questions, in our view, have been given scientifically correct descriptions. Our task was to open up the perspectives of this methodological approach to studying the text in connection with different areas of translation, linguistic and comparative literature studies.

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Текст как доминанта перевода

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В статье рассматриваются предпосылки формирования нового научного направления теории перевода – транслатологии текста, аспекты текстоцентрического подхода к феномену текста в общелингвистическом, типологическом и транслатологическом ракурсах, диалог ПТ-ИТ, а также дано описание некоторых научно-критических моделей, основанных на представлении об этом диалоге.

Ключевые слова: текстоцентрический подход, транслатология текста, стратегия перевода, вторичный текст, научная критика перевода, системная дидактическая модель.
