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Manipulative Strategies in the Translations of Literary Texts Carried Out in the Soviet Union

Natalya V. Klimovich*

*Siberian Federal University
79 Svobodny, Krasnoyarsk, 660041, Russia*

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The research paper concerns the phenomenon of ideological manipulation in literary texts translations. Exemplified by the existing translations carried out in the Soviet period the author identifies the strategies used in the translated texts to manipulate the readers. Influenced by the existing political system of that period, ideological influence and censorship in the Soviet Union that was pervasive and strictly enforced, literary text translations into Russian contain numerous evidence of ideological manipulation that was common for any literary work published in the Soviet period.

Keywords: manipulation, translation, manipulative strategies, ideological manipulation, rewriting, substitution, antonymous translation.

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Research area: philology.

Introduction

The conception of ideological manipulation originated in the late 20th century with the ideas of Manipulation School representatives and was later developed and validated by many scholars, practicing translators, mass media and publishing houses representatives. The assertion that the large number of the translated literary works is subjected to manipulation due to ideological, political and cultural reasons found evidence in the published translations of literary works into different languages. Translations carried out in the Soviet Union were thoroughly censored and inevitably changed in accordance with the adopted ideology of that period. Some parts of the original novel were deleted, omitted, changed

or substituted. It case if a literary work did not contain the ideas of class discrimination, fight against oppression, criticism of capitalism, etc. it was rewritten to conform to the Soviet ideological values.

Point of view

The idea of manipulation in translation has been the subject of numerous studies, starting from the representatives of the “Manipulation School” in translation (S. Bassnett, T. Hermans, J.S. Holmes, I. Even-Zohar, A. Lefevere and G. Toury) and its further studies. In the recent decades contemporary scholars study manipulation in translation (interpreting) (A. Kramina (Dukate), A. Schjoldager, N.G. Kornaukhova, F. Farahzad,

P. Kuhiwczak), manipulation in mass media (R. Holiday), manipulation in film translation (P. Fawcett) as well as ideological manipulation and censorship that took place due to political/cultural influence of the target language (M. Banhegyi, Ren Shuping, Shih Chung-ling, Jamal al-Qinai).

Manipulation in translation is mostly determined by the culture of the target language, the initiator of translation and/or the translator (Klimovich, 2015). A. Lefevere (Lefevere, 1992) states that the dominant role in defining translation policy belongs to ideological considerations. Thus, in different periods of history some texts were translated according to the certain ideological requirements of the target language. The existing ideology influenced and is still influencing translation policy in different countries. Thus, Jamal al-Qinai (Kuwait) identifies examples of “adaptation”, “Arabization” or even “Egyptianization” of the texts translated from French into Arabic (Al-Qinai, 2005). Chinese researcher Shih Chung-ling (Shih, Chung-ling, 2010) writes about ideological influence in translation of cultural references from Western languages into Chinese. Other researchers, Mohammad Rahbar, Zainab Ranjbar Najaf Abad and Bijan Bateni (Iran) (Rahbar, 2013) speak about ideological manipulation in the Persian translation of *Daddy Long Legs* by Jean Webster.

Although translators are normally expected to keep their political views out of their work, but, nevertheless, translated texts very often become domesticated according to the norms of the target language not to break the linguistic and cultural norms of the target culture. However, not only translators and the level of their competence are responsible for the end product. There are, of course, initiators of translation, “publishers, editors, proofreaders and technical producers who may change the ST¹ in order to conform to social expectations” (Jamal al-Qinai, p. 513).

Ideology plays an important role in translation practice as it is ideology that serves to achieve political purposes, controls selection of texts to be translated, translation strategies, and the spreading of certain translated texts. Translation becomes the material manifestation of ideological operation that serves the benefits of the patrons (Lefevere, Jamal al-Qinai, et al.).

In this research paper the author studies manipulative strategies in the translations of literary texts carried out in the Soviet period. The translation policy adopted in the Soviet Union resulted in a situation where a lot of books that didn’t comply with the adopted ideology were not translated at all, or translated with numerous omissions and alterations (Klimovich, 2015).

Literature and translations were under control and greatly influenced. One of the consequences of political and ideological influence in the Soviet Union was literature censorship, which, in accordance with the official ideology and politics of the Communist Party was performed by Goskomizdat that censored all printed matter: fiction, poetry, etc. Works of print such as the press, advertisements, product labels, and books were censored by Glavlit, an agency established on 6 June 1922, to safeguard top secret information from foreign entities. Religious intolerance and atheism were other goals of post-World War 2 censorship, and was an extension of Anti-Westernization. Translations of foreign publications were often produced in a truncated form, accompanied with extensive corrective footnotes. Some parts were extracted or edited out from the text.

This political and cultural policy of the Soviet Union formed the ideology of translators and influenced their choice of strategies in translation. Thus, according to Dorothy Kelly “how decisions taken in the solution of translation problems can introduce ideological elements, in particular positive self and negative other

representation, which reproduce and reinforce myths or stereotypes existing in the target culture regarding the source culture” (Kelly, p. 57). In this way translation is directly dependent on and connected with the ideology of the state. “Literary translation is particularly one of the powerful ideological instruments for cognitive manipulation because the plot and story easily conceal ideological didacticism” (Shih Chung-ling, p. 4 – 5). Accordingly, we cannot but agree with C. Nord who states that “almost any decision in translation is consciously or unconsciously guided by ideological criteria” (Nord, p. 111). As translation is used as an effective tool to spread and reflect some ideology, translators inevitably think and act under ideological norms in the culture of the target language.

Ideological manipulation in the translations of literary texts carried out in the Soviet period includes the following strategies.

Manipulative Strategies in Translations

The idea of “*translation as rewriting*” was introduced by A. Lefevere in the collection of essays “Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame” (Lefevere, 1992), followed by the concept of “refracted text”. Refracted text was understood as the text that was processed for a certain audience or adapted to a certain poetics or a certain ideology. Later, the term meant adaptation of a work of literature to a different audience, with the intention to influence the way in which the audience reads the work. The concept of “refraction” was followed by the concept of “rewriting” interpreted as any text produced on the basis of another with the intention to adapt that text to a certain ideology or to a certain poetics and, usually, to both.

According to S. Bassnett and A. Lefevere (Bassnett, 2000) all rewritings, independent of their purpose, reflect a certain ideology and in

this way they manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Rewriting is considered as manipulation, and has two sides: positive and negative. Its positive aspect can contribute the evolution of literature and society, as it can introduce new concepts, genres, devices and the history of translation is also the history of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another. As for negative sides, rewriting can repress innovation, distort the original and increase manipulation of all kinds.

A. Lefevere considers ideology and patronage among the factors, contributing to rewriting. Patronage refers to the powers (persons or institutions) that can further or hinder the reading, writing, and rewriting of literature (Lefevere, 1992). Patronage is usually more interested in the ideology of literature ranging from “mediation” to “interventionism” and “adaptation”. “Yet, deliberate interventions have often been made in rewritten texts in the name of some ideology” (Jamal al-Qinai, p. 489).

In the Soviet Russia rewritings were common, starting from children literature to the literature for adults.

In 1918 with direct participation of M. Gorky, Moscow-based Soviet publishing house “**World Literature**” was founded in People’s Commissariat for Education to translate and publish the works of the foreign authors in the Soviet Union. The purpose of the publishing house was to reprint the works of the world literature and Russian authors in accordance with the Marx and Lenin ideology. The published translations were supposed to instill an interest in the fight for the working class. Undesired content, such as religious context and links and other elements that didn’t correspond with the adopted political doctrine of the Soviet State were rewritten or deleted from the text. “The primary criteria governing the selection of books for translation

were aesthetic, educational, moral and political, rather than commercial” (Inggs, p.4).

One of the interesting examples of rewritings includes “The Golden Key, or the Adventures of Buratino” (1936) by Aleksey Tolstoy. Based on the 1883 novel “The Adventures of Pinocchio” by Carlo Collodi, Buratino like Pinocchio is a long-nosed wooden puppet. However, in Tolstoy’s version the original story underwent direct ideological changes. A. Tolstoy omitted most details which would be considered too gruesome or too moralistic, such as: Pinocchio having burned his feet; black rabbits pretending to be about to bury him; the whole story of the Toyland; the shark swallowing Pinocchio and his father, etc. Unlike Pinocchio in the original story, Buratino never shifts to right behaviour and does not become a real human. Quite the contrary, he is rewarded for rather not following the rules of what is assumed to be right behaviour as being nonconformist. As one of the most successful children’s stories introduced into the Soviet environment, “The Golden Key” depicts the values of the system under which it was written, including abolition of private property, the importance of collective labour, and the idea of equality and socialisation.

Another example of ideological rewriting is “The Wizard of the Emerald City” (in translation by Peter L. Blystone “Tales of Magic Land”) is a children’s novel by A. Volkov. The book is a re-narration of “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz” by L. Frank Baum. A. Volkov changed the names of most characters, removed some elements of Baum’s novel and added some new elements. He “allegedly cleansed the work of its capitalist undertones and imbued it with healthier communist values, thereby creating a new story, suitable for Soviet children” (Haber, p. 257). The rewriting was in line with Russian culture of the time: to befriend and help others (the ideology of the Pioneer organization),

the idea that the prosperity of the minority is built upon the exploitation and deception of the majority, addition of a revolutionary strain to the story (Elli asks why the people haven’t risen up against the wicked sorceress Bastinda), friendship, companionship, love of homeland and the collective struggle for freedom.

The poetry by R. Burns undergone serious changes. Under Soviet ideology previous translations of Robert Burns made in the nineteenth century could no longer fulfill the new aesthetic function of literature. New translations of Burns’ poetry would have to include a positive revolutionary hero, heroic acts, optimism, references to communist slogans, and so forth (Vid, N.). New translations were performed by S. Ya. Marshak who became the only official translator of Burns’ poetry in the Soviet Union to present Robert Burns’ poetry to Soviet readers in a more appropriate way. He avoided dialect expressions to deprive Burns’ poetry of its Scottish coloration; all the religious inks were ignored and there were no translations with religious motifs except satire; the images of beggars and robbers were idealized; the poems to Burns’ friends – aristocrats, as well as poems describing political situation in Scotland and England were not translated due to ideological reasons.

“Robinson Crusoe”, a novel by Daniel Defoe was subjected to serious changes as well. Its abridged retelling of 1920s by K. Chukovsky “The Life and Astonishing Adventures of the Seafarer Robinson Crusoe” became the most popular version in the Soviet Union. The translated novel, in line with Soviet practice, doesn’t contain Christian references; Crusoe’s father is depicted as a harsh and cruel man with little or no affection for his son, whereas in the original the father promises to pray for his son’s welfare and demonstrates considerable affection and concern. “Crusoe’s more philosophical musings

are certainly omitted in Chukovsky's version, in conformity with the Soviet requirement that excessive soul-searching or spiritual turmoil in characters should be avoided as in conflict with those qualities appropriate for a positive hero" (Inggs, p.9).

Other examples of the similar rewritings include L. Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland" that in the Soviet Union was published as "Sonia in the Kingdom of Wonder" (it is believed to be translated by Olga Ivanovna Timiriaseva), "Anya in the Land of Wonders" (translated by V. Nabokov) and later translated by many times by many Soviet translators (N. Demurova, S. Marshak, O. Sedakova, B. Zakhoder, etc), N. Demurova's translation was considered as a classical one in the Soviet Union; "Tom Sawyer" by M. Twain; J. M. Barrie's "Peter Pan" and P. L. Travers's "Mary Poppins". In "Uncle Tom's Cabin" by Harriet Elizabeth Beecher Stowe the reader will not find any sign of Christian philosophy, only descriptions of the horrors of slavery. Soviet translations of the Lord of the Rings by J. R. R. Tolkien turned science fiction into a fairytale. All the parts the novel containing scenes with smoking pipes, tobacco and tobacco smoke and everything connected with smoking that played a significant role in the novel was ignored.

Deletions and omissions were also common in the translated texts. Even when the original versions were not rewritten the texts were subjected to ideological censorship.

"Lady Chatterley's Lover", a novel by D. H. Lawrence, first published in the Soviet period 1928 was first translated into Russian in 1932 by T. Leshchenko-Sukhomlin and I. Bagrov and M. Litvinova. Containing not only sexual scenes, but obscene words and religious links the novel was not easy to translate under conditions of strict censorship and ideological influence. The translations into Russian deprive Lawrence's language of its peculiar character. Thus, critics

write of emasculation of the Russian version, as in comparison with the original version it became more ceremonious due to deletion of the so-called "four letter words" and obscene lexis.

Other examples of deletion or omission include biblicisms – words, quotations and idioms that originated from the Holy Scripture. For example, John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath", an American realist novel that describes difficult life of a poor family of American tenant farmers driven from their home by drought, economic hardship, agricultural industry changes and bank foreclosures forcing tenant farmers out of work. Although the plot was in line with the Soviet ideology, the novel contains numerous quotations from the Bible, as the family was very religious. A large number of biblicisms were omitted in the translation of the novel by N. Volzhina (Klimovich, 2015). The fact led to changing the meaning of some parts of the text as well as emotionality and expressiveness of the original version that was lost for the Russian reader.

Omissions of the religious context also take place in D.H. Lawrence's "Sons and Lovers", "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" by T. Hardy, "The Forsyte Saga" by J. Galsworthy and "An American Tragedy" by T. Dreiser where plenty of deletions were made due to ideological and political reasons.

In some cases "undesired" content was not deleted but *substituted* by a synonym or an analogue. This technique allows to get rid of the words and expressions that do not comply with ideological requirements. At the semantic level the substituted phrase/word has the same meaning, but, in most cases it changes expressive content of the original text.

Substitutions are standard for the translations of the Soviet period. Mostly, biblicisms are substituted by synonyms-

analogues (Klimovich, 2015). Thus, in “The Portrait of a Lady” by Henry James (Russian translation by M.A. Shereshevskaia and L.E. Poliakova) an idiom *to make a scapegoat of sb.* is obviously identified by the translator, but was consciously substituted with the verb *отыгрывается* (*take it out on*). The Mammon – symbol of greed in J. Lawrence’s translation of “Lady Chatterley’s Lover” and *prophecy* in J. Stainbeck’s “The Grapes of Wrath” are substituted with their semantic, but not expressive equivalents *мошны* (*heavy purse*) and *видеть наперед* (*foresee*) correspondingly in the Russian translated versions.

Although the original texts were distorted and “forbidden” elements and structures are substituted with their semantic, but not expressive equivalents, getting rid of the undesired biblical link the translators managed to keep equivalence with the original texts at the semantic level.

Even interjections with biblical links were substituted with their analogues. Thus, in J. Stainbeck’s “The Grapes of Wrath” it is possible to find the following examples of substitution: *My God* – ну; *By God* – Да, etc. The technique used for the translation of interjections changes the source text both at semantic and expressive levels.

Antonymous translation is manifested through giving opposite meaning to a word or an expression in the translated text. Under condition of ideological manipulation negative connotation was given to the words and phrases that were supposed to be changed. Such phenomena

occurred with proper names originated from the Bible and interjections with proper names from the Bible.

For example in J. Stainbeck’s “The Grapes of Wrath” proper name *Jesus H. Christ and God Almighty* were translated as *чёрт* (*devil*). *As for interjections, by God* was translated as *Эх, черт*; *Holy Jesus* as *Ах, черт*, etc. This technique allowed to keep Biblical link of the source text, but gave negative connotation to the positive statements. Thus, having recognized intertextual elements the translator, following the Soviet ideology conveyed them with the negative analogues, changing expressive content of the main characters’ statements and, consequently, readers’ perception.

Resume

Thus, ideological manipulation in the translations of literary texts in the Soviet period includes *rewriting* of a literary works, resulted in appearance of completely different, modified in accordance with ideological requirements, writings. In other cases the undesired elements, such as religious contexts or any other elements in the Russian published texts that did not comply with the state ideology were *deleted* from the text, *substituted* with synonyms or antonyms. In the author’s opinion, in the scope of the world literature translation, the manipulation strategies are not limited to the identified ones. To understand and study other possible strategies and the proportion of the phenomenon on a global scale, further comparative studies are required.

¹ ST – source text

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Манипулятивные стратегии в переводах художественных текстов советской эпохи

Н.В. Климович

*Сибирский федеральный университет
Россия, 660041, Красноярск, пр. Свободный, 79*

Статья посвящена изучению явления идеологической манипуляции в переводах художественных текстов. На примере существующих переводов художественных текстов, выполненных в советское время, определяются манипулятивные стратегии, используемые в текстах переводных художественных произведений. Под влиянием политической системы, идеологических доктрин и цензуры, широко распространенной и тотальной в Советском Союзе, переводы художественных произведений на русский язык содержат многочисленные свидетельства идеологической манипуляции, которая распространялась на любое литературное произведение, публикуемое в советское время.

Ключевые слова: манипуляция, перевод, манипулятивные стратегии, идеологическая манипуляция, переработка, замена, антонимичный перевод.

Научная специальность: 10.00.00 – филологические науки.
