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Fairy-tales of Arctic Peoples: Unique Objects of Culture and Translation

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Serving as bearers of unique cultural symbols and codes on the one hand, and as instruments for archiving and generating of the cultural information and memory on the other, fairy-tales represent distinctive objects of non-material cultures belonging to indigenous peoples of the North. The evident Arctic vector in the modern culturological studies and tendencies for cross-cultural interaction on the global scale determine addressing to fairy-tales as to objects of literary translation. In some cases fairy-tales function as translation hyper-units concerning which translators take decisions on translating. Cultural, lingual and semiotic features of Arctic indigenous peoples' аҕаһууһау-аҕаһууһау require the implementation of culture-oriented translation strategies used on the basis of complementary approach.

Keywords: circumpolar civilization, fairy-tale, object of culture, cultural information, literary translation, object of translation, translation unit.

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Research area: philology.

Introduction

As the most essential civilization product created within the whole humanity lifespan and representing an actual result of human activity, or a set of its permanent forms, the culture requires indispensable package, i.e. different means of structuring and preserving of the cultural information. Within large cultural space a special place is taken by cultural memory. The modern humane discourse defines this notion as the set of relevant cultural senses which go far beyond individual cultural experience; which

are inherited across generations and reflect the most important and essential history common for particular people, nations or even for the biggest part of humanity (J. Assman, P. Nora, M. Halbwachs, C. Jung). The cultural memory is the central point of attention for many people from different backgrounds and considered to be engaged in contemporary researches.

Discussion

The most well-known and, thus, studied package for cultural information and memory are

texts traditionally delivered in oral and written forms. Being aimed at composing and preserving of cultural information their function has regularly been mentioned by cultural scientists (A. Assman, J. Assman), sociologists (J. Alexander, M. Halbwachs), philosophers (P. Ricoeur, H. Lubbe), historians (P. Nora), anthropologists (C. Levi-Strauss), semiotic scientists (Yu. Lotman), literary scholars (A.N. Veselovskii, O.A. Kling, V.I. Tiupa, V.Ye. Khalizev), linguists (V.A. Boldycheva, N.G. Bragina, I.G. Tiviaieva) and translation critics (V.V. Kabakchi, V.A. Razumovskaya). However, texts, literary ones in particular, are considered not just as storages (archives), but also as regular drivers for the cultural information and memory. Thus, Yuri M. Lotman often pointed on the fact that texts did not stand only as passive archives: they appeared not as simple information storage, but, most importantly, as its active generators. Tying together the notion of cultural memory (or “memory of the culture” if we follow Yu. Lotman’s definition) and cultural production, he regarded that the memory in its turn did not play the role of a passive archive for the culture, but framed an essential component for text producing mechanism [Lotman, 1992; Lotman, 1998]. Among the variety of culture-oriented and culturally relevant literary texts a special place is taken by fairy-tales (tales). In the context of the cultural information archiving, a fairy-tale can be generally defined as some kind of information “capsule” living in panchronistic and pantopoetic spaces within the modern world culture for a long period of time (since the inception of folk arts in the ancient times). Namely, the fairy-tale is one of the most crucial and traditional forms (information packages) of coding for the cultural information (including the memory) and constitutes one of the most sustainable transferring means for the culture. As a retelling, or as a kind of inter-lingual and inter-cultural translation of precedent myths, the latter shows

close relationships with fairy-tales. Suggesting an inherent relationship between tales and myths as well as an absolute similarity in their material, devices and schemes, A.N. Veselovskii proposes in his theory that the myth is a reflexive form of cultural memory [Veselovskii, 1989]. Thus, as both unique cultural objects and folklore, tales perceive their original mythological and metaphorical nature in understanding of the world around, what inseparably ties them with the culture as a source and precedent mythological narrative. In this sense, one cannot but agree with a commonly known idea pioneered by C. Jung that it is mythological way of thinking unites people of the past with people of the present and future as well as it explains an unconscious human commitment to myths and tales [Jung, 1996].

Among numerous and various classifications of tales, first of all, one should separate them into two main genres, i.e. folklore and literary ones. The first one, originally created and delivered by the word-of-mouth, represents the most popular genre of folklore and possesses essential cultural information and memory of the nation. The unique ethnocultural code existing in the information space of tales is their inherent feature. At the same time, its structural and narrative simplicity, traditional clichés (i.e. repeatability of plots, characters, speech patterns and tokens) which provide simplicity for the perception, inseparably matches complexity of the cultural code within the information space of tales. Canonic existence of the cultural code brings fairy-tales to the level of unique ethnocultural and ethnoligual phenomenon; grounds their informational inexhaustibility and determines possibility of multiple (almost unlimited by the number of recipients) interpretations of the content within perceiving.

It should be noted, that despite permanent existence of tales among texts which form the cultural content of nations, their reception

in certain cultures discover a clear variation. Considering tale information in the language of universal categories of time and place, we show that their narrative traditionally contains “fairy place” and “fairy geography”. Unraveling of fairy plots (often repeated in different fairy texts) outside the real time and space guarantees universalism of tales as non-material cultural properties. Yet in their original context, tales are consistently understood as archaic objects (regardless their source language or culture), which find a significant gap between notions of “now” and “at that time”, “here” and “there”. Interestingly enough that unlike tales living in the biggest part of modern cultures, mythology and folklore of indigenous and small-numbered peoples of Arctic (as the research mainly deals with the context of the Russian Arctic region) are comprehended only as archaic objects and remain actual and highly-reliable in the cultural space of the contemporary circumpolar civilization [Khazanovich, 2014: 143]. The “other” perception of myths and tales in the cultural context of circumpolar peoples is explained by their traditional isolated living, by deliberate willing to preserve their cultural uniqueness and by rising of the national identity. It worth mentioning that the results of researches prove the downward tendency for most languages belonging to indigenous minorities of the Russian Federation as well as negative dynamics in their use within the system of secondary education [Arefiev 2014: 14]. Such critical or dangerous shape for indigenous peoples leads to the fact that native speakers learn about their non-material cultural properties mainly through translations into the Russian language. An important role in “another” attitude towards myths and folklore is played by the focused policy in the sphere of culture conducted by a number of territorial entities in the Russian Federation. A vivid example of such policy is the cultural policy in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) which is reflected in its legislation

[Koptseva et al. 2016]. Yakut is the state language in this region, and moreover, it serves as the language of cross-ethnic communication inside the multinational republic. Yakutia is a place where the special program aimed at supporting comprehensive development and performance of state and official languages has been implemented [Belolyubskaya, 2014]. At the same time, tales of indigenous Yakutian peoples are examples of “strong” texts [Kuzmina, 2009], since they are known by the biggest part of culture-bearers; they are included into the paradigm of secondary and higher education; and besides, they possess high degree of re-interpretability made through other semiotic systems existing in the cultural space of this region (i.e. graphics, bone carving, comics, cartoons, theatrical performances). One of the reasons which explain the importance of tales and sustainability (repeatability) of their plots in Arctic cultures is the centuries-old spoken form of fairy texts. Due to late development of the source written language, texts of folklore tales have been scripted quite recently. First books created in the languages of Arctic peoples (both course books and literary works) were published less than only a hundred years ago – in the 1930s. “After development of the writing system for small-numbered peoples, Leningrad became that very place where the national literature was born. There were published first literary works, which due to national, ethical, historical and other peculiarities of the national literature determined its specificity. At the backdrop of numerous soviet national literatures, the one of indigenous peoples of the North represents unique phenomenon in the Russian culture reflecting philosophy, aesthetics and culture of the Northerners [Zhabko, 2015: 83].

The unique culture of Arctic indigenous peoples is based on integrating notion of circumpolar civilization meaning not a competition with the nature, but a harmonic

co-development that would give the humanity a paradigm and opportunity for alternatives in living [Nikolaev]. Vast territories of the Arctic zone, harsh climate, low density of population inhabiting small separate settlements are coupled the poly-ethnic population structure and high level of cultural diversity. So, projected on folklore tales belonging to Arctic peoples, the cultural heterogeneity is shown in their classification (i.e. tales of Northerners, tales of Siberian peoples, tales of Arctic peoples, Evenkies tales, Nenets tales, etc.).

The ethnocultural code of tales, operating within the poly-cultural context of the circumpolar civilization, contains a wide range of different established oppositions which are formed in terms of axiological and conceptual notions of cultures (i.e. “universal” – “unique”, “us” – “them”, “new” – “old”, “right” – “wrong”) and provide with new methodological opportunities for researches in ethnology, cultural and linguocultural studies of indigenous minorities of the North. The use of cultural oppositions in the analysis of cultural information and memory of the Arctic tales encourages identification of belief systems and the nature of worldviews for bearers of circumpolar cultures; allows determination and description of the national axiological system and its transformation within the course of historical development of cultures; and detects the culture condition at this time.

Yet, fairy-tales of Arctic peoples who live in severe climate, as well as tales of all nations in the world, perform for their recipients a number of important functions, not least of which are educational, pedagogical and entertaining ones. It is worth saying, that tales are notably one of effective means for the moral education of young generations and also for the development and preservation of Arctic peoples’ cultural identity and self-awareness. The pedagogical function, indeed, lies in the fact that tales have served

as specific moral and educational criterion for the readiness of youngsters for the coming-of-age period, or as some kind of “occupational guidance” with the help of which one can potentially find an activity field for their child [Nagovitsyn, Ponomariova, 2011].

As it has been pointed out at various times, for the cultural information and memory tales mainly accomplish archiving and generating functions described above in this article. Indeed, these functions should in particular be considered when speaking about fairy-tales as about objects of literary translation. Since languages of circumpolar peoples (namely, of the Russian Arctic region) have got their written form quite recently, this fact has resulted in late original recordings of texts (in reference to the period of their creation). The overview of works dedicated to the historiography of folklore belonging to indigenous Arctic peoples speaks volumes for the fact that folklore texts (tales in particular) were first of all written by representatives of other cultures with the help of Cyrillic and Latin alphabets as well as in the form of Russian translations [Kolesnik, 2014]. Such written fixation of tale texts was basically aimed at collecting unique ethnographic material for further researches. As so, it should then be mentioned, that the language used for first translations of tales was Russian, so that it gave an opportunity to gather particular experience in translation of the Arctic tales considered as unique cultural properties.

Relatively short history of this type of translation into foreign languages begins only in the second half of the 20th century and allows us identifying a set of basic translation tasks. The first task is defined as cultural and educational one, and to solve it means to include tales of the Arctic peoples into the wide context of cross-cultural communication and exchange, to acquaint other cultures with unique objects of the circumpolar civilization. By addressing the

second task those researchers who don't have any skills in source languages of Arctic native peoples, receive culturological, ethnographical and ethnophilological material that give them an opportunity to study specific features of the culture and mentality of this circumpolar civilization. The third challenge is related not just to practical translation, but to the theory of translation and, thus, fits quite well with the context of culturological area within the modern translation studies. Coping with the third task we get an opportunity to accumulate essential experience in ethno-literary translation [Nakhodkina 2014; Razumovskaya 2014a]. In this sense, it will be methodologically correct to consider Arctic tales as ethno-literary texts which require special translation strategies and methods. Due to ethno-linguistic peculiarities, tales can be analyzed as unique translation hyper-units concerning which translators make their decisions. The experience in translation of tales created by the circumpolar peoples can serve as a ground for ethno-literary translation to become a separate field in the sphere of literary translation studies.

Despite a surge in interest towards the folklore literature of Arctic peoples explained by the modern tendency on policy and culture ethnization, one should know about relatively small amount of Arctic tales translation into contemporary foreign languages [Burykin, 2008]. Moreover, many of printed translations were made not from the original language, but quite indirectly, i.e. from their last recorded Russian version. Such situation can particularly be caused by two external reasons: either by absence of the

tale written in the language of source culture, or by absence of translators speaking that source language. That is why each printed translation of Arctic peoples' tales into foreign languages becomes a significant cultural event. Such events also include publication of Siberian peoples' tales (i.e. parallel in Russian and English) containing tales of the Siberian Arctic region [Smirnova, 1992].

Conclusion

Genre and information characteristics of Arctic tales necessitate a thorough search of appropriate translation approach and, particularly, translation strategies and methods focused on the cultural information in translation objects. The basic paradigm of culture-oriented strategies in literary translation formed by the strategies of foreignization and domestication [Venuti, 2006], at the present time finds a tendency for expansion. Thus, to the strategic dichotomy suggested by L. Venuti we can add the strategy of estranging [Razumovskaya, 2014b]. Having said so, we also note that similar to any literary translation for those translators who follow only one strategy a good result is rather a rare exception. More successful products can be obtained through translation based on the most important methodological principle, i.e. on complementary principle suggested by N. Bohr [Bohr, 1961] which means considering the object through mutually exclusive notions (i.e. strategies). Thus, despite the fact that any translation is carried out *ad hoc*, the future may well bring a flagship attitude towards tales of Arctic peoples as unique objects for (ethno)literary translation.

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Сказки народов Арктики: уникальные объекты культуры и перевода

В.А. Разумовская

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Как носители уникальных культурных символов и кодов, а также как средства архивирования и генерирования культурной информации и памяти, сказки являются уникальными объектами нематериальных культур коренных и малочисленных северных народов. Очевидный арктический вектор современных культурологических исследований и тенденции к межкультурному взаимодействию в глобальном масштабе определяют обращение к сказкам как к объектам и художественного перевода. В ряде случаев сказки выступают гиперединицами перевода, относительно которых принимается решение на перевод. Культурные, языковые и семиотические особенности текстов сказок народов Арктики требуют применения культуроориентированных стратегий перевода, используемых на основе комплементарного подхода.

Ключевые слова: циркумполярная цивилизация, сказка, объект культуры, культурная информация, художественный перевод, объект перевода, единица перевода.

Научная специальность: 10.00.00 – филологические науки.
