

TRANSLATIONAL ADAPTATION: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

Research sets out to prove the theory of translational adaptation, to describe adaptation as one of the basic notions in translation studies and its fundamental concepts. An adaptive potential of discourse / text is defined within the framework of intralinguistic and interlinguistic comparison of pragmatic texts of political and religious discourses, which grounds the adaptive translational models of pragmatic texts under analysis.

Introduction

Unanimity of theoretical interpretations of adaptation testifies to the fact, that adaptation is viewed as a “stepdaughter” of translational studies. Actually, the adaptive model of translation, adaptive theory of translation acts on a joint of translation editing, translation itself and communicative theory. The latter considers the problems of utterance adaptation within one culture, thus adaptation belongs to translational studies. However, for translational studies adaptation is also a borderline case, for it mostly suggests elimination that leads to the total alteration of the text, which is not accepted as a variant of translation by the majority of scientists.

Although, translational adaptation possesses its own attractiveness because the adaptive models of pragmatic texts explicate the necessity of the usage of definite transformations that results in linking communicative theory, pragmatic linguistics and theory of translation. Adaptive translational models are called upon for disclosing the reasons of the text changes in the process of transition from one discourse to another, from one type of the text to another, from one ideology to another. These models disclose the transformational changes while trans-coding from one language to another, from one culture to another.

Adaptation as one of the linguistic types of mediation is regarded by the majority of researchers as the extreme degree of transformations admissible in translation [1, 2, 3, 4]. We provide another approach according to which the adequate translation of pragmatic text isn't possible unless adapted to the linguistic and cultural stereotypes of target audience. In this case the correlation between applied reproductive and adaptive strategies depends on the pragmatic potential of definite discourse / type of the text of source text and target text. Thus, translational adaptation does not contradict reproductive translation being an associative strategy. The main purpose of adaptive strategies lies in both the transference of pragmatic potential of discourse / text and orientation to the linguistic and cultural stereotypes of the recipient in translation.

The aim of the essay

to suggest the linguistic, cultural, and methodological reasons for applying the translational adaptation to pragmatic texts.

Materials and methods

The comprehensive analysis of the “adaptation” as a notion represents the hierarchy of the typological structural, functional, cognitive, and comparative methods of political and religious discourse / text analysis. The system of the following methods provides the succession of stages which a translator keeps to while rendering discourse / text.:

- 1) Functional method distinguishes the system of dominating functions of the text / discourse, defining their specific character in cross-cultural comparison.
- 2) Method of thesaurus definition is directed at singling out in the text realia, symbols, linguistic and cultural concepts, which mark the culture conditioned zones of the text.
- 3) Method of distributive analysis defines frequency of functioning of culture-bearing elements in pragmatic texts with the further distribution into nuclear, periphery and marginal for determining the adaptive potential of the text / discourse.

- 4) Text-typological method helps to differentiate convergent / divergent text features, which in their turn are obligatory / non-obligatory for adaptive translation.
- 5) Cognitive method is aimed at determining the key concepts for this or that text / discourse, which are obligatory / non-obligatory for adaptive translation strategies.
- 6) Contextual method of analysis deals with structural, lexical semantic and functional features of the text, which determine the types of transpositions / transformations typical of adaptive translational strategies.
- 7) Method of symbolic interpretation defines and interprets symbol in the text, which suppose the choice of an adequate translational adaptive device.

Linguistic and cultural models of pragmatic texts demonstrate convergent / divergent features, which reflect text-typological stereotypes of comparable cultural traditions. From translational perspective the distinguishing of these features helps to designate the minimum and maximum difficulties in translation and also suggests the prevailing of reproductive or adaptive strategies. Convergent / divergent text-typological features are assumed as a basis of adaptive translational models, which trans-coding stipulates the level of adequacy of pragmatic text influencing the target audience.

The reasons for applying the translational adaptation are as follows: 1) the pragmatic function of the text is dominant; 2) target text corresponds with the text-typical stereotypes of the target language and audience; 3) the measure of closeness / remoteness of the languages and cultures in contact defines the existence / absence of the stereotypes of this or that pragmatic text.

Results and discussion

Many linguists agree that “discourse” can be defined as a text + extralingual features. From the point of view of translational studies and adaptive theory in particular the notions of discourse and text are important for the process of their identification taking into account the culture asymmetry. The latter causes not only the principle difference in the texts’ paradigm, but determines the discourse’ system of dominant functions, which adequate translational recreation makes for adequate perception of definite type of the text or, in other words, its adequate identification and further interpretation.

The research is based on the pragmatic texts of political and religious discourses which were deliberately chosen for their simple elaboration in the theory of translation. The paradigm of pragmatic types of the texts includes the following: political discourse - vocabulary article, textbook on political studies, political speech, political advertisement; religious discourse - vocabulary article, textbook on homiletics, sermon, and religious advertisement. Translational transference of the paradigm into another culture presupposes the adequate identification of these texts which is possible if linguistic and cultural stereotypes of the target audience are preserved. The analysis proved that the adequacy on structural, semantic and stylistic levels of source text and target text leads to the identification of discourse / text.

For highlighting the typological structural and functional characteristics of pragmatic texts there was undertaken the analysis of theoretical research issues devoted to the studying of pragmatic texts on the following levels: hyper textual, textual and hypo textual. The analysis results in the supposition that beyond the scientist’s interests are the problems concerning the functioning of culture bearing elements which define the adaptive and pragmatic potential of the text, and also the problem of the methods’ system which helps to distinguish the cultural specific characteristics of the text under translation.

According to the aims of our research the most essential is the following subdivision of culture-bearing elements in the text – realia, symbols, and linguistic, cultural concepts. The pragmatic measure of the text proportionate to the frequency of functioning of these culture-bearing elements. Besides, frequency of functioning itself and the hierarchy of culture-bearing elements influence on the specific characteristics of type of the text not only within the discourse, but within the cultural tradition. For a translator it means that actually he deals with two types of textual information – factual and estimating. In the translational process different types of information define the algorithm of translational actions in favor for either reproductive translation or adaptive translation. The dominant for reproductive translation is factual information, which is expressed by informative (denotative, cognitive) function. The prevailing of connotative types of information calls the foregrounding of stylistic functions. All this means that non preservation of the dominant functions in translation causes displacement within either the types of the text or discourse.

Comparative cultural and cognitive analysis resulted in pointing out the main tendencies in redistribution of information from one type of the text to another within one and the same discourse. Thus, the main tendency in political discourse of Atlantic tradition (the USA linguistic and cultural tradition) shows the following: pragmatic potential increases from vocabulary article to political speech preferably through the explication of the lexical elements with “semantics of specifics”. Quite opposite tendency could be seen in the texts of east Slavic tradition (Ukrainian and Russian linguistic and cultural tradition) where pragmatic and thus adaptive potential increases through foregrounding the lexical elements with the “semantics of uniqueness” while the elements with “semantics of specifics” are gradually eliminated. The pragmatic texts of religious discourse in Atlantic tradition demonstrate the amplification of lexical elements with the “universal semantics” alongside with the increase of the lexical elements with “semantics of specifics”. In comparison with the texts of Atlantic cultural tradition that of east Slavic tradition show the main tendency in realization the lexical elements with the “semantics of uniqueness” already in the texts on homiletics.

The defining of the main transpositions while trans-coding from type of the text to another one within one language and cultural tradition points out the dominant transformations, which in their turn serve for working out the adaptive translational models for definite discourses / texts. The evidence of reproductive translation suggests that the adequate translation of pragmatically oriented texts is hard to gain without application of adaptive strategies. Thus, the adequate reproduction of pragmatic potential of the text for another cultural and linguistic tradition is possible under the condition of appliance to the text the adaptive translational models.

The deep probe into the methodological basis of the theory of adaptation resulted in presenting the adaptive translational models to pragmatic texts of political and religious discourses.

Political discourse. While translating the vocabulary article of east Slavic tradition most lexical elements of “universal semantics” have their equivalents; however the explication of lexical elements with another two types of semantics may cause the increasing of the text’s volume, and therefore can complicate the translation with the usage of adaptive strategies.

Cultural specifics of the textbook on political studies of east Slavic tradition while translating to Atlantic tradition presupposes the following adaptive strategies: elimination or reduction of purely American realia; amplification of the names of worldly famous philosophers; reduction of ideological component; amplification of political terminology.

With the aim to preserve the linguistic and cultural specifics of the eastern Slavic political speech under translation the following adaptive strategies should be applied: appraisers with negative connotation should be eliminated while appraisers with positive connotation - amplified; lexical elements with cultural meaning should undergo either reproductive or adaptive ways of translation.

Political advertisement of Atlantic tradition is presented preferably with multimedia devices while the most of east Slavic advertisement is presented only in the form of the written texts. Taking into account the system of values of Atlantic cultural tradition the translation of east Slavic political advertisement texts is not acceptable for our texts are not valuable for this culture.

Religious discourse. Cultural diversification defines the following translational adaptive strategies applied to the vocabulary article: the names of saints and sacred in-text attached to them should be reduced; religious concepts and appraisers with positive connotation should be amplified together with sacred in-text.

Multi-polar strategy of homiletic textbooks of both traditions opens up those places which seem “clear” analogues however if translated reproductively could transgress or even destroy the “vertical” scale of another culture system of values.

As far as sermon text is oriented to the audience without cultural or confessional background, the translation of sacred names tends to elimination as it concerns the concept-sphere of the Mother of God. The names of the saints also undergo partial desemantization. Almost the same could be said about the lexical elements with confessional component of meaning and religious concepts which should be either reduced or eliminated.

Advertisement texts of religious character could not be adapted to east Slavic tradition for this type of pragmatic text is absent in this linguistic and cultural tradition.

Conclusions

Finally we can see that the text / discourse identification suggests adequacy on structural, compositional, semantic, and stylistic levels. In other words, the text or discourse can be recognized if the analogous function of the source text in recipient culture is served by adequate structural and semantic means. Taking into account the dominant orientation to the target language and cultural specific characteristics, the measure of closeness or remoteness from the source text may vary for the texts under adaptation.

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