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TRANSLATION STRATEGY
AS A STAGE OF THE TRANSLATOR'S ACTIVITY QUALITY MODEL

SUMMARY. This article discusses translation strategy as one of the main stages of assessment of a translation quality model, aimed at the description of the interpreter's activity. It is assumed that this model will be predictive in nature, which will remove a number of difficulties of translation, as well as it could model some blocks of text translation. Under the proposed model, translation strategy is defined as a multi-stage program of the interpreter's actions. In formulating a translation strategy, the translator takes into account the following aspects: the purpose of communication, methods of translation, and the type of text. Based on the results obtained in the course of translation training, the author concludes that translation strategy is a complex multi-dimensional concept and requires comprehensive study.

KEY WORDS. Translation strategy, translation modeling, translator's activity.

The current development of translation studies is characterized by interdisciplinarity. Reconsideration of universal translation categories and formulation of new requirements resulting from modern reality are occurring along with a change in the direction of the research vector to anthropogenic, cultural and cognitive aspects of the translation process.

Due to the fact that the anthropocentric paradigm dominates, priority is given to the study of the translator's/interpreter's "language personality", which in turn functions as a bearer of an elitist language culture. Nowadays scholars more often pay attention to such issues as the professional competence of an interpreter/translator, and the ways and methods of achieving high-quality translation (i.e. translation which does not conflict with the requirements of the customer and the norms of the target language).

At the same time, it is obvious that there is a need in new techniques and pedagogical methodology applied to translation studies. New methodology would describe the activities of an interpreter/translator as a cognitive process, including linguistic and cultural mediation, and thus it would be possible to evaluate the quality of target texts. In our view, each of the selected aspects should be studied separately.

Generally, the translation process is studied by means of theoretical models, which are hypothetical in nature; therefore, the translation process is described with a certain

degree of approximation. In these circumstances, the model is understood as a "conditional description of a number of mental operations, doing which can make it possible to translate the whole source text or a part of it" [1].

The majority of so-called classical models of translation do not cover all the areas of translators' activity. Generally, they describe either some certain actions or reduce translators' activity to searching for adequate assimilation and transformation; therefore, they have fairly low explanatory characteristics and cannot meet the requirements of modern life. As N. L. Galeeva noted, they cannot forecast and program translators' activity, since the activity itself and a translator as a doer are eliminated from the object of research [2].

European scholars also express some dissatisfaction with the disabilities of the majority of current models.

For example, Sharon O'Brien (Dublin City University) says that translators are "dissatisfied with the current 'one size fits all' approach and with the fact that little consideration was given to variables such as content type, communicative function, end user requirements, context, perishability, or mode of translation creation (i.e. whether the translation is created by a qualified human translator, unqualified volunteer, Machine Translation (MT) or Translation Memory (TM) system or a combination of these)" [3].

According to the majority of qualified translators, translation quality drops dramatically. In this regard, we can say that the quality of the translation product (i.e. text) should become the subject of the study. Scholars need to develop new algorithms and techniques, aimed at improving the level of translation services, which could be used both while training and translating.

At the moment there are some translation models which are somehow related to the problem of translators' activity description, e.g. the pragmatist model of translation by N. L. Galeeva. Under this model, translation is not limited to the manipulation of a variety of language tools; it is viewed as a speech activity according to a given program from the source text [2].

Besides, some European scholars (Nord 1997; Lauscher 2000; Brunette 2000; Colina 2003) worked out translation quality models which reduce themselves to error typology and do not assess translators' activity. The survey of those models indicates that they are of a predominantly static character, thus they are "unable to respond to new text types or varying communicative situations and this is leading to rising levels of dissatisfaction" [3].

The author assumes that some translation errors could be avoided while formulating translation strategy if this stage is studied carefully and the algorithms of formulating translation strategy are described in detail.

In this connection there is a need for assessment and justification of the "ecological" translation model which enables to include a sufficient number of multi-level parameters (translation strategy, the rules of translation, translation errors, equivalence, and translation competence), corresponding to the multidimensional nature of the studied categories, combining objective and subjective factors of the

transforming and evaluating subjects. In this case, the article does not attempt to describe the model as a whole.

The purpose of this article is to render the main stages of translation strategy which would be worked out further in the framework of the described model.

It is essential to start with the definition of the basic concept, i.e. translation strategy. The term "strategy" in its turn requires separate consideration. V. V. Sdobnikov considers it was borrowed from the English language and it has several interpretations: 1) *(military)* the science and art of using all the forces of a nation to execute approved plans as effectively as possible during peace or war; 2) the art or skill of using stratagems in endeavors such as politics and business; 3) an elaborate and systematic plan of action [4].

As is seen from the definitions, the first meaning refers to military terminology, the second one is a very specialized meaning in politics and business, and the third is a broad interpretation which has been borrowed by the theory of translation.

Based on the analysis of the definitions (except those related to the military industry) taken from a number of explanatory dictionaries (Great Encyclopedic Dictionary, Dictionary, edited by T. Ephraim, Sociological Dictionary, edited by G.V. Osipov, L.N. Moskvichev) [5], [6], [7], we can derive a general definition: a strategy is a framework for an activity, covering a considerable period of time; a way to achieve difficult and complex goals. Based on that, the tactic is a tool to implement a strategy. Thus, "a framework of any activity" is an integrating seme in the majority of definitions.

V.V. Sdobnikov notes that the major components of the strategy are: "1) situation awareness, 2) formation of goals, 3) forecasting, 4) planning" [8].

Let us proceed to the analysis of the definitions of "translation strategy". Right away it is necessary to point out that the *Translation Explanatory Dictionary*, edited by L.L. Nelyubin, does not define this concept. It means that at the moment it is not yet formed and requires clear understanding and definition.

There are different terms of this concept: the interpreter's tactic, translation actions, the translator's strategy, action plan, translation mechanism, etc. It significantly complicates the identification and description of the concept. As A.G. Vitrenko points out, "All of these phrases are used as semantic variants by the same authors" [9].

In addition, translation strategy is considered either as a general concept (i.e. there are attempts to bring some universal concept) or a narrow one (translation strategy is formulated for every single text). We believe that the first approach is more productive (especially in the case of training in translation), because an entry-level translator should learn to plan his actions in general, he should have a "general plan" which can be easily changed due to the typological characteristics of a source text. Firstly, a student-translator will learn to plan his actions and as a result of it a "conceptual matrix" of the source text is worked out. Secondly, a student-translator will learn to select different tactics within a separate part of the source text.

Some European scholars view translation strategy in its broad meaning, i.e. the translators' global approach or plan of action on a given text; according to their intention ("global approach or plan" is an integral seme here).

During training in scientific and technical translation, students follow the universal strategy which was worked out by I.S. Alexeeva. She says there are three main stages of translation strategies: pre-translation text analysis, analytical search for translation equivalents and analysis of the translation results [10]. Such a treatment is correlated with the opinion by V.N. Komissarov, who said that the basis of translation strategy is "a number of basic units which a translator proceeds from, either consciously or unconsciously" [1; 239]. Among such basic units there are understanding of the source text, difference in content of the target text, and conformity to the norms of the target language.

To determine the degree of necessity for formulating translation strategy, the author of the article conducted an experiment with 24 students majoring in Translation Studies. The students were divided into two groups and each group was given a scientific informational text (250 words in total) to translate. The first group of students (11 people) translated the text without a prior formulation of translation strategy. The second group (13 people) formulated a translation strategy to select optimal methods of translation of the most difficult parts of the text. The number of errors, made by students of the first group, was one and a half times higher than those by the second group of students. The nature of errors is also different. In the first group there were mostly semantic errors, in the second group there were predominantly lexical errors: lexical incompetence, lexical incompatibility.

Below is given an example of a part of the source text which has caused the greatest difficulty in translation.

A part of the source text: *Researchers at the University of Washington have created genetically altered poplar trees that can break down trichloroethylene — the most common groundwater contaminant at U.S. Superfund sites — 100 times faster than can unaltered plants.*

Back translated text from Russian (Group 1): *Scientists at Washington University brought variety of genetically modified poplar trees, which is able to break down trichloroethylene, which is the most common contaminant of groundwater sources, at least in the United States* [hereinafter: translation errors are underlined].

Back translated text from Russian (Group 2): *Researchers at the University of Washington have created modified poplars that can break down trichloroethylene (the most common groundwater contaminant at U.S. Superfund sites) 100 times faster, in contrast with unaltered plants.*

This example shows that the students from the first group were unable to understand the source text because there was no clear translation strategy, they did not have an overall plan of action. Students translated intuitively, at random and it caused semantic errors that significantly distorted the pragmatic potential of the source text, thus it violated communication.

The third observation made is that some scholars refuse to use the term 'translation strategy' (e.g. R.K. Minjar-Beloruchev, A.G. Vitrenko). They explain it in the following way: the term is not defined fully, it means not a scientific but rather an ordinary concept, and therefore it does not correspond to the terminological requirements.

On the basis of the observations in the course of translation training, we cannot agree with the fact that the concept of "translation strategy" should be denied. Its formulation and description is needed especially during translation training. This enables a student to structure the theoretical knowledge of translation and to correlate the theory and practical skills.

From our point of view, *translation strategy* is a multi-stage program of translators' activity, emerging at a pre-translation stage with an account of the following aspects: purpose of communication, methods of translation (partially defined by the customer), type of text.

1. The Purpose of Communication. As S.V. Serebryakova believes, "the specific character of translation is determined to a greater extent by the fact that the translator performs an important social function of a mediator between multilingual and multicultural communities (or their representatives) [11]. Therefore, the translator must be able, firstly, to formulate correctly the communicative purpose of the source text, focusing on linguistic and cultural things, and secondly, he must be able to predict possible reactions of the recipient to the source text, since the majority of lexical units in the text contain connotative and associative meanings that influence perception. Formulating the purpose of communication will move to the second stage of translation strategy, i.e. selection of translation methods.

2. Translation Methods. The theory describes various translation methods for each type of translation. For example, translation distinguishes complete translation (semantic and communicative types) and summary translation (selective and functional types). Moreover, a translator has a number of tools (translation methods) to translate. To improve the translation quality and reduce the time of its performance, a translator should decide in advance which method to choose and what translation methods are to be applied to solve different translation problems. Such a choice cannot be made without taking into account the type of text.

3. The Type of Text. The theory of translation does not provide a universal text typology. But in the course of translation training we mainly use the classification by A. Neubert. He proposes to divide texts in descending order of pragmatic transferability: 1) texts aimed at a foreign audience (international treaties, statements for foreign press); 2) texts of universal value (scientific and technical literature, advertising copies); 3) texts of global cultural value (fiction); 4) texts specially aimed at a foreign audience (law documents, local press) [12]. Each text has its typical clichés, vocabulary and syntax that are recommended to be translated with certain methods. In addition, the typology of A. Neubert is convenient because a translator can easily and quickly determine the purpose of communication of a particular text, since text pragmatics is specified.

In summary, it is possible to indicate that translation strategy is a complex multi-dimensional concept, requiring comprehensive study. We agree with A.G. Vitrenko, who notes that "the place of translation strategy should be taken by an explicit operating model, a kind of translation algorithm" [9]. In this connection, the author attempts to formulate the translator's activity quality model, general parameters of which are briefly outlined in the beginning of this article.

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