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Russian Literature in the 20th Century English Translations the Problem of Cultural Context

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The article is dedicated to problems of the Russian literature translation into the English language, and, in particular, to the question of differences both in the content and forms transferring, which are caused by asymmetry within cross-cultural and cross-lingual communication. The author considers the reasons for loss of information which possesses special features of a fiction text, and in particular, of its esthetic, evaluational, emotive and expressive components. The difference between the Russian and English poetic traditions which in many cases explains the nature of transformation in translations of the 20th century is analyzed: when rhythmic and metric canon, sound imaginary, rhyme and other methods for the organization of artistic information in the poem are considered as something secondary, then the translated text seems to be a reproduction of lexis, i.e., in fact, poems are translated through prose or reconstructed with changes in original means of expression. As the result of such experiments, the Russian poetic text is translated with severe misrepresentations and does not create the whole concept of the original poetic idea. Such translations most drastically damage the works by such "musical poets" as Anna Akhmatova and Osip Mandelstam. By analyzing the processes accompanying the translation, the author addresses to complications, coming from cultural components, i.e. from the necessity to take into consideration a wide cultural and historical context. Regarding this fact, the author also focuses on such a method of compensation for the lost meanings as translation notes and comments.

Keywords: hyper-informativity, asymmetry of interlingual communication, cultural context, intercultural asymmetry, translator's comment.

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Introduction

A demand for the Russian classic literature in foreign cultures provide us with insight into the character of requirements, interpretations and reading variants, and specifically regarding attitudes towards particular writers and works.

Many authors and works still take the central stage even at this moment. For example, "Idiot" by F.M. Dostoyevsky or "Anna Karenina" by L. N. Tolstoy have been reflected in various languages of the world: they have been translated, in particular, not less than into 8-10 leading

European languages, provided that sometimes a number of translations for one and the same work can appear almost simultaneously or, quite occasionally, a period between translations may count for decades.

In order to describe, what exact translation product is read by recipients of the Russian literature and why there are such a great multiplicity in translation of one and the same author or work, we should remember some specific features of literary translation.

Information criteria of the literary translation

Within this type of translation emotive and appraisive as well as expressive and esthetic information prevails over the object-logical one, increasing the informational depth and intention of the text: the feature which M. Yu. Lotman defined as “hyper-informativeness”, noting that “the fiction text has one more specific feature: it gives different information to different readers according to their level of interpretation” (Lotman 1970, 33). In comparison with non-fiction (documentary) literature, these texts are based on invention, they are aimed at creation of a certain mental state, image that would combine the object-logical information with the emotive and appraisive one: a reader lively (as well as quite differently) imagine those things which are absent in the reality, and the biggest part of such reconstructed character depends not only (and not so much) on regular meanings of the language units settled in the collective and individual speech practice, than on the degree of the language expressiveness.

This feature of art texts presents the main problem in translation since the language sign emphasis is important not so much per se, as it is not a decoration, but it determines the very essence of these texts: they possess information not about the reality, but about some fiction, about

things which are absent in the real environment, i.e. the reader is involved into some pretended reality. The information processed by a translator, is essentially not direct information about the existing world, but mediated information concerning the author’s world view (Kazakova, 2006, 36). The world of art – the Picture of objects, events, relations – is scenery of an absent world created by the author’s imagination and talented usage of expressive linguistic means. This non-existing and only verbally created world is aimed at being reconstructed by the translator through means of the other language. In order to build such image in readers’ mind one need a very powerful influence: language signs should be selected and organized in such a way that they could involve all the resources of perception: not only the mental and also emotional state, in order to make the reader “to cry aloud over the imagery”.

The choice of means useful implementing a translation strategy can crash into a number of challenges, both cross-linguistic and cross-cultural ones. The initial challenge appears at the level of different methods of the source text reconstruction. These methods (genres, types, kinds of texts, including experimental forms) mainly predetermine three spheres of the literary translation: translation of fiction prose, poetry and folklore. The most significant type of translation is dealing with a memorio-publicistic prose, which, on the one hand, is definitely artistic element, but, on the other hand – it implies not a fiction but real events.

Considering variation of artistic information within the individual perception, these terms complicate the translation task, since apart from the search for object-logical inter-language correlations there is a need for evaluation of the degree of expressiveness of original signs and search for the equivalence in these degrees. The profession obliges to have a good command in both

languages, including style registers, traditions in literature, knowledge of text composition that should be identified in even the source text, and more generally – to control asymmetry within the cross-lingual communication (Ryabtseva 2013, 126-127), i.e. different cultural traditions, historically determined attitudes towards this or that way of expression, in other words – regarding all those emotive-evaluational-expressive associations that accompany with the language sign or text form in different cultures and can be identified by the recipient according to their experience. In fact, the only objective characteristic within the processing of literary information in translation is not the source text itself, since being a psychosemiotic phenomenon (Sorokin 2004, 31-32) it undergoes a strong pragmatic influence from the translator within his doubled “I-concept” (i.e. possesses a “resistant character”), but system-related principles of information ordering peculiar to the text (Kazakova 2006, 34, 189).

The conflict of verses traditions in poetry translation

Translation of the Russian poetry into the English language in the context of the modern culture is complexified by the fundamentally different attitude to traditional poetic forms, in particular, to such ways of poetic expressions as rhyme, sound imagery, rhythmic and metric rules, etc. Many of translators are sure that “verses with rhyme” is a matter of popular songs, congratulations, chants and other variants of a “low genre”, whereas the great poetry need only *verlibre*. As the result, quite often the Russian poets are translated in a different way, lacking so called decorations and pushing closer to ordinary speech intonation. Moreover, the English verse, according to literary critics (Baring, 1960: 70), was developed on the basis of Latin tradition, i.e. was biased towards intensification, hyper-density

in lines, what is entirely corresponds with the briefness of the middle size of English words. The Russian verse tradition was mainly based on the Greek type of verse creation, and despite the acceptance of rhythmic and metric rules, was always different by flexibility and “vastness”. That basic distinction between verses tradition created and still creates challenges for both translation of the Russian poetry and its perception by readers. Those few Russian poets who wrote their poems in the English language (Brodsky, for example) or translated their own works into English, faced with the fact that readers considered these texts to be dull and highly straight. At the same time, the prosaic translation (the most closets to the text) seems to be more preferable. Still, the translator put out of account the fact that in poetry forms and content are closely interconnected: in fact, there is no content without the form; there is a change in image meaning of the text, since it lack not just additional information, but also the information quite often appeared to be crucial for the text. If there is no melody in the verse, so there is no verse at all. Especially it relates to such poets as Akhmatova and Mandelshtam, to those, who are the poets of voice, of musical verse.

Among the most popular and most translated Russian poets one can name Anna Akhmatova. In these translations we can see both cross-lingual and cross-cultural challenges. Here is the English example of the famous poem “Smuglii otrok brodil po alleyam” translated by S. Sandler (Sandler, 2004):

Смуглый отрок бродил по аллеям, У озёрных грустил берегов, И столетие мы лелеем Еле слышный шелест шагов. Иглы сосен густо и колко	The dark-skinned boy wandered through the avenues, Felt sad by the shores of the lake, And for a century now we have cherished The barely heard rustling of his footsteps. Thick and prickly, pine needles
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Устилают низкие Cover the low stumps...
пни...
Здесь лежала его Here lay his tricorn hat
треуголка
И растрёпанный том And his tattered volume
Парни. of Parny.

Here we can see another Akhmatova. Apart from differences in poetic form (there are no rhymes, sound imagery, well-known Akhmatov's accentual verse), we can identify discrepancies in lexis and style determining the other image, or to be more precise, another attitude towards the image of young Pushkin. In this sense the crucial element here is the word "otrok" (eng. "young boy"). The historic development of the word can significantly change the meaning. Quite frequently, dictionaries disorientate the translator since they offer only one modern meaning, excepting rare cases of their use. Akhmatova (as Pushkin in his times) prefer using archaic vocabulary: in this poem the word "malchik" (eng. "small boy") would formally be more appropriate in the metric sense, but Akhmatova used this word considering its historical meanings and thus creating the image of not only young Pushkin, but also the distance in time, filled with the whole means of connotations. From the historical point of view, the word "otrok" meant not only a "child of 7-12 years old" as it can be judged by the modern dictionary. It was used also in different cases: a young warrior in knyaz's armed forces; recruit; young bachelor; teen-man marked with Divine Grace. The modern speech does not find any place for these meanings, but the poetry preserves them, although they are found only in such explanatory dictionaries. The English word "boy" does not match any of these historical meanings, and the method of archaisms which add lyrical nature to the image, turns out to be lost.

Steenly Kunitz translates this poem in quite a different way (Poems of Akhmatova 1967):

Pushkin
A swarthy youth rambled
By the forlorn lakeshore.
A century passes, and we hear
His crackle on the path.

Pine needles, thick, thorny,
Bury the stumps of the trees...
Here lay his tricorn hat,
His dog-eared verses by Parny.

In this variant (unlike other academic translators, Kunitz is a famous poet) one can find an interesting attempt to create some kind of analogy to the source accentual verses, but regarding the traditions of English poems and readers' expectations. The translator even uses the word "youth" to present the original meaning of the word "otrok". Nevertheless, the modern English language when this word is used for one man it obtains slightly negative and ironic meanings: "You'd rather read the textbook, youth!". Differences in lexis are also seen in the description of the following situation: "my leylem/Ele slyshny shelest shagov". Eliminating the sound image, this description is transformed into precisely opposite meaning: "we hear his crackle"¹ / "on the path".

The Russian prose in English translations: "Master and Margarita"

One of the less studied features of the literary translation is known as multiplicity translations. The common factors of this phenomenon are not as evident within translation of the Russian prose as it seems to be. The number of translations of one and the same literary work does not depend on time, or any cultural value of the text, or on the degree of its popularity in the source and target culture, or on the degree of accuracy in translation. For example, there is only one semicentennial

English translation of the novel “Doctor Zhivago” by Boris Pasternak, while its contemporary “Master and Margarita” by Mikhail Bulgakov has already had a dozen of translations made within the last 50 years (in average, only new English translations of this novel appear in every five years). So, why is it “Master and Margarita” that has become the most translated Russian works of the 20th century? Since its very first appearance in the 1966, it has been translated merely into the English language ten times: from the first variant by M. Glenny (1967) till the very last one by M. Karpelson (2011). “Master and Margarita”, one of the flagship novel of the 20th century in Russia, was first published almost 30 years after Bulgakov’s death, in 1966-1967, in “Moskva” journal (in quite a short form, without the final chapter and other abbreviations). The reader learnt about the full variant of the novel only in 1973; there are a lot of films and theatre performances; there is a whole world called “Masteriana” in the Russian language that includes encyclopedias, biographies, articles, books, thesis and etc.

What has caused such a great number of translations? The complex form – a novel within the novel? But it is almost non-translatable since it is based on the play of stylistic registers of the Russian language. A paradox: an Eastern novel in the Soviet Moscow? Again, this paradox with its allusion combination of the Christian and Soviet devilry is missed in the other cultures, since it has one more character beyond – Moscow, together with its streets, buildings, citizens and traditions – with all what is called a “historical memory”. What is the price of attempts to translate satiric Bulgakov’s phrases which have become idioms in the Russian speech: “*Lydi kak lydi. Vot tolko kvartirny vopros ikh isportil*”; “*Ya litso otvetsvennoye*”; “*Osetrina ne pervoy svezhesti*” and etc. Being one of the most important elements in the whole novel, grotesque cannot be translated particularly that it is based

on the cultural phenomena: from the ordinary elements of NEP (a bottle of oil, communal flats, drinking bout, restaurant, caricatures of writers in “Griboyedov”, blacksheesh) to fantastic fiction (Devil’s ball, Margarita and Natasha riding over brooms to Lysaya Gora) and religious narrations (Pontius Pilate trial and Crucifixion) and cosmic heights (Woland flying with his people like dark clouds in the sky). Many of Soviet words which are as a rule translated by transliteration and calquing (*MASSOLIT, Torgsin, upravdom*), are desemantized in thus lose their emotional and evaluation connotations which highly damages to the artistic content. These losses are most significant in the respect to allusions (*Dom Griboyeodva, nekhoroshaya kvartira, ischezayut lydi, sumashedshiy dom*). Considering the vast amount of English translations of this novel, the researchers often try to identify the best variant, but, quite reasonably these attempts turn down to even more questions. Such common “pros and cons” can be seen in M. Charles’s words: “there’s very little to decide between the Pevear-Volokhonsky and Burgin-O’Connor versions; they say pretty much the same thing in slightly different ways. Glenny’s is the outlier. His translation seems easier to read, but the ease may come at the expense of exactitude. Personally I’m not sure how much that matters; I can live with a translation that loses a few details, even if Bulgakov himself might grumble” (Charles 2009). His opinion reflects the demand for the average reader: they prefer soft translation, even if it is not so much accurate and has some omissions.

**Comments in translation
as a way to cope with cross-lingual
and cross-cultural asymmetry**

Almost all the translator except Glenny, try to repair losses of the culturally determined information and achieve optimum accuracy by using comments. The comment may include

comparison either of linguistic or cultural features of the source and target signs. Some comments function as “defense” for the translator, confessing that: “I have under-translated here, but it is impossible due to some factors independent of my abilities, though I have done my best”. Such structure of comments is caused by cross-lingual and cross-cultural differences which are not mentioned in dictionaries. One of translators of “Master and Margarita” (Diana Birdgin) suggest the oddest (and not typical for translators of the Russian literature) comment to the translation of the word “pilatchina”:

Pilatism: the Russian here has the suffix -china, which is hard to convey in English, but is extremely insulting.

This comment significantly broaden the sign field of the translated word *Pilatism*, neutral in its meaning, which is quite effective in translation of the contextual meaning in the aspect of the source presupposition (the word is used as a term in the system of implicit bad language applied in ideological labeling): in the source text this term is used by critics who arranged a persistent campaign in press for Master. Here we deal with the comparison of two morphologic abilities of expressiveness in both languages. Certainly, in this case only expressive features of the suffix are commented: the comment introduces information about the existence of some lexical and grammatical paradigm adding the “sense of offensiveness”, though the paradigm itself stays outside the system of other-cultural coordinates, and thus loses its satiric power.

The other example of such comment (within the same translation) addresses to the content differences: the Russian word “bufetchik” is translated as *bartender* with the additional comment: “This word in Russian, bufetchik, does not have an English equivalent. The buffet in a Russian theatre has both liquor and food,

and the bufetchik would be both bartender and manager”.

This interesting comment still is not so much relevant for the understanding of the text – it only adds secondary information to the target text. Such comment performs not only explanatory but also cognitive function, and consequently pushes out the borders of the sign field defined by the source sign. Moreover, by adding some missing conceptual components to the translated sign, the translator “makes it heavier” to some degree, burdening the propositional part of this element in the text: the perception gets up for a deeper semiosis, which is not always correspond to the true role of the commented sign.

Quite often translators fall back on the other type of comments, complementing the object-logical or evaluational information (not always objective one), in a particular way forming and directing the reader’s perception and liberally guiding their interpretation. The variety of such comments one can track by comparing different translations of “Master and Margarita” by M. A. Bulgakov. For example, there are two different comments accompanying the name “Ivan Bezdomny”. Richard Pevear translates it as *Ivan Homeless* and comments it in the following way: “Many “proletarian” writers adopted such pen-names, the most famous being Alexei Peshkov, who called himself Maxim Gorky (“gorky” meaning “bitter”)”.

Diana Bergin uses a transliteration *Bezdomny*, but writes the following neutral comment: “This name literally means “Homeless,” and brings to mind an entire series of famous pseudonyms, starting with Maxim Gorky (“the Bitter”) and ending with Demyan Bedny (“the Poor”)”.

It is easy to see that the tone (the degree of objectiveness) of these comments is different: Pevear thinks it is possible to include translation evaluations such as quotes (“proletarian”) and an ironic “demotion” of Gorky (Alexei Peshkov, who

called himself Maxim Gorky). As the result the whole comment sounds sarcastically, contains a shade of neglect, that allow us to consider it as relatively subjective cognitive type. Bergin prefer more objective strategy: she speaks about the “plurality of famous nicknames in the literature”, without including any evaluations. According to this nature the comment can be analyzed as relatively objective cognitive type.

Meanwhile, in this case translators have large amount of materials which is included in different studies dedicated to Bulgakov and his novel, and which is more precise and thus more reasonable both from the cognitive and communicative and pragmatic points of view. In particular, in understanding the name “Bezdomny”, the most crucial information is presented by researchers in studies of the prototype for satiric image of an untalented poet: according to several proves (reflected in “Bulgakov’s Encyclopedia” by B.V. Sokolov) this prototype is represented by a “poet Aleksander Ilyich Bezymensky (1898 – 1973) whose nickname-surname has been impersonated into Bezdomny” (Sokolov, 1996). But none of the translation comments in “Master and Margarita” this information has not been included: presumably, due to the fact that the poet Bezymensky is unfamiliar to the English readers, though as well as Demian Bedny.

Strategies for translation of allusions and intertextual relations

The most considerable obstacles occur in translations due to citations, complex stylistic units, word plays and allusions, etc. Literary comments, as a rule, perform communicative function, specifically directing the reader’s attention or focusing them on particular signs in the text. These comments are especially fraught with semiotic complications, since the translator can diverge from the straight nature of the translated and commented sign, or miscalculate

its role in the context of the source culture or text work: as the result, the sign loses its meaning. Let’s compare two comments to the phrase “Vylezay, proklyaty gans!” (when Woland says it to Begemot) in different translations of “Master and Margarita”:

Bergin: “Come out of there, accursed Gans – i.e., *Fool – die Gans in German – literally, goose*”.

Pevear: “Come out, you, confounded Hans! – Like Jack, Jean or Ivan in the folk-tales of their countries, the Hans of German tales is ... considered a fool (though he usually winds up with the treasure and princess for his bride)”.

Considering that this phrase in the novel is addressed to Begemot acting as a fool, and then obviously, Pevear is much closer to the original. If only because *die Gans* does not mean “a goose”, but a “she-geese”, and the German word does not have the meaning of “fool” being used in the word combination *die dumme Gans* – “foolish little goose/girl”. Whereas, *der Hans* is a real equivalent to “fool”, “Ivan-the-fool”, to the folklore character. Thus, despite typical for Pevear ironic additions in brackets, this comment has a prove for wider cultural truth, in comparison with *die Gans* – which according to the translator herself, lacks the meaning, and her comment reflects insufficient knowledge of the translator and could mislead the recipient. It is interesting to note, that misinterpretation of this word was included into the comment in the later translation by Aplin.

As the example of the whole complex of cross-lingual and cross-cultural complications we can consider a short abstract taken from the 6th chapter, where as it might be seen one cannot do without comments. Still, the notes suggested by translators turn out to be even unnecessary. In this part a proletarian poet Ryukhin sees from the truck a “metal man” standing on the pedestal. A strange idea occurred in his mind then: “*Vot primer*

nastojashhei udachlivosti... – tut Ryukhin vstal vo ves' rost na platforme gruzovika i ruku podnyal, napadya zACHEM-to na nikogo ne trogayushhego chugunnogo cheloveka, – kakoi by shag on ni sdelal v zhizni, chto by ni sluchilos' s nim, vse shlo emu na pol'zu, vse obraschalo k ego slave! No chto on sdelal? Ja ne ponimayu... Chto-nibud osobennoe est v etih slovah: «Burya mgloyu...»? Neponimayu!.. Povezlo, povezlo! – vdrugyadovito zaklyuchil Ryuhin i pochuvstvoval, chto gruzovik pod nim shevelnulsya, – strelyal, strelyal v nego etot belogvardeets i razdrobil bedro i obespechil bessmertie...”

Glenny translates avoiding any explanation and following the wordline of the source text, as so the allusive nature of this abstract is completely lost: *“Right near him stood a metal man on a plinth, his head inclined slightly forward, staring blankly down the street. Strange thoughts assailed the poet, who was beginning to feel ill. ‘Now there’s an example of pure luck.’ – Ryukhin stood up on the lorry’s platform and raised his fist in an inexplicable urge to attack the harmless cast-iron man--’ . . . everything he did in life, whatever happened to him, it all went his way, everything conspired to make him famous! But what did he achieve? I’ve never been able to discover . . . What about that famous phrase of his that begins ‘A storm of mist. . .’? What a load of rot! He was lucky, that’s all, just lucky!’ – Ryukhin concluded venomously, feeling the lorry start to move under him, ‘and just because that White officer shot at him and smashed his hip, he’s famous for ever . . .”*

As usual, Glenny’s translation has no comments, that is why the reader can only guess, who is that “a metal man on a plinth”, what does the phrase “A storm of mist” mean and why “that White officer shot somebody; but the association with Pushkin’s life leaves the recipient’s perception, since the first line of the

poem presents a cultural invariant for the Russian reader, and its word-for-word translation is not sufficient for the intertextual identification. It is interesting to note, that according to surveys in Harvard University, Glenny’s translation is the most popular one among American readers, although it is flooded with such a “mysterious intertexts” and the biggest part of Bulgakov’s irony is lost. All the following translators add to the main text of this chapter more or less wide comments.

Pevear: *“Riukhin raised his head and saw that very close to him on a pedestal stood a metal man, his head inclined slightly, gazing at the boulevard with indifference. Some strange thoughts flooded the head of the ailing poet. ‘There’s an example of real luck...’ – Here Riukhin rose to his full height on the flatbed of the truck and raised his arm, for some reason attacking the cast-iron man who was not bothering anyone. ‘Whatever step he made in his life, whatever happened to him, it all turned to his benefit, it all led to his glory! But what did he do? I can’t conceive... Is there anything special in the words: ‘The snowstorm covers...’? I don’t understand! Luck, sheer luck!’ – Riukhin concluded with venom, and felt the truck moving under him. ‘He shot him, that white guard shot him, smashed his hip, and assured his immortality...”*

This translation by Pevear is accompanied by the most extensive comment: *“a metal man: This is the poet Pushkin, whose statue stands in Strastnaya (renamed Pushkin) Square. ‘The snowstorm covers’ is the beginning of Pushkin’s much-anthologized poem ‘The Snowstorm’. The reference to ‘that white guard’ is anachronistic here. The White Guard opposed the Bolsheviks (‘Reds’) during the Russian civil war in the early twenties. Pushkin was fatally wounded in the stomach during a duel with Baron Georges D’Anthes, an Alsatian who served in the Russian Imperial Horse Guard. Under the Soviet*

regime the term ‘white guard’ was a pejorative accusation, which was levelled against Bulgakov himself after the publication of his novel, *The White Guard*, and the production of his play, *Days of the Turbins*, based on the novel. In having Riukhin talk with Pushkin’s statue, Bulgakov parodies the ‘revolutionary’ poet Vladimir Mayakovsky (1893-1930), whose poem *Yubileinoe* was written in 1924 on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of Pushkin’s birth”. As it might seem to be such exhaustive explanations should make the text more clear, but the main disadvantage of any translation comments – loads of the objective information – is accompanied here with non-relevant evaluational information that is literary deform the ironic character of allusions of that kind which is presented in the source text. Such a multiple-word addition makes the reader to know some historic facts, including non-relevant, i.e. those which are not related to the episode, but this translation lacks expressivity.

In Aplin’s variant, the text is transformed once again together with the other variant for the line from Pushkin’s verse: *“Ryukhin raised his head and saw ever so close to him stood a metal man on a pedestal, his head slightly inclined, looking dispassionately at the boulevard. Some strange thoughts surged into the head of the sick poet. “There’s an example of real luckiness...” At this point Ryukhin stood up straight on the back of the truck and raised his hand, for some reason attacking the cast-iron man who was harming no one. “Whatever step he took in life, whatever happened to him, everything was to his advantage, everything worked towards his fame’. But what did he do? I don’t get it... Is there something special about those words: ‘Stormy darkness’? I don’t understand! He was lucky, lucky!” Ryukhin suddenly concluded venomously, and felt that the truck beneath him had stirred. “That White Guard, he shot,*

he shot at him, smashed his hip to pieces and guaranteed his immortality...”

This translation is also followed by comments of mainly a neutral nature; and although they include additional information, they do not contain any individual evaluation that has been marked in Pevear’s translation: *“Metal man on a pedestal: The monument to Alexander Pushkin by A.M. Opekushin (1838 – 1923), officially unveiled in 1980; Stormy darkness: The opening words of Pushkin’s poem of 1825 ‘A Winter’s Evening’; White Guard...immortality: Pushkin died following a duel in January 1837 with Georges d’Anthes (1812 – 1895), whose social position as the adopted son of an ambassador made him the pre-revolutionary equivalent of an anti-Bolshevik White Guard”*.

This plentitude of comments to translation of M. Bulgakov’s work is quite reasonable, since the novel is full of allusions, hints, intertextual relations; the Russian cultural invariants including the attitude towards the Soviet life of the 1929 (to the period of NEP and the beginning of “disappearances” from “bad flats”) are quite hard to not only be translated, but also be perceived in a form of the foreign language and culture. If we take a look at today’s Internet forums, at increasing way of communication and publication, so with a naked eye we can note dispersed opinions about English translations: some people prefer Glenny’s variant as the “smoothest” one; other like the most English text by Bergin; the third ones highly appreciate as being more exact and accurate versions by Peavear and Karpelson; there are also fans of Ginsburg’ translation and of many others. Still, their argumentation comes down to stylistic details, syntax, to dynamism of narration, Jerusalemite components – there is almost no interest to endnotes, phantasmagoria of the Soviet reality, so thoroughly and detailed reconstructed by the author in this outstanding novel.

Conclusion

At the example of differences and complications in a vast variety of translations of Akhmatova's works and one of the most famous novels of the 20th century, one can find a particular correlation between the pursuance of accuracy and diversity in translation decisions. This correlation regards not only external cross-lingual relations, but mainly,

the comparison of literary and art traditions, cross-cultural differences, personal and collective valuation and demands, mentality and system of values. On other words, such multiplicity in translations of the Russian literature reflects the degree of translator's insight into the information depth of fiction texts and ability to refer with it their personal and collective experience.

¹ The translator uses a non-appropriate word crackle which according to the Oxford Dictionary of the English Language means "a sound made up of a rapid succession of short sharp noises".

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Русская литература в английских переводах XX века: проблема культурного контекста

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В статье затрагиваются проблемы перевода русской литературы на английский язык, в частности, разночтений как в отношении содержания, так и в передаче формы текста, обусловленных асимметричностью межъязыковой и межкультурной коммуникации. Рассматриваются причины потери информации, составляющей особенности художественного текста, в том числе ее эстетических, оценочных, эмотивных и экспрессивных компонентов. Анализируется различие русской и английской традиций стихосложения, во многом определяющее характер трансформации при переводе русской поэзии XX века на английский язык, когда ритмометрический канон, звукопись, рифма и иные способы стихотворного упорядочения художественной информации рассматриваются как нечто второстепенное и переводной текст представляет собой воспроизведение словесного состава, то есть, в сущности, стихи либо переводятся прозой, либо реконструируются с изменениями авторских средств выразительности. В результате таких переводческих экспериментов русский поэтический текст передается с серьезными искажениями и не дает полного представления о поэтической мысли оригинала. Особенно страдают от такого перевода произведения наиболее «музыкальных» поэтов, как Анна Ахматова или Осип Мандельштам. Анализируя процессы, сопровождающие перевод прозы, мы обращаемся к осложнениям, вызванным культурно-обусловленными компонентами, то есть необходимостью учета широкого культурно-исторического контекста. В связи с этим фактором рассматривается такой способ компенсации утраченных смыслов, как переводческие примечания и комментарии.

Ключевые слова: гиперинформативность, асимметричность межъязыковой коммуникации, культурный контекст, межкультурная асимметрия, переводческий комментарий.

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