Russian "Strong" Text in "Other" Cultures: Semantic Matching and Deviation

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The transmission of information complex of a literary text in the process of interlingual translation involves mandatory information variability in secondary texts. Aesthetic and cultural value of the key ("strong") texts of national literatures and cultures demands the translator to select the translation strategies, which permit to convey the information of the original, accumulated in translation units, in the most accurate way. A special group of such units is presented by culturonyms. The culturonyms from the original Russian text and European translation of "Eugene Onegin" are analysed in the present article as examples.

Keywords: literary translation, "strong" text, culturonym, translation compliance, "Eugene Onegin".

Research area: philology.

Introduction

As literary texts are both the traditional storages and the generators (according to Yu.M. Lotman) of aesthetic and cultural information, they hold a special place in the national and world cultural spaces. It is well known that in some cultures the priority of archiving, translating and generating cultural information, as well as implementing aesthetic meanings belongs to written literary texts mainly. One of the most vivid examples of literocentrism is Russian culture, while it is literary texts that play the leading role in preserving its cultural peculiarity and intercultural influence and interaction. The representatives of "other" cultures try to get to know the multidimensional Russian culture, study the mysterious Russian soul, get to know Russian household activities and learn the centuries-long history of Russia through the texts of Russian literature. Another special feature of Russian culture and literature, correspondingly, is their traditional place at the somewhat cultural crossing between West and East, which determines Russia's special place in the world cultural and literary space. Russian literary texts are involved in the intensive translation process of the western and the eastern directions, which requires solving translation tasks due to the cultural and typological characteristics of the target languages.

Literary Text as Information Storage and Generator

Literary text archives, stores, translates and generates the aesthetic and cultural information not only in its original form, but also in various

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secondary forms. Moreover, literary text is highly capable of generating secondary texts [Lotman 1992: 200]. Within its (linguo)culture, the source text may have such secondary versions as periphrasis, parody and stylization [Verbitskaia 2000; Kuz'mina 1999]. Among secondary texts generated in their cultural and linguistic spaces, the texts created as a result of diachronic interlingual translation – translation of the text written in the period previous to the translation into modern language – takes a special place. Such modernizing translation makes the texts created in earlier historical periods and in earlier language forms available for the next generations of readers. Another significant and extensive group of secondary forms of the source literary text is the forms created as a result of interlingual translation.

The axiom of the literary translation studies is as follows: the priority objective of the interlingual literary translation is to transfer the aesthetic meaning of the source text in the target text, allowing the latter to create an aesthetic effect similar to the aesthetic effect of the source text. The aesthetic meaning and cultural information preserved in translation due to the translator's efforts by using corresponding strategies, methods and techniques are the objects of perception and understanding by the respondent of the literary message (reader). It is important for understanding (decoding) of the aesthetic meaning of the literary text if the author and the reader of the text posess common cultural infromation and cultural memory, which is directly determined by their belonging to one or close (linguo)cultures, and similar aesthetic preferences.

Looking at the problematics of the literary translation studies from the position of the cultural kindred and what is especially important, cultural construction, A. Lefevere made the hypothesis of the textual grids and paid attention of theorists

and practicing translators to the importance and necessity of considering the place of the source text in the grid of the "source" culture and the possible position of the translation in the grid of the target ("other") culture [Bassnett, Lefevere 1998]. The researcher believed that there do exist cultures with the textual grids, which regularly demonstrated significant concurrence. As a result, the source text and the target text occupy pretty similar places (in the center or on the fringes) in the textual grids of the source and target cultures. Such an approach allows to assume that the "giving (donor)" culture and the recipient culture have not only textual, but what is important, cultural grids interacting in the intercultural space. Certain concurrence of the textual and cultural grids gives evidence that some modern cultures in the distant past could have had a common cultural source, which allows them to preserve a certain similarity. Thus, for most modern cultures of Europe such a common source is (without any doubt) the ancient culture – the universal basis of the modern European civilization. On the other hand, some cultures have unique textual grids, the structures of which show no analogues and are characterized by primordial homogeneity and closeness (impermeability) [Bassnett, Lefevere 1998: 14]. Many oriental cultures are traditionally homogeneous, which is directly due to the peculiarities of their historical, economic and, of course, cultural development.

Literary texts located in the nodes of textual and cultural grids and maintaining the persistence ("rigidity") of "their" cultures, form the kernel part of national cultures. A. Lefevere considered the kernel texts of literature as the cultural capital. After N.A. Kuz'mina such texts may be determined as "strong" texts, while they traditionally possess a high energetic potential, have a large audience, constantly share their energy with readers and receive energy from readers, which is many times strengthened due to

the informational resonance with other "strong" texts of their and other cultures [Kuz'mina 2009: 68-71]. It is the "strong" texts of literature that are regular objects of literary translation making the translation an important and responsible intercultural communicative event.

"Eugene Onegin" as Cultural Capital

The novel in verse "Eugene Onegin" by A.S. Pushkin undoubtedly belongs to the national heritage of Russian culture. This Pushkin's text is in the treasury of Russian and world cultures and is of the utmost and constant interest for the representatives of different nations and generations. Translations of "Eugene Onegin" (both interlingual and intersemiotic, according to R.O. Jakobson) form one of the broadest centers of translation attraction [Razumovskaya 2011] with synchronous and diachronous dimensions. As the "strong" text of Russian culture, this Pushkin's text contains diverse cultural and aesthetic information. One cannot but agree with V.G. Belinsky who defined the novel as "an encyclopedia of Russian life". But Russian life is presented in the text not in isolation but in a broader cultural context, reflecting the direct and indirect cultural ties of Russia in the first third of the 19th century. Both "Russianness" and clear multiculturalism of Pushkin's text are harmoniously integrated into the global cultural space and preserve the unfading interest for the readers of the source text and translations for almost two hundred years. Let us emphasize that for the world cultural space it is not only the text of the novel (the "strong" text of Russian culture) that is important, but also the personality of the author and its perception in the "other" cultures. An interesting example is the perception of the Russian poet in Polish culture. T. Venclova (a modern Lithuanian poet, translator and literature theorist; in 1947 his father A. Venclova translated

"Eugene Onegin" into Lithuanian) believes that the attitude towards the Russian poet in Poland is a symbol of Polish-Russian relations. The biographical and creative parallelism of A.S. Pushkin and Adam Mickiewicz and a complicated history of the personal relationship of the outstanding contemporary poets made A.S. Pushkin inevitably "other" for Polish culture [Venclova 2009].

The existence of a significant amount of the novel translations into various languages of the world and the presence of many more than one target language translation indicates a high degree of polytextuality and polilinguality of Pushkin's text. Translations of the novel that have been created during the period of almost two hundred years, have different popularity, an art form (poetry or prose), completeness of the source text translation (full-text translations, separate chapters and fragments). Each translation, without any doubt, has distinctive characteristics and features, while the source text is one of the most perfect and unique works of A.S. Pushkin and certainly one of the most difficult texts for interpretation in any foreign language [Alekseev 1964; Lotman 1995]. The uniqueness of the source text is due to the history of the text's creation, storylines and composition, system of personalities and artistic images, peculiar poetic form (Onegin stanza), as well as the variety of topics covered in the novel. The list of topics is so broad that there was a place even for the theme of translation. Thus, Chapter Four of the novel ends with the following lines: *Но жалок тот, кто все предвидит, Чья не кружится голова, Кто все движенья, все слова В их переводе ненавидит, Чье сердце опыт остудил И забываться запретил!*

It is likely that Pushkin's genius foresaw the long life of the text not only in the original Russian language form, but also in the forms of other languages and other cultural spaces.

In 1855, it was written about the last novel by A.S. Pushkin: "If 'The Bronze Horseman' is so close to the heart of every Russian, if the course of the whole poem is so connected with the history and poem of the city of St. Petersburg – then still the poem is not the heritage of Russia alone, it will be appreciated, understood and recognized as the great poem wherever there are people who can understand the elegance of <...> 'The Bronze Horseman' is available to everyone, a European piece of art" [Druzhinin 1987: 52]. The ability of "The Bronze Horseman" to be adequately perceived by representatives of "other" languages and cultures determined by A.V. Druzhinin and the evaluation of the poem as a significant cultural phenomenon for Europe can be projected on other Pushkin's texts, among which a special place belongs to "Eugene Onegin".

"Eugene Onegin" as a Translation Object

Let us note once again that turning of translators to the outstanding text of A.S. Pushkin in different epochs and in different cultures has resulted in the emergence of foreign-language translations of a varying quality. The text of "Eugene Onegin" has been repeatedly and variously translated. Nevertheless, the quality of translations offered to the readers was often very low. K.I. Chukovsky wrote about the least successful translated versions in the article "Onegin in a Foreign Land" that translators had turned Pushkin's novel in verse "into a cheap set of smooth, hollow, hackneyed phrases" [Chukovsky 1988].

A well-known metaphor describes the translated literary text as a kind of reflection in the "mirror" of the translation language and culture. Inevitably, the question arises what reflection could be seen in the "mirror". There is no doubt that the formal and informational continuum of the literary text finds its reflection in translation.

Thus, Yu.M. Lotman noted: "The idea is not hidden in any, even well chosen quotations, but is expressed throughout the literary structure as a whole. A researcher who does not understand this and is looking for the idea in some quotes is like a man who, having learned that the house has a layout, begins to break the walls down in search for the place where the layout is immured. The layout is not immured in the walls, but is implemented in the proportions of the building. The layout is the idea of the architect, the building structure is its implementation" [Lotman 1996: 37]. Thus, the carrier of aesthetic information is not only the content of the text, but also its form, to be more precise, the formal and informational complex (continuum) of the literary text. The form and content of the poetic text are a monolithic super interconnected unity, in which the content is the logical and harmonious continuation of the form, and the form has an obvious ability to explicate the content. Metaphorically speaking, the poetic text has some hieroglyphic features, which reflect our hieroglyphic consciousness, and has several levels of perception: the level of natural language, the rhetorical level (the level of ideas, images) and the symbolic level [Nesterov 2002; Rymar' 2004]. Such semantic multilayering involves the gradual perception of the information contained in the texts, which results in the ambiguous perception of such texts by readers. Each unit, each element of the poetic fabrics have binding features of hypersemantization and multifunctionality. With the help of the text units, as well as the links between them, encoding of individual meaning and aesthetic experience of the author occurs, and the subsequent decoding of this meaning and emotional experience by the reader of the poetic text. In the translation aspect, the transmission of the source literary text information in translation is inseparably connected with the objectives of reconstruction of the dominant meaning of the source text [Pishchal'nikova 1992], as well as

with the problems of determining the translation units. There is no doubt that the volume (size) of the translation units may range from the smallest phonosemantic units [Voronin, Pago 1995] to the whole text of the literary work (especially poetic).

Returning to the metaphor of the "mirror", it should be noted that the reflection of the source literary text in the translation language and culture would not be a resulting homogeneous image, but a heterogeneous image seeking homogeneity. This requires careful "assembly" of the image-reflection out of the translation equivalents of different levels. One of the most important translation equivalents is set at the level of culturonymes, which are the regular carriers of cultural and aesthetic information and are considered as regular translation units. Pushkin's text is full of culturonyms of different types (xenonyms, polyonyms and idionyms according to V.V. Kabakchi). Translation of idionyms as the carriers of cultural information of "their" culture (and considered to be regular translation units), is essential to preserve Russian national features in the foreign-language description of Russian culture.

Semantic Matching and Deviation of Novel's Culturonyms

Analysis has shown that mismatches are found in translations when traditional concepts of Russian culture are translated. Thus, in Chapter Five, there is one of the most enigmatic and mysterious places of the novel: the dream of Tatiana, who has repeatedly been studied by literature experts, linguists, specialists in semiotics and cultural studies. The scene of the dream is preceded by the well-known description of winter nature and the scene of girls' fortune telling during "Святки" ("Sviatki"). The mystical time of "Святки", which is extremely important for understanding of the nature of the characters

and their actions, receives various designations in the target texts. In Orthodoxy, "Святки" is the time period (twelve days) from Christmas to Epiphany. The period of "Святки" refers to the winter calendar period (a winter holiday ritual complex), has ancient pre-Christian roots and is traditionally celebrated by the Slavs. The important fact that "Святки" is a time period that lasts for several days, is reflected in the nominative unit morphologically (the plural noun). In the English translations there are some translation equivalents. Thus, the Orthodox holiday period in the English translations of C. Cahill (1999), A. Kline (2009) and Ch. Johnston (1977) became "Christmas" celebrated in Catholicism mainly during one day only (December 25). In the English translation made by the Russian translator S.N. Kozlov (1998), the translation version "Christmas evenings" is presented. In the first full-text translation of the novel into English by H. Spalding (1881), "Святки" became the "Twelfth night", i.e. the holiday more famous and popular in Catholicism, but with pagan roots among the Germans. In the Catholic tradition, the next day after the Twelfth night is the Fate day determining the meaning and the sequence of events in the next year. The Christmas holidays finish with the Twelfth night, which is the eve of the Epiphany. Therefore, for the Anglophone readers through the translation of the culturonym the "Twelfth night", the information about mysticism of the specified time of the Chapter's scene and the possibility to look into the future during this period is transmitted. In the German translation by R.-D. Keil (1980), the translation equivalent carrying the information on the Twelfth night is presented: "Den Abend vor der zwölften Nacht". The Twelfth night of the ancient pagan Germans was the end of the festive period of Yule (solstice), which was calculated according to the lunar calendar, and in the later Christian times took place at the same time with Christmas.

V. Nabokov (1975) and S. Mitchell (2008) chose the unit "Yuletide" (period of Yule) as the translation equivalent for the idionym "Святки". One can find the cultural unit "Святки" as the equivalent for the English culturonym "Yuletide" in some modern dictionaries. Nabokov's choice of the translation equivalent can be considered the most successful one, because in the meanings of the units "Святки" and "Yuletide" pagan and Christian religious connotations are combined, as well as the idea of the national winter holiday and mysticism accompanying it. Moreover, Святки and Yule belong to the certain time period, which also allows us to consider these units as successful translation equivalents. In the Italian translation by F. Gabrielli (2006), only the information that the action takes place during a festive time is translated – "le feste". When translated into the Ukrainian language, which is closely related to Russian and, therefore, into the closely related Ukrainian culture, M.F. Ryl'sky (1937) uses the Slavic polyonym "Святки".

The specific time of girls' fortune telling in Chapter Five ("крещенские вечера") has the following correspondence in the target texts: the "Twelfth night" (C. Cahill and H. Spalding), the "Twelfth night evenings" (S. Mitchell), "Epiphany" (A. Kline) and "Twelfthtide eve" (V. Nabokov). The unit "Epiphany" primarily reflects the Catholic tradition and is associated with the Gospel events after Christmas (Adoration of the Magi, when the Child Jesus was given gifts by the Three Wise Men, also called the Magi or Kings). The Italian translator also chose the concept of the Epiphany ("Dell 'Epifania") and commented on the cultural unit in the footnotes. In Orthodoxy, the unit "Крещение" ("Kreshchenie") refers to the Christian holiday in honour of the baptism of Jesus Christ in the waters of the Jordan River by John the Baptist. In the translation by Ch. Johnston, the evenings of traditional fortune telling are not specified and are determined by the unit with a broader notion of "festal evenings". S.N. Kozlov uses the version "Christmas tide". In the German translation by R.-D. Keil the "Julzeit" (Yule time) is presented. The closest match is in the translation by M.F. Ryl'sky into the closely related Ukrainian language – "Хрещенських вечорів" ("Khreshchenskikh vechoriv").

Conclusion

Therefore, a certain semantic, cultural and, accordingly, aesthetic information asymmetry is found between the Russian culturonyms (idionyms) "Святки" and "Крещенский вечер" and the translation equivalents used by translators. The aesthetic and cultural information of the source text transmitted by means of idionyms of the Russian culture is only partially recreated in the English translations considered herewith. The cultural worlds described in Pushkin's text inevitably encounter the cultural worlds of the recipient cultures during translation, which leads to the loss or addition of certain aesthetic and cultural meanings and incomplete reflection of the semantic complex of the source text in the target text.

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Русский «сильный» текст в «других» культурах: семантическое согласование и расхождение

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Передача информационного комплекса художественного текста в процессе межъязыкового перевода предполагает обязательную информационную вариативность во вторичных текстах. Эстетическая и культурная ценность ключевых («сильных») текстов национальных литератур и культур требует от переводчика выбора стратегий перевода, позволяющих наиболее точно передать информацию оригинала, заключенную в единицах перевода. Особую группу таких единиц представляют культуронимы. В качестве примеров в статье использованы культуронимы, представленные в русском оригинале и европейских переводах «Евгения Онегина».

Ключевые слова: художественный перевод, «сильный» текст, культуроним, переводческое соответствие, «Евгений Онегин».

Научная специальность: 10.00.00 – филологические науки.