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The Translation of Proper Names in Folklore

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The study of proper names translation in folklore is characterized by interdisciplinary approach. Nowadays there are a lot of studies aimed to classify and organize all the possible variants of proper names translation. And, despite the diversity of these works, one can observe the extraordinary variability in this field. PN in folklore, especially in a fairy tale are the most important keepers of information. They contain the most important implicit information and reveal cultural values and traditions of every nation. A deep analysis of PN in synchrony and diachrony predetermines a successful adequate translation as well as knowledge of target audience and choice of culture-oriented strategies.

Keywords: proper names, a fairy tale, culture-oriented strategies, synchrony, diachrony.

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The study of proper names translation in folklore is characterized by interdisciplinary approach. Nowadays there are a lot of studies aimed to classify and organize all the possible variants of proper names translation. And, despite the diversity of these works, one can observe the extraordinary variability in this field. One and the same tale is translated differently, as well as the character's names.

From the translational perspective, transcription, transliteration and loan translation techniques are considered to be used very often. Sometimes it is possible to find a mixed type of mentioned strategies.

Analyzing the traditional and modern approaches to proper names translation, H. Särkkä gives as follows classification:

1. They can be imported unchanged from the SL text;
2. They can be modified to fit the phonological/graphological system of the TL. This, of course, is something that has or has not been done for the translator by his/her speech community in the case of conventional place names like *Prague, the Hague, Rome* etc.;
3. They can be expanded with a gloss to make up for the TL reader's lack of world knowledge in the target culture;

4. On occasion, they might be omitted altogether (perhaps replaced with a paraphrase) if considered peripheral in terms of the central message of the text or if retaining them would be more likely to cause the reader to pause in puzzlement. True, this would be more likely to happen in interpretation, but could not be ruled out altogether in translation, either;

5. In rare cases, they might even be introduced in the TL text where, instead of a proper name, the SL text contains a cultural allusion unlikely to be understood by the TL reader (Särkkä, 2007).

S. Mizani analyzes three widely known theories in linguistics: Descriptive theory, Referential theory, and Causal theory of names. She extrapolates them into translation studies and proves that these theories are rather helpful in explaining and overcoming some difficulties in the proper names translation process (Mizani, 2008).

S.V. Vlasenko studies translations of Russian fairy tales from the perspective of event references. The tale is treated like complex verbal signs and cultural phenomena whose status borders on cultural symbolism and/or semiotic artifacts. Translator perception patterns driven by the fairy tale message search for its further code-switching appear to be strongly dependent on referencing (Vlasenko, 2011:18).

Analyzing the nomination process, D.I. Ermolovich describes three stages of PN translation – identifying nomination, classifying and individualizing nomination (Ermolovich, 2005:58).

Nord stated that in some cultures, there is the convention that fictional proper names can serve as “culture markers,” i.e., they implicitly indicate to which culture the character belongs (Nord, 2003).

Indeed, in order to translate a folk name one needs a deep linguistic analysis of a literary

work. A translator should study the etymology of the name. Sometimes even native speakers do not always understand the implicit meaning of a proper name in folklore.

It should be noted that the “consciousness of the modern native speaker belonging to Western culture is full of names and concepts which belong to ancient mythology. These names are mythological symbols (mythosymbols) which contain implicit information or references to the relevant texts known by a speaker. Many of them are still used in case of partial or total sense obliteration” (Borbotko, 2006: 240).

Consequently, this connection between myth and name is a serious challenge for a translator of folklore tales. Ideally, dealing with precedent names the translator should strive to maintain a pragmatic effect of the original, and this against the background of cultural differences. The precedent names are an important part of the national picture of the world. They play an important role in the process of stereotyping, forming and developing the national picture of the world; help to become a part of the national culture and national traditions, within the framework of a global civilization based on universal values (Nakhimova, 2007:207).

The main task of a translator is to get a reader acquainted with different national traditions, widespread stereotypes that are encoded in PN. Analyzing the translation process and its result, the text translation, it is possible to say that referentiality of text units, parts or fragments is implemented indirectly: through the translator’s vision of the world (Vlasenko, 2011:21). Therefore, the translator must be a link between the mythologems of source and target cultures. Moreover, there are no analogs of precedent names in the target culture, but they are a cluster of implicit meanings that have been formed and perfected over a long period of time. It is important to analyze a proper name meaning in synchrony

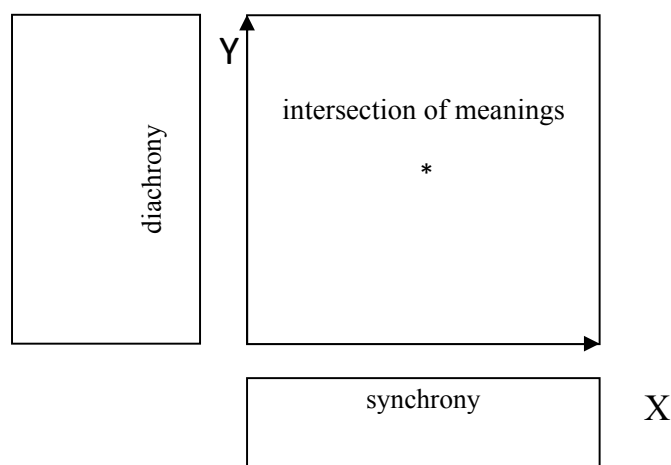


Fig. 1

and diachrony simultaneously, to study parallel texts, dictionaries and etymology of the name. The ability to identify the intersection of meanings in synchrony and diachrony predetermines the success of translation. The point of intersection of two spheres in synchrony and diachrony should be a starting point of translation. Choosing a way of pragmatic adaptation, a translator must define a target audience first of all. Domestication is more preferable strategy to translate proper names for primary school children. The translation takes place in the synchrony because only familiar heroes and scenarios can be perceived and understood by children. “Typically, the farther a tale from the culture a person belongs to is, the less it teaches” (Sergeev, 2002:67). Older children and adults who love fairy folk tales are ready to get acquainted with a different culture. In this case the reference to synchrony, as well as to the diachrony can help a translator to achieve an adequate translation.

A chart outlining the translation technique is shown in Fig. 1.

In this regard Gadamer wrote that “in fact the horizon of the present is continually in the process of being formed because we are continually having to test all our prejudices. An important part of this testing occurs in encountering the

past and in understanding the tradition from which we come. Hence the horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past. There is no more an isolated horizon of the present in itself than there are historical horizons which have to be acquired. Rather, understanding is always the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves” (Gadamer, 1988:340).

A “name” plays a pivotal role in folk tales. It contains the most important implicit information that helps a reader to understand the plot. Folklore fairy tales don’t have many characters as well as proper names. One and the same character can be found in different folk tales. But this limited quantity of folk proper names reveals cultural values and traditions of every nation.

A proper name is the main keeper of information in fairy tales, but it is practically reduced to a simulacrum, “copies of copies” (Plato) in a modern society.

However, despite this contradiction, a translator of folklore should start with a deep and comprehensive etymological analysis. This idea is very close to Malinowski’s theory of needs. It says that culture (from a name to a myth) was determined by basic needs and the possibilities of satisfying them (Malinowski, 1960). Due to this theory giving a name is not a game or

entertainment but necessity which correlates with the deep essence of a man.

Florensky notes that names can be partly compared with hereditary generic types in genetics. They cannot be exactly determined, but once learned, they become indispensable and very important; maybe we didn't want to learn them, but when we did it, we could see that we started to understand very difficult and sophisticated things (Florensky, 2003:31).

Because "all our cultural wealth which has been accumulated over the centuries is in the word, and especially in the name. <...> Name generates all the physiological, mental, phenomenological, logical, dialectical, ontological spheres" (Losev, 1990:25).

In a fairy-tale discourse proper names can be compared with Russell's "mental formations" (Russell, 1982): absorbing the experience of generations, they clearly reflect the entire multi-layered narrative, getting features of this or that nation.

There are widely known fairy tales where main characters are «Ivan-durak», Ivan Tsarevich and poor Jack or Jack-the-Fool. Ivan is the main hero of Russian folktales. He is almost always portrayed as either the third son of a peasant family or the third son of a king. In the latter stories, he is called Ivan Tsarevich, which means "tsar's son." Ivan is one of the most common Russian names. The friends and foes of Ivan Tsarevich are often mythic figures, from magical animals to deathless beings. (Wikipedia). He usually has older brothers who detest him. Meletinsky introduced a term for such heroes, he called them "low-heroes of a fairy tale" (Meletinsky, 1958)

He tries to explain why a low hero is in the main focus of folklore narrative. Anthropological scholar believes that ultimogeniture custom is the reason of folklore attention to the youngest son in a family. At the same time Olrik writes that according to style and the three-act structure

of narrative the youngest, not very important at first sight becomes the most important in the epic action. This theory didn't become very popular. Then O. Rank suggested sexual rivalry for the mother or sister that was substituted by brothers' fight. Meletinsky is sure that primogeniture tradition is the only explanation of the idealization of the youngest hero in Russian folk tales (Meletinsky, 1958).

So, "to read (to perceive the readerly aspect of the text) is to proceed from name to name, from fold to fold; it is to fold the text according to one name and then to unfold along the new folds of this name. This is proairetism: an artifice (or art) of reading that seeks out names, that tends toward them: an act of lexical transcendence, a labor of classification carried out on the basis of the classification of language – a maya activity, as the Buddhist would say, an account of appearance, but as discontinuous forms, as names" (Barthes, 1992:83).

It is interesting that American and British scientists were also interested in the Jack's name origin.

"By restoring to the discourse its hero's proper name, we are merely acting in accordance with the economic nature of the Name: in the novelistic regime (and elsewhere?), it is an instrument of exchange: it allows the substitution of a nominal unit for a collection of characteristics by establishing an equivalent relationship between sign and sum: it is a bookkeeping method in which, the price being equal, condensed merchandise is preferable to voluminous merchandise". (Barthes, 1992:95). A proper name contains and combines the most important national traits.

The transformation and development of a main British-American character isn't as simple as one can think. R. Cavendish believes that the oldest known version of the international tale type, "The Dance among Thorns" (AT 592), is an early fifteenth-century English poem titled

“Jack and His Stepdame,” in which Jack is an only child abused by his stepmother. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century texts provide hints of Jack’s better-known and more heroic role. Jack’s popularity grew throughout Britain and Ireland at the same time that Britain was colonizing the world (Cavendish, 1970).

By the 18th century this hero became one of the most popular in British folklore: an inexperienced, kind and very naive young boy. The British society was developing and Jack was also transforming. He absorbed the most important qualities of a common person, a bright representative of British nation. Then this character appeared as Jankin, Hans, Hansel, Jean, Jake, Jock in different languages and cultures. With emigrants Jack travelled to America where he acquired absolutely new traits. “Jack the oldest son, Jack the youngest son, and Jack the only son have thrived side by side” (Lindahl, 1994).

New World need a new hero and it was created “Our Appalachian giant-killer has acquired the easy-going, unpretentious rural American manners that make him so different from his English cousin, the cocksure, dashing young hero of the ‘fairy tale’; Jack is “the unassuming representative of a very large portion of the American people” (Chase, 1943).

Thus, rather close cultures understand one and the same character differently and these differences should be taken into consideration during the process of translation.

Analyzing various approaches to translation of a proper name «Ivan-durak» one can find several variants of translation such as «The Tale of Little Fool Ivan» by M. Polevoi, «The Fool Of The World» by Arthur Ransome, «Ivanushka The Little Fool» и «Ivan the Simpleton» translated by N. Guterman. Also there are a lot of examples when «Ivan-durak» is translated as «Jack-The-Fool» on the Internet. Despite the proximity of these characters, such translation

completely eliminates the cultural peculiarities of Russian fairy tales, makes impossible to meet and understand traditional character of the Russian fairy tale folklore.

Such diversity shows that there is no one rule all translators should follow. This situation can be explained through two main strategies that are used in modern translatology. They are foreignizing and domestication. Schleiermacher argued that ‘there are only two. Either the translator leaves in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader toward him. Or he leaves the reader in peace, possible, and moves the author toward him (quoted in Venuti, 2005:242).

A lot of scientists are sure that domestication became the leading in Anglo-American world. L. Venuti explains it by Anglo-American hegemony since World War Two and as a result an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to Anglo-American cultural values (Venuti, 2005).

D. Xiaosong summarizes the main ideas of Venuti and Antoine Berman on this topic. They believe that there are four reasons:

One, every translator is inevitably and inherently exposed to these ethnocentric forces, which determine the desire to translate as well as the form of the TT.

Two, the editor or the reviewer of a translation sees it as fit if the translation reads well in the target language because most of them don’t know the source language well.

Three, publishers in the UK and USA tend to choose works that are easily assimilated into the target culture.

Four, the Anglo-American publishing and culture is hegemonic, so it is domestication not foreignization that is favored (Xiaosong, 2015).

D. Xiaosong believes that “in a literary translation process two kinds of information can be classified: direct information and aesthetic information. The reasons behind the dominant domestication method in the Anglo-

Table. The translation of a proper name Баба-Яга

English-Russian and Russian-English Dictionary By O'Brien	English-Russian and Russian-English Dictionary By E. Wedel (part 1) A. Romanov (part 2), N. Y. 1964	Русско-английский словарь, сост. В.К. Мюллер. М., Сов. Энциклопедия, 1937	A Russian-English Dictionary of social Science Terms by R. Smith	Русско-английский словарь А.И. Смирницкого	Русско-английский словарь А.М. Таубе и др.
The witch	Old witch, Hag	Ogress, Witch, Hag	Baba-Yaga, a witch in Russian folk tales	Baba-Yaga, (a witch in Russian folk tales)	Baba-Yaga, (a witch in Russian folk tales), ogress

American world are that the translators focus on the transfer of direct information not aesthetic information of the source text and that the reader doesn't possess enough backup information to understand a translation of foreignization" (Xiaosong, 2015).

Thus, it is possible to put it like be clear and simple if you want to be published and popular.

There is no time for aesthetics, and thorough analysis in the information society. That is why publishers prefer to print the works of foreign authors, who were able to assimilate with the Anglo-American culture.

Modern Internet sites prefer to use domesticating strategy to gain popularity; printed publications, focused not only on children but also on adults very often balance between these culture-oriented strategies.

This tendency can be seen very clearly if we consult the dictionaries, published in Russia and abroad (Table).

The domestication is used in all foreign publications and only the dictionary by R. Smith offers a golden middle, balancing between the two polar strategies.

Proper name translation depends on the people a translator works for. Different target audience members need different strategies: domestication is preferable for children, foreignizing unfolds a mysterious culture of a different nation for adults.

An adequate translation is possible at the intersection of synchrony and diachrony. Synchrony is responsible for both social and political views while diachrony is very important to understand the proper name development through the history of every nation.

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Перевод имен собственных в произведениях фольклора

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Несмотря на разнообразие подходов к переводу ИС, на сегодняшний день не существует общепринятых правил перевода данных лексических единиц. При переводе одного и того же фольклорного произведения переводчики прибегают к различным вариантам перевода ИС. ИС в фольклоре, особенно в волшебной народной сказке, являются основными носителями информации: впитывая в себя опыт поколений, они наглядно отражают всю многослойность повествования, приобретая черты определённого народа. Достижение адекватности при переводе ИС будет напрямую зависеть от изучения переводчиком ИС в синхронии и диахронии, а также от целевой аудитории и, как следствие, выбора культурно-ориентированных стратегий.

Ключевые слова: имена собственные (ИС), сказка, культурно-ориентированная стратегия перевода, синхрония, диахрония.

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