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THE ROLE OF THE TRANSLATOR IN THE PARADIGM OF TRANSLATION

In the history of humankind, written and oral translations have played a key role in communication between people, especially in terms of commerce, education, and religion. In the middle 20th century, people had an even greater demand for precise and demanding translations. This led to the emergence of translation studies as an independent discipline. In this review, I will attempt at giving an overview on the role of the translator in the paradigm of translation.

Being familiar with the elements of the paradigm of translation is essential to know exactly how the translation takes place. This paradigm includes the elements that play a major role in translation. According to Ban zerowski, the paradigm consists of the following elements:

Figure 1. The Paradigm of Translation [1, p. 389]

SENDER → TEXT-A → TRANSLATOR → TEXT-B → RECEIVER

Ban zerowski states that ‘the main focus of translation studies should be on the translator, as he plays a central role in the system’; nevertheless, other elements of the system are also important for the quality of the end result [1, p. 389]. In the following section, we will discuss in detail the role of the translator (intermediary) in the paradigm of translation.

Many people believe that in order to be able to translate a text from one language to another, it is enough only to know and/or speak the source and the target language. In many cases, however, the person of a translator is much more complex, much more extensive than that of a person who knows two languages. Of course, knowledge of the two languages is essential and crucial, but a translator must also have a number of other qualities.

First of all, let us be clear: due to the time-consuming nature of the

translation, the translator has to be extremely patient who enjoys what he is doing. Depending on the type and genre of the text, the translation may have some minutiae that can take hours on the part of the translator to find the right equivalence in the target language. Szöllősy [4, p. 10] also draws attention to this factor, who believes that 'the good translator should enjoy, however perverse this may sound, the tiresome wrangling with minutiae'. As expected, in order for a translator to be able to find and replace these elements, he must be not only patient and persistent but proficient in both languages. By this, however, we do not mean basic proficiency as it is not enough to simply speak well the two languages, but the translator must have a thorough knowledge of its systems. Among other things, the translator must have the knowledge of systems and rules of morphology, syntactics, stylistics, and pragmatics. Nevertheless, Crystal [2, p. 428] points out that 'the translator must not only have a thorough knowledge of the source language: he must also be familiar with the subject matter of the text to be translated belongs and feel the social, cultural and emotional connotations properly to translate them into the target language'. Of course, all this is by no means easy. First, let us take a look at why it is hard to simply cope with the difficulties of the subject matter. The translator may often encounter cases where his background knowledge proves to be lacking in carrying out the translation properly. This can happen in many cases when the translator has to translate technical texts in which he is not at all or only partly proficient. In such cases, Szöllősy [4] encourages translators not to be afraid to look up for lacking or potentially 'difficult-to-understand' information and to use the knowledge provided by the internet and/or books to make up for the incomplete background knowledge. She also notes that 'a thorough understanding of the background is the glue that holds the translation together, supplying it with essential content and lending it authority [4, p. 11]. In addition to being familiar with the field in which the source text originated and exists, the translator must be familiar with the culture that plays a decisive role in the worldview of the target language audience. Crystal believes that 'the purpose of the translator is, as far as circumstances demand or permit, to produce, a text faithful to the original, which, however, is as if it were written in the target language' [2, p. 429]. As Klaudy [3, p. 137] noted, the translator functions as a cultural filter, that is, he filters out the foreign elements from the original works. However, this requires the translator to be able to recognize the so-called 'foreign' in the source text and replace it with an element that will not be conspicuous to the target audience. In such specific situations, Szöllősy suggests that if the element does not play a major role in the text, the translator should rather omit it; otherwise, if it is a significant element of the text without which the text would not be complete or understandable to the reader, she suggests trying to transpose it into the language of the target audience adding some changes. Generally, this transposition is much easier to accomplish if the translator is aware of how to mimic the cultural impact of the source text. For

this reason, it is helpful if the translator is well acquainted with different genres and regularly reads different types of texts in the target language, which can sometimes help to overcome a 'how it is said in the target language' problem [4].

In addition to the translator roles mentioned above, the translator is also a central part of a translational paradigm, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. The Paradigm of Translation [4, p. 29]

AUTHOR → TEXT I → READER → EDITOR → TRANSLATOR → READER OF THE TEXT II → TEXT II → AUDIENCE
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Szöllősy [4, p. 29] complements Bańcerowski's [1, p. 389] paradigm, so according to Figure 2, one can see that the translator plays a central role in several respects. First, the translator reads through the source text, which gives him a basic insight into its meaning. Second, he identifies important and less important elements that are supposed to be transposed or omitted during translation. Third, by appropriate decision-making, taking into account the differences between languages and the target audience, he transposes the elements and meaning of the source text into the target text. Besides, the first reader of the new text is the translator too. In addition, a translator has a number of other features that we have not covered in this review due to lack of scope.

In conclusion, one can see that a translator is not just a person who can simply speak two languages. On the one hand, the translator not only speaks the languages, but also knows their unique characteristics, and on the other hand, he also functions as a cultural filter who filters out the 'foreign' from the text. In addition, a translator is endlessly patient who reads different genres of text in order to deal with the difficulties of translation, looks up for special details if it is not totally understandable for him, and, besides, is well acquainted with the culture of the source and target language.

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