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TRANSLATIONS OF PROPER NOUNS IN MEDIA DISCOURSE AS A DIDACTIC PROBLEM

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Abstract

This study addresses practical and didactic aspects of transferring proper nouns from German into Russian in the case of trainee translations, when the use of the resources that make up the media discourse to search for and check the necessary information becomes to the main translation tool. However, the inconsiderate use of media resources by trainee translators can lead to controversial or wrong solutions. In translation theory there are certain methods of transferring the proper nouns. The application of these methods may differ for individual language pairs according to specific rules based on the language systems. The reason for the difficulties in selecting the equivalent while translating the text may be, firstly, the lack of traditional translation of the proper noun, and secondly, too much variability among the counterpart versions that can be found in the online media resources. Recently, however, there has been a tendency among translation students to look for translations of the proper nouns in media discourse and to choose a precedent version of the translation, regardless of its compliance with existing transcription rules. Complications arise if the rules do not take into account or do not clearly regulate the principles of transmission of certain phonemes or letter combinations. This paper also focuses on the task of the teacher, who explains the procedure of solving specific difficulties from the perspective of translation theory and, if necessary, the existing rules.

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Keywords: Media discourse, trainee translations, proper nouns, transcription rules, translation didactics.

1. Introduction

The development of technology affects almost all sectors, including the humanities. Internet platforms have become a useful tool in the work of journalists and editors, as well as translators, to facilitate the search for and verification of necessary information. Today, new technologies make it possible to quickly and efficiently perform translation with the help of all the necessary aids - dictionaries, terminology lists, texts on parallel subjects, corpus of translated texts, etc. Addressing the media discourse allows a translator to track the usability, compatibility, and context of the use of a particular lexeme, making it easier for the translator to work with parallel texts and eliminating the need for consultations with experts. However, the use of Internet platforms to search for material or to edit a text has its disadvantages. First of all, this is the heterogeneity of information, which makes it difficult to find a translation solution even for an experienced translator and can confuse a novice translator.

Using the strategy of searching for the translation of proper nouns in the media discourse by trainee translators as an example, we will look at the possibilities of media resources and try to offer solutions to those problems that can arise from the incorrect use of them.

2. Problem Statement

Modern translation practices require the use of a range of information sources and technical tools. In this article, I will consider the key concepts of media linguistics and translation theory, the understanding of which is necessary within the framework of a given topic.

The translator works with text and a number of texts, processing entire layers of information. One of the classical auxiliary tools for translation is parallel texts. And the set of texts can already be considered as a discourse. Since considering the case of proper nouns translation - and they can occur in encyclopedic texts, if we are talking about world-famous persons, or in the media, i.e. media texts, if a person's popularity is limited to his or her sphere of activity, or the country of residence - then the translator's reference to the complex of media texts, i.e. to the media discourse, is inevitable.

2.1. The concept of media discourse and text

In relation to the concept of discourse and text, Uvarova (2015) considers discourse as "a verbal and cogitative activity in the aggregate of the process and result (text) taking into account all the extra-linguistic factors, and the text as a product of verbal and cogitative activity, a necessary fragment of the discourse, its basic unit, a communication unit of the highest order" (p. 50).

Kozhemyakin (2010) defines media discourse as "thematically focused, socio-culturally conditioned verbal and cogitative activity in the mass media space" (p. 14). The broadest vision of the problem is reflected in the definition of Dobrosklonskaya (2008), who came to the conclusion that the media discourse is a set of processes and products of speech activity in the field of mass communication in all the richness and complexity of their interaction.

Based on numerous studies of discourse, Zheltukhina (2016) defines media discourse as a coherent, verbal or non-verbal, oral or written text in conjunction with pragmatic, socio-cultural, psychological and other factors, expressed by the media, taken in the event aspect, which is an action, participates in socio-

cultural interaction, and reflects the mechanism of consciousness of communicators. Being a field structure, the media discourse has a center, where prototype genres are located, and a periphery, which is made up of marginal genres, which differ from each other by their heterogeneous nature due to their location at the intersection of different types of discourse. The media discourse is mediated, i.e. there is a distance between the addresser and the addressee - spatial and/or temporal.

A media discourse is something more comprehensive than a media text. If a media discourse is interpreted as a verbal and cogitative activity within a mass media space that includes all the extralinguistic features, then a media text is a special product, a unit of the media discourse, which is not tied to the extralinguistic factors and can be analyzed from the point of view of only its content, the text itself. Thus, the media discourse, as a derivative of the discourse as a whole, is understood as a verbal and cogitative activity, which is implemented in the mass media space. If the product of a discourse is text, then the product of a media discourse is media text. The media discourse, as well as the discourse in general, can only be considered in conjunction with all the extra-linguistic factors, not just the language system. The media text, however, can be analyzed outside of these factors, meaning only those features that can be extracted directly from the text (Uvarova, 2015, pp. 52-53).

It is important to take into account the fact that "any processes taking place in society - positive or negative - ultimately form the culture of a given society, including the language culture" (Temnikova, 2016 p. 11). A translator acts as a recipient of many texts before generating a final target text that correlates with the original. The specificity of the media with which the translator works, however, can have a significant impact on his or her decisions.

2.2. Parallel texts and translational behaviour

The meaning of the parallel texts for translation is given by Levitskii (2016, pp. 96-97), which consists in the following: first, the translator extracts terms and knowledge necessary for translation from them; second, they facilitate the translator's understanding of the original. The linguist uses parallel texts to extract the terminology of the field of knowledge.

In a broad sense, parallel texts are defined as a set of bilingual or multilingual texts that meet at least one of the criteria: a) they are a pair of texts where A is the original nontranslated text created in the source language, and B is a translation of A, created in one or several target languages, b) they are a pair of texts both of which are translations of A, made in different languages in approximately the same period of time, c) both texts are original texts created in different languages, but are comparable (Fabricius-Hansen, 2004, p. 322). In the first case, it may be the text of a contract concluded by foreign partners, where the text is presented in two languages. An example for the second case is the translation of UN resolutions from English into Russian, Spanish, etc. In the third case, texts in different languages may be similar in function or subject matter, may be of the same 'genre' or the same type of text.

From the point of view of the creation of translation, parallel texts are most convenient to consider as a part of the "target language' text universe" (ZS-Textuniversum by Koller) and are understood as a set of original texts in the translation language: "Parallel texts are original texts in the target language that deal with a similar topic, are aimed at a similar group of readers and use comparable linguistic and stylistic means" (Koller, 2011, p. 105).

It is in the parallel texts of the media discourse that the necessary information is searched for - facts, names, etc. - in order to create an adequate understanding of the situation and the events described in the source text by the translator, which then generates an adequate and equivalent translation.

In describing the process of text production and text reception, Koller (2011) addresses the reader and his expectations. He claims as follows: "The original text functions in the communicative context of the language and cultural community concerned; it is embedded in this context. At the same time, this means that the text is received against the background of certain norms of expectation that form the recipient's horizon of expectation" (p. 104).

This leads to the development of a reciprocal conditional relationship in which the expectation norms of the recipient determine the writing norms of the author, the writing norms of the author refer to the expectation norms of the reader and confirm them or do not or only partially fulfil them or even contradict them.

Koller (2011) also postulates that the norms of expectation are by no means identical for all recipients in a language (language community), but are to be seen in dependence on 1) the individual and group-specific prerequisites of knowledge and understanding, 2) the level of education, the language and expertise of the recipients (p. 105).

Therefore, it is important to take into account all the peculiarities of the media discourse, the expectations of the recipient, the limitations of the language system, the situation, the rules, to understand the role of the translator and to follow the translational ethics when working with the written text.

In recent years many scholars have conducted research on translators training in many cases, i.e. on collaborative learning in translator training (Al-Shehari, 2017), on professional vs. trainee translators linguistic behavior (Klaudy & Károly, 2017), on trainee translators competences (Al Nafra, 2018, Kraeva & Krasnopeeva, 2017), on machine translation in translator training (Sycz-Opoń & Gałuskina, 2017). As it follows from this brief overview, the aim of these studies is to examine a more dynamic and creative approach to teaching translation and develop as many competences as possible. The observation of the translation actions carried out and the comments on them by the students as well as by the teacher may highlight the feasibility and productivity of using media discourse in translation practice.

3. Research Questions

Next to the language-external factors, such as text type, source language and the translator's educational background, other possibly influencing factors, that affect linguistic behavior in translations, include characteristics of the writing process, typological or usage differences between source and target languages, the sociological status of the source and target languages, the style of the translator or original author, the sociological status of different types of translators, etc. Introducing the corpus-based translation studies (CBTS), De Sutter (De Sutter, Lefer, & Delaere, 2017) claims its ultimate goal as to find out what these factors reveal about underlying sociological, cognitive and other causes and motivations of linguistic choices in translations vs. non-translations on a higher level. Comparison of the linguistic behavior in translations and in non-translations is a relatively new direction of research and is not covered in this article. However, De Sutter raises the important question of what guides the translator in his or her language behavior. From a sociological point of view, Pym (2008) has introduced the idea of translators being risk

averse: if they can choose between a safe option (e.g. a variant that is commonly accepted as a standard variant), and a risky option (e.g. a variant that is considered restricted to informal conversations), translators will most often opt for the former option, depending on whether they get rewarded or not taking a risk. In a situation of translation training there is no reward only one's own practice or the mark for the completed task. It may be of interest to what extent the strategy to avoid risks relates to the trainee translators' linguistic behavior.

In order to find out why a trainee translator has chosen one or another solution a translation strategy is used in translation didactics. It explains the decisions made, which helps to understand the motives of trainee translators when performing written translations and to correct the discussion process during practical exercises. Therefore, research questions for this paper can be formulated as follows: 1) What the trainee translators are guided by when transferring proper nouns? 2) How do they explain their decisions? 3) How much trainee translators take into account the teacher's recommendations when translating proper nouns?

4. Purpose of the Study

The role of the teacher will be examined in this study and his or her impact on the result of the translation, which is performed by the trainee translators themselves, then is discussed, edited as a final version and reviewed, the study also aims to determine what mistakes remain uncorrected or are not described in the strategy, on the example of the proper nouns translation.

5. Research Methods

A variety of research methods are employed in the present study. A questionnaire was used to gather background information concerning the participants' age, gender, linguistic, educational and professional experience which was used to construct the participants' profiles. The trainee translators are all fourth-year students of the Interpreter and Translator Bachelor Programme at the Chelyabinsk State University. They have many common characteristics: they had no translation experience (only curriculum practice), they are of approximately the same age (20-21 years), and most of them started to learn German at the University. There were two academic groups of students, 8 and 12 people in each group, because we have got only four male students, no gender-based data were collected. All the participants come from similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

The students were required to perform a translation task which included translating a text from German into Russian, that is an annotation to the autobiographical book on the life of Max Mannheimer. After the translation was completed there were two lessons devoted to translation discussion in each group of students.

The trainees were asked to draft a translation strategy, that includes the translation problems identified, the types of these problems, the information sources used, the solutions, the strategies applied and justification for these strategies. In general, the translation strategy can be defined as "the way you manipulate the linguistic material in the text in order to produce an appropriate target text" (Al Nafra, 2018, para. 3), so it contains all final solutions for the task.

The data for this case study were collected in November 2018 and include thereafter an original source text in German, twenty translations into Russian, twenty translation strategies to the target text and the interviews taken during the discussions.

The given approach allows to observe which sources are trusted by trainee translators, who is the authority for them in decision-making, how do they select and process information from the media discourse, what the teacher should pay attention to didactically.

6. Findings

One of the traditional problems of translation is the transfer of proper nouns. The reason for the difficulties in choosing the equivalent may be the lack of a traditional version of translation, which is taken as a reference standard, or too much variability among the matches that can be found in the Internet resources that build the media discourse.

As it is known, there are certain methods of transferring the names of their own in translation. There are also rules for the application of these methods for individual language pairs. Recently, however, there has been a tendency among translation students to shift the responsibility for the translation of a name to the author of an already existing version of translation, which is a precedent translation of a name, and which is functioning in the media discourse.

This study addresses two aspects: practical and didactic. On the one hand, the search for translation solutions on the Internet, the use of texts on parallel topics is beneficial and saves time in mastering translation skills, as it is possible to quickly check information from different sources in many languages, on the other hand, the abundance of information, lack of perseverance and a superficial approach at the initial stages of translation training make one choose literally the first option available as "the most popular" or "the most common" translation. That increases the subjectivity of translation, which is in a sense a precondition for the violation of translation ethics. The trainer's task is to focus the trainee's attention on the principles of solving specific difficulties from the perspective of translation theory, explaining the existing rules, if necessary. Complications arise if the rules do not take into account or do not clearly regulate the principles of the transmission of certain phonemes and letter combinations.

The text offered in the course "Practical course of translation in a second foreign language" contains ten proper nouns: toponyms (Mähren, Sudetenland, Auschwitz, Warschau, Dachau), anthroponyms (Max Mannheimer, Marie-Luise von der Leyen), book titles (Spätes Tagebuch, Drei Leben) and the name of the month (Oktober). Each version of the translation goes through a stage of collective discussion and final editing. Example of 20 translations and the accompanying translation strategy descriptions provide the information on how the search and selection patterns affect the latest generation of trainee translators.

6.1. Translation solutions for the toponyms

Problems with the selection of the equivalent for the proper nouns begin already at the stage of translation of toponyms. The search for equivalents in the media discourse gives two main options for the German *Sudetenland - Судетская область (region)* and *Судеты (Sudeten)* (KP.ru, livejournal). And if these versions can be considered interchangeable in the context of the *»Anschluss« des Sudetenlandes*, the loan-translation *Судетская земля (land)* would be completely unacceptable.

Two different phonetic versions of *Auschwitz* – *Аушвиц* (YouTube, livejournal) and *Освенцим* (ria.ru) are also the subject of collective discussion. In accordance with the recommendations of the Union of Translators of Russia, the principle of translation from the source language should be decisive in this case, and Auschwitz was located on Polish territory. The source text is written in German, and *Аушвиц* is a transcription from German *Auschwitz*. If we turn to the Polish-Russian practical transcription, we will come to the traditional variant of *Освенцим* from the Polish *Oświęcim* (Ermolovich, 2016, pp. 54-59). As follows from the Table 01, 100 per cent of trainee translators have decided for the correct version *Освенцим*. The summary table contains all translation versions, the number of translations of each version is indicated in brackets.

Table 01. Translation of toponyms

ST	Version 1	Version 2	Version 3	Version 4	Version 5
in Mähren	в Моравии (15)	в Моравии, Чехословакия (2)	в Моравии (Чехословакия) (1)	в регионе Моравия, Чехословакия (1)	в Чехословакии (1)
Sudetenland	Судетская область (19)	Судеты (1)	-	-	-
Auschwitz	Освенцим (20)		-	-	-
Warschau	Варшавы / Варшаве (15)	Варшавский / Варшавском концлагере (5)	-	-	-
Dachau	Дахау (20)		-	-	-

The most original option seems to be to opt out of translating the name of the region of Moravia, because the given name can be unfamiliar to the modern reader (as discussed in the classroom). Such motivation borders on the violation of the principle of translation ethics about the inviolability of the source text: the translator has no right to change, shorten or expand the source text if this task is not set by the customer. Nevertheless, such a strategy is combined with the principles of Koller (cf. above), when the target text is adjusted to the individual or group-specific prerequisites of knowledge and understanding, as well as the level of education (which is subjectively assessed by the translator). In one final translation, Moravia is replaced by Czechoslovakia with an explanation: *The generalization of Mähren – Чехословакия was applied ... in order to combine this sentence with the following one*, herein the expediency of the lexical transformation is not justified, and it seems that if there was still *Moravia* in the text of the translation, it would prevent the unification of sentences. Another four works add the name of the country to the translation of the region *...в небольшом городке в Моравии, Чехословакия / ...в маленьком городке в Моравии (Чехословакия) / ...в небольшом городке в регионе Моравия, Чехословакия / ...в городке в Моравии, Чехословакия*. There is no explanation for this decision in the description of the strategy. However, the justifications for toponyms' translation are different, cf. *"geographical names ... were translated according to the precedent translation"*, *"proper nouns were transferred according to tradition"*, *"a precedent translation versions were found for the proper nouns, which corresponds to transcriptions to the maximum possible extent"*, *"a variant of translation was chosen for proper nouns (articles and transcription of names were used)"*.

Thus, 94 per cent of the toponyms were stylistically correct, but only 40 per cent of the strategies indicated that the toponyms were traditionally transferred.

6.2. Translation solutions for the anthroponyms

Among the anthroponyms in the source text there are two names of their own - the name of the hero of the book Max Mannheimer and the author, as well as co-author - Marie-Luise von der Leyen. Table 2 below presents the variants of the transmission of these names.

Table 02. Translation of anthroponyms

ST	Version 1	Version 2	Version 3	Version 4	Version 5
Max Mannheimer	Макс Маннхаймер (8)	Макс Манхаймер (11)	Макс Мангеймер (1)	-	-
Marie-Luise von der Leyen	Мария-Луиза фон дер Ляйен (12) – justifications: *precedent name (7) / transcription (1) / partly by tradition, partly by transcription (1) / domestication and precedent version* (1)	Мари-Луиза фон дер Ляйен (5) - justification: *transcription was used for names* (false justification)	Мари-Луиза фон дер Лейен (1) - justification: *names according to a common translation*	Мэри-Луиз фон дер Ляйен (1) – justification: *for names were found precedent versions* (but there is no such version in the Russian media at all)	Мария-Луиза фон дер Ляйер (1) - justification: *transcription was used for names* (misprint plus false justification)

The difficulty of the name transfer of Max Mannheimer is that there is a double *n* here, which according to the rules of German-Russian practical transcription should be removed in the suffix *-mann / -ман*. However, the comments to the rules only refer to the suffix, whereas in our case *mann-* belongs to the root of the word. The results are striking: the whole group with which I noticed this nuance left a double *n* in translation, while in the group with which we did not dwell on this nuance in detail, almost everyone wrote a surname with one n, exception is a trainee translator, who decided that it is appropriate to translate the surname as a city - by tradition as *Мангеймер*. If we turn to the media discourse, the version with one *n – Макс Манхаймер* is less common (rg.ru, scoopnest.com/ru/user/SvobodaRadio, ru.krymr.com/a/news), and the variant with *nn – Макс Маннхаймер* is more often than six times - 107 : 639 (svoboda.org, dw.com/ru), in the oral argumentation in favor of the last variant the frequency and the appeal to the source of Deutsche Welle as an authoritative one was used. To clarify this issue, I contacted a German-speaking translator who confirmed, that the transcription rules do not fully regulate the transmission of doubled consonants, but as a person with a surname where there are two doubled consonants, it was always difficult for her, to write her surname in Russian without doubled consonants or to read it written this way by authorities. Nevertheless, the fact remains that in case of *Mannheimer* the surname has to be written with a *double n* according to the rules of German-Russian practical transcription. If we look at the media sources, we can see that they are practically all the same, so they cannot be a reliable selection criterion.

The co-author's name Marie-Luise von der Leyen is even more difficult to translate. According to the transcription rules, it is transmitted as *Мари-Луизе фон дер Лайен*. However, this equivalent is not found in translations at all. I have also indicated justifications for all versions in the table and my comment to them. These justifications show the high level of subjectivism of trainee translators who are guided by their own taste (unrecognized) and language experience (not measured), in total disregard of the rules and recommendations developed over the years of translation practice. In this regard, the justification *"domestication and precedent version were used for the name Marie-Luise von der Leyen, because it is not subject to the transcription rules"* is particularly interesting. Other justification, that shows us the real motives of a trainee translator is *"according to a common translation"*, when the translator is being risk averse, but in fact she just does not know and is not going to work out what is the correct justification.

In this example, the media discourse had a 100% impact on the translation, as translations of the German politician *Ursula von der Leyen* were found, which lead to the translation *фон дер Ляйен*. Although the example of pronunciation of this name (audio recording on Wikipedia resource) corresponds to the recommendations of German-Russian practical transcription.

6.3. Translation solutions for the book titles

There are also the titles of two books in the text. The first is Max Mannheimer's memoirs of the Holocaust, and the second is the title of the book *Drei Leben* to which the abstract is attached (see Table 03).

Table 03. Translation of book titles

ST	Version 1	Version 2	Version 3	Version 4	Version 5	Version 6
Spätes Tagebuch	«Поздний дневник» (12)	«Поздний Дневник» (3)	«Поздний дневник» ("Spätes Tagebuch") (2)	"Spätes Tagebuch" (Поздний дневник) (1)	«Поздний дневник» (нем."Spätes Tagebuch") (1)	«поздний дневник» (1)
Drei Leben	Три жизни (15)	Три Жизни (5)	-	-	-	-

Here, the main risk factor for trainee translators was the lack of translation of *Spätes Tagebuch* into Russian. Therefore, 20 percent of the translators chose to keep the original title of the book in the translation one way or another. Version 2 and Version 6 contain orthographic mistakes. In principle, the translation of the title of the book itself *Drei Leben* did not cause difficulties, but in the final text allowed orthographic mistakes that are not justified in the strategy. Thus, the *Три Жизни* in the title become *Три жизни* (4) or *в трех жизнях* (1) in the translation text, and in one case the *Три жизни* in the title (which is correct) become *Три Жизни* in the text, which is illogical, and can only be explained by the translator's carelessness or even negligence in editing the translation.

The translation of the name of the month is presented in two versions: Oktober - *в октябре 1938* (19) or *в Октябре 1938* (1), the second of which is a classic case of language interference - the capital letter at the beginning of the word is preserved, despite the fact that according to the rules of the target language the names of months are written with a small letter. I have to remind that the first language of

these groups is English, where the names of months are also written with a capital letter, in German, as these are nouns.

7.   Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the reason for a significant part of the mistakes and inaccuracies is that the trainee translators participated in the study are not morally ready and do not plan (by their own admission) to work with the second language. However, it must be recognized that the skill of justifying translation decisions needs to be developed, and this can also be done in the translation practice in a second language.

The analysis has shown that for different types of proper nouns, either the same method is used, or there is always a precedent version. What guides the translator in selecting one of a number of versions is not specified. The trainee translators stay unaware about what is the difference between translation according to the transcription rules and the precedent translations, which do "*correspond to transcriptions to the maximum possible extent*". It is this harmful tendency to give preference to any precedent translation, no matter what principles, by whom and in what situation is was made, as well as to subjectivity and should be changed by the teacher in the process of training.

Taking the most frequent or popular (the first result given by the search engine) result for the right one, refusing to follow the rules, a trainee translator risks violating the semantic integrity of the source text and the stylistic integrity of the translation text, so, from the point of view of translation didactics, it is necessary to explain the principles of working with Internet resources and media discourse at the stage of analytical and variable search. Addressing the media discourse in the process of translation from the perspective of the Internet user or recipient of the media discourse impedes the formation of key translation competences. As a rule, the user trusts the offered information, and a professional translator is obliged to understand the nuances of the meaning of words and facts, to take into account the context and purpose of the translation.

As this research has shown, trainee translators follow the teacher's recommendations only in what is confirmed by online sources. If a rule or recommendation is not confirmed by the media discourse or if the mention in the media texts is statistically significantly higher than the one corresponding to the transcription rules, the precedent translation functioning in the media course will be present in the final version of the translation text. Thus, we can say that the current generation of trainee translators consideres the sources in the media course as more authoritative, than the recommendations of the trainer and the experience of previous generations of translators.

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