

# The Translator as an Inter-Cultural Message Mediator

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Translation is the very expression in target language of what has been said in source language fully preserving stylistic and semantic equivalence. Under translation we understand mainly the process of translation, as well as the product of the process of translation. The professional translator must always consider the literary text from an intercultural perspective to become an intercultural expert who mediates between different cultures.

Descriptivist G.Toury states that translation is an activity " which inevitably involves at least two languages and two cultural traditions, i.e., at least two sets of norm systems on each level. Hermans Th. in his turn argues that "Since translation operates in and on existing discourses while fashioning new texts after models belonging to other discourses, individual cultures or groups may develop different attitudes with regard to these potentially disruptive new arrivals". [1]

The act of translation is nothing but a form of intercultural communication that operates on texts rather than with communicators themselves, and in working on a text, translation (as well as the translator) relocates it within another literary tradition with its own aesthetic and other values and assumptions that influence the reception of the text. [2]

In rewriting the text for a readership not imagined by the original text sender, the translator is involved in a number of mediational activities.

Translation as intercultural mediation and activity is fundamentally an interpretative activity in which the translator engages in creative acts of meaning-making between languages and cultures. The interpretation of language and culture involves not only personal interpretations, but also communicated interpretations as well as a selective bridging between these cultures. The translator as mediator and message conveyor is an active participant in both cultures who is engaged in performing and analysing interpretations both within and across cultural framings.

Russian theorist V.Komissarov considers that "translation is a complicated and many-sided kind of human activity. Though usually people speak about translation "from one language on another", actually it is not simply a replacement of one language with another. the different cultures, people, ways of thinking. literatures, epochs, levels of development, traditions and world vies clash with each other in translation". [3]

According to M.Brandes, "translation is a kind of language mediation where the content of the foreign text (original) is transferred to other language by way of creating a communicatively equivalent text in this language". [4]

Schweitzer states that "Translation can be defined as a unidirectional and two-phase process of interlingual and intercultural communication, where a secondary text is

created on the basis of the primary text subjected to purposeful ("translational") analysis, the secondary text replacing the primary one in another language and cultural environment". [5]

In this field, the translator plays an important role in the process of intercultural communication, since he/she not only translates the given text, but also interprets the cultures, thoughts, intentions of the communicants. As a mediator, the translator always tries to explain and highlight the main rules of behaviour and customs of the countries. The translator as a text message conveyor should pick up an equivalent for language phenomenon which directly reflects another culture. If the translator manages to do his best in the translation process, it'll be a great success.

The translator must have thorough knowledge of the languages (at least two languages), cultural background, ability to interpret the text, the background of the subject knowledge of techniques, transformations of quality translation. The translator decodes messages transmitted in one language and records them in another. It is an interlingual communicative act in which at least three participants are involved; the sender of the source (the author of the source language message), the translator, who acts individual capacity of the receptor of the source language message and as the sender of the equivalent target language (message), and the receptor of the target language (translation). If the original wasn't intended for a foreign language receptor, there is one more participant - the source language receptor for whom the message was originally produced.

Translation as an interlingual communicative act includes two phases: communication between the sender and the translator and communication between the translator and the receptor of the newly produced target language text. In the first stage, the translator acting as a source text (language) receptor, analyses the original message. In the second phase, the translator acts as a target language (text) sender, producing an equivalent message in the target language and redirecting it to the target language receptor. In translation an equivalent (target language) message should necessarily match the original. The message produced by the translator, should make the same response in the target language receptor as the original message in the source language receptor. At the same time the translator should take linguistic and extra linguistic aspects of translation into consideration. The translator of the text (as the doer of the action) is always between two places: the reality of the source language and the possibilities of the receptor language. Through the act of the translation, the translator opens the door for so-called dialogue, which is his mission in today's world in which different countries and languages communicate with one another. The main task of the translator is nothing but to render a text written in one language into another, hence making available material that would otherwise be quite inaccessible. It should be stated therefore that translation is a special communicative activity that involves the transfer of information across linguistic boundaries. While talking about the translation as a whole one should first of all think over the translator's professional skills in connection with the key issue of translation-equivalence.

Some translation scholars, like J.C. Catford, A. Popovich began wrestling with the

problem of how adequately to define what constituted equivalence in translation. They explored the complex issue of untranslatability, as far as not all linguistic items have their counterparts in other languages by any means. [6,7] The problem of defining equivalence remains central to the field as a whole and to the translator in particular. Some scholars, such as E. Nida, whose starting point was the Bible translation and anthropology, have strongly emphasized the importance of context for a translator. [8] As he points out, a language can't be understood "outside the total" framework of the culture, of which the language in question is an integral part. The translator is therefore engaged not only with words, but also with the context in which those words and phrases appear, and any equivalence will have to take into account the two different contexts, that of the source and the target. It stands to reason that the professional translator should be well aware of all theories of the field suggested by different distinguished scholars of today.

The translator of the text message must be involved in a constant process of unlearning, as far as the realities and expectations of his/her own culture are not necessarily the same in the other culture and literature. It is quite important that the translator becomes familiar with the nature of words, phrases, for with the respect to the word, we define its semantic parameters, we listen to its sound and rhythm, and reveal its existence within its immediate and larger context. This is particularly true in the realm of literary creations, and most conspicuously present in verse writing. The only way that the translator can get close to the specific association that a verse writer attributes to a word is through a contextual analysis.

Translation at its best is a kind of art and like any artist, the literary translator should master a lot of crafts to make that work. Some literary translators started as creative writers (I myself did the same), others as language masters, still others begin as learners and teachers of literature and fiction. The literary translator's craft requires them to work simultaneously as close readers, why not artists, linguists, critics and translation scholars. One should confess that it takes years of great experience to become a first-rate translator, as it does to become a first-rate writer of any kind. There are special skills that translators acquire at the beginning and then done throughout their careers. It should be stated that most literary translators start out by acquiring a thorough knowledge of the "target" language in accordance with at least one foreign language. It means not only learning to speak that language but also becoming familiar with its culture - its literature, its history, politics, arts, as well as daily life. Sometimes, literary translators who don't know the source language try to work in collaboration with a native speaker of the source language. This combination of skills and insights might be a highly impressive and effective translation strategy, especially when the translator is versatile and knowledgeable about the literary traditions of the original text as a message.

It should also be noted that a translator is always the first and closest reader of a text, which means that the translator must read the text thoroughly and to the point. The sophisticated translator always has a firm grip on the range of styles found in both source and target languages. As far as translation is inherently cooperative- between the

author and the translator a great number of translators find other kinds of cooperation, no matter with writers or other translators, quite useful when they are starting out. Cooperation itself can be an effective strategy for skilled translators as well.

The translator always plays a significant role in being a mediator between two cultures. He or she not only translates the text from the source language to the target language, but also carries the culture and traditions of one to the other. The translator as a co-author, with his creativity, recreates the piece of literature of a different language to his own. The sophisticated and talented translator besides being a message conveyer, is a creative artist who ensures the survival of writing across time and space, an intercultural mediator and interpreter, whose importance to the continuity of culture is really immense.

It is quite important to note that the translator is considered to be a mentor for the generations as well, for he/she is not only translating the text but also transmitting the traditions of a particular culture to the other. The reader of the text comes to know the traditions of that particular language. The translator teaches the tradition to the younger generation; the translator as a mentor teaches and educates at a time. The translator helps the readers explore literature of other languages within the framework of culture. In brief, the translator is not only a person who just translates the text, but he acts as a mediator, mentor, artist, message conveyer, the very preserver of the source culture and passes it to the target text language.

Translators and the translation process wholly involve the process of mediating and communicating individuals with individual cultural backgrounds that escape monocultural definitions.

As D. Robinson states, "Translators depend not only on the surface structure of a "sacred" source text, but also, focus on the function of the translation itself within the larger context of the target culture". [9] Another distinguished theorist, Halliday M. and G. Toury state that "translators themselves are crucial to both the source and target texts in that they are both communicators and mediators of these texts". [10]

While speaking about the literary translator's professional capacities, one should, first of all mention his mediating role in the field. the translation process as a communicative act really defines the figure of the translator as a "decoder of the source language and an encoder of the target language, and at the same time a receptor of the message in the source culture as well as a source of the message in the target culture. [11]

Hatim and Mason state that the translator mediates not only in the sense that he or she "reads in order to produce" and "decodes in order to re-encode", but also in the sense that he or she mediates between cultures, given that he or she tries "to overcome those incompatibilities which stand in the way of the transfer of meaning". [12]

G. Toury also seems in favour of the role of the translator as a cultural mediator. According to him, despite the "explanatory power with respect to translational phenomena" of disciplines such as Linguistics, Text Linguistics, Pragmatics, "being a translator cannot be reduced to the mere generation of utterances which would be considered: translations" within any of these disciplines". [13]

It should be mentioned that the translator (literary translator as well) is both a

decoder/ encoder and a receptor/sender of the text. He is also an expert in intercultural communication, as well as a mediator between languages and cultures.

While talking about the literary translator we should first of all focus on his/her role as a mediator standing between the writer and reader. He rewrites the text for the audience (readership) that's not the audience imagined by the writer and does not share the language, knowledge, assumptions, that the sender of the original message has assumed of the imagined audience for the text. In short, the translator is the sole true intercultural communicator in the communication process and mediates a text that wasn't designed for the certain intercultural communication for an audience that doesn't necessarily perceive it as intercultural communication.

In conclusion, it's quite important to note that translation(as well as literary translation) as a whole and the translator in particular, are the key mechanisms and factors of intercultural communication.

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**Գեղարվեստական տեքստի  
թարգմանիչը որպես միջմշակութային ուղերձի միջնորդ**

**Ջաղինյան Նինա**

**Ամփոփում**

*Հանգուցային բառեր. թարգմանություն, գեղարվեստական տեքստի թարգմանիչ, բնագիր տեքստ, թարգմանվածք, բնագրի հեղինակի մտքի մեկնիչ, մշակութային ուղերձի միջնորդ, համահեղինակ*

Հոդվածում դիտարկվում են մի շարք առանցքային խնդիրներ՝ կապված գեղարվեստական տեքստի թարգմանչի գործոնի, դերի և առաքելության հետ: Թարգմանական դաշտում թարգմանիչը հանդես է գալիս որպես բնագիր լեզվի և մշակույթի մեկնիչ, բնագրի հեղինակի գործընկեր՝ գործադրելով իր ողջ իմացությունը, մասնագիտական հմտություններն ու կարողությունները:

**Переводчик художественного текста  
как медиатор межкультурного послания**

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**Резюме**

*Ключевые слова: перевод, переводчик художественного текста, оригинальный текст, переведенный текст, интерпретатор мыслей автора оригинала, медиатор культурного послания, соавтор*

В статье рассматривается ряд ключевых проблем, связанных с фактором, ролью и миссией переводчика художественного текста. В транслатологическом пространстве переводчик выступает как интерпретатор культуры и языка оригинала, как коллега автора оригинала, прилагая при этом все свои знания, профессиональные навыки и возможности.