ON THE INSEPARABLE CONNECTION BETWEEN TRANSLATION AND STYLE[1]

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Abstract: This paper deals with the complex and multifaceted nature of the relationship between translation and style. Bearing in mind the fact that this topic has not been very much systematically researched so far, this paper aims at emphasising the mutual relationship between these two notions from different perspectives and through various theoretical insights. Despite being an important feature of the original, style also affects the translated work itself and can be perceived as a reflection of translator's language and stylistic preferences. These considerations encourage comparative research with regards to translation practice. Furthermore, they tackle the cognitive dimension of the relationship between translation and style, which accentuates the role of the reader (who might also be a translator) within the overall creative process.

Key words: style, translation, original, mind-style, reader, stylistic effect

Introduction

Generally speaking, literary translation means transferring a work of literature into another language. However, despite this rather simplistic definition, this form of translation is rather specific, complex and very often thought of as the most difficult one. Apart from paying attention to meaning and sense, literary translators also focus on style (Kumar Das 2005: 27), as well as on the type of language used in the original, the connection between the readers and the context situation, the register and the stylistic effects which bring to the fore the manner in which meaning is expressed (Cary and Jumpelt 1963: 142-148); literary translation "is bound to reflect the translator's own creative interpretation of the source text (Basnett 2002: 83) and it is unique among other forms of translation because it lets one consistently share in the creative process through translating cultures, which brings to the fore the manner in which words mean something, rather than the meaning itself (Landers 2001: 4). Literary translation is a rather intricate procedure which, despite the perfect mastery of languages and cultures the translator works with, requires an artistic talent necessary for transposing the communicative and aesthetic function of literary texts. Hence, grasping the stylistic essence of the original and its consistent transference into the target language highlights the inseparable connection between translation and style, which is relevant for both theory and practice.

Bearing in mind the fact that the connection between translation and style has not been very much systematically researched, the aim of this paper is to tackle this relationship from different points of view through various theoretical insights. The discussion on the considerations presented in the paper is aimed at offering new perspectives and encouraging comparative research in regards to translation and style, especially focusing on its cognitive dimension, which accentuates the role of the reader (who might also be a translator) within the overall creative process.

The notion of *style*

Within the European tradition, the origins of theoretical reflections on style date back to Aristotle and Plato's rhetoric and poetics as well as to the insights of Horace, Cicero and others on this topic (Minova-Gjurkova 2003: 24). According to Aristotle, "style was the basic idea behind the different features of a text" (ibid: 11), while Plato considered the style to be "a feature and a quality of a piece of work" (ibid.). The interest for the concept of style does not wane during the Medieval Period and the Renaissance, when it was studied as part of rhetoric, literature and grammar (ibid.). More serious and scientifically based researches on style date back to the early XX century, which was actually the birth of stylistics as a scientific discipline. First definitions on style appeared; according to Buffon "the style is the man himself", Bally relates style to 'a layer of affective elements', while Spitzer regarded it as an indicator of author's uniqueness and individuality (ibid.).

According to Crystal and Davy (1969), 'style may refer to some or all of the language habits of one person, but more often it refers to a selection of language habits, the occasional linguistic idiosyncrasies which characterise an individual's uniqueness (ibid: 9). In this context, style may refer to all language habits shared by a group of people over a given period of time. This means that to investigate style would mean to 'observe those language features which are restricted to certain kinds of social contexts as opposed to other alternatives and classifications of these features into categories based on their function in the social context' (ibid: 10).

Leech and Short (1981) define style as 'the way in which language is used in a given context, by a given person for a given purpose (ibid: 10). These insights about style can be related to Saussure's definitions of *langue* and *parole*, *langue* being the code or system of rules common to the speakers of a language and *parole* being the particular uses of this system, or selection from the system that speakers or writers make on a particular occasion, which is what style actually is (ibid.). Leech and Short explain that 'style has always been restricted to those choices which are choices of manner rather than matter, of expression rather than content (ibid: 15). This clearly differentiates form from content; one concept can be expressed in two different ways and 'the author necessarily makes choices of expression and it is in these choices, in his way of putting things that style resides'[2] (ibid: 19).

When it comes to literary style, these observations imply that the author consciously makes meaningful choices of certain language feature depending on the function or the meaning he/she wants to convey. Thus, the author creates an image of the reality he/she wants to

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[2] This observation on style can be related to Halliday's ideational function of language which represents 'the way in which language conveys and organises cognitive realities of experience (Leech and Short 1981:31). This function is very important because the stylistic significance is located in the ideational function of language. The linguistic pattern of choices creates a cognitive pattern which is the key to the vision of a piece of work (ibid: 32).

depict for the reader through particular linguistic choices which generate a unique stylistic and literary effect (ibid: 32).

In brief, this indicates that Leech and Short perceive the style of a literary work as a relationship between linguistic form and function or aesthetic effect. According to them, all linguistic choices are meaningful and functional and they create an effect on the reader who thus gets an impression about the literary text. They tackle style in terms of linguistic features consistently appearing in a text, which relates them to style and artistic effect (Gjurchevska Atanasovska 2018).

How to 'measure' style

When it comes to measuring the style of a literary work, Leech and Short explain that 'style is regarded as a function of *frequency*. To find out what is distinctive about the style of a certain corpus or text we work out the frequencies of the features it contains and then measure these features against equivalent figures which are 'normal' for the language in question. The style is then to be measured in terms of deviations – either higher frequencies or lower frequencies – from the norm' (Leech and Short 1981: 43). However, such an analysis could be impractical, so in order to avoid complicated and accurate arithmetic calculations of style, it would be sufficient to provide a rough indication of frequencies of a certain linguistic feature and to support it with examples (ibid.)

These insights can be related to the concept of *prominence*, which can be helpful to understand the concept of 'measuring' style. Leech and Short define it as 'the general name for the phenomenon of linguistic highlighting, whereby some linguistic feature stands out in some way. The concept of prominence provides the basis for a reader's subjective recognition of a style. A feature stands out if it attracts the reader's attention (ibid: 48). This implies that prominence is related to frequency of some linguistic features against others in a text.

Crystal and Davy (1969) also suggest ways of determining style and according to them in order to determine the style it is necessary to 'identify the entire range of linguistic features which people intuitively feel to be stylistically significant. Features that are considered to be stylistically significant would be those which *a) occur more frequently within the variety in question* and *b) are shared less by other varieties*. They use the term *frequency* in order to determine the stylistic relevance of certain linguistic features[3] in which it appears (ibid: 12).

Translation and Style

It is clear that style as a crucial aspect of a literary work has a profound influence on the translation process. Although style as a concept is mentioned as early as in Cicero's and Horace's writings on translation, the connection between the two has seldom been thoroughly researched into. Many theoreticians in the field of translation studies tackle style superficially

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[3] Linguistic features correlate to different kinds of situational functions (context). If a linguist has intuitively noted that a particular feature is stylistically significant, he/she tries to understand the basis of his intuitive response by examining the extra-linguistic context in order to establish any situational factor which might account for restriction on its use. Consequently, any feature whose occurrence is restricted to a particular extra-linguistic context is considered to be of stylistic importance. The role of a feature is perceived through different dimensions of situational constraints in which it appears (Crystal and Davy 1969:64). Crystal and Davy suggest that there are several different dimensions of situational constraint which indicate stylistically relevant features for a particular situation. For further information, see Crystal and Davy 1969: 66-67.

or totally neglect it, whereas only few of them carry out systematic studies of its relationship with translation[4]. This is surprising though, bearing in mind that 'style is central to the way we construct and interpret texts (Boase-Beier 2006: 1). It is logical to conclude that style as an essential aspect of a text has a bearing on the translation process.

In her book *'Stylistic Approaches to Translation'*, Boase-Beier defines style and its relationship with translation. From a stylistic point of view, translators deal with style in terms of 'paying attention to what is unique to the text and its choices, being aware of the patterns in the text and its essential nature and function. To pay attention to style in translation study means to consider how all these factors are reflected in the text and its translation (ibid: 2).

Kirsten Malmkjær (2004) also shows a strong interest in style. She considers it to be "an important aspect on which the translator should focus since the choices he/she makes are dependent upon the choices in the source text made by the author and it is only by comparing the original and the translation that it could be determined why translation means the way it does" (ibid.).

According to Pekkanen (2007), when it comes to literary translation, style can be perceived from different perspectives. Namely, it can refer to: 1) the typical features of the source-text; 2) the typical featres of the translated text or 3) the features characterising the translation process itself, defined either through various situational and methodological aspects typical of the translation process or through comparing the source text with the target text and thereby arriving at the translator's local and global strategies.

Speaking of the effects of style upon translation, Boase-Beier (2006:1) considers three aspects: 1) in the actual process of translation, the way the style of the source texts is viewed will affect the translator's reading of the text; 2) during the process of recreation of the original text, the target text will also be influenced by the sorts of choices the translator makes, and style is the outcome of choice and 3) the sense of what style is will affect not only what the translator does but how the critic of translation interprets what the translator has done.

Consequently, she analyses style in translation from at least four viewpoints (ibid: 5): 1) the style of the source text as an expression of its author's choices; 2) the style of the source text and its effects on the reader (and on the translator as a reader); 3) the style of the target text as an expression of choices made by its author (who is the translator) and 4) the style of the target text and its effects on the reader.

She actually emphasises points 2 and 3 i.e. the style of the source text as perceived by the translator and how it is conveyed or changed or to what extent it is or can be preserved in translation (ibid.). This indicates that when it comes to the relationship between translation and style, she accentuates the cognitive perspective of the text receiver who creates an image about the original through its style and as a translator conveys it in the target text. This standpoint suggests that the cognitive role of the reader is crucial for the understanding of the source text and it influences how he/she will experience the effect of the original and to what extent it will be kept it in the target text.

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[4] For more detailed information on research into the connection between translation and style see Ѓурчевска 2010, Ѓурчевска Атанасовска 2018 and Китановска-Кимовска 2013.

Discussion

Style can be understood as a rather general concept which can be situated in different contexts and perceived through various aspects of human life. Despite the numerous definitions, they all focus on style as a choice from various alternatives being offered; style is dependent on the context in which those alternatives appear and on the function or purpose it should fulfill, as well as on the affective response it should produce.

Style is a crucial feature of a literary text and it is perceived as a relationship between linguistic form and literary function or aesthetic effect. Linguistic choices are meaningful and stylistically significant and create an impression on the reader. Those linguistic choices which are intuitively recognised as highly frequent in a text and thus become noticeable for the reader are considered to be stylistically significant; they will shape the impression made upon the reader.

It is logical that style as an essential aspect of the original affects the translation process and the translated text. Style is an important component of the translation process since it reflects the original itself; it influences the way we understand certain text and our impression about it. In other words, it is through style that the meaning of the text is perceived. Style emphasises the aesthetic essence of a text, which means that translators deal with 'recreating' style and transferring it in the translation itself.

The analysis of the connection between style and translation offers interesting perspectives in regards to translation process. Apart from being regarded as an exclusive feature of the original, style can also be seen as an important aspect of the translation as well. When it comes to the style of a translated text, it can be examined not only as a choice dependent upon the author's preferences, but also as an alternative offered by the translator himself/herself, who has various options available. Despite the traditional focus on the typical stylistic features of the source text, we can explore the stylistic features of the target text and discuss the extent to which they correspond to the stylistic load of the original text. Additionally, these insights encourage comparative approaches which include evaluating and comparing the source and the target texts in order to explore methodological strategies available to translators. The findings might be used for practical and educational purposes. Even though the relationship between translation and style has seldom been researched into, in Macedonia there are some surveys which deal with this issue, predominantly MA and PhD theses[5].

The reflections on translation and style in this paper offer a distinctive stylistic approach to translation. This approach brings to the fore cognitive postulates which accentuate the reader (who might also be a translator) and engage him/her in the process of understanding the text and its style; he/she thus becomes part of the overall creative process. The importance of the cognitive role of the translator within the creative process of translating literary texts has been empirically proven by the research carried out within the PhD thesis *"Translating Expressive Lexis: Problems and Challenges – based on examples of literary translations form English*

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[5] For more detailed information on the topic, see *„Преведување стил: врз примери од англиската книжевност на македонски јазик"*(Китановска-Кимовска, 2013), and *„Јазикот во англискиот оригинал и македонскиот превод на Даблинци од Џојс"*(Ѓурчевска, 2010).

into Macedonian" (Gjurchevska Atanasovska, 2018)[6]. The research shows the significance of the translator's role as a text-receiver, whose ability to grasp the stylistic dimension of the original and transfer it properly in the target texts affects the quality of the translation itself. The analysis compares Macedonian translation equivalents for expressive lexis from original texts in regards to the extent to which they successfully reproduce the stylistic effect, thus showing the importance of the text receiver's cognitive role during the translation process. The survey offers information related to the stylistic appropriateness/inappropriateness of translation equivalents within the translation method used for translating literary texts; the aim is to show and compare the extent to which the translators succeeded in offering successful translation equivalents for the expressive lexical units from the original texts providing the same or at least similar stylistic effect in Macedonian. The analysis, which qualitatively and quantitatively shows which translation is more successful in transferring the stylistic effect from the original, also indicates which of the translators approached the creative process more seriously and engaged more intensively in grasping the style of the original. The results prove the importance of the cognitive dimension of the text receiver and suggest that if it is neglected or underestimated in any way, the quality of the translation is impaired. Greater stylistic appropriateness of translation equivalents in relation to the original positively affects the translation quality, which means that it is proportional to the role of the text receiver (the translator) in the overall creative process. On the other hand, lower stylistic appropriateness of the translation equivalents has a negative impact on the translation quality, which implies that it is inversely proportional to the role of the text receiver.

Conclusion

The insights presented in this paper emphasise the complex and multifaceted nature of the relationship between translation and style. Despite the fact that their mutual relationship has not received proper scientific attention, it is so strong that it inevitably comes to the fore as an important aspect of various researches in this field. Although this connection might seem subtle and discreet, theoretical and empirical postulates suggest that style is an essential aspect of the translation process and affects it in so many different ways, which also has a bearing on the translator's work itself. This proves its practical dimension as well.

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[6] For further information on the PhD thesis, see Ѓурчевска Атанасовска, К. (2018*) Преведување експресивна лексика: проблеми и предизвици – врз примери на книжевни преводи од англиски на македонски јазик.* Дата Понс, Скопје

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Забелешка: Овој труд е сработен во рамките на Макропроектот *„Јазици, книжевности, култури: образовни политики во функција на современото општество"* на Филолошкиот факултет „Блаже Конески" - Скопје

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