

AN INTRODUCTION TO COGNITIVE POETICS

Lecture 4: **'Conceptual Shift'** or how **Cognitive Poetics**
integrates into Translation Studies

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Outline

- A need for integrating CP to TR
- Freeman and Takeda's TR analysis
- Types of translational problems
- Definition of conceptual shift
- Reasons for conceptual shift

A need for integrating CP to TR

Margaret Freeman

- For translators, the question becomes to what extent a cognitive approach to literary texts can help them improve the quality of their translations, in capturing both the content of possible meanings accessed by the text and the aesthetic qualities that reflect the emotional stance the writer takes to those possible meanings.

A need for integrating CP to TR

- Elzbieta Tabakowska
 - 'Stylistic' competence of a translator
 - [Stylistic competence] must also comprise his ability to detect and recognize (in both the source and target languages) linguistic minutiae: subtle semantic differences on precisely the level of imagery dimensions. ... [T]his peculiar type of competence, situated somewhere in the area which lies within fuzzy borders that separate 'the craft' from 'the art' of translation, comprises also the ability to recognize the subtle ways in which individual dimensions – like individual strokes of a painter's brush – co-exist and co-operate to produce a coherent and harmonious picture

A need for integrating CP to TR

- How should we define translational equivalence?

A need for integrating CP to TR

- A contrastive cognitive poetics
 - re-interpretation of texts in translation with regard to the inter-relation of different cultural models as well as changes that conceptual domain of the text undergoes in translation

A need for integrating CP to TR

- Cognitive Linguistics offers a powerful theoretical apparatus for the contrastive study of the original text and its translations, since it gives us the possibility of looking beyond structural similarity and traditional types of translational transformations

Freeman and Takeda's TR analysis

- interpretation of the source text based on grammatical, semantic and intertextual analyses
- identifying translation problems such as ambiguities and possible readings
- application of cognitive approach to analysis of the text (applying CMT and blending)
- looking for conceptual equivalents in the target language
- translation activity per se which would eliminate faulty readings

Types of TR problems

- The structural difficulties :
 - the difference in combinatory nature of elements of the trope within two languages;
 - a possible change in morphological characteristics of either tenor or vehicle or both in the language of translation.

Types of TR problems

- Dan Brown's simile:
- The miniature structure itself protrudes up through the floor as though it were the tip of an iceberg

Types of TR problems

- Semantic difficulties in translation of tropes include:
 - lack of correspondence between the association a vehicle may entail in two languages
 - lack or abundance of synonymy between two languages with reference to tenor and vehicle;
 - lack of correspondence between the scope of expressive, image-bearing, emotive and evaluative information between the original and translation.

Types of TR problems

- *Food makes my mouth flood with saliva*
- *Mij rot perepovnyvsia slynoju*
- *my mouth is overfilled with saliva*

Types of TR problems

- Difficulty with rendering iconic information:
 - the difference in constructing the image in two languages
 - the need to preserve the conceptual level of the image

Types of TR problems

- *until the rain interfered, running its icy fingers down my back*
- *azh poky kryzhanyj doshch ne spijmav mene u svoji labety*
- up until the icy rain caught me in its big hands

Domestication

- Domestication

- a situation where a source text 'domestic' translation unit, which could be translated in such a way that it would be seen as 'foreign' in the target text, is instead translated in such a way that it will not be seen as 'foreign'.

Alternatively, it is translated in such a way that it can be seen as either explicitly... or implicitly ... 'domestic' (Ambrosiani 2012: 87)

Foreignization

- Foreignization
 - translation strategy directed towards source culture, when the translator leaves certain elements of the text foreign to the target culture as is

Conceptual Shift

- Conceptual shift
 - Translators' choice under which apart from the change in verbalization of the trope there is a change in the image at the conceptual level

Reasons for Conceptual Shift

- Conceptual shift may be a result of:
 - translators' language preferences and their idiosyncrasy, or individual characteristics of writing style which include the systematic choice of structures and wording, predominantly
 - structural, semantic and conceptual differences between the two languages, including the bulk of phraseology, stereotypes, realia, etc.
 - mistakes in translation due to an erroneous interpretation or lack of language and intercultural competence (according to EMT standards)

Reasons for Conceptual Shift

- **Translators' strategies**

- Omission

- *The voice had come from the top of a curled staircase that snaked up to the shadows of the second floor.*

- *Golos dolynav zgory, iz zakruchenyh shodiv, shcho vely an drugyj poverh, de bulo temno.*

- *The voice had come from the top of a curled staircase that led to the first floor where it was dark.*

Reasons for Conceptual Shift

- Salinger's 'Catcher in the Rye'
 - *I certainly began to feel like a prize horse's ass,*
 - *U mene vzhe azh zad prylyp to stil'cia,*
 - *My butt actually stuck to the chair*

Reasons for Conceptual Shift

- Creating a verbal image or using an idiom which is absent in the original
- *It was very ironical, it really was*
- *Jij-bogu, azh smih bere*
- *Well-well, (lit) the laughter overtakes me*

Reasons for Conceptual Shift

- Addition or omission
 - Suzanne Collins "The Hunger Games":
 - *My eyes scan the woods*
 - *Moji ochi gariachkovo prochisuvaly lis*
 - *My eyes brushed the woods in haste*
 - HUMAN IS MACHINE vs HUMAN IS COMB

Reasons for Conceptual Shift

- Substitution of a metaphoric image in which both verbal image and conceptual metaphor / metonymy are changed

Reasons for Conceptual Shift

- *The Fashion of the Ear*
- *Attireth that it hear*
- *In Dun, or fair* —(Johnson 1960: 257)

- *Bo vse – ščo vuho čuje –*
- *Ujava rozfarbuje*
- *To rajdužno –to siro.*

- *As all – that the ear hears –*
- *Imagination will colour*
- *Into rainbow colours – or grey.*

Conclusions

- Conceptual shift leads to domestication
- It may lead to changes of various degrees
- It depends on the conceptual pictures of the world
- Leaves the issue of translator's ethics open