

CULTURAL ISSUES IN TRANSLATION

Exoticism

Linguistic and cultural features from the ST (source text) directly imported into the TT (target text) with no explanation, deliberately to demonstrate the foreignness of the culture, e.g. Arabian Nights; Rebecca West's "Black Lamb Grey Falcon"

Cultural borrowing

Importing terms from ST to the TT without any change, often where an equivalent does not exist or where the difference between two words in the ST must be clarified when only one word exists in the TT, or where the ST word has a specific connotation e.g. Angst, joie de vivre, Schadenfreude, glasnost, perestroika, fildžan, „By the way“ (be careful of false friends)

Literal translation

Calque

The TT keeps the ST structure and word order, but is not idiomatic in the TL (target language). e.g. bolje vrabac u ruci, nego golub na grani; Weltanschauung. Deliberate literal translation of well-known idioms to emphasise foreign culture (Asterix in Britain: "Bonté gracieux – goodness gracious; je dis – I say!") **Calque:** better a sparrow in the hand, than a dove on a branch.

Transposition/Modulation

Change of semantics. Zabranjeno pušenje; prijatno! Napraviti kompromiz; napiti se

Communicative translation

Where a literal translation would be inappropriate, especially with idioms, phrases and sayings, where an equivalent exists in the TL.

Communicative equivalent: a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

Communicative paraphrase: what little you have for sure is more valuable than many things you might get, but don't yet have.

Equivalence

Cultural transplantation/adaptation

Moving from a foreign culture to a familiar one, minimising the use of foreign terms or unfamiliar cultural elements. Not so much translation, as adaptation. This involves re-writing the entire text, e.g. Cyrano de Bergerac → Roxanne, Baz Lehrman's version of Romeo and Juliet. Jokes suited to this transformation because of their shortness. (Bosnian → Irishman?)

Literary translation

"I thought fit to steer betwixt the two extremes of paraphrase and literal translation; to keep as near my author as I could, without losing all his graces, the most eminent of which are in the beauty of his words." Dryden (1697)

"I have endeavoured to make Virgil speak such English as he would himself have spoken, if he had been born in England, and in this present age." Dryden (1697)

"...the greatest fallacy of James W. Wiles's approach was his belief that *The Mountain Wreath* must have sounded extremely exalted and archaic even at the time of publication in 1847. As a consequence, the translator strove consciously to recreate the elevated tone of Njegoš's epic by deliberately choosing expressions that are no longer in common use: ye, doth, thou, thee, thy, hast, shouldst, wilt, and so on... When *The Mountain Wreath* was written, it sounded quite natural to a contemporary reader. It is here that the greatest weakness of Wiles's translation lies... **the language of the translation should be just as contemporary as it was to the first reader.**" Vasa D. Mihailovich, 1986

Practice

- ¹ U početku bješe riječ, i riječ bješe u Boga, i Bog bješe riječ.
² Ona bješe u početku u Boga.
³ Sve je kroz nju postalo, i bez nje ništa nije postalo što je postalo.
⁴ U njoj bješe život, i život bješe *vidjelo* ljudima.
⁵ I vidjelo se svijetli u tami, i tama ga ne obuže.
⁶ Posla Bog čovjeka po imenu Jovana.
⁷ Ovaj dođe za svjedočanstvo da svjedoči za vidjelo da svi vjeruju kroza nj.
⁸ On ne bješe vidjelo, nego da svjedoči za vidjelo.

John 1:1-8 from Vuk Stefanović-Karadžić's translation of the New Testament

- Ko rano rani dve sreće grabi
Communicative translation

Calque

Equivalent

- Voditelj:** Gazda Vidače, hoćete li nam reći nešto više o ovoj kravi?

Vidak: Ova klava je produkt australijanske klave i ruskoga poglavara. To je mislim dogovor bio još tada u doba Berlinskoga kongresa da se klava kao institucija jedne države prebaci kod nas, uuuu naaa, na naše prostore. Ovo je jedna klava koja nema neke mogućnosti psiho-fizičke, ali je jedna relikvitet jer možete mislit... Evo je. Njoj je jezik dužine... Mirna! Mirna! Njoj je jezik dužine preko 14 santimetara. Ona može da poliče jedan sladoled cijeli za nepunu minutu...