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THREE ROLES OF TRANSLATORS IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

The article focuses on the three roles of translators in children's literature and their ability to transform themselves in the process as illustrated with examples from the author's own translation of "Dorothy and the Wizard in Oz" into Bulgarian and compared with the Russian translation of the book.

Keywords: *Translation Studies, translation of children's literature*

My inspiration for this article came from the paper *The Interpreter as performer*¹. Like interpreters, translators of children's literature can and have to be performers or even actors, and to take on different kinds of roles during their translations. For a good translation they have to put themselves in the child's shoes and to take the role of a listener. To help the parent, who is usually the reader, they have to turn into a reader as well, and to make an easy to read translation. And in order to become a good storyteller, they have to dive into their own imagination and childhood experience and to take the role of a painter. To illustrate that idea I will give examples from my translation of *Dorothy and the Wizard in Oz* into Bulgarian. For my translation and analysis I chose the fourth book of the series, which hasn't been translated in Bulgaria until now. I compared all of my translating decisions with the Russian translation of the book.

Translator as listener

We know that animals in different countries speak different languages and produce different sounds. The Bulgarian cock sings "kuku-ri-guu" (куку-ри-гуу), the English – "cock-a-doodle-doo" (кок-а-дудъл-ду), the German – "kike-ri-ki" (кики-ри-ки), the Russian – "kuka-re-kú" (кука-ре-ку). All differences come from national culture and customs, but bring the national colour of that country.

In translated texts it is better to ignore the national colour and onomatopoeias should be replaced with their language equivalents in the translation. Sometimes they appear only once or are invented by the author for humorous effect. In that case they shouldn't be translated but transcribed. It's interesting that traditional onomatopoeias are seen mostly in children's fiction [1, c. 261–269].

¹ Naimushin B. The interpreter as performer // 44 Linguistic Colloquium. Globalisierung – Interkulturelle Kommunikation – Sprache. Akten des 44. Linguistischen Kolloquiums. Frankfurt: Peter Lang [in print].

Except for producing different sounds in different languages, animals are called by their masters differently:

1. „Then the boy picked up the reins, shook them, and said "Gid-dap!"¹
„След това момчето взе юздите, разтърси ги и извика: – Дий!“²
„Он разобрал вожжи, тряхнул ими и причмокнул: – Н-но!“³
2. „Here, – piggy, piggy, piggy!" called their master, anxiously."
„– Тук, гуци, гуци! – притеснено ги повика техният господар."
„– Домой, домой, мои крошки! – сзывал своих питомцев перепуганный хозяин."

In this situation the translator has to transform himself into a child and to take the role of a listener, in order to make the right choices in the text. In this case I decided to use the Bulgarian language equivalents of all onomatopoeias, giving this way a clear image of animals, and allowing the listener to imagine the whole episode. This also can be important from educational point of view, for example – if the child has never seen such animals before.

Translator as reader

The reading process itself is examined by Finish translator Ritta Oittinen. She pays attention to the strong children`s imagination. The translators of children`s literature are readers as well, but unlike children they use their past childhood experiences. An important moment for translators is also the fact that a big part of the literature is read aloud and the translated text has to sound vividly and interesting to the young listener [2, с. 32].

In her article *The Verbal and the Visual*, Oittinen says that when the translator is translating for small children, he has to conform the text to the rhythm of the story. Most of the books are supposed to be read aloud. And therefore the translator has to translate not only for adult`s eyes and ears, but also for their mouths. The author writes that songs in the story have to be able to be sing aloud by the reader [3].

3. *'To eat is sweet
When hunger's seat
Demands a treat
Of savory meat.'*

¹ Dorothy and the Wizard in Oz. [Online resource]. URL: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/420/420-h/420-h.htm> (date 09.02.2013).

² Баум Л.Ф. Дороти и Вълшебникът в Страната на Оз. София: Сиела, 2013.

³ Баум Л.Ф. Дороти и Волшебник в Стране Оз [Online resource]. URL: http://lib.aldebaran.ru/author/baum_laimen/baum_laimen_doroti_i_volshebник_v_strane_oz/ (date 09.02.2013).

*“Голяма е тази наслада –
Гладът когат' настоява,
С вкусна награда
Да го заситиш веднага!!!“*

This example is omitted in the Russian translation. In my version, I tried to keep the idea and to make the rhyme sound natural and clear, and also to give an opportunity for the reader to sing it.

Translator as painter

In chapter eight of the book, the main characters reached the valley of Vo and found that this is a wonderful valley with singing birds, beautiful gardens and small cottages, seeing here and there.

In this beautiful episode the translator has to take up the role of painter and to draw the beautiful valley correctly. And like many situations, one single word can cause a huge problem.

The word which happens to be difficult in this chapter for my “drawing”, was *cottage*, which can be translated as: cottage (къщичка), little house (къщурка), country house (селска къща), villa (вила), small villa (виличка).

Villa and small villa dropped immediately, because people in this valley were living permanently and the villa is using usually only seasonally. Country cottage wasn't appropriate either, because there wasn't any folk-style characteristics in the description. But undoubtedly it was written about a house. In this case my dilemma was – house (къща), cottage (къщичка) or little house (къщурка).

In his book “The Grammar of Fantasy”, Italian writer Gianni Rodari compares the stone with the word. According to him, when a stone is thrown in water, it provokes a circular motion and carries away other objects in the lake. This way a word can provoke series of chain reactions like sounds, images and associations. This phenomenon is connected with human experience and can be different with different people [4]. My choice here was little house (къщурка). The House is supposed to be bigger, and cottage I connect myself with the Three little pigs' cottage. My choice was also influenced by Ran Bosilek's poem “Home”. When I read it, it was absolutely clear for me that the only appropriate word was къщурка (little house).

4. *„The nearest cottage was still some distance away”
„Най-близката къщурка беше все още далеч”
„Но до ближайшего домика было еще довольно далеко”*

The House is typical for towns. It is always big and firm. Usually made of stone (Snow White, The Bremen Town Musicians, Three little pigs)

The cottage and *the little house* are typical for the country and woods. Both of them are small, usually made of wood. But cottages are not always hospitable. An example of that are the most famous forest houses – the house on chicken legs and the house made of bread, Easter cake and sugar.

In contrast to the *cottage*, *the little cottage* is always hospitable and friendly. Examples can be found in “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs”, “Stone soup” and “Little Red Riding Hood”. That’s the other reason I chose the word *къщурка* in my translation, because in the little house from the valley of Voe, Dorothy and her friends receive food and help during their travels.

Another interesting example for translating, is the image of the ugly dragonets. Even episodic characters, with whom our Earth travelers met in chapter thirteen, they will probably be very impressive in the eyes of the child. They are ugly, with small bodies, enormous heads and awfully crooked mouths. The mother dragon tied their tails to the rocks when she hunts, because otherwise they will be naughty. The meeting of Dorothy and her friends with the strange creatures is short, but strange, and is important for their future travelling. That’s why for achieving the dragonets image and on my editor’s advice, the ugly creatures’ mouths from *coal-scuttles* as they are in the original, turned into *shovels*.

5. *"I simply can't describe 'em," answered the kitten, shuddering. "Their eyes are like pie-plates and their mouths like coal-scuttles.*

*„Не мога лесно да ги опиша – отговори котето, потрепервайки. -
Очите им са като чинии, а устата им като лопати.”*

„Уж и не знаю, как сказать, – отвечал котенок, вздрагивая всем телом – Глаза, как тарелки, пасть размером с ящик для угля.”

Conclusion

Translating children’s literature is not an easy task, especially when the translators have to translate for a dual audience – the adult, who is a reader and the child, who is a listener. In this situation the translator has to put himself in his reader’s and listener’s shoes in order to be able to make a clear, accurate and appropriate translation.

While translating, I was constantly trying to imagine that I was reading aloud or someone else is reading to me. Sometimes, and in difficult for me places I used the Russian translation of the novel for comparison. Although both languages are Slavic, the translations differ from one another. I suppose that this is due to the different feel and understanding of the text.

I found three different roles of the translator during my translation: the role of the reader, the listener and the painter. The book was very entertaining because of the fact that I know the characters and their adventures and because the narration was smooth throughout the whole novel. It was pleasure for me to read, which prepared me

on the other hand for the process of translation. But even the many roles, situations and obstacles I faced, all transformation were worth the trouble and allowed me to dive into my imagination and to travel along with my new fairy-tale friends.

References

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ТРИ РОЛИ ПЕРЕВОДЧИКА ДЕТСКОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ

Рассматриваются три роли переводчика детской литературы и его способность к смене этих ролей в процессе перевода. Приводятся примеры из авторского перевода книги «Дороти и Волшебник в Стране Оз» на болгарский язык в сравнении с русским переводом данного произведения.

Ключевые слова: *теория перевода, перевод детской литературы.*