

THE METHOD OF ADAPTATION IN TRANSLATION AND ITS LINGUOCULTURAL-PRAGMATIC FOUNDATIONS



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ABSTRACT

This article examines “adaptation” as a translation method and its linguocultural-pragmatic basis. It reviews how Soviet and later scholars approached adaptation—often viewing it with skepticism—and contrasts this with more modern views that see it as essential for handling cultural differences. The translation argues that adaptation serves to preserve a text’s overall meaning while making it comprehensible and functionally appropriate for the target audience. Ultimately, the author concludes that adaptation is a key pragmatic strategy for achieving equivalence between languages.

Key words: *translation, adaptation, realia, rephrasing, method of adaptaion.*

АННОТАЦИЯ

В данной статье рассматривается «адаптация» как метод перевода и её лингвокультурно-прагматическая основа. Анализируется подход советских и более поздних исследователей к адаптации, которая часто воспринималась ими скептически, и сопоставляется с современными взглядами, рассматривающими её как необходимый инструмент для преодоления культурных различий. В статье утверждается, что адаптация служит сохранению общего смысла текста, одновременно обеспечивая его понятность и функциональную адекватность для целевой аудитории. В конечном итоге автор приходит к выводу, что адаптация является важной прагматической стратегией для достижения эквивалентности между языками.

Ключевые слова: *перевод, адаптация, реалии, перефразирование, метод адаптации.*

ANNOTATSIYA

Mazkur maqolada “adaptatsiya” tarjima usuli sifatida hamda uning lingvokulturologik va pragmatik asoslari tahlil qilinadi. Unda sovet va keyingi davr olimlarining adaptatsiyaga bo‘lgan yondashuvlari ko‘rib chiqilib, ularning

ko 'pincha ushbu usulga nisbatan skeptik qarashlari zamonaviy yondashuvlar bilan qiyoslanadi. Zamonaviy qarashlarga ko'ra, adaptatsiya madaniy tafovutlarni bartaraf etishda muhim vosita hisoblanadi. Maqolada adaptatsiya matnning umumiy mazmunini saqlab qolish bilan birga, uni tarjima o'quvchisi uchun tushunarli va funksional jihatdan mos qilishga xizmat qilishi ta'kidlanadi. Xulosa sifatida muallif adaptatsiyani tillar o'rtasida ekvivalentlikka erishishning muhim pragmatik strategiyasi sifatida baholaydi.

Kalit so'zlar: tarjima, adaptatsiya, realiyalar, qayta ifodalash, adaptatsiya usuli.

In translation, not only are two languages involved, but also two distinct cultures and two different literary and real-life contexts that come into conflict. For this reason, in modern translation studies the process of translation is understood not only as a transfer of language but also as a form of intercultural communication. Such an approach contributes to the introduction of new concepts into scholarly discourse and helps uncover new aspects of certain terms that had previously been insufficiently studied. One such concept is *adaptation*. Although this term has been used in many fields, it can be observed that in the first half of the 20th century it hardly became a focus of attention in translation studies research. The term *adaptation* is explained by L.Nelyubin in his "Dictionary of Translation Terms" as follows:

1. A method of achieving equivalence of the original text by altering the described situation so as to produce the same effect on the receptor.
2. By *adaptation* one usually means manipulating the text in various ways, namely simplifying its content and form, as well as shortening the text so that readers who are not prepared to read it in its original form can grasp it.
3. Adjusting the text for readers who are not sufficiently prepared to read it; for example, "simplifying" a literary work for those who have just begun learning a foreign language. [Nelyubin 2013:14-21]

The last two parts of this definition reflect how most Soviet translation scholars regarded the concept of adaptation. In other words, it was considered a translation method that did not merit serious scholarly attention, and its definitions carry a certain negative connotation. For example, A.V. Fedorov emphasizing that the translated text must fully correspond to the original, notes that one should avoid adaptation forms such as recasting (переделка), retelling(пересказ), and abridged rendition (сокращённое изложение) as much as possible, and he does not recognize adaptation as a full-fledged form of translation. R.K. Minyar-Beloruhev

[Minyar-Beloruchev,19-21] supported this view, stressing that in translation it is important to convey all information, whereas adaptation delivers only the general meaning of the information in a shortened or altered form.

In the multilingual explanatory dictionary titled “Terminologie de la Traduction: Translation Terminology”, adaptation is defined similarly, as “the process of replacing socio-cultural realities in the source text with realities of the target culture in order to meet the needs of the target audience.” [Vinay, 3-6] Discussing the theoretical debates surrounding adaptation, its vague semantic boundaries, and some researchers’ negative attitudes towards it, J. Bastin suggests analyzing this concept within four theoretical dimensions:

- Translation Strategy: adaptation as a strategy during the translation process.
- Genre: adaptation in relation to text genres.
- Metalanguage: didactic translations, where learner comprehension is the priority.
- Faithfulness: how closely the translation’s meaning remains to the original’s meaning.

Bastin defines the essence of adaptation as a translation method by building on Vine and Darbelnet’s definition, and he regards it as a practical and objective approach. From the genre perspective, he notes that certain genres — such as drama, advertising, subtitling, and children’s literature — are ones where adaptation is highly needed. In the metalinguistic domain, he observes that for didactic materials the important factor is how well the learner can comprehend the language. From the faithfulness criterion perspective, adaptation is evaluated based on how closely the translation text remains to the original in terms of meaning.

At this point it should be emphasized that these types of adaptation methods do not damage the overall meaning of the text. On the contrary, while preserving the original content, certain elements are reworked in forms that are convenient, easily assimilated, and culturally familiar to the target readership. As a result, the translated text becomes functionally balanced, suited to the communicative purpose, and aligned with the needs of the target audience. In summary, when translating from one language to another, translators encounter not only significant lexical-grammatical differences, but also major disparities in the concepts, ideas, and beliefs of different peoples — differences born of each culture’s natural, economic, and political conditions. If a translator tries to find a direct equivalent for such culturally loaded terms, it may obscure or even lose the intended meaning of the original word. When different languages and cultures come into contact, semantic asymmetry inevitably arises and gaps become apparent.

When the source text contains elements that are unclear or incongruous, the translator resorts to the adaptation method to render them intelligible in the target language. Under the principle of dynamic equivalence, both lexicon and grammar are adapted to make the text understandable to the reader. In other words, the goal is to achieve a level whereby “the author would have written it that way”. To this end, the translator removes or explains unclear or foreign elements in the original, and specifically adapts cultural context and historical realities for the target reader.

In the translation process, a significant issue is the existence of linguistic-cultural differences between source and target languages – each language has a unique “linguistic landscape”. Each language is enriched with cultural signifiers and values, and the semantic associations of words or phrases are shaped by its culture. The translator does not simply assume that readers cannot understand foreign realities in the original; rather, he or she takes into account how each concept is expressed in the target culture. Intercultural differences are one of the most complex aspects of translation and are often referred to as ethnocentrism or cultural divergence. Accounting for such differences helps maintain the uniqueness of the original text while accurately conveying its meaning.

Based on the views of scholars, it can be stated that a translation is considered high-quality if it is easily accepted by the target-language community and if the translated text produces an effect on the reader that is close to that experienced by the original audience. To achieve this, it is often more appropriate to apply pragmatic adaptation rather than strictly reproducing the external form of the text.

Translating the literature of peoples belonging to different religions has always posed various challenges and complexities for translators. In such cases, the translator’s task becomes twice as demanding: on the one hand, to fully convey the content of the original, and on the other hand, to make the text understandable for the target reader. This is because the translation of religious terms and concepts should not create difficulties for the reader, while at the same time it must not contradict the religious beliefs to which the reader adheres [Shirinova, 8].

An analysis of scholarly works on the translation of religious realia shows that numerous errors have been made in translating religious terms, belief-related concepts, the names of prophets and saints, and references to miracles and events associated with them. In F. Sapaeva’s dissertation titled “*A Comparative Analysis of Uzbek Translations of Mahtumkuli’s Poems*,” the following shortcomings are identified in the translation of religious and educational poetry: “the omission of stanzas and verses with religious content due to ideological influence; alteration of the text under the pressure of dominant ideology; misinterpretation of religious

terms due to lack of understanding; incorrect rendering of the names of sacred books, angels, prophets, saints, and religious figures; as well as errors in references provided for some incorrect translations.” The author explains these deficiencies primarily by the ideological pressure of the Soviet period and, secondly, by the translators’ insufficient knowledge of Islam [Sapaeva 2018, 19-20].

R.Shirinova explains errors in the translation of religious realia by the following four main factors:

- insufficient knowledge of the religious beliefs and customs of other peoples, as well as inability to distinguish between sectarian differences;
- attempts to deliberately simplify the original text based on the assumed level of the target audience;
- expressing all religious terms and concepts using generalized terms common to all religions or omitting them in translation;
- replacing terms belonging to other religions with Islamic terminology in the process of adapting the translated work to Uzbek cultural context [Shirinova, 122].

Indeed, correctly expressing religious concepts and cultural realities in translation requires the translator to have a high level of skill. In particular, when rendering religious terms, it is necessary to correctly identify their stylistic functions. If the language, nationality, or religion of the source text differs fundamentally from that of the target, adaptation cannot be avoided. In some cases, adaptation even helps preserve the communicative effect in the translation without harming the original literary work’s overall idea. The theoretical reflections considered here demonstrate that adaptation is an important means of reconciling not only linguistic differences but also cultural disparities. It serves to preserve the semantic integrity of the text while making it comprehensible and functionally appropriate for the reader. When applied correctly, the method of adaptation ensures semantic precision, stylistic appropriateness, and communicative effectiveness in the translation process. Thus, adaptation can justifiably be considered one of the most important pragmatic strategies for achieving equivalence in modern translation theory.

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