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**Y. V. Maslov**, Ph. D. in Education, Associate Professor  
Belarusian State Economic University, 26 Partizansky Ave., 220070 Minsk, the Republic of Belarus, maslove@tut.by

## TEACHING TRANSLATION AND TRANSLATION STUDIES: IN SEARCH OF THE SCIENCE AND ART SYNERGY

The material presents a review of a collective monograph “Multidimensional Translation, from Science to the Arts”, published in the English language and based on the materials presented at an international scientific conference dedicated to Translation Studies theory and teaching translation as a specific form of speech activity. The author briefly reviews the content of all the research papers paying attention to particular elements of research methodologies. An attempt is made to analyze the quality of their approaches and their practical value for the process of foreign language training both in our country and abroad. An important aspect of the material is the fact that the monograph contains the research conducted by one of the educators working at the Professional Foreign Language Training Chair of Baranovichi State University.

**Key words:** translation; translation studies; teaching translation; translator/interpreter training; translator/interpreter competence; translation skills.

Ref.: 1 title.

**Ю. В. Маслов**, кандидат педагогических наук, доцент  
Учреждение образования «Белорусский государственный экономический университет»,  
пр-т Партизанский, 26, 220070 Минск, Республика Беларусь, maslove@tut.by

## ОБУЧЕНИЕ ПЕРЕВОДУ И ПЕРЕВОДОВЕДЕНИЕ: В ПОИСКАХ СИНЕРГИИ НАУКИ И ИСКУССТВА

В материале представлена рецензия на коллективную монографию на английском языке «Многоплановый перевод: от науки к искусству», изданную по итогам проведения международной научной конференции, посвященной проблемам переводоведения и обучения переводу как специфическому виду речевой деятельности. Рецензия включает краткое содержание всех опубликованных в данной книге материалов с описанием отдельных элементов методологии авторских исследований. Сделана попытка проанализировать представленные подходы, определить степень их практической значимости для решения актуальных задач иноязычного образования в нашей стране и за рубежом. Важным моментом является то, что в монографии опубликовано исследование одного из преподавателей кафедры профессиональной иноязычной подготовки учреждения образования «Барановичский государственный университет».

**Ключевые слова:** перевод; переводоведение; обучение переводу; подготовка переводчиков; переводческая компетенция; переводческие умения.

Библиогр.: 1 назв.

**Introduction.** The present paper aims at reviewing the recently published collective monograph *Multidimensional Translation, from Science to the Arts* (2022). The 138-page book contains 15 articles written by experts working in Latvia (5 articles), Slovakia (3 articles), Romania (2 articles), Belarus, Croatia, Lithuania, Poland, and Russia (1 article from each country).

The articles fall into three major categories: translation theory (2 articles), teaching translation/interpreting (6 articles); literary translation (6 articles), and language teaching (2 articles). One Russian-language article deals with the book market situation in Slovakia. The outline of the content prompts the idea that most authors are primarily concerned with the “practical” aspects of

translation. It simply means that educators from Central Europe and the Baltic area are now actively looking for ways and means to foster the effectiveness of foreign language training at university level.

At present translators and/or interpreters are in great demand elsewhere in the world, as contacts between representatives of different cultures are intensifying. That creates a number of challenges for educational systems whose task is to train such specialists as efficiently as possible. Given the diversity of the authors' backgrounds, there is a plurality of approaches discussed in the articles. However, it is also clear that researchers are guided by universally accepted assumptions about language and/or translation/interpreting. Thus, it makes sense to thoroughly analyze the content of the articles and find as many takeaway ideas as possible.

**Materials and methods of research.** The present writer will attempt to answer the following question: which approaches to training translators/interpreters described in the reviewed volume can be of greater use for educators working in this country? The critical analysis of articles' content will be employed, dividing all the research papers into three major categories mentioned above.

**Research results and discussion.** Two articles are dedicated to the discussion of *translation theory*.

An overview of audiovisual translation and media accessibility is given by *Lina Abraitienė* from the Institute of Language, Literature and Translation Studies, Vilnius University Kaunas Faculty (Lithuania). Recently published World Health Organization's data allow the author to emphasize the global need to develop techniques of sign language, subtitling and audio-description. Thus, research into audiovisual translation is currently on the rise, its semiotics-related features being of primary interest for scholars.

One of the most valuable takeaways is the table compiled by the author comprising all known modes of audiovisual translation. The mode titles are borrowed from the authoritative papers published between 1991 and 2014 by six different scholars [1, p. 65—66]. Moreover, the sources are in three European languages (Spanish, French, and English), which creates a more "global" perspective on audiovisual translation modes. The table can serve as solid reference material for any researcher willing to conduct further studies in the field.

*Ivan Borshchevsky* from Baltic International Academy (Latvia) published a curious study of early 20<sup>th</sup> century cinematography focusing on the phenomenon known today as audio description. In fact, the author posits that the silent films shown in Riga more than a century ago were accompanied by various forms of narration, which makes the retrospective studies of those practices quite worthwhile.

Six articles deal directly with *various aspects of interpreter/translator training*.

The materials may be of use for educators engaged in teaching various aspects of translation studies. One can notice one viewpoint shared by all the authors: they all stress the importance of well-thought-over textbooks ("rigorous" textbooks, using the words of one researcher).

*Muriel Waterlot* from the Catholic University named after John Paul II (Poland) presents an intercultural communicative competence-based assessment model that can be applied in translator training. The idea of the author stems from the existence of synergies between the didactics of translation and the didactics of foreign-language education. The synergies in question are the following: both are viewed primarily as forms of communication, are based on the learner-centered approach prevalent in today's education in general, and are supposed to contribute to the formation of the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC).

The third synergy plays a crucial role in developing the author's assessment model, as the act of translation should essentially be considered an act of *intercultural mediation*. In fact, the author postulates (and tests) the following hypothesis: the specific organization of translator training contributes to the building of ICC of learners. The hypothesis has been tested in practice, with 24 bachelor degree students of the Dutch language participating in the experiment. The results of the

experiment show that learners come to realize the beneficial impact of translation studies on their cultural awareness.

The author also developed a kind of scale [1, p. 52—54] that can be applied in assessing written products of translation activities (not necessarily from Dutch into Polish, but from any foreign language). The assessment scale may be the most tangible takeaway.

**Klaudia Bednarova-Gibova** from the Institute of British and American Studies, University of Presov (Slovakia) describes a *future* research project for translation studies (TS). The author emphasizes that TS has become one of the most dynamically evolving fields of study in the humanities, which brings about a growing need in a constantly updated and improved translation course books.

The author contemplates the development of translation textbook for a specific target audience (students of language and culture at the faculty of arts). The audience is not going to use translation skills professionally; the aim of the course is to increase their awareness of the complexity of translation activity. The approach is dictated by the growing understanding of the importance of translation *per se*.

The author's ambition is to produce an English-language translation textbook for Slovakian students based on the ideas circulating in the international school of translation thought. The author proposes a 12-chapter textbook, each chapter covering a specific area of translation theory/practice. The most beneficial takeaway for educators may be the tentative outline of the future textbook's chapters [1, p. 19]. Incidentally, one of the chapters is devoted to *literary translation*. However, the article's value is limited by the fact that the project has not yet received the necessary funding.

Another project was proposed by **Martin Djovcos and Miroslava Melichercikova** from the Department of English and American Studies, Faculty of Arts, Matej Bel University (Slovakia). This article deals with the methods of interpreter trainees' progress. The authors set an ambitious task of increasing the efficacy of interpreter training at all Slovak universities where translators and/or interpreters are currently being trained.

The authors point out that the translation and interpreting programs in Slovakian university system are still labeled "philology studies", which constitutes a limited viewpoint. That is why, according to the authors, a new approach to devising Translation Studies' syllabus is imperative. The theoretical part is grounded in the well-established theories by renowned researchers (Seleskovitch and Lederer, Kalina, Gile, et al.).

The most valuable takeaways are the specific methods of evaluating trainees' progress that manifest themselves in certain organizational aspects of the course. For instance, all students of translation are supposed to keep a diary and update it after every seminar. Also, their interpreting performance (consecutive and simultaneous) is recorded three times per semester. The students are then tasked to make a transcript of their interpreting performances and fill out an evaluation table [1, p. 58].

The proposed evaluation table makes it possible to assess the quality of interpreter performance on the basis of the observed number of false starts, hesitations, unfinished sentences, corrections, redundant noises, voice uncertainty, omissions, additions, negative shifts, and overall satisfaction. Moreover, two interpreter trainers will evaluate the same recordings from two different perspectives. Such methods may well be employed by every educator teaching practical courses in Translation Studies.

**Yuri Maslov** from Belarusian State Economic University (Belarus) describes a multi-dimensional model of simultaneous interpreting that can be applied in interpreter training at university level. The author emphasizes the role of simultaneous interpreting (SI) in today's world saying that contemporary students are "organically prepared" for taking SI courses.

The author's ruminations are grounded in theory of translation, stemming from two sources — the interpretive theory of translation by Danica Seleskovitch and the efforts model by Daniel Gile. The article postulates the existence of four crucial difficulties that SI professionals have to deal with (linguistic, cultural, social, affective). If one combines them with Gile's four efforts (reception, retention, production, coordination), one can develop a three-dimensional graphic representation of

what interpreters should learn to do competently. To put it simply, SI training may well be focused on 16 focal points such as linguistic difficulties of reception/retention/production/coordination, cultural difficulties of the same type, etc.

To demonstrate the practical value of the approach, the author provides a table [1, p. 37] displaying a set of sub-skills needed to overcome a particular difficulty combined with exercises aimed at building specific sub-skills. According to the author, the approach presents a theoretical possibility to devise an entire “periodic table” of exercises that can be used throughout a particular SI training course.

**Corina Vasile** from the University of Craiova (Romania) focuses on the problem of translating institutional discourse, making a distinction between the use of the terms “organizational” and “institutional”. The author points out the interdisciplinary perspectives on discourse, emphasizing the fact that “discursive practices go beyond solely mirroring conventions utilized by communities” [1, p. 10].

The theoretical basis of the article is the taxonomy of translator competences (Sehan 2010) that include language, textual, subject, cultural, and transfer competencies. The bulk of the article is a detailed coverage of the specific characteristics of the above competences. One of the takeaways can be the idea put forward by Zainurrahman Sehan: linguists should use the term “transferring” instead of “translating” [1, p. 13]. Though the article focuses on competences rather than on various aspects of institutional discourse, the idea of “transferring” seems to be worthy of discussing, as it gives a chance to view the process of translation from a slightly different perspective.

**Valentina Kalinina** from Liepaja University (Latvia) discusses ways for building professional vocabulary while teaching a foreign language (Russian) to would-be actors. The author’s approach stems from the concepts of personality type and/or professional identity. According to the author, the knowledge of Russian may be a factor in the success of students’ creative self-actualization in the future. However, the article presents an insufficient number of examples of how actual teaching of lexis should be performed.

Six other articles deal with various aspects of *literary translation (LT)*.

The publication of these papers reflects the mere fact that international readership begins to question the quality of literary translations. That is why literary translation *per se*, as well as the problem of training literary translators, attracts the attention of researchers in different countries.

**Liana Georgiana Oprea (Moga)** from the University of Craiova (Romania) delves into the theory and practice of LT. Firstly, the author explores the notions of accuracy, equivalence, and fidelity, concluding that LT forever “oscillates between faithfulness and freedom” [1, p. 24]. Secondly, the author describes literary translator’s competence and agency paying special attention to the cultural competence, as the main role of the literary translator is, by default, that of a cultural mediator. Thirdly, the author presents an evaluation framework aimed at providing LT quality assurance. The framework includes such descriptors as accuracy (referential, grammatical, and lexical), stylistic compliance, adequacy, and acceptability (adherence to target culture norms). The ensuing description of norms from the conceptual standpoint takes up the remaining portion of the paper. One of the takeaways may be the list of references comprising 24 sources, which can be easily used for obtaining additional information on the subject.

**Veronica Razumovskaya** from Siberian Federal University (Russia) focuses her attention on the phenomenon of neologisms. The author stresses the well-known fact that at present one can observe a steady expansion of the paradigm of translation categories. Consequently, the researcher reminds readers of newer categories—source inexhaustibility, translation multiplicity, foreignization and domestication, the center of translation attraction and semantic situation (the last two notions proposed previously by the author herself). It is also noted that the research in phonosemantics can yield many an insight into LT [1, p. 111].

However, the title of the paper suggests that the greatest challenge in LT is posed by neologisms, the *sui generis* of lexis. The author focuses on one type of neologisms that she calls the “sound-descriptive” ones. Naturally, translating such neologisms into a different language requires

not just creating new words, never before existing in the target language, but creating the phonosemantic model of the source neologism as well. The author postulates the importance of the so-called phonosemantic universals. In fact, literary translators may achieve higher levels of equivalence in translation by means of using such universals.

The article contains a 17-item list of references that includes five publications published by the author. Inquisitive readers may well go deeper into the problem by doing more extensive reading of the author's articles dealing with the subject matter.

**Irena Miculaco** and **Juraj Dobrila** from the University of Pula (Croatia) underline the role LT plays in teaching foreign languages. In fact, their publication, a 20-page-long article, is dedicated to the results of a teaching episode that includes translating a classical Russian-language short story into the native language of the students (Croatian). The purpose of the exercise is not confined to building skills in translation proper; it also includes raising cultural awareness and motivation to learn the Russian language.

A substantial portion of the article is dedicated to the notions of background knowledge and semantic transformations in translation. The most valuable idea concerns the concept of "educational translation" that can be understood as challenging students of foreign languages possessing no previous experience in translation with literary translation tasks.

The teaching episode involved 5 third-year students of Russian who were tasked with literary translation of a classical short story by Ivan Bunin entitled "Dark Alleys" (the authors use Hugh Aplin's version, "Dark Avenues"). The paper contains a detailed analysis of how various culture-related elements can and should be translated into English (Alpin's version) and Croatian (the authors' version). However, one gradually becomes uncertain about the origin of Croatian translations. It seems unclear whether they belong to the students or their teachers.

At the end of the exercise though, the students are asked to do a survey and answer questions concerning their attitude toward translation and their level of creative satisfaction. Their answers prove that they are generally positive about the task. The main takeaway may be the idea to incorporate LT tasks into foreign language courses.

Yet a word of caution should be spoken, as it is probably not quite appropriate to put greenhorn translators face to face with a literary text of the highest artistic caliber. It may well be that "less classical" texts serve better the purposes of such tasks.

**Aleksandra Laucuka** from the University of Latvia describes an approach to the translation of idioms based on corpus linguistics. The author presents both the description of the central notion and the results of statistical analyses of the corpus compiled on the basis of contemporary French fiction and its Latvian translations. The data clearly show that the feature of "polilexicality" may serve as a key factor in translators' decision-making. In simple words, if a translator decides to translate a multi-word foreign idiom with just one word, its figurative meaning will most certainly be lost in translation.

The article contains practical advice that can be of great use for literary translators. For example, it might make sense, when translating idiomatic expressions, "to use a freshly minted metaphor or even to calque the original one, if sufficiently transparent" [1, p. 84]. The author's overall conclusion is indisputable: when a source-text idiom stands for a target-text idiom, the original imagery has the highest chances of surviving in the act of translation.

However, one should give a word of caution again, as translators should "tread softly" when dealing with idiom. For instance, the author cites an example of an idiomatic French expression ("noir comme un corbeau") and provides several near literal translations that are, essentially, similes. But the "literary" — idiomatic — meaning of the expression is not even mentioned, though it is miles away from what the author gives. The French dictionaries state that this idiom is typically used to describe "hardened / seasoned criminals".

**Ekaterina Bertule** from Baltic International Academy (Latvia) presented the results of her research dealing with lexical transformations in the process of translating humor. The author describes

the notion of humor in depth pointing out the inevitable differences in ways of translating humor from English, an analytic language, into Latvian and Russian that are both synthetic languages.

The author analyzes seven original micro-contexts borrowed from the novel “The Old Man and the Sea” by Hemingway and compares their translations into Latvian and Russian (published in 1974 and 1984 respectively). The analysis shows that the American author creates a humorous effect employing such techniques as comparison, personification, absurdity, irony, paradox, etc. The author delivers an interesting observation on the quality of translations pointing out that the repertoire of techniques aimed at generating a humorous effect was expanded incorporating several other, target language-specific techniques.

Another keen observation concerns the general tone of translations. Unsurprisingly, the Latvian translation carries more neutral versions of the original humor. The author explains this in terms of the peculiarities of Latvian national character. Reticence and self-restraint are common features in Latvians, and the 1974 translation of the American novel seems to have been tailored to the expectations of the target readership. Whether such an approach is fully appropriate today is yet to be debated.

**Oleg Belajev** from Liepaja University (Latvia) presents an article dealing with Russian translations of the iconic poem by Appollinaire. The author describes the historical and cultural context in which the poem appeared, and maps out a number of connections existing between the poet’s themes and the themes of his contemporaries. However, the author’s focus somewhat shifts towards literary studies; the reader is left with a feeling that much more could have been revealed about the peculiarities of the Russian versions of that iconic verse.

**Martin Lizon** from the Department of Philosophy at Matej Bel University (Slovakia) surveys the Slovak book market trends in relation to the publications of contemporary Russian literature. The author concludes the survey stating that commercial considerations reign supreme in today’s book market. Yet they are not the only ones that drive the publication policies of leading Slovak publishers. The other considerations include the relative merits of works of fiction, the interests of Slovak academia, and, last but not least, peculiar leanings of book market actors.

**Conclusion.** The volume entitled *Multidimensional Translation, from Science to the Arts* should be read attentively by professionals in the sphere of translation studies. Certain experiences of the contributors serve as guidelines educators can duly follow. It is clear that many educators today are in search of better ways and means of translation quality assessment. They also welcome the idea of obtaining a multi-purpose “rigorous” textbook in translation studies. One other popular area of studies is literary translation in its many forms.

One should thank the editors of the book, *Lina Abraitene* and *Zanna Daragane*, for the job well done. The publications of such caliber can’t but help build bridges between educational practices grounded in various cultural environments, scientific theories, etc. Such newly built bridges can and will facilitate the creation of new, bright avenues for international collaboration in the field of education and translation studies.

#### References

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