

The Semiosphere as a Generator of Intra- and Intercultural Translations

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Abstract. The paper discusses the main provisions of Yu. Lotman's semiosphere concept and the potential of semiotics as a tool for translation studies. Besides, it analyzes the semiosphere as a generator of intra- and intercultural translations. The authors of the paper concluded that translation is not just a language-oriented process, but a transformation of the original (verbal or nonverbal) message by symbolic means of the receiving semiosphere or its component; translation is an act of communication that can occur in the middle of "its" semiotic space and on the border of two contacting cultures, and intra- and intercultural translations are interdependent phenomena.

Keywords: semiotics, semiosphere, culture, translation, translation studies, intracultural translation, intercultural translation.

Introduction

Changes in the life of the world community, the processes of globalization, and the emergence and development of a worldwide communication computer network have significantly increased the possibilities of intercultural communication. These trends have formed, in essence, the society's demand for translation as a communicative mediation in various areas of life. It became obvious that the opinion, in which translation theorists and practicing translators have repeatedly tried to convince society for many years, has finally been confirmed, stating that translation is not just an act of transcoding a text from the original language into a text in another language, but also a socially significant act of intercultural communication.

The peculiarity of translation is more the fact that translation plays a significant social role as a link between societies with different languages and cultures. Over time, the role of translation will become more and more significant, since, from a simple intermediary that satisfies only a small fraction of the need for communication between individuals separated by linguistic and national barriers, translation turns into a leading process in the field of intercultural communications, providing a diverse information and communication activity of modern society.

At the same time, in translation studies, the practice of translation is ahead of theoretical achievements, since there is still no unity in views regarding translatability, adequacy, and equivalence of translation, although these issues are given sufficient attention in scientific research. In the Russian translation school, the key is the concept of equivalence, which is often defined as "the equivalence of the original and translation texts", "the main task of translation", and the concepts of equivalence, adequacy, and identity are viewed as synonyms (Bazylev et al., 2010). According to A.D. Shveitser (1988), the main indicator of correct translation is communicative equivalence. He distinguishes different levels of equivalence, considering that an adequate translation is characterized by a specific level of equivalence, but an equivalent translation is not necessarily adequate. Some researchers (Machulskaya, 2011) interpret adequacy as a synonym for "equivalence". At the same time, others consider equivalence and adequacy of translation as non-identical concepts, where adequacy is considered a characteristic of translation that provides the necessary completeness of inter-language communication in specific

The Semiosphere as a Generator of Intra- and Intercultural Translations by Xiaoyan et. al.
conditions, and equivalence is defined as a semantic community of language and speech units equated to each other (Komissarov, 2002; Lipatova and Litvinov, 2011).

In our opinion, the solution for achieving the adequacy and equivalence of translation will be facilitated by such a method of text analysis where the translation will be considered in the system of the general sign theory. This not only gives a broader view of the semiosphere of the author and interpreter (translator) than a purely linguistic approach but also provides for the transfer of the meaning of the signified using the target language enriched with extra-linguistic elements.

The peculiarities of the semiosphere affect the differences in the translators' understanding of the original text and, accordingly, cause differences in the ways of its reproduction. Semiotic analysis is used to look into the communicative reality that signs accumulate in themselves because, with this approach, the complex structure of the source text becomes transparent (Gorlee, 1994).

In this regard, it should be noted that interpretation becomes an organic part of the translator's activity if the original and translated texts are considered as fixed sign sequences since the texts cause the need to substantiate the principles of their interpretation. The basic provisions of semiotics described by C. Peirce (2000) concerning the nature of the sign reduce this concept to the properties of the sign itself, which in its existence cannot be realized without interpretation. Therefore, the nature of the sign is considered one of the main topics of semiotic research by R. Barthes (1994), Yu. Borev (1986), Yu. Lotman (1970, 1992, 1996a, 2000), and R. Jakobson (1978). Thus, the essential idea of the sign nature expressed by Barthes consists in the existence of conative meanings in the message of the sign. Borev defined the nature of a sign as a signal that carries meaning, meaning-laden information; an object concerning another object, pointing to it, and denoting it. Lotman introduced the concept of semiosis as a cultural space where the cultural signs function. Jakobson introduced the concept of an iconic sign based on the actual similarity of the signifier and the signified.

The practicability and justification of the semiotic approach in translation studies can be argued using several provisions. Thus, a common feature of translation studies and semiotics is the central problem for both fields, namely, the interpretation of a particular sign, its scope, goals, borders, etc. (Ageev, 2002). Translation is likened to semiosis, because it is a process of generating meaning, in particular during the reading of a work of fiction (Torop, 1995). The value of semiotic concepts, in particular for translation studies, lies in the fact that they help to find out

The Semiosphere as a Generator of Intra- and Intercultural Translations by Xiaoyan et. al.
what is common in various phenomena, solve basic issues and describe them in a unified system of terms and concepts.

The problem of translation, according to Ricoeur, can be approached in two ways: on the one hand, we can talk about translation in a narrow sense and understand by it the translation of a verbal message from one language to another. On the other hand, in a broader sense, translation can be an attempt to comprehend and interpret the text within the framework of one language (Machulskaya, 2011). Using the terminology of Jakobson, the first type of translation should be called interlingual, and the second one intralingual (Jakobson, 1978). The latter type of translation (intralingual) occurs within one semiosphere, whereas the interlingual translation exists on the border of two contacting cultures.

Without considering the linguistic aspect of translation, which is quite well represented in numerous works of Russian and foreign scientists, we will consider this mechanism of cultural communication as intracultural, which occurs within one semiosphere, and intercultural, which is carried out on the border of two contacting semiotic spaces. We will consider the intracultural translation as an example of the adaptation of a literary work, and the intercultural translation as a translation of a literary work from the sign system of one semiosphere to the sign system of another one.

Thus, the purpose of the study is to view the concept of the semiosphere through the prism of intercultural and intracultural translations.

Research hypothesis: translation is not just a language-oriented process, but a transformation of the original (verbal or nonverbal) message by symbolic means of the receiving semiosphere or its component.

Methods

In this study, we used the following methods:

- general methods of scientific research (analysis, synthesis, description, definition, interpretation),
- semiotic approach to the interpretation of the concept of intracultural and intercultural translation, which are the source of the existence of the semiosphere and its product (Rozin, 2001).

The selection of scientific sources was carried out using the Russian Science Citation Index (RSCI) database, as well as the search for open sources on the Internet, using the search terms "semiotics", "semiosphere", "translation", and "translation studies".

Results

1. Semiotics as a translation science tool

To achieve the purpose of the study, it is necessary to highlight the relationship between semiotics and translation. According to A. Shveitser, "the convergence of semiotics and translation studies were facilitated by the separation of semiolinguistics from the general semiotics, according to the initial postulates of which natural language is primarily a semiotic system and each text can be described in semiotic terms" (Shveitser, 1988, p. 36). Shveitser considers translation as "a three-piece unity: on the one hand, it is an aesthetic product, on the other hand, a certain amount of technology, and from yet another perspective, the process of translator's combining a certain set of signs (initial and translated texts) and the recipient's semantic perception of the set of signs" (Shveitser, 1988, pp. 55-56).

This view leads to a rethinking and a broader understanding of the theory of translation studies, because there are objective prerequisites for the active introduction of methods and principles of linguistic semiotics into the science of translation, although until recently a systematic joint study of common problems that semiotics and translation studies share has not been considered due to ontological differences in the two fields (Jakobson, 1978). However, they have one thing in common, as both study the use, interpretation, and operation of signs. W. Wilss attempted to integrate semiotics and linguistics of the text and proposed the use of semiolinguistics in translation studies, based on the formula "who says what in which channel and with what influence" (Wilss, 1996).

S. Syrovatkin also considered the possibility of applying semiotics in translation studies. According to the position of his theory, "translation is a code transition, which by its nature is a semiosis, that is, the process of generating a value" (Syrovatkin, 1978, p. 34). According to Syrovatkin, an utterance can be called a "complete sign", and the building material for its creation are syntagmas and morphemes, elements of the lowest level.

We consider important for our study the results of D.L. Gorlee's research where she claims that "translation is the process of using signs. It can be characterized both as signification (more precisely, reinterpretation) and as sign behavior because it is associated with the transition from one sign system to another. In addition, given that the possibility of such a transition is based on certain patterns and correspondences between these two systems (languages), and the

purpose of translation is to preserve the meaning of the original message, translation can be qualified as a process of interlanguage semiotic variation" (Gorlee, 1994, p. 34).

A. Popovich also pointed out the connection between translation and semiotics, noting that "the semiotic aspect of translation is the iconic character of the translation process. The translation is a meta-sign concerning the literary activity of the author of the original text conditioned by secondary activity. The semiotic aspect means observing the differences that arise during translation due to the different realization of space and time in the corresponding culture in the communicative shifts and the communicative situation" (Popovich, 1980, p. 193). Popovich concludes that each translation shows contradictions between different cultures to one degree or another. Trying to combine semiotic and translation approaches to the text, Popovich suggests that "the cultural sphere, designated by the concept of "us", is in the text the world of the author's subject and the reader. This semiotic contradiction between "us" and "them", "our" and "other" can be noticed in translation, where the meeting of two "cultures" takes place, namely, the "culture" of the original text and the "culture" of the translation" (Popovich, 1980, pp. 130-131).

2. The main provisions of the semiosphere concept developed by Yu. Lotman

Introduced by Lotman in philosophical and scientific discourses, the concept of the semiosphere is widely used in modern studies and analyses of socio-cultural existence and its phenomena. As R. Zainetdinova notes, the construction of a model of the cultural semiosphere makes it possible to identify the main meanings of the sign systems of a certain culture, decipher its "language", to define its concepts and specific logic (Zainetdinova, 2011). At the same time, the culture itself in Lotman's concept appears as a consequence of the manifestation of the semiosphere, its actualization in human existence (and the corresponding actualization of a person through sign and textual practices).

The concept of the semiosphere acts as a specific systemic and fundamental category since the concept of semiosphere for semiotics has the same meaning as the concept of society for sociology and social philosophy, culture for cultural studies and philosophy of culture, civilization for the civilizational approach, being for ontology, etc. However, it should be noted that Lotman did not provide a clear definition of the concept of the semiosphere.

Based on the fact that every cultural object (artifact) is in one way or another organized textual integrity, Lotman, within the framework of the concept of the semiosphere, sees the origins of this integrity not in the immanent semantic structure of the object but in the general

The Semiosphere as a Generator of Intra- and Intercultural Translations by Xiaoyan et. al.
semiotic system (Lotman, 1992). The fixation of this semiotic continuum, which determines the integrity of both a single text and the aggregate organization of these texts, leads to the conceptualization of the concept of the semiosphere (Lotman, 1996b).

In Lotman's semiotic theory, the semiosphere appears not just as a sign and textual or structural space of signification. The semiosphere first of all appears as continuous integrity, thanks to which only the functioning of signs, significant structures, semiosis, semiotic personality, and the like is possible, and it only secondarily reveals itself as a space of sign and communicative practices and techniques. The semiosphere is the existence of signs, their generative condition, and not the signs themselves. In other words, the semiosphere provides the emergence, formation, and dynamics of signs and sign systems, but it is not reduced to them and is not significantly determined by them. The semiosphere is a space for the production of meaning, organized according to the principle that no sign, text, or culture can exist separately, requiring the presence of another sign, text, or culture.

At the same time Lotman (1992) emphasizes the abstractness of the semiosphere (the abstractness of the semiotic space). In this case, we are talking about the fact that all semiotic mechanisms of information translation have certain properties (translation, dialogicity, heterogeneity, etc.), and the abstract set of these properties in its pure form gives a pure semiotic space. This is what semiosphere means in Lotman's semiotics. Semiotic properties (communication, semantic, informational; all these concepts are used by Lotman as equivalent terms), abstracted from the semiotic objects themselves, are the semiosphere. It becomes important only as a condition of the sign, and not the sign itself, as the "idea" of the text, and not its "matter". However, at the same time Lotman constantly turns to specific real facts of cultural and sign dynamics, and in them, he finds the same properties, the independent existence of which he postulated from these facts. Thus, despite its abstract nature, the semiosphere reveals itself through a concrete series of phenomena.

Thus, for Lotman, semiosphere does not mean a real set of signs and texts, sign and communication systems, but an abstract information space that makes these signs, texts, and the like possible. It is proto-information, and not its carriers, that is the main thing for the existence of the semiosphere.

3. Semiosphere as a generator of intra- and intercultural translations

The semiosphere is all-encompassing and outside of it, everything that belongs to a given culture cannot exist. It is both a result and a condition for the development of culture (Lotman,

1996c). The main features of the semiosphere as a generator of intra- and intercultural translations are dynamism, heterogeneity, and asymmetry.

The heterogeneity of the semiosphere manifests itself in the functioning of languages of different natures in its space, which, under the influence of certain factors, can enter into various relationships with each other: from complete translatability to complete untranslatability. Such constant movement between the components of the semiotic space deprives it of static and gives it dynamism.

The asymmetry of the semiosphere is manifested in the "center/periphery" direction. The core of the semiosphere consists of the most developed languages, in particular, the natural language (Lotman, 1996c). The periphery is permeated with languages that are inherent only in certain cultural functions. However, culture develops, and, consequently, changes, and during this transformation, those languages that were previously in the marginal area of semiotic dynamics, in the process of development, create their normative grammar and become a component of the core of the semiotic space of this culture. Such meta-structures are trying to subdue peripheral "outside" languages, to which they recently belonged. However, their presence in the center does not allow them to develop anymore. Lotman demonstrates the above judgment by the example of the transformation of cinema from a phenomenon "free from theoretical limitations" into "central art" (Lotman, 1996d, p. 179). The asymmetry of the semiosphere is expressed by a system of directed flows of internal translations that permeate its entire thickness. The translation is the main mechanism of consciousness since its action consists in expressing a certain reality using another language, which allows us to reveal the nature of this essence. In the semiotic aspect, these language systems are not symmetrical, since they have different degrees of signification.

The heterogeneity of the semiosphere determines the alternative relationship between its components and is a prerequisite for the emergence of new messages (Lotman, 1996c). Such internal transformations generate new information. We conclude that two interrelated processes occur within the semiosphere: the semiosphere generates new messages, the informativeness of which, in turn, allows it to exist.

Intracultural translation takes place in the horizontal and vertical planes of the semiotic space of culture. Within the first plane, it becomes a means of communication of the central "own" with the peripheral "outside". Vertically, the dialogue is carried out between the layer of "semiotic reality", where various linguistic formations coexist, and the semiotic metastructure.

When studying the concept of the semiosphere as a generator of intracultural and intercultural translations, special attention should be devoted to defining the "borders of the semiosphere", the functions of which are manifested in differentiating the external "outside" with the internal "own" and at the same time combining them. A border is something that belongs to both contacting sign systems. It is not by chance that we use the concept of "sign systems" in the previous judgment instead of the term "contacting cultures" since the semiotic border lies not only between different cultures. The division into subspace formations is also inherent in the internal structure of a single semiosphere. Such borders can be established at different levels, forming a complex hierarchical structure of the semiotic space of culture. The translation is the main means of existence of the cultural semiosphere (Lotman, 1996b). Translation gives it the impetus to generate new information, to enrich its semiotic individuality.

Let us consider the process of recoding a literary work, on the one hand, by non-verbal signs of the culture to which it belongs, and on the other hand, by linguistic signs of another culture.

In semiotics, there are two approaches to the interpretation of culture: the tradition of C. Peirce (pure semiotics) and F. de Saussure (structural and functional semiotics). In the light of the first school, signs are considered as the initial indivisible elements of speech, the classification of which is based on the ratio of form and content: iconic signs, where form and content are qualitatively similar; index signs, where the connection between form and content is established in the coordinate system of space and time; and symbols, where the connection of form with meaning is arbitrary. The form of the first two types of signs allows guessing their content even if the addressee is not familiar with them at all. The form of a symbolic sign is not a manifestation of its form (Peirce, 2000). In structural-functional semiotics, the starting point is language, and the sign is its element, which does not exist in isolation. For de Saussure the sign is a complex of the inseparable signifier ("the acoustic image") and signified ("the concept") (Ageev, 2002). From whatever point of view we look at the "sign vs text" opposition, the scheme of the semiosphere will look, in our opinion, like this: signs — texts — cultures — semiosphere.

In the context of semiotics, the contact of two cultures occurs due to the interaction of their main carriers, i. e. texts. Sharing the opinion of P. Torop, "by the text we will understand not only a certain graphically fixed message but a complex whole that is at the intersection of external and internal connections; only based on their comparison can we talk about the concept of text" (Torop, 1995, p. 12).

The Semiosphere as a Generator of Intra- and Intercultural Translations by Xiaoyan et. al.

The translation is based not on language but on a sign system (verbal or nonverbal). The semiotic analysis of the text constitutes its main function (Zainetdinova, 2011). As noted above, the text can transform due to the constant intersection of intercultural borders and subspace borders of the native semiosphere. The code systems possessed by the "own" author and the "outside" interpreter are different (Lotman, 1996d). Note that the extralinguistic situation is also an important factor for interpretation. Both the original text and the translation have their semantic contexts (Syrovatkin, 1978), which, in our opinion, directly depend on the semiotic spaces of their cultures. The code systems used by the addresser and the addressee are different, and therefore in the process of translation we will not receive an exact copy of the original text, but one of its possible interpretations. Thus, the source text and the resulting text are only relatively identical. An intercultural translation could be considered perfect only when, with its reverse transformation into the sign system of the original language, we would receive the original message. Such a method of encoding/ decoding is possible only in the system of logical sciences, where accuracy is the basis of any text. The main task of the translator is not to lose the invariant essence of the original source. In our vision, the conveyed meaning is much more valuable than accurately conveyed words. According to Ricoeur, a good translation can and should strive only for relative equivalence to the source, since due to the lack of its clear "equivalent", this equivalence cannot be found and reproduced in any way (Machulskaya, 2011).

The structure of a literary text in translation is influenced by two processes: transcoding (linguistic and formal process) and transposition (the literary and artistic process of understanding the content of the text) (Torop, 1995). To achieve adequacy, the translator must be an excellent combinator.

When writing, the author always has the right to choose. Among the whole range of colors of the surrounding reality, they choose only those that, in their opinion, can most accurately reflect the content of the message. Having a natural language as a basis, the writer builds over it so-called "secondary modeling systems", additional semantic add-ons (Lotman, 1996c). Such sign systems can be called the "cultural baggage of the author", which readers have to perceive. In the process of adaptation of a literary work, which is a form of intracultural translation, things from the "cultural baggage of the author" are interpreted by the director (main interpreter), screenwriter, actors, etc. They are helped in this by the semiosphere, which is uniform for both the author of the source text and interpreters. Across the border of two contacting semiospheres, a translator of the recipient culture takes on the task of interpreting this

"baggage" (Popovich, 1980). Whether they will be able to pick up the code for this "baggage" to further interpret its contents will depend on them alone. It has so happened in the practice of cinema, for example, in the film adaptation of the Sherlock Holmes stories by director Guy Ritchie ("Sherlock Holmes" (2009), "Sherlock Holmes: The Game of Shadows" (2011)), that the film director is not constrained by the limits of a literary work and in the process of adaptation tries more to show originality in the transmission of this cultural message than the desire for accuracy. Some of the author's ideas may be dropped, swapped, or even replaced with concepts that the director considers more appropriate and accurate.

Does the author of an intercultural translation have the right to originality and to go beyond the semiotic space of a literary work? In the translated work, the figure of the translator is hidden behind the name of the writer. While the author of the source text was more interested in the images of their statements, the interpreter of the "outside" culture strives for the accuracy of the transmission of the content of the work and delves into all the puzzles of the encrypted code to interpret it with the signs of the recipient culture. After all, the original work should become the property of the translator's culture, while remaining a representative of its native culture, and the reader should see it as the creation of the author, not the translator.

The process of "reading" a film, which is an adaptation of a literary work, looks somewhat different. At the first glance, reading the film seems to be an easy task. On the screen, we see the same objects that we meet in real life at every step. However, for a holistic perception of the adapted work and decoding of its numerous semantic add-ons, knowledge of natural language alone is not enough. We need a deep analysis that requires special knowledge of the cultural code, for example, understanding that the transformation of the mentally retarded Forrest Gump, the protagonist of the Oscar-winning film of the same name directed by Robert Zemeckis, into a successful millionaire is a concentrated embodiment of the so-called "American dream".

The signs of the semiosphere are generally divided into conventional and pictorial, or iconic ones (Ageev, 2002). The former are encrypted and require knowledge of a special code, while the latter are understandable and natural. Literature and cinema use these signs, but in literature, the former ones dominate, and in cinema the latter ones. Signs of literature (words), according to Lotman, are the main carriers of the meanings that make up the "continuous narrative text" (Lotman, 1970). In cinema, by analogy to the word, the main meaning is carried by frames, the function of which so far is reduced only to "naming". Frames in the film

The Semiosphere as a Generator of Intra- and Intercultural Translations by Xiaoyan et. al.
language, like words in literature, are "primary modeling systems", or "working material" for creating a holistic picture of the world of a particular work (Lotman, 1973). To translate a literary work from one language of the semiosphere to another, perfect mastery of both is required. In the process of a film adaptation, the text already pre-encoded by symbolic means of another origin is taken as a basis (Lotman, 1973). No matter how original an innovator the director is, they will try to carry through the prism of their creation the semantic core that interested them in the literary work. Therefore, the original text of the film will be a complex hierarchy of semantic transformations, starting from the screenplay and ending with editing.

Each of the participants in the cinematic translation has their approach and their vision of the process and the final result of the film adaptation. It is not known whether each of them re-read the literary source before the start of filming. The scriptwriter, of course, would have to do this, since they are the first interpreter of the source text. The director's interpretation will depend on whether they decided to make a film after reading the book or after the proposed finished script, which throughout the filming will still be the main source text. Thus, the director's work will be another interpretation of the literary work after the screenwriter has already interpreted it. Acting is the laying of new ways of intracultural translation in the space of the actors' semiosphere.

Conclusion

The translation is an act of communication that can take place in the middle of "own" semiotic space and on the border of two contacting cultures. Intra- and intercultural translations are interdependent phenomena. Thus, the hypothesis of the study has been confirmed, stating that translation is not just a language-oriented process, but the transformation of the original (verbal or nonverbal) message by symbolic means of the receiving semiosphere or its component.

The prospect of further studies can be a deep analysis of the concepts considered from the perspective of comparative studies, presented by specific literary and cinematic examples.

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