

# **TRANSLATION STUDIES IN RUSSIA**

- 1. Translation in Kievan Rus**
- 2. Translation in the 16th and 17th century**
- 3. Translation in the 18th century**
- 4. Translation in the 19th and early 20th century**
- 5. Translation in the 20th and 21st century**

- Translation of religious texts from Greek into Old Church Slavonic
- New Testament, Psalter, the Prayer Book
- word-for-word rendering

Non-religious material began to appear,  
important translators were no longer  
anonymous

- Scholarly translations included topics in astronomy, astrology, arithmetic, geometry, anatomy, medicine

# Translators fell into 4 groups:

- staff translators in various administrative departments (mostly foreigners: Poles, Germans, Dutchmen or natives from the southern or western parts of the country)
- a few monks who translated only religious books from Latin and Greek (Epiphanius, Slavinezky, Arsenius the Greek, Dionysius the Greek)
- the largest group - part-time translators who occasionally made 1 or 2 translations in their spare time
- translators who worked on their own initiative and chose the source text they wanted to translate (Andrei Matveev, Bogdanov, Prince Kropotkin)

- Translation was seen as a means of enriching the language, asserting its originality and its expressive potential
- Mikhail Lomonosov
- A.P. Sumarokov
- V.K. Trediakovsky

- Historian Nikolai Karamzin translated the works of classical and contemporary authors from Greek, French, Latin, German, English, Italian and some oriental languages.
- Vasily Zhukovsky translated from French, Latin, German, English and Old Russian.
- Thanks to him, Russian readers gained access to many works of Schiller, Goethe, Byron, Walter Scott.
- Alexander Pushkin and Mikhail Lermontov played a major role in the history of translation.
- Free translation was a dominating strategy.
- P.A. Vyazemsky, N.I. Gnedich, A.A. Fet insisted on complete faithfulness to the source text.

# The Soviet Period

- The fact that the Soviet Union was a multinational state contributed to the growing demand for translation.
- Russian readers become familiar with the great epics from Georgia, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and elsewhere.



# Iakov Retsker

(1897(1897— 1984)

- **Translator, linguist, scholar**
- Established the correlation between logical categories and transformations in translation.
- He distinguished 7 types of lexical transformations based on the universal character of formal and logical categories.



- Subbordination  
*concretization, generalization, differentiation*
- Implication Inclusive Relations Intersection  
*sense development, meaning extension*
- Exclusive Relations  
*holistic transformation, compensation*
- Contradictory Relations  
*antonymic translation*

- Translation model is a system including lexical transformations, equivalents and contextual correspondences.
- **Professor Retzker's classification:**
- 1. Types of equivalents
- 2. Ways of rendering equivalent – lacking units
- **Language units are classified into two groups:**
-  those that have equivalents
-  those that don't have equivalents

# Professor Retzker distinguishes between:

- 1) equivalents – constant correspondences that don't depend in their majority on the context
- 2) analogy – TL synonyms correspond to SL words, the choice of which is conditioned by the context
- 3) descriptive rendering is applied, when foreign words denote notions and phenomena that don't exist in our life: “to dine with duke Humptry”, “to give a wet Willy”.

- Equivalents can be permanent: full or regular, or non-permanent: contextual and partial.
- Equivalents are functional substitutes for SL units. Some SL units have permanent equivalents in TL. That is one to one correspondence between such units and their equivalents (terms, geographical names).
- Full equivalent is presumed when there is a complete coincidence of pragmatic meaning of the SL and TL units.

Pragmatic meaning of a translation equivalent is the reaction of the translation user to the verbal message in TL.

- Depending on the type of language units involved in the translation process regular equivalents can be defined as lexical phraseological and grammatical.
- Linguistic context in equivalents is subdivided into
  - immediate
  - General
- The context is the length of speech necessary to specify the meaning and translation of the given word.
- Immediate linguistic context is a sequence of syntactic and syntactically related words that determines meaning and syntactic function of the given word and forms the bases for its translation.
- General linguistic context is a source text as a whole.

# General linguistic context

- includes the situational context, temporal, special and other circumstances under which source text was produced as well as all facts, which the receptor is expected to know, so that we can adequately interpret the message.
- An exceptional translation of a SL unit, which suits a particular context can be described as an occasional equivalent or a contextual substitute. The choice of grammatical units depends on semantics.

# Ways to create occasional equivalents and to render equivalent-lacking units are:

- 1) using long words – imitating in target language the forms of the SL word or word combinations. By this technique we understand using transcription of transliteration exclusively.
- 2) by transcription of transliteration and explication of their genuine nationally specific meaning.
- 3) using a descriptive explanation to convey the meaning of the ST unit.

- 4) by translating componential parts and additional explanation of units of the nationally-bound lexicon.
- 5) using appropriate substitutes or semantic analogy, i.e. words with similar meaning, which is extended to convey information.
- 6) by ways of word for word translation.
- 7) using all kinds of lexical transformation modifying the meaning of a SL word.
- Equivalent-lacking idioms are translated either by reproducing their form in TL through a word for word translation or by explaining the figurative meaning of the idiom.



# **There are the following types of rendering equivalent-lacking units:**

- 1) Zero translation – when meaning of grammatical unit isn't rendered in the translation since it is practically identical to the meaning of some other units and can be safely left out.
- 2) Approximate translation – when the translator makes use of a TL form, partially equivalent to the equivalent-lacking source language unit.
- 3) Transformational translation – when the translator resorts to one of the grammatical transformations.

# Leonid Barkhudarov (1923 - 1985)

- Doctor of Philology
- Specialist in Translation Studies
- published the book “Language and Translation”
- collected a lot of material on the application of correspondences of the Russian and the English languages

- “Translation is the process of transformation of speech product in one language into a speech product into another language with the preservation of the unchanged plane of content that is meaning”

the essence of translation is equivalent  
transfer of 3 types of meaning

- **Referential meaning**
- **Linguistic meaning**
- **Pragmatic meaning**

**Barkhudarov** identifies four types of transformations in translation:

- **perestanovka ('transposition')**
- **zamena ('substitution')**
- **dobavleniye (addition)**
- **opushcheniye (omission)**

# Andrei Fedorov (1906-1997)

- Doctor of Philology
- Specialist in Translation Studies
- "Introduction to the Theory of Translation" 1953
- suggested creation of the linguistic theory of translation
- offered to distinguish between the Special and the General theory of translation

# Vilen Komissarov(1924 – 2005)

- Professor, Doctor of Philology, Specialist in Translation Studies
- A Word on Translation (1973)
- Linguistics of Translation (1980)
- Theory of Translation (1990)
- Theoretical Basic of Methods of Translator Training (1997)
- General Theory of Translation (1999)

- “translation is a complicated and many-sided kind of human activity. Though usually people speak about translation “from one language on another”, actually, it is not simply a replacement of one language with another. The different cultures, people, ways of thinking, literatures epochs, levels of development, traditions and world vies clash with each other in translation”.



# distinguishes five levels of equivalence:

- Pragmatic
- (1) equivalence on the level of the communicative goal (=the lowest degree of semantic similarity with the original text)

- *Лавры моего конкурента не дают мне спать. – I am green with envy because of the success of my competitor.*
- *На кой леший мне такой друг? – What on earth do I need such a friend for?*
- *Could you do me a favor, please? – Пожалуйста, окажите мне услугу.*
- *How do you do! – Здравствуйте!*
- *Don't trouble trouble until trouble troubles you. – На дворе трава – на траве дрова.*

*Tiger Tiger, burning bright,*

- *In the forests of the night;*
- *What immortal hand or eye,*
- *Could frame thy fearful symmetry? (W.Blake)*
- *Тигр, Тигр, в лесу ночном*
- *Мрачный взгляд горит огнем.*
- *Чья бессмертная рука*
- *Жизнь влила в твои бока? (Пер. К.Филатовой)*

## ■ Situational

(2) equivalence on the level of (the identification) of the situation (=higher degree of similarity, even though it is not so evident at first sight)

- *I meant no harm.* – Простите, я нечаянно.(the situation in the bus)
- *Who shall I say is calling?* – Кто его спрашивает? (the situation on the phone)
- *Wet paint.* – Осторожно: окрашено! (the situation in the park).
- *Fragile.* – Осторожно: стекло!
- *Beware of the dog!* – Осторожно, злая собака!
- *Push/Pull* – От себя/К себе.

- Lexical (semantic)
- (3) equivalence on the level of message / of method of description (of the situation) (=higher degree of similarity: it is not only the communicative goal and the situation that are identical, but also the way in which the situation is described)

- *He was not unlike his mother. – Он довольно похож на свою мать.*
- *He is my son. – Я - мать этого мальчика.*
- *After her illness, she became as skinny as a toothpick. – После болезни она стала худая, как щепка.*
- *Сегодня Борису не до шуток. – Boris is in no mood for joking today.*

- Grammatical
- (4) equivalence on the level of utterance /of syntactic meanings (=besides the communicative goal, the situation described, and the manner of describing the situation, the grammatical structures are also partly identical, i.e. their differences are only due to the differences between the systems of the two languages.

- *The port can be entered by big ships only in tide. – Большие корабли могут заходить в порт только во время прилива.*
- *We had a long walk. – Шли мы долго.*
- *Jane was heard playing the piano. – Было слышно, как Джейн играла на пианино.*



- Structural
- (5) equivalence on the level of linguistic signs / of word semantics (=the maximum possible similarity)
- *Every mother loves her children. – Каждая мать любит своих детей.*
- *I will write you every week. – Я буду писать тебе каждую неделю.*

# THE LEVELS OF EQUIVALENCE HIERARCHY

- the hierarchy observed between the level of equivalence is unilateral, the lower levels presupposing the higher ones, but not the other way about.
- The hierarchy of levels does not imply the degree of evaluation.

- **Russian translation theories are largely based on the assumption that translation is a phenomenon that can be studied and described in an objective and consistent way, using various methods of observation and analysis.**

- The main method of research used by Russian translation theorists is the comparative analysis of the source and target texts, as well as various experimental studies of the actual act of translation.

- Theoretical investigations of translation in Russia are largely carried out within a linguistic framework.
- Most researchers regard the linguistic theory of translation as an important branch of the linguistic sciences, alongside general linguistics, comparative linguistics, psycho-linguistics, sociolinguistics, text linguistics and other areas of linguistic research.
- translation studies in Russia embraces all types of translation.