

OFFICIAL SCIENTIFIC DOCUMENTARY TRANSLATION IN THE TERRITORY OF THE GREATER ALTAI¹

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Abstract

The paper considers Russian as a language of documentary translation in the Greater Altai; it investigates the key genres and translation transformations of scientific documentary texts from Russian into English.

Keywords: *documentary translation, academic translation, the Russian language, the English language, the Greater Altai*

Rezumat

În articol, cercetăm limba rusă ca limbă de traducere documentară în Altai. Ne oprim, mai cu seamă, la genurile cheie de documente și transformările dictate de procesul de traducere. Ne interesează documentele științifice și traducerea lor din rusă în engleză.

Cuvinte-cheie: *traducere documentară, traducere de text științific, rusă, engleză, Bolshoy Altai*

Introduction

The present paper investigates the specificities of Russian as a language of documentary translation in the territory of the Greater Altai. The paper reveals the basic translation transformations of the terminology and the official documentary clichés and set expressions while translating them from Russian into English. The material under consideration is various genres' samples of official scientific documentary translations. They are an official academic review to an original article, an information letter about an academic university contest, and an application for a federal grant for fundamental scientific research.

The paper also researches the hybridization of academic and official texts types (their genre 'multi-functionality') and the translation effects of it. We hypothesize that in the official academic documentary translation from Russian into English, hybridization makes the target texts even more standardized and full of clichés and set expressions than the source texts in Russian. The paper suggests the Russian language to be the language of cross-cultural communication and translation that traditionally existed in the territory of the Greater Altai, though English can reduplicate this function.

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By the term “the Greater Altai” contemporary researchers in the field of geopolitics, history, linguistic and cultural studies understand the region, “including Altai Krai and the Republic of Altai on the Russian side, the East Kazakhstan Region on the Kazakh side, the Bayan-Ulegey and Kobdos aymaks on the Mongolian side, and the Altai District of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on the Chinese side” (Starcev, 2016, p. 29), see also: (Barabanov, 2002), (Tiškin, Seregin, 2018, etc.). The glocalization version of the cross-border region has assumed initially, since the late 1990s, the integration “according to the type of ‘European regions’ where it was a discussion about the creation of a ‘cross-border Altai mountain region’, the ‘Greater Altai’ (Russian terms), otherwise – the ‘East Asian Economic Zone’ (a Chinese term)” (Starcev, 2016, p. 29). This territory is obviously multicultural and multilingual. Russian, Kazakh, Chinese, Tuvan, Altai, Mongolian, and some other languages can be called the main languages of the Greater Altai.

Theoretical Framework and Methods

The study of Altai cultural trans-boundary linguistic diversity is carried out nowadays both with the help of culturological and literary (imagological) methods. Thus, in particular, Gorno-Altai State University regularly hosts the international scientific conference “Dialogue of Cultures: the Poetics of a Local Text”, based on the results of which a scientific periodical collection of articles is published, where the multilingualism of Altai and the so called “Altai text” are presented in the imagological perspective (Alekseev, 2018). The works of Tomsk and Gorno-Altai researchers in the field of imagology (in particular, the studies of Olga B. Lebedeva, Alexander S. Ânuškevič, Nataliâ E. Nikonova, Pavel V. Alekseev) indicate the active academic interest in the field of key national and cultural images’ representation in language and culture. This field of research is also relevant for the literary scholars of Altai State University (Barnaul) in the project “Altai Text in Russian Culture”, within which international scientific conferences are regularly held and a collection of scientific articles is published.

However, there is a need to study the linguistic diversity of the Greater Altai not only in a historical, cultural, and literary perspective, but also with the help of linguistic tools. All of the languages of the Greater Altai (Russian, Kazakh, Chinese, Tuvan, Altai, Mongolian, etc.) work as languages of translation. Nevertheless, in the late 1990s – early 2000s, English takes the priority position of the main language of translation and the language of intercultural communication of a cross-border region. Linguists see the English language as the center of the so-called “gravitational model” of the languages functioning (Marusenko, 2015, p. 67), where, during the globalization processes, “international languages regularly displace regional and minority languages, primarily from the sphere of education and labor” (*idem*, p. 31). This situation looks non-ecological from a linguistic point of view.

The “restoration of rights” of the Russian language as the language of cross-cultural communication that traditionally existed in the territory of the Greater Altai (it was, in particular, the language of documentary translation, too) seems to be an effective strategy, which could help with “leveling” the linguistic and ecological balance of a cross-border region. Russian, which has the legal status of the official language of the country on a par with the languages of the titular nationalities, for example, in the Republic of Altai, is used as the key language of documentary translation.

The ecological linguistic problems in this sociolinguistic situation of the Greater Altai’s multilingualism are primarily connected with the cultural-preserving function of the Russian language (Skovorodnikov, 2013, p. 216), working as a means of preserving the memory of ethnically unique languages (Altai, Uighur, etc.) (see, for example: (Čemčieva, 2017)). Official scientific documentary translation belongs to the field of special translation (in particular, its written version). The main characteristics of this type of translation are the features of both the academic translation and the translation in business communication. Vilen N. Komissarov refers both of these subspecies of translation to the so-called informative translation, which is “the translation of texts whose main function is to communicate some information, and not to produce an artistic and aesthetic effect on a reader” (Komissarov, 1990, p. 97). We can see similar ideas about the academic text information structure (the so-called ‘information flow’) and its transfer in translation in the book of Mona Baker (Baker, 2006, pp. 119-120). In the monograph by Basil Hatim and Jeremy Munday, we see also the ideas of the hybridization of the texts types (the ‘multi-functionality’ of all texts) and the translation effects of it: “With the emphasis on contextual focus, the multi-functionality of all texts is thus no longer seen as a weakness of the text type model, nor indeed as a license for an ‘anything goes’ attitude in the production or analysis of texts or translations. For example, it is recognized that, while a distinction may usefully be made between so-called expressive texts (of the creative, literary type) and informative texts (of the factual variety), texts are rarely if ever one or the other type” (Hatim, Munday, 2004, p. 73).

Discussion

Vilen N. Komissarov believes, “it is necessary that the functional and stylistic features of the source texts determine the specific features of the translation of these texts” (Komissarov, 1990, p. 97). He considers the informative contents, consistency, accuracy, and objectivity to be the main characteristics of the academic texts, and highlights the active “use of scientific and technical terminology and the so-called special vocabulary” as one of the key features of these texts (*idem*, p. 110). The texts of business communication are characterized primarily by high standardization, the use of various set expressions and clichés, the requirement for the accuracy of

information contents to avoid unambiguity (Moskvin, 2006, pp. 596-591). Official reviews and reviews of original articles and monographs, applications for research within the framework of an academic grant, etc. can be considered the genre varieties of the texts that combine the characteristics of academic and business communication. All of them, on the one hand, are highly standardized (there are officially registered templates). On the other hand, when filling them out, it is often necessary to duplicate the information/content of the document in Russian and in English.

While translating the academic and technical documents, the translators can follow the officially published recommendations in the translators' guidelines. Two main guidelines to be used in Russia are "The Recommendations of the Union of Translators of Russia (UTR)" (Maslovsky, 2015) and the traditional "Guideline for Translators and Editors of Academic and Technical Texts of the All-Union Center of Translations" (Smirnov). Tat'ána V. Paršina supposes they mutually complement each other: "The recommendations of the UTR aim at ensuring a stable high quality of written translations through the unification of translation requirements, formalization, and harmonization of relations between the customer and the translator. Unlike the Guideline of the All-Union Center of Translations, the Recommendations of the UTR do not have in their content a separate systematized regulation of the rules for written translation. However, the study and analysis of the Recommendations of the UTR allow us to find typical solutions to the issues the translator faces with (Paršina, 2017, pp. 52-53).

An example of an official review on an article of the professor, PhD in Linguistics from Siberian Federal University written by her colleague, the professor, PhD in Linguistics from Altai State University and then translated from Russian into English for submission to the journal from the Web of Conferences database demonstrates the main properties of the text of official scientific documentation. The review is informative, logical, objective; it contains the necessary amount of scientific terminology from the field of linguistics: *kognitivnaâ lingvistika* (Rus. for *cognitive linguistics*) – *cognitive linguistics*, *verbal'no predstavlennaâ konceptualizaciâ vremeni* (Rus. for *verbally presented conceptualization of time*) – *verbally manifested time conceptualization*, *korpusnyj analiz emocij* (Rus. for *corpus analysis of emotions*) – *the corpus analysis of emotions*, *emotivnyj analiz tekstov* (Rus. for *emotive analysis of texts*) – *emotive analysis of texts*, *pragmatika* (Rus. for *pragmatics*) – *pragmatics*, *sentiment-analiz* (Rus. for *sentiment analysis*) – *sentiment analysis*, *antropocentričeskij podhod* (Rus. for *anthropocentric approach*) – *anthropological point of view*, etc. The selection of translation equivalents for the terminology used by the author of the original article and, accordingly, the author of the review, was carried out in accordance with the rules of academic and technical translation ("A Guideline for Translators and Editors of Academic and Technical Texts of the All-Union Translation Center"), for example:

- While selecting translation equivalents according to the dictionaries, the translator should take into account which field of science and technology this foreign term belongs to, as well as the context in which the term is applied. The translator should use the appropriate marks in the dictionaries. For example, *power* – *mošnost'* (Rus. for *power*) (techn.); *energiâ* (Rus. for *energy*) (physical). The translator should also take into account that scientific and technical terminology is constantly evolving and even widespread terms may receive new meanings or be replaced by new terms. For example, *analysis* – *analiz* (Rus. for *analysis*), but also *teoriâ*, *teoretičeskie issledovaniâ* (Rus. for *theory*, *theoretic research*); *usefulness* – *poleznost'* (Rus. for *utility*), but also *effektivnost'* (Rus. for *efficiency*).
- If a term found in the original text is not recorded in scientific and technical dictionaries for some or other related industries, then the translator should choose the translation equivalent for it using reference books or other special literature, or seek advice from an appropriate specialist. If there is no equivalent in Russian for this foreign term at all, then the translator is recommended to create a new equivalent together with a specialist according to existing models of term formation. In complex cases, if it is not possible to form a new equivalent in Russian corresponding in meaning to a foreign term, then the translator should translate this term in a descriptive way and bring it in brackets in the target language when it is first mentioned (Smirnov).

Thus, the terms *pragmatika* (Rus. for *pragmatics*), *kognitivnaâ lingvostika* (Rus. for *cognitive linguistics*), *korpusnyj analiz* (Rus. for *corpus analysis*), *konceptualizaciâ* (Rus. for *conceptualization*) have stable equivalents in English, so they did not cause problems in translation. However, in the situations of selecting equivalents for such a term of the Russian language as *antropocentričeskij podhod* (Rus. for *anthropocentric approach*), a wider philosophical context was required, and the wider English-language term *anthropological point of view* was chosen as an analogy. The Russian-language tradition of using the term *anthropocentric* (in relation to the linguistic context) is not generally accepted in the English academic texts in linguistics, and the term was generalized during translation. The term *sentiment-analiz* (Rus. for *sentiment analysis*) – *sentiment analysis*, used by the author of the original article and, accordingly, by the author of the review, is quite new to Russian emotive linguistics. It was necessary to use the original English-language term, which was at one and the same time a source for the creation of its Russian equivalent.

The informativeness of the official academic review text is gained due to the high standardization of the text, which is manifested in the use of a large number of template phrases. This characteristic of the official academic text correlates with the following recommendation for the translation of academic and technical documentation proposed by the Union of Translators of Russia: “When translating academic technical texts and documentation, it should be

taken into account that academic technical Russian texts are characterized by the accuracy of the data presentation. It is represented in the neutral style, uniformity of terminology, unambiguity of descriptions and syntactic uniformity of homogeneous text fragments” (Maslovsky, 2015). The search for the equivalents for the set expressions in the genre of an “academic review” is connected with the usage rules of Russian and English template phrases of academic documentary texts: *stat’â obladaet naučnoj obosnovannost’û* (Rus. for *the article has scientific validity*) – *the paper is scientifically sound*; *stat’â napisana âsnym, vnâtnym âzykom* (Rus. for *the article is written in a clear, concise language*) – *the paper is clearly written, concise and understandable*; *issleduemaâ tema* (Rus. for *the topic studied is...*) – *the subject matter*; *naučnaâ značimost’ stat’i dostatočno vysoka* (Rus. for *the scientific significance of the article is quite high*) – *the impact of the paper is likely to be high*; *prinât’ bez popravok* (Rus. for *to accept without revision*) – *acceptable without revision*, etc. In many cases, the grammatical structure of the corresponding English-language template phrases has been rebuilt in accordance with the following “Guideline for Translators and Editors of Academic and Technical Texts” offered by the All-Union Translation Center: “While constructing a Russian phrase, the translator should take into account that the word order of a foreign sentence does not always coincide with the word order of a Russian sentence. In Russian, the sentence parts giving the main information are located at the end of the sentence. Therefore, the word order of a foreign sentence in translation often has to be rearranged. The translator should not omit vague questions arising during the translation” (Smirnov). For example, *v nem predstavlen obosnovannyj vzglâd* (Rus. for *it presents a reasoned view*) – *it gives a justified outlook*: in the Russian template phrase, a grammatical construction with the passive voice of the verb is used (the copula *to be* + the participle II), in the English-language template phrase, the construction of the active voice (*it gives*) is used; *issleduemye problemy* (Rus. for *researched problems*) – *the issues under consideration*: in Russian, the construction of the participle I + noun is used, in English is used the construction of the noun + the prepositional construction; *prinât’ bez popravok* (Rus. for *accept without revision*) – *acceptable without revision*: in the Russian template, the form of the infinitive is used, in English the form of the adjective is used.

Genre specifics of the information letter about the academic university contest in two languages (Russian and English) assumes the duplication of basic information in both languages, but this translational duplication often does not occur, in practice. This is due both to the selection of partial, rather than full equivalents of the terms in a certain academic field (for example, phonetics of the English language, higher education, etc.), and to the peculiarities of their usage. For example, in a bilingual information letter about the academic phonetic contest “Feel Free To Fly”, held at Gorno-

Altai State University (March 2022), there are discrepancies between the terms related to the organizational part of the contest and the terms related to the title of higher education institutions: in the title line of the information letter, *Federal'noe gosudarstvennoe bûdžetnoe obrazovatel'noe uĉreždenie vysšego obrazovaniâ* "Gorno-Altajskij gosudarstvennyj universitet (Rus. for "the Federal State Budgetary Educational Institution of Higher Education "Gorno-Altai State University") correlates with the English-language version of *Federal State Budget Educational Establishment of Higher Education "Gorno-Altai State University"* (in this case, there is a translation error due to choosing the wrong equivalent of the word *uĉreždenie* (Rus. for *institution*): *establishment* instead of *institution*). When the set expression *vysšee uĉebnoe zavedenie* (Rus. for *a higher education institution*) is mentioned for the second time in the information letter, the word *institution* is eliminated in translation: *budušie uĉitelâ inostrannogo âzyka v vysšem uĉebnom zavedenii* (Rus. for *future foreign language teachers in higher education institution*) – *future foreign language teachers in higher education*. Discrepancies in the terms are also observed in the following case: for the three Russian terminological word-combinations, *organizacionnyj komitet* (Rus. for *the organizing committee*), *Organizator Konkursa* (Rus. for *the Organizer of the Contest*) and *ekspertnaâ komissiâ* (Rus. for *the expert commission*), the same cliché *the Organizing Committee* is used. In this case, one of the key recommendations for translators and editors of academic and technical texts given by the All-Union Translation Center is violated: "In translation, it is necessary to observe the uniformity of terms, names of physical quantities and their units, type codes, abbreviations, symbols. The translator gives only one translation option for a word, a term or an expression" (Smirnov). Violation of the terminological uniformity may affect the consistency of the target text, although in this case, replacing three terminological words combinations in Russian with one in English makes the target text more unified.

If partial equivalents of the terms from the field of foreign language teaching methodology and English phonetics are used in translation, the translator's strategies correspond to the above-mentioned guideline recommendations of the All-Union Translation Center. "Commonly used and special abbreviations are presented in the target text. Arbitrary abbreviations are not allowed. If for some reason it is necessary to use abbreviations adopted only for this text in translation, then they should be deciphered at the first mention" (Smirnov): *B1 po škale âzykovyh urovnej Soveta Evropy* (Rus. for *B1 according to the Council of Europe language level scale*) – *B1 according to the CERF* (the abbreviation *CERF* is used in translation from Russian into English as an analogue of the expanded terminological combination). "In case the Russian equivalent is not established for this foreign term, the translator is recommended, together with a specialist, to

create a new equivalent according to existing models of term formation” (Smirnov): *akcenty RP i Estuary English* (Rus. for *accents of RP and Estuary English*) – *RP and Estuary English accents* (in this case, a hybrid version of a term in English phonetics, which is restored when translated into English, is used in the Russian source text). One-word Russian terms can be replaced in translation by two-word and three-word terminological constructions: *fajloobmennik* (Rus. for *file sharing*) – *file sharing site*; *viktoriny* (Rus. for *quizzes*) – *phonetic polls*. In the second example (*phonetic polls*), an adjective is also added to the term, specifying its subject area.

While translating the information letter from Russian into English, as well as translating the official academic review, various grammatical substitutions of set expressions are observed: *Forma provedeniâ: distancionnaâ* (Rus. for *Form of conducting: remote*). – *The Contest is organized in a distant format*; *Rabočij âzyk: Anglijskij* (Rus. for *Working language: English*). – *The language of the Contest is English* (not only the syntactic structure of sentences, but also their punctuation is changed in the process of translation: in the sentences of the source text, in Russian, the punctuation which is usual for the technical instructions is used; on the contrary, English sentences are designed as standard narrative sentences from the point of view of punctuation).

Impersonal grammatical constructions work as one of the most characteristic features of a Russian academic documentary text. It is assumed that such constructions reduce the degree of subjectivity of the text and give it a standardized character. One of the guideline recommendations of the All-Union Translation Center regarding the narrative structure of the translated text is the following: “The target text narration should be produced from the same person of the original” (Smirnov). However, quite often, when translating an information letter from Russian into English, the subject is added to the Russian impersonal sentences and the mood is changed: *Dlâ polučeniâ zadaniâ v den' provedeniâ II tura sleduet perejti po ssylke...* (Rus. for *To receive the task on the day of the second round, follow the link...*) – *To receive the task of Part II contestants use this link...* (instead of the obligatory construction in the source text, the form of the indicative mood of the verb is used in the translation, and the subject *contestants* appears, which was only implied in the original); *S kriteriâmi ocenki zadaniâ možno oznakomit'sâ...* (Rus. for *The criteria for evaluating the task can be found...*) – *The criteria of the assessment of the reading task are in...* (instead of the possibility construction marker, the form of the indicative mood of the verb is used in the translation, and it has the added subject *The criteria*). A frequent grammatical transformation is the change of the verb's voice in the sentence and the change of the verb's tense form: *Apellâcii po rezul'tatam učastiâ v konkurse ne prinimayutsâ* (Rus. for *Appeals based on the results of participation in the Contest are not accepted*). – *Any appeal notices will be refused* (a construction with a verb in the active voice of a

Russian sentence is transmitted into English with the verb in the passive voice; the present tense of the verb changes to the future).

Genre characteristics of the application for a federal grant for fundamental scientific research differ from the characteristics of the above-mentioned scientific documents (an academic information letter and an official academic review) primarily by the presence of so-called document templates required to be filled in one or two languages (Russian and English). Document sections with duplicate information translated from Russian into English are needed in this document primarily in the *Form 1. Information about the Project* and in the *Form 2. Information about the Head of the Project*. In the first template, the project title, keywords, the summary and the expected project results in Russian and in English should be provided. The second template should contain the key publications of the Head of the Project indexed in the databases “Web of Science Core Collection” and/or “Scopus” in English (without duplication in Russian). Of course, filling in the templates of an official scientific document implies a very high degree of standardization and clichés used in the document. The search for the adequate correspondences to the Russian-language clichés of an official document involve the translator’s strategies of reducing or expanding the close context of the clichés (*ih dal’nejšego razvitiâ* (Rus. for *their further development*) – *their development*; *sposobstvuûšej ustojčivomu razvitiû* (Rus. for *contributing to sustainable development*) – *contributing to the development of tourist and recreational resources*; *opisanie tekûšego sostoâniâ lingvoekologiĉeskoj situacii na territorii Bol’šogo Altaâ* (Rus. for *describing the current state of the linguistic and ecological situation in the territory of the Greater Altai*) – *describing the current linguistic and ecological situation in the territory of the Greater Altai*). Reducing the close context of Russian clichés in translation is connected with the requirement for clarity of the target text, on the one hand, and with the lack of absolute equivalents of Russian clichés like *further development*, *the current state of the situation*, etc. in English. Cf.: “There should be no unclear phrases in the translation that interfere with the correct interpretation of the original” (Smirnov).

Expanding of the close context of the cliché like *a sustainable development* is also associated with the need to achieve greater clarity and consistency of the target text by adding an object with homogeneous attributes: *tourist and recreational resources*. In many cases, the standardization of the information in the official scientific document template makes it possible to find the absolute equivalents for the terms on the subject under consideration (*text corpora*, *sub-corpus*, *the ecology of language*, *multilingualism*, *the academic digital environment*) and for the set expressions and clichés (*effektivnyj otvet rossijskogo obeštva na bol’šie vyzovy* (Rus. for *an effective response of Russian society to the great challenges*) – *an effective response of Russian society to the great challenges*; *na sovremennom etape global’nogo razvitiâ* (Rus. for *at the present stage*

of global development) – at the present stage of global development; *strategičeskoe planirovanie âzykovej politiki* (Rus. for *strategic planning of language policy*) – *strategic planning of language policy*, etc.). Throughout the text of the academic grant application, the uniformity of terminology is observed: “In the entire text of the translation, the uniformity of terminology inherent in this field of knowledge or the field of activity should be observed” (Maslovsky, 2015).

Conclusion

The diverse genres of academic documentary translation from Russian into English in the territory of the Greater Altai show some specificities of the Russian language as a language of cross-cultural communication and translation. First, the hybridization of academic and official texts types (their genre ‘multi-functionality’) was revealed. In such a genre of academic documentary translation as the translation of an academic review to the original article, we see the hybrid features of an official text translation and an academic translation. The review is informative, logical, objective; it contains the necessary amount of scientific terminology from the field of linguistics; it also contains the templates and official documentary clichés. The uniformity of linguistic terminology is not always observed in the text analyzed. While translating, the grammatical structure of the corresponding English-language template phrases have been rebuilt in accordance with the recommendations of the Guideline for Translators and Editors of Academic and Technical Texts. Genre specificities of the information letter about the academic university contest in two languages suggest the duplication of basic information in both Russian and English. We revealed that in such a case, even violating the Guideline recommendations about the uniformity of terminology units, the translation provides a unified wholeness of the target text. Translation transformations of the narrative structure in the information letter about the academic university contest show the deep changes of the narration persons (adding the narration subjects into English target sentences, changing the impersonal Russian phrases into the personal verb forms in English, etc.). The document templates required to be filled in one or two languages (Russian and English) in an application for a federal grant for fundamental scientific research make the translator’s task easier and differentiate this genre of academic documentary translation from all the mentioned above. A high level of the standardization of the application for a federal grant as an official scientific document makes it possible to find the absolute equivalents for the terminology units used in the document on the subject under consideration. All these specificities of the Russian language as the language of translation and, wider, cross-cultural communication in the territory of the Greater Altai are considered to be one of the most effective instruments “leveling” the linguistic and ecological balance of the Greater Altai as a cross-border region.

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