

EXPLORING BOHDAN LEPKY'S TRANSLATION ETHICS USING LINGUISTIC INQUIRY AND WORD COUNT

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Abstract. The present empirical study aims to outline ethical landmarks of Bohdan Lepky, the renowned Ukrainian writer and translator, in his Ukrainian translation of *Salomé* by Oscar Wilde. We assess the ethics of translation data defined by Kalina (2015) in terms of accuracy, impartiality, and confidentiality. In order to address these ethical issues, the study envisaged the following steps. First, source and target texts were analyzed using the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) computerized program based on its built-in French 2007 and Ukrainian 2015 dictionaries. Second, all 'style words' (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010) represented by functional words, e.g., conjunctions, prepositions, and pronouns that bear procedural meaning, were compared in both texts. Findings showed that the translator followed the ethical "tradition of sameness" (Wyke, 2011), being less "visible" (Venuti, 1995) in his target language version. Despite a greater number of impersonal pronouns causing slight implicature, we observed no traces of simplification or explicitation deforming tendencies in Lepky's translated text. Similar indices of conjunctions and prepositions, and the average number of words per sentence in both texts, confirmed the accuracy of meaning and style. Although markers of oral speech (fillers) prevailed in translation, this strategy manifests his agency and attempt to be ethically "accountable" for his product in the sense of Schlesinger's (1989) "equalizing." This shift moves along the oral-literate continuum towards more natural, i.e., rich in pragmatic discourse markers (Schiffrin, 1989) oral communication. The LIWC psychological category of "affect" filled with emotionally charged words was less dense in the Ukrainian version, contributing both to the translator's "ethics of difference" (Venuti, 1999) and his impartiality. Thus, results of the LIWC-processed data demonstrated high ethical standards of translating Bohdan Lepky met in his Ukrainian rendition of *Salomé* by Oscar Wilde.

Keywords: *Salomé, Oscar Wilde, Bohdan Lepky, ethics of translation, translation universals, LIWC.*

Засєкін Сергій. Дослідження перекладацької етики Богдана Лєпкого на основі застосування Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count.

Анотація. Це емпіричне дослідження має за мету окреслити етичні орієнтири відомого українського письменника та перекладача Богдана Лєпкого у його українському перекладі твору «Саломея» Оскара Вайльда. Ми оцінюємо етику перекладу, визначену в (Kalina, 2015) за параметрами точності, об'єктивності та конфіденційності. Для вирішення цих питань етики дослідження передбачало таку процедуру. По-перше, вихідні та цільові тексти було проаналізовано за допомогою комп'ютерної програми Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) на основі французького словника LIWC 2007 та українського словника LIWC 2015 року. По-

друге, в обох версіях було зіставлено всі «стильові слова» (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010), представлені функціональними словами, напр. сполучниками, прийменниками, займенниками, що містять процедурне значення. Результати засвідчили, що перекладач дотримувався етичної «традиції однаковості» (Wyke, 2011), будучи менш «видимим» (Venuti, 1995) у своїй версії цільовою мовою. Незважаючи на більшу кількість неозначених займенників, що є проявом імпліцитації, ми не помітили в перекладному тексті Лепкого жодних слідів спрощення чи експліцитації. Подібні показники сполучників і прийменників, середня кількість слів у реченні в обох текстах довели точність відтворення змісту та стилю. Хоча маркери усного мовлення (заповнювачі) переважали в перекладі, ця стратегія виявляє суб'єктність перекладача та намагання бути етично «відповідальним» за свій продукт у сенсі «вирівнювання» (Shlesinger, 1989). Ця перекладацька універсалія веде до природнішого, тобто багатого на прагматичні дискурсивні маркери (Schiffirin, 1989) усного спілкування. Психологічна категорія «афекту» в LIWC, представлена емоційно забарвленою лексикою, була менш щільною в українській версії, що засвідчило й «етику відмінності» перекладача (Venuti, 1999), і його відчуженість. Отже, результати аналізу оброблених LIWC даних продемонстрували додержання Богданом Лепким високих етичних стандартів під час його відтворення українською «Саломеї» Оскара Вайлда.

Ключові слова: Саломея, Оскар Вайлд, Богдан Лепкий, етика перекладу, перекладацькі універсалії, LIWC.

Introduction

There is a growing body of literature that recognizes the importance of studying translation ethics in all acts of intercultural verbal communication (Baixauli-Olmos, 2020; Baker & Meier, 2011). This study is a part of our broader research on translation universals (Zasiiekin, 2020) and ethics (Zasiiekin & Vakuliuk, 2020; Taraban et al., 2020). Historically, the term ‘ethics of translation’ has been used to describe moral principles accepted by translators in their interlingual activity. The translators’ ethical behavior has been taken for granted for many centuries since the time of translating the Septuagint. However, the determination of ethics criteria seems even technically challenging today, for a major problem here is the existence of two approaches to translation ethics. Van Wyke (2011) put it in terms of two traditions that hold in translation studies – of “sameness” and “difference.”

The first approach expected translators “to reproduce with absolute exactitude the whole text, and nothing but the text” (Nabokov, 2004, 212). Venuti treated it as a translator's “invisibility” (Venuti, 1995). The second approach demanded a thorough account of the translation purpose, thus focusing on the source text's message delivered for the target addressee. Enriched by Derrida’s (1993) theory of deconstruction, the ethics of difference, in fact, means translators' presence, agency, or visibility in all acts of intercultural contact. In other words, meaning is not hidden inside the text, it is being born the moment the reader/translator starts decoding it.

Therefore, being ethical for a translator envisages making choices and being accountable for them. To put it simply, these two “ethics” were described by Newmark (1988) as semantic and communicative translation. The former attempts to move the reader closer to the author, whereas the latter makes the source text smoother, more transparent and understandable for the target reader, i.e., to move the author closer to the reader.

Taken together, these approaches and their prioritizing in translation studies today demonstrate a variety of labels for similar psycholinguistic phenomena - being faithful to the source text author or being loyal to the target text receiver. Adhering to one of these “faithfulnesses” could possibly prevent breaches in the translator's ethics traditionally assessed in terms of accuracy, impartiality, and confidentiality (Kalina, 2015).

However, translation is also reported to distort a translated language due to introducing ‘the third code’ (Frawley, 1984) features to the target language. This code is created at the threshold of two languages being neither source nor target language. As a result, the traces of translators' mental activity left in the target text can be treated both as a third code and as a breach of translation ethics that rests on the above mentioned three principles - accuracy, impartiality, confidentiality. Indeed, if translators simplify the style of the author's thought expression or add some information that was implicit in the source text, they make the target text inaccurate in terms of meaning, style or terminological consistency. Both explicitation and simplification cause the translator's undesirable visibility. However, the visibility should not be mixed with “difference” that implies, as mentioned before, translators' agency in establishing meaning, i.e., communicative mode of translation.

The past thirty-five years have seen increasingly rapid advances in the field of translation universals. For instance, Blum-Kulka (1986) mentions these linguistic items as ‘shifts’. Berman (2000) addressed them as “deforming tendencies,” Chesterman calls them ‘translation universals’ (Chesterman, 2011), and Toury (1995) prefers ‘laws’ instead. These ‘deforming tendencies’ destroy the translated language by erasing its natural pattern and adding a bundle of alien features causing its lexical, syntactical, and stylistic deficiencies. These linguistic features do not depend upon translation direction, kinds or types of translating, nor genre or functional style of the source texts.

According to Berman (2000), the list of ‘deforming tendencies’ includes:

- Rationalization
- Clarification
- Expansion
- Ennoblement
- Qualitative impoverishment
- Quantitative impoverishment
- The destruction of rhythms
- The destruction of underlying networks of signification
- The destruction of linguistic patternings
- The destruction of vernacular network or their exoticization
- The destruction of expressions and idioms
- The effacement of the superimposition of languages.

Chesterman (2011) elaborated on this list and suggested distinguishing *S*-universals and *T*-universals. The former capture universal differences between translations and their source texts, while the latter identify universal differences between translations and comparable non-translated texts. Among the potential *S*- and *T*-universals are *lengthening* (translations tend to be longer than their source texts), *standardization* (normalization), *explicitation* (translations tend to be more explicit

than their originals), *simplification* (less lexical variety, lexical density, and use of high-frequency items). Since the current study deals with translation and its source text, the focus here is on *S*-universals.

To date, few studies have investigated the association between translation universals and translator's ethics of professional commitment (Chesterman, 2017). Thus, this paper aims to define the translator's (un)ethical behavior in terms of translation universals.

Method

Procedure

In order to address these issues, the study envisaged the following steps. First, source- and target texts were analyzed using the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) computerized program based on its built-in French 2007 and Ukrainian 2015 dictionaries. Second, all 'style words' (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010) represented by functional words, e.g. conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns, gap fillers, interjections, discourse markers that bear 'procedural meaning' (Blakemore, 2002), were compared in both texts. Their frequency deviation in source- and target versions signals the availability of a translation universal. Next, using computer data-analysis methods, a set of translation regularities was found out.

Basically, procedural meaning is treated in terms of Relevance Theory (Wilson & Sperber, 1993). It explains a conceptual-procedural distinction as a major distinction made between two types of linguistically encoded information. Conceptual information expressed by content words is viewed as encoding concepts being a part of explicit (arbitrary) principle based on metalinguistic and pragmatic knowledge (Paradis, 2004). Words with procedural meaning contribute to the derivation of implicatures, specific ways of processing propositions. Translation universals, therefore, are viewed as a result of the subliminal translation-inherent processes that can be traced in the translator's use of function words that encode procedural meaning.

Consequently, frequencies of function ('style') words detected by LIWC are an indicator of their implicit (unconscious) use both by the author and by the translator. Any deviations in their respective quantity signal the availability of a translation universal in the target language text. Since the unconscious decisions of translators explain the emergence of translation universals, the report on these tendencies expressed through 'style words' allows measuring the degree of translators' visibility in the target text and, therefore, their accuracy and impartiality.

LIWC: the Ukrainian version

In recent years, LIWC has been utilized for the quantification of psychological, psycholinguistic, and linguistic content data drawn from individual traumatic and stress narratives and/or source- and translated texts. The advantage of this psycholinguistic tool is that it allows making conclusions about the author's and translators' styles, amid the abundance of translation universals.

LIWC had no Ukrainian dictionary until 2018. Our team (Zasiekin et al, 2018) used the LIWC 2015 built-in English dictionary and reproduced it in Ukrainian to create this version. This version's utility has recently increased for linguists, psycholinguists, and psychologists. The greatest challenge of this enterprise is an urgent need to address the translation problems caused by different target culture-bound issues.

The LIWC2015 dictionary items had to be reproduced in Ukrainian with due account of their semantic, pragmatic, and cultural load. With this goal in mind, the translators applied a set of lexical translation transformations, including differentiation, concretization, generalization of word meaning along with transcoding, explication, adaptation, and calquing. These transformations as psycholinguistic logical operations performed in the translator's mind played a critical role in attaining their better understanding by the Ukrainian users.

Some linguistic items, e.g. from the category of 'Leisure', 'Netspeak' were not translated at all, i.e. retained their original form, due to their shared use today both by speakers of English and Ukrainian. On the other hand, all function words (excluding articles and auxiliary verbs absent in the Ukrainian language), including pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, particles, interjections, were translated easily, for they had their invariable counterparts in the target language. Since our research focused on function words and psychological categories, e.g. 'affect' with procedural meaning, the Ukrainian LIWC dictionary was considered equivalent to its original English version.

By contrast, many English words with conceptual meaning like nouns with broad meaning demanded its concretization in Ukrainian. Similarly, gender in Ukrainian nouns, verbs, and adjectives caused the necessity of translating each word in all cases with respective gender markers. These items with 'conceptual meaning' were out of scope in this study.

Despite many grammatical and culture-bound challenges, the Ukrainian LIWC version was finally released in 2018 and was added to the list of downloadable dictionaries.

Materials

Due to practical constraints, this paper cannot provide a comprehensive review of ethical issues in literary translation. However, it is an attempt to highlight some ethical landmarks in the literary translation of Bohdan Lepky – a prolific Ukrainian writer, translator, public activist. His literary translation legacy embraces Polish renditions of *The Tale of Ihor's Campaign* and works by Taras Shevchenko, Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky, Maksym Rylskyi, Pavlo Tychyna, and other Ukrainian poets and writers. He also made a significant contribution to the creative enrichment of Ukrainian literature by translating poetry, fairy tales, plays from Polish, English, German, and Russian.

Despite the cultural importance of these translations, there remains a paucity of evidence both on Lepky's translations from French and the ethical criteria he followed in his work. As they are less known to the public, this study outlines his creative decisions made while translating *Salomé* – a literary work of high aesthetic value written in French by Oscar Wilde. This tragedy also attracts readers' attention due to its topical questions raised about human morality and global ethics.

In light of recent advances in the study of translation ethics, it is becoming extremely difficult to ignore the existence of translation universals viewed both as challenges for translators and as a threat to the natural patterning of the target language.

In this regard, the following research questions arise:

RQ1: Can selected translation universals be instrumental in our understanding of keeping the target language text “ethically” accurate?

RQ2: Did Lepky apply “an ethics of difference” in his translation?

Results and Discussion

Findings show that the translator mainly followed the ethical “tradition of sameness” (Wyke, 2011), being less “visible” (Venuti, 1995) in his target language version.

LIWC discovered traces of *implicitation* in the target version due to Lepky's more frequent use of impersonal pronouns (0.10 vs 4.32).

Despite a greater number of impersonal pronouns causing a slight *implicitation*, LIWC data discovered no traces of *simplification* or *explicitation* deforming tendencies in Lepky's translated text. Similar indices of conjunctions (6.07 vs 5.63) and prepositions (6.18 vs 6.43), the average number of words per sentence (WPS) (see Table 1) in both texts confirmed the accuracy of meaning and style.

Table 1

Results of Processing Source and Target Texts by LIWC

LIWC variables	Oscar Wilde's original “Salome” (French)	Bohdan Lepky's translated version (Ukrainian)
WPS	8.73	8.22
Ipron	.10	4.32
Conj	6.07	5.63
Prep	6.18	6.43
Affect	3.56	.96
Anx	.44	.04
Anger	.40	.17
Sad	.33	.01
Space	3.23	5.30
Time	2.53	1.71
Nonflu	.00	.25
Filler	.00	.07

Data show the prevalence of interjections, particles, and gap fillers (LIWC categories Nonflu, Filler) in Lepky's translation, making the original literary

characters' discourse less fluent and more natural for Ukrainian readers. In his target language version, the translator compensated their lack in the original, where natural speech contained no gap fillers and hesitation markers. Although these markers of oral speech prevailed in translation, this strategy manifests Lepky's agency and attempt to be ethically "accountable" for his product in the sense of Shlesinger's (1989) "equalizing." This shift is viewed along the oral-literate continuum towards more natural, i.e., rich in pragmatic discourse markers (Schiffrin, 1989), oral communication. Despite the fact that Shlesinger's finding was relevant for interpreting, the flatter language of translation shows that literate texts tend to have more oral "shape" (Pym, 2008). In essence, the detected equalizing is in effect 'normalization' in Chesterman's (2011) terms, as it results in a "reader-friendly" target version of the source text.

From this standpoint, the use of fillers and hesitation markers cannot be treated as something purely undesirable or outstanding. Instead, they play a constructive role in translation by contributing to a more natural speech flow in the conversation between the play's characters. This establishing of normal flow has little to zero destructive effect on the target language resulting in 'normalization'. And its emergence can be tolerated unless it compromises the accuracy of meaning.

Moreover, normalization as a candidate for translation universals can be related to the communicative method of translation (Newmark, 1988). Similarly, in terms of Venuti's (1999) translation ethics, it reflects Lepky's agentive status within "the ethics of difference." Another interesting finding concerns a 'time to space' shift in the Ukrainian version. This more spatial representation implies a semiotic step to a more "cyclic" time in the manner of events' representation. This normalization, or a spatial shift, characterizes the translator's adjustment to the norms of the Ukrainian language.

As to psychological categories, the LIWC category of "affect" filled with emotionally charged words was less dense in the Ukrainian version: the number of 'affect' linguistic markers was lower (3.56 vs. 0.96), which created the effect of rationalization viewed as Lepky's investment in *Salome's* objectivity and his emotional impartiality, or "non-engagement" (Baker & Maier, 2011). This choice contributed both to the translator's "ethics of difference" and his emotional impartiality.

Conclusions

Taken together, the discussed translation ethics phenomena suggest that literary translation is a multifaceted psycholinguistic process of the translator's psychosemiotic reproduction of the source text by means of the target language. The effect of this process is the creation of a cognitively asymmetrical new text that, despite retaining conceptual information, may contain deviations of the original syntactical, stylistic, and pragmatic features, i.e. procedural information marked by function words.

Results showed that selected translation universals could be instrumental in our understanding of keeping the target language text “ethically” accurate. Their availability automatically makes a translator visible in the text that breaches “the ethics of sameness”. However, these deviations should not always be treated as the deforming features that endanger the natural pattern of the target language. Instead, they can be viewed as linguistic tools of those translators who pursue “the ethics of difference.” Thus translator’s agency and “the ethics of difference” do not deform the target language. Rather, they mark the translators’ accountability for their product being more communicatively translated. These findings have significant implications for understanding how procedural information processed by translators is manifested in translation, influencing their ethical choices.

Thus, LIWC-processed data demonstrated high ethical standards Bohdan Lepky met in his Ukrainian rendition of *Salome* by Oscar Wilde. His translator behavior is characterized both by accountability for his creative decisions within “the ethics of difference” and accuracy with impartiality – seen as the key components of the translation “ethics of sameness”.

The present study has been one of the first attempts to thoroughly examine psycholinguistic features of the translating process using Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count’s Ukrainian 2015 version. Although this study focuses on the literary translation ethics of one translator, hopefully, the findings may well have a bearing on other translation universals, for instance, in non-literary translation involving other language pairs.

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