

Introduction

This book confronts two “double-edged” or “mirror-image” questions. First, what are the specific linguistic means, translation techniques, and cultural assumptions that are involved in the re-expressing or reconstituting in the form of an English translation of those elements of the Russian original text that are alien to English speakers culturally and that are seemingly untranslatable into English linguistically? (The same question is also asked “in reverse”—with reference to English-to-Russian translation.) Second, how does such a reconstituting of complex linguistic and sociocultural meanings conceivably affect the behaviors and cultural perceptions of readers and film viewers in the receiving culture? The answers to these questions are presented in the form of six case studies of different coexisting translations of the same texts carried out with the help of comparative translation discourse analysis (CTDA), which I advocate in opposition to the “aesthetic” approach (Venuti 2011) in translation critiques, consisting of elegantly phrased, scholarly-sounding disquisitions on the quality of translations without sufficient reference to the originals. In the final chapter of the book, I move my discussion to the contemporary Russian translation scene, Russian translation theory, the re-institutionalization of literary and film translation in Russia in the new millennium, and some leading translators’ and famous writers’ views on the ideal translator.

Comparative Translation Discourse Analysis (CTDA)

One of the founders of discourse analysis, Norman Fairclough, defines discourse as “language as a form of social practice” (1989, 22) and discourse analysis as “a systematic examination and interpretation of the structure and functions of a text (oral and written), the sociocultural circumstances of its production, and its perceived (supposed, expected, or already existing) various readings, depending on the analyst’s conceptual framework” (26); “discourse analysis [...] is an exploration of how ‘texts’ at all levels work within sociocultural practices” (1995, viii–ix).

Fairclough confines himself to monolingual and monocultural analysis of discourse. I extend discourse analysis to translation and compare the textual parameters and expected cross-cultural impact of different translations of the same material. Translations of works of verbal art are a very special kind of cross-cultural discourse carried out between pairs of specific languages (in

our case Russian and American English) through the medium of a translator who tries to make sense of the sociocultural "other" through the prism of his or her subjectivity. This is a hugely complicated task that affords alternate solutions as different translators have to re-create the multifaceted cross-cultural "other" in local contexts that are alien to and removed from the original in both time and space.

Faced with multiple translations of the same original, a cultural commentator should be capable, if only to a limited degree, of teasing out the differing tightly intertwined strands of the linguostylistic¹ and sociocultural "other" in different translations to make their comparative merits and demerits more transparent to educators, translators, and students of translation. I believe that it is detailed comparative dissections—or "deconstructions"—of the text at different levels of analysis (semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic) that should form the foundation for an informed view of how a translated text works, with reference to its original, in its new sociocultural setting. This is what the present book attempts to do through its case studies. To this end, I offer CTDA in order to counteract what Venuti calls a "belletristic approach" to translation criticism, whereby the critic "assigns [a translation] an aesthetic autonomy from the source text and judges it not according to a concept of equivalence, but according to the 'standards' by which he judges original compositions. [...] this approach [is] belletristic because it emphasizes aesthetic qualities of the translated text itself. It is also impressionistic in the sense that it is vague or ill-defined" (2011).

Aspects of "the Other" in Translation

Today it has become customary to refer to "the foreign" (the alien language, its users and, more generally, its culture) using terms such as "the other," "otherness," or "alterity." The terms cover a wide and varied discursive range in philosophy and cultural studies, where they are employed mainly to describe different kinds of inequalities and power relationships: class, race, ethnicity, national origin, and gender. The amount of literature on the existential difficulty of understanding and accepting representatives of different ethnicities, cultures, the members of the opposite sex, or, for that matter, any human being other than oneself is truly vast, and the list of the thinkers that have been developing the concepts of "otherness" or "the other" in the philosophical, cultural, and psychoanalytical literature of the 20th and 21st centuries includes such celebrated figures as Cassirer, Husserl, Heidegger, Bakhtin, Lévi-Strauss, Habermas, Levinas, Said, Sartre, Buber, and Derrida, to name but a very few. In translation studies, "the other" is also discussed by various trans-

¹ "Linguostylistic" means that which displays multiple levels of analysis related to various language domains, i.e., lexical classes, morphology, syntax, semantics, discourse analysis, etc.

lation theorists such as Lawrence Venuti (1995, 1998), Rachel May (1994), Umberto Eco (2001), Maria Tymoczko (2002), Edwin Gentzler (2002), Tim Parks (2007), Theo Hermans (1996, 2006, 2007), Kate Sturge (2007), and Rosemary Arrojo (2005, 2006), to name just a prominent few. These are highly insightful scholarly discussions. But in none of these writings is the concept of “the other” specifically defined and considered as the core of interlingual translation discourse and the object of comparative translation discourse analysis. In other words, many publications consider separate aspects of the “other,” “otherness,” or “alterity,” but these concepts are used in widely disparate contexts, are usually too abstract, or general, and are next to impossible to apply, not least in resolving concrete problems in translating from Russian into English and vice versa. Scholars seem to be more concerned with all-embracing generalities aimed at covering all languages or groups of languages.

In my own present conceptualization of “the other” in Russian-English translation, I take my cue from George Steiner, who, while not defining “the other” nevertheless explicitly uses concepts and expressions that may be subsumed under that category. Thus he talks about “a palimpsest of historical [and] political undertones and overtones” (1998, 180); “a ‘chord’ of associations” (180); “the irreducible singularity of personal remembrance” (182); “the ‘association-net’ of personal consciousness and subconsciousness” (182); “a semantic field” (314); “a dialectically enigmatic residue” (316); “formats of significance” (317); “the ‘other’ language and ‘other’ culture” (412); “the serious alterity of meaning and expressive form” (413); “a cultural lattice” (413); “the differing idiomatic habits, the distinct associative contexts which generate resistance and affinity between two different languages” (445). These interconnected concepts coalesce in Steiner’s definition of the task of the translator, which, compared with Benjamin’s (or Derrida’s), is much more clearly stated and realizable:

The translator must actualize the implicit “sense,” the denotative, connotative, illative,² intentional, associative range of significations which are implicit in the original, but which it leaves undeclared or only partly declared simply because the native auditor or reader has an immediate understanding of them. (291)

Proceeding from Steiner’s definition of the task of the translator, I put forward a concept of “the other in translation,” which I believe helps elucidate some crucial aspects of any translation process as well as enabling us to form more substantive opinions of translation products. I suggest that the concept of otherness, as the core of translation discourse and the subject of the case studies I consider in this book, should include (1) the linguistically and cul-

² Of the nature of or stating an inference.

turally alien elements of the original text (in our case, Russian or English); (2) the linguo-socio-cultural personality of its author as imprinted on the text and as perceived by the creator of the text of the translation (the translator); (3) the translator's own linguo-socio-cultural identity as reflected in the created translated text; (4) the translator's adjustments in the translation, made to accommodate the prospective audience's perceived educational background and expectations; and (5) the translator's adjustments in the translation resulting from his/her self-monitoring and self-censoring in a particular sociopolitical and ideological situation.

Two important points need to be emphasized in relation to this definition. First, the most translation-resistant part of "the other" includes the Lecerclean "remainder"³—the odd, untidy, awkward, or "verbal-creativity-driven" parts of the text that do not have ready-made correspondences in the translating language and therefore are conspicuously present in or inconspicuously absent from the translation. More specifically, these are the unique elements of authorial style such as diction and text prosody, intertextual allusions, and stretches of language known in translation studies as "*realia*." *Realia* is an earlier specialized term denoting concepts and ways of expression that exist in one language but are conspicuously absent in the other. "The remainder" and *realia* are commonly known as "the untranslatable"—that which has been or is likely to be "lost in translation." Their "omission," or "neutralization," is only discoverable if translation analysts take the trouble to compare original and translation. Alternatively, "the remainder" and *realia* may be quite noticeable due to their conspicuous "otherness," if translated very literally—that is, "foreignized." Second, "the other" includes a sociological dimension—the translator's own education, life experience, cultural outlook, aesthetic preferences, professional competence, and, most importantly, the adopted translation methodology that are reflected in the translation, whether the translator is or is not aware of it. This is the difficult-to-identify translator's imprint on the text of the translation, or "the translator in the text," to quote the phrase in the title of Rachel May's book (1994).⁴ The interpenetration and interaction of all the above elements comprise the core of "translation discourse," which I define as a mode of exchanging organized knowledge, ideas, experiences, and

³ "The remainder" is a concept that was originally created by Jacques Lecercle (1990) and further developed and illustrated by Lawrence Venuti (1998), who argued that, although "the remainder" can never be completely formalized, it must be fully recognized as a factor in translation.

⁴ In her book *The Translator in the Text* (1994), Rachel May calls the "imprint" left by the individual translator on his or her translation "the translator in the text." "The translator's voice in the translated narrative" has also been discussed by Theo Hermans and other authors. See, for example, Theo Hermans's article of the same title (1996, 27, 42).

aesthetic perceptions through the medium of language as used by translators in concrete contexts.

In performing comparative translation discourse analysis (CTDA), I illustrate the variability of translation by examining and rationalizing different translations of the same texts from the perspectives of semantics, syntax, and pragmatics. I consider the semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic variations in different translations of the same single originals (Russian and English) in relation to five interpenetrating and overlapping modes of cross-cultural appropriation of “the other”: neutralization, domestication (naturalization), foreignization, contamination, and stylization.

Given the scope of CTDA, it is easy to get bogged down in its multiple ramifications, therefore, I focus only on those elements in the source texts and their translations which I find problematic. I expect these instances to be interesting to Russian-English translators and students of translation with some knowledge of Russian.

The choice of material for the case studies was determined by two other considerations: first, at the time of writing, the translations I consider were all being actively discussed in different media (I believe, some of them still are), and, second, they contain a lot of translation-resistant elements that constitute the concept I am developing—“the other in translation.” The case studies are based on close readings and comparative translation discourse analysis of samples of prose fiction and two film voiceovers. In addition to the popular literary and film texts and their translations that I selected for the case studies, the other sources of data were the latest translation studies literature; translators’ prefaces, commentaries, and foot- or endnotes in translated books; conference presentations; face-to-face discussions and interviews with colleagues working in the field of translation; extracts from translations tried out on my students in class; surveys of my students; online discussions; and archival materials.

The Structure of the Book

“The Other” in Translation: A Case for Comparative Translation Studies consists of six chapters, each dealing with a specific case study, a chapter discussing the present-day translation situation in Russia, a concluding section briefly examining the role of translation as an integrating medium in conditions of multiculturalism and globalization, and eight appendices that supply additional material illustrating the issues discussed.

Chapter 1, “The ‘Americanization’ of Russian Life and Literature through Translations of Hemingway’s Works: Establishing a Russian ‘Amerikanskii’ Substyle in Russian Literature,” offers a case study of two “Kashkintsy” translations of Hemingway. This chapter traces the origins of the “*ozhivliazh*” (sexing-up) trend in the literary translations of today back to the “Kashkintsy group” of translators that formed in the Soviet Union in the 1930s and whose

influence on the style of literary translation is still felt in Russia today. I argue that it was the "Kashkinty group" and their followers, such as Rita Rait-Kovaleva, who began to introduce, most likely unintentionally, what I call the "swashbuckling" or "swaggering" style in their literary translations of American prose fiction that came to be generally associated by Russians with the "freewheeling," "devil-may-care," "we're-truly-free individuals" way Americans supposedly talked. The myth persists and the style has been reinforced and gets replicated to this day.

Chapter 2, "Some Like it Hot—'Goblin-Style': 'Ozhivliash' (Sexing Things Up) in Russian Film Translations," provides a case study of two voiceover translations into Russian of an episode from the American TV series *The Sopranos*—one shown on the Russian NTV television channel and the other on TV-3. I illustrate how the initial tentative "enlivening" of translations initiated by the Kashkinty and Rita Rait-Kovaleva has escalated today in the medium of Russian voiceover translations of American films. I argue that the widely popular voiceover film translator Dmitrii Puchkov (aka Goblin), whose cachet is to translate English four-letter words with the help of what is generally perceived as publicly unacceptable Russian obscene language (*mat*), misrepresents the sociocultural functions of obscene language in the two cultures by assuming that the set of sociocultural constituencies that use and tolerate *mat* in Russian society is identical to the set or composition of the sociocultural groups that use and tolerate four-letter words in American culture. I also argue that Russian film as a cultural medium has long been resistant to the use of *mat* (unlike contemporary Russian prose, for example), and, therefore, transplanting the seemingly similar language stratum into Russian cinema violates the still relatively restricted standards of decency generally expected of Russian films.

Chapter 3, "Translating *Skaz* as a Whole-Text Realium: Five Modes of Translation (Russian to English)," offers a comparative analysis of two translations of an excerpt from Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. The case study focuses on the two radically different ways in which the translators Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (2007) and Anthony Briggs (2006) resolve the problem of translating *skaz* in the parable about two merchants told by one of the characters in the novel, Platon Karataev. I describe five modes of translating that all translators—whether wittingly or unwittingly—resort to in varying degrees. These are textual neutralization, domestication (naturalization), foreignization, contamination, and stylization. While discussing possible rationales behind each of these modes and their combinations, I offer my own translation of part of the passage under consideration.

Chapter 4, "Translating *Skaz* as a Whole-Text Realium: From *Skaz* to Swaggering Pizzazz (English to Russian)," offers a case study of three different translations into Russian of J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. Compared with the previous chapter, this is a case study "in reverse" because it analyzes three translations from English into Russian. I argue that *The Catcher*

in the Rye is a “whole-text” *skaz*, identify the recurring specific language means and devices used by Salinger to produce the effect of *skaz*, and then apply a comparative translation discourse analysis to establish to what extent the *skaz*-like poetics of the Salinger text is replicated in the three existing translations of the short novel in Russian. I argue that, whereas in the first, canonical translation of the novel (1960), its translator, Rita Rait-Kovaleva, was “smuggling in” a vision of an “unattainable,” democratic world for the Russian reader to take perverse pleasure in and to contrast with the drab Soviet realities of life, the second and the third translations by Maksim Nemtsov (2008) and Iakov Lotovskii (2010) respectively obfuscate any ideological implications of the Salinger text and replace the somewhat artificial “Amerikanskii” style of narration in Rait-Kovaleva’s Russian translation with the harsh Russian youth vernacular of the late 1990s and the 2000s—the kind teenage “rebels without a cause” tend to speak in present-day Russia. The poetics of the Russian translations has thus transmogrified from the starting point of American-style *skaz* in English through a subtly ideologized “Amerikanskii Russian” of Rait-Kovaleva’s translation to the non-ideological swagger and pizzazz of Nemtsov’s and Lotovskii’s translations.

Chapter 5, “Translating Postmodernism: A Translator’s Modus Operandi,” examines the translator Jamey Gambrell’s operations in some translation-resistant passages from the novella *Day of the Oprichnik* (2006; trans. 2011) by the contemporary Russian classic Vladimir Sorokin (b. 1955). The chapter shows how the linguistic and the sociocultural intertwine in creating both an original postmodernist text and its cross-culturally engaging translation.

Chapter 6, “Using Translation as a Political Weapon: Having a Riot Translating ‘Pussy Riot,’” examines some radically different ways used in Russia today to translate the name of the Russian punk collective Pussy Riot into Russian following their “punk-prayer” performance at Moscow’s Cathedral of Christ the Savior on 21 February 2012. I argue that these different translations are used as means of asserting one’s sociopolitical position and cultural identity in the global controversy surrounding Pussy Riot. Among other things, the analyses in this chapter highlight the political and ideological dimensions of translation as a performative activity.

Chapter 7, “Russian Translation Theory: Ongoing Discussions,” examines the thinking by three of Russia’s foremost translation theorists and practitioners today: Dmitrii Buzadzhi, Viktor Lanchikov, and Dmitrii Ermolovich. In this chapter, I attempt to identify the latest shifts in Russian translation studies and to find its points of engagement with “global” translation theory. This is followed by a brief conclusion, “Negotiating Multiculturalism,” examining the role of literary translation as a medium of change in the context of the interacting processes of cultural assimilation, amalgamation (the “melting pot” theory), and multiculturalism (the “salad bowl” theory).

Appendix 1 contains alternative translations into English of a passage from *War and Peace*; Appendix 2 contains the translator Lotovskii's rationale for retranslating *The Catcher in the Rye*; Appendix 3 contains three translations into Russian of the first paragraph of *The Catcher in the Rye*; Appendix 4 lists *skaz*-forming textual elements from *The Catcher in the Rye*; Appendix 5 illustrates the interaction of theory and practice in translating a seemingly untranslatable lexical item—"supercalifragilisticexpialidocious"; Appendix 6 contains Robert Chandler's definition of an ideal translator of Platonov, and I supply some illustrative examples from Chandler's and his collaborators' translations and retranslations of *The Foundation Pit* and *Happy Moscow*; Appendix 7 discusses some translation quality control institutions in Russia; and Appendix 8 is a facetious "instruction manual" for dummies on how to use translators and interpreters.

To sum up, in the chapters and appendices that follow, I try to bring theorists and practitioners together by discussing ways of resolving specific translation problems on the basis of middle-range theories⁵ relating to word and sentence semantics and text pragmatics. The middle-range solutions are considered from the perspectives of neutralization, domestication (naturalization), contamination, foreignization, and stylization as modes of negotiating "the other" in translation. The book is research-based: I use six concrete case studies to consider some "accursed" problems ("the untranslatable") of Russian-English translation through the basic method of comparative translation discourse analysis (CTDA). By comparing different translations in specific terms I also show how different translators, in fact, initiate cultural change. Thus comparative translation studies provide us with additional tools to monitor and analyze cultural change.

The book is meant primarily for Russian-to-English and English-to-Russian translators and students of translation with some knowledge of Russian, but it will also be useful to advanced Russian language learners and Russian heritage speakers.

⁵ Robert K. Merton (1910–2003), best known for developing such universally used concepts as "unintended consequences," "role model," "self-fulfilling prophecy," and "reference group," created the term "middle-range theory" in opposition to the all-embracing word "theory." His problem with the word "theory" was that "like so many words which are bandied about, the word 'theory' threatens to become emptied of meaning. The very diversity of items to which the word is applied leads to the result that it often obscures rather than creates understanding" (Merton 1964, 5). Merton advocated "theories of the middle range," which he defined as "theories intermediate to the minor working hypotheses evolved in abundance during the day-to-day routines of research, and the all-inclusive speculations comprising a master conceptual scheme from which it is hoped to derive a very large number of empirically observed uniformities" (5–6). What Merton said about social theory is, in my view, perfectly applicable to translation theory. To me, trying to create a translation theory that would embrace everything is an illusion—not to say an exercise in futility.