

On the Methodology of Analyzing a Piece of Literary Work for Translation Purposes



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The present article deals with the problems of literary translation. The linguostylistic and the linguopoetic methods have so far been used to bringing the analysis of a piece of a literary work as close to its understanding as possible. Thus the linguostylistic method is commonly employed to reveal various stylistic devices and syntactical expressive means used in the source text and examine the problem of their adequate transference into the target language. As to the linguopoetic method, it aims at revealing the aesthetic influence of the literary work upon the reader. We think it would be quite logical not to restrict our analysis only to the above-mentioned methods of interpretation when

doing literary translations. The method of literary criticism is certainly to be used to display the author's main idea and philosophical point of view vested in the literary work. It also helps the translator to pursue her/his main goal: to transfer the aesthetic (the so-called "aesthetic aura") as well as the literary value of the original into its translated version with the help of language means.

The present article attempts to contribute to the theory of translation, linguistics and literary studies.

In the 60-70's of the 20-th century, a linguistic branch dealing with poetic speech was established as an interdisciplinary approach involving data from different philological sciences. Many scholars tried to embark on the methodology which would enable them to analyze the content and forms of poetic speech and study it as a distinct branch. One should bear in mind that "poetic speech" is not to be confused with the so-called "speech of poetry". "Poetic speech" is peculiar to prose, poetry and drama, whereas the "speech of poetry" has to do with verse, with its specific language, unique lexico-stylistic and syntactical formations. For the investigation of a literary work as a manifestation of poetic speech and specifically for translation purposes, we propose three methods to be employed with one another. They are the following: the linguostylistic method, the linguopoetic method, and the method of literary criticism.

The analysis of a literary work is generally undertaken in two ways:

1. To analyze the literary work and to comprehend it as an aesthetic whole;
2. To estimate the literary work as a stylistic and aesthetic arrangement.

The study of the literary system of a work may include various methods of analysis which may reveal the author's literary credo, his ideology and aesthetic intent, his use of

lexical and syntactical expressive means, especially stylistic devices. Altogether, they are considered the poetics of a literary work comprising both the linguistic aspect and literary poetics (for more details see: Todorov T., 1977).

Many linguists have discussed both the methods and the methodology of studying the so-called “poetic speech”. For instance, the famous Russian linguist V. Vinogradov insisted on the existence of the science of poetic language as a special branch of philology. He was sure that as soon as we have defined the subject of this science, we should be able to decide on the methods of analysis. The scholar introduces the following point of view: the main object of the science of poetic language is not language itself but the existing notion of the same language. According to V. Vinogradov, in order to study poetic language, it would be quite logical to study the aesthetics of a word (for more details see: Vinogradov V., 1971, p.29).

We consider it necessary to focus our attention on “**the two objective ways**” of studying literary speech pointed out by V. Vinogradov to estimate their scientific and practical value nowadays. The first way involves the analysis and interpretation of a literary work as an aesthetic whole. In this case, the problem of difference between literary genres, such as poetry and prose, assumes importance.

Every literary work is really an entire system and its investigation may include various literary methods the unity of which cannot be accidental, but as a rule determines the *density* of the literary material, the writer’s literary credo, aesthetic and ideological goals.

According to V. Vinogradov, the second way of studying a literary work as a system of aesthetic and stylistic values is the study of its primary elements – phonemes, which especially have a great impact on the language of “poetic speech”.

On the one hand, there is national language, on the other hand - poetic language. As to the language of poetry with the help of which “poetic speech” is made up, it is mainly used in verse but we believe “poetic speech” is largely employed in the speech of prose, too, especially in the so-called “poetic prose”, i. e. highly rhythmic prose that makes use of poetic devices such as alliteration and assonance. Vivid examples of such literary prose (fiction) are W. Faulkner’s prose in American literature and H. Matevosyan’s prose in Armenian literature.

In the middle of the 70’s of the 20th century, the **philological investigation** of literary works was closely connected with the research of translations. Translation was correlated with “the interpretation of the text” which is known as Philological Hermeneutics. The establishment of Hermeneutics as a general methodological mechanism of investigation is related to F. Schleiermacher’s name who was an outstanding philosopher and theologian at the end of the 18th and at the beginning of the 19th centuries (see: Schleiermacher F., 1959). In this branch of philology, the tendency of analyzing separate excerpts of a literary work for the sake of having some concrete idea about the whole work is of primary importance. It should be noted that the opposite way of investigation is not ignored either, i.e. the analysis of the literary work as a whole enables us to achieve the interpretation and perception of various passages of the work.

Language is in the focus of all these studies, as a means of exposing the plot of the

text studied on the first level. On the second level, language is analyzed as a means of expressing the author's intentions related to his/her way of thinking, world outlook, and unique style. These two levels of language analysis make the study of a literary work more detailed, accurate, and exact.

The philological analysis of a literary text includes three levels of investigation:

1. The study of a literary work on the linguosemantic (semiotic) level which supposes the investigation of language according to its phonetic, lexical, stylistic, grammatical and syntactical peculiarities which are mutually connected with one another.
2. The study of a literary work on the meta-semiotic level which supposes the analysis of lexical and syntactical expressive means providing the meta-plot of the work, revealing the author's aesthetic intention, creating its emotional and expressive impact on the reader
3. The study of a literary work on the meta-meta-semiotic level which supposes the investigation of the aesthetic effect created by the actual usage of the language, by the potential and palpable idea of the work, which form its linguistic and literary poetics.

The first two levels mentioned above are inseparably connected with each other and their study is made by means of the **linguostylistic method**. It aims to research language - speech relation. The **linguopoetic method** is used to study the ideological and aesthetic influence of the text upon the reader (see: *Linguostylistics: Theory and Method*, ed. by Olga Akhmanova, 1972).

For about two decades ago professor S. Gasparyan suggested that it should be logical to add the **method of literary criticism** for the purpose of displaying the aesthetic value of a literary work in connection with the author's final goal reflected in it, with the main idea of the work which reveals its philosophical, psychological, and moral concepts interpreted in its broad context (Gasparyan S., 1987).

We suppose that the application of the method of literary criticism will enable us to reveal the aesthetic value of a literary work and to transfer it from the original into the translated version. Moreover, we believe that this method is not to be limited to the analysis of the author's literary gift, talent, mastery but it should also include his literary topics and literary credo overall.

We are sure the joint usage of the above-mentioned three methods of investigation can provide necessary information to study the language, poetics of the literary work and its ideological nuances which are to be adequately interpreted in the translation of the original.

Very often, the global ideological issue of the work may be displayed by means of some symbolic values which can be decoded with the help of wider context. Naturally, to interpret these symbolic values, we will need some background knowledge about the epoch to which the author belongs, information about the author's literary and aesthetic preferences and, finally, some facts from his/her private life.

It is a well-known fact that symbols include a very powerful ideological potential, thus the study of a literary work primarily presupposes the process of decoding symbols and encoding them in the translation version of the text. In recent years, there is a

tendency to unite the linguistic and literary analyses of the text and the results of investigations. This tendency is very topical in our reality, too. On this occasion professor S. Gasparyan notes in her monograph (see: Gasparyan S., 1991) the differentiating peculiarities of the linguostylistic and the linguopoetic methods. The scholar regards the linguostylistic method as the main method of investigating a text by means of which the unity of language and speech is displayed. This unity is the basis of any text – any verbal work, including literary works. In order to study a literary work the scholar finds it necessary to investigate the very complicated relationship between the verbal structure and the creative-literary form of the work. In this case, the linguopoetic method, which is quite different from the linguostylistic one, is to be used. The former is to be employed while studying mainly literary works, whereas the latter can be employed to study other works quite different from literary ones.

If the efforts of all the scholars are joined together, some scientifically grounded theory will appear to solve all the debatable problems arising between linguists and literary critics. There is no doubt, the theory of translation will only gain from it.

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Գեղարվեստական թարգմանության վերլուծության մեթոդաբանական հարցեր

Սույն հոդվածը քննում է գեղարվեստական ստեղծագործության ուսումնասիրման երեք՝ լեզվաոճական, լեզվաբանաստեղծական և գրականագիտական մեթոդների միասնական կիրառության խնդիրը՝ թարգմանվածքում բնագրի առանձնահատկությունները լիովին արտացոլելու նպատակով: