

Main Concepts and Principles of Modern Translation Theory

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Abstract: The article explores modern translation theory, emphasizing the increasing importance of interethnic and interlingual relations in the context of globalization. It highlights the cognitive nature of the translation process, focusing on the interaction between source and target texts, the translator's mental operations, and the formation of professional translator competence. Key theoretical approaches, including relevance theory, the concept of invariants, and cognitive modulation techniques, are examined alongside classical and contemporary perspectives from scholars such as Holz-Mänttäri, Barkhudarov, Komissarov and Ivanov. The study underscores the role of functional equivalence, linguistic and extralinguistic challenges, and the necessity of an anthropocentric, linguocultural approach to achieve accurate, adequate and contextually appropriate translations.

Keywords: Translation, equivalence, cognitive processes, translator competence, intercultural communication, modulation, relevance theory, linguocultural factors, converse transformation, anthropocentric approach.

Interethnic and interlingual relations are gaining particular importance in the current era of global transformations. This, in turn, leads to the intensification of the translation process, which is one of the main aspects of interaction between languages.

In modern translation studies, a range of issues is being examined from a cognitive perspective, including the relationships between the source text and the translated text at various levels, the understanding of meaning as a linguistic and cultural phenomenon and its reconfiguration within the framework of interlingual relations. At present, models of translation practice, various factors that ensure the translator's linguistic and cognitive activity and the mechanisms that activate them, as well as the layers that shape the translator's personal competence, are increasingly being discussed and explored, in many respects for the first time [Safarov Sh., 2019: 2].

Especially in the current process of globalization, translation plays a crucial role in economic development, the strengthening of socio-cultural relations between nations, the growing importance of religious tolerance and, most importantly, the advancement of science and scholarship. The traditions of world translation studies have also been researched by Uzbek scholars such as J.Sharipov (1965/1972), G.Salomov (1978), N.Komilov (1988), Q.Musaev (2005), I.Gafurov, O.Muminov, N.Qambarov (2012), Sh.Safarov (2019) and others, as a result of which Uzbek schools of translation have been formed.

It should be noted that for a long period translation studies was mainly concerned with the analysis of literary and religious text translation. Today, however, it has moved beyond the boundaries of literary literature and has begun to address problems related to the translation of various types of texts. Finally, along with the functional characteristics of translation practice, its

spiritual and ethnic aspects have also attracted the attention of researchers and critics as a result of the commercialization and institutionalization of translation [Safarov Sh., 2019: 14].

Until recently, the main discussions in translation studies focused on translation and its degree of equivalence, as well as its relationship with culture. In the most recent studies, however, attention has shifted toward the translator's personality and the formation of professional translation competence. Since the translation process has a cognitive nature, it requires an ***anthropocentric approach***; consequently, one of the key tasks of contemporary translation studies is the shaping of the translator's personality and the selection of translation strategies, that is, the development of professional translator competence [Tukhtasinov I., 2018: 31]. This tendency has become increasingly evident in recent research.

At one time, A.Reformatsky gave a negative answer to the question of whether a “science of translation” could be created. In his interpretation, “various branches of linguistics are employed in translation practice and for this reason translation cannot possess its own theory” [Reformatsky A., 1952: 12; Garbovsky N., 2007: 34]. Over time, however, translation theory became established as an academic discipline. This was made possible by the emergence of new approaches formed within the ***anthropocentric paradigm***, which demanded a scientific grounding of translation activity, as well as by the development of cognitive linguistics, pragmalinguistics, linguocultural studies, semantics and other fields of knowledge. These disciplines provided a theoretical foundation for the study of translation, which in turn led to the emergence of serious and systematic research in translation studies.

The German scholar Holz-Mänttäri [Holz-Mänttäri, 1984] links translation activity with the communicative and pragmatic theory of the text and characterizes translation as a means of communication oriented toward purpose and result. The scholar defines the translation process as a “message-transmitting medium” that includes intercultural transfer, as follows:

“The translation process is not merely the transfer of words, sentences, or texts into another language; rather, in all cases it is a means that shapes functionally oriented communication and ensures goal-directed interaction across cultural barriers” [Holz-Mänttäri, 1984: 7–8].

According to the scholar, in practical translation the primary focus is on creating a functional communicative text. The form and content of the translated text are determined not simply by transferring the norms of the source language but by features that are functionally appropriate to the culture of the target language. Such functional appropriateness is determined in practice by a professional translator who is capable of carrying out intercultural transfer at the required level.

In the approaches of translation studies of twenty-first-century attention should be paid not only to the role of the translator but also to the ***mental operations*** involved in cognitive activity. Naturally, translation is not limited to being a communicative act or work on a text; it is also the product of a ***cognitive process***. In recent years, the growing number of studies in translation studies has created the conditions for ***cognitive translation studies*** to emerge as a distinct field [Safarov Sh., 2019: 68].

In seeking ways to overcome controversial issues researchers are testing various forms and models for analyzing the mental operations performed by translators. One such model is known as “***relevance theory***”, whose authors, Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, emphasize that communication is entirely embedded in cognitive activity [Sperber D. and Wilson D., 1986/1995: 46].

Within ***relevance theory***, attention is focused on the presence of implicature or ***implicit information*** and on how it is generated. Meaning is not expressed solely within the text itself; rather, in many cases it exists in close connection with the specific context and the conditions reflected in the text [Safarov Sh., 2019: 69]. In one of the modulation techniques of translation – namely, in the phenomenon of ***converseness*** – implicit meaning is likewise embedded in the

content plane. The translator's task, therefore, is to employ the modulation technique appropriately, in accordance with the degree of relevance.

Based on the primary purpose of translation, modeling refers to the determination of what is preserved and what is transformed during the translation process. In translation practice, the element that remains unchanged is termed the *invariant*. An *invariant* is the essence that is preserved despite various changes in expression. It is generally acknowledged that the translation invariant is not a clearly material entity but a mental structure – an idea or a cognitive configuration, that is, meaning. Contemporary research in translation studies recognizes that modeling is becoming increasingly widespread within the discipline. At present, as greater attention is paid to the relationship between the translation process and cognitive activity, the proposed models are increasingly acquiring a cognitive-linguistic character. Among such models, we may include the phenomenon of *converse transformation*, which constitutes the object of the present study and is characterized by the preservation of invariance – namely, essence – based on *relational oppositions* and the presence of *implicit meaning*.

In his work, Barkhudarov L.S. viewed translation as the process of transforming a speech product in one language into a speech product in another language and concluded that “translation does not deal with language systems; it deals with concrete speech products, that is, texts” [Barkhudarov L.S., 1975: 26].

Disagreeing with this view, Komissarov V. argued in his research that the translation process cannot be considered autonomous from language and that it is impossible to explain the regularities of translation without taking linguistic laws into account. If a translator approaches language solely from a translator's perspective, they are bound to overlook important aspects of language. From this it follows that, for the linguistic analysis of translation, texts and the speech process serve only as the initial objects of investigation [Komissarov V., 2002: 46].

When translation is studied as a specific form of speech communication, translation theory does not limit itself to the study of language mechanisms alone. This is because translation is not merely an interaction between languages, but also an interaction between cultures.

If we fail to take into account that the translation process is carried out not by an idealized mechanism but by a human being and that the translator's psychological orientation inevitably affects the final result, any analysis of the translation process would be incomplete.

Scholars such as Chukovsky K. (1936), Kashkin I. (1977), Gachechiladze G. (1980), Rossels Vl. (1955), Kundzich O. (1959/2017) and others, who proposed analyzing translation theory within the framework of literary studies, regard translation as a form of literary activity. Accordingly, they treat translation theory as a theory of literary translation. In their view, translation is a type of artistic creation and should therefore be studied by literary scholarship. Some scholars belonging to this approach consider the study of the language of literary translations to be a secondary task [for example, Rossels V., 1955]. As Fedorov A. noted, “although the arguments advanced against studying translation from a linguistic perspective lack seriousness and objectivity, they are marked by a strong tendency” [Fedorov A., 2002: 20]. According to these critics, linguists have created a normative system that demands complete equivalence between the source text and the translated text, allowing no changes, fluctuations, or deviations, and as a result the linguistic approach has been equated with word-for-word translation.

Representatives of the linguistic school of translation studies [Krupnov V., 1976; Fedorov A., 2002] developed denotative, situational, transformational and semantic theories, as well as theories of levels of equivalence and regular correspondences.

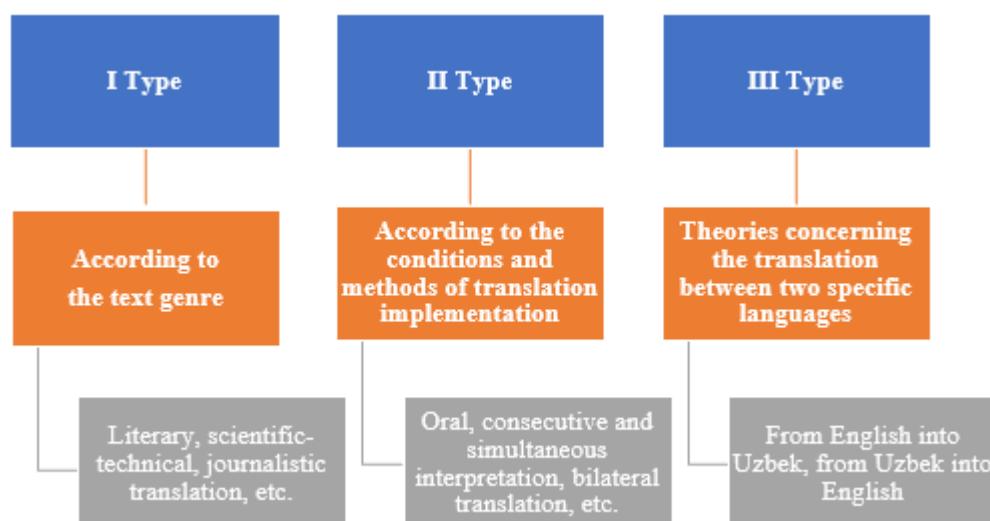
The denotative theory is based on the exchange of ideas about material and imaginary events of objective reality. However, it does not take into account the fact that the same situation in linguistic communication can be expressed in different ways. The transformational theory of translation is grounded in the idea of similar structures from transformational grammar;

according to this view, all transformations that may exist in a given language are produced in translation without evoking any figurative or other associations. The semantic theory is based on the study of the content-related aspects of the source and target texts and does not go beyond the semantic level of language [Komissarov V., 1973: 60].

The “*theory of levels of equivalence*” proposed by Komissarov V. is a model of translation activity, according to which equivalence relations are established between the similarity of the contents of the source and translated texts [Komissarov V., 1990: 51].

The “*theory of regular correspondences*” advanced by Retsker Ya. [Ya. Retsker, 1950/2007; Rybin P., 2007: 81] examines the nature of certain correspondences between the source and translated texts. These correspondences may occur at the levels of lexis, phraseology, syntax and style. Thus, in other linguistic theories, the problem of translation is approached in a one-sided manner and is addressed by relying on one or another aspect of translation activity.

As a rule, general and particular types of translation theory are distinguished. There is a close interconnection between general and particular theories. General theory studies translation without taking into account the specific features arising from the characteristics of a particular language. Particular and special theories specify the principles of general translation theory in accordance with individual types and forms of translation. There are three types of particular theories (see picture 1):



Picture 1: Three types of particular theories

In linguistic research, the following main tasks of translation theory are identified:

1. To reveal and describe the general linguistic foundations of translation, that is, to determine which specific features and regularities of language systems underlie the translation process;
2. To consider translation as an object of linguistic research and to determine its place among other types of language mediation;
3. To develop the principles for classifying types of translation activity;
4. To reveal the essence of translation equivalence as the basis of communicative equivalence between the source and target texts;
5. To elaborate the general principles and characteristics for developing particular and specialized theories of translation;
6. To explain the influence of pragmatic, sociolinguistic, and linguocultural factors on the translation process;

7. To define the concept of the “norm of translation” and to develop principles for assessing translation quality.

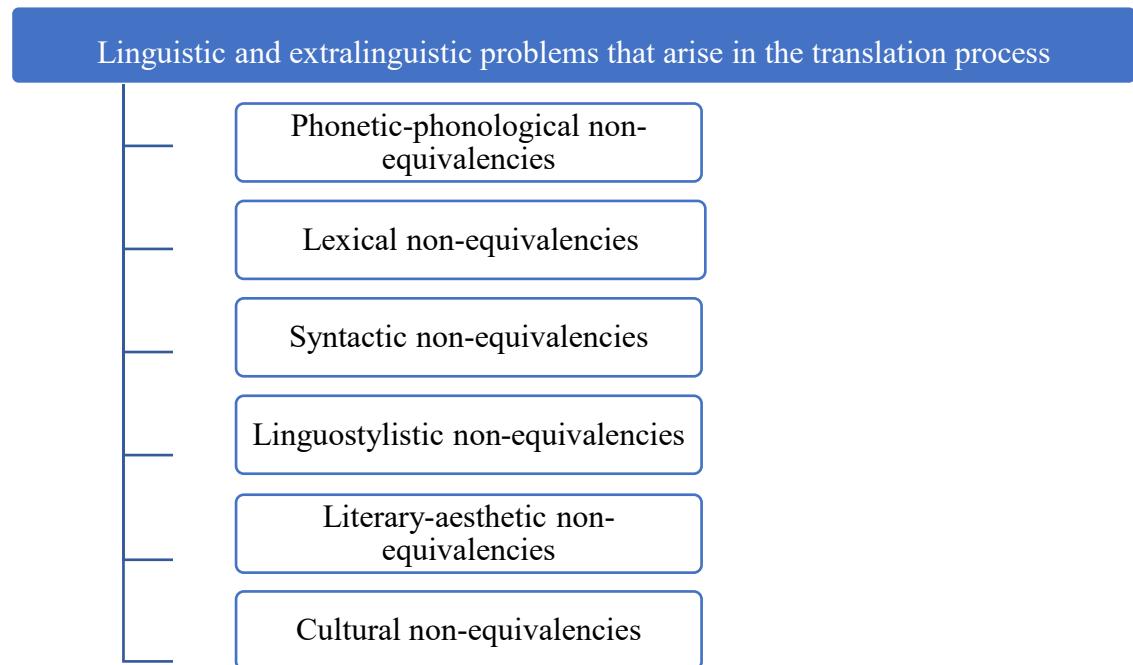
The function of translation is to ensure such a type of interlingual communication in which the text created in the target language can fully replace the source text in communicative terms, and in which the translation is perceived by receptors as being completely equivalent to the original in functional, structural, and semantic content.

The importance of ensuring functional equivalence between the source and the translation is manifested in the fact that a translated work is accepted as belonging to the original author and is published under the author's name. It is perceived as an original written in another language. The recipients of the translation consider that the translation fully incorporates the content of the source text and that this content is expressed by means of another language.

A text that is communicatively equivalent to the source is created in the target language, and this communicative equivalence is manifested in readers' acceptance of the translation as functionally, semantically, and structurally equivalent to the original.

Science requires the study of the regularities existing in this field. When translation is studied as an object of scientific inquiry, the investigation of the regularities of the source and target languages leads to a broader generalization of the relationship between the two languages. In this way, translation theory can be developed into a scientific discipline that studies the regularities of language and style.

From a linguistic perspective, translation theory generalizes translation facts and demonstrates cases of correspondence and divergence between languages. When working with a text that has a particular value in the source language, the translator's effort to ensure formal-semantic and poetic proximity between the two texts, to create unity of form and meaning, and thus to convey to the reader the subtle nuances of the author's creative thought, ideas, and imagery enhances the attractiveness and readability of the translation. In this process, discrepancies between the characteristics of the two languages pose serious obstacles for the translator. These discrepancies are of both linguistic and extralinguistic nature and constitute some of the major problems in the translation process. They can be grouped as follows [Bumatova A., 2020: 12] (see picture 2):



Picture 2: Linguistic and extralinguistic non-equivalencies.

In an effort to overcome the challenges present in modern translation studies, Cook G. introduced the term “*cognitive transformations*” into the discipline, pointing to the existence of

logical and mental patterns and schemas that determine discourse or text structure and identify the cognitive shifts that occur within them [Safarov Sh., 2019: 76].

The current state of translation theory and practice shows that, as before, translation practice continues to outpace theory. This is due to the fact that under the conditions of contemporary social life, international and intercultural relations are expanding steadily, and accordingly, the significance of intercultural communication is increasing.

In translation theory, the issues of equivalence and non-equivalence have always remained central. From the second half of the twentieth century onward, this problem also began to be addressed in the works of English scholars. The British scholar Theodore Savory wrote in his book that “another problem arises in translation because of unbridgeable gaps between languages, since a word that is familiar in one language may have no equivalent in another” [T. Savory, 1957: 14]. In his view, the causes of certain types of non-equivalence lie in the specific ways of life of different peoples and in the distinctive development of the cultural and socio-economic life of various societies and language communities.

In translation studies, the term “**equivalence**” is generally accepted as the most frequently used and widely recognized concept. In A. Ivanov’s research, issues related to the terminological definition of this phenomenon and concept are examined in greater detail. In this regard, the scholar states: “When we understand translation as the replacement of textual material in one language with equivalent textual material in another language, we imply not a simple correspondence between two texts in different languages intended for their respective language communities, but a functional similarity” [A. Ivanov, 2006: 10]. Such conclusions may also be multivariate. In this context, problem-solving requires moving away from rigid templates.

The existence of specific regularities in relations between two languages, and the presence of similarities between them, does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that the same translation methods must always be applied. The decisive role is always played by context and the concrete situation. As for the translation of literary texts, since it is an art, it does not allow for standard solutions but rather relies on cognitive principles. Correctly performing such a task ensures the achievement of the main goal, namely, that the content and stylistic coloring of the text in a given situation correspond to expectations.

At present, the following features are coming to the fore in the application of cognitive principles in the translation process [Safarov Sh., 2019: 90]:

- a) the existence of cognitive stages in understanding meaning and re-expressing it;
- b) the importance of retaining information in memory;
- c) the dynamic nature of the process, ensured by the unity of linguistic and extralinguistic elements;
- d) the non-linear course of the process, which does not submit to the uniform progression of the text;
- e) the activation of automatic and deliberate, controlled and uncontrolled actions – translation selects information sources generated by both involuntary and controlled actions;
- f) the activity of problem-solving and decision-making actions based on specific strategies of the process.

In brief, the above considerations lead to the conclusion that in modern translation studies, it has become an urgent task to develop the competence of the translator as a professional who is capable of approaching the translation process from a cognitive perspective, taking into account the linguocultural aspects of discourse, and skillfully applying various models, procedures, and strategies of translation. The cognitive nature of the translation process, in turn, necessitates an anthropocentric approach.

As a conclusion we can say that achieving intercultural mutual understanding ultimately comes down to attaining adequacy in translation, a process that requires passing through a series of complex stages. To solve the problem of achieving translation adequacy, an effective methodological basis is required – namely, a broad interdisciplinary *linguocultural approach* that takes into account the complex interrelations between language and culture. It is well known that English and Uzbek, which genetically belong to different language families, first and foremost require systematic contrastive analysis. While the issue of achieving equivalence and adequacy in translation still remains open to discussion, and scholars continue to test various forms and models for analyzing the mental operations performed by translators, the application of logical transformations such as **converse interpretation** in translation practice further enhances the possibility of pragmatically accurate interpretation of meaning, which constitutes the most essential aspect of translation.

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