

# Identifying Text Message through Different Types of Translation

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**Abstract**—Main idea, concept, message are practically terms denoting the same phenomenon. To give a definition to a text message is no less hard than to formulate the message. Still, stylistic text analysis presupposes detection of text elements that contribute to message formation and are marked from this point of view; the understanding of the message depends on many factors, including extra-linguistic variables: historical and cultural background as well as readers' personality characteristics such as the habit and ability to read, their educational and social status, age and gender. The more pronounced then is the necessity of adequate message formulation. The procedure of literary text translation into other verbal as well as in non-verbal languages helps clearly reveal the message. Several stages of the procedure were worked out in the study to train future teachers in reading and analyzing the text.

**Index Terms**—Concept, main idea, message formation, translation vs. retelling, translation into non-verbal languages, translation from non-verbal languages.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Literary text is a difficult and complicated issue for the analysis. First of all, the word “text” itself still has a number of interpretations. In present study the understanding of the text as a unit of language that has its meaning and form is accepted. Since a literary text contains its own artistic world [1]-[4], it shares with the real world its characteristics that philosophy describes in terms of categories [5]. Such categories as time, place, continuum, completeness, presupposition and modality are regarded as a part of text semantic structure. Some categories belong only to the text, e.g. categories of information, polyphony, retrospection, prospection. Formal elements of text structure are represented by means of exact markers: title/ending (space before another story) in the story or book covers. All the elements of the text create its message, although some of them are strongly marked in the perspective of message formation. The translation of the text into other languages, including non-verbal ones, could reveal both the stability of the message and variability of the text elements that form it.

In Achva Academic College of Education Text Analysis course presupposes the analysis only of written text, short stories and poems. Oral speech is analyzed in the course on Discourse Analysis; discourse is understood as a unit of speech that has its own means of organization, less formal in the perspective of its form. During Discourse Analysis course, the compulsory course for English Department

students at Achva Academic College of Education, the students first of all learn about the background differences that contribute to the case of misunderstanding: gender, generation, ethnic and cultural differences as well as present-moment factors such as light and sound effects, clothes, time and place.

For the convenience of teaching text and discourse analyses are taught as special subjects; text analysis class deals with written literary text analysis and discourse analysis class - with spontaneous oral speech samples. This kind of discourse subdivision seems to be logically approved as *literary texts* are organized and constructed in a way and by means of relevant for the message production elements. Here we can speak about conscious choice of marked/non-marked elements in the perspective of message production. Of course, the reader as the second participant of the act of communication decodes the information according to his/her background knowledge, and the strategies of adequate decoding are actually what the course in Text Analysis is aimed to teach. Literary texts where spontaneous speech is imitated are good samples of analysis preparing the student for further oral discourse analysis; they may be polyphonic and then the reader has to single out thematic or topical chains and to establish relations between them, defining the message as the ultimate result of text decoding.

In both courses the analysis is based on the message/unit topic framework identification.

Another course was worked out then – the course on text transformation in its translation into semi-verbal and non-verbal languages. The main thing here is to understand that in the case of translation we as readers are dependent on the translator and their text decoding. This is the reason why there are so many translations of the same poems and pieces of prose. as well as stage and movie productions of the same play. It is even harder to discover the message in translations into semi-verbal languages (stage performance, movies, operas) and non-verbal languages (ballet, silent movies, cartoons - the pieces that at least have visual and sound means of expression and convey both factual and emotional information, while music and painting that are represented only by sound or by visuality and as such are on a very high level of abstraction and convey mainly emotional information.

The aim of this study is to find out whether the translation of the text into other languages, including non-verbal ones, could reveal both the stability of the message and variability of the text elements that form it. The objectives of the study were to work out the procedure of translation teaching, the stages of its progress as well as working out the criteria of the comparison of the original text and its translations.

## II. TEXT AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Cultural factor becomes highly important when nature-related texts are analyzed. Thus, the students of Text Analysis class are supposed to analyze *Symphony in Yellow* by Oscar Wilde. For European and North American readers even without reading it may be clear that yellow in nature is connected with the fall and a special state of mood. For Israeli students it's not relevant as a yellow season doesn't exist there. So it requires additional explanation since culturally accepted connotation of the season wouldn't be taken into account when the text is interpreted; even more, one of the students wrote in the paper: "You said it was Fall or Spring, so it has some meaning". Israeli climate doesn't make people feel the difference, so it may be taught but not felt.

Another factor – historical background – is also of great importance when literary texts are analyzed; thus the majority of students when asked how they could define the genre of *Gulliver's Travels* by Swift defined it as a fairy tale. Not knowing the history of England and the situation Swift criticized they were unable to understand his satire. In this case the question arises: should the commentaries be regarded as a part of a text as only they make it possible to decode the original message. The answer to the question is highly complicated, is closely connected to the problem of original text – its translations relations and is not the matter of present study. It is discussed here in order just to show how complicated decoding is; the students of Text Analysis class become familiarized with it and start paying more attention to extra-linguistic factors.

Discourse Analysis course is aimed to work out and teach strategies of spontaneous speech analysis. The procedure includes singling out of meaningful units of discourse relevant in the perspective of message production and their adequate interpretation with regard to verbal and non-verbal factors. Very well understanding that samples of spontaneous speech are hard to record, movies and TV programs are chosen as the material for the analysis. The interviews taken on the spot are considered to be the closest to spontaneous, unprepared discourse samples (although in any case the interviewed are aware of the camera).

Units of discourse are singled out by means of objective criteria: one theme, the same number of participants, switches in time and place, in modality and side effects. Switches in theme may occur naturally and verbally, as a result of co-themes and associative themes, and may develop under the influence of extra-linguistic factors. In this case it is important to define the initial theme and the ones that develop further, to establish their relations.

At the same time within one discourse unit there may be a number of personal themes manifesting different personal theme interpretations and resulting from different personal backgrounds. Then there are cases when we deal with

One theme – one interpretation

One theme – a number of interpretations

or rather cases of one or different codes of communication. The information about a number of interpretations is received through the analysis of "initial statement – response" pairs: responses could be defined as adequate/non-adequate. The reasons of non-adequate responses are very often those of different backgrounds of

participants, their false interpretation of verbal remarks and intonation as well as non-verbal elements of discourse: face expression, body language, gestures, even clothes.

Very often the students ask how clothes could participate in discourse development and its adequate decoding. The explanation is a very simple one: an inappropriately dressed person, feeling and knowing it, would include his/her irritation into the act of communication; in such a case clothes would contribute to the choice of vocabulary, intonation, gestures, would be responsible at least of the mode of communication. A good example is the movie "My Fair Lady": badly dressed Eliza tries to protect herself against the respectable society and thus is very rude, yells every now and then. Being well-dressed she immediately changes the manner of speech. Another example analyzed in Discourse Analysis class is a discourse unit from *Gone With the Wind* movie: Scarlett O'Hara, planning to borrow the money she desperately needs from Rhett Butler, knows he will get irritated with her shabby clothes and being terribly poor and miserable still sews a new dress from her late mother's portiers. When she meets Rhett and starts talking to him, she conducts the conversation the way she planned it to be; the moment Rhett sees her spoiled by hard work hands the conversation changes its mood – initially it was flirt and pity for Rhett on Scarlet's side and admiration on Rhett's, after the switch it's ashamed and business-like on Scarlett's side and teasing, ridiculing and suspecting on Rhett's side.

"Speaking different languages" within one theme is a well-known case: different background knowledge of the participants lead them to misinterpretation and each one is inadequate from the point of view of the others. The situation may have both humorous and tragic effect and thus is very often used in comedies and tragedies. In Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* the whole piece of discourse thematically connected to a sleeping remedy for Juliet is out of Romeo's discourse; he doesn't know that what he sees is sleep, not death. He misinterprets her state and commits suicide.

The movie *Roman Holidays*, on the contrary, is a comedy and is analyzed from the point of view of "one theme – different personal codes". In the movie a princess wants to see the life of common people and escapes from the palace. Before that she was given sleeping pills. She finds herself in the streets of Rome alone and gradually falling asleep. On the other hand, a young American reporter is coming back from his friends and meets the young lady in the street. Since she is sleepy and produces an impression of a drunken woman he doesn't know what to do with her and takes her to his apartment, a cheap and simply furnished room. This where the piece of the movie regarded as a discourse unit for the analysis starts. The first thing the lady asks is about the room: "Is it an elevator?" Never in her life has she seen such a small room. For the reporter it's just an inadequate phrase of a tipsy lady. He wants her just to have a rest in his room and she whispers, coming close to him: "Undress me". In her language it's a natural thing – never in her life has she undressed herself. For the reporter it's another hint: he should have thought twice before taking the lady to his place. When the gentleman is going to leave for a cup of coffee the lady says: "You have my permission to leave". Being a princess she has never met people leaving without

her permission; not knowing it the reporter is greatly surprised.

In the above example the theme can be defined as “night sleep for sleepy and drunk” as the reporter is really a bit tipsy. But the languages the two people speak are different: the language of the princess is adequate to her personal background, for palaces and royal family life and inadequate within the scenery of a shabby rented room. The language of the reporter is adequate for a simple street girl and inadequate for a princess. Thus the unit of discourse presents “one theme – two languages” situation and could be adequately interpreted only in terms of different backgrounds.

Having seen this unit only the students decoded it in terms of a drunk and thus inadequately behaving lady; having gotten additional information – seen the previous part of the movie – they changed their opinion.

The conclusion is: one should watch the whole movie to understand the phrase. One should live the whole life to understand another person. In the case of movies or TV programs analysis the factor of the audience should also be taken into account. The audience participates in the act of communication and seems to be regarded as communication participants; in other words, a certain unit of discourse contains on-screen and opposite-screen participants and presents a number of personal codes.

To sum the information up it would be possible to say that non-verbal elements of discourse very often are of vital importance in the process of information decoding and message formulation.

In any multicultural society communication presupposes special accuracy and respect to other cultures traditions. Thus communicating with my students I very often found myself “cornered” – standing close to the wall with no further possibility for escape. The explanation is very simple: being of Russian background I cannot conduct business communication, being too close to the partner. In Israeli tradition it's accepted to be very close and even to touch one partner's shoulder. It takes time to understand that one shouldn't get insulted or surprised; one should only learn about the people he/she communicates with.

“Speaking different languages” within one theme is a well-known case: different presuppositions (background knowledge) of the participants lead them to misinterpretation and each one is inadequate from the point of view of the others. The situation may have both humorous and tragic effect and thus is very often used in comedies and tragedies. In the course of teaching it was discovered that some new instruments of the analysis would be desirable; in this perspective a Translation course was developed; the full name of the course is “Text Transformations in its Translations into other Verbal, Semi-Verbal and Non-Verbal Languages”. It seems that text transformations in its translation may present a better understanding of the message.

### III. TEXT TRANSFORMATION CARMEN

In this study the point of view on text categories as basic elements of text semantic structure is accepted. In the field of text translation the categories of information and

modality are of special relevance. Information includes three types of information: factual, sub-textual and conceptual. Conceptual information deals with text concept or message and could be regarded as a summarizing type of information. Modality then participates in its production as well. Thus conceptual information, final message-forming information, could be presented as a summary of factual and sub-textual information and modality. In each type of a translation the weight of each part would be different – sometimes the category of information would be completely substituted by modality.

The series of text transformations could be seen when the story “Carmen” by Prosper Merimee is analyzed. Originally the story was written in French [6] and then translated into English [7]. A French composer, George Bizet, used the libretto written by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halevi [8] and based on Merimee's story and wrote an opera with the same title. The majority of the students in the groups I teach have never read the story and seen and heard the complete opera, but the music is familiar to them as it is very popular [9]. So their image of the text mainly presents an image of a very romantic, beautiful girl who somehow suffered because of the cruelty of the society/somebody from the society. The music, of course, contributes to this romantic image. When the students read who in reality Carmen was they are surprised and disappointed – it's hard for them to accept the image of a young, poor and aggressive Gypsy girl who was working at the tobacco factory and killed her friend for some trifle.

Nevertheless, the transformations of the text didn't stop at this stage. A Russian composer Rodion Shadrin transcribed the music by Bizet and created a ballet; it was his present to his wife, an outstanding ballet dancer Maya Plisetskaya; she became the first Carmen on the ballet stage [10]. What has happened to the text? In opera “Carmen” we can hear not only the theme of Carmen, but also a theme of Jose, a young corporal whom she seduced and who betrayed his family, his villagers, his duty and escaped together with Carmen. He kills Carmen not this much out of jealousy; he kills her because she destroyed all his life and betrayed him.

In the ballet not all the opera themes are transcribed. The theme of Jose is mainly represented as his regret and sorrow but as passion and jealousy. The further transformation of the text takes place when the music is abridged and adjusted to ice dance. Rather many ice dancers chose it for their performances [11]. And the highest case of abstraction related to Carmen seems to be ballet Carmen performed by a single ballet dancer, a man, A famous and outstanding Michael Barishnikov [12]. On an ice it was performed by a single male ice dancer Plushenko [13].

So, what do all the transformations reveal? They reveal the message that could be debated in the original text: the message of personal freedom and independence, the right for a personal choice. There could be no conformism in love. In the story one can discover themes of responsibility, of destruction of somebody's life under just a capricious mood. The opera still contains the theme, but the music of charming Carmen wins. In the ballet only the topic of passion and jealousy remains. This is the message of the ballet and this is presented by sport performance, ice dance.

#### IV. THE PROCEDURE OF ORIGINAL TEXT/TRANSLATION ANALYSIS. APPROACHES TO TRANSLATION

In the course on text transformation many issues of the above presented series are analyzed. Some of them will illustrate the following: the stages in teaching text translation.

The first stage is the translation within one and the same language. It means text transformation in its shortened and simplified versions. Many students confess that they know *Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Treasure Island* or *Alice in Wonderland* only due to their abridged versions, when they read the books when they were kids or read them to their kids. So, the first thing that could be done at this stage is the comparison between the book and its "translated" versions and the second assignment would be to do this kind of "translation". The analysis shows that the factual information is presented, but all the original shades of meaning as well as the message are lost. The attempts to keep them in shortened versions failed. It should be mentioned, that *Alice in Wonderland* [14], [15] was chosen for the analysis.

The second stage includes lessons on morphological classification of languages and some assignments on English/Hebrew translation of some sentences and paragraphs. Then the students analyze Hebrew version of *Alice in Wonderland* [16]. The translation happens to be rather poor, and the poems are not translated at all. Then it would be interesting to try and translate one part of a chapter (usually the part with "Father William" poem is chosen as it presents a great challenge.

Here it would be appropriate to mention different approaches to translation. In the course of the research seven translations of *Alice in Wonderland* into Russian were analyzed. One of them, an academic one done by Demurova [17], is considered to be the best; it presents a really very precise translation with highly witty and resourceful puns substitutions and humorous verse translation, but also detailed and reliable comments. In some versions [18] the verse is translated but without comments it is humorous but loses the element of satire. And the most possible free version of Alice's translation is actually retelling. This what the translator, Boris Zahoder [19], chooses as his way and informs a reader about it. Then in relation to "Father William" he chooses a didactic and boring verse well-known to Russian young readers and changes it due to original Father William presented in Alice. Since in retelling the readers' realities exist in the text, no comments are necessary.

The students of Translation course translate their portion of Alice having chosen one of the principles; some of them chose a very well known to Israeli kids "Johnatan a'katan" nursery rhyme.

The next stage is a translation into a non-verbal language. Since the message of a poetic text is an image, a piece of poetry was chosen for the translation into painting. It was *The Ballad of the Reading Gaoil* by Oscar Wilde [20]:

And all men kill the thing they love,  
By all let this be heard,  
Some do it with a bitter look,  
Some with a flattering word,

The coward does it with a kiss,  
The brave man with a sword!

The pictures done by different groups of students show that the majority tried to narrate by means of pastels; only very few students tried and managed to paint emotional symbols of passion and suffering.

The factual interpretation done by Shiran, the 4<sup>th</sup> year student (Fig. 1).

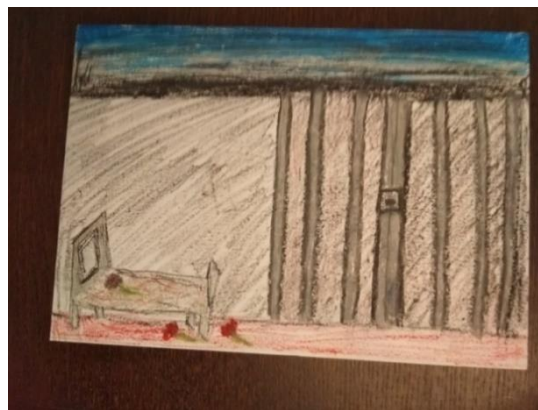


Fig. 1. Visual text interpretation by Shiran.

And the emotional one done by Liav, the 3<sup>rd</sup> year student:



Fig. 2. Visual text interpretation by Liav.

The most interesting stage of examining the message in translation is the translation of non-verbal texts into verbal languages. One of the assignments was the translation of the cartoon Hedgehog in the Fog [21]. In the cartoon there practically no words, only music and action; the hedgehog gets lost in the fog and sees a frightening and mysterious world around him. Simple things look and sound enigmatic – leaves, caterpillars, a dog. Many students tried to retell the story, but some managed to translate it. Here are three possible "translations":

##### A. Retelling

The hedgehog got lost in the fog (Abeer Tury, 2<sup>nd</sup> year student)

*It met a kind dog in the way; the dog brought its sack back to it. The hedgehog heard a sound of whisper, he turned around and fell in the river. When he was swimming in the river, it saw a white horse and stars behind, it was like a dream for it. Suddenly, a fish came and saved it from drowning in the river; the fish took it to the surface and leave it there. The hedgehog sat down lonely, terrified and sorrowful on a tree trunk near to fire. Then the bear came running and asked the hedgehog, where have you been? It's*

like the bear was looking and calling for him so long but it couldn't find the hedgehog. The bear asked its best friend to eat the raspberry; the hedgehog gave it to him because deep in its heart thinks that the best thing happen is that they got back together again. It is like that would sacrifice everything even with the most precious thing "raspberry" for the sake of its friend and for the sake that they would stay together forever.

#### B. Retelling with Message Formulation

Hedgehog in the fog (Vivian Aboudi Nagar, Sandra Deeb Batshon, Jamila Abu Hamad, retraining course)

When he went into the fog he discovered many strange and scary sounds and creatures.

The hedgehog at first didn't see the creatures but when he started to see he was so scared.

The fog was thick so he barely saw the creatures but while he was walking he encountered in them.

Suddenly he encountered with a big tree and while he was discovering the tree he lost his bag.

He started to look for his bag and he saw a dog he was so scared but the dog helped him and brought the hedgehog his bag.

The hedgehog continued in his way to his friend, when he finally arrived to his friend he felt safe.

They drank tea together and count the stars but he was still curious about all the things he saw.

#### C. The Message

It feels comfortable and safe to be with a friend but when you look outside and try to face the world by yourself you suddenly find out many things that you didn't know.

It may scary you and it may makes you curious about the things you see and face for the first time in your life.

And Translation (done by Yalon Hemo, 2<sup>nd</sup> year student)

The fog is getting stronger. I hear voices. I see figures. I see this half-torn tree up ahead. Maybe I'll stay here for a while, I think. I go inside, but it's too dark. I'd rather stay outside with the uncertainty of what's to come than in the darkness where I'd never be able to see what's to come. And I feel lighter now. But it is an uneasy lightness. How can I feel any comfort in this fog? My bag. Where is my raspberry bag? It can't happen. It just can't. No. No no no no. I need it. I need it! What will I do without the bag? It's not here, and it's not there. It's not inside the tree and not around it. I've looked everywhere it can't have just vanished! All this fear, this anguish I'm feeling right now. It doesn't matter if I don't have the bag with me. Where is it where is it where is it?

Out of all the attempts to translate *The Kid* by Chaplin [22] the following one was chosen:

*The Kid*. Translated by Sharon Harari

I was abandoned by my desperate mother, when my adopted father had found me. He didn't have much money, he was poor, but he was very generous, and kind and he felt sorry for me and he took me into his life. Although he didn't have much experience of raising a child, he found creative ways to feed me and looked after my needs.

I remember Sunday mornings making pancakes with almost nothing, but we always felt content and satisfied.

Growing up was never boring. I especially liked helping my dad fixing other people's windows. He was so busy working all day! He was a hard worker and it seemed that he couldn't manage without me. I didn't understand why a police officer was always running after us. I believe he really loved my father's work. But it all changed when a pretty woman came into our step door. She was beautiful, rich and kind. I remember she gave me a toy and an apple. I was so hungry, and I ate it all.

One day, I got very sick and the bad people came and wanted to take me away from my dad. After a long fighting, my father didn't give up and he saved me, and we spent one cold night in a shelter, but it was warm because we were together.

Suddenly, I found myself in a police station and the kind woman was staring at me. She hugged me and cried. I didn't understand why, and I couldn't stop thinking about my father. Life was very different with the lady. She took me to a big, clean house and surprisingly, there was a knocking on the door and my dad was standing there. I was so happy to be reunited with my father.

The examples show how the message formulated on the basis of pure modality verbally could be formed only on the basis of an artistic piece of literature.

#### V. CONCLUSION

The study proved the hypothesis that text transformation into non-verbal languages really makes it possible to discover a reliable message as it remains in all its versions simply formed by various artistic means.

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declares no conflict of interest.

#### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

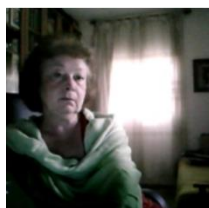
I am the only author of the article based on my own research.

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