"A Sensible Image of the Infinite"*: Intersemiotic Translation of Russian Classics for Foreign Audiences

Olga Leontovich

Volgograd State Socio-Pedagogical University
27 Lenin Prospect, Volgograd, 400066, Russia

Tianjin Foreign Studies University
No. 117, Machang Road, Hexi Disctrict, Tianjin, China

Abstract

The article is a continuation of the author's cycle of works devoted to foreign cinematographic and stage adaptations of Russian classical literature for foreign audiences. The research material includes 17 American, European, Chinese, Indian, Japanese fiction films and TV series, one Broadway musical and 9 Russian films and TV series used for comparison. The paper analyses different theoretical approaches to intersemiotic translation, 'de-centering of language' as a modern tendency and intersemiotic translation of literary works in the context of intercultural communication. Key decisions about the interpretation of original texts are made by directors and their teams guided by at least three goals: commercial, creative and ideological. Intersemiotic translation makes use of such strategies as foreignization, domestication and universalization. The resignifying of a literary text by means of the cinematographic semiotic system is connected with such transformations as: a) reduction — omission of parts of the original; b) extension — addition, filling in the blanks, and signifying the unsaid; c) reinterpretation — modification or remodeling of the original in accordance with the director's creative ideas. A challenge and at the same time one of the key points of intersemiotic translation is a difficult choice between the loyalty to the original, comprehensibility for the target audience and freedom of creativity. The research shows that transformations and use of different translation strategies can have both positive and negative consequences. Positive outcomes include: visualization and comprehension of the Russian cultural space; adaptation of Russian experiences for the target culture; retranslation of universal values expressed by the original. Negative consequences result in: the distortion of the original due to insufficient cultural literacy; purposeful deformation of cultural meanings for ideological reasons; erroneous interpretation of the literary text; deformation of the original macro-meaning; preservation of the plot, but loss of the in-depth meaning of the original text. Any degree of creative freedom still requires intercultural competence and a careful choice of semiotic signs aimed at expressing the key ideas of the original.

Keywords: *intersemiotic translation, screen adaptation, Russian classical literature, domestication, foreignization, universalization, macromeaning of the original, intercultural communication*

* A reference to George Bancroft's quotation: "Beauty is but the sensible image of the Infinite. Like truth and justice it lives within us; like virtue and the moral law it is a companion of the soul".

«Чувственный образ бесконечности»: интерсемиотический перевод русской классики для зарубежной аудитории

О.А. Леонтович

Волгоградский государственный социально-педагогический университет
проспект Ленина, 27, Волгоград, 400066, Россия

Тяньцзиньский университет иностранных языков
ул. Мачандао, 117, район Хэси, г. Тяньцзинь, Китай

Аннотация

Статья продолжает цикл авторских публикаций, посвященных зарубежным экранизациям и постановкам русской классики. В статье анализируются различные теоретические подходы к проблемам интерсемиотического перевода, тенденция к «децентрализации языка» как коммуникативного средства, а также интерсемиотический перевод литературных произведений в контексте межкультурного общения. Материал исследования включает 17 американских, европейских, китайских, индийских, японских художественных фильмов и телесериалов, один бродвейский мюзикл, а также 9 российских экранизаций, используемых для сравнения. Показано, что режиссеры принимают ключевые решения относительно интерпретации оригинала, руководствуясь тремя целями: коммерческой, творческой и идеологической. В качестве основных стратегий интерсемиотический перевод использует доместикацию, форенизацию и универсализацию. Выявлено, что переозначивание литературного текста на язык кино связано со следующими трансформациями: 1) редукция, т.е. пропуски частей произведения; 2) расширение — восполнение пробелов, внесение дополнений и означивание недосказанного; 3) реинтерпретация — переделка оригинала в соответствии с творческим замыслом режиссера и творческой группы. Сложность интерсемиотического перевода обусловлена необходимостью сделать выбор между верностью оригиналу, понятностью текста для целевой аудитории и свободой творчества. Установлено, что использование трансформаций может иметь как положительные, так и отрицательные последствия для межкультурной коммуникации. Положительными являются: 1) визуализация и осмысление чужого культурного пространства с учетом фоновых знаний аудитории; 2) выражение позитивного отношения к культуре-источнику; 3) адаптация инокультурных реалий и ценностей к целевой культуре, способствующая восприятию глубинных смыслов исходного произведения. Отрицательные последствия включают: 1) искажение инокультурной реальности из-за недостатка культурной грамотности; 2) целенаправленную деформацию исходных культурных смыслов в идеологических целях; 3) ошибочную интерпретацию ценностного и нравственного содержания исходного произведения; 4) искажение авторского замысла; сохранение внешней формы вне связи с глубинными смыслами оригинала.

Ключевые слова: *интерсемиотический перевод, экранизация, русская классическая литература, доместикация, форенизация, универсализация*

1. BACKGROUND, METHODOLOGY AND KEY PRINCIPLES

Intersemiotic translation, or transmutation, the notion introduced by Roman Jacobson [1959], is used to denote a specific type of semiosis — interpretation of verbal signs by means of nonverbal ones. This article is a continuation of a cycle of works

published over a period of more than ten years and devoted to foreign cinematographic and stage adaptations of Russian classical literary works for foreign audiences (Леонтович 2008; 2017; Leontovich 2011; 2015; 2018). Originally, the study was focused on European and American films and later moved on to include Chinese, Japanese and Indian adaptations.

Although there are hundreds of films and stage performances based on Russian classics all over the world, the interest for Russian literature does not seem to fade. We have counted at least 33 foreign adaptations of *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy, 25 of *Crime and Punishment*, 16 of *Brothers Karamazov* and 15 of *The Idiot* by Dostoyevsky. Directors undertake new attempts to produce their own adaptations, trying to get new insights into Russian literature and suggest innovative interpretations of its in-depth meanings.

Besides, due to the development of new technologies, the role of visual and audial perception is steadily growing. Many people prefer to watch and listen rather than read. This calls for the emergence of new screened and stage adaptations. Therefore, we believe it is necessary to continue the study of intersemiotic translation, its regularities and outcomes, the process and results of transferring meanings from one semiotic system into another. We agree with Aguiar and Queiroz who write: **"**Despite its theoretic relevance, and in spite of the frequency in which it is practiced, the phenomenon remains virtually unexplored on general explanatory levels (conceptual modeling), as well as from the point of view of the logic of the semiotic processes involved in it" (Aguiar & Queiroz 2010).

The *aim* of this paper is to discuss the key theoretical approaches to intersemiotic translation and analyse the mechanisms of meaning transformation from an intercultural perspective. The *research material* includes 17 American, European, Chinese, Indian, Japanese and 9 Russian fiction films and TV series — screen adaptations of Russian classical literature (total running time approx. 119 hrs.), as well as the Broadway musical *Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812* based on Leo Tolstoy's "War and Peace".

Proceeding from the ideas of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992; Fairclough & Wodak 1997), we believe that the research should not only disclose the mechanisms of intersemiotic translation but show its impact on social reality. We also make emphasis on symbolic interactionism (Mead 1934; Blumer 1969; Hall 2007), social constructionism (Cooley, 1998; Lock & Strong, 2010) and social semiotics, the proponents of which are interested in researching the aspects of discourse which go beyond language, to "socially situated sign processes" (Halliday 1978; Hodge & Kress, 1988; qtd. from Iedema 2003).

2. THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO INTERSEMIOTIC TRANSLATION

The notion of intersemiotic translation stems from Roman Jacobson's seminal work "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation" (1959) where he distinguished: 1) intralinguistic translation as the rewording of a verbally expressed content with the help of the signs of the same language; 2) interlinguistic translation done between different languages; 3) intersemiotic translation as the interpretation of verbal signs with the help

of non-verbal ones. Nowadays, intersemiotic translation is viewed in a broader sense — as any change from one semiotic system to another.

The types of intersemiotic translation (to name just a few) include:

♦ Verbal to visual translation: book illustrations; screen adaptations of literary works; novel-to-comic adaptation; animation; sign language; subtitling; etc.

♦ Visual to verbal translation: ekphrasis — verbal description of a visual work of art; radio reporting; sports commentary; etc.

♦ Translation of verbal forms into music and dance: ballet performances and operas based on famous literary works; verbal explanations of music pieces by musicologists; etc.

In the attempt to reveal the mechanisms of intersemiotic translation, scholars have coined numerous terms to explain the phenomenon: 'transmutation' (Jacobson 1959), 'transposition' (Jacobson 1959; Dusi 2010), 'adaptation' (Eco 2003), 'transformation' (Calabrese 2000), 'interpretation' (Petrilli 2003), 'semiotranslation' (Gorlée 2004), 'tradaptation' (translation + adaptation), 'multi-dimensional translation' (Gottlieb 2007), etc.

An overview of different approaches to intersemiotic translation provided by Nicola Dusi shows a wide spectrum of opinions about its nature. For Eco, Dusi writes, every translation is primarily a form of interpretation. Therefore, a film based on a written text is not a mere "translation", but more precisely, an "adaptation", as the director and the screenwriter have to "make certain choices, decide what to *reveal* and how to reveal it, open up the implications of a story told through physically different means" (Dusi 2010).

On the other hand, Fabbri (2000) following in the footsteps of Lotman, believes that "novelistic writing can be translated into a film for the television or cinema"; this kind of translation, he argues, is an *intersensitive* process. For example, an emotion can be expressed by means of music, color, light, or a combination of different signs (qtd. from Dusi 2010).

Mid-way between Eco and Fabbri, Dusi writes, is Calabrese (2000) who views translation not only as interpretation, but above all as *transference* of the meaning of one text into another, with inevitable *transformations*. From this perspective, translation is seen not as "something closed and permanent", but rather as a process aimed at maintaining, eliminating, transforming, or reformulating certain meanings of the original text. As a result, "the target text can take on the dignity of the source text, and add to it its own uniqueness, as well" (Calabrese; qtd. from Dusi 2010).

Instead of adaptation, Dusi suggests the term 'transposition', which, from his point of view, expresses the idea more accurately. Transposing, he argues, means taking into account "the whole style of the source text". The challenge, then, is to *translate the style* of the novel into a film, where "style" denotes "the combination of the text's expression form and content form, logically 'molded' by the enunciative strategies" (Dusi 2010).

Another term that is used to conceptualize intersemiotic translation is 'resemiotisation' dealing with the way in which "meaning shifts from context to context, from practice to practice, or from one stage of a practice to the next" (Iedema 2003: 41) and

the materiality of expression "serves to realize the social, cultural and historical structures, investments and circumstances of our time" (Ibid: 50). Jewitt applies this term to the way in which meanings are transformed from one semiotic system to another in the course of social processes (Jewitt 2014: 467).

'Resemiotisation' is closely connected with the notion of 'multimodality' used in reference to the textual, aural, linguistic, spatial and visual communication resources (or modes) (Murray) and their combination in media. Today's digital environment where semiotic resources (e.g. language, image and sound) "coexist, cooperate, and get translated" (Kourdis 2015: 311) on a regular basis, is marked by the proliferation of different forms of multimodal texts (O'Halloran et al. 2016: 199).

The variety of approaches towards the essence of intersemiotic translation and debates around its definition indicate that there are still more questions than answers concerning its nature and mechanisms of transferring meanings from one semiotic system to another. The problems of intersemiotic translation are nowadays researched in different countries (Italy, Brazil, Poland, Estonia, etc.). As examples, it is possible to name conferences in Poland ("Intersemiotic translation", Lodz, 25—27 September 2013; "Text-Image-Music" Crossing the Borders Conference, Krakow, 2018), the international special interest group "Intersemiotic Translation and Cultural Literacy", as well as numerous publications (Aguiar & Queiroz 2010; Dusi 2010; E-Chou Wu, 2014; Eco, 2003; Fabbri, 2000; Gorlée 2004, 2008; Iedema 2003; Jeha; Petrilli 2003; Torop 2003; etc.).

3. 'DE-CENTERING OF LANGUAGE' AS A MODERN TENDENCY

Intersemiotic translation is based on the interplay between verbal and nonverbal forms of perception and expression. Since ancient times, sight had been valued as the noblest of all human senses and the most reliable source of knowledge (Wiegel 2010: 6). "The ocularcentrism of the ancient Greeks" accounted for the priority of sight in a hierarchy of the senses that defined the attitude towards it in Western societies "in the many centuries to come" (Ibid: 8).

Scholars indicate that the invention of writing and the printing press marked the transition of humans from orality to literacy (Ong 2002). De Kerckhove views writing as "a revolution of sensory relationships pertaining to the major modes of transmitting and exchanging information on a personal and a social level" (1980: 24; qtd. from Wiegel 2010: 31). This shift from orality to literacy is described as a "bombshell in human history", a mental and cognitive revolution that profoundly changed the human mind (Innis 1951; McLuhan 1962; Havelock 1976; Ong 1982; Roepke 2011). Scholars write about new modes of information processing caused by the ability to read and write and major changes it caused in human communication.

Today, however, we are observing a reverse process — the computer generation go back to children's discourse mainly based on iconic, visual perception. According to Iedema (2003: 33), the influence of digital communication, the globalization of trade, commerce and culture produce changes in our 'semiotic landscape,' the main of which are "the de-centring of language as favoured meaning making" and the "blurring of the traditional boundaries between and roles allocated to language, image, page layout, document design, and so on." He indicates that today's "semiotic landscape is

becoming more and more populated with complex social and cultural discourse practices" (Ibid). If during the "literate age" text was seen as a primary source of communication, nowadays, due to the rapid development of digital technologies, the image is used more and more frequently (Lutkewitte 2013). As Jay puts it, "vision, aided by new technologies, became the dominant sense in the modern world, even as it came to serve new masters" (Jay 1993: 45).

However, today's communication still cannot happen without language, even though "the hegemony of the written word <...> has been challenged from different directions (from the call for papers for the MeCCSA Practice Network Annual Symposium 2019 "Shaping Knowledge: Encounters between Word and Image"). Wagner uses the term 'iconotext', which paves the way for investigating the convergence of visual and verbal texts (E-Chou Wu 2014).

Contemporary communication practices involve a sophisticated interplay of word, image, sound, touch and even smell. The positive effects of multimodality include almost unlimited technical opportunities for creative presentation of content and imagery; an overwhelming emotion produced by the interaction of language, music and visual images; the effect of presence in a 3D environment, etc. Intersemiotic translation opens up the borders of perception for people with disabilities. Audio descriptions enable "blind people to enjoy cinema just as sighted people do. It is a mixture of description, interpretation and conjecture which must quickly and concisely take into account the cumulative effect of the work done by all the other facets of the film" (Thompson). According to Gottlieb (2005) and Borshchevsky (2019), audio description is hyposemiotic translation, as it reduces polysemiotic nonverbal information to a monosemiotic text. Sign language, in its turn, uses the visual-manual modality to convey meaning for the deaf, hard of hearing and speech-impaired individuals. For example, the video of "Bohemian Rhapsody" interpreted in American Sign language for the deaf has gone viral on the Internet. People with dual-sensory loss (deaf-blind) communicate with the tactile finger-spelling signs or the POP (Print On Palm) method, by using the index finger to trace the letters on a palm or a finger braille, a modern Japanese way of signing with fingers (How to Communicate…). The Tactile Picture Books Project takes touch books to a new level thanks to the 3-D technologies (Ramachandran 2014). Exhibitions of tactile pictures give the blind and vision impaired people access to the world of art.

The proliferation of multimodality into different spheres of human communication gives rise to new research paradigms. Torop writes about the productivity of a semiotic approach in textology, especially in connection with culture, introducing the notion of "total translation" to denote the "co-existence of the verbal and the visual and non-coincidence of <...> the border between the verbal and iconic" (Torop, 2003, p. 280).

4. INTERSEMIOTIC TRANSLATION OF LITERARY WORKS AS A WINDOW TO ANOTHER CULTURE

Unlike monosemantic written text, film uses different types of semiotic signs (language, images and sounds). In case of our research, we are mainly interested in the way intersemiotic translation works in an intercultural context when a literary piece is interpreted for a foreign audience. In addition to the usual problems connected

with transference of signs from one semiotic system to another, the process is complicated by intercultural differences. The screen or stage adaptation of a literary work has to be adapted to the knowledge base, tastes and value system of the target audience.

The creation of a screened version of a literary work presupposes that part of the original text remains in the same (verbal) semiotic system and the remaining part is translated into the signs of other systems. In fact, we are dealing with the redistribution of meanings, which are further combined anew, thus forming the macromeaning of the whole. This process can be viewed as a two-step translation: 1) interlinguistic (as in most cases an adaptation is done on the bases of a translated text) and 2) intersemiotic (Leontovich 2015). When writing about film adaptations, Eco compares transmutation to the gestures of an orchestra conductor interpreting a score (Eco 2006: 302). The transference to a different semiotic system does not mean that verbal signs are no longer used, but their place in the system is changed, they become part of a complex network of connections between signs of different nature (Leontovich 2015).

According to Torop, translation is a multi-level process, which involves cultural, economic, and ideological activities. He believes that translators act at the frontiers of semiotic systems and cultures not as simple mediators, but generators of new semiotic systems for the description of foreign texts in order to increase the dialogic capability of a culture (Torop 2003; Aguiar & Queiroz 2010).

With this approach, the dialogical nature of meaning-making acquires a different dimension. Naremore remarks that the ambivalent nature of a screen adaptation can be viewed as a multi-level dialogue between the original and target text [Naremore 2000, 67]. Proceeding from this idea, Lhermitte writes about the necessity to develop aesthetics based on the dialectical exchange between literature and film, the relationship between which is complicated by the multiplicity of the semiotic systems they use (written and oral texts, music, action and images). The screening combines not only words (in their written and oral forms), but also acting, music, sound effects and moving images (Lhermitte).

By giving access to a text written in a foreign language, translation in its different forms opens the window to an unknown culture for the target audience. Key decisions about the interpretation of original texts are made by directors and their teams guided by at least three goals: commercial, creative and ideological.

The achievement of the first (commercial) goal presupposes the commodification of the screened or staged version of the original, i. e. its adaptation to the tastes, values and cultural preferences of the potential consumers. The commentaries of Indian spectators to the film *Kasba* (adaptation of Chekhov's story *In the Ravine*) say: *Very good movie for sleeping on, kept waiting something will happen, but nothing happens; Boring movie; Extremely boring.* Bollywood film narratives are based on traditional formulas, codes and conventions. They are sentimental, speak about people's sufferings and love, use beautiful dances and music. According to the film historian Randor Guy, *Panakkari*, the Tamil adaptation of Leo Tolstoy's "Anna Karenina" from 1953, failed at the box office "mainly because of its 'anti-sentimental' storyline".

The second (creative) goal is defined by the directors' perception of the original and the manipulations they use to convey their ideas to the audience. A director may

decide to bring the action of a film closer to the present, use the plot to embody contemporary problems and voice one's own opinions and concerns. The action of Dostoyevsky's "Crime and Punishment" and "Idiot" takes place in the 1860s. However, in *Elu Suttina Kote*, the Indian adaptation of "Crime and Punishment", it unfolds in the 1980s. The evens of the Indian *Idiot* (1992) occur in the 1990s, and the central characters drive big jeeps instead of horse-driven carriages. In the Japanese film *The Idiot* (1951) the action takes place in Japan after WWII; the main character Kinji Kameda (based on Prince Myshkin) returns home crashed by the war and captivity.

The third (ideological) goal is connected with the country's internal and external policy, relationship between countries, the political views of the film-makers and the audience. The fate of the Broadway musical *Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812* is an example of the contradiction that can occur between the director's creative goal and the political views of the audience. The musical was an adaptation of a 70-page segment from Leo Tolstoy's "War and Peace" that cost 14 million dollars. The show premiered in November 2016 and ended in a scandal when the black actor Okieriete Onaodowan appointed for the role of Pierre was replaced by the white actor Mandi Patinkin. The replacement gave rise to a Twitter campaign of angry protestors who saw it as racial discrimination. As a result, in September 2017, after running for less than one year, the show was closed.

Intersemiotic, as well as interlinguistic, translation makes use of such strategies as foreignization and domestication. All the nine Indian films analyzed in this study employ the strategy of *domestication*, using the original Russian plot, but placing the action in India. This can be illustrated by the three adaptation of the *White Nights* by Dostoyevsky: *Chhalia* (1960) is set in Delhi and Lahore, *Iyarkai* (2003) — in Rameswaram and *Ahista Ahista* (2007) — also in Delhi.

On the other hand, the cinematographers who use the strategy of *foreignization* want to be true to the original and imitate all the tiny details of Russian life. This route was taken by the Chinese film-makers of *The Dawns Here are Quiet* (2005), the TV series that enjoyed overwhelming success in China. The director Mao Weining wanted the environment to look absolutely true to Boris Vassilyev's book. For this purpose, a village was specially built on the bank of the Amur river near the Russian border, with 30 houses, a church, and a 'banya' (bathhouse). The screening did not start before the script was approved by the writer himself. The authenticity of the Russian landscapes in the TV series is really impressive.

The use of foreignization may sound as an attractive strategy allowing to show the exotic Russian world, but, on the other hand, it is a great challenge for the film-makers, as it is fraught with serious cultural mistakes. This was the case with the 1999 European-American adaptation of Pushkin's "Eugene Onegin", which contains numerous errors and misinterpretations.

In the context of our research, it is also expedient to speak of the strategy of *universalization* — demonstrating the universal value of a text, which transcends cultural borders. An example of universalization is the choice of a talented black actress Denée Benton who performed the part of Natasha in the above-mentioned Broadway musical

Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812 and brilliantly coped with the task. Her appointment for the role may be explained by the director's intention to show that "War and Peace" has long become part of the world culture rather than a Russian national phenomenon; in this context, the racial identity of the actress becomes irrelevant.

The resignifying of a literary text by means of the cinematographic semiotic system is connected with such transformations as: 1) reduction, i.e. omission of parts of the original; 2) extension — addition, filling in the blanks, and signifying the unsaid; 3) reinterpretation — modification or remodeling of the original in accordance with the director's creative ideas.

An example of *reduction* as a form of transformation is the absence of lengthy philosophical monologues in practically all the adaptations of "War and Peace". In this case it is a purely technical decision justified by the impossibility of their visual representation and the difficulty of their oral perception. However, in other cases particular episodes are eliminated from a film for different reasons: because they are incomprehensible or inappropriate for the target audience, do not match the image which the director is trying to mold, etc. For example, the Russian adaptation of Boris Vassilyev's novel *The Dawns Here are Quiet* about women fighting against the Nazis during WWII contains a scene in a 'banya' (bathhouse) where they appear naked. In the 1970s this was a very bold scene unusual for the Russian spectators, but Stanislav Rostotsky, the Russian director, insisted on it as he wanted to show that female bodies were created for love and childbirth, not for the war. However, Mao Weining, the director of the Chinese TV adaptation of the same book, thought it was inappropriate to show naked women to the Chinese audience and wanted the actresses to wear long chemises. But the Russian actresses who played all the female roles in the film, refused to put them on, as this did not correspond to Russian traditions. The parties finally came to a compromise: women in the scene appear sitting in Chines wooden baths hiding their naked bodies. Even so, the episode was shown on Russian TV but excluded from the Chinese version.

The same Chinese series is a good illustration of the second type of transformation — *extension* of a cinematographic text. A comparatively short novel is extended to 19 episodes, which are supplemented with long dialogues about love, duty, service to the nation and struggle against the enemies. Such dialogues are well accepted by the Chinese viewers, but seem boring to the Russian audience; therefore, the version of the Chinese series demonstrated on Russian TV was reduced from 19 to 12 episodes.

Reinterpretation as the third type of transformation is implemented in the changes of the plot, images of characters, their communicative behavior, value orientations and motives for their actions. When, for example, American cinematographers decide that the events or actions of Russian characters are irrational and incomprehensible, they transform them to please the US audience. The happy end in the US adaptation of *The Brothers Karamazov* (1957) is definitely a tribute to Hollywood traditions. In the Russian 1968 film Dmitry in chains trudges in the snow to Siberia and Grushenka follows him in a horse-driven sledge. By contrast, in the American version Dmitry escapes from the police with Grushenka, to the accompaniment of optimistic music. An average Western spectator cannot understand and accept Dmitry's desire to suffer not because

he murdered his father, but because he "wanted to murder", and the Russian formula: "You cannot run away from your conscience" (Leontovich 2015).

The choice of semiotic signs is in the power of a director acting as an interpreter. From the point of view of the ethnic component, the choice of a language used in a film plays an important role, which goes beyond simple verbal expression — it may acquire an additional symbolic sense. Some Indian films are intended for a particular linguistic community: *Panakkari* (after "Anna Karenina") and *Iyarkai* (after "*The White Nights*) are Tamil-language adaptations, *Elu Suttina Kote* (based on "Crime and Punishment") is a KannAda-language film, and *Neecha Nagar* (after "The Lower Depths" by Maxim Gorky) is in Hindi. It is interesting that though the Indian adaptation of *Idiot* (1992) is done in Hindi, the characters pronounce some phrases in English (*I love you, I love you! But if you want me to, I can order him. Why does she treat me like a prostitute?*), which is a way to express their higher social status. For the sake of comparison — the extreme case in terms of language use is the Chinese series *Here the Dawns are Quiet,* which was originally shot in Russian and later dubbed in Chinese, with subtitles added to make it comprehensible for the speakers of numerous Chinese dialects.

The use of nonverbal signs also demonstrates a high degree of variability and may play a role in the contextualization of action and meaning-making. Though the main character of *Elu Suttina Kote* (based on Raskolnikov from "Crime and Punishment") is Indian, he has a portrait of Lenin on the wall and we can hear the Russian revolutionary song ("Vihri vrazhdebnye...") at the background, which are indications of his political views and his rebel spirit.

Music is an indispensable element of culture and a source of powerful emotional impact. The use of good Indian music, though sounding somewhat unusual for a Russian spectator in connection with Russian literature, has contributed to the box-office success of such Indian films as *Chhalia* (1973) with Raj Kapoor and *Saawariya* (2007) — two famous adaptations of *"The White Nights"* by F. Dostoyevsky.

A challenge and at the same time one of the key points of intersemiotic translation is the difficult choice between the loyalty to the original, comprehensibility for the target audience and freedom of creativity. As Dusi writes, "<...> translation/transposition can follow at least two possible directions: it can lead the audience to comprehend the universe of meaning of the source text (*source-oriented* approach); or it can serve the need to transform the target text in view of the target cultural system (*target oriented* approach)" (Dusi 2010). The third possible direction is the transformation of the original for the purpose of the director's self-expression. The combination of all these complicated processes produces lots of problems for directors, producers, actors, etc.

Scholars disagree about the limits of freedom a director (interpreter) can enjoy. One extreme is the "fetishization of the original" [Ponzio 2003: 113]; the other is the poststructuralist opinion about the translation and adaptation "living an independent existence away from their originals" (E-Chu, 2014). Borges describes the interpreter's role in the following way: "It is his infidelity, his happy and creative infidelity, that must matter to us" (2000: 45). Stam expresses a similar opinion: "Film adaptations, then, are caught up in the ongoing whirl of <...> recycling, transformation, and transmutation, with no clear point of origin" (Stam 2005: 27—31; qtd. from E-Chou Wup 2014: 168).

In connection with this, a number of questions arise, such as: 1) what if the non-Russian speaking audience want to get a taste of Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy and Chekhov, not the director's creative endeavors? 2) what if, due to incompetence and intercultural misunderstanding, the director gives the public a totally wrong interpretation of the original and impression of the source culture?

The musical *Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812* contains a chaotic mixture of different semiotic signs, the use of which is not justified by any in-depth motives. It is probably intended to create "a Russian atmosphere" as it is imagined by an internationally naïve audience guided by common stereotypes. As a Russian spectator said, the wish to give the viewers what they allegedly wanted to see turned the performance into a farce: the show was a combination of 'balalaika', gypsy dance "Tsyganochka", old peasant and modern songs and the omnipresent vodka. Before the start of the performance, spectators were given *pirogi* (Russian pies). The hall was decorated with posters from the USSR era and "Pussy Riot". All those things have nothing to do with the simple but dignified life of Russian aristocracy of the early 19th century. This allows us to conclude that any degree of creative freedom still requires intercultural competence and a careful choice of semiotic signs aimed at expressing the author's idea, which underlies the adaptation.

5. RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

The analysis of foreign adaptations of Russian classical literature allows us to make generalized conclusions about intersemiotic translation in an intercultural context.

1. Key decisions about the interpretation of original texts are made by directors and their teams guided by at least three goals: commercial, creative and ideological.

2. Intersemiotic translation makes use of such strategies as foreignization, domestication and universalization.

3. The resignifying of a literary text by means of the cinematographic semiotic system is connected with such transformations as: a) reduction, i.e. omission of parts of the original; b) extension — addition, filling in the blanks and signifying the unsaid; c) reinterpretation — modification or remodeling of the original in accordance with the director's creative ideas.

4. A challenge and at the same time one of the key points of intersemiotic translation is the necessity to choose between the loyalty to the original, comprehensibility for the target audience and freedom of creativity.

5. The research shows that transformations and use of different translation strategies can have both positive and negative outcomes. Positive outcomes of transformations done in the process of intersemiotic translation of Russian classics for a foreign audience include: visualization and comprehension of the Russian cultural space; adaptation of Russian experiences for the target culture; retranslation of universal values expressed by the original. Negative outcomes result in: the distortion of the original due to insufficient cultural literacy; purposeful deformation of cultural meanings for ideological reasons; erroneous interpretation of the literary text; deformation of the original macro-meaning; preservation of the plot, but loss of the in-depth meaning of the original text.

6. Any degree of creative freedom still requires intercultural competence and a careful choice of semiotic signs aimed at expressing the author's idea, which underlies the adaptation.

6. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The correlation of the source text and its intersemiotoc translation is metaphorically summed up by Jeha in the following statement: "To say that one liked the movie but thought the book was better amounts to little more than stating one's preference of apples to apple pie. They are not supposed to be compared, for one is what the other has become. It is better to compare how the meaning of a text was rendered into two or more movies. Or, if one wishes, to judge what recipe makes the best pie (Jeha: 1).

The results of the research bring us to the following conclusion: the utmost aim of intersemiotic translation is to express the macromeaning of the original literary work, its main idea. Different semiotic signs, episodes, actions of characters, etc. act as micromeanings, which, as a mosaic, constitute a whole, different from a mere combination of its constituents. Here we deal with the transference of quantity into quality. In the process, intersemiotic translation can use different forms of redistribution of micromeanings and contexualization of verbal and nonverbal signs, but its utmost aim is the creation of a new integral text, preserving the macromeaning of the original. An adaptation is not a simple replica of the original — it is good or bad not if it is totally faithful (or unfaithful) to the original, but if, even with serious factual changes, it manages to express the macromeaning, translate the source text into the language of film or theater performance preserving the spirit, values and essence of the original.

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Bionote:
OLGA LEONTOVICH is Ph. D. (Advanced Doctorate), Professor and Chair, Department of Intercultural Communication and Translation, Volgograd State Socio-Pedagogical University; Professor of Tianjin Foreign Studies University (Tianjin, China). Author of over 200 publications. Spheres of research interest: communication studies, cultural anthropology, sociolinguistics, intercultural communication.
Contact information: e-mail: olgaleo@list.ru

Сведения об авторе:
ЛЕОНТОВИЧ ОЛЬГА АРКАДЬЕВНА — доктор филологических наук, зав. кафедрой межкультурной коммуникации Волгоградского государственного социально-педагогического университета (ВГСПУ), профессор Тяньцзиньского университета иностранных языков (г. Тяньцзинь, КНР). Автор более 200 публикаций. Основные сферы научных интересов — теория коммуникации, лингвокультурология, социолингвистика.
Контактная информация: e-mail: olgaleo@list.ru