Literary Translation As Cognitive Overlap Between Foreign And Native Languages

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ABSTRACT
The aim of this paper is to study the unique and universal features of the author's presentation of life and death based on the prose of late XIX – early XX centuries in the aspect of interaction between the Russian and English pictures of the world. We detail the results of lexicographical and etymological analysis, contextual, conceptual and cognitive review of translation strategies and techniques of Chekhov's fiction. A number of prose, drama and letters translations of Anton Chekhov by Constance Garnett Julius West and Gerard R. Ledger are examined for this purpose. By carrying out an analysis of these texts using a variety of methods we state that the effectiveness of translation is determined by the functionality of decoding. The personality of the interpreter acts as an intermediate link in the translation process, the competence and creative potential of whom provides interpretation of the author's ideas in the target language. Consequently, we validate hypotheses that the full convergence of ideas about life and death of the Russians and British facilitates the transfer of Chekhov's images into English to a large extend.

Keywords: translation, intercultural communication, Chekhov's prose, author's picture of the world, concepts life and death.

1. Introduction
The article deals with the comparative study of Anton Chekhov's works and fragments of his letters translated into English. The problem of the translation became the focus of philological research a century ago. The pivotal role of translation in the process of multicultural communication is undeniable, thus it is being constantly under study by Linguistics.

The main idea of this paper is to investigate the unique and universal features of the author's presentation of life and death based on the prose of late XIX – early XX centuries in the aspect of interaction between the Russian and English pictures of the world.

Literature Review
In the aspect of translation, intercultural communication is being understood as the dialogue of texts,
belonging to different cultures. Interaction of cultures and the texts as substitutes for cultures presupposes the existence of common elements and distinguishes discrepancies in the cognitive pictures of the world (see: Searle, 1985; Wilson, 1990; Boden & Zimmerman, 1991; Bottom, 1991; van Dijk, 1997; Boeva-Omelechko, 2001; Slyshkin, 2007; Katermina, 2015; Tameryan, 2015a,b; Bolyrev et al., 2017; Zybina et al., 2017; Volskaya et al., 2017; Gulnov et al., 2018; Knyzева, 2018; Knyzева & Popova, 2018; Ponomarenko et al., 2018; Tastan et al., 2018; Razumovskaya et al., 2018; Slyshkin, 2007; Katermina, 2015; Tameryan, 2015a,b; Bobyreva et al., 2017; Zyubina et al., 2017; Volskaya et al., 2018; Boeva-Omelechko, 2001; Selyshkin, 2007; Katermina, 2015; Tameryan, 2015a,b; Bolyrev et al., 2017; Zybina et al., 2017; Volskaya et al., 2017; Gulnov et al., 2018; Knyzева, 2018; Knyzева & Popova, 2018; Ponomarenko et al., 2018; Tastan et al., 2018; Razumovskaya et al., 2018; Grynszpan, 2001). In addition, literary translation is interpreted as intercultural aesthetic communication also reflecting the interaction of the author and translator models of the world.

To convey Chekhov’s ideas about life and death into the British culture is the most important goal of a translator that is why the representation of the given concepts are the pinpoints of the writer's fiction perception.

Description of A. P. Chekhov's works in the aspect of intercultural translation is based on a wide range of problems, connected with the given research (Freedman, 1988; Nankov, 2003; 2013; Purves, 2009; Garach, 2016; Lynch & Vogel, 2018).

We carry out the analysis of Chekhov's narrative applying methods and techniques in the context of the current translation principles. We demonstrate the ways the translators reveal the original text.

Results and Discussion

The study revealed that the effectiveness of translation is determined by the functionality of decoding. We discuss the results of lexicographical and etymological analysis, contextual, conceptual and cognitive review of translation strategies and techniques of Chekhov's fiction.

Any picture of the world is binary. We think of life and death, happiness and misfortune, past and future; we distinguish between right and left, close and distant. The left part of that opposition is always marked positively. The right component of the opposition is negative. (Dictionary of culture of the XX century, 1997: 143).

The two-component model of binary concepts consists of the invariant and variable parts. The invariant of a concept comprises common to a given culture meanings, fixed in the language.

Binary concepts life and death in Chekhov's narrative also constitute conceptual opposition.

Russian biological dictionary defines life as the ability of an object to the replication of genetic information transfer (Biological Dictionary Online, 1986). In the English biological dictionary life is treated as the condition which distinguishes active organisms from inorganic matter (Biology-Online Dictionary, 2018).

In the Russian language death is a cessation of life (Biological Dictionary Online, 1986). In the English language it is the permanent termination of the biological functions that sustain a living organism (Biology-Online Dictionary, 2018).

According to the philosophical point of view life in the Russian mentality is defined a special qualitative state of the world, perhaps a necessary stage in the development of the universe. The specific phenomenon, a kind of absolute reality for the man and his consciousness (Philosophical Dictionary, 1997: 236).

In Russian Orthodoxy life is an interaction between body and spirit, the essence of which remains a mystery to mankind to the present time (Brockhaus and Efron's Jewish Encyclopedia, 1913).

According to the English philosophy and Christian beliefs the conception of life and its nature varies. Both offer interpretations as to how life relates to existence and consciousness, and both touch on many related issues,
including life stance, purpose, conception of a God or gods, a soul or an afterlife (Meta-Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2018).

In Russian philosophy death is not regarded as the opposite to life. In some philosophical movements and religious believes life is considered as an integral part of the resurrection (Philosophical Dictionary, 1997: 362).

In English philosophy and Christianity death can not be viewed as the opposite of life. On the other hand, philosophy and religion consider death not as the opposite of birth, but as an integral part of the resurrection (Meta-Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2018).

From the position of Orthodoxy death in Russian is: 1) opposite to the process of life, which destroys the interaction between spirit and body. The body is the mortal part of human being that dies, the spirit, on the contrary, as a permanent substance, which remains to live even after the death of the body, 2) it is a victory over the last enemy, because a person constantly meets with enemies in this life (Brockhaus and Efron's Jewish Encyclopedia, 1913).

In British culture, death is acknowledged as part of the current human condition, affected by sin. Although eternal life is a gift that is granted to all who accept salvation through Jesus Christ, faithful Christians await the second coming of Jesus for complete realization of their immortality. While waiting for Jesus to come again, Christians may be called upon to care for the dying and to face personally their own death (Religious Views on Death, 2018).

Data of etymological dictionaries indicate that the lexeme zhizn' «life» was formed by the suffix -zn-, indicating the Old Russian stative verb zhitì «to live» (Tsyganenko, 1989: 311).

In the XI century Old Russian word zhizn' «life» had two meanings: "life, recovery" and "property" (Fasmer, 1986: 52).

In the modern Russian language, the meaning "property" is preserved in such word as belongings. Old.-Russ. verb zhitì meant "to exist; to feed; to dwell (Chernykh, 1999: 304).

The lexeme life originated from Old English life (dative lif) "existence, lifetime, way of life, condition of being a living thing, opposite of death," from Proto-Germanic *libam (cf. Old Norse lif "life, body," Dutch lijf "body," Old High German lib "life," German Leib "body"), properly "continuance, perseverence," from PIE *leip- "to remain, persevere, continue; stick, adhere". Much of the modern range of meanings was present in Old English. Meaning "property which distinguishes living from non-living matter" is from 1560s. Sense of "vitality, energy" is from 1580s. Extended 1703 to "term of duration (of inanimate objects)" (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2018).

Data from etymological dictionaries demonstrate that the lexemes death in English and zhizn' «life» in Russian go back to the common Indo-European basis.

The lexeme death has the common root with the Russian verb davit' "to kill". The word death is positively connotated, since it is associated with the Indo-European prefix su- "good; its own; natural".

The word smert' «death» positively marked, since it is connected with the Indo-European prefix su-, "good; the good; its; natural" (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2018).

The synonymic row of representations of the concept zhizn' "life" is represented by the following nominators: existence; being; accommodation; century; days; stomach; life process; living (Dictionary of Synonyms of the Russian Language, 1970: 120).
The synonymic row of nominations of the concept life is represented by the following words: animal animateness; body; breath; consciousness; continuance; creature; endurance; entity; essence; existence; flesh; growth; human; individual; organism; person (Collins English Thesaurus in A-Z form., 1992).

The synonymic row of representations of the concept smert' "death" is represented by such nominators as: death; assumption; the end (of sbd's days); execution; coffin;; (fatal) outcome; grave; moraine (Dictionary of Synonyms of the Russian Language, 1970: 271).

The synonymic row of the words nominating field the concept death consists of the following nominators: annihilation; bereavement; cessation; decease; demise; departure; destruction; dissolution; downfall; dying; end (Collins English Thesaurus in A-Z form., 1992).

So, lexems zhizn' "life" and life do not originate from the same source, but they convey close semantic meanings: existence; being; time or period (from birth to death); motion.

The lexemes smert' "death" and death have the common Indo-European origin, as they go back to Gothic taiurþr "murder". Their common semantic features are:

cessation (of life); decay; death.

The most significant cognitive feature of the concept life in Chekhov's narration is conscious existence:

“We live not in order to eat, but in order not to know what we feel like eating”;

“Mankind has conceived history as a series of battles; hitherto it has considered fighting as the main thing in life” (Chekhov, 2018).

Chekhov is indulgent to many human weaknesses, except meaningless existence and idleness:

“The all of the evil in life comes from idleness, boredom, and psychic emptiness, but all of that is inevitable when you become accustomed to living at others' expense” (« My Life »);

“In order to live well and humanly one must work – work with love and with faith” (Chekhov, 2018).

In Chekhov's works gender differences are not revealed, but quite the contrary, he tries to overcome them, affirming the equality of the sexes:

“A woman ought to be trained so that she may be able, like a man, to recognise when she's wrong, or she always thinks she's in the right. Train her to think logically, to generalise, and do not assure her that her brain weighs less than a man's and that therefore she can be indifferent to the sciences, to the arts, to the tasks of culture in general <... >. We must give up our attitude to the physiological aspect, to pregnancy and childbirth, seeing that in the first place women don't have babies every month; secondly, not all women have babies; and, thirdly, a normal countrywoman works in the fields up to the day of her confinement and it does her no harm. Then there ought to be absolute equality in everyday life. If a man gives a lady his chair or picks up the handkerchief she has dropped, let her repay him in the same way” (Chekhov, 1977, 107-132).

Reflections of A.P. Chekhov on the death of N.M. Przhevalsky about the people of heroism, about devotees that are needed, “like the sun” in modern society, “enormous educational significance of their activities” form the cognitive layer, reflecting ideas about the role of the individual in life and in history in the writer's idiolect:

“One Przhevalsky or one Stanley is worth a dozen polytechnics and a hundred good books” (Aldrich, 2007, 361);
“I believe in individual people, I see salvation in individual personalities scattered here and there all over Russia--educated people or peasants--they have strength though they are few. No prophet is honoured in his own country, but the individual personalities of whom I am speaking play an unnoticed part in society, they are not domineering, but their work can be seen; anyway, science is advancing and advancing, social self-consciousness is growing, moral questions begin to take an uneasy character” (Chekhov’s Short Stories, 1883).

Comparative analysis of metaphoric and axiological layers of binary concepts «life» and «death» also help reveal a number of similarities and differences in their cognitive structure:

We identified the dominant metaphoric model of the concept life – "life is nature" in all its manifestations:

“Autumn, yes, summer was over. There were fine, warm days, but it was fresh in the morning, shutters creaking on their rusty hinges, or from the flying cranes – and one's heart felt light, and one was eager for life;

A tree is beautiful, but what’s more, it has a right to life; like water, the sun and the stars, it is essential. Life on earth is inconceivable without trees;

<…> the cold crimson sunset lay a narrow streak of light, he thought that truth and beauty which had guided human life there in the garden and in the yard of the high priest had continued without interruption to this day, and had evidently always been the chief thing in human life and in all earthly life” (Chechov, 1886).

Life is represented by such cognitive metaphors, as «life is a bowl / a cross»:

“He did not go to meet His sufferings with a smile, <…> but prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane that this cup might pass Him by;

One must know how to bear one's cross, and one must have faith. I believe, and so do not suffer so much” (Chekhov’s Short Stories, 1883).

Another frequent metaphor Chekhov's narrative is "life is a flash of light":

“<…> when these feeble relics of life flickered up in her for an instant she would say to her son” (Chekhov's Short Stories, 1883).

The author associates life as a chain of events, among which it is sometimes difficult to discern causal relationships, but this is what makes our existence an interesting, uncommon, and sometimes completely unpredictable story:

In the works by A.P. Chekhov, life is built up as a chain of events, between which it is sometimes difficult to determine cause and effect relationships, but this is what turns the existence of the writer's characters into an interesting, uncommon and sometimes completely unpredictable story:

“The past, he thought, is linked with the present by an unbroken chain of events flowing one out of another” (Chekhov’s Short Stories, 1883).

In Chekhov's discourse, life is personified as a kind of substance, existing by its own laws, on a life of its own.

The next models, metaphoring life in Chekhov's picture of world, are:

life is dull;
life slips by without colour;
Thus, life is portrayed in Chekhov's axiologically ambiguous, and the motif of death predominates.

In the creative activity of the writer, death marks a transition to another life. In the conceptosphere of A.P. Chekhov, the death of the body is opposed to the immortality of the soul.

For A.P. Chekhov aimless and meaningless life seemed the most tragic. Spiritual death of a personality is more serious and terrible than the physical one, since physical death is inevitable.

At that time, the choice to live or not to live spiritually rich largely depends on the person in the letter to M.V. Kiseleva on September 29, 1886:

When in a serious mood, it seems to me that those people are illogical who feel an aversion toward death. As far as I can see, life consists exclusively of horrors, unpleasantnesses and banalities, now merging, now alternating” (Chechov, 1886).

Death is associated with nature or some kind of a natural phenomenon:

“Strong storm from the road and lost if not the local dogs that seem to death;

It's just a year since father died last May the fifth, on your name-day, Irina. It was very cold then, and snowing; the thick darkness hung over earth but the thoughts of death makes me gloomy;

Autumn came on, rainy, dark, and muddy. Radish was laid up at home ill, expecting death from day to day” (Chekhov’s Short Stories, 1883).

Death is described by the metaphor of sleep:

“Up to the time of her death she had been brisk, and used to bring soft rolls covered with poppy seeds from the market. Now she did nothing but sleep and sleep” (Chekhov’s Short Stories, 1883).

Death is personified as a ghost:

“see the death like spectre behind me”.

In Chekhov's stories, death is presented as a container:

death is a coffin /grave /a cemetry / a catafalque:

“While the funeral procession was crawling from the church to the cemetery <…> What is this grave here <…> dead men <…> Zapoikin turned toward the grave <…> near the monument <…> catafalque” (Chekhov’s Short Stories, 1883).

Phrases with the component “a coffin” metaphorize the concept "death":
to torture to death;
to drive someone to the grave.

Death is also presented as the biblical metaphor of space:
to see him off with;

psychological metaphor:
more dead than alive; half dead with terror; petrify with terror (Chekhov’s Short Stories, 1883).
In the works by A.P. Chekhov cognitive features of the concept «life» are axiologically ambivalent. They convey positive connotations:

“and the inexpressible sweet expectation of happiness, of unknown mysterious happiness, took possession of him little by little, and life seemed to him enchanting, marvelous, and full of lofty meaning; <…> life as a fine composition arranged with talent” (Chekhov’s Short Stories, 1883);

and the negative ones:

“Life is a vexatious trap; when a thinking man reaches maturity and attains to full consciousness he cannot help feeling that he is in a trap from which there is no escape; <…> and your long life, and Shakespeare, and Darwin, seem to you nonsense, absurdity” (Chekhov’s Short Stories, 1883).

Cognitive features of the concept «death» also convey oppositive evaluation. Death is marked positively:

“Death can only be profitable: there’s no need to eat, drink, pay taxes, offend people, and since a person lies in a grave for hundreds or thousands of years, if you count it up the profit turns out to be enormous” (“Rothschild’s Fiddle”); “I see the Divine Providence in her premature death” (Chekhov’s Short Stories, 1883).

Death is estimated ambivalently:

“Death is terrible, but still more terrible is the feeling that you might live for ever and never die” (Chekhov’s Short Stories, 1883).

Based on materials of Associative Thesaurus of English we found out that in the English language consciousness the most important realities turn out to be: sex, money, work, food, water, time, life, love, car, house, death, home (Kiss, G.R., Armstrong, C., Milroy, R., 1972).

Life is the seventh in importance, and death is only rated eleventh.

According to the Associative Dictionary of Russian the reaction to the word life the Russian language consciousness are the next: death (62); excellent (30); long (16); good (16).

Reactions to the word death the following are represented: life (61); poet (21); fear (18); grief (16); has come (15) (Russian Associative Dictionary, 1998: 214).

Conclusion

The conducted research confirms the theoretical and practical significance of the research as an actual direction in the discourse linguistics, cognitive linguistics, intercultural communication and translation theory. Thus, the binary concepts «life» and «death» form the core and the periphery. The core is structured by human knowledge of life and death, and the periphery is formed by author's meanings and his cognitive models.

The dominant cognitive features of the concept «life» in Chekhov's picture the world of conscious are: existence, work, gender equality and the role of a personality.

Such cognitive models describe the concept «life»: life is a bowl; life is a cross. The representations of that concept are based on associations with natural phenomena.

Death in the author's picture of the world is also associated with nature: autumn and spring symbolize life and death respectively. Life and death are both personified.

Death is described by the metaphor of sleep, container, space and psychological metaphor.
Valuable characteristics of concepts "life" and "death" stem from the central categories of Chekhov's creativity: on the one hand, life is conceived as light, truth, beauty and happiness; and on the other hand, it's comprehended as darkness, yearning and despair. Death is, however, perceived by Chekhov as benefit, Providence, horror. The author embodies his concepts of life as the unity, harmony and struggle of opposites.

Since the conception of life and death in the Russian and English pictures of the world are largely identical, the transfer of Chekhov's images into English was carried out taking into consideration all nuances in meaning.

The translation problem of the cognitive and discursive research of narratives of A.P. Chekhov in English translation is perspective for researchers dealing with problems of intercultural communication and translation theory.

References