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## **CHALLENGES AND PECULIARITIES OF TRANSLATING LYRICS AS A NEW SUBFIELD OF TRANSLATION STUDIES (BASED ON ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ROCK SONGS)**

### **Abstract**

The article analyses peculiarities of translation studies in the context of cultural phenomenon and uses Rock music as an example for observation. The study is based on theoretical and practical scientific works in the field of philology related to translating lyrics. It links cultural and musical phenomena to linguistics, providing an analysis of their interconnection and interference. The article emphasizes the insufficient investigation of the field of translating songs' lyrics. Listening to music in a foreign language might turn out to be an excellent way to improve language proficiency. Investigating into a specific subfield, such as translating songs may become an interesting way of practicing a translator's duty. The article examines a translation of a song and obstacles met on the way.

**Keywords:** culture, globalization, intercultural communication, linguistic competence, lyrics, rock music, translation.

**Introduction.** The culture itself has many definitions. As far as we live in this century, a great amount of experience is being gained by man. But we will perceive culture from the point that this is a complexity of knowledge, traditions, values and perspectives that is inherent in a local geographical area. From all of this, for us, the interpretations, the most essential component is knowledge. Using knowledge lets us provide high-quality translations and shows us the cultural and linguistic peculiarities of a certain language. The process of globalization is erasing any boundaries, including scientific and study-related ones too. Translation studies once were only about linguistics and philology, but now we can officially link them up to cultural studies too. Recent researches emphasize the cultural aspect of translation, perceiving it as a form of intercultural exchange and a tool for cultural communication [1].

**Theoretical analysis.** Texts had been translated a long time ago. They stand as historical relics for us now. The earliest translation was probably the adaptation of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* into various Asian languages thousands of years ago; and it was continued by the classical debates of Cicero and Horace concerning *verbum pro verbo* versus *sensum exprimere*. Translators and their materials, as we believe, serve as mediators through time and space. This allows us to have some sort of dialogue with our past.

And we do believe that culture is not a static matter. It transforms to suit the external factors and cultural and historical changes. This dynamic subject is always in need of those who will take care of it, capture it and deliver to descendants; and they have to be not only linguistically competent but also culturally educated. The translation studies were formally established only in the year of 1972, at the linguistic seminar where scholars firstly used such a term. Although technological advancements now may seem as a threat to a living translation, we assert that human beings are irreplaceable with Artificial Intelligence due to the fact that it lacks creativity potential [2].

The translation of musical texts demands familiarity with a range of specialised terms and technical and contextual knowledge, including genre namings, composers and their styles and musical instruments. Terms Adagio, Allegro, Largo and Moderato are always used in Italian because this is a musical tradition, where changings are not appropriate. The translator of musical texts must therefore possess not only linguistic competence but also musical literacy. This means that musical translation requires careful rendition, by which the translator must understand the aesthetic meaning in both cultures. For instance, Verdi's *La Traviata* might initiate different audience reactions in distinct

countries, so the linguist must consider local expectations and, if we take librettos, adapt it not only in a literary accurate way but preserve the rhythm and rhyme with the performative effect that may be caused [3].

Poetic translation, as we consider, requires a meticulous and deliberate approach. It is strictly structured unlike prose. In it every word, syllable and punctuation play a vital role for the semantic and stylistic parts of the text. Poets form texts and compose them simultaneously, where imagery and rhetorical devices operate on multiple levels of meaning. The translator must be engaged into symbolic context and attend to the tone, structure and aesthetic resonance. Also, historical specificities complicate the work. Authors may use archaic words (or vice versa neologisms), syntactic deviations and break the standard word order to stylize the text and to shape it with the atmosphere of some era. The one who translates must be attentive in these cases and negotiate between historical matching fidelity and suitable readability. Moreover, a rhythm serves as an interlining between music and poetry. Though these disciplines are different, they both rely on intonation, rhythmic section and acoustic (voice-pronounced) structure [4].

The language itself is a musical matter. It involves pitch, tempo, and stress patterns, just like in music. Assonance and alliteration acquire interpretive significance when they're used to express emotional tone or poetic rhythm. By that, such devices must be perceived not just as stylistic decorations, but as important parts of poetic speech. We assume that poetry translation allows for greater flexibility than prose. Direct translation cannot be used in almost all cases due to metrical, phonetic and syntactic differences between SL and TL. The preservation of meter and rhyme will remain to be one of the most challenging aspects of poetic translation. In addition we must say that poetic texts also function as cultural artifacts, because they include not only linguistic structures but additional context too, whether it's socio-cultural or historical one. A successful translation is the one that localizes cultural peculiarities, its symbols and provides the original meaning to the target audience [5].

Music is an inherent part of global art. It stands not just as an entertainment, but as a matter that is connected to education, social identity and neurological development. University of Liverpool has conducted a study back in 2002 that demonstrates that the human brain processes music similarly to a foreign language. Musicians' brains indicate a higher amount of grey matter in areas responsible for speech processing. German study in this field showed us that understanding music (an ability to play on instruments) is the same for the brain as if the brainholder was learning foreign language. These studies demonstrate unobvious linking between music and linguistic sciences. From a pedagogical side, listening to the foreign language music might be a good and balanced method for students to learn the language. By focusing on the lyrical part of the song, the listener might acquire new vocabulary, recognize idiomatic expressions, and explore cultural nuances [6].

A central task of the interpreter is not to just mechanically select rhyming equivalents but to artistically adapt the text and to preserve the authors' work's original spirit. An illustrative case is *The Beatles'* song *Girl*. Although the band's discography was not officially represented in the USSR, exactly this song was published in the same years as it was published in the West. This song was performed by several soviet crooners, we will overlook Valery Obodzinsky's version. Though in Russian rendition the lyrics significantly alter the original narrative content, the overall thematic focus on an image of a girl is maintained. But due to the lack of a one-syllable Russian equivalent for the word girl, it was sung unchanged in the chorus [7].

Speaking of music more particularly, Rock music had its own eras of development, transformation and decline. Although it's gone "underground", now it may seem that Rock music is undergoing some renaissance era and is evolving anyway; more and more (young) listeners turn to Rock music, preferring it to other dominant and mainstream genres. Rock music has formed its own universe with legends, myths, stories and traditions. Emerged from R'n'B and diverged from early Rock'n'roll, Rock music had gone independent and acquired its own recognizable sound and cultural significance. Despite the fact that to now there exist uncountable volumes of rock music, the real interest is aroused only by two or three decades – from 1955 to 1980's. These years had produced icons and canons of the genre. The pillars were laid: many of the recognizable band names belong to

this specific time. “Godfathers” or just “founding fathers”, such as *Little Richard, Pattie Smith, Ozzy Osbourne, Paul McCartney, Iggy Pop, David Bowie* etc. have formed the face of the era. What distinguishes rock is its energy, its youthful defiance, and its rebellious spirit. The rhythmic part and tonal qualities in rock are making an addition to the emotional and semantic impact of this music. We do not diminish other musical genres, but we do emphasize how under the influence of specific cultural, historical and emotional atmosphere, one of the most crucial phenomenon was made and how lyrics in songwriting reached such a well-developed level, which is important for our article. Though many of rock songs’ lyrics’ authors lacked formal education or adherence to conventional social norms, their lyrical improvisational output was regarded by both critics and audiences as literary and poetically interesting, comprehensive and even dramaturgically full. Whether their songs were inspired by literature read, philosophy discussions, some random words or phrases from ordinary life, or a well-constructed narrative, these musicians have produced lyrics for music that are worth analyzing as texts with literary value. In the field of translation, we are sure that translating songs’ lyrics is still insufficiently covered, which is good for the investigator because it sets a space for deep analysis and work, with the possible separation of translation of lyrics as an independent subfield.

Classic rock songs often consist of typical and settled structures. They are the four-bar formula, the verse-chorus interchange, a tonal resolution, applying embellishments and guitar solos. A deep artistic commitment is shown by how carefully and precisely authors pay attention to lyrical details – using idioms, composing new structures, citing literature etc. Rock musicians were creating novellas in the form of musical albums, which included their philosophical ideas, their comments on social, cultural and historical issues of their time. Rock was a tool for society’s awakening, its consciousness. It was sung to disrupt routine style of thinking, to provoke reflections, to encourage individual creativity and broad social awareness. As we deem, paying close attention to lyrics is crucial in Rock songs. Listeners are invited to search for twisted and double meanings, solve conceptual visions and uncover the narrative depth. Lyrics there stand not as a mere supplement to the melody but as an integral part of the work of art – they are compiled of rhythmic and instrumental elements to form an expressive whole. Not a common thing for Rock lyrics is referring to canonical literature and history, incorporating cultural and pop-cultural allusions or reflecting on surrounding events. Some artists and bands, such as *The Beatles, Klaatu, King Crimson, David Bowie, Bob Dylan, Pink Floyd, and Queen*, have constructed entire fictional universes, lyrical heroes, and overarching narratives that stretch along albums or entire discographies.

**Experimental part.** For the experimental part we will take a look and analyze the ways of translating a song from English into Russian. The song we overlook is credited to Canadian rock-band Klaatu because, as we assume, its legacy is not widely represented across listeners at all, and, consequently, no adequate translation of their songs has ever been done before.

The track is called *We're Off You Know*. If you look at its lyrics, you will notice that this song features simple ABAB and AABB types of rhyme: *...some uncharted shore ...worth looking for ...the urge to merge ...and a little courage*. This poses the question if we should follow the original rhyming schematic. In this particular case, we believe that it is most appropriate to try to match the original text, because the original form doesn’t seem very complicated. Our variant of the second verse is: *Итак, берега нас ждут, где не бывало ног, Ведь мы ищем только то, что стоило бы нам найти. Грянем вместе, друг! Наш союз тебя так влѣк. Ведь согласны мы, всё, что нужно нам – этот Шанс и отваги пяди!* As you may notice, the rhyming schema is modulated from AABB into ABAB. The semantic aspect is preserved; we provide, or at least we try to provide the message to the listener in a slightly changed form but with all the same ideas. For example, the third line is: *You can tag along should you feel the urge to merge...* is translated as *...Грянем вместе, друг! Наш союз тебя так влѣк...* The interrogative part should you feel is eliminated due to the fact that the song's narrator doesn’t seem to ask and is only talking in an invitational tone. The word *Шанс* in the last line is changed from the word *Hope* because we couldn’t find a word that consists only of one syllable and that would suit the line. And *a little courage* is being stylistically adapted as *отваги пяди* to include literary creativity by generating an unexisting idiom.

We are also taking into account the amount of syllables and we try to set up the same amount in the TL. Obviously, the melodic phrases cannot be ripped apart in a haphazard way, and so it has a structure: Get out the lead full steam ahead smartly now. In the actual song it's divided by the melody the following way: Get out the lead | full steam ahead | smartly now. By this example we show the extent to which we are meticulously providing the translation: Зеваки, встать! С кушеток – вон! Жи-вей!

The chorus *So raise the sails and trim all the sheets, Set your course and jam all the cleats, We'll follow the north star to know where we are so You sleepyheads get out of bed right now, Let your fortunes be cast to the wind* becomes *Что ж! Парус вверх, равняй по бортам, Брасуй рею, швартовы отдай! Нам не потеряться – звезда путь ведёт. Так! Зеваки, встать! С кушеток – вон! Жи-вей! Пусть судьба ваша вдаль впрёд плывёт*. Phrases *trim all the sheets* and *jam all the cleats* are related to marine terminology, and the word *all* in these examples are the author's lexical supplement. We couldn't find not only equal Russian phrases that a Russian listener would understand, but we also wouldn't fit the amount of syllables. Instead of this, we changed marine ship *sheets* term to approximately relative *борта*, because those sheets stand for some schematic calculations that are being made before the ship's departure, so *равнять борта* makes sense and sounds adequate and easier to understand in TL. *Course* here is not the ship's voyaging course, but a term for the headsails that are placed perpendicularly in the ship's front part; *брасовать рею* in imperative form is quite similar, as we think, to the original *set your course*. *Cleat* is *кнехт*, a non-russian word, and it also might seem quite hard to understand when you first hear it. Although it could fit in the line, we used omission here. *The north star*, we think, is adapted perfectly, because *звезда путь ведёт* is just another, stylized form of the word *путеводная* or *полярная звезда*. The last line in the original was also transformed from *let your fates be cast* replacing *fate* with *fortune* which has the same meaning; the line has been adapted as *Пусть судьба ваша вдаль впрёд плывёт* replacing the literary *...to the wind* with another literary *впрёд плывёт* in Russian.

**Results.** As far as we have investigated and what we understood is that you might have to have several variations of translation of one text (song lyrics). Because by that you, as a listener, might look at the translated material from different sides, where various terms are used which can strongly differ from each other. You might also think out, assume the possible translation variants from your own, but this requires some degree of language knowledge. The result of our observations is that translating literary texts, and especially the rhymed ones, is not a simple task. We can see that obstacles not just might be met on the way, but they will be met. Whatsoever, this kind of work with literary texts seems very interesting and skill-developing for us, and it may serve as a great opportunity to translate in practice.

**Conclusion.** As we have observed, there is a certain link between culture and language. It is historically determined and in our days of globalization sciences draw closer to each other, which allows us to see more clearly how music impacts poetry and vice versa. The translator must always be careful with his translating decisions and be attentive to details. He/she must also be engaged in the cultural, social and historical context of both language systems if he/she is to work in niche subfields of translation. In our experimental part we illustrated in practice how exactly some translations can be done, what is difficult and what is obvious.

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## **АУДАРМАШЫЛЫҚТЫҢ ЖАҢА САЛАСЫ РЕТІНДЕ МӘТІНДІ АУДАРУДЫҢ ҚИЫНДЫҚТАРЫ МЕН ЕРЕКШЕЛІКТЕРІ (АҒЫЛШЫН ТІЛІНДЕГІ РОК ӘНДЕРІНІҢ НЕГІЗІНДЕ)**

### **Түйін**

Бұл мақала мәдени феномен контекстіндегі аударматану ерекшеліктерін талдайды және зерттеу мысалы ретінде рок-музыканы қолданады. Жұмыс филология саласындағы теориялық және практикалық еңбектерге негізделген, олардың негізінде ән мәтіндерін аудару жатыр. Жұмыста мәдени және музыкалық феномендердің филологиямен байланысы көрсетіліп, олардың өзара байланысы мен ықпалы талданады. Мақалада ән мәтіндерін аудару бөлімінің жеткіліксіз зерттелгендігіне назар аударылады. Шетел тіліндегі музыканы тыңдау арқылы сол тілді меңгеру деңгейін арттыруға болады. Ән аудармасының ерекше бөлімін одан әрі зерттеп, тереңірек меңгеру аударма ісі бойынша тәжірибе алаңы бола алады. Мақалада әнді аудару процесі мен осы жолда кездесетін қиындықтар қарастырылады.

**Кілттік сөздер:** мәдениет, жаһандану, мәдениетаралық коммуникация, лингвистикалық құзыреттілік, лирика, рок-музыка, аударма.

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## **ТРУДНОСТИ И ОСОБЕННОСТИ ПЕРЕВОДА ТЕКСТА КАК НОВОЙ ОБЛАСТИ ПЕРЕВОДОВЕДЕНИЯ (НА ОСНОВЕ АНГЛОЯЗЫЧНЫХ РОК-ПЕСЕН)**

### **Аннотация**

Данная статья анализирует особенности переводоведения в контексте культурного феномена и использует рок-музыку в качестве примера для исследования. Работа основана на теоретических и практических работах из филологической сферы, основой которых является перевод текстов песен. Работа показывает связь культурного и музыкального феноменов с филологией, приводя анализ их взаимосвязи и взаимовлияния. Статья обращает внимание на недостаточную изученность подраздела перевода текстов песен. Слушая музыку на иностранном языке, можно улучшать свой уровень владения им. Дальнейшее изучение и углубление в особый подраздел перевода песен может стать хорошим полигоном для практики в переводческом деле. Статья обобщает перевод песен и сложности, встреченные на пути.

**Ключевые слова:** культура, глобализация, межкультурная коммуникация, лингвистическая компетентность, лирика, рок-музыка, перевод.

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