

Adequacy and equivalence in the gothic translation of the Bible
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Адекватность и эквивалентность в готском переводе Евангелия
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Abstract: *the article discusses such key notions of translation theory as adequacy and equivalence in relation to of the earliest translations of the Bible – into the Gothic language, made the bishop Wulfila (Ulfilas) in the 4th century A.D. It is shown that even in such a remote time period the translator was guided substantially by cultural or functional equivalence, which anticipated works of many modern theorists.*

Аннотация: *в статье говорится о ключевых понятиях теории переводоведения, адекватности и эквивалентности, в применении к одному из наиболее ранних переводов Библии – готскому, сделанному епископом Вульфилой в IV в. Представляется, что даже в эту столь отдаленную от нас эпоху переводчик руководствовался в значительной степени культурной или функциональной эквивалентностью единиц, чем превосходил труды многих современных теоретиков переводоведения.*

Keywords: *translation theory, Gothic, equivalence, adequacy.*

Ключевые слова: *теория перевода, готский, эквивалентность, адекватность.*

The main purpose of translation, its characteristic feature that makes it different from other kinds of cross-cultural communication, is its unique ability to fully replace the original and to be perceived by the recipient as a textual unit identical pragmatically and communicatively to the original one. The translation strategies depend on various aspects, both linguistic and extra-linguistic. Most contemporary theories regard adequacy and equivalence within the framework of creative processing of the original. S. Bassnett regards translation as a dialogical process, taking place in virtual reality and not related directly either to the source or the target text [1]. In early works, researchers often resorted to comparing the source text and the target text, nowadays more attention is drawn to the transference process itself. It is quite common for a certain lexical unit or construction not to be rendered exactly in the target text, in this case various equivalence comes into context: (cultural equivalence, functional equivalence, through-translation)[2] At the same time, the notion of equivalence itself is closely connected to the theoretical problems of linguistic variation in the first and the second language [3, 4]. According to V. S. Vinogradov [5] equivalence of the translated text is a relative concept and depends on multiple factors: professional level of the translator, his mother tongue and culture, characteristic features of the SL and the TL, the time period when the original text and the translation were created and the features of the texts being translated.

Translation is an activity that always involves at least two languages and, consequently, two cultural traditions, which implies the necessity to render culture-specific terms. Christianization of the Germanic peoples certainly posed a challenging task to the first translators of the Bible into the Germanic languages, since the gap between the pagan Germanic culture and the Judeo-Christian tradition must have been enormous. As is well known, the earliest known translation of the Gospels into a Germanic language was Wulfila's Gothic Bible (4th cent. A.D.). It is usually considered to be an almost word-for-word gloss of the original Koine Greek source, replicating the idiom of the Greek language and it is sometimes stated that Wulfila may have deliberately resorted to numerous borrowings to make the text "cryptic and oracular" [6]. At the same time, Friedrichsen also noted that of the 64 Greek and Hebrew loans one finds in the Vulgate, only 28 appear in the Gothic Bible [7].

In most cases, in fact, we may speak of full semantic, stylistic and communicative equivalence of the translation:

John 6:10

Gothic: *īþ Iesus qap: waurkeiþ þans mans anakumbjan. wasuh þan hawi manag ana þamma stada. þaruh anakumbidedun wairos raþjon swaswe fimf þusundjos.*

Septuagint: *εἶπεν ὁ ἰησοῦς, ποιήσατε τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀναπεσεῖν. ἦν δὲ χόρτος πολὺς ἐν τῷ τόπῳ. ἀνέπεσαν οὖν οἱ ἄνδρες τὸν ἀριθμὸν ὡς πεντακισχίλιοι.*

King James: *And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.*

Quite often, being unable to find full equivalents, Wulfila renders culture-specific terms resorting to functional equivalents (that is, replacing culturally marked terms with unmarked ones, existing in the TL). In this case the term *wastja* 'jacket' appears to be a native Gothic word (from Proto-Indo-European) rather than a loan or culturally marked term, such as "chiton" and "himation" in his presumable source text: *wasti* (also *gawaseins* (and-/ga-) *wasjan*) from PIE *wes- 'clothe?'; akin to OE *werian* (r<z) [8]. *Paida* deserves further discussion

Paida, according to W. Lehmann [8], is an early loan of Anatolian or Illyrian origin (Greek βαίτη ‘garment’; cf. OE *pad*, OHG *pheit*: probably an early borrowing into Germanic languages via Gothic). The word probably carried some kind of cultural connotations and could refer to some “foreign” garment in Gothic; it is an early loan, borrowed into Gothic before Wulfila, therefore we may call it a cultural equivalent.

Matthew 5:40

Gothic: jah þamma wiljandin miþ þus staua jah paida þeina niman, aflet imma jah wastja.

Septuagint: καὶ τῷ θέλοντί σοι κριθῆναι καὶ τὸν χιτῶνά σου λαβεῖν, ἄφες αὐτῷ καὶ τὸ ἱμάτιον:

King James: If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also.

Finally, Wulfila does resort to through-translation (or, at times, even transliteration, such as *raca* in Matthew 5:22), such as *afstass boka* (literally, ‘repudiation book’, *biblion apostasion*), certificate of divorce.

Matthew 5:31

Gothic: <...> hvazuh saei afletai qen, gibai izai afstassais bokos

Septuagint: <...> ὃς ἂν ἀπολύσῃ τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, δότω αὐτῇ ἀποστάσιον.

King James: <...>Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.

Generally it appears that even at that early age the translator was well aware of the importance of the communicative aspect. The text was meant for continuous reading, therefore Wulfila avoids excessive unnecessary use of loan-words, resorting to functional equivalents instead. It is often believed that he replicated many of the grammatical structures of his source text [6,9]. It may be so due to the fact that Wulfila (Ulfilas) himself was only a half-Goth, half a Cappadocian Greek, or perhaps he deemed it necessary to preserve the structure of the original. Nowadays, when cross-cultural communication becomes more intense than ever, it seems only too intriguing to look back at the translation strategies of the 4 century A.D.

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