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# ENGLISH STUDIES

at NBU



NEW  
BULGARIAN  
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**ENGLISH STUDIES AT NBU**

New Bulgarian University

Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures

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## We thank our reviewers

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## EDITOR'S MESSAGE



I am delighted to introduce this themed issue of *English Studies at NBU!*

It provides an exciting opportunity to address the current state and perspectives of translator and interpreter training. One of the key challenges is how to ensure that universities adapt to the constantly changing translation and interpreting field and produce the professionals that the language industry needs.

We would like to invite you to spend valuable time exploring these and other fascinating connections between theory and practice.

My considerable appreciation goes to all my colleagues whose generous contributions of time and effort have made this themed issue of ESNBU possible. Special thanks to our guest editors Alina Pelea, Emilija Sarzhoska-Georgievska and Ildikó Horváth.

I end by congratulating our readers, authors, reviewers and the entire editorial team on the achievements made in 2018 and by wishing a very happy, peaceful and prosperous 2019.

Boris Naimushin,

Editor in Chief

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## A YEAR IN REVIEW - 2018

It's been a very good year!

As we work towards our goals, we have a lot of achievements to share with you.



### Visibility and discoverability

Our [Facebook group](#) is growing at such a rate that we can barely keep up welcoming everyone as we are reaching even wider audiences through this channel. Our mailing list has been reaching out to targeted audiences - readers, editors and reviewers - with specific campaigns.

In September ESNBU's application was approved and the journal was included in DOAJ. In November it was included for coverage in World of Science Emerging Sources Citation Index, beginning with the issues from 2017, and in early December we signed an agreement with EBSCO. In mid December the National Centre for Documentation and Information (NACID) included the journal in the list of refereed and referenced titles.

At the same time we have been witnessing an increasingly higher number of hits to the website from around the world, stretching to China, Australia and Africa, and especially North American universities and university libraries.

Our goals to improve the transparency of our publishing process have lead us to launch a section of our site – [ESNBU Backstage](#) – to state our values, and provide information about the editorial and reviewing procedures. In the aims of educating the readership and in particular researchers at the beginning of their academic career, we started building a Knowledge base.

### Industry best practices

In keeping with the latest industry best practices we have updated several policies. Firstly, we have been transitioning towards full implementation of ORCID ID since early in 2017. As of 2019 it will be mandatory for corresponding authors and editors. At the same time we are educating our authors on the benefits of having this identifier.

Secondly, we are explaining more of our policies regarding the “openness” of the journal. Besides open access to articles and applying the Commons CC-BY-NC license, we are making explicit the “open data” aspect of open access, and we are encouraging authors to open their data with a suitable license of their choice. We are also educating the authors about the benefits of providing their data as open to access, use and reuse and how it can help their visibility as researchers, the discoverability of their outputs, and the trust they build with fellow scholars and publishers. For more detail, read the [Knowledge base](#) in the Backstage section of our web site.

### **Editorial board new term of office 2019-2022**

The first Term of Office of the ESNBU Editorial Board underwent a renewal in November after the set period of four years, 2015-2018. This involved the replacement of members, inviting others, and renewing some of the existing members for another term.

In this issue, we are paying tribute to Desmond Thomas, Tatiana Fed and Maria Stambolieva who are leaving to pursue other commitments and we are welcoming two new members of the Editorial board, Tadd Graham Fernée and Abdelmajid Bouziane, for the next term of office 2019-2022.

We are thankful to the leaving members, but we also owe gratitude to the ones who are staying to keep helping us make ESNBU an even better quality academic journal.

Meet the [new Editorial Board 2019-2022](#) on the ESNBU web site and find details about the [Editorial Board functions](#).

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who has been with us on this journey so far and who have contributed to the development of the journal.

Enjoy reading this thematic issue!

Stan Bogdanov,  
Managing Editor

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## THE GRADUATION PAPER IN TRANSLATION STUDIES: NUANCES OF CRITICAL THINKING

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### Abstract

Critical thinking skills play a vital role in a knowledge society and have a direct influence on the quality of teaching and learning. We aim at highlighting the way in which the graduation paper in Translation Studies can become an excellent opportunity to encourage students to test the applicability of key concepts from this field and to tackle research systematically. Based on our experience of supervising graduation papers on translation studies-related topics, we have identified students' typical approaches and recurring difficulties. This allows us to suggest possible solutions for the problems encountered, depending on each stage of the process. Our purpose as supervisors is to endow students with the cognitive flexibility they need in order to draw up an adequate research plan, use translation assessment criteria creatively and hone their critical skills for future real-life situations.

**Keywords:** research, critical thinking, translation studies, systematicity

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*“... the quality of everything we do is determined by the quality of our thinking.”*  
(The Foundation for Critical Thinking)

## **Preliminaries**

We live in the knowledge society, and the ways in which we use key concepts such as information and learning represent constant challenges. The permanent need to adapt to the changes and the increasing demands regarding the processing speed and volume, along with the analysis and structuring of data, requires enhanced analytical skills and heightened flexibility. The capacity to process, analyse and integrate new knowledge as well as to apply it with the highest degree of efficiency demands, arguably more than before, critical thinking skills or “good thinking skills [...] that can help us to make reliable decisions and acquire new knowledge quickly” (Lau, 2011: 1).

On the other hand, in a digital world in which communication and exchanges of information are taking place at unprecedented speed, interculturality and, primarily, globalisation, bring to the fore the translation process and demand a greater responsibility from translators. The diversity and increased availability of search engines and CAT tools, their use and integration into the translation process (sometimes from the very beginning to the very end) also require a closer look at the quality of translated texts, hence the need to define clearer standards and methodologies regarding the translation process assessment.

In this context, supervising graduation papers on translation studies-related topics is a good opportunity for educators and trainers to make sure that students are familiar with translation assessment principles and are able to apply them to various text types. Our experience in the Department of Applied Modern Languages, Faculty of Letters, Babeş-Bolyai University has taught us that this particular learning experience holds enormous resources.

## **The graduation paper**

We see the graduation paper as an important stage in building translator competence because it establishes useful overlaps between research methodology and translation theory, practice and translation quality assessment. It also gives educators and trainers a rather accurate tool for assessing third-year undergraduates with a view to giving them customised feedback throughout the preparation period.

This type of paper - similar in nature to a research project - enables us as trainers to check and assess both the students' information mining skills and their capacity to synthesise the data gathered to produce a coherent medium-length text according to a set of standards.

Starting from the definition of research as "a systematic investigation toward increasing the sum of knowledge" (*Chambers Dictionary*, 1989), the graduation paper as a whole should reflect the way in which students can manage specialized knowledge. This involves identifying, outlining and operating with concepts from their field of study extracting pertinent information, selecting and using bibliography, identifying a research problem, drawing up a case study, applying theoretical knowledge to solve practical problems and providing relevant examples.

As for the actual writing stage, its aim is to allow the supervisor to monitor and assess the way in which students succeed in presenting the information and describing the methods they employed. Essentially, the aim of such a synthesis can vary from case to case, along a continuum between the informative pole and the creative one. The originality of the student's research should be shepherded to include, underline and manifest personal contributions. These contributions should be utilised in assessing whether the student achieved certain objectives, e.g. highlighting another perspective, offering innovative explanations, providing illustrative examples and imagining new directions of study.

Before discussing the topics and methodology of a graduation paper in Modern Applied Languages and starting from the idea that "theory and practice are as inseparable in Translation Studies as they are in all other fields of human endeavour" (Williams & Chesterman, 2014, p. 2), we think that it would be useful to mention the key curricular areas at the undergraduate level. Some of the theoretical subjects students study during a three-year specialisation in Applied Modern Languages have a direct bearing on their graduation papers.

### **The Graduation Paper in Modern Applied Languages**

The Applied Modern Languages specialisation at our University involves an interdisciplinary path which develops along three directions:

- advanced language studies (two compulsory foreign languages, in theory, both B2 to C1);
  - They comprise theoretical and practical courses of grammar, speaking and writing techniques, lexicology, text typology, text analysis and text production, translation, cultural studies, communication techniques and mass media etc.
  - The linguistic preparation involves both contemporary language practice and specialised languages, with a focus on communication competences and techniques, translation techniques, the use of terminological databases, and familiarisation with the cultural perspectives and mentalities common to the countries in which the languages are studied.
- specialised subjects, such as economics, law, marketing, management, computer technology, European institutions and mechanisms of European integration etc.;
- compulsory internships destined to integrate and practise theoretical knowledge in real work environments, in order to acquire professional experience.

The graduation paper can be written in one of the two foreign languages studied; it also must contain a summary in the other foreign language, and a second one in Romanian. During the graduation paper defence, students must answer questions in both foreign languages and in Romanian.

The graduation paper is structured into a theoretical part and a practical part. The two can be presented either distinctively or combined, with theoretical considerations accompanied by examples. The choice depends to a large extent on the research type and topic, as well as on the selected methodology. The usual general structure (introduction, body, conclusion and, possibly, appendices) is nevertheless compulsory.

As we see, the main feature of Applied Modern Languages undergraduate curriculum is its interdisciplinarity. This is highlighted by the diversity of topics students approach for their graduation papers, but, in what follows, we focus only on translation-related topics.

## Theory and practice in translation-related graduation papers

The question regarding the interaction between theory and practice has permeated the debate regarding the usefulness of teaching translation theory (Chesterman & Wagner, 2002/2010; Baer & Koby, 2003). As Fawcett *et al.* (2010, p. xi) underline, it is a question with a multifold answer, with the mention that what stands out is the mutual influence of theoretical considerations upon practical translation decisions:

Firstly, there are the effects of theory on practice and the effects of practice on theory. Secondly, there is the opposition between theory as description, and theory as tool. And, thirdly, there are theories of translation and theories from outside translation. The first pair is in many ways the most tricky and seems to go to the heart of what it means to link theory and practice.

Needless to say, both the theoretical background and the review of the literature concerning a certain topic hold an undisputed place in the architecture of a graduation paper. In the case of translation theories, the classical dichotomy between free and literal translation, translation shifts (Catford, 1965/2000), translation procedures such as borrowing, calque, modulation and transposition (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995), or the divergent tendencies of foreignisation and domestication (Venuti, 2004) present many tools which allow us to have coherent discussions about translated texts. They are of great help for students too, even though their identification in texts is sometimes faulty, generally resulting from insufficient practice. It is in fact the classical example of theoretical knowledge confined to the perimeter of a class and/or exam, whose application to the students' research activity is not immediately obvious to them. Depending on the topic chosen (i.e. literary translation or specialised translation), functionalism and the Skopos theory (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014) hold more or less weight in the theoretical part of the graduation paper. This paper is—or should be—a moment when the journey comes full circle, and translation theories, whose main conceptual pillars have been motivated by debates around concrete texts, are put again to the test in order to check their validity.

As mentioned above, students tend to use positive or negative adjectives concerning the quality of the translation which are placed towards the extremes of the assessment scale. In general, moderate assessment opinions such as the ones used by

Chesterman and Wagner - that is, a translation is “more readable” than another (Chesterman & Wagner, 2002/2010, p. 8) or a translation represents “an acceptable version” which is “pleasant to read, easy to understand” (Chesterman & Wagner, 2002/2010, pp. 9-10) are usually overlooked.

The choice of the text type - literary versus non-literary, in a first stage - is important. In what follows, we will not go into such details, but limit ourselves to broader considerations that apply to both categories of texts.

### **Critical thinking**

Systematic research involves a clearly formulated methodology, a series of techniques and procedures applied in a logical succession. Therefore, the graduation paper, due to its specificity, should aim at honing the student’s ability “to think clearly and rationally, understanding the logical connection between ideas” (SkillsYouNeed, n.d.) in a systematic way — these attributes being, actually, the characteristics of critical thinking.

Critical thinking has been seen from different perspectives along the years: it was defined as “reasonable, reflective thinking about what to do and believe” (Ennis, 1962) and as “skilful, responsible thinking, that facilitates good judgment because it 1) relies on criteria, 2) is self-correcting and 3) is sensitive to context” (Lipman, 1988). Today, critical thinking is a key concept in many fields (and disciplines), including Translation Studies, if we consider the skills a translator must have. Developing abilities such as comprehension, creativity, self-monitoring, complex judgement and analysis faculties, and good translation assessment and translation review skills involves, largely, an active-reflexive learning style. As the common denominator of all these skills is critical thinking, the graduation paper is meant to nurture it, as this will allow them to improve both their thinking and their linguistic abilities.

More recently, while analysing the thinking skills needed in the contemporary world, Lau (2011) stresses two important features of critical thinking: 1) the interdependency of critical thinking and creativity; 2) its systematic character, which allows us to identify several subskills of the proficient critical thinker, namely the ability to:

- understand the logical connections between ideas;

- formulate ideas succinctly and precisely;
- identify, construct, and evaluate arguments;
- evaluate the pros and cons of a decision;
- evaluate the evidence for and against a hypothesis;
- detect inconsistencies and common mistakes in reasoning;
- analyse problems systematically;
- identify the relevance and importance of ideas;
- justify one's beliefs and values;
- reflect and evaluate one's thinking skills (Lau, 2011, p. 2).

Why are these two features so relevant for the graduation paper? On the one hand, students are very creative: given a particular topic, they are likely to find innovative ways of tackling it. There can be, of course, occasional exaggerations of an overenthusiastic mind, and not all approaches are justifiable in the academic context. These, however, can be toned down by self-reflection, monitoring of inconsistencies and criteria-based comparisons with other perspectives on similar topics. In other words, creativity and critical thinking intertwine constantly in students' work.

On the other hand, thorough research and a rigorous organisation of ideas provide a solid starting point. The students' ability to find an adequate wording for a hypothesis helps them focus on the selection of pertinent examples. Sifting through ideas and providing valid arguments for a certain opinion and refuting the unreliable are also valuable exercises.

Additionally, one of the most useful principles for the graduation paper in general—and for the field of translation, in particular—is that of constructive criticism. Students who analyse the translated version of their favourite book after enjoying it in the original might be very biased and give vent to emotions. For example, if proper names are translated into the target language because the translator deemed them as representative for the character's traits, the instinctive value judgment applied by students to the translation is that it sounds "awkward" because they are familiar with the source text sonority. At other times, they resort to categorical arguments, such as "this translation is great; the other one is awful". Much too often the negative label is attached because of certain omissions in the translated version which students see as

unacceptable, with the implacable attitude of the novice who has never translated large volumes of text. It is on such occasions that the ability to analyse problems in context and to evaluate the pros and cons of the translator's decisions plays an essential role.

The model proposed by Davies & Barnett (2015, p. 8) further refines the relationship between critical thinking and creativity. According to it, critical thinking involves both an individual and a sociocultural dimension and can be approached along different axes:

Critical thinking in higher education has, we contend at least six distinct, yet integrated and permeable, dimensions: (1) core skills in critical argumentation (reasoning and inference making), (2) critical judgments, (3) critical-thinking dispositions and attitudes, (4) critical being and critical actions, (5) societal and ideology critique, and (6) critical creativity or critical openness. Each of these, we believe, has a particular place in an overarching model of critical thinking.

While thinking in general is a cognitive ability that does not necessarily depend on education, being linked rather to one's *learning style, availability* and *motivation*, critical thinking, on the other hand, is closely linked to education—to an even larger extent to higher education. Developing skills such as analysing and interpreting data, assessment, explaining and supporting ideas with arguments, applying ideas or theories are indeed among the basic objectives in translator training. It is our duty as trainers to help students eventually apply this largely theoretical model in their professional life. For this, one may use various exercises which demand students' active participation: looking for several translation solutions; explaining their translation choices or preferences; supporting their points of view using relevant arguments; assessing their peers' work and giving feedback. Thus, the trainer's role is no longer to provide ready-to-use methods and solutions, but rather to create problems, to interrogate and to stimulate interaction. As Baer & Koby (2003, p. 8) put it,

We may hope to better prepare students for the workplace by offering them appropriate tools, but if our teaching methodology is of the traditional kind [...] we may fail to produce translators who are capable of the flexibility, teamwork, and problem-solving that are essential for success in the contemporary language industry, not to mention the creativity and independent thinking that have always been the hallmark of the finest translators.



## Experience-based comments and suggestions

Based on a decade-long experience of supervising graduation papers on translation studies-related topics, we have been able to identify several patterns in the way students approach this task and, as a direct consequence, to come up with a series of solutions that have proved to make students' work more efficient and constructive. Inevitably, the trainers' mission is easier.

### Planning the research

One of the most important stages in the preparation of the graduation paper is *planning*, for this is what allows obtaining relevant information from relevant sources. Thus, in the second undergraduate year, our students attend mandatory courses in *Information and Documentation Methodology* and *Academic Writing*. These courses are meant to familiarise them with searching, selecting and processing relevant information on a given subject. In other words, students are encouraged quite early to think of a topic for their graduation paper and even test whether their idea is likely to yield results. Our analysis of students' information and documentation practices indicates that they usually encounter a series of problems related to information gathering and selection.

To start with, after selecting a broad topic, most students have a hard time *defining the theoretical or practical framework*. As a consequence, the theoretical resources they find are not always the most relevant and, more importantly, cannot be easily organised conceptually, thematically or chronologically because they tend to be quite eclectic. As they lack rigorous resource selection criteria, students find it difficult to stop searching and end up spending too much time with this preliminary stage<sup>1</sup>. This is why it is important for the supervisor to discuss individually with each student and guide them in choosing the right keywords and, implicitly, in finding a fertile and solid research path. In a nutshell, the teacher's role at this stage is to help students understand the topic they are researching and to make sure they do not move on before having a clear direction in mind. A method that has proved efficient in our case consists

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<sup>1</sup>Most students only use the Google search engine and keyword search (more often than not, only one keyword). Few of them use advanced methods involving logical operators and combinations of keywords or syntagms. Moreover, the actual identification of the relevant keywords poses problems, and that entails the danger of deviating from the main topic and of selecting non-relevant sources.

of asking students to formulate a starting question they want to answer in the paper or a hypothesis they want to test. Very often, the simple fact that a question requires a yes or no answer is an indication that the student has not yet found a good starting point.

Moving to the next stage without a solid topic leads to difficulties in *integrating the theoretical part into the applicative one / linking theory to practice*, because the selected resources are not relevant and do not support the case study. More precisely, students do not know how to organise material so as to turn it into the backbone of their own original research, thus *highlighting the objectives of their case study*. Most often, they simply make a list of summarised ideas, quotations, and paraphrases: a “passive” display with no indication of the paper’s aim.

In order to get over these obstacles, students can be advised to use reading sheets. How they make them is of utmost importance. These notes can simply consist of lists of quotations, classifications and ideas, or they can be designed as *part of the student’s research process* on the selected topic (what has been said about it, who are the most relevant authors, how the topic has been tackled so far, what aspects have been dealt with, whether various problems have been solved or not, etc.). We can thus infer that critical thinking means here a permanent and careful monitoring of one’s own thinking and cognitive processes during the information and documentation stage: “What do I understand from what I have read?”, “In what way can this be useful for my research?” This active reading and documentation approach has two advantages. The first one is that students are constantly aware of the main objective of the research, as the latter is structured into three basic questions: “What do I want to do?”, “Why do I want to do it?” and “How do I want to do it?” The second advantage is that students are thus forced in a way to elaborate a strategy for pursuing the objective they set.

The way students tackle the selected material, the way they organise information and try to identify or formulate approaches actually reflects the extent of their ability to think critically, an essential ability at this stage of the research process.

### **Patterns in students’ approach to the graduation paper**

In our view, there are three constants in the way students envisage their work before being guided by the supervisor and, often, throughout the preparation of the paper to varied extents, in terms of their overall attitude and approach to methodology.

Firstly, whenever translation analysis is involved, we can see an all-too-natural tendency to hunt for mistakes. A natural tendency, if we consider that the education system – in our country, at least – often tends to view errors as something to spot and correct as quickly as possible, sometimes without any reflection as to the reasons which led to it, to the context that might justify the translator’s “faulty” approach. Moreover, throughout years of education, assessment is done according to grids which sanction mistakes, i.e. deviations from a certain norm. In other words, once in the position to “judge”, students consider that this automatically involves criticising. Reiss (2014, p. 3) finds a plausible explanation to this approach:

The students’ practical translation exercises and their examinations, whether on the elementary or more advanced levels, are “corrected” and graded, i.e., criticised and evaluated. Here again we may ask whether the correctors give sufficient attention to the range of possibilities offered, expected, or even desired. What criteria are employed beyond the obvious ones of vocabulary blunders and misunderstood grammatical constructions? To what extent does the corrector simply rely on his own feelings?

Secondly, we noticed that there is a *short range of topics* that spark every generation’s enthusiasm without the students being capable of finding arguments in favour of their potential choice. In our opinion, these topics are actually the most visible translation difficulties: cultural references, proper names, proverbs and idioms. They can indeed make excellent research subjects, but a student’s justification is usually limited to statements like, “I was totally surprised by how *quidditch* was translated into Romanian”, “I realised there’s no way to render that Romanian proverb in other languages” or “I’m sure this cannot possibly be translated into any other language”.

Thus, it is not surprising that, in the third place, it is a certain degree of *disarray* that characterises the first steps of students into graduation paper preparation. Briefly, they have an idea about the fascinating thing they would like to talk about, but no clues as to the how to tackle this first real research task in their lives. Also, in the initial stages of the work on the case study, their evaluation may be an illustration of the inability to see the forest from the trees. Too busy to identify the minutiae of the transfer from ST to TT, students draw lists of problems, followed by a sort of “categorising block”: assigning category names to sets of problems seems a daunting task.

Responding appropriately to these intuitive student behaviours requires teachers to answer essential questions about the role of the entire process:

- What do we assess in a graduation paper: the relevance and depth of the analysis, the original approach or simply the compliance with the existing norms/the adequate usage of existing theoretical instruments and models?
- How do we assess a graduation paper?

In our opinion, we must be realistic regarding the degree/type of originality we ask for at this level. The personal contributions can be achieved “by providing new data, by suggesting an answer to a specific question, by testing or refining an existing hypothesis, theory or methodology, by proposing a new idea, hypothesis, theory or methodology” (Williams & Chesterman, 2014, p. 2).

As to the second question, the official grading grid proposed by our department seems to give at least a partial answer, or at least a basis for discussion: relevance of the topic for the field of study)<sup>2</sup>, depth of analysis, coherence in the use of concepts, quality of the working hypothesis and validity of conclusions, methodology, style, length, references and citations, grammar and formatting.

### **Supervisors’ instruments**

Ideally, the supervisor should be able to maintain students’ enthusiasm, curiosity and critical tendency while at the same time channelling them towards an objective and structured paper. In order to achieve that, the following steps are of the essence at the very beginning of the work.

One should start by choosing the appropriate type of text for the subject the student wants to study. From experience, we know that the teacher’s experience is likely to be a better indicator as to the potential of a text or corpus than the student’s excitement, but this rule does not always apply. There are students with a highly analytical mind whose approaches can be very detailed and well-argued. A good supervisor should consider analysing suggestions before giving a verdict.

In close relation to the previous “step”, there is the choice of the right approach. First, it should be decided whether the student will analyse existing translations (if so,

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<sup>2</sup> In principle, it goes without saying that a paper accepted for defense has to have a relevant topic, but there may be a good reason for mentioning it in the grid: students will better understand the teacher’s requirements when the topic is selected.

whether he/she will look at one in particular or rather have a comparative view), will propose a translation of his/her own and explain his/her solutions or will both analyse existing versions and suggest personal solutions whenever appropriate.

Then comes the stage during which the two need to choose the elements to analyse/translate, with two main options available: one type of translation problem throughout a long text (e.g. translating colloquial language in a novel) or a thorough examination of all the difficulties in a short fragment.

The supervisor also must provide a list of model translation analyses both before<sup>3</sup> and after<sup>4</sup> the approach and the type of analysis have been decided upon. A lot of time is gained in this way, as students easily get an idea of what is expected of them, understand the need of precise terminology and are less likely to indulge in non-constructive subjective considerations. In this respect, we agree with Reiss (2014, p. 17): “In this kind of normal situation it is the type of text which decides the approach for the translator; the type of text is the primary factor influencing the translator’s choice of a proper translation method”.

Last but not least, the supervisor should provide a work calendar at the beginning of the academic year and insist on sticking to it. Otherwise, there is a double risk: students might start – due to their enthusiasm for the topic – by working on their case study before mastering the theoretical tools, and they might underestimate the time needed for actual writing. The calendar we have tested for a working interval of eight months is the following:

1) *first three months*: final choice of topic, provisional overview of the paper confirmed by the supervisor, indicative bibliography (with at least some of the titles already read), case study – discussed and agreed upon with the supervisor;

2) *fourth month*: draft of one theoretical chapter and detailed plan of the case study, detailed feedback from the supervisor;

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<sup>3</sup>A possible indicative list could be: Baker, Malmkjaer, 2001; Lungu Badea, 2005; Risterucci-Roudnicky, 2008; Venuti, 2004; Vinay, Darbelnet, 1995.

<sup>4</sup>Encyclopedias of translation, scientific papers on the same or on a related topic, PhD theses, graduation papers, master’s theses.

3) *fifth and sixth month*: draft of the other theoretical chapters and work on the case study in the background, detailed feedback from the supervisor;

4) *seventh month*: submission of the case study and detailed feedback from the supervisor;

5) *eighth month*: submission of the entire paper for final feedback.

### **Conclusion**

Our experience indicates that supervisors can build efficient methods of nurturing critical thinking based on the most common student behaviour patterns they notice. The guiding principle is that students should be given enough advice as to avoid wasting precious time (for example, using wrong documentation methods or making their own general planning of activities), but not be spared the essential steps of the process, even if they involve trial-and-error: selecting a valid topic, formulating the relevant starting questions, designing a research plan, etc. Moreover, while the theoretical part of the graduation paper needs a careful assessment of the potentially useful concepts, the case study puts the students' creativity to test. The students' arguments in favour of the applicability of certain concepts to the analysis of the original and translated versions of a text are often pleasant surprises. Binary oppositions such as foreignisation and domestication, addition and omission, are often not enough as umbrella-terms which account for the translation choices. A whole network of translation methods and procedures is therefore needed in order to identify the reasons behind certain target text options. This process provides students with a precious tool to use in their future professional life: the skill to think critically.

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## ACADEMIC TEACHING IN TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING IN RUSSIA: STUDENT EXPECTATIONS AND MARKET REALITY

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to develop a framework for translator and interpreter competence in an ever-changing professional environment and provide recommendations to improve academic teaching in translation and interpreting in Russian universities in order to meet the needs of the language industry. To this end, the author discusses the results of three surveys carried out in 2017-2018. In the first survey, chief executives and vendor managers of major Russian translation companies share their experience of hiring university graduates. In the second survey, young professionals entering the Russian translation and interpreting market reflect on their university experience versus the expectations they had when enrolling in translation and interpreting programs. In the third survey, teachers of translation and interpreting from Russian universities reflect on existing academic programs in translation and interpreting.

**Keywords:** translation, interpreting, translator and interpreter training, language industry, translation theory, translation practice

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### **Modern Russian translation and interpreting market demand and supply**

In recent years, any debate concerned with the developing language industry has inevitably involved a variety of issues of translator and interpreter education and training. The main topics under discussion relate to the competencies students acquire when translating into a foreign language (Beeby-Lonsdale, 1996), creation of a translation competence model (PACTE, 2003), comparative analysis of different programs of translator training (Pym & Torres-Symón, 2017), and exploration of class management skills in teaching conference interpreting (Setton & Dawrant, 2016), etc. Since there already exists a concise and elaborated competence framework, most questions of teaching translation in universities do not require discussion. This allows educators to equip their students “not only with a deep understanding of the processes involved but also with the ability to perform and provide a translation service in line with the highest professional and ethical standards” (EMT Competence Framework, 2017). The framework defines five main areas of competence which translation graduates need to acquire: language and culture, translation, technology, personal and interpersonal skills, and service provision.

Professional organizations and associations also contribute to a better understanding of translators and interpreters’ competence framework (NAATI Certification prerequisites, 2018). They provide their members with a detailed description of skill levels which characterize translators’ or interpreters’ performance levels (ILR skill level descriptions, 2007). In addition, there are industry-based competency frameworks, for instance, the competence framework for community interpreting in the field of healthcare (NHS Scotland Competency Framework for Interpreting, 2010), as well as ISO standards describing the requirements for translation and interpreting services, general guidance concerning developing and managing translation projects, etc. All these documents serve as a reliable foundation for creating educational plans and developing teaching techniques applicable for the improvement of the efficiency of translation and interpreting teaching.

However, the Russian culture of academic teaching in translation and interpreting differs from the European experience. Russian universities offer both bachelor’s and master’s degrees in translation. Thus, students learn foreign languages

and acquire professional skills simultaneously. Significantly, students are engaged in both translation and interpreting studies, even at bachelor's level. All future specialists majoring in "Theory and Practice of Translation" must be able to perform both translation and interpreting at a professional level.

This idea is supported by an analysis of 160 vacancies in translation and interpreting published in 2017-2018 on the HeadHunter website, the largest recruiting hub on the Russian Internet. Special attention was paid to the functions and responsibilities stated by the employers. The bulk of companies wanting to employ a specialist in translation and interpreting agree on the scope of work a young employee should be engaged in. They are looking not for a translator or an interpreter but for a 'universal soldier' – a professional capable of translating written texts, performing both consecutive and simultaneous interpreting, editing texts, and carrying out post-editing of machine translation. It means that probably quite soon we are going to meet a new generation of Russian multi-specialists that will be able to perform different professional tasks in versatile combinations.

In addition to professional responsibilities, Russian employers expect their employees – both freelancers and in-house workers – to be able to manage the teams of language specialists, conduct negotiations via the phone or any other means of communication, to prepare presentations and reference materials, to compile marketing information sheets. Thus, a translator has to be a designer, marketing analyst, and mediator – all in one. Certain companies want a professional capable of organising and hosting different events, such as conferences, board meetings, round-table talks, and festivals, etc. They also want their employees to be experts in intercultural communication and assistants for foreign specialists in Russia.

Despite these demanding skills requirements, the translating and interpreting profession remains popular among Russian high school graduates. 265 Russian universities offer bachelor's programs in Linguistics (Vuzoteka, 2018), more than two-thirds of which offer translation and interpreting. In addition, 43 universities offer translation and interpreting programs as their major specialization. A simple Google search reveals about 50 universities which offer master's programs in Conference Interpreting, Literary Translation, and Professionally Oriented Translation, amongst

others. Thousands of young translators and interpreters enter the market every year. Despite this the Internet is filled with hundreds of job offers for good translators and interpreters, since most of today's Russian university translation and interpreting graduates do not meet their future employers' expectations. One possible reason is the lack of a unified and concise competence framework which could serve as a starting point for universities in designing an effective translation and interpreting curriculum. The only available standard document, which could be used for this purpose, is the Federal State Educational Standard. This standard contains a list of competences and skills which the future translator and interpreter needs to acquire. Unfortunately, most of the competences included in this list are either outdated or too vague and unspecific. There is still no National Occupation Standard to set out the competences and skills required from Russian translators and interpreters.

The primary purpose of this study is to suggest a framework for translator and interpreter competence which will comply with market demand and provide recommendations for improvements in the teaching of translation and interpreting in Russian universities.

### **Translator and Interpreter teaching: the employer's perspective**

In order to help students choose their professional path, teachers of translation and interpreting need to be aware of employers' expectations. In 2017, 23 major language sector companies, from six Russian cities – Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod, Ekaterinburg, Chelyabinsk, and Omsk – were surveyed. The aim was to identify strengths and weaknesses among current university graduates. Respondents were also encouraged to share their own thoughts and ideas in the form of a free commentary. This proved to be very useful in providing a deeper insight into the problems. The results of the survey were published in 2017 (Malenova, 2017). Here I would like to share a brief outline in the context of two other surveys conducted in 2018. These will be described below.

The first group of questions concerned the most important skills and competencies for a language professional. Respondents were encouraged to give more than one answer. Thus, the percentage of answers exceeds 100%. The most popular answer (70% of respondents) was 'a high level of competence in the native language'.

The problem of native language competence amongst young people is not new. However, with respect to the language industry, it is a crucial matter since such people are expected to be a “linguistic gold standard”, with ramifications for future generations. Potential employers (60% of respondents) also emphasize the importance of good foreign language competence. One interesting comment was that certain university graduates know the foreign language better than their native one. They tend to make fewer mistakes using a foreign language, especially in writing.

Expectations of employees’ domain-related knowledge ranked third, as mentioned by 62% of the respondents. In their comments, the employers explained that they did not expect universities to teach students all possible terms and term combinations in all the domains of human activities. This would be an impossible task. They encouraged teachers to help students to develop the skill of effective information search, to elaborate their own algorithm of mastering an unknown domain while preparing for a translation process, and to be curious and inquisitive. The fourth most popular skill mentioned by respondents (45%) – the urge for constant improvements in skills – is closely connected with the previous one. The survey participants even suggested some ways of students’ professional development, such as taking part in volunteer projects, or working as translators at minor events (university conferences and festivals), etc. Employers prefer to hire a translation and interpreting specialist who has had some working experience while at university, rather than choose a graduate without such an experience. In their comments, respondents said that they would prefer applicants who had tried their future profession and therefore had no naïve ideas about their future careers. As one of respondents mentioned, ‘they should be prepared to find themselves not in a Hollywood blockbuster such as “The Interpreter” or “Arrival”, but in a screen version of Kafka’s novel’.

Some respondents (38%) said that an ability to work with CAT-tools was a definite advantage in their future employment. They also noted that today it is important not only to be an advanced user of one TM-program but also to be open to new challenges and to be ready to master any software used by the employer’s company. Some employers were even ready to teach their future employees and provide them with additional professional training concerning not only technical aspects of their work but other tools and skills connected with their field of expertise. In

their free comments, respondents mentioned that 'quite often the graduates themselves understand that they need more training, so companies give them some clues and hints, show the right direction rather than teach'. This does not mean that universities should be satisfied with waiting for companies to train their graduates. On the contrary, they need to work in close contact with potential employers and provide their students with a firm foundation for their further professional career.

Finally, yet importantly, respondents mentioned such skills as 'vigour and enthusiasm' (30%), 'expertise and flexibility' (30%), and 'communicative skills' (26%). They said they would hire a person who is mentally alert, competent, and ready to learn. This 'ideal' employee should have undergone 'intensive language and translation and interpreting training', be able 'to translate well', and have a broad outlook.

The second group of questions dealt with certain disadvantages of universities' graduates applying for a job in the industry. Respondents were asked to share their overview of the current situation in translation and interpreting teaching and to specify the skill gaps they encountered while working with students or 'fresh' graduates. Respondents were free to give more than one answer and to leave their comments.

Analysis of responses to the questions from this group showed that most of them correlate with the responses brought forward above. The most common answer in this group of questions would deal with native language skills. More than 90% of the employers were not satisfied with the applicants' proficiency in their mother tongue. The bulk of the complaints of the sort were connected with the quality of writing: while performing translation tests, the applicants tend to make a lot of spelling, punctuation, stylistic, and grammar mistakes. Employers also mentioned that some translators did not even use automatic spelling and grammar checkers embedded into MS Word. It is also interesting that answers to the questions concerning the applicants' proficiency in foreign languages repeat an established pattern – only 65% of the respondents complained of poor knowledge of a foreign language.

The second popular skill gap mentioned by respondents (78%) is connected to the so-called 'soft skills'. Respondents said that most of their young employees were careless, forgetful, and not diligent enough: they could miss the deadline easily, ignored

their translation briefs, and were rude to the clients and to their direct supervisors. They also sometimes failed to spur conversations on the phone, could not work in a team, and seemed not to be motivated enough to upgrade their skills. In other words, when students graduate their universities they are not ready for the realities of their profession being a life-learning process.

In their free commentary, respondent shared their own ideas of the skills that need to be enhanced in the process of university training. They spoke of a serious lack of general knowledge. According to respondents, translation and interpreting teachers should pay more attention to culture and geography of both Russia and countries of the languages studied, cultivate in their students some respect for their future profession, and stimulate them to develop 'translator's thinking'. Potential employers also mentioned the need for teamwork skills and the ability to use them. Some of respondents were very sincere in their comments and even said they were repelled by the graduates' 'hypertrophic arrogance' accompanied by a 'hypotrophic knowledge'.

The results of this survey should make us think of the future of translation and interpreting training because the main task of universities is not only to equip their students with all necessary knowledge but also to teach them how to behave in a modern professional environment, how to find their place on professional market and be successful there.

### **Translation and interpreting teaching: Views from the inside and outside**

In order to see a full picture of translation and interpreting teaching advantages and disadvantages, two new surveys were conducted in 2018 (Malenova, 2018). Their task was to understand how it is seen from the perspective of two other major stakeholders, i.e. university graduates working as translators and interpreters, and university teachers of translation and interpreting. The results of the survey were presented at the XI International Summer Translation School organized by the Union of Translators of Russia. Here I would like to elaborate on these results and to formulate some recommendations to improve academic teaching in translation and interpreting.

Both surveys in question were conducted simultaneously, although the respondents, as it was mentioned earlier, came from two different groups. Overall, there were 275

participants (232 graduates and 43 teachers) from Russia and all parts of the former Soviet Union, from Latvia to Kazakhstan. Most of the graduates who took part in the survey had vast experience in the field: 23% of respondents had been working in this industry for more than 10 years, 14% had been practising for more than 6 years. The majority of the survey participants were recent university graduates: 35% of them had been working in translation and interpreting for 2–5 years, while 28% did not have such experience because the length of their employment in the field was one year only. This statistics is very reassuring because it proves that these respondents have already learned about their profession at first hand. At the same time, most of them have only recently graduated from their universities, so they remember their training process very well.

Those who took part in the survey for translation and interpreting teachers can also be a reliable source of information because more than a half of them (54%) had been engaged in teaching for more than 10 years. Others were less experienced (37% had been teaching for 6–10 years, 7% had been doing that for 2–5 years and other 7% had only one year of practice). Nevertheless, their insight was very useful. It is very important to add that the respondents who took part in the survey as teachers proved to have a considerable amount of experience in translation and interpreting practice. 42% of them were constantly engaged in providing these services, 42% of respondents did it from time to time, 14% used to work as translators and interpreters in the past. Only 2% of respondents had never tried to work in this field of expertise. This means that teachers who took part in the survey were very well aware of the profession's peculiarities. Thus, a myth of a teacher who knows about translation only in theory is just a myth.

The surveys included questions regarding the practices of teaching translation and interpreting, academic disciplines taught in BA and MA programmes, and the respondents' reflections of their teaching and learning experience. The recurrent theme in the surveys concerned a balance of theory and practice in the programmes. Graduates and teachers (as the respondents from these two groups will be called in this research) were asked the same questions. This approach proved to be very instrumental regarding the purpose of the whole research. The idea was to make participants from both groups elaborate on the same issues and then analyze their answers in comparison.

The first question for the respondents from both groups was: 'How would you evaluate the practical use of your curriculum/curriculum, according to which you were taught?' As predicted, the answers given by teachers and graduates were sometimes directly opposite. Most teachers (65%) believed that their curricula were very useful and that future translation and interpreting specialists were prepared for their future work rather well, 15% called their programs extremely useful and claimed that teachers were able to provide future translators and interpreters with all knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in their future careers. Although 20% of colleagues had some doubt, they answered that their programs formed just a general overview of the profession. On the other hand, the majority of graduates (51%) said their university curricula provided them with a general overview of the profession, 5% of them even stated that their university experience proved to be useless. Nevertheless, 39% of respondents were quite satisfied with their university experience, and 15% claimed that all they knew about their profession they learned at their universities, which is very reassuring.

If we come to the question concerning the balance of theoretical and practical classes, this opposition between teachers and graduates becomes more extreme. While the bulk of teachers (61%) thought their programmes had an optimal balance of theoretical and practical disciplines, exactly the same amount of graduates (61%) were sure that they had too much theory they never applied in their actual practice. Some of the graduates tried to explain this fact saying that 'theory and practice did not coincide', 'I didn't feel any connection between theory and practice because there were no practical examples on theoretical classes, and in practical classes we were never reminded of any theory'. Answers to the question about the theoretical course in Translation Theory prove this pattern. Most of the teachers (58%) believed that their course in Translation Theory was practice-oriented and very useful for students. On the contrary, 60% of graduates were sure that the Translation Theory course they took as students was too theoretical and did not give them any sense of the profession. We can see the same picture when we analyze the responses to the question 'Are theoretical disciplines (Theory of Grammar, Lexicology, and Stylistics) useful in students' future careers?' 57% of teachers were sure that these courses would be very instrumental in their students' practice. However, the graduates' answers contradict this opinion. 56% of graduates claimed that these courses provided them with just a vague understanding



of what Linguistics was about, and proved to be useful only for the purpose of writing their Bachelor or Master thesis. Nevertheless, graduates admitted that this knowledge was not useless. It was not the theory they rejected, but rather the way it was presented by their teachers. Here are some comments of the graduates: 'I realized the need for theoretical disciplines after 7 years of real work experience', 'Theory is fine but it was delivered in such a boring way... I found only Lexicology and Stylistics quite interesting and useful', 'Phonetics Theory is hell', and 'These disciplines were taught in a terrible way. I had to study everything myself and some of these studies proved useful'.

These answers to the questions concerning the balance of theory and practice are of a diagnostic nature. They reflect the approach used in the Russian tradition of translation and interpreting teaching. Teachers prefer to load their students with theoretical knowledge while students act as passive listeners. As a result, students consider these classes boring and useless. The best way to learn something is not to listen to the lectures but to retrieve the knowledge yourself through facilitated learning, reading and discussion. If university teachers show the correlation between theory and practice and facilitate students to acquire rather than to consume knowledge, the results of the next survey will be different.

The survey included question concerning different aspects of translation and interpreting training that have always been a problem for many universities, such as teaching Russian for translators, the way the graduation thesis is composed and defended and the place of information technologies (IT) in the curricula. These issues still prove to be a sore point that is why the graduates evaluated their education quality in this respect as rather poor. Despite teachers' strong belief that their students got enough practical training in their native language (72%), graduates did not agree with this opinion. According to 60% of graduates, they only had a theoretical course in Russian Studies. Proficiency in the native language is extremely important for future translation and interpreting specialists, considering the fact that employers, as it can be seen from a previous section of this research, are very concerned with this aspect of students' professional training. Therefore, special attention should be given to approaches to teaching Russian as a first language in academic programs.

Another problematic issue is the graduation thesis which can be a useful tool in translator and interpreter teaching practice. Only 35% of graduates stated that writing and defending a graduation qualification paper (as it is referred to in Russian universities) provided them with useful experience and helped form a deeper understanding. Some added that their research topic predetermined the direction of their further professional development. Most graduates (65%) admitted that time spent on their graduation papers was wasted. 5% of the respondents did not even remember what their graduation paper was about. Teachers shared the same view: only 41% of them were convinced that the process of research might help form the necessary professional skills. Nevertheless, 40% of teachers believed that the research process, in general, helps students develop critical thinking and expertise in a narrow field of Linguistics.

Graduates' answers concerning the benefit of IT classes led to more conclusions. When ranking the subjects, many graduates considered IT in Linguistics (IT Technologies in Linguistics) useless. More than 30% of the respondents stated that they had never attended such a course. Another 30% stated that they had not acquired any useful information applicable to everyday practice. Considering the modern trends in the translating and interpreting industry, where the ability to use information technologies and professional software is a general requirement, these answers seem strange. That is why teachers were asked about the content of such courses in their universities. It turned out that only in 33% of cases students worked with CAT-tools and special software in the framework of IT course. 14% of teachers replied that they did not have such a course in their curricula, 17% said that this course was used to teach students how to use PCs and the simplest software. However, the worst thing is that 36% of colleagues had no idea concerning the content of this course. In this case, these are students who suffer from such an approach: they either never acquire information about CAT-tools, or have to study the same material in the framework of different courses. Graduates' answers also indicate that in some universities it is common to have two or even three theoretical subjects that are absolutely alike (for example, Introduction to Linguistics, General Aspects of Linguistics, History of Linguistics), and the same information (and even the same examples) is repeated by different teachers. On the one hand, as Russians say, repetition is the mother of skill. On the other hand, if this repetition does not contribute to the students' professional skills, it may be considered unnecessary.

Graduates were also asked to make two Top-10 lists, one including the 10 least useful disciplines they studied during their university studies and the other including Top-10 of the most useful classes that helped them in their further careers. The first list started with the 'Federal component' disciplines, which are included in each curriculum in the Russian Federation. They were Philosophy, History, Physical Education, and Principles of Personal and Social Safety. Graduates also mentioned some theoretical subjects, such as Grammar Theory, Phonetics Theory, General Linguistics, Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Statistics. They also sometimes mentioned very field-specific subjects, such as Valeology, Argumentology, Orthology and Cognitive Linguistics. Often, graduates admitted that the main problem was not in these disciplines themselves, but in the way they were taught. There were such comments as 'no teacher could tell what the essence of the subject was', 'in most cases these courses were delivered for the sake of delivering. On the other hand, there is good news. Most of the graduates who had worked in translation and interpreting sphere for more than 6 years admitted that all the knowledge acquired in the university was useful in some way. It is clear that there is no useless information when we are talking about a good professional. However, it is important to make students understand that.

The top-10 of useful subjects included practical classes such as Practical Course in Translation, Practical Course in a Foreign Language, Consecutive Interpretation, Simultaneous Interpretation, Grammar Practice, Translation Theory, Business English, Technical Translation, Phonetics and Military Translation. Graduates also complained that they would have preferred to have more practice. Some said that their interpreting course was too short. Others would like to have more classes in CAT-tools and translation technology. Universities also understand this need for additional practical training and provide their students with different types of internships. 32% of teachers mentioned internships in the university departments. In 65% of cases, students were offered internships in at different companies. 58% of teachers mentioned that their students often worked as volunteers at various international events. In 46% of cases, teachers invited translation and interpreting specialists who gave classes, delivered lectures, and organized workshops for future translators and interpreters. The total percentage of answers amounts to more than 100% because many universities combine these options to show their students different sides of their future profession.

## Conclusion

A thorough analysis of the surveys conducted allows us to develop a framework for translator and interpreter competence that could be helpful for both teachers working at universities and students trying to build their careers in a dramatically developing language industry. The competence framework suggested includes the same areas of competence as EMT Competence Framework-2017. However, it encompasses certain knowledge and skills due to the peculiarities of demand and requirements of Russian translation and interpreting market.

1. Language and culture competence. Translation and interpreting profession is all about languages, their correct usage, the absence of mistakes, and following the language norm. It is important to convince students that they are nothing less than ambassadors of language and culture: people who define the future of their native language and the way it will be used. As the surveys show, it is extremely important to pay attention to developing proficiency not only in a foreign language but in Russian as well. Teachers should encourage their students to study Russian more and practice their speaking and writing skills. A special course in Russian for translators and interpreters could be a good way for acquiring the necessary level in this area of competence.

2. Translation and interpreting competence. As it was mentioned above, Russian reality requires students to be capable of rendering both translation and interpreting services. It is the main difference compared to the European approach, where translators and interpreters study separately. It is a hard task to bring up a professional with a high competence in these two areas just in four years. Thus, a good way to provide students with an opportunity to be successful in the future is proper career guidance. Young students often have quite a vague understanding of their future profession. Sometimes they enter the university just to obtain a diploma; sometimes they want to study foreign languages for their future career in another field, but they often tend to have an idealized image of their future profession. It is very important to tell them about all the pros and cons of it, to explain how they can find their place on the market. Starting with their first year at university, future professionals should learn about the skills vital to becoming successful in the field, about possibilities of extra learning and additional qualifications using online courses and platforms. It is also

important to organize mentoring for each student through their educational path, so they could achieve an advanced level of competence required of language industry professionals.

Effective theoretical classes could also equip students with the skills and knowledge encompassed by this competence. As the analysis of the surveys shows, both teachers and students are concerned with the content of theoretical courses. Thoughtless rote learning of definitions does not contribute to students' future careers. Theory is very important and it should be used to develop students' critical thinking, to help them understand the key aspects of translation and interpreting practice through the prism of theoretical patterns. Theory and practice must be interconnected; theoretical classes should be aimed at broadening the students' worldview and developing their abilities to use procedures of analysis and synthesis both in their research and in translation and interpreting practice.

3. Technology competence. With the rapid development of translation technology, it is important for the universities to be at the very edge of it. Universities must equip their students with skills and knowledge they can use to implement different translation technologies – CAT-tools, machine translation, and corpus-based tools – within the translation process. Traditional IT-classes are clearly not enough for future language professionals to be successful in the field. The survey participants support this idea and in the free comments emphasize their need in acquiring this competence. Considering the fact that major providers of language solutions for translators offer different academic programs for Russian universities, it is not a problem to include such a course into an academic curriculum.

4. Personal and interpersonal competence. Soft skills are as important as hard skills. It is vital to teach students how to communicate using their language skills. It is very important to discuss the issues of translation and interpreting ethics, rules of communication, business etiquette, etc. A very effective way of doing that is to organize business role-playing games, case studies of real-life situations which can emerge in the course of real work. Moreover, the translation and interpreting teacher should act as a role model. He or she could become a great example for the students, a professional

worthy of emulation. In this case, by our own example we may teach students how to organize their communication processes in a professional environment.

5. Service provision competence. For Russian universities, this competence is an extra mile to go. This competence “covers all the skills relating to the implementation of translation and, more generally, to language services in a professional context – from client awareness and negotiation through to project management and quality assurance” (EMT Competence Framework, 2017). It is clear that to be successful in the language industry, future professionals must be aware of current demands of the language industry, to comply with professional codes and standards, and take into consideration all stakeholders’ requirements and expectations. Despite this, most Russian universities do not have any courses concerned with these issues. There is no doubt that students will benefit from this course a lot. It may become an excellent starting point for their successful professional careers and will help them to find their place in an ever-changing professional environment.

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# EDUCATION IN LOCALIZATION: HOW LANGUAGE SERVICE PROVIDERS BENEFIT FROM EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

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## Abstract

The purpose of the research was to examine whether or not partnerships between language services organizations and institutions of higher education have a positive impact on students, the educational institutions, partnering companies, and on the language services industry as a whole. We interviewed key educational institutions within the United States as well as a select few in Europe who closely partner with organizations within the language services sector to determine whether or not their partnering experiences had a positive effect on student enrolment, student participation, post-graduate success, and appropriate job placement within the language services industry. Likewise, we interviewed leaders in the language services industry to better understand whether or not they found the partnerships to be beneficial for their own organization, and for the industry as a whole. With regard to the key players we researched, all seemed to be in favor of partnerships, and all shared tangible reasons why these partnerships are a win for all involved. Although our research seems to indicate that – at least at present – there are only a limited number of these partnerships around the globe, there is a growing interest and desire for this number to grow in the years ahead.

**Keywords:** localization, language service industry, educational partnership

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## **Building partnerships with institutions of higher learning**

Where do project managers go to find the most qualified localization experts in the language services field? Are they looking for hands-on experience or are they interested in those who are brand new but have earned a degree in localization? How worthwhile is it, for language services providers to partner with institutions of higher education?

For decades, there have been translation and interpreting degrees offered at accredited educational institutions around the globe, but many of these programs have remained fairly traditional. This unwillingness to change – this resistance to adapt to a new educational model – may end up negatively impacting on their enrollment numbers.

More and more professionals in the field of localization are teaming up with institutions of higher education. They offer guest speaking engagements, lectures, and even run several classes. Moreover, while many colleges and universities continue to offer traditional translation and interpretation courses, building partnerships with localization experts might end up being a lifeline by connecting these institutions with the ever-growing language services industry. In fact, some argue that the death of the traditional translation degree is going to arrive within the next decade or so. Are institutions of higher education paying attention? Are they readying themselves for this possible shift?

The world *is* changing, and the fields of translation and interpreting are changing along with it. Graduates would be well served to have a growing understanding of machine translation (MT), computer-assisted technology tools (CAT tools), and translation memory (TM). In other words, they should be leaving school well equipped to enter the localization field. Gone are the days when translators could simply look at the task at hand, consult their industry-specific dictionaries, and translate away. The same can be said for the interpreting space. Translators and interpreters are now finding it more and more necessary to embrace technology that not only enhances their work but also speeds up the process.

With a familiarity of the universities around the world that cater to the localization industry, project managers can zero in on each candidate's background, expertise, and possible hands-on experience, but this insight can offer project managers

even more – networking. Contacting various colleges and universities around the world to offer a speaking engagement, a lecture, or even a seminar in localization is definitely a win-win-win:

#### Student benefits

- Finding future employers and places for internships
- Meeting industry representatives
- A chance to better understand the language services industry

#### Language Service Providers benefits

- Channels for finding new staff and freelance resources
- Opportunities to influence the quality of translation and interpreting graduates
- Knowledge transfer partnerships with universities

#### Benefits to universities

- Access to a regional and international pool of companies for student placements
- Access to employers in the industry for the exchange of information
- Updates and notifications regarding industry trends and best practices

Project managers bear a lot of responsibility. Creating and maintaining a team environment, meeting established objectives, producing high-quality end products and services, mediating conflict, communicating with clients and upper management, and negotiating time lines are just a few of what seems to be an endless list of tasks. Hiring the right employees to help accomplish these tasks and maintain a steady workflow is critical to a project manager's success. Knowing which colleges and universities are offering the most relevant programs in localization would save project managers a lot of time and effort in their search, but there is one more key benefit – becoming educational influencers.

Offering to partner with educational leaders can help to ensure the courses are in-line with the fast-paced, ever-changing language services industry. The first step, of course, is knowing where these institutions are around the globe, and reaching out. There are a growing number of colleges and universities worldwide that now offer individual courses, as well as certificates in the field of localization. Some even offer undergraduate and graduate degrees. However, are the courses truly offering a robust localization experience? The best advice that professionals offer is to scrutinize the program's syllabus – just how many classes toward the certificate or degree actually focus on localization? Just one?

Maybe two? Do those classes reflect a true localization experience, or is the title being used more or less to attract students? Reaching out to these institutions and offering your expertise in the field of localization might just be what they need without their even knowing it. Building partnerships with institutions of higher learning might end up being a lifeline to traditional translation and interpreting programs.

## **European university and industry partnerships**

### ***Elia Exchange***

The ELIA Exchange (European Language Industry Association) is a great place to start. Open to industry stakeholders, students, and recent graduates, the ELIA Exchange offers valuable resources to connect through webinars, introductory courses in language services, discussion forums, volunteer opportunities, and more.

### ***GALA***

As a leader in supporting the language services industry, advancing technology, and creating valuable communities, GALA also offers a plethora of resources for both instructors and students.

Below are examples of localization project managers that have already benefitted from partnering with institutions of higher education.

### ***University of Helsinki***

Anu Carnegie-Brown, the Managing Director of Sandberg Translation Partners Ltd (STP) sums it up best:

Because STP employs more in-house translators than an average LSP, we have a comprehensive internship programme, which initially led me to working closely with UK and Nordic universities in 2010 in order to bridge the gap between the academic and the commercial translation worlds and improve the skills of the translation graduates we employ. (Carnegie-Brown, 2018)

Ms. Carnegie-Brown is no stranger to partnering with institutions of higher education. In 2013, she co-wrote and ran STP's first credit-awarding course at the University of Helsinki. The course focused on translation project management because, as she puts it, "translation courses did not cover this topic at all, yet it's an integral part of the work even if you end up being a freelance translator."

The following year, Ms. Carnegie-Brown wrote the curriculum for a 5-credit course for the University of Helsinki entitled, "Introduction to the Translation Industry" which was considered groundbreaking at the time as it included the partnerships of seven Finnish translation companies and four European developers of language technology software that all cooperated to teach the MA translation students. The course comprises classroom-based learning, independent self-study, class presentations, and compulsory visits to local LSPs. Topics cover the global translation market, job opportunities in the translation industry, language technology including Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT) and Quality Assurance (QA) tools, translation management systems, machine translation solutions, a project management workshop, and two books written by industry practitioners.

### ***University of Surrey***

In a four-week business challenge workshop embedded in the "Business and Industry aspects of the Translation Profession" module, the University of Surrey aimed to help MA translation students adopt business-like attitudes and thinking as a way forward in their careers within the translation and localization industry. It helped students to develop a variety of transferable skills and to empower them to think about themselves not only as future members of this industry but also as its future leaders.

The project involved participants from the university's Centre for Translation Studies and the Surrey Business School, STP, and four business mentors. STP prepared and presented four authentic challenges they were facing as an organization and gave students access to their production manager for the duration of the workshop, welcoming students to their headquarters. Students worked to develop solutions to these challenges with the help of expert business mentors which resulted in student presentations to industry leaders, mentors, tutors, and peers.

Dr. Joanna Gough, a lecturer in translation studies at the University of Surrey, ensures that her MA students graduate with a clear knowledge of the current state of the industry, including the latest developments:

The students in our translation and interpreting programmes learn the latest trends and technologies... this knowledge is complemented by various seminars and hands-on workshops given by professionals and industry experts... in the same module, we have a four-week workshop in collaboration with the Surrey Business School, a translation

company (Sandberg Translation Partners), and business mentors from outside the industry. In this workshop the students grapple with specific, authentic business challenges set by STP. They carry out independent research, gather information directly from STP, visit the company, and with the help of the mentors, come up with a business solution to their assigned challenge... This type of authentic, project-based learning is very effective. (Gough, 2018)

As part of their MA and Interpreting courses, the University of Surrey offers CAT, Translation Memory (TM), Machine Translation (MT), subtitling, advanced corpus tools, technology-mediated interpreting, and re-speaking, as well as business and industry aspects of the language industry.

### **American universities and industry partnerships**

#### ***Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey***

While many American institutions claim to offer certificates as well as undergraduate and graduate degrees focused on localization, there are surprisingly very few that actually put their money where their mouth is – one such university is the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey (MIIS). MIIS weaves localization content throughout their master’s degrees in translation, translation and interpretation, and in conference interpretation. From hands-on experience with a variety of CAT-tools, to the study of localization project management, multilingual desktop publishing, software, website and games localization, MIIS is fully committed to the localization experience.

We spoke with Jon Ritzdorf (2018) who works full time at Moravia as a solutions architect and teaches part-time at MIIS, the University of Maryland, and NY University. Mr. Ritzdorf has been involved in the field of localization for close to 20 years. In fact, it was almost 20 years ago when MIIS started offering workshops and classes in localization before “localization” was even a thing. In 2000, he and the other translation majors were taking workshops in software localization and full semester-long courses in CAT and Terminology Management. To say that MIIS was a pioneer in the localization space from an educational standpoint is clearly an understatement.

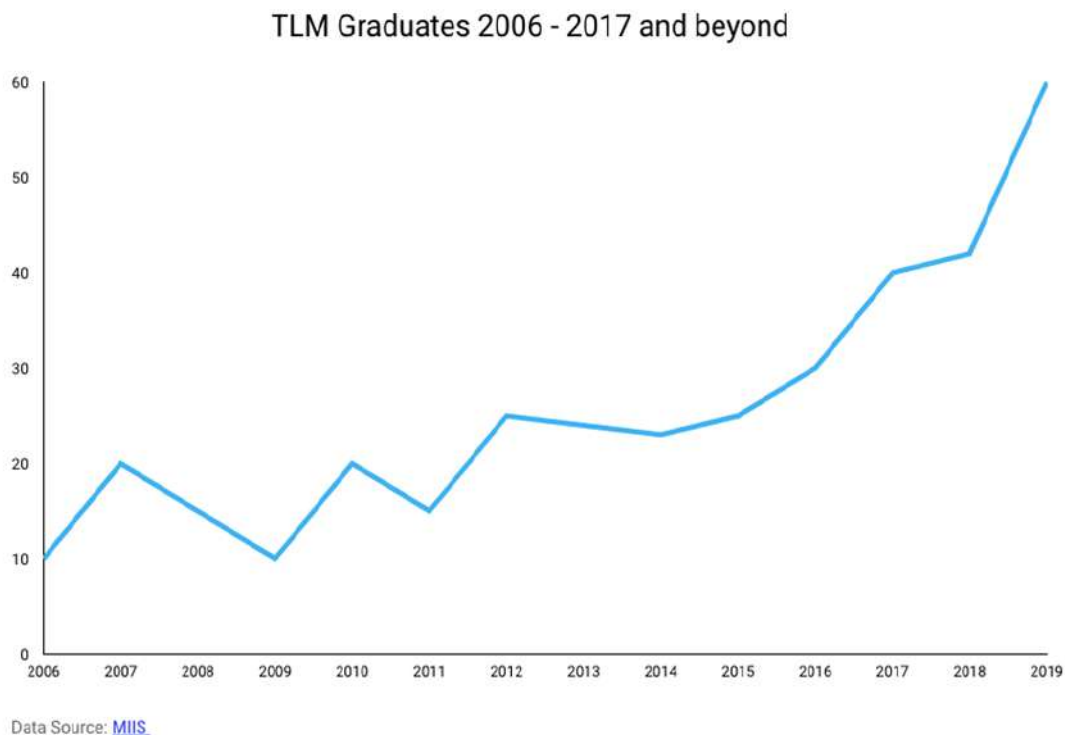
According to Mr. Ritzdorf, MIIS now offers “a full army of courses and a dedicated staff of full-time professors in the field of localization... No other institution has the

same variety of course work, [nor] the breadth and depth that MIIS has...” For roughly a decade now, MIIS has offered a master’s degree in Translation and Localization Management (TLM), and their enrollment numbers continue to rise year after year.

Max Troyer, Program Chair and Associate Professor for the Translation and Localization Management (TLM) program, also weighed in on MIIS's leadership in the localization space. Mr. Troyer, who teaches website localization, multilingual desktop publishing, and audio-visual localization, shared some interesting data with us about the upward trend in localization graduation at MIIS:

2011 started the upward trend. We made some big changes to the program in 2017, adding a specialization that doesn’t require near-native in the applicant’s second language, and that resulted in our program doubling in size for 2019 graduates. For the fall 2018 enrollment, we’re seeing the same numbers as last year (about 60 incoming students). (Troyer, 2018)

The trend is demonstrated by the graph below:



*Figure 1.* Translation and Localization Management (TLM) graduates by year (Johnson, 2018a).

### ***University of Washington***

Where do experienced professionals turn to when their industry starts to shift toward localization? They certainly cannot return to full-time studies, but they do need access to programs that will introduce new concepts and advance their skills in order to

stay competitive. The University of Washington has successfully tapped into this demographic with its Certificate in Localization: Customizing Software for the World:

- Part I Introduction to localization
- Part II Localization engineering
- Part III Localization project management

Nevertheless, these courses at the University of Washington are not just for those already in the business world and in need of a quick introduction or refresher. They also work well for those entering the field and for those wishing to advance in their careers. We spoke with Agustín Da Fieno Delucchi (2018), the program's principal advisor. Mr. Delucchi has been in the computer industry for nearly 30 years, 20 of which have been devoted to international software development. With experience as a terminologist, language specialist, translator, localization engineer, program manager, localization architect, as well as geopolitical risk manager, Mr. Delucchi is perhaps the perfect example of how to successfully partner language services experts with education.

### **Reflecting the needs of the language services industry**

Although we are highlighting very specific institutions of higher education, this is not to say that others are not following suit. We caught up with Rebecca Brazzale, the Assistant Director for the Center of Language Studies at Brigham Young University, and here is what she had to say,

Post-MT is a growing field. We insist that our graduates are comfortable using the technology tools associated with efficient translation... Our translation/localization [programs] are coordinated with the efforts of our linguistics program, which incorporates the corpora studies, machine translation, [and] machine learning. We also bring in industry professionals to provide feedback on our program. (Brazzale, 2018)

**Appendix 1** presents a list of a number of universities around the globe which are perhaps beginning to advance their translation and interpretation courses to better reflect the language services industry and its increasingly evolving needs.

**Appendix 2** presents a list of universities which have not yet established partnerships with language services but may be open to collaboration.

### **Conclusions**

There are still only a handful of post-secondary programs around the globe that offer advanced courses specifically geared to localization. Although some argue that a

formal education is not necessary since on-the-job training in language services will give you everything you need, there is definitely another side to the coin. LSPs who team up with willing academic partners have a lot to gain. They will have a hand-picked, engaged audience who will listen to everything they have to share about the industry (and about their own company). They will have a say in how to mold and shape the localization programs (thereby having a positive influence on the industry as a whole). They will have at their fingertips, the best and the brightest future job candidates. It all depends on how you define change - by what you have to give up, or by what you have to gain. LSPs who team up with willing academic partners have a lot to gain:

- They will have a hand-picked, engaged audience who will listen to everything they have to share about the industry (and about their own company)
- They will have a say in how to mold and shape the localization programs (thereby having a positive influence on the industry as a whole)
- They will have at their fingertips, the best and the brightest future job candidates.

It really comes down to how you feel about change – should you resist it or embrace it? The choice is yours to make.

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## APPENDIX 1

Table 1

Universities beginning to advance their translation and interpretation courses

Institution & Location	Degree offered	Course title	Syllabus insight
<b>Beijing Culture and Language University</b> <i>China</i>	Undergraduate Master's PhD	Localization Direction; Master of Translation; Translation Technology and Localization	CAT Tools, Project Management, Localization Management; partnerships with enterprises and government
<b>Kaunas University</b> <i>Lithuania</i>	Master's	Master in Translation and Localization of Technical Texts	Localization of software, websites, and video games; translation technology, project management, and translation of audio-visual media
<b>Kent State University</b> <i>USA</i>	PhD	Translation Studies	CAT tools, Project Management, Localization
<b>KU Leuven</b> <i>Belgium</i>	Certificate and post-graduate	Translation Technology Summer School; Specialized Translation	Geared toward professionals, graduate students, translation teachers, and localization managers who have no or little experience with translation and localization technologies – Speech recognition, multilingual workflow management software and games localization, CAT tools, terminology management, MT and post-editing
<b>Swansea University UK</b> <i>(Wales)</i>	Certification and Master's	Professional Translation MA	Advanced translation work on general, administrative, and technical text types, training in industry-standard CAT tools; Public Service Interpreting, audiovisual translation, MT, software localization, terminology management, video making/digital publishing, etc...
<b>TH Köln</b> <i>Germany</i>	Master's	Conference Interpreting	CAT tools, project management
<b>Universidad Alfonso X el Sabio</b> <i>Spain</i>	Post Graduate	Experto en Tradumática, Localización y Traducción Audiovisual (Expert in Tradumatics, Localization and Audiovisual Translation)	Software, website and videogames localization and learning CAT tools.
<b>Universidad de Cádiz</b> <i>Spain</i>	Master's	Audiovisual Translation	Translation techniques applied to subtitling, dubbing, subtitling for the hearing impaired and localisation, relating to the stage of translation itself and use of the most important software.
<b>Universidad Intercontinental</b> <i>Mexico</i>	Certificate / Diploma	Specialized Translation and Professional Interpretation	Professional internships in translation agencies in Mexico or abroad; Combines professionalism with the use of new technologies to train translators for the future; graduates will be better prepared to compete with any translator in

			the world in terms of productivity, quality control, performance, use of new technologies, project management and professionalism; A unique module is taught in Mexico and Latin America on the "Localization of video games and web pages" by one of the best video game localizers, earning several awards in Spain.
<b>Universidade do Porto</b> <i>Portugal</i>	Master's	Translation and Linguistics Service	Multimedia Translation, correctly use terminology related to subtitling, dubbing, audio-description and to the translation and localization of web pages or localize and use the different resources that are available on the Internet for the different types of translation approached during the seminar are some of the tasks included.
<b>Université de Charles Gaulle</b> <i>France</i>	Master's	Traduction et Adaptations Cinématographiques	Knowledge of tools, methodologies and modern translation for all forms of audiovisual adaptation; Dubbing, subtitling, voice-over, video game translation, subtitling for the deaf and hearing impaired.
<b>Université de Québec en Outaouais</b> <i>Canada</i>	Graduate Diploma	Localization and Hypermedia	Specialization: Computer-assisted translation and terminology, localization and hypermedia
<b>Université de Strasbourg</b> <i>France</i>	Master's	TCLoc – Technical Communication and Localization	CAT tools, project management, translation, interpreting, conference interpreting, localization management, localization engineering, computational linguistics
<b>University College London</b> <i>UK</i>	Certificate	Online course in localization	Intro to software localisation; Translatable components; Localizing resource files; Localising online help; Screenshooting and localising graphics; Software testing and bug logging
<b>University of Limerick</b> <i>Ireland</i>	Master's	Multilingual Computing and Localisation	Internationalisation requirements and their implementation; The critical analysis and research of translation technologies; The automation of the localisation process in what has been called the Localisation Factory; Business organisation and international business practices.
<b>Zhaw Zurich</b> <i>Switzerland</i>	Bachelor's	Multilingual Communication and Technical Communication	CAT tools, translation, interpreting, Localization management, Project Management, Conference interpreting

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## APPENDIX 2

Table 2

*Universities without established partnerships with language services but may be open to collaboration*

<b>Institution &amp; Location</b>	<b>Degree offered</b>	<b>Course title</b>	<b>Syllabus insight</b>
<b>Ollscoil na hÉirann, Gaillimh</b> <i>Ireland</i>	Master's	Advanced Language Skills	Interlingual subtitling, elements of analysis of film discourse and audiovisual translation and Hands-on workshops with short subtitling projects.
<b>Stellenbosh University</b> <i>South Africa</i>	Bachelor's	Language and Culture	Careers in professions requiring expertise in languages and culture, the media, the diplomatic service, education, publishing, tourism and the translation industry.
<b>Università di Bologna</b> <i>Italy</i>	Master's	Screen Translation	Specialize in translation for film, television, theatre, web; Accessibility to multimedia or head of multilingual versions of audiovisual production company
<b>University College Cork</b> <i>Ireland</i>	Master's	Translation Studies	Methodology of simultaneous and consecutive Interpreting; Intercultural Communication; ICT of the Localisation Industry; Translation and Professional Communication Skills
<b>University of Denver</b> <i>USA</i>	Certificate	Translation Studies	Global translation industry Practice in different types of translation including localization; Leverage technology and software applications for translators
<b>University of Texas Rio Grande Valley</b> <i>USA</i>	Certificate	Localization and Audiovisual Translation	Translation; Translation technologies; Audiovisual Translation; Translation Project (in AVT or Localization)
<b>University of the Witwatersrand</b> <i>South Africa</i>	Postgraduate Diploma	Translation and Interpreting	Translation and Interpreting; Specialist (I and II); Specialist Translation for Interpreters; Conference Interpreting Skills; Interpreting Studies; Interpreting Research Methods and Analysis

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## ISSUES IN BULGARIAN SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETING

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### Abstract

The article discusses the current state of sign language interpreting in Bulgaria. It analyzes a range of historical, social and professional issues regarding policymaking, sign language education and methodology. Presented here are three interrelated factors influencing the interpreting practice in the country such as limited knowledge about the linguistic status of Bulgarian Sign Language, traditions in Bulgarian deaf education and social attitude of the hearing majority regarding the linguistic skills of deaf and hard-of-hearing people.

**Keywords:** Bulgarian Sign Language, signed language, sign language interpreting, translation, deaf, hard-of-hearing

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Sign language interpreting is a particularly popular topic today because of the increasing demands of society to provide equality to deaf and hard-of-hearing people based on the recognition of sign language<sup>1</sup> and cultural heritage acknowledgement. The growing importance of sign language communities and deaf empowerment puts interpreting at the centre of theoretical and practical analysis of many professionals from different fields of knowledge. Nowadays, interpreting policy deals with both hearing and deaf people as sign language interpreters working in a team on the ground that deaf signers can bring their knowledge and deaf experience to the sign language interpreting profession (Adam, Stone, Collins, & Metzger, 2014). It is suggested that deaf-hearing interpreter teams providing interpreting, translation, and transliteration could make available nuanced comprehension and interaction in a wide range of visual language and communication forms.

The notion of interpreting is also being discussed in relation to the educational settings and deaf education in particular. Livingston (1997) writes about the need for teachers to be interpreters for deaf students. She believes interpreting can ensure learning success and understanding of any subject and suggests that only natural sign language as a means of communication and instruction can provide for deaf students understanding of particular idea throughout assisting them in understanding it at the same time while creating the context within which the meaning can be made and shared. Educational interpreting is of particular relevance because of the inclusion policy and increasing number of deaf student being educated alongside their hearing peers.

Regardless of the setting where interpreting takes place, it always happens when people do not share a common language. Sign language interpreters (SLI) are responsible for helping deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals to understand the information in any spoken/oral language. Traditionally, “interpretation” is the process of conveying a message generated in one language into an equivalent message in another language (Witter-Merithew & Johnson, 2005), while “translation” refers mainly to written communication. Therefore, traditional definitions of translation fail to account for sign language interpretation as sign languages do not have a written form, although there is an attempt to represent sign elements orthographically called “sign writing”. It is interesting to notice that translation is valid to sign language interpretation as well when transfer of

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<sup>1</sup> Here, “sign language” is used as a generic term that includes signed languages such as American Sign Language, Australian Sign Language or other recognized national signed languages.

thoughts and idea includes natural language and secondary, or contrived, representations of language (Ingram, 1985).

The main differences between signed and spoken interpreting is the language modality - spoken language interpreters rely on aural/oral approaches while signed language interpreters deal with aural/oral and manual/visual modalities. Defining terminology in the fields of signed interpreting is implicitly related to the notion of sign languages and various forms of production in visual modality recognized by the broad term “manual communication” (Bornstein, 1990).

### **Basic concepts in sign language interpreting**

Just like spoken languages, sign languages are naturally developing human languages. Extensive research on different national sign languages has shown that they are independent linguistic systems with their own grammar and lexicon and not representations of spoken languages (Stokoe, 1960; Klima & Belugi, 1979; Liddell, 2003). In other words, the correlation between natural sign languages and spoken/oral languages is complex and depends on the culture of their users more than the country where users live. For instance, although English is the dominant language in the United States and UK, American Sign Language (ASL) and British Sign Language are historically and grammatically unrelated. ASL is closer to French Sign Language due to their historical connection. Therefore, each sign language is a distinct language. According to the 16th edition of the Summer Institute of Linguistics Ethnologue, there are 130 listed Deaf<sup>2</sup> sign languages (Lewis, 2009). I doubt this number is representative considering that every year new sign languages are being discovered, new rural areas are linguistically researched.

Deaf people are born, live and got to school among and together with hearing people. Everyday situations put oral and sign languages in constant contact and create opportunities for sociolinguistic variations. The first sociolinguistic research was conducted by Stokoe, (1960) in the American Deaf Community. He introduced ‘simultaneous communication’ as an aural and a visual communication system of the

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<sup>2</sup> Following current convention, “Deaf” (with a capital D) is used to refer to Deaf culture and those individuals who share the culture, while “deaf” (with a small d) is used to refer to the audiological condition of the deafness (Woodward, 1972).



simultaneous use of signed and spoken English. He characterized ASL/English usage in Deaf community as “untypical” diglossic situation of ASL and Manually Coded English (Stokoe, 1960). “Bimodal communication” introduced as a term by Messing (1994) also suggests simultaneous use of words/signs while speaking, with the only difference related to the speaker's intentional desire to communicate in only one of the languages. Bimodal communication can occur with either the spoken or the signed language being the primary one used in a given conversation. Not as much as the degree of the hearing loss, but the signed conversation experience and overall linguistic competence of the signer determine his/her choice, intentionally or not, to produce speech close to the national spoken language as a structure and sign order or away from the spoken language syntax. Language contact between sign languages and spoken languages is the focus of many subsequent sociolinguistic studies in the USA. The outcome was defined as a pidgin (Woodward, 1972) or “contact signing” (Lucas & Valli, 1992). Most of the linguistic contact phenomena are examined such as code switching as well as regional and social variations, bilingualism, language attitude, language planning and choice (Battison, 1978; Ann, 2001). Social variables and linguistic variables and their effect on sign languages and deaf people's behaviour are explored and variables strongly related to the Deaf communities appointed – those corresponding to the audiological status of the signer's parents, age of sign language acquisition (learned signing before the age of six), and attended educational institution (special or mainstream school) (Woodward, 1972).

Simultaneous sign language interpretation describes the situation when the information is delivered almost in parallel with the production on the original message. Communication may go one-way when SLI provides information from spoken language to a particular sign language or two-ways – communication is more interactive and puts greater demand on the SLI as he/she needs to be aware of the linguistic competence of the signer. In one-to-one encounters, it is SLI's choice whether to deliver the signer's message voicing it simultaneously or consecutively.

Interpreting for deaf students in educational setting is especially challenging because it requires the interpreter to have a broad knowledge and skills to facilitate communication in the auditory and visual modalities. Each student based on its personal, educational and overall sociability may perform linguistically different using sign language or sign supported speech (spoken-based sign systems or visual representations

of a particular oral language). Everything that is spoken in the presence of an interpreter and a deaf student must be mediated appropriately in accordance to the student's preferred mode of signed communication and sign selection. If the deaf person relies on information presented primarily via natural sign language, the SLI is required to work between two different languages "interpreting" the information. "Transliteration" on the other hand "requires an interpreter to work between spoken English and one of several contact varieties that incorporate linguistic features from both English and ASL" (Livingston, Singer, & Abramson, 1994, p. 2). Transliteration is often requested by hard-of-hearing people from hearing families, late deafened signers whose dominant and preferred means of communication is in aural/oral modality usually because of the more frequent and intense interactions with hearing people. There are two forms of transliteration – signed using gestural modality or oral for deaf people who are not signers. Oral transliteration does not include a formal sign language, however, respectfully by the students' needs and requested by them, oral transliterators are expected to add natural gesture, fingerspell words and use cued system to visualize hard-to-see letters. Transliterators might also support deaf student conversationally by lip reading, especially important when the hearing speakers have challenging articulation or unclear speech. "Voice interpreting", on the other hand, takes place when deaf people have difficulties to comprehend voice and pronunciation, so the oral transliterator repeats the message to the listener for clarification. There are also other visual and tactual communication forms used primarily by deaf visually impaired people, such as "tactile sign language" and "tactile fingerspelling" (Jacobs, 1997).

This list of interpreting forms is not exhaustive. The interpreting concepts and issues presented here are associated to the analysis of the Bulgarian situation as far as sign language interpreting is concerned – where it has been and where we are now, following the traditions and new trends in the field.

### **Bulgarian sign language interpreting**

The ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2012 puts Bulgaria in demand of Bulgarian Sign Language<sup>3</sup> (BGS�) recognition and support to Bulgarian deaf people educationally and socially through their language and

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<sup>3</sup> Transliteration of the Bulgarian Sign language in English is "gestural-mimic language"

by respecting their own cultural values. Bulgaria officially accepted the challenges and has been working hard to fulfil the requirements and develop sign language friendly policy implementing Bulgarian sign language in the educational system. This process brings Bulgarian traditions in oral education to face the modern social approach to deafness and deaf people.

According to Wheatley and Pabsch (2012), the listed number of active SLI in Bulgaria is 46, which surely is an overestimated number. Maya de Wit (2017) presented her research data on the status of the SLI profession in over 45 countries and regions worldwide at the Third International Conference of the World Federation of the Deaf in Budapest. She reported that interpreting services continue to be challenging for many countries. Finland, according to her analysis, is the country with the highest deaf person-interpreter ratio (8:1), while in Bulgaria one SLI is assigned to serve for 2609 deaf people. Experience shows that Deaf Bulgarians rely on their relatives to a greater extent than to sign language interpreters, unless the latter are hearing children of deaf adults (CODAs). CODA interpreters possess the necessary cultural and language knowledge to offer quality service without a solid foundation in interpreting.

In my view, the interpreting policy in Bulgaria was influenced and perhaps limited by at least three interrelated factors:

1. Limited knowledge of the linguistic status and structure of Bulgarian Sign Language.
2. Educational history and traditions in deaf education in general and particularly the relationship between the Bulgarian language and the Bulgarian Sign Language.
3. The attitude of the majority of hearing people towards deaf people in terms of their linguistic needs and abilities.

### **Legislation and status of Bulgarian Sign Language**

In regards to the first aspect, BGS� is still officially not recognized as a true language scientifically and at a state level. Not until recently since the first paper on BGS� linguistic research was written (Lozanova, 2015; Lozanova & Stoyanova, 2015) and later on a national survey by a team of linguists along with Bulgarian Deaf was

conducted, most hearing people, including many special teachers, psychologists, and linguists, claimed that deaf people use gestural elements of nonverbal communication combined in a system (Videnov, 2011). And indeed, not much linguistic work has been done on Bulgarian sign language. What is available today tends to indicate that BGSL is an independent language with its own grammatical and semantic structure; it appears to share some general linguistic principles and features with other sign languages, such as American Sign Language and Russian Sign Language (Ministry of Education and Science, 2017a). Bulgarian Sign Language is presented in three printed dictionaries – Concise Dictionary of Bulgarian mimic language consisting of 700 signs, published in 1961 (Yanulov, Radulov & Georgiev, 1961); Dictionary of Bulgarian gestural-mimic language of 3000 signs in two editions, including video format (Bulgarian Union of the Deaf, 1996). A supplementary part to the dictionaries is a text presenting thematically organized phrases in Bulgarian language supported by signs (Mosheva & Gancheva, 2005). The most recent publication in this area is Dictionary of Bulgarian sign language (Ministry of Education and Science, 2017) where 5000 signs of BGSL are introduced and organized by the configuration of the dominant hand of each sign, unlike the previous dictionaries in which the sign lexicon is thematically presented. At the moment, intensive work is being done on investigating the nature of the BGSL – linguistic description and analysis. Besides the linguistic information, there is a need to focus on problems related to the status of the sign language and its acceptance as a mode of communication in the community at large, and particularly among hearing parents of deaf children. Historically, parents have been advised not to learn and expose their children to sign language because it would prevent the acquisition of the Bulgarian language. Despite existing evidence in literature that early exposure of children to sign language enhances their aptitude for acquiring spoken language (Magnuson, 2000), Bulgarian educators and therapists still have doubts and reservations about the role of natural sign language for children’s overall development and language competence.

### **Educational background**

One of the reasons for this scepticism are the traditional roots framing Bulgarian deaf educational policy which stems from the classical methodology within the scope of the auditory-oral approach in both intervention and education of deaf children. In accordance to this methodology, the deaf have been taught to speak, write and lipread

using their residual hearing. The expected outcomes of their education are supposed to be successful mainstreaming and more social opportunities in life. In line with oral education principles, the language of instruction in Bulgarian special schools is Bulgarian spoken language. It is used by hearing teachers as a language of communication formally and informally – in and outside the class. BGSL is officially regulated as a supportive tool in teaching any subject area and signing is declared to provide only visual access to Bulgarian language. The primary goal of education is Bulgarian language in its spoken, written and signed forms. Although some professionals claim that “Bulgarian sign language” is being used, from linguistic perspective Signed Bulgarian performed simultaneously mediates the process of learning and teaching (at least on theory). Moreover, Bulgarian represented by signs is the end goal of deaf education as deaf students are expected to communicate primarily with hearing people, behave as such and possess knowledge on “proper” sign language. It is axiomatic that knowing the language is a prerequisite to include it in the educational system both as a source language and a target language, so only changing the mindset of professionals about what the real language of the Deaf is, can lead to positive development and change in the qualification of SLI and special teachers working with deaf students.

### **Attitude of the hearing society towards deaf people and their language**

With respect to the third factor, the society hardly perceives the deaf person as bilingual. Unlike other people who deal with two or more languages, the bimodal bilinguals have to struggle with long-held stereotypes about sign language and “pathological” view on deafness. Just like other bilingual minorities, members of the Bulgarian Deaf community tend to associate socially within their own linguistic group and as such, they underestimate their language in favour of the majority language (Grosjean, 1992). Not surprisingly, deaf people in Bulgaria who have good command in Bulgarian language are prone to more connections with hearing people, acknowledgment and higher social position, including within the community of deaf people. The higher status of Bulgarian language can be explained by the hierarchy of social groups in which verbal knowledge is an essential component of a normative behavioural model. If we accept the hearing people as a social group with a higher social status than the “group” of deaf individuals, the interference of traits of the former is explicable, as “[...] the more prestigious group becomes an attractive model for the less

prestigious one [...]“ (Videnov, 1998, p. 23). Literature regarding social functioning of Deaf people contains enough evidence that the same was true for other Deaf communities around the world many years ago (Woodward & Markowicz, 1980).

The majority of organizations worldwide for training and registration of SLI claim that qualification should include general knowledge in the fields of interpreting, ethical decision making and interpreting skills along with well developed communication skills, at least bilingual in the national spoken language and the national sign language. Legally, the professional framework of Bulgarian SLI, including the educational requirements, duties and qualification standards, is defined in an Ordinance No. 48 from 9 January 2012 on the acquisition of the vocational qualification “Interpreter – Sign Language”. Until now, the Union of the Deaf in Bulgaria is the only institution in Bulgaria providing actual certification training for Bulgarian sign language interpreters, as well as maintaining their registration. The history reveals that the organization, established in 1934, full member of the European Union of the Deaf since 2007, claims to promote, support, and assist deaf citizens in the country towards their social and professional integration. In respects to the SL interpreting, UDB has established a National Methodological and Consultative Centre for Bulgarian Sign Language, part of which is the Vocational Training Centre responsible for SLI training and certification. The Centre is engaged in teaching and qualification of SLI as well as preparing teachers how to use sign language at school to support their teaching and learning interactions with deaf students. Contrary to the international initiatives to recognize Deaf communities as linguistic minorities and not disabled category of people, the Union of the Deaf in Bulgaria determine the Signed Bulgarian as the language of Bulgarian Deaf (Bulgarian Union of the Deaf, 2001). Additionally, it should be perceived as a modality of the Bulgarian spoken language. While I cannot claim that all Deaf Bulgarians agree with the statement, actually, there has been a strong in-community dispute about the status of the BGSL, I am convinced that without native deaf signers being involved in the process of deaf empowerment, the change cannot be expected any time soon. Consequently, in interpreters training provided by the Vocational Centre the focus is primarily on “transliteration” skills, not on the development of communicative competence in BGSL. For that reason, there is only one category curriculum covered – Vocabulary (Lexicon). Cultural awareness and Grammar are not considered essential (Mosheva, 2015). Actually, the existence of grammar is denied.

## **Bulgarian Sign Language interpreter training**

Methodologically, “translation method” is applied resulting in good word-to-sign production skills learned. Sadly to note, teaching BGS� to both interpreters and teachers follow the same aims and objectives, based on the same curriculum guide with little organizational difference in the learning process. Language learning and teaching curriculum use a linear approach – “a series of objectives which, once they are mastered in a given course, are never dealt with in that course again or, never dealt with specifically in more advanced courses” (Cokely & Baker-Shenk, 1980, p.144). Also the trainings are set more like a skill-based course for “transliteration” than knowledge-based one. Philosophy frames, cross-cultural mediation, the code of ethics, and interpreting techniques are not included as major areas in the educational content although required by the law. The Vocational Training Centre does not offer certification maintenance programs or hands-on trainings to help sign language interpreters advance their careers. The Association of the Bulgarian Sign Language Interpreters also offers little if any help to sign language interpreters. The Association’s official language strategy generally corresponds to the policy led by the Union for the Deaf in Bulgaria. There are educational interpreters and support workers at Universities in Sofia and Plovdiv provided on a project-based principle by the Association of Parents of Children with Hearing Loss.

It is fair to mention that there are course-based practices in teaching BGS� as a second language to hearing learners applying communicative approach (Lozanova & Dimitrova, 2004). The selection of vocabulary follows thematically organized schema taught in meaningful context, not learned in isolation. In order to avoid possible confusion of Bulgarian and BGS�, production and understanding in sign language is voiceless and learners are not expected to express themselves in sign language until they develop good receptive skills in BGS�. Cultural awareness and certain grammatical features are included in the learning content (Lozanova, 2006). Given the fact that communicating in a language and interpreting in that language are different skills, presented information might be considered important mostly because it demonstrates existence of practices focused on the natural BGS� recognition.

Furthermore on the subject of Bulgaria, there are few full-time working interpreters and none employed by schools. National regulations and educational institutions do not have a policy and guidelines outlining the role and responsibilities of the SLI in the educational system. The Individual Educational Plan defining the inclusive accommodations and modifications to meet student's needs does not specify sign language interpreter's roles although it does not deny such. Deaf and hard-of-hearing children are left without interpreting services at mainstream schools. It is not clear what would be the required professional skills based upon the school settings the interpreter will work in.

### **Conclusion**

The two types of interpretation, namely Bulgarian Sign Language interpretation and transliteration, are used to make spoken Bulgarian language accessible to deaf people. Sign language interpreting is a complex task and requires skills to understand deaf bimodal bilinguals who can move between various points on the language mode continuum and use Bulgarian-based signing, or BGSL, depending on the situation and the language competency and skills of the participants.

All things considered above clearly show that sign language interpreting in Bulgaria is still in its developmental stage. Although we are certain that Bulgarian Sign Language is a "real" language, we lack deep knowledge of its linguistic structure in order to implement it in interpreter training programs as a target or/and a source language. A lack of both theoretical and practical research in this area, very limited description of actual practice, and mostly the discrepancy in the opinion and positions about the nature of BGSL indicate the need for fundamental knowledge in the field. Equally important is educational interpreting, which also needs professional attention and scientific research to define its role in inclusive education in general and more precisely with regard to the needs of the deaf or hard-of-hearing students.

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## ANTI-PARKER

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### Abstract

This paper is a critique of the book “Lewis Carroll in Russia: Translations of *Alice in Wonderland* 1879–1989” by Fan Parker, Ph.D., which reviews eleven Russian versions of the children’s classic. Detailed analysis of Dr. Parker’s book has led the author to conclude that most of its principal arguments and findings are unsubstantiated, mistaken, biased or inexpert, and that it cannot possibly be seen as a source of authority in literary translation studies.

**Keywords:** Fan Parker, translation studies, literary translation, Lewis Carroll, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, children’s literature, Russian translation, Demurova, Shcherbakov

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## Preliminary Notes

This paper is a critique of a book by United States scholar Fan Parker (1994), which reviews eleven Russian versions of Lewis Carroll's "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" (hereinafter, AAIW).

The title of this paper may not be seen by some readers as typically academic, so an explanation would not be out of place. By entitling it in the style of certain polemical works of the past, such as Friedrich Engels' *Anti-Dühring*, I intend to give the reader immediate clarity about the critical nature of my discussion.

I also feel the need to explain the *raison-d'être* of this paper. It is probably a belated response to a 1994 work by a deceased scholar (Dr. Parker died in 2004), but I have only recently been able to obtain and analyze the original edition of her book. The reason why it still calls for an argumentative response is that it is sometimes referred to, in a rather unquestioning manner, by authors who have apparently not consulted the actual source.

Here is an indicative example. The Russian version of Wikipedia contains the following statement in the page dedicated to AAIW:

Доктор Ф. Паркер, написавший книгу «Льюис Кэрролл в России», утверждал, что перевод Щербакова является одним из самых лучших.<sup>1</sup>

(*Translation:* Dr. F. Parker, the author of the book "Lewis Carroll in Russia," maintained that Shcherbakov's translation was one of the best.)

The verb in this statement is notably used in the masculine form, indicating that the authors of the Russian text believe Fan Parker to be a man — a sign that they have obviously not held her book in their hands.

## Background Facts

Though it is only one work by Dr. Parker we are discussing, it is certainly helpful to form a wider picture of the scholar's research and sphere of interests.

The most comprehensive summary of Fan Parker's life and academic work that I have been able to come across was given by her son, Stephen J. Parker, in 2006:

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Алиса\\_в\\_Стране\\_чудес](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Алиса_в_Стране_чудес) — accessed on November 17, 2018.

“Fan Parker (Fania) was born in Riga, Latvia, lived in Moscow, and came to the USA through Ellis Island as the traditional immigrant. She received her BA and MA at NYU, and her PhD in Slavic Studies at Columbia University in 1945... She founded, developed, and chaired the Russian Department at Brooklyn College, which is part of the City University of New York. She was there for nearly 4 decades teaching an array of courses in Russian language, culture, and 19th and 20th century Russian literature... She was the author or co-author of five books, the first being *Vsevolod Garshin: A Study of a Russian Conscience* published in 1946 and the last being *Lewis-Carroll in Russian: Translations of Alice in Wonderland, 1879-1989*, published in 1994... Her other writings – books and articles – were in regard to Dostoevsky, the Russian artist Ilya Repin, Soviet literature, and children’s literature.”<sup>2</sup>

I have been able to identify the three other books not mentioned by Stephen Parker among the five that his mother authored or co-authored in the nearly four decades of her academic career. They are listed in the References section as Parker (1961), (1963) and (1980). The first two of those, a Russian ABC book and a reader, can hardly be considered as research papers; the third one, co-authored with her son, is about a Russian painter and has little to do with language or literature.

As for the three short articles (between 2 and 4 pages long) published by Fan Parker in peer-review academic journals, all of them treat the subject of Russian and English language teaching at middle and high schools (Parker, 1952; 1957; 1960).

These facts are not given here in an attempt to diminish the significance of Dr. Parker’s oeuvre, but merely as evidence that, apart from the work reviewed in this paper, her name is not associated with any research or publications relating to either Lewis Carroll or translation studies.

Another clarification has to be made here. The work I am going to discuss is referred to as a “book” and indeed has the form of one, numbering 89 pages and being almost half an inch thick. Considering, however, that it is printed in large-type wide-spaced text on extra-thick paper, interspaced with numerous drawings by John Tenniel, and contains an appendix with long excerpts from translations, it is probably more appropriate to classify it as a pamphlet or even as a long article. Dr. Parker’s own text is about 6,300 words long, which is equal to 21 standard pages, a length that might appear somewhat limited for a study of 11 books.

Let us, however, analyze the paper on its merits now.

<sup>2</sup> <https://slavic.drupal.ku.edu/sites/slavic.drupal.ku.edu/files/docs/parker-openingremarks.pdf>

## **Purpose, content and structure of Parker's pamphlet**

The closest to what can be seen as the author's stated purpose of study can be found in a short Introduction to the pamphlet:

This first critical study of the Russian translations of *Alice* has been prompted by the need to clarify a subject that has long been in a state of confusion (Parker 1994, p. 3).

The author does not explain, however, what precise "subject" it is or why she believes it to be "in a state of confusion." We are told, instead, that Carroll's book was seen by Russian translators as... a way for each to display his or her individual credentials and talents as a translator... [They] did not exemplify any particular theories of translation" (Parker 1994, pp. 3-4).

This last assertion can easily be refuted at least in the case of one translator who described her conceptual approach to translating the *Alice* books in an article twice as long as Dr. Parker's pamphlet (Demurova, 1970; 1978). That article, initially published as part of a literary translation yearbook, which circulated in 100,000 copies, was read by an extremely large audience of intellectuals and had an impact on all subsequent Russian translations of Carroll's works, widely different as they were.

Dr. Parker does not mention whether there is a translation theory she herself adheres to or expects to see "exemplified." One might feel that identifying the major translation challenges and developing uniform assessment criteria would be the conventional basis on which a researcher might build her study. But none of these steps have been taken.

The Introduction ends with the categorical remark that

...in the course of events, the translations reflected the vulgarization and impoverishment of the mighty Russian language (Parker, 1994, p. 4).

As this contention is reiterated later in the pamphlet, I will come back to it again.

Coming after the Introduction is a section entitled "The Alice Tale," a compilation of rather well-known facts about the book, its author, illustrator, etc. In passing, Dr. Parker deplores that "the nymph quality of Alice Liddell" was lost in Tenniel's drawings. Other than that, there is no analysis of the tale's content or meaning.

The section is followed by eleven chapters, each a short review of one Russian version of AAIW. The pamphlet has no concluding section or summary. Whatever findings the author comes to are stated in individual reviews.

### The First Version

The first Russian version of AAIW was published anonymously (Carroll, 1879). As we now know, it was created by Yekaterina Boratynskaya, a niece of biologist Kliment Timiryazev (Fet, 2016).

It was a Russified adaptation, in which Alice was turned into Sonja. Dr. Parker has many nice words to say about it. She praises it, for instance, for the translation of the famous phrase “Curiouser and curiouser,” “because it takes advantage of the full sentence” (Parker 1994, p. 10). She does not go into detail, so let us take the Sonja book from the shelf and look at what there is to applaud:

„Чуднѣе и распречуднѣе“, закричала Соня! Отъ удивленія она даже путалась въ словахъ, и выражалась какъ-то не по-русски (Carroll, 1879, p. 15).<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Parker offers no explanation of what she means by “taking advantage of the full sentence” or how that contributes to a good translation. Even more puzzling is her claim that this rendition is “the best to be found in any later translations” (Parker, 1994, p. 10).

Well, no. It is a poor translation if only because it doesn’t reproduce what we find in the original: a surprised little girl’s natural slip of the tongue. Sonja’s remark sounds weird, but in a very different way: it’s a labored and stilted mannerism invented by a struggling translator.

Dr. Parker also commends the first translator for the way she deals with puns, including her “ingenuity in the tail/tale pun” (Parker 1994, p. 13). Let us look at that, too:

„Ахъ, грустная и длинная повѣсть моей жизни“, вздохнула мышь, глядя на Соню.

„Длинная-то, длинная“, подумала Соня, оглядываясь на мышиный хвостъ, „но почему грустная, любопытно знать,“ продолжала она про себя. (Sonja, 1879, pp. 33–34).

For non-speakers of Russian, the above lines *do not contain any* attempt at reproducing the *tale/tail* pun or at creating the slightest humorous effect. Both *tale* and

<sup>3</sup> Excerpts from (Sonja 1879) are spelled according to pre-1918 reform rules, as in the original edition.



*tail* are given their direct dictionary equivalents (*повесть* and *хвост*, respectively), which differ not only in form, but also in grammatical gender. The latter of the two cannot combine with the feminine forms of adjectives *длинная* ('long') or *грустная* ('sad'), so the assumption that Sonja might ever mistake *повесть* for *хвост* is inherently false.

Dr. Parker goes on to say:

In a similarly humorous vein, we find the transformed image of the three little sisters—Sasha, Pasha, and Dasha—living in a dense forest under a key, or perhaps a waterfall, depending on the meaning one assigns to the Russian *kliuch*.” (Parker, 1994, p. 12)

One should have a very peculiar sense of humor to smile at the idea of someone “living under a key.” Carroll’s fantasy never degrades into incoherent absurdity. But the Russian phrase *жить под ключом* cannot even mean ‘to live under lock and key,’ it evokes an irrational vision of a huge key literally forming a shelter for the sisters. Nor can *ключ* ever mean ‘fountain’ in this infelicitous word combination.

Dr. Parker, however, has not failed to see that many fragments of the original text ...are completely omitted, condensed, or poorly rendered... Some poems are left untranslated, puns and jokes are omitted, and the ending is reduced to a single abbreviated paragraph” (Parker, 1994, p. 13).

This amounts to a recognition of the fact that “the first translation” is not a translation at all, but an arbitrary retelling. In Dr. Parker’s own words, it is “not [a] successfully sustained rendering of the children’s classic” (Parker, 1994, p. 14).

### Early 20th-century Translations

In 1908–1909, three Russian versions of AAIW were published by Matilda Granstrem, Aleksandra Rozhdestvenskaya, and Poliksena Solovyova<sup>4</sup>. Neither of the three does credit to the original, especially because those by Granstrem and Solovyova are heavily Russified. But it is their review that interests me in this paper, and I cannot help pointing to Dr. Parker’s glaring misconceptions as she discusses them.

One incongruence is that she calls the first of the three authors “*Mr.* Granstrem” — which is ironic, considering that, as has been mentioned, Parker herself is referred to as a *male* professor in Russian Wikipedia.

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<sup>4</sup> Her name is spelled as Solov’eva by Parker (1994).

In a three-paragraph review of Rozhdestvenskaya's translation," Dr. Parker finds the following non-existent fault with it:

She [Rozhdestvenskaya] softens Carroll's sharp adjective and nouns (e.g. "screamed," "idiot," "off with her head"). (Parker, 1994, p. 20)

This is simply *not* true to fact. The "sharp" words have received full-fledged equivalents in Rozhdestvenskaya's translation: screamed — *крикнула, взвизгнула*; idiot – *идиот*; off with her head! — *отрубить ей голову!* And, in some instances, even more emotional words are used than those found in the original. For example, the word "said" in the sentence

"I see!" said the Queen, who had meanwhile been examining the roses

is translated as *воскликнула* ('exclaimed'); and "shouted" in

"That's right!" shouted the Queen

is rendered as *заркнула* ('roared, barked').

One the other hand, some of Fan Parker's praises are as unfounded as her criticism. She asserts, for example, that Rozhdestvenskaya's "versification lacks poetic brilliance but is good overall" and that the success of her translation "rests in her adept use of the Russian language" (Parker, 1994., pp. 20–21). The renderings of "Father William" and the Lullaby are singled out in this context.

Let me quote two stanzas from Rozhdestvenskaya's version of "Father William":

«Ты старик уж, отец, — снова сын завёл речь, —  
И ты толст, слишком толст уж теперь,  
Так зачем же, скажи, кувыркаешься ты,  
И спиной отворяешь ты дверь?..

Ты уж стар, ты уж сед, слабы зубы твои. –  
Сын сказал. — Тебе кашу есть!  
Как же гуся всего — объясни это мне —  
Мог с костями и клювом ты съесть?»

This versification is not only far from being "good," it is below par, with wrong word stresses (*как же гуся всего*), multiple filler words (*уж, слишком, же, это*), repetitions (*ты толст, слишком толст; ты уж стар, ты уж сед*), unnatural sentence structures (*тебе кашу есть*); sequences that mismatch the rhythmic pattern (like «*снова сын завёл речь*», where the ever-accented *ë* is forced into an unstressed syllable), and so on.

All of that is exacerbated by extremely bad rhyming. More than once, a word is rhymed with a form of itself, an inadmissible blunder in Russian poetry, e.g. *есть* ('eat') - *съестъ* ('eat up'), *его* - *него* ('him'). Most of Rozhdestvenskaya's "rhymes" are either not rhymes at all (like *все* - *нигде*, *мне* - *дворе*, *мне* - *судьбе*, *жару* - *могу*, as just one common sound is not enough to make a Russian rhyme) or are what is called "weak" or "watery" rhymes based on verb endings (*надевать* - *держатъ*, *отвечал* - *прогнал*, etc.). These facts call into question Dr. Parker's expertise in Russian prosody.

On the other hand, the far more skillful Poliksena Solovyova is subjected to hair-splitting criticism:

[In Solovyova's translation,] Pat turns to "Pet," the Cheshire Cat to "Chesterskii" Cat, and so forth. Misunderstanding the English construction, "I must have been changed several times," she renders it as "it seems that I was changed [by others] several times." (Parker, 1994, p. 23)

All of that faultfinding is subjective and basically wrong. To begin with, the rendition of *Pat* as *Пэм* is a perfectly legitimate re-spelling of the name, in which the letter *э* stands for the English *a* just as it does in the rendering of *Carroll* as *Кэрролл* and of thousands of other names (e.g. *Sam* — *Сэм*, *Nancy* — *Нэнси*, *Thatcher* — *Тэтчер*).

Now, "Chesterskii" (*Честерский*) means 'coming from Chester' and, considering that Chester is the county town of Cheshire, the choice of the adjective is hardly a mistake.

Finally, if one attentively reads the original phrase "I must *have been changed* several times," it means exactly what Dr. Parker believes to be a "misunderstanding"—that is, a change effected by others, as opposed to "I must *have changed* [myself]."

Here I must add (while running ahead), that the same interpretation to this construction was given by another translator, Aleksandr Shcherbakov, who wrote:

Но, по-моему, с тех пор *меня* несколько раз *превращали* в кого-то другого. (Carroll 1977, p. 68)

(*Back translation*: "But, I think, since then *they have* several times *turned me* into someone else.")

This, however, goes altogether unnoticed by Dr. Parker who, as we will see later, is very enthusiastic about Shcherbakov's work. An inconsistent approach, to say the least.

## D'Aktil and Olenich-Gnenenko

Yet another Russified version of AAIW was published by D'Aktil (Anatoly Frenkel) in 1923. While admitting that D'Aktil displays “overall a good command of Russian and English,” Dr. Parker reproaches him for replacing the content and characters of Carroll’s poems with inventions of his own.

I cannot fail to note the contradictory nature of such criticism because a Russified version of an English story is liberal by definition, and one can hardly expect the translator’s *Marfushas* and *Yahskas* to relate to English folklore or history.

This contradiction is all the more surprising that Dr. Parker takes almost diametrical approaches to essentially similar distortions in different translations. When analyzing Solovyova’s version, she had good words to say about the replacement of Father William with *Borovik* (‘cep, or boletus edulis’) — she calls it “a splendid poem in tribute to the rare mushroom” (Parker, 1994, p. 25). But D'Aktil, according to her, “takes great liberties” by replacing the same character with “a dragonfly hard at work gathering food for the winter” (p. 27). Why a mushroom is seen as a smaller liberty and a better substitute for Father William than a dragonfly remains unexplained.

D'Aktil is also criticized for his grammar, as he

...often replaces the relative pronoun ‘which’ (kotoryi) with participles... It is not... fitting in regard to Carroll’s direct, economical use of English and leads to extended, wordy phrasing. (Parker, 1994, p.27)

Now this sounds exceedingly strange. A Russian participle combines the meanings and functions of two words, a relative pronoun and a verb, so it inevitably makes the phrase shorter, i.e. *less*, not more, “wordy” than a relative clause.

As Dr. Parker gives no quotations in support of her criticism, I had to look myself for contexts showing how D'Aktil actually translates relative clauses. The results were surprising. In reality, *only one* participle phrase in the whole of D'Aktil’s translation corresponds to a *which*-clause in the original, and here it is:

She found herself in a long, low hall, which was lit up by a row of lamps hanging from the roof. — Алиса очутилась в длинном низком зале, освещённом рядом свисающих с потолка ламп.

Nowhere does the Russian equivalent contain “extended” or “wordy phrasing,” as Dr. Parker puts it. On the contrary, this 12-word 69-character sentence is, perhaps, even more concise and succinct than the 21-word 75-character English original. As for being “fitting” in regard to the original, this sentence is an exemplary translation: it is accurate semantically and syntactically, and is written in impeccable Russian.

I must add here that, while not at all giving up the word *который* in translating *which*-clauses, the translator uses it economically. His work only benefits from that, as frequent repetition of *который* (‘which, who, that’) is considered bad style in Russian.

Two other findings by the reviewer, that “the Mock Turtle soup is praised for being a ‘fashionable’ soup of fine ingredients” (Parker, 1994, p. 27) and that “the translation ends with Alisa relating her dream to her sister in italicized block letters” (p. 28), cannot really be taken seriously as “faults.” But that is all the academic has to say before summarizing that “D’Aktil’s translation is not among the best” (p. 28.). Not convincing, I am afraid.

That said, I am not trying to give any assessment of my own, favorable or unfavorable, of the D’Aktil version. The point I am making is that Dr. Parker’s critical arguments against it happen to be partial, untenable, and sometimes even untrue.

The critic goes on to review the translation by Aleksandr Olenich-Gnenenko, first published in 1940, which is said to “follow the original as far as the Russian language permits, perhaps too tenaciously at times” (p. 29). The translator is praised for his good command of English, but his success with puns is characterized as limited (p. 30).

As for his poems, they are seen as “fairly successful approximations of the originals” (p. 31). Again, no samples of those “successful approximations” are given. It is obvious that Dr. Parker was not familiar with Efim Etkind’s brilliant and crushing analysis of Olenich-Gnenenko’s versifications, who wrote (in reference to the translator’s version of “Father William”):

А. Оленич-Гнененко не справился с заданием, которое сам же себе и поставил: внешность «баллады» он скопировал, но за пределами перевода остались — естественность вольной и хитроумной шутки, энергичная, свободная интонация оригинала. Уродлив и фальшив оборот: «То полезно ль...?» А как ритмически невыразительна спотыкливая строка «Ты, однако, весь день ходишь на голове», где ударение зачем-то выпячивает предлог «на»! (Etkind, 1963, p. 348)

(*Translation:* Olenich-Gnenenko failed the task he had set himself: he did copy the form of the “ballad,” but his translation lacks the naturalness of an unfettered and clever joke and is devoid of the original’s energetic, free intonation. The construction «То полезно ль...?» is ugly and false. And how rhythmically expressionless is the stammering line «Ты, однако, весь день ходишь на голове», where the [rhythmic] stress singles out the preposition *на* for no reason!)

In his extensive discussion of Olenich-Gnenenko’s verse, the internationally renowned philologist and translation theorist (the author of more than 550 published academic papers) uses such terms and expressions as: «мертвенно скопированы» (lifeless copy), «неприятно приблизительное созвучие» (unpleasantly imprecise consonance), «строка эта бесформенна, интонация в неё не вписана» (the line is shapeless and has no intrinsic intonation), «даже искушённый взрослый ничего тут не поймёт» (even a sophisticated adult reader won’t understand anything here), etc. His summary is as follows:

...поэт-переводчик не имеет права не видеть за деревьями леса. Поэт-переводчик, гонящийся за каждым отдельным деревом, сбивается с ног и теряет дорогу... Так произошло со стихами из «Алисы в стране чудес», - переводя их после С. Маршака, А. Оленич-Гнененко сделал решительный шаг назад. (Etkind, 1963, p. 351)

(*Translation:* ...a translator of poetry has no right not to see the wood for the trees. A translator of poetry who goes after every individual tree will stumble around and lose track... This is what happened with poems from *Alice in Wonderland*: by translating them [in this way] after Samuil Marshak, Aleksandr Olenich-Gnenenko took a decided step backward.)

To this I would add that, in my opinion, no review of Russian poetic translations from Carroll can be valid if the reviewer is not familiar with Dr. Etkind’s analysis.

## **Demurova**

As Dr. Parker comes to her next object of review, the translation by Nina Demurova, she blasts it right from the beginning as “a classic demonstration of the vulgarization and impoverishment of the Russian language during the decades of Soviet rule,” a version “plebeian in tone and nuance, the choice of words and idioms taken solely from poor Soviet stock” (Parker, 1994, p. 32).

It would, of course, be naïve to expect Dr. Parker to explain what exactly she means by “the vulgarization and impoverishment” of the language during Soviet rule, or to cite a linguistic or literary authority who might have supported, with any convincing

evidence, such a sweeping statement about the Russian language. And not surprisingly so: no serious expert in language would ever uphold this view, because 20th-century Russian literature with its world-famous giants like Bulgakov, Pasternak, Chukovsky, Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva, Solzhenitsyn and Brodsky, to name just a tiny few, revealed a language treasury no less inferior to any earlier period.

Let us now look into why the academic calls Demurova's translation "plebeian." She writes:

This is embodied in her persistent use of "ty," the second person singular form of "you," a predominant form of address among Soviets, which creates a particularly harsh ambiance diminishing Alice's stature as a person. (Parker, 1994, p. 32)

I feel really embarrassed at having to explain some elementary facts about Russian grammar and usage so as to demonstrate the falsehood of this assertion. But if we have to go over the basics, so be it.

Let me begin by saying that, like all European languages except English, Russian has two distinct forms of the second person pronoun: singular (*ты*) and plural (*вы*). The singular pronoun (which goes with corresponding verb forms) is used to address a good friend, a close family member, a child or an animal (we do talk to pets and beasts, don't we?). In addition, it may also serve to vent a person's anger or to show disrespect for someone who would expect a politer treatment under normal circumstances. The plural form is reserved for conversations with people beyond the circle of family and close friends, especially if they are significantly older.

In pre-1917 Russia, the singular form was also the accepted way of addressing any member of the "lower" classes (such as a servant, a worker, a waiter, a cook, a coachman, or a peasant) regardless of their age. It was with the downfall of the monarchy that this disparaging use of *ты* was finally abandoned. One can say many unfavorable things about Soviet rule in Russia, but it is undeniable that in official Soviet parlance all citizens were to be addressed in the same manner using the respectful plural pronoun *вы*.

So it is absolutely incorrect to say that *ты* was "a predominant form of address among Soviets." It was not, and if "Soviets" stands for "Soviet people" here, there were

different kinds of people who would use one or the other pronoun depending on who they talked to and in what situation.

It is equally wrong to allege that the pronoun *ты* “diminishes Alice’s stature as a person.” Let us recall that Alice is a seven-year old girl. In Russia, small children have always been addressed with the familiar form, whether before, during or after the Soviet period. And what “stature” is Dr. Parker talking about? Alice’s perceived status changes depending on the situation she finds herself in and, more specifically, on how her interlocutors treat her.

When the White Rabbit takes Alice for his housemaid in Chapter 4, it is altogether natural that, in Demurova’s translation, he addresses her as *ты*, exactly as masters would treat their servants in the 19th century. One can find plenty of examples of this usage in the writings of Dr. Parker’s favorite Russian author Vsevolod Garshin (1855–1888; her doctoral thesis was about his works).

On the other hand, when, in Chapter 4, Alice imagines herself being talked to by her nurse, i.e. a servant, who says:

“Miss Alice! Come here directly, and get ready for your walk!” (AAIW, ch. IV) —

it is the polite plural *вы*, not *ты*, and corresponding verb forms that we find in the translation:

«Мисс Алиса! *Идите* скорее сюда! Пора на прогулку, а *вы* ещё не одеты!».

I would even say that the Russian wording is politer than the original (*directly* ‘немедленно’ is rendered as *скоро* ‘quickly,’ and the command “*get ready*” is replaced by a mild complaint: «*вы ещё не одеты*» ‘you are not dressed yet’). In no way is Alice’s “stature” as a member of the upper class compromised in this translation.

That said, there are situations in the book where the choice of the informal singular form is open to discussion, as when the King questions Alice at the trial. The King, who is also the judge, is more likely to use the formal mode of address (*вы*) when speaking to a witness in court.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> In my own translation of the book, I have used the pronoun *вы* in that context (Carroll, 2018, p. 88).



But, on the other hand, Alice's interlocutors are aware of her young age ("Consider, my dear, she is only a child," says the King in Chapter 8; "Tut-tut, child," says the Duchess in Chapter 9). As the singular-number second-person pronoun has always been the predominant way of addressing children in Russian, it easily explains Demurova's choice of *ты* over *вы*. There is nothing "plebeian," "vulgar," or "Soviet" in that.

Dr. Parker's reference to Stuart Collingwood's words that "Mr. Dodgson possessed an intense natural appreciation of the beautiful" (Parker, 1994, p. 33), cited in support of her criticism of Demurova, is completely off the point. Lewis Carroll's sense of the beautiful did not prevent him from making many of his characters speak to Alice in a very uncivil way. The Gryphon rudely calls her a "simpleton," and the Mock Turtle, "very dull"; flowers tell her things like "you never think at all" or "I never saw anybody that looked stupider," and so on and so forth. The tone of such remarks agrees quite well with the Russian familiar form of address.

So much for the pronouns. What else does Dr. Parker find fault with? "Demurova," she says, "is impervious to the child's [i.e., Alice's] charms" (Parker, 1994, p. 33). I am afraid, there exists no reasonable academic way to react to this assessment, especially because no further explanation of it is given.

Some more specific criticism, however, is found in the following passage:

For "kick" [in "I think I can kick a little"], Demurova employs "liagat" which is a verb pertaining only to four-legged animals, such as a horse who throws his hind legs wildly. (Parker, 1994, p. 35)

Let us begin by correcting a mistake: it is not the imperfective verb *лягать* (or *liagat'*, as Dr. Parker spells it), but the perfective *лягнуть* (*lyagnut'*) that Demurova's Alice uses in her speech:

«Камин здесь, конечно, невелик, особенно не размахнёшься, а всё же лягнуть его я сумею!»

It is true that the verb corresponds to *kick* and, like the English word, can be said of an animal (such as a horse). But, also like the English word, it can easily be used to describe the foot movement of a human being. Examples of that are plenty in Russian classic literature — let me cite one from Fyodor Dostoyevsky:

На этот раз проходил известно кто, то есть шельмец, интригант и развратник, — проходил по обыкновению своим подленьким частым шажком, присеменявая и

выкидывая ножками так, как будто бы собирался кого-то *лягнуть*. (Dostoevskij, 1846).

This time someone he knew well was coming — that is the scoundrel, the intriguer and the reprobate — he was approaching with his usual mean, tripping little step, prancing and shuffling with his feet as though he were going to *kick* someone. <sup>6</sup>

Here's one more piece of criticism:

When the Caterpillar says “What do you mean by that?... Explain yourself!” Demurova phrases the question with the verb “vydumat” which implies falsehood on the part of Alisa, a child of great honesty and integrity. (Parker, 1994, p. 35)

The falsehood that I can see here lies in the analyst's understanding of words and line of thought. In the translation, the Caterpillar's question («Что это ты выдумываешь?» — literally, “What are you fantasizing about?”) implies not so much “falsehood” as disbelief and skepticism.

In addition, logic fails Dr. Parker here. Alice's assumed honesty and integrity have nothing to do with what the Caterpillar may think of her. It is the Caterpillar's words, not anyone else's. Let us recall how Lewis Carroll described the situation: “She [Alice] had never been so much contradicted in all her life before, and she felt that she was losing her temper” with the Caterpillar. To contradict, by definition, means to “deny the truth of (a statement).” (Contradict, 2017) So Demurova is no more at fault than Lewis Carroll himself for allowing Wonderland creatures to doubt Alice's truthfulness.

Demurova is also under attack for using the word *ругать* instead of *бранить* (both mean ‘scold’). Yes, we know that 19th-century lexicographer Vladimir Dal wrote that «ругать пошлѣе и грубѣе, чѣм бранить» (*rugat'* is more vulgar and rude than *branit'*) (Dal' 1882, p. 108). But that is a didactic exaggeration: *rugat'* just *may describe* the use of strong language, but *not necessarily* at all. In any case, there is nothing rude about the word itself, especially in the reflexive combination *ругать себя* (*rugat' sebya*), which means simply ‘to scold, blame or reprimand oneself’ and is perfectly neutral. Ample evidence of that can be found in classic Russian literature, such as Gogol's or Dostoyevsky's works, and in the Russian versions of other English classics by distinguished translators, e.g.:

...Elizabeth, though *blaming herself* for her own weakness, could not go on. <sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Translated by Constance Garnett

<sup>7</sup> Jane Austen. *Pride and Prejudice*, 1813

...у Элизабет, как она ни *ругала себя* за своё малодушие, не хватило решимости пойти дальше.<sup>8</sup>

The award-winning writer and translator Samuil Marshak (1887–1964), who edited these lines, had the perfect ear for style and knew better, of course, than to use a vulgarism here. But even without this example, it is easy for any Russian speaker to see that the following lines by Dr. Parker sound simply preposterous:

Where a proper translation renders “ona branila sebja tak strogo” (she scolded herself so severely), Demurova gives “[ona] rugala sebja tak besposhchadno” (she swore at herself so unmercifully), crediting Alisa inappropriately with *a number of regularly employed swear words*.<sup>9</sup>(Parker, 1994, p. 35).

Dr. Parker is openly “doctoring” word definitions: *ругать себя* does not mean ‘swear at oneself’ here, and her accusation that the translator credits Alice with “a number of swear words” is a glaring untruth. The reviewer lays it on thick in a clear effort to justify her devastating verdict:

Demurova’s unrelenting use of a vulgar style remains constant throughout, demonstrating unerringly that Soviet modes of expression are wholly inappropriate for Carroll’s cultured English and England. Bit by bit, her translation of the Alice text exemplifies the general Soviet butchery of the mighty Russian language. (Parker, 1994, p. 35)

With this, I believe, we have come to a point when it can be said with enough confidence that many (if not most) of Dr. Parker’s assessments do not, regrettably, demonstrate her good grasp of the Russian language. It may be attributable to her extended loss of contact with a genuine Russian-speaking environment. Her resettlement to the United States in her early teens and the time when she wrote her pamphlet were divided by a span of nearly eight decades. Another reason could be the superficial nature of Dr. Parker’s research, if her writing deserves that name. Further examples of that superficiality will be given below.

I am not writing this to eulogize Nina Demurova’s translation, as I see many faults in it myself — as did, incidentally, the renowned children’s writer and translator Kornei Chukovsky, despite the generally favorable tone of his review (Chukovsky, 1968)<sup>10</sup>. But any analysis must be fair, consistent, method-based, and unprejudiced. None of that appears to be the case with Dr. Parker’s pamphlet.

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<sup>8</sup> Translated by Immanuel Marshak and edited by Samuil Marshak

<sup>9</sup> My emphasis

<sup>10</sup> Notably, Dr. Parker was familiar with Kornei Chukovsky’s review, but grossly misrepresented it as if it were exclusively critical (Parker, 1994, pp. 84).

## Two More Translations Dismissed, Two Extolled

I will now just passingly touch upon the reviews of two more “Soviet” versions of AAIW, one by popular children’s writer Boris Zakhoder and another by etymologist Vladimir Orel. Dr. Parker dismisses the former as “a strange amalgam of an English *Alisa*, improper Russian forms, and the translator’s intrusions [which] makes this a quite poor rendition” (Parker, 1994, p. 38), and the latter as “a thoroughly forgettable translation” full of “miscomprehensions and deviations from the original” as well as “contemporary Soviet jargon” (pp. 47–48).

Even though there are good objective reasons to give those translations a low rating indeed, Dr. Parker’s arguments are scarce and mostly inadequate, and sometimes entirely wrong. For example, she criticizes the use by Zakhoder of the interjection «*Oŭ!*» (which she translates as *Oy!*, but which more often corresponds to *Ouch!*, *Ooh!* or *Oh!*), believing that “in Russian, as in English, [it] is more appropriate for an elderly person” (p. 37) — again, a gross misconception about Russian word usage.

As another example, Orel is condemned for alleged “frequent use of abusive epithets from Russian common speech” (p. 48). Not one such “abusive epithet” is cited, however, and no explanation is given of how they differ from Carroll’s own “abusive” epithets, such as *stupid*, *idiot*, and the like.

One other “Soviet” translation, however — that by electrical engineer Aleksandr Shcherbakov, which was published in 1977 shortly after Zakhoder’s version and the revised edition of Demurova’s text — surprisingly earned Dr. Parker’s appreciation as “the best of the Anglicized versions of *Alice*” (p. 46). As Mr. Shcherbakov’s supporters grasped at this flattering characteristic in an effort to put his work on a pedestal, Dr. Parker’s arguments deserve a detailed analysis.

The reviewer begins by praising Shcherbakov’s text for being “free from Soviet jargon and solecism” (p. 39). As no examples or clarifications are given, this contention cannot be discussed seriously. Then she passes on to character names:

Shcherbakov keeps Carroll’s nomenclature with only a few variants, such as Dodo into “Dodo-Kakikh-Uzhe-Bol’she-Net” (Dodo-of-the-sort-which-are-no-more), accenting the extinction of the large bird, and Caterpillar into “Cherepakha-Shelkopriad” (silk-spinning caterpillar), of greater stature than a mere worm. (p. 40)

The reader may remember Dr. Parker's displeasure with Solovyova's "Chester Cat" (in place of Cheshire Cat) and alleged misspelling of the name *Pat*. Against that background, the academic is surprisingly indulgent toward a whole phrase of Shcherbakov's own invention attached to a very short original name. We are told that it accents the extinction of the bird, but why make such an accent at all? There is nothing to indicate that Lewis Carroll ever meant or would welcome such an accent — he simply made a character out of a familiar sight for the Liddell sisters: a picture of the bird by John Savory they saw at the Oxford University library. And if the reader looks up the word *dodo* in any dictionary, the words "extinct bird" will pop up immediately, so the addition is totally unnecessary.

As for the Caterpillar, Dr. Parker makes a mess of two characters, calling it, for some strange reason, *Cherepakha-Shelkopriad* ("Turtle-Silkworm"): in reality, it is just *Шелкопряд* (Silkworm) in Shcherbakov's translation. The reviewer, as can be seen from the quote above, is concerned with "stature" here too, claiming that a silkworm is "of greater stature" than a mere worm.

Well, it is not. But even if it were, the character in the original is not a worm, but a *large blue caterpillar*. And, evidently having learned that silkworms are never large nor blue, Shcherbakov changes the epithets to *fat* and *gray* («толстая сизая гусеница Шелкопряд»), thus significantly distorting the original image. But that goes unnoticed by Dr. Parker.

Next, Shcherbakov's handling of puns is discussed. Dr. Parker finds "special ingenuity" in his version of the tale/tail pun — a play on the word *канцонетта* ('canzonetta') and the phrase *конца нету* (*konca netu*, 'no end').

In my opinion, this is a poor pun for several reasons: first, the pair is difficult to confuse because of different stress patterns; secondly, *канцонетта* is a rare musical term not even found in general Russian dictionaries, so a child reader is unlikely to understand it, let alone find the pun funny. But, finally, even if it were a hilarious pun, it is in no way related to the idea of a tail, so the intended joke falls apart and the tail-shaped poem makes no sense anymore.

As another example of Shcherbakov's "ingenuity," Dr. Parker cites his translation of the Lobster Quadrille song:

Shcherbakov's choice of fish, "sig" (a variety of salmon) and "lin" (a huge freshwater fish), is fitting and unusual. (Parker, 1994, p. 45)

Unusual? Yes. *Сиг* (*sig* 'cisco') and *лунь* (*lin* 'tench') are not among the most common fish species caught or served as food in Russia or England. But fitting? Definitely not. The words are so rare that Dr. Parker has not even provided their exact English equivalents.

Shcherbakov used *сиг* instead of *whiting*, and *лунь* instead of *porpoise*. But why replace well-known names of marine wildlife with something that few readers have seen or heard of? Dr. Parker does not explain that, so let me fill the gap: the translator tries to make a pun out of *лунь* ('tench'). He takes the obsolete adjective *предлинный* ('very long') and reinterprets it (in Mock Turtle's words) in a rather abstruse way as *пред-линный* 'coming before a tench.'

This pun sounds even more artificial, far-fetched and labored in Russian than its literal translation into English you have just read. It is miles apart from what it is intended to be an equivalent of — a light and witty play on common words: *purpose* and *porpoise*, *whiting* and *blacking* (yes, it replaces both those puns).

Dr. Parker is obviously partial when she praises Shcherbakov for his "special ingenuity" in choosing the equivalent for the "*beat time/Time won't stand beating*" pun — *провести время*, where *провести* carries the double meaning 'to spend' and 'to cheat' (Parker, 1994, p. 40). Boris Zakhoder used exactly the same solution in his earlier translation, but nowhere in her review does Parker make any mention of that or any of his other puns (some of them not bad at all), let alone compliment his "ingenuity."

On the other hand, she has no objections to (actually, never mentions) the occurrence of the interjection *Ой!* in the speech of Shcherbakov's Alice («Ой, простите, пожалуйста!», «Ой! Я опять её обидела»), for which she groundlessly criticizes Zakhoder.

Let us look at another of Shcherbakov's solutions that Dr. Parker finds "deft": his translation of the chapter title "A Mad Tea-Party" as «*Чаепитие со сдвигом*»,

...which evokes the Russian custom of having tea with something (sugar, jam) or with someone, and by using the instrumental form of "sdvig" ("so sdivgom," displacement) the connotation is drinking with those who are somehow displaced or "off," that is, the mad ones. (Parker, 1994, p. 42)

This passage again raises questions about Dr. Parker's grasp of the Russian language. She has detected a non-existent analogy between Shcherbakov's *чаenumue со сдвигом* (literarily, 'drinking tea with a shift') and expressions like *чай с сахаром (с вареньем)* 'tea with sugar or jam.' What Dr. Parker has overlooked is the translator's attempt to play on the fact that the Hatter, the Hare and the Dormouse move (i.e., shift) around the table.

As for the figurative meaning of the phrase *со сдвигом*, 'crazy,' it is a colloquialism that took shape precisely in the late Soviet period so much abhorred by Dr. Parker. The phrase is not, and has never been, common in educated speech (there are just three contexts with the expression cited in that sense in the National Russian Corpus (n.d.)), and is at odds with Lewis Carroll's style and lexical texture.

When pondering over Dr. Parker's partiality toward Shcherbakov's text, I came to the conclusion that it stems from his ample use of the plural pronoun *вы* — something that Parker appears to consider as the hallmark of a good translation. That partiality is so strong that even when Shcherbakov's Alice inconsistently switches over to the informal pronoun *ты*, Dr. Parker goes to great lengths in order to justify the departure, permitting herself an avalanche of verbosity quite uncharacteristic of her short brochure:

At the end of the second chapter, as the Mouse swims away from Alisa, infuriated by her affectionate remarks about cats and dogs, Alisa pleads an informal form for the Mouse's return. It is precisely how Alisa would address the Mouse had she been in a wakeful state. By his translation, Shcherbakov unobtrusively introduces a psychological twist in Alisa's consciousness, as if for the moment she was leaving the world of dreams, the Mouse becoming what she is, a mere little mouse. Afterwards, both Alisa and the Mouse revert to the formal mode of address. (Parker, 1994, p. 42)

For the sake of clarity, let me quote the relevant lines directly:

А Мышь, подняв целую бурю, торопливо отплывала в сторону. Тогда Алиса тихо и жалобно сказала:

— Мышка, милая! *Вернись*, пожалуйста. Я больше не слова не скажу ни о кошках, ни о собаках, раз *ты* их не любишь.

Услышав эти слова, Мышь повернула и медленно поплыла обратно. (Carroll, 1977, p. 46)

With Alice trying to appease a large angry animal (who, may I remind the reader, seems the size of a walrus or a hippopotamus to the diminished girl), her sudden

rollback from the polite form *вы*, coupled with a diminutive (*мышка* ‘little mouse’), is a highly questionable “twist.” It looks more like an illogical mistake on the translator’s part than a psychological subtlety.

But all right, let us believe for a moment that the informal pronoun indeed reflects a “twist” in the girl’s consciousness. We will then have to classify it as a needless and pointless departure from the original. Never, during her stay in Wonderland, does Carroll’s Alice question the reality of what is happening to her; she does not leave her dream until she wakes up at the end of the book. Moreover, in Lewis Carroll’s world, Wonderland was not only Alice’s dream, it was a dream he himself cherished and wanted to remain in. As he wrote in the concluding poem of “Through the Looking-Glass,”

Ever drifting down the stream —  
Lingering in the golden gleam —  
Life, what is it but a dream?

Ленивый дрейф счастливым дорог.  
Что наша жизнь? Волшебный морок  
Да сон, без всяких оговорок. (Carroll, 2018, p. 259)

In short, the presumed “twist of consciousness,” if it was really meant by the translator, would go against Lewis Carroll’s concept and intent.

Incidentally, there are more cases of erratic use of formal/familiar modes of address by the translator. In Shcherbakov’s version of the Mouse’s tale, Furry is as inconsistent as *Alisa* when talking to the Mouse:

‘I’ll be judge, I’ll be jury,’ said cunning old Fury: ‘I’ll try the whole cause and condemn you to death.’ (AAIW, Chapter 3)

Наши законы — *ваша* вина. *Будешь* немедля *ты* казнена. (Carroll 1977, p. 55)

[*Back translation: Our laws, your (polite form) guilt. You will be (familiar form) executed immediately.*]

I must also comment on Dr. Parker’s remarks that “Shcherbakov is equally ingenious with his rendition of verse” (Parker, 1994, p. 44) and that he “maintains Carroll’s refinement” in language (p. 45). My analysis shows that the opposite is true.

Most poems in the *Alice* books — whatever their original style or meter — have been rendered by Shcherbakov in the trochaic rhythm, which is associated in Russian culture with merry folk songs and dances. The translator seems indifferent to the style of the verse he renders. He turns the Jabberwocky poem, which is styled as a grim



medieval hero epic and should be recited in a slow, solemn rhythm, into a *chastushka* — a genre of a jocular (often obscene) peasant song:

Розгрень. Юрзкие хомейки  
Просвертели весь травас.  
Айяяют брыскунчейки  
Под скорячий рычисжас. (Carroll, 1977, p. 178)

The Mock Turtle’s song, which parodies a romantic lyrical song by James Sayles of the style performed in 19th-century musical salons, is rendered by Shcherbakov in the same rollicking rhythm evoking the image of a rosy-cheeked peasant woman singing loudly, waving her scarf and tapping out a *chastushka* during a village feast:

Суп горячий и густой,  
Весь от жира золотой!  
Мы всегда готовы уп-  
Уплетать подобный суп! (p. 133)

But the vernacular is not the only register of speech into which Shcherbakov plunges his Alice (should I call it “plebeian,” to use Dr. Parker’s term?). He easily falls into bureaucratism as well. Consider the way he translates a clear and simple sentence preceding the Mouse’s story:

And she kept on puzzling about it while the Mouse was speaking, so that her idea of the tale was something like this... (AAIW, Chapter 3)

Но Мышь изогнула дрожащий хвостик, сжала его лапками и исполнила нижеследующие стихи, которые в памяти Алисы были теперь неразрывно связаны с движениями мышиноного хвоста. (Carroll, 1977, p. 54)

[*Back translation:* But the Mouse curved its trembling little tail, grasped it with its paws, and recited the poem following hereinafter, which in Alice’s memory was now inextricably associated with the movements of the Mouse’s tail.]

Apart from extensive arbitrary additions, the translator has not stopped short of using two bureaucratic clichés: *нижеследующие* ‘following hereinafter’ and *неразрывно связаны* ‘inextricably associated’. The crowning infelicity here is the word *память* (‘memory’) for “idea” in the original: it creates the impression that the Mouse’s tale was something Alice already knew but now began to link, for some strange reason, with the movements of its tail. In summary, the sentence is a gross, poorly styled mistranslation.

This example, along with many others that could be given, illustrates the degree of “refinement” and “fidelity to the English text” (quotations from Dr. Parker’s review)

that one finds in Shcherbakov's translation — a phenomenally inferior one if analyzed without bias. Dr. Parker's assessment of it as "the best of the Anglicized [i.e. non-Russified, *D. Ye.*] versions of *Alice*" just doesn't hold water.

I believe that I have familiarized the reader sufficiently with Dr. Parker's "method" so as not to discuss her review of Vladimir Nabokov's "Anya in Wonderland." Her opinion of his work is enthusiastic, but does that opinion deserve being taken into account any more than her other reviews? I believe not.

Like Yekaterina Boratynskaya, Matilda Granstrem, and Anatoly Frenkel (*D'Aktil*), Vladimir Nabokov produced a strongly Russified version of Carroll's tale in a genre that contemporary philology cannot view as translation proper. But in that niche of Russianized adaptations of foreign children's books, this early work of one of the world's most famous authors, "Anya in Wonderland," is a unique phenomenon which merits attentive and competent academic analysis in a separate study.

### **Findings and conclusions**

My study of the paper "Lewis Carroll in Russia" by Dr. Fan Parker has given me sufficient evidence to make the following conclusions.

- In her pamphlet, Dr. Parker tried to give credible ratings to 11 Russian versions of *AAIW*, but failed to do so due to the lack of method, objectivity, consistency, and sufficient competence from her analysis.
- Two different types of works — books Russified in accordance with now obsolete traditions of literary adaptation, and translations proper — should be studied and reviewed in accordance with different principles, and not mixed up together.
- Dr. Parker was obviously not guided by any theory of, or any authority in, literary translation.
- Dr. Parker used no set of uniform criteria in comparing each version of *AAIW* either with the original or with other versions. Her paper is a conglomerate of highly selective, fragmentary, and arbitrary comments.

- Proper review criteria should have included, among others: translation correctness and accuracy; fidelity to the original concept, imagery, and style; global handling of humor, puns, and parodies; literary and poetic merits from the perspective of the target language.
- Dr. Parker's paper abounds in sweeping and unsuitably emotional judgments that are not substantiated with any examples or arguments. Most of the reviewer's opinions, whether favorable or unfavorable, are biased, and many of the comments she makes are not true to fact.
- Many of Dr. Parker's statements reveal her profound misconceptions about Russian grammar, style and word usage, probably due to her prolonged loss of contact with the living language.

These findings lead me to assert that the pamphlet (Parker 1994) cannot be deemed a serious or trustworthy piece of academic research. Dr. Parker's criticism, whether eulogistic or disparaging, rests on bias, misconception, broken logic, and insufficient competence.

It is with great relief arising from resolving a long-standing misapprehension that I conclude: Dr. Parker's work can be safely excluded from the circle of respectable academic sources in translation studies and discarded from responsible consideration.

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## **ISSUE METRICS**

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