

A TRANSCREATIVE METHODOLOGY IN COLLABORATIVE TRANSLATION CLASSROOM

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Abstract:

This paper has twofold objectives. In the first place, it proposes to present a reliable collaborative plan devoted to the transcreation of different versions of legends and folk tales and secondly to demonstrate the advantages of applying the transcreative approach to translation in translator training at post graduate study level. The paper presents a novel idea to teach translation and includes some pedagogical implications, such as the proposal to introduce collaborative transcreation activities into translator training curricula.

Transcreation or creative translation is the process of adapting material for a given target audience instead of merely translating it. Transcreation ensures that the intended impact and emotion of the source message is not lost in translation, and that the original intent, style and tone are maintained. Translation stays faithful to the source text while Transcreation is an art that customizes the material for target audience.

Keywords: collaborative translation, reliable learning environment, folk tales, transcreation, translation pedagogy, etc.

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Introduction:

Several teachers and scholars have recognized the importance of creating a reliable learning environment and involving students in collaborative translation projects in recent years. The scholars in translation studies surely acknowledge the associations and synergies between functional translation theory and authentic translation projects in translator education. An authentic project might be incorporated successfully into a translation practice classroom as an emergent phenomenon that can encourage students to understand translation as complex professional behaviour. Following this translation teaching methodology, translation trainers may collaborate with translation agencies, publishing houses and other institutions to provide translation trainees with real-life experience.

In order to prepare future translators for the demands of the market and translation industry, translation

curricula propose numerous additional activities, in and out of the classroom, subsequently making translation courses more attractive for students. Hence the aim of the paper is twofold: firstly, to present the transcreation project as a set of new ideas to teach translation and secondly, to demonstrate the advantages of introducing transcreation workshops in translator training course at post graduate level.

One organizes an authentic out-of-classroom activities which is a translational-ethnographic event in local indigenous surroundings by sitting in a comfortable armchair at a corner in a primitive stronghold, listening to folk tales about the stronghold's past.

Learning in authentic settings augments several faculties, including memory, understanding, imagination and creativity. The latter has been gaining increasing importance in translation professions other than literary due to public recognition of the worth of a professional translator's creative abilities in general. There seems to be a need to introduce more activities

enhancing translation trainees' creative thinking into translation courses.

In the present-day technological advancement, there is an ever-growing use of online tools in translation field. It seems obvious that within the field of translation teaching and translator training curricula, attention should be drawn to yet another issue, which is the need to make students aware of cultural values and idioms, as well as to raise students' awareness of intertextual and intercultural content. Apart from teaching proper use of modern technologies, trainers should also sensitize the learners to the crucial significance of the human factor and humanistic values in the translation process. Gill and Guzmán (2011), inspired by the American educator Chet Bowers (1997), noticed that in translation teaching, technological change is seen as inherently progressive, and technologies for fostering such change are given high status in our institutions. In such a paradigm, cultural knowledge and the anthropocentric view of the world can be quickly turned into commodities. We must create curricula that ensure that deep human cultural values do not fall into the status of low-category knowledge [...]. We believe it is our duty to empower students by helping them develop their critical consciousness, their own social vision that will help them become involved in our ever-changing societies. (2011: 107)

A similar view has been expressed in the 'European Master's in Translation' *Competence Framework*:

In the translation industry, technological change has had an ever-increasing impact on the way translation services are performed, though human intelligence, knowledge and skills are still the key factors in delivering quality translations and the growing range of language services which translators and translation companies can provide. (Toudic and Krause 2017: 2)

One of the most popular language services provided now-a-days by translation companies, a service in the

performance of which human intelligence and creativity are indispensable, is transcreation.

Though apparently new, the term *transcreation* has been used both in the field of literary or artistic translation and in the area of international commerce and marketing for some time now. In the domain of globalized brands and commerce, transcreation usually refers to "the adaptation of advertising material for different markets" (Pedersen 2014: 57). As Pedersen summarizes the ways in which the term is understood by transcreation service providers, both the process and the product of transcreation seek "to perform all the adjustments necessary to make a campaign work in all target markets, while at the same time staying loyal to the original creative intent of the campaign" (2014: 58). In the context of various language services, transcreation itself is usually advertised as something "more than translation" (Pedersen 2014: 62) and as such is claimed to be "a specialism", "an extra service" which may be more expensive than "a more prosaic translation" (Gambier and Munday 2014: 20).

In the domain of literary translation, transcreative practices resulting in particularly creative adaptations of literary works have been present for decades, if not for centuries as in the case of Indian literature (cf. Bassnett, Trivedi 1999: 10). Purushottama Lal, who introduced the term *transcreation* as the name for the particular Indian concept of creative literary adaptation, describes his own translation of Sanskrit plays into English in the following words: "faced with such a variety of material, the translator must edit, reconcile, and transmute; his job in many ways becomes largely a matter of transcreation" ([1957] 1964: 5). In 1960s, the term *transcreation* (in Brazilian Portuguese – *transcrição*) was used by a Brazilian translator and poet Haroldo de Campos, who understood it as "a transformative recreation of inherited tradition" (Vieira

1999: 97). According to Campos, to “transcreate is not to try to reproduce the original’s form understood as a sound pattern, but [...] to use the local existing tradition” (cit. in Vieira 1999: 110).

It seems reasonable to understand transcreation as a specific category of translation “concerned more with effect and emotions than meaning”, considering that “transcreation is not only about communicating effectively, but also affectively, establishing an emotional connection between the audience/the customer and the message”, which is of paramount importance, for example, in retelling children’s literature. As legends and folk tales – prototypically telling stories of places and their ancient inhabitants and often containing moral lessons – are genres aimed primarily at younger audiences.

Transcreation may be considered as the reaction to the translator’s need to look for creative meanings that could express the novelty of the original text which is, hence, brought alive in the target language.

The ability to adequately translate persuasive advertising content, often based (just as poetry and other literary works) on alliteration, assonance and wordplay, is obviously a desired skill in the repertoire of professional translators’ competencies. Katan even advocates “the transcreational turn” in Translation Studies in order to save translational professions from disappearing in the era of constantly improving Google Translator apps and machine translation in general (2015: 378). And since “it is the (professionally trained) translator who is uniquely placed to intervene and mediate between contexts to ensure optimum [intercultural] communication”, individual professionals [i.e. translators and interpreters] “could ‘simply’ step into the role of transcreator, which would allow them to take advantage of an already assigned professional recognition of their creative role, and which would authorize them to take account of the impact of cultural distance when translating” (Katan

2015: 378). It seems, then, that transcreation workshops or courses should enter translator training curricula on a regular basis.

Examples of the most interesting translation problems together with students’ proposals to solve them can be found below:

How to achieve a sophisticated, slightly (but not too) archaic literary register?

How to be politically correct and at the same time not lose the multicultural picture of the ancient setting?

What do certain culture-bound and folklore-bound terms mean and how to render them at the same time?

How do you make a title intriguing for the target reader?

It has become obvious in recent years that in order to meet the demands of the market and to prepare translation trainees for the specificity of international agencies specializing in providing language services such as translation, localization, post-editing, transcreation or other, students should be taught many different skills. As a translation education scholar remarks, “Moving beyond the text” and focusing on a larger translation project proves “an effective tool of teaching comprehensively various competencies including teamwork, time management, project management and terminology mining. Of relevance are issues of professional ethics and conduct, such as responsibility for one’s own work and meeting deadlines. (Dybiec-Gajer 2011: 163-164).

Conclusion:

The objective of this paper was to demonstrate the advantages of applying the transcreative approach to translation. It involves various preparatory and main transcreative tasks such as performative reading in an authentic environment, comparative analysis, creation of a style-guide for a specific literary genre and rewriting the source text creatively. The trainee tasks involve solving translation problems more creatively, looking for synonyms in particular registers and

applying stylistic and narrative devices to capture the target reader's attention. The students' imaginative ways of combining several different versions of folk tales and rendering them into the English language resulted in original adaptations, rich in new, interesting images of the legendary scenery, characters and events. A conclusion can be drawn that designing and conducting an original collaborative translation course including elements of transcreation training may help motivate students and equip them with many different skills. This kind of translation/transcreation course may be also beneficial to those who teach it. The teacher's creativity and open-mindedness are enhanced, since he or she can never be sure how a given course or project will develop; students can ask many unexpected questions concerning both collaboration and transcreation, as well as contribute many interesting ideas for solving translation problems and adapting texts creatively. Last but not least, transcreatively oriented translator training would seem to prepare future translators for the needs of the contemporary translation demand.

To conclude, research on the applicability and potential advantages of the transcreative approach to translation in translator education should be continued as it may contribute to the enrichment of university level translation training curricula and in the long run to the widening of employment opportunities for postgraduates.

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