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COGNITIVE-LINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF TRANSLATION ACTIVITY

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Abstract: The article examines translation as a cognitive-linguistic activity. Translation is viewed not only as a linguistic process but also as a complex cognitive operation involving conceptualization, interpretation, and reconstruction of meaning. The study highlights the role of concepts, frames, and mental models in translation and discusses the cognitive competence of translators in intercultural communication.
Keywords: translation, cognitive linguistics, concept, frame, mental model.

Introduction

In the twenty-first century, the development of interdisciplinary research has encouraged translation studies to adopt new scientific paradigms. One of these directions is cognitive translation studies, which investigates the translation process in relation to human thinking and knowledge systems. While traditional approaches primarily regarded translation as a linguistic phenomenon, contemporary cognitive theories consider it a complex intellectual activity.

Cognitive linguistics studies the relationship between language and thought. Representatives of this field interpret linguistic units as manifestations of human knowledge and experience about the world. Therefore, translation involves not merely the recoding of textual content but also its conceptual reconstruction.

Research Methodology

The study employs descriptive, comparative-analytical, and cognitive-semantic methods. The cognitive mechanisms involved in translation are analyzed on the basis of contemporary theories of translation studies and cognitive linguistics.

Translation and Cognitive Processes

Translation involves several stages of human cognitive activity. First, the translator reads the text and comprehends its semantic content. At the next stage, this content is reconstructed according to the conceptual system of the target language.

The following cognitive operations are carried out during translation:

perception;
comprehension;
interpretation;
conceptualization;
categorization;
re-verbalization.

These operations are closely connected with the translator's knowledge, experience, and cultural competence.

The Role of Concepts in Translation

One of the key notions of cognitive linguistics is the concept. A concept is a mental unit stored in human consciousness that accumulates knowledge about a particular phenomenon.

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In the translation process, the translator identifies concepts in the source text and seeks to express them through corresponding concepts in the target language. However, some concepts possess strong national and cultural specificity, making their complete equivalent translation difficult.

For example, the English concept of *freedom* may be associated with political liberty in some cultures, while in others it may be interpreted as personal independence or spiritual liberation. Therefore, translators must take into account both the cultural and semantic dimensions of concepts.

Frames and Mental Models

The theory of frames developed by Charles Fillmore is considered one of the important methodological foundations of translation studies. A frame is interpreted as a structured model of knowledge concerning a particular situation or event.

When processing a text, translators rely on existing frames. If a frame found in the source text does not exist in the target culture, translators may apply adaptation or explanatory strategies.

A mental model, in turn, represents the conceptual image of the text formed in the human mind. The adequacy of translation largely depends on how accurately this model is constructed.

Translation and Intercultural Communication

Translation serves as a means of communication between different cultures. The worldview of every nation is reflected in its language. Therefore, translators function not only as users of two languages but also as representatives of two cultures.

The cognitive approach regards translation as a transfer of cultural knowledge. Translators must convey not only linguistic meaning but also cultural content.

Translator's Cognitive Competence

Cognitive competence plays a crucial role in the professional activity of translators. It includes the following components: analytical thinking; conceptual thinking; cultural knowledge; strategic decision-making; communicative skills. These competencies are among the primary factors ensuring translation quality.

Cognitive Models of Translation

Modern cognitive translation studies propose several models explaining the mental processes involved in translation. One of the most influential approaches is the relevance-theoretical model developed by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson. According to this theory, translation is based on the search for optimal relevance between the source and target texts. The translator selects linguistic means that enable the target audience to achieve maximum cognitive effect with minimal processing effort.

Another important approach is the cognitive-constructivist model, which views translation as an active process of knowledge construction. In this framework, translators do not simply transfer information but reconstruct meaning according to their background knowledge and cultural experience.

Prospects of Modern Cognitive Translation Studies

In recent years, experimental research in cognitive translation studies has expanded significantly. In particular, eye-tracking methods, think-aloud protocols, and neurolinguistic studies have been used to investigate translators' processes of text perception and information processing. Such research makes it possible to identify decision-making mechanisms, attention distribution, and translation strategies.

The development of digital technologies has also introduced new directions into cognitive translation studies. Computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools, machine translation systems,

and artificial intelligence-based applications have become integral parts of translators' work. However, modern researchers emphasize that technological tools cannot fully replace the translator's cognitive activity, since understanding cultural context, pragmatic meaning, and conceptual content remains a uniquely human process.

Cognitive Strategies in Translation

During translation, professionals employ various cognitive strategies to solve linguistic and cultural problems. Among the most common strategies are:

inferencing;
anticipation;
contextual interpretation;
problem-solving;
information restructuring.

Inferencing allows translators to derive implicit meanings from context. Anticipation helps predict upcoming information in a text, while contextual interpretation facilitates accurate understanding of culturally marked expressions. These strategies contribute significantly to translation efficiency and quality.

Practical Significance of the Cognitive Approach in Translation

The cognitive approach helps solve many practical problems encountered in translation. In translating metaphors, phraseological units, and culture-specific realities, translators take into account not only linguistic forms but also the conceptual meanings underlying them. For example, the English metaphor *"Time is money"* is based on a conceptual model that interprets time as an economic resource. When translating this metaphor into other languages, it is necessary to preserve not only its literal meaning but also its cognitive essence. Likewise, when it is difficult to find equivalents for culturally specific concepts, translators may employ explanatory, adaptive, or transformational strategies. Thus, the cognitive approach enables translators to achieve a deeper understanding of textual meaning, provide scientific justification for translation decisions, and improve translation quality.

Conclusion

Translation is a complex cognitive-linguistic activity in which language, thought, and culture interact. In the process of perceiving, analyzing, and recreating textual meaning, translators employ various cognitive mechanisms. Concepts, frames, and mental models constitute essential components of the translation process. The cognitive approach provides a deeper understanding of the nature of translation and contributes to improving translation quality.

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