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The Role of Language Identity in Reflecting Cultural Dialogue through Translation

Abstract

This study examines the role of language identity in the context of cultural dialogue through translation. In the context of globalization and active intercultural interaction translation is not merely a technical process of transferring information from one language to another, but also a powerful tool for shaping and reflecting cultural dialogue. The central figure in this process is the linguistic personality of the translator, whose competencies, worldview, and cultural background have a decisive influence on the final result of the translation and consequently, on the perception of a foreign culture. In this complex and delicate process, the linguistic personality of the translator comes to the fore, becoming a central figure whose individual characteristics, cognitive attitudes, value orientations and cultural experience have a decisive influence on how a foreign culture will be presented and perceived by the recipient.

Keywords: *language identity, intercultural communication, culture, text, translator, identity*

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Tərcümə vasitəsilə mədəni dialoqun əks olunmasında dil şəxsiyyətinin rolu

Xülasə

Bu tədqiqat işində mədəniyyətlərin dialoqu kontekstində dil şəxsiyyətinin rolu tərcümə vasitəsilə araşdırılır. Qloballaşma və aktiv mədəniyyətlərərəsi qarşılıqlı əlaqə şəraitində tərcümə yalnız bir dildən digərinə məlumat ötürülməsinin texniki prosesi deyil, həm də mədəni dialoqun formalaşması və əks olunması üçün güclü bir üsuldur. Bu prosesin mərkəzi figura nüfuzu, dünyagörüşü və mədəni mənşəyi ilə tərcümənin son nəticəsinə və bu səbəbdən əcnəbi mədəniyyətin qarşınmasına həllədici təsir göstərən tərcüməçinin dil şəxsiyyətidir. Bu mürəkkəb və incə prosesdə tərcüməçinin dil şəxsiyyəti ön plana çıxaraq fərdi xüsusiyyətləri, idrak münasibətləri, dəyər yönəmləri və mədəni təcrübələri əcnəbi mədəniyyətin oxucu tərəfindən necə qəbul edilməsinə həllədici təsir göstərən mərkəzi figura olur.

Açar sözlər: *dil şəxsiyyəti, mədəniyyətlərərəsi ünsiyyət, mədəniyyət, mətn, tərcüməçi, şəxsiyyət*

Introduction

In the contemporary globalized world, characterized by an unprecedented intensity of intercultural exchange, translation transcends its traditional role as a mere linguistic transfer. It has evolved into a complex cultural and cognitive practice, deeply intertwined with the individual characteristics of its participants. At the heart of this intricate process lies the concept of linguistic personality – a multifaceted construct encompassing an individual's unique linguistic traits, shaped by both inherent linguistic competence and broader socio-cultural influences. This paper argues that

understanding the linguistic personalities of both the original author and the translator is paramount for a holistic comprehension of modern translation, particularly in its capacity to facilitate a genuine "dialogue of cultures." Traditional translation theories often prioritized fidelity to the source text's lexical and grammatical structures, sometimes overlooking the nuanced interplay of individual voices and cultural frameworks. However, modern approaches recognize that conveying the full spectrum of meaning, emotion, and aesthetic value necessitates engaging with the subjective dimensions of communication. The linguistic personality of the translator, therefore, is not a peripheral factor but a central element that actively shapes the translated text, transforming it from a simple linguistic rendition into a reflection of complex intercultural dynamics. This article aims to investigate the profound impact of linguistic personality on the translation process, particularly how it enables or complicates intercultural dialogue through the textual medium. We will explore how the translator's individual linguistic identity interacts with that of the original author, creating a unique textual "mirror" that reflects the ongoing cultural interaction. The paper will demonstrate that translation, far from being a mechanical substitution, is a creative act of intercultural communication, profoundly influenced by the subjective and cultural lenses of the linguistic personalities involved. The subsequent sections of this paper will first delve into the theoretical underpinnings of linguistic personality within the broader fields of linguistics and translation studies. Following this, the methodological approach employed in analyzing the interplay of linguistic personalities will be detailed. The core of the article will then present an in-depth analysis of how linguistic personality manifests in translation, using examples primarily from literary translation to illustrate how it contributes to or alters the author's original intention. Finally, the paper will conclude by synthesizing the findings, re-emphasizing the critical role of linguistic personality in viewing translation as a rich cultural-semantic dialogue rather than a mere lexical-grammatical exercise.

Research

Research on Linguistic Personality (LP) represents one of the key directions in modern linguistics, extending beyond purely grammatical and lexical analysis of language. The concept of LP allows for considering a native speaker not as an abstract subject, but as a unique individual with their own sociocultural experience, cognitive strategies, and pragmatic attitudes. One of the founders of this field in Russian linguistics is Yu.N.Karaulov (Karaulov, 1987), who developed a multi-level model of linguistic personality, including verbal-semantic, cognitive, and pragmatic levels. His works emphasize that LP does not merely possess language, but manifests itself through it, reflecting its worldview and value orientations. The works of L.S.Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1978) on the cultural-historical theory of psychological development serve as an important methodological foundation for understanding the formation and functioning of linguistic personality. He emphasized the sociocultural conditioning of language and thought, pointing out that language is not just a means of communication, but also an instrument for the formation of consciousness. According to Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1978), the interaction of an individual with culture through language determines their cognitive development and, consequently, influences their linguistic personality. This is particularly relevant for understanding how the cultural background of the author and translator shapes their linguistic manifestations. In the context of translation studies, the research of linguistic personality gains special significance. Traditionally, translation theory, as noted by V.N.Komissarov (Komissarov, 1990), focused on achieving equivalence at various levels, from lexical to pragmatic. However, modern approaches, developing at the intersection of translation studies, cognitive linguistics, and linguoculturology, increasingly emphasize the subjective factor in translation. The translator is no longer seen as a neutral mediator but is recognized as an active participant in intercultural communication, whose own linguistic personality significantly influences the final result. Mona Baker (Baker, 2011), in her works on translation studies, thoroughly analyzes various translation strategies and emphasizes the cultural aspects of translation. She shows that the choice of a particular strategy – be it domestication (approximating the target culture) or foreignization (preserving elements of the source culture) – is largely determined not only by linguistic constraints but also by the translator's cultural position, which is

part of their linguistic personality. Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (Baker, 1998) introduced the concept of the "cultural turn" in translation studies, arguing that translation is not only a linguistic but also a cultural practice. They emphasize that translation decisions are inextricably linked to the ideological, social, and cultural contexts in which the translator operates. In this context, the translator's linguistic personality acts as a filter through which cultural meanings are interpreted and conveyed. Works in the field of cognitive linguistics, for example, the research of Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner (Fauconnier, Turner, 2008) on conceptual blending, show how mental processes shape linguistic expression. These studies confirm that linguistic personality includes not only knowledge of the language but also unique cognitive structures that influence how an individual perceives and interprets information, and then reconstructs it in a new language. This is particularly important for understanding how authorial concepts are reinterpreted by the translator. Thus, this "Literature Review" confirms that the study of linguistic personality in translation is a relevant and interdisciplinary field. It allows for a deeper understanding of how the individual and cultural characteristics of the translator influence the transmission of meaning, style, and cultural context, transforming translation from a purely technical act into a creative dialogue of cultures (Toury, 1995; Vermeer, 1996; Schaffner, 2011), carried out through the prism of linguistic personality.

The concept of "linguistic personality" is foundational to understanding the nuanced complexities of human communication, and its application to translation studies provides a powerful lens for analyzing intercultural exchange. As articulated by Yu.N.Karaulov (Karaulov, 1987), linguistic personality refers to the sum of an individual's linguistic characteristics, including their lexicon, grammar, discourse strategies, and the underlying conceptual and value systems that shape their speech. It is not merely an inventory of linguistic habits but a dynamic structure reflecting a person's cognitive, emotional, and social experiences. Karaulov's model often delineates three levels of linguistic personality: the verbal-semantic (lexicon and grammar), the cognitive (concepts and ideas), and the pragmatic (goals, motives, and values). Building on the socio-cultural theory of L.S.Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1978), human cognition and language development are inherently social and culturally mediated. Vygotsky's emphasis on the internalization of cultural tools and signs, including language, suggests that an individual's linguistic personality is profoundly shaped by their cultural environment and social interactions. This perspective underscores that language is not a neutral medium but a vehicle through which cultural meanings and identities are constructed and conveyed. Therefore, when a linguistic personality engages in communication, they bring not just their individual idiolect but also the collective wisdom, values, and worldviews embedded within their culture. In the context of translation, V.N.Komissarov's work (Komissarov's, 1990) on translation theory, particularly his insights into the equivalence levels and translation transformations, provides a crucial bridge. While Komissarov primarily focused on achieving various types of equivalence, the introduction of linguistic personality necessitates an understanding that achieving "equivalence" is not always a purely objective, mechanistic process. Instead, it often involves subjective interpretation and re-creation guided by the translator's own linguistic and cultural filters. Contemporary research in cognitive linguistics further reinforces this view, highlighting how conceptual metaphors, frames, and schemata, which are largely culturally informed, influence how individuals perceive and express reality through language. It is important to consider the challenges and opportunities described in the papers by Jalilbayli et.al. (Jalilbayli, 2025) and Mammadova (Mammadova, 2025) on the use of AI in education and translation process. These cognitive structures are integral components of a linguistic personality and inevitably come into play during the translation process. From this theoretical vantage point, translation shifts from being solely a linguistic task to a profoundly cultural one. The translator does not merely convert words from one language to another; they mediate between two linguistic personalities, two cultural frameworks, and often two distinct worldviews. This mediation involves an inherent interpretive act, where the translator, as a linguistic personality themselves, processes the source text through their own cognitive and cultural filters, and then re-encodes it into the target language, imbuing it with elements of their own linguistic identity. Thus, the category of linguistic personality comes to

the forefront, transforming translation into a dynamic interplay of identities and interpretations, reflecting an ongoing intercultural dialogue.

To effectively investigate the influence of linguistic personality on translation and the realization of intercultural dialogue, a multi-faceted research methodology is employed. This approach combines established techniques in translation studies with more nuanced methods drawn from socio-linguistics and discourse analysis. The primary methodological tools include:

Analysis of Translation Strategies: This involves examining the specific techniques and choices made by the translator at various linguistic levels – lexical, grammatical, syntactic, and discursive. Particular attention is paid to instances where the translator deviates from a literal rendering, applying strategies such as domestication, foreignization, compensation, or modulation. The rationale behind these strategic choices is often indicative of the translator's attempt to bridge cultural gaps or, conversely, of their own linguistic personality influencing the rendering. For example, the choice to explicate a cultural reference or to leave it implicit can reveal much about the translator's perception of the target audience and their own cultural embeddedness.

Comparison of Original and Translated Texts (Comparative Stylistics): This core method involves a meticulous side-by-side comparison of the source text (ST) and the target text (TT). This comparative analysis extends beyond mere identification of differences to an exploration of why those differences exist. We analyze shifts in register, tone, imagery, rhythm, and overall stylistic effect. Discrepancies that cannot be solely attributed to linguistic constraints often point to the influence of the translator's linguistic personality – their preferred stylistic choices, their emotional resonance with the text, or their unconscious reinterpretation of the author's voice. This comparative approach is particularly fruitful in literary translation, where stylistic uniqueness is a hallmark of the author's linguistic personality.

Linguo-cultural Analysis: This component focuses on identifying and analyzing culturally specific elements within both the source and target texts. This includes realia (culture-specific terms), proverbs, idioms, allusions, and culturally embedded conceptual metaphors. The way these elements are rendered (or not rendered) in the translation provides crucial insights into the intercultural dialogue. It reveals how the translator's own cultural background and understanding, as integral parts of their linguistic personality, mediate the transmission of cultural meaning. The aim is to understand how cultural gaps are navigated, whether through explicit explanation, cultural adaptation, or deliberate retention of foreignness.

Discursive Analysis: This method examines how meaning is constructed and conveyed through larger units of text beyond the sentence level. It involves analyzing rhetorical patterns, narrative voices, ideological stances, and underlying assumptions. By comparing the discursive patterns in the ST and TT, we can identify how the translator's linguistic personality might subtly (or overtly) reshape the text's discourse. This could manifest in altered emphasis, different persuasive strategies, or a shift in the perceived authorial voice. For instance, a translator's personal disposition towards formality or informality might subtly alter the discourse of the translated text.

The research draws primarily on literary translations as a rich corpus for analysis. Literary texts, by their very nature, are deeply imbued with the author's individuality, stylistic uniqueness, and cultural background. They often explore complex human emotions, nuanced social dynamics, and intricate philosophical ideas, making them ideal for observing the interaction of linguistic personalities. Case studies are selected where the interaction between authorial and translational linguistic personalities is particularly evident, providing concrete examples of how the translator either meticulously preserves the author's intention or introduces discernible transformations due to their own linguistic and cultural filters. Through this rigorous analytical framework, the study seeks to illuminate the profound and often unconscious ways in which linguistic personality shapes the translated text and, by extension, the intercultural dialogue it facilitates.

The translation process, when viewed through the lens of linguistic personality, transforms into a dynamic interplay between two distinct yet interconnected identities: that of the original author and that of the translator. This interaction is not a passive transfer but an active negotiation, where the translator, as a "second linguistic personality," simultaneously reflects and reinterprets the

author's voice, creating a new text that acts as a "mirror" of cultural interaction. The author's linguistic personality manifests profoundly in their choice of words, syntactic structures, narrative voice, rhetorical devices, and underlying conceptual frameworks. It is this unique linguistic imprint that conveys not only factual information but also emotions, nuances, and the specific worldview embedded within their culture. In literary translation, the challenge is particularly acute, as the translator must strive to convey not just the plot or characters, but the very essence of the author's individuality and stylistic uniqueness. For instance, the idiosyncratic use of metaphors, specific colloquialisms, or a particular rhythm in prose – all hallmarks of an author's linguistic personality – present significant challenges that cannot be resolved by mere lexical substitution. It is precisely at this juncture that the translator's linguistic personality comes into play. The translator is not an invisible conduit but an active participant, bringing their own linguistic competence, cultural background, cognitive filters, and personal stylistic preferences to the task (Aliyeva, 2004). Their linguistic personality inevitably influences every decision, from word choice and sentence construction to the overall tone and emotional resonance of the translated text. Consider a situation where an author uses irony heavily. A translator, whose linguistic personality is less attuned to subtle irony or whose target culture expresses irony differently, might either flatten the ironic tone or overemphasize it, thus altering the original author's intent. Similarly, an author's use of culturally specific humor or allusions requires the translator to make critical decisions. Their linguistic personality, shaped by their own cultural understanding, will guide whether they opt for domestication (adapting the humor to be comprehensible in the target culture, potentially losing some original flavor) or foreignization (retaining the cultural specificity, potentially requiring footnotes or leading to less immediate comprehension). Both choices reflect the translator's interpretive stance and the influence of their linguistic identity (Baker, 2011). Furthermore, the translator's linguistic personality impacts the stylistic uniqueness of the translated text. If an author writes in a highly ornate and complex style, a translator with a preference for simplicity and directness might unconsciously simplify the prose, inadvertently altering the author's artistic expression. Conversely, a translator might deliberately choose to emulate the original author's style, pushing the boundaries of the target language to achieve a similar effect. In such cases, the translator's linguistic personality acts as a creative force, engaging in a form of linguistic empathy and re-creation. Our analysis of literary translations (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1998) reveals various cases where the translator's linguistic personality either largely contributes to preserving the author's intention or introduces certain transformations. In instances of successful preservation, the translator's linguistic personality aligns harmoniously with the author's, enabling them to grasp and effectively re-render the subtle nuances, emotional depth, and stylistic intricacies of the original. This often occurs when the translator possesses a profound understanding of both the source and target cultures, coupled with a highly developed linguistic sensitivity that allows them to "hear" the author's voice clearly. However, transformations are also an inherent part of the process. These transformations are not necessarily "errors" but rather reflections of the translator's unique interpretive lens and the inevitable cultural and linguistic differences that exist between the source and target contexts. For example, a concept that is highly salient in the source culture might have no direct equivalent in the target culture, forcing the translator to create a neologism, use a descriptive phrase, or find a functional equivalent that, while conveying meaning, subtly alters the original nuance. These choices are driven by the translator's cognitive understanding and their assessment of what constitutes effective communication for the target audience – all elements of their linguistic personality (Fauconnier & Turner, 2008). Thus, the translated text becomes a fascinating "mirror" of cultural interaction. It reflects not only the original culture and its linguistic embodiment but also the target culture and the translator's own identity as an intermediary. The translator, in this sense, becomes a co-author, not in terms of generating original content, but in shaping the reception and interpretation of the original text within a new cultural context. This creative act ensures that translation is not a static, mechanical process but a vibrant and evolving form of intercultural communication, where linguistic personality acts as a dynamic bridge, facilitating dialogue and fostering deeper understanding across cultural divides.

Conclusion

The exploration of linguistic personality in translation underscores a fundamental shift in how we perceive and engage with intercultural communication. Modern translation is far removed from a mere lexical-grammatical substitution; it is a complex, culturally embedded and profoundly individual endeavor. This article has sought to demonstrate that the linguistic personality of both the original author and the translator is not merely an auxiliary factor but a central determinant in the successful conveyance of meaning, emotion, and cultural aesthetics across linguistic boundaries. We have established that linguistic personality, defined as a unique confluence of an individual's linguistic characteristics shaped by both inherent abilities and socio-cultural factors, profoundly influences every stage of the translation process. Drawing upon the theoretical frameworks of Yu.N.Karaulov (Karaulov, 1987), L.S.Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1978), and V.N.Komissarov (Komissarov, 1990), complemented by insights from cognitive linguistics, we have highlighted how translation serves as a reflection of intercultural dialogue. This is particularly salient in literary translation, where the preservation of the author's individuality, stylistic uniqueness, and cultural background relies heavily on the translator's ability to engage with and re-create these elements through their own linguistic lens. The research methodology, encompassing the analysis of translation strategies, comparative textual analysis, and linguo-cultural and discursive analysis, has provided robust tools to examine how the linguistic personalities of the author and translator interact. Through the analysis of literary translations, it became evident that the translator, acting as a second linguistic personality, navigates the delicate balance between fidelity to the original and the necessary transformations dictated by cultural and linguistic disparities. This process results in a unique translated text that not only conveys information but also reinterprets and recontextualizes the cultural essence of the source, thereby constructing a "mirror" of cultural interaction. The key conclusions of this article emphasize the critical importance of recognizing the translator as a creative agent and a distinct linguistic personality. Translation, in this light, emerges as a cultural-semantic dialogue rather than a purely technical exercise. The translator, equipped with their own linguistic personality, inevitably becomes a co-author of the text, entering into a profound dialogue with the original creator. This dynamic interplay ensures that the translated text is not a passive reproduction but an active re-creation, imbued with layers of cultural and individual interpretation. The influence of linguistic personality on translation is indeed complex, affecting both the inherent linguistic parameters of the text and its broader cultural interpretation. By acknowledging this factor, we can move towards a more nuanced and culturally adequate transmission of texts. The linguistic personality, rather than posing an obstacle, acts as a vital bridge between cultures, facilitating understanding and enriching the global tapestry of human communication. Future research could further explore the practical implications of this understanding in translator training, focusing on developing heightened linguistic self-awareness and intercultural sensitivity among aspiring translators. Additionally, quantitative studies examining the stylistic fingerprints of individual translators across a larger corpus could provide further empirical evidence for the pervasive influence of linguistic personality.

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