Conference Paper

The adventures of the text in digitalization era: ``the rime of ancient mariner'' by S.T. Coleridge in the classic translation by Nikolay Gumilev and the ``revelations'' of digital translation

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Abstract

The possibilities of machine translation in the era of total digitalization seem limitless, however, for poetic text, electronic translation technology has limited application. For the analysis and comparison of machine and literary translation, the text of Coleridge's 1798 poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" was taken for it uses the theme of the sea, which is extremely important in the poet's work. This poem was translated by N.S. Gumilev in 1919: the translation was made more than a hundred years after the date of the creation of the original, and the author of the translation had to take into account the context of the creation of the work.

The translation generated by modern technologies involves the work of a self-learning neural network which is based on corrections made by users. Online translation technology allows users who believe that the translation is inaccurate to either choose from several proposed options or make their own. On the one hand, due to the constant work of users and their corrections, the translation has the property of self-learning and implies that each subsequent translation is better than the previous one. On the other hand, for texts created 200 years ago, this technology may turn out to be unproductive: most texts translated using an electronic translator are modern, they take into account current realities and contexts of use.

To test this hypothesis, an experiment was conducted: translations of the same text by the translator-poet of the Silver Age and the modern electronic translator Google were compared. An electronic translation cannot explicitly take into account the rhythmic structure of the text, the assonances and alliterations used in it, etc., however, it can convey the general meaning of the text, its content. It seems interesting that in the text generated by electronic translation, new semantic connections arise which are absent in the original and in the translation of the poet.

Keywords: Translation, neural network, digitalization, Gumilev, Coleridge.

1. Introduction

The technology of machine translation is based on text generation algorithms based on the three factors: the grammatical structure of the translating language, its lexical stock and the typical structure of phrase construction characteristic of the language. The first two factors can be taken into account by the human translator who works, knowing the grammar and vocabulary of the translating language [5]. However, a significant drawback of the person working with the text is their limited familiarity with the corpus of texts [6]. No matter how educated the translator may be, they a priori may not be familiar with the entire corpus of texts in both their native and foreign languages [8]. This access to the vast corpus of texts is available to the neural network which generates a translation not only on the basis of substituting words into the grammatical structure, but also on the basis of the most frequent combinations and uses [7]. At the same time, the electronic translation has the ability to self-learn: users can independently make adjustments to the texts generated by the neural network, and in the future, the translation will be adjusted based on the amendments made by them. The mass character of the amendments also plays a role: in any case, an electronic transfer assumes that one individual user may be mistaken. If, however, a lot of users introduce some kind of correction, it is more representative.

2. Methods and Methodology

To compare the translation generated by the electronic translator and the classical translator — the author of his poems, a study was undertaken based on comparative and contextual analysis methods.

When analyzing translations of the modern era, several factors should be taken into account, and first of all, the interaction of texts among themselves, both pretext and post-text: possible allusions, additional information, associative connections and text dialogues also affect the perception of translation in the culture of the translating language. This gives rise to the innovative concept of "adventures of the text" [9], which implies the interpenetration of various interpretations of the text, its rethinking in a new way.

The hypothesis of the study is that the electronic translation, completely devoid of the human factor, and by default conveying the literal or close to the literal meaning of the text, can more fully highlight the original intention of the author. Perceiving the text in the translation, the reader inevitably deals with the interpretation of the translator,

who, if the translation is a poem, was forced to observe the laws of rhyme and rhythm, inevitably sacrificing some fragments of the original [2].

3. Results and Discussion

"The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" by Coleridge is a vast text, which is something between a lyrical and dramatic work: in the author's remarks — comments placed on the left side of the poetic lines — there is mentioned what the characters do, in what context this or that line is pronounced. In other words, part of the plot is presented by the author not in poetry, but in prose, for:

TABLE 1: An Albatross coming — original [1]

And lo! the Albatross proveth a bird of good omen, and followeth the ship as it returned northward through fog and floating ice.	And a good south wind sprung up behind; The Albatross did follow, And every day, for food or play, Came to the Mariner hollo! In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud, It perched for vespers nine; Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white, Glimmered the white Moon-shine.'

N.S. Gumilev translates these lines as follows:

TABLE 2: An Albatross coming — the translation by N.S. Gumilev [4]

I vot Al'batros okazyvayetsya dobrym predznamenovaniyem i soprovozhdayet korabl', vozvrashchayushchiysya k severu skvoz' tuman i plavuchiye l'dy.	I dobryy yuzhnyy vetr nas mchal, Byl s nami Al'batros, On poigrat', poyest' sletal Na korabel'nyy nos. V syroy tuman na machte on Spal devyat' vecherov, I belyy mesyats nam siyal Iz belykh oblakov.

The translation made by N.S. Gumilev, on the whole, is quite close to the original: Gumilev's text has all the semantic elements of Coleridge's text, slightly modified to maintain rhythm and rhyme. So, in Coleridge's text, the albatross flies "for food and play" to the Mariner, and not "to the ship's bow" ("na korabel'nyy nos"), like Gumilev writes. Further, Gumilev removes from the text of the second stanza a mention of different options for the deployment of the albatross: he sat only "on the mast" ("na machte"), and, again, in order to maintain the rhythm used by the translator, Gumilev writes that the albatross "slept" ("spal"), not "perched".

The following text was generated using an electronic translator:

TABLE 3: An Albatross coming — Google translation

I vot! Al'batros dokazyvayet ptitsu dobrogo predznamenovaniya i sleduyet za korablem, kogda on vozvrashchayetsya na sever cherez tuman i plavayushchiy led.	I khoroshiy yuzhnyy veter voznik pozadi; Al'batros deystvitel'no sledoval, I kazhdyy den', dlya yedy ili igry, Prishel k moryaku privet! V tumane ili oblake, na machte ili savane, Eto sidelo za vecherney devyati; Whiles vsyu noch' skvoz' tuman-dym belyy, Mertsal belyy lunnyy blesk.

In a first approximation, we can see that the interlinear, made by an electronic translator, is stylistically imperfect, there is no coordination between words. The idea that the albatross is a good sign for sailors is conveyed by the absolutely illiterate construction "dokazyvayet ptitsu dobrogo predznamenovaniya" (which, however, if the phrase structure is incorrect, means that the albatross proved that he really is a bird that brings good). Further, the electronic translator could not cope with the outdated word "Whiles", the equivalent of which is the modern "while", but left it in the English version as if it were a proper name. Also, the pronoun "it", referring to the bird — albatross, also turned out to be incorrectly interpreted: the electronic translator perceived it as "eto".

However, electronic translation is completely devoid of the excessive connotations that a human translator can make to a text. So, Gumilev doesn't have any interjections used by Coleridge: the exclamation "lo!", conveyed to them as "and here" ("i vot"), is an interjection, the meaning of which is the effect of unexpectedness, something wonderful, unprecedented. Coleridge also uses a colloquial speech style. When the albatross flies to the sailors, they say "hollo!" to him, moreover, Coleridge does not separate this word with punctuation marks, giving readers the opportunity to guess for themselves that in this context the sailors apparently greet the bird. This "hollo!" is in no way reflected in the translation of N.S. Gumilev.

Further, in the text by Coleridge, it is mentioned that the albatross sat "In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud" — the last word was interpreted by the electronic translator as "savan", although if you enter the word "shroud" into the same Google translator out of context, it has several meanings. Most likely, Coleridge's albatross sat either on the mast or on cables ("shroud"), but the electronic translation algorithm, interacting with poetic text, chose the word "savan" ("death dress") from the possible values. It can be assumed that precisely such a choice was influenced by two factors: firstly, in the following text an evening religious service is mentioned, and the electronic translator perceives all of the above as a kind of church context. Secondly, among the possible meanings, the more frequent prevails. Gumilev removed the church allusions: the albatross simply accompanied the sailors for nine evenings.

Interestingly, in Coleridge's text, the passage dedicated to the albatross symbolizes a happy deliverance from death, as indicated by the associative series of text: for example, the albatross sits on the mast for nine evenings. In the Anglican tradition, the ninth day after death is significant: it is nine days later that the funeral is held: "Before the funeral in England, the dead man "expects his fate" in the morgue at the hospital. There they will prepare him for burial, bringing him only to the chapel in the cemetery for a funeral service. Among the British it is not customary to bury a dead man in the ground. His body is cremated, and the ashes are later waved in the wind. Such a custom was first proposed by the Church of England. By the way, everyone should write a will, mentioning that they want to be burned in a crematorium.

The funeral ceremony takes place on the 9th day after the death of a person. So the canons of the Anglican church command" [3].

Significant is the mention of a word with the figurative meaning of "savan" ("death dress"), also referring to death. In Coleridge's poem, the text quite transparently hints that the sailors are close to death in the ice, and the albatross accompanying the ship "leads" them out of this state. In the future, after the death of the albatross and the subsequent events, which the sailors perceive as revenge for the dead bird, the context manifests itself more fully: the albatross was indeed the bird of life, and his accidental killing led to calm, thirst and death of the entire crew of the ship.

Gumilev's translation, in accordance with the author's decision, doesn't have these connotations, and the electronic translator, who could not cope with the stylistic coordination of the text, nevertheless, retained the indicated shades of meaning. We can conditionally say that Coleridge's ominous colouring of the text, which predicts the further development of events, occurs earlier in the first lines than in Gumilev's translation.

In general, the electronic translator in this fragment provides an uncoordinated substring, which for further use needs to be processed and edited by a human translator. Consider another example of Coleridge's work:

TABLE 4: The description of the sea calm — the original [1]

The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.	All in a hot and copper sky, The bloody Sun, at noon, Right up above the mast did stand, No bigger than the Moon. Day after day, day after day, We stuck, nor breath nor motion; As idle as a painted ship Upon a painted ocean.

N.S. Gumilev translates these lines as follows:

TABLE 5: The description of the sea calm — the translation by N.S. Gumilev [4]

Korabl' neozhidanno ostanavlivayetsya	V goryachikh, mednykh nebesakh Poldnevnoyu poroy Nad machtoy Solntse, tochno krov', S Lunu velichinoy. Za dnyami dni, za dnyami dni My zhdom, korabl' nash spit, Kak v narisovannoy vode, Risovannyy stoit.

As in the previous case, the translation made by N.S. Gumilev, accurately and in detail reflects the original, but with the loss of a number of semantic elements: thus, the comparison "as idle" ("as broken", "as inoperative") is eliminated. At the same time, there is a consonance of the words "idle" and "idol" — if you take the poem by ear, the ship caught in the calm stands not just as idle, but also as an "idol", a statue contrasted with the Christian religious context that permeates the entire text by Coleridge. Gumilyov also lacks the transmission of this "nor breath nor motion", which again refers to the image of death in Coleridge's text. In Gumilev's translation, "korabl' nash spit", "our ship is sleeping": in spite of the metaphor of death-sleep which is also accepted in the Russian language, the sleeping person is perceived as alive by default, and the text is more optimistic: the ship can still sail. Coleridge continues the red line outlined above: according to its text, from the very beginning it can be assumed that the old sailor is a ghost, a dead man.

TABLE 6: The description of the sea calm — Google translator

Korabl' vnezapno uspokoilsya.	Vse v zharkom i mednom nebe, Krovavoye Solntse v polden', Pryamo nad machtoy stoyal, Ne bol'she chem Luna. Den' za dnem, den' za dnem, My zastryali, ni dykhaniye, ni dvizheniye; Kholostoy kak narisovannyy korabl' Na narisovannom okeane.

An electronic translation demonstrates the inconsistency of the text already shown above, but the neural networks managed to cope with the image that Gumilev interpreted almost the opposite of the original: Coleridge's sun is "no bigger than the Moon" ("s Lunu velichinoy"), but Gumilev has "with the same size as the moon". Also, in the original, the ship really did not just stop, but "becalmed" — "calmed down", which in Coleridge's text again reminds of death.

4. Conclusions

The survey has shown that the text of the poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" by Coleridge has a religious meaning and is deeply connected with the theme of death. The old sailor is dead, he is a ghost, and most of his story is a description of the posthumous wanderings of the soul. At the beginning of the text, the reader does not yet know about this and perceives — until a certain moment when the symbolic game between Life and Death and other allegorical and religious passages begins to be described — the story of the sailor as ordinary stories of an old man describing his life experience.

At the same time, the study has fixed that the text has a significant feature which allowed us to demonstrate the analysis of fragments from the beginning of the poem: although the third part does not explicitly mention the death of the sailor and his comrades, the text contains hints of death, by means of the second meaning of the word.

The survey has determined that the text of literary translation by N.S. Gumilev, in many respects corresponds to the text of the original, however, the transformation of the text undertaken by the poet completely destroys the second layer of meaning: we can say that the text of the translation is more optimistic than the text of the original, and the description of the painful death of the sailors is not anticipated by the text of the first and second parts.

The study has elucidated that an electronic translation made with the help of Google translator differs in inconsistency and significant stylistic mistakes, however, it conveys the second meaning of the text, additional connotations appear embedded in the text by Coleridge.

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