Leo Tolstoy's translation of Gospels in light of 20th century translation studies

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the ideas of Leo Tolstoy on translation issues represented in his almost unknown book *Soedineniye i perevod chetyrekh Evangelii* (The Four Gospels Harmonized and Translated) (Tolstoy 1957; Tolstoy 1896; Tolstoy 1904 a, b), in which the major parts of the New Testament were translated and commented upon with regards to the official (a.k.a. Synodal) translation into Russian as well as the original Greek text. Though Tolstoy attempted to simplify and even omit some passages as irrelevant, many of his translation methods had a clear correlation with the approaches formulated in 20th century theory of translation, namely semantic analysis, inner and surface structures and cultural equivalence.

Keywords: Leo Tolstoy, translation, Gospels, dynamic equivalence, pragmatics, religious translation.

Resumen

Traducción del Evangelio por León Tolstói a la luz de los estudios de traducción del siglo XX

Este artículo está dedicado a las ideas de León Tolstói sobre cuestiones de traducción expresadas en su casi desconocido libro *Soedineniye i perevod chetyrekh Evangelii* (Los Cuatro Evangelios armonizados y traducidos) (Tolstoy 1957; Tolstoy 1896; Tolstoy 1904 a,b), en el que traducía y comentaba la mayor parte del Nuevo Testamento en relación con la traducción oficial en ruso y con el texto griego. Aunque Tolstói intentó simplificar y omitir algunos pasajes que consideraba irrelevantes, muchos de sus métodos de traducción están en evidente correlación con los puntos de vista formulados en la teoría de la traducción del siglo XX, especialmente análisis semántico, estructuras internas y superficiales y equivalencia cultural.

Palabras clave: León Tolstói, traducción, Evangelios, equivalencia dinámica, pragmática, traducción religiosa.

1. Introduction

One of the late works by Leo Tolstoy, who attentively and critically studied Christian beliefs, was the translation of the Gospels into Russian entitled *Soedineniye i perevod chetyrekh Evangelii* (The Four Gospels Harmonized and Translated) (Tolstoy 1957; Tolstoy 1896; Tolstoy 1904 a, b). This book, incorporating numerous comments, criticizes the Russian Synodal Bible (hereafter "Synodal Bible"), i.e. the Rus-

sian authorized version, and outlines the drawbacks, caused by controversies and the archaic language, which were difficult to understand for believers. Tolstoy's comments are similar to the tradition of research promoting Biblical and translation studies, developed in particular by Nida and Newmark (Nida 1947; Newmark 1991).

This is the only work in which Tolstoy addresses issues of linguistics and translation, and so deserves reappraisal. Although *The Four Gospels Harmonized and Translated* has received sporadic attention from scholars, their perspective has been largely historical (Troyat 2001: 397) and the literary and linguistic features have been almost completely overlooked. I would argue that the issues discussed by Tolstoy in his book and the practical solutions suggested by him deserve to be a part of translation studies.

Tolstoy's work incorporates Greek and Synodal Bible texts, notes, comments, and summaries of chapters in parallel. The parallel texts allow us to study and critically evaluate the translation. Many remarks on the Synodal Bible version have a theoretical basis and may be applied to contemporary translation studies. Furthermore, Tolstoy made relevant remarks on lexical semantics, contextual meaning, syntax, corruptions and interpolations, and adaptation.

Thus, the subject matter of the paper will be the analysis of Tolstoy's translation. Within this framework, I will show that the writer's ideas foreshadowed trends in the 20th century linguistic theory of translation, especially equivalence and pragmatics, as promoted by Jakobson, Nida, and Newmark. The critiques and methods expressed by Tolstoy show the correlations with 20th century techniques, in particular dynamic equivalence theory. The relevance of the methods is enforced by the examples from recent religious translations such as *New American Standard Bible* (1995) and *English Standard Version* (2001) (Bible Hub. Online Bible Study Suite. http://biblehub.com/).

2. Overview

2.1. Tolstoy's translation activity

Until now, Tolstoy has not been mentioned in the literature on translation theory either in or outside Russia, despite the fact that he is the only internationally known Russian writer who translated the Gospels and made a Gospel harmony. His name deserves being included in a list of those who made similar harmonies, inter alia, Tatian, Saint Augustine, Mercator, Griesbach, Jefferson, Aland. The translation of the New Testament also ranks Tolstoy together with the translators of the Gospels such as John Wycliffe and William Tyndale in Great Britain, Martin Luther in Germany, Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples in France. It is noteworthy that these translators were subject to persecution and even labelled as heretics due to their Biblical studies. Tyndale, and Jan Hus who was Wycliffe's disciple and an advocate of translation into the vernacular, were burnt at the stake. Tolstoy was excommunicated from the Russian Orthodox Church in 1901 for his religious views and has not been readmitted.

Whilst working on the translation, Tolstoy compared the Four Gospels, read the text in Greek and drew analogies with translations into other languages – *Vulgate*, Bibles in German, French, and English, the harmonies done by Griesbach, Grechulevich, Tiscendorf (see Tolstoy 1904 a: 18). Tolstoy interrupted his work on the book in 1881, although he edited it later. Since it was forbidden from being printed in Russia, the book was first published in sections in Switzerland between 1892 and 1894. The entire edition of the work only came out in Russia in 1906. In the Soviet Union, after the 1917 Russian Revolution, the book was only published in full in Tolstoy's complete works of 1957 (Tolstoy, 1957).

In 1896, it came out in the UK translated by John Kenworthy – an English writer, associate and biographer of Tolstoy (Tolstoy 1896) – and in 1904, it was completely translated and edited by Leo Wiener - Assistant Professor of Slavic languages at Harvard University, and published in two volumes for the Complete Works (Tolstoy 1904 a, b). Tolstoy's religious views, which were outlined in the harmony and later refined in such works as *A Confession* (1882), *What is Religion* (1902), *The Gospel in Brief* (1906), were not accepted in the tsarist era or in Soviet Russia.

As to the translation, Tolstoy addressed the problem of transparency, the understanding of the text, and emphasized not only the religious but also the linguistic features of the Gospels. In particular, he used linguistic approaches and methods that later became known as componential analysis, semantic analysis, and surface structures.

Tolstoy's linguistic approach to translation, anticipated linguistic translation theory, which was actively developed by linguists of the Prague school, especially Vilem Mathesius and Roman Jakobson. Tolstoy's ideas on intelligibility and effect on the reader were echoed by Mathesius who wrote that "the fundamental goal of literary translation was to achieve, whether by the same or by differing devices, the same artistic effect as in the original" (Mathesius 1913; cited by Gentzler 2001: 82).

3. Presentation

This section is on the correlation between Tolstoy's translation methods and translation theory, and will deal with Tolstoy's main critiques. These are divided into two groups: the semantics of the vocabulary and syntax transformations (3.1.) and cultural translation (3.2.).

3.1. The Semantics of vocabulary and syntax transformations

The problem of understanding translated texts has been studied and tackled since antiquity. One of the most famous precursors of tackling unintelligible passages of the Bible was Martin Luther, who sought to use the language spoken by believers (Luther 1957).

Tolstoy tackled many ambiguities. The ethos of the book was represented in his words: "no one can believe what is incomprehensible, and the knowledge of what is

incomprehensible is equal to ignorance" (Tolstoy 1904 a: 16) which may explain why he rendered many figurative concepts in plain language, e.g. *pearl** – 'most precious', *the children of the bridechamber** - 'guests' (hereafter, *symbol will accompany the words and phrases from the Synodal Bible).

This part will cover the following issues: choice of meaning (3.1.1.); replacing Church Slavonic vocabulary (3.1.2.); rendering proper names (3.1.3.); substitutions of syntactic patterns (3.1.4.).

3.1.1. Choice of meaning

The analysis of meaning made by Tolstoy resembles Nida's componential analysis, i.e. "That part of the analysis of a text which aims at discovering and organizing the semantic components of the words" (Nida, Taber 1969: 199). In his analysis, the American linguist considered the following concepts relevant to religious discourse: χρηστότητι 'kindness', ἀγάπη 'love', σάρξ 'flesh'. Tolstoy deconstructed and examined meanings of Greek words and concepts: εὐαγγέλιον 'Gospel', εὐσέβειαν 'godliness', μαρτυρίαν 'witness', δόξαν 'glory'.

Special attention was devoted to a well-known quotation from John 1.1 «В начале было Слово» "In the beginning was the word". Tolstoy wrote: "In the beginning was the comprehension" (Tolstoy, 1904 a: 26). As to the Greek word λόγος 'word', he considered eleven meanings, and on the basis of the contextual analysis, suggested *comprehension*, generalizing the concepts: *reason, cause, reflection,* and *correlation*. This idea correlates with what Nida writes about λόγος, "There simply is no English word (and certainly not Word itself) which can do justice to the variety and richness of meaning of this Greek term" (Nida, Taber 1969: 5).

Commenting on John 1.3., Tolstoy recommended using nouns instead of pronouns – an approach similar to Nida's to make the phrase clear in a narrow context:

(1)

Synodal Bible	Tolstoy
Иоанн 1:3 Все чрез него начало быть, и без него ничто не начало быть, что начало быть.	*Все чрез разумение родилось, и помимо разумения не родилось ничто из того, что живо и живет* (Tolstoy 1957: 31).
John 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made (KJB).	Everything was born through the comprehension, and without the comprehension is not anything born of that which is alive and lives (Tolstoy 1904 a: 31).

Here *comprehension* is used for λόγος and is repeated (unlike pronouns in the Synodal Bible). The technique of changing pronouns into nouns was used by Tolstoy to facilitate understanding and avoid ambiguities, as he intended his text to be used by non-educated people.

At the same time, Tolstoy did not use just one equivalent to render the central meaning. He noted several cases when the same word should be translated differently in context. In Luke 10.39, which describes the episode of Jesus at the House of Martha and Mary, Tolstoy rendered λόγος as *teaching*. Tolstoy justified his choice of word on the basis of the context, arguing that the collocation *очевидцы слова* 'witness of the word' is impossible. He wrote, "…one cannot be a witness of a word" (Tolstoy 1904 a: 374). A similar case is with σάρξ (sarx) expressed as *плоть* 'flesh' in John 1.14 (Tolstoy 1904 a: 39) and *мир* 'world', i.e. all people in Luke 3.6 (Tolstoy 1904 b: 57).

3.1.2. Replacing Church Slavonic vocabulary

As to the less common vocabulary, Tolstoy went against the obvious intention of the Russian Church to introduce Church Slavonic components. The Synodal Bible had been translated into Russian under the direction of Filaret (Drozdov), Metropolitan of Moscow, who made up rules for translators in his article "*O dogmaticheskom dostoinstve i okhranitel'nom upotreblenii grecheskogo semidesiati tolkovnikov i slavenskogo perevodov Sviaschennogo Pisaniia*" (On the dogmatic significance and protective usage of the LXX and Slavonic translations of the Holy Scripture (Filaret 1994). These rules required literary translation whilst maintaining, if possible, the syntax of the source text. Literary editing of the Synodal Bible made by the Metropolitan was impeccable in rendering subtle shades of meaning, but mostly he intentionally made the text archaic to avoid the complete split of the Russian text with Church Slavonic, which is still used in Russian churches. In the Synodal Bible, obsolescent and formal phrases dominate: *верхняя одежда* 'outer garments', *поприще* 'walk of life'. As a result, the New Testament in the Synodal Bible became stylistically archaic. The closeness of vocabulary and syntax to the Greek text became evidence of the so-called biblical style.

Replacing Church Slavonic forms in Tolstoy's translation is represented by: *глас* – голос* 'voice', *сшедший* – сошедший* 'having come', *чрез* – через* 'through'; *око* – глаз* 'eye', *отче* – батюшка* 'father', *агнец* – ягненок* 'lamb', *секира* – топор* 'axe', *возопить* – кричать* 'cry', *сие* – это* 'this', *доколе* – когда* 'when'.

The replacement of obsolescent words in the context may be found in the Parable of the Wedding Feast, where *блажен** 'blessed' and *воздать** 'recompense' are substituted by *счастлив* 'happy' and *отплатить* 'pay back' respectively:

(2)

Synodal Bible	Tolstoy
Лука 14:14 И блажен будешь, что они не могут воздать тебе; ибо воздастся тебе в воскресение праведных.	*И будешь счастлив, потому что этим нечем отплатить тебе, а отплатится в восстановлении праведных* (Tolstoy 1957: 418).

Synodal Bible	Tolstoy
Luke 14:14 And thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just (KJB).	And thou wilt be happy for they cannot pay you back, but thou wilt be recompensed at the establishment of the just (Tolstoy 1904 a: 434).

Amongst other peculiarities of the translation, it is important to note the substitution of the words incorporating meanings associated with religion, which cause some ambiguity: *рождество* – рождение* ('nativity' – 'birth'), *крещение* – перерождение* ('baptism' – 'rebirth'); *мессия* - избранник* ('messiah' – 'the anointed'), *воскресение* - пробуждение* ('resurrection' – 'awakening'); *воскреснуть* – восстать* ('to resurrect' – 'to wake up'). The desire to create a simple language which could be understood by peasants led to the use of provincialisms, some of which are not registered in dictionaries: *змея* – козюля* ('snake'), *плевел* – кистерь* ('weed').

3.1.3. Rendering proper names

Rendering proper names is relevant to Bible translation as most of them bear certain associations with the traits of those to whom they belong. This is a frequent occurrence in the Bible, primarily with anthroponyms, exposing the original meanings of names, *...called..., because*, e.g. "And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living" (Genesis 3.20). This is a challenge for a translator, since the lack of additional explanation does not allow those without sufficient training to understand that the name suggests "living" or "life". Tolstoy was one of the first who began considering contextual meanings of proper names and their rendering. Thus, the writer took into account the meaning, context and stylistic relevance of proper names which had been largely ignored. Tolstoy, rendering Matthew 1.21, explains the name "Jesus", adding "*which means the Saviour"* to associate the context with the meaning of the name:

(3)

Synodal Bible	Tolstoy
Матфей 1:21 родит же сына, и наречешь ему имя: Иисус; ибо он спасет людей своих от грехов их.	*И она родит сына, и назовешь его Иисус, что значит Спаситель, потому что он спасет людей от грехов их* (Tolstoy 1957: 47).
Matthew 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins (KJB).	And she will bring forth a son and will call him Jesus, which means the Saviour, for he will save people from their sins (Tolstoy 1904 a: 51).

The Greek name Peter (Πέτρος), meaning *stone,* becomes significant (characteristic) in the Confession of Peter. It was translated as a common noun: Mathew 16.18 "And I tell thee that thou art a rock, and on this rock will I build my assembly of men,

and death will not overcome this assembly of men" (Tolstoy 1904 b: 56). The place-name Jerusalem, depending on the context, was rendered either as *city* or *church*. Some less known place-names were omitted, e.g. Zabulon and Nephthalim.

3.1.4. Substitutions of syntax patterns

Among the substitutions of syntactic patterns in Tolstoy's translation, a tendency is seen to choose a simpler and more natural pattern. Tolstoy tried to avoid any ambiguity, in particular that caused by the clumsy syntax of the source text, which is in line with the idea that every language has its own preferences in terms of syntactical patterns (Nida 1975: 36). The syntactical patterns of the source text should have been represented as kernel structures and then become the subject of back-transformation or paraphrasing, in order to achieve the most appropriate and natural pattern for the target language.

Replacing syntax patterns in Tolstoy's translation is represented by the rejection of obsolete syntax patterns, in particular Church Slavonic past participles with the Russian affix *-ед*: *подошед – подошел* 'having come up'*, пришед – явившись* 'having come'*, вышедши – вышел* 'having gone out'.

The replacements of noun phrases with clauses can be seen in Luke 2.50 and Luke 8.23: *сказанных им слов* – того, что он сказал им* 'words told by him' – 'what he told them'*; во время плавания* – когда они плыли* 'during sailing' – 'when they were sailing'. The replacement of the Russian present active participle with the affix *-щий* in defining clauses beginning with *тот, кто* ('s/he who…'). In the following example, parallel constructions with this pattern can be found:

(4)

Synodal Bible	Tolstoy
Иоанн 4:36 Жнущий получает награду и собирает плод в жизнь вечную, так что и сеющий и жнущий вместе радоваться будут.	*И тот, кто жнет, тому платят, и он собирает плод в жизнь невременную, так что тот, кто сеял, вместе радуется с тем, кто жнет* (Tolstoy 1957: 328).
John 4:36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together (KJB).	And he who reaps is paid, and he gathers fruit for the non-temporal life, so that he who has sowed rejoices with him who reaps (Tolstoy 1904 a: 342).

Summing up the correlations between Tolstoy's translation and dynamic equivalence theory, the following techniques may be specified: the use of componential analysis, the replacement of obsolete words, and the choice of syntactical patterns in the target language.

3.2. Cultural translation

The cultural component has become one of the key notions in translation studies. It started developing as a part of Bible translation studies in the works by Nida (Nida 1947). According to the scholar, "cultural translation is a translation in which the content of the message is changed to conform to the receptor culture in some way, and/or in which information is introduced which is not linguistically implicit in the original" (Nida, Taber 1969: 199). At the same time, cultural translation, though nobody doubts its necessity, is a controversial area, as the approaches and the opinions differ on what, and to which extent, one should adapt in terms of culture. The issue of cultural translation is especially relevant given that we are speaking about a text that describes circumstances that occurred several thousand years ago (as the case is with the Gospels).

Some metaphors from the source text are absent in the culture of the target text or are shown in another form. The phrase from Matthew "Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?" may seem absurd to some African peoples, as many would prefer snake to fish. In this case, the translator is recommended to find a name of some inedible snake or give comments (Nida 1960: 98). Tolstoy used the provincialism *козюля* meaning 'snake' in the similar passage: "If any son will ask bread of any of you who is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he asks a fish, will he give him a snake?" (Tolstoy 1904 b: 111). Cultural translation in Tolstoy's work was mainly represented by omissions and explanations (3.2.1.), and rendering realia (3.2.2.).

3.2.1. Omissions and explanations

Tolstoy omitted interpolations in the Synodal Bible that were represented by separate words, phrases, and verses. In these omissions, when he used shorter and more understandable versions, one can notice the origins of translation relevance, aimed at the communicative effect on the reader.

There are several reasons for the omissions in Tolstoy's work, including: a phrase or verse is obscure, a component is lacking in the Bible or contains some ambiguity, some details are omitted as they hinder understanding of the main idea and divert the attention or break the flow of the text. In 5.29 Mathew, the word правый *right* referring to the eye is omitted as, in Tolstoy's opinion, it has no meaning and does not add to the sense:

(5)

Synodal Bible	Tolstoy
Матфей 5:29 Если же правый глаз твой соблазняет тебя, вырви его и брось от себя; ибо лучше для тебя, чтобы погиб один из членов твоих, а не все тело твое было ввержено в геенну.	*Если глаз твой ловит тебя, вырви его и брось от себя; потому сходне тебе, чтобы один глаз пропал, чем всему тебе сгореть* (Tolstoy, 1957: 224).

Synodal Bible	Tolstoy
Matthew 5:29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast [it] from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not [that] thy whole body should be cast into hell (KJB).	If thy eye catches thee, pluck it out, and cast it away from thee, for it is more profitable for thee that one eye should perish, that thy whole body should burn (Tolstoy 1904 a: 237).

Tolstoy makes a note: "I repeat eye, as we cannot speak in Russian of the eye as a member" (Tolstoy 1904 a: 238). In English translations, the Greek word μέλος 'member' occurs, inter alia in King James Version, but modern versions, such as New Living Translation, New American Standard Bible, International Standard Version (Bible Hub. Online Bible Study Suite. http://biblehub.com/), use the phrase "*part of your body"*.

Omitting phrases from Matthew 20. 1 – 20, the Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard (Tolstoy, 1904 b: 80) is also illustrative. In the description of how labourers were hired, exact time indicators were substituted for descriptions more appropriate in colloquial language: *около третьего часа* - в завтрак* 'about the third hour' – 'at breakfast time', *около одиннадцатого часа* - в полдень* 'about the eleventh hour' – 'at noon'.

The descriptions devoted to wonders and sacraments were accurately avoided and some of the verses were discarded. Tolstoy wrote in one of his comments to the verse from Matthew 3. 14-15 where Jesus spoke on the rite of baptism:

…The fourteenth and fifteenth verses are not very intelligible and, in the sense in which they are taken, add nothing to our teaching. The continuation of the sixteenth verse speaks of a miracle, an unnatural and unintelligible event. It adds nothing to the teaching, but on the contrary obscures it (Tolstoy 1904 a: 61).

In the passage devoted to the clothing and diet of John the Baptist, Tolstoy substituted *дикий мед* 'wild honey' as a symbol of austerities for herbs, to make the target audience realize the miserable nature of the diet.

Though Tolstoy tackled interlocutions, he added some explanations., e.g. in Luke 15.22 which is part of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, the modifiers *дорогой* 'costly' and *хорошие* 'good' were added to the nouns *ring* and *shoes* respectively to let the readers understand that these were signs of special respect:

(6)

Synodal Bible	Tolstoy
Лука 15:22 А отец сказал рабам своим: принесите лучшую одежду и оденьте его, и дайте перстень на руку его и обувь на ноги (KJB).	*А отец говорит работникам: несите кафтан самый лучший и оденьте его, и перстень дорогой давайте надену ему на палец, и дайте хорошие сапоги ему* (Tolstoy 1957: 522).
Luke 15:22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet (KJB).	But the father said to his servants, Bring the best coat, and dress him; and I will put a costly ring on his hand, and give him good shoes (Tolstoy 1904 b: 89).

3.2.2. Rendering realia

As to rendering unknown realia, i.e. words and expressions for culture-specific material things, the replacement of a mustard seed with a birch seed in the Parable of the Mustard Seed (Luke 17.5.) is worth mentioning. Tolstoy explained that a mustard seed could not be understood as a symbol of the tiniest thing that may grow into a tree (Tolstoy 1904 b: 96). In the description of the garden in the Parable of the Vineyard, Tolstoy made a more familiar illustration for the inhabitants of Russian provinces: *виноградник** 'vineyard' became *сад* 'garden' and *виноградари** 'winegrowers' became *мужики* 'husbandsmen':

(7)

Synodal Bible	Tolstoy
Марк 12:1 …некоторый человек насадил виноградник, и обнес оградою, и выкопал точило, и построил башню, и, отдав его виноградарям, отлучился.	*человек насадил сад, и огородил, вырыл пруд, и поставил избу, и сдал мужикам, а сам уехал* (Tolstoy 1957: 524).
Mark 12:1. …A certain man planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a place for the vinefat, and built a tower, and let it out to winegrowers…(KJB)	…A man planted a garden, and hedged it, and dug a pond, and built a house, and let it out to husbandsmen … (Tolstoy 1904 b: 91)

In the same verse, Tolstoy changed the obscure word *точило* mentioned in the Synodal Bible, which is unregistered in Russian dictionaries. Modern Russian readers can mistake it for a tool for sharpening (*точить* 'to sharpen') and *точило* sounds like 'a touchstone', but here it means a tank to collect fresh grape juice. Thus, the *birch seed* and the description of the garden would have been better understood among peasants.

In the Sermon on the Mount, the reader of the Synodal Bible again encounters an unclear part of text where the word ῥακά was rendered as *сволочь* 'rascal':

(8)

Synodal Bible	Tolstoy
Матфей 5:22 А я говорю вам, что всякий, гневающийся на брата своего напрасно, подлежит суду; кто же скажет брату своему «рака», подлежит синедриону; а кто скажет «безумный», подлежит геенне огненной.	*А я вам говорю, кто сердится на брата своего, тот уже подлежит суду. А если кто скажет своему брату: сволочь, тот подлежит суду уголовному. А если кто скажет своему брату: сумасшедший, тот подлежит суду* (Tolstoy 1957: 219).
Matthew 5:22 But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgement: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire (KJB).	But I tell you, He who is angry with his brother is already subject to judgment. And he who says to his brother, Rascal, is subject to criminal prosecution. And he who says to his brother, Crazy, is subject to fire (Tolstoy 1904 a: 233).

In the same verse, Tolstoy pointed to the interpolation of the concept *without a cause*, as it distorted the sense and contradicted the writer's religious principles and the religious idea of non-violence. He wrote "If it is only without a cause that it is not good to be angry then it is permitted to be angry with a cause" (Tolstoy 1904 a: 233). The controversy of the interpolation is confirmed by the absence of the element in some well-known contemporary English versions:

(9)

New American Standard Bible
But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court… (*Bible Hub. Online Bible Study Suite.* http://biblehub.com/);

(10)

English Standard Version
But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment… (*Bible Hub. Online Bible Study Suite.* http://biblehub.com/).

The examination of cultural translation elements in *The Four Gospels Harmonized and Translated* has shown some features of adaptation in Tolstoy's translation – omission and explanation. However, Tolstoy managed to remain within the framework of translation, albeit a rather free one.

4. Conclusion

The analysis of *The Four Gospels Harmonized and Translated* allows us to identify Tolstoy's main requirements for translation. According to Tolstoy, the aim of translation is the expression of meaning. In order to achieve this aim, translation must engage with the entire text, not simply a word or a sentence. These recommendations are clearly aimed at avoiding literal translation and translationese. Tolstoy wrote in this regard, "This is not a translation of a thought, but of words. No sense results from it, and each separate word is invested with a mystic and arbitrary gloss" (Tolstoy 1904 a: 24).

As to the disadvantages of Tolstoy's approach, a few points should be mentioned. Some interpretations made by the writer, especially those on omissions, look far-fetched or even might have been introduced to distort some official church religious dogmas. Tolstoy's desire to create a colloquial language, and the lack of any clear criteria for choosing the most appropriate and natural equivalents, led to the overuse of derogatory or infrequently used vocabulary.

However, Tolstoy actively experimented with various translation techniques which subsequently became widely discussed and promoted in 20th century linguistic translation theory. These include: semantics (shown in a meticulous choice of meaning, attention to contextual meanings of proper names); syntax (shown in the substitution of noun phrases by verbal ones, or participles for clauses); cultural translation (shown in the adaptation of realia for readers belonging to another culture, and the addition of colloquial language). Furthermore, Tolstoy also touched upon the problem of conveying meaning to a target audience.

These translation principles, despite some inconsistencies, are still practiced in religious translation projects, in particular Vision 2025 launched by Wycliffe Bible Translators, which according to its official site (http://wycliffe.org.uk) "*aims to see a Bible translation programme begun in all the remaining languages that need one"*.

Thus, Tolstoy may be considered, inter alia, as a precursor of some of the key concepts in translation studies, including dynamic equivalence and cultural adaptation which, in turn, gave rise to interdisciplinary approaches, and in particular, certain sociocultural aspects in translation (Pym, Shlesinger, Jettmarová 2006), deconstruction (Davis 2001), polysystem theory (Even-Zohar 1997) and postcolonial studies (Robinson 1997). Despite their controversial nature, the approaches implemented in *The Four Gospels Harmonized and Translated* and theorized in the 20th century, provide a wealth of material for the further development of translation studies.

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Notes

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