

# THE ROLE OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND TRANSLATION ACTIVITY IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION

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## Abstract

This article discusses that mondialisation mostly threatens the diversity of cultures and languages in the context of intercultural communication and translation activity. The difference between languages only reveals the richness of the divine word and creates all the conditions for each of them to show their potential. It is noted that between cultures one of the substantial contacts are proved by translated monuments, an evident example of which is Georgia where, even in the Middle Ages, the quality and value of the translation activity was taken to the original literature level. In the era of globalization, communication with “dominant” cultures and being “open” for them, is indeed a necessary process not only for enrichment of the Georgian culture, but for the purpose of its survival as well; any culture, like language, once not subjected to a change, will no longer fit the new realities, and, is doomed for stagnancy, and therefore, for perishing. In terms of communication between cultures, this situation makes even more important the translation activity; definition of its role sets a new task in a global context of intercultural communication and linguistic-cultural awareness. Like protection of the dignity and rights of all human beings, the modern democratic governance should be the guarantor of cultural values. Thus, it is essential that in the global civilization everyone had opportunity to acquire and be identified in the modernity.

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**Keywords:** Globalization, culture, translation activity, identity, communication

## Introduction:

Nowadays, when the culture is divided into a number of cultures, multiple languages and a lot of people’s communities, when “the multitude of languages on the earth is not the humanity's impractical, and moreover, damaging division - partition, but expression of the human mind diversity, it does not mean the fragmented poverty of the human soul, but full of thought diversity [...] the reasonable unity of nations, languages and cultures”,<sup>44</sup> the following statement is essential: the culture and identity of each people is unique and belongs to the sacred things which should enjoy the absolute respect.

The issue concerns protection of the peoples' common heritage - cultures and languages with its entire plurality and world; giving the opportunity to every person so that they could fully enjoy the modern world’s all the technical, social and intellectual achievements in the way that not to compromise the values and the culture, on the background of which they grew up and their memories not to be erased.

In conditions of characteristic for globalization new realities – on the background of technological and social unrest, intellectuals think that a very big danger is created: mondialisation mostly threatens the diversity of cultures and languages. Recently, in intellectual discussions the interest to the issue of maintaining the diversity of cultures and languages has

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<sup>44</sup> See G. Ramishvili, “Substantial differences between the languages, in terms of linguistics and cultural theory “TSU edition, Tbilisi, 1995, p. 11, 116.

been growing more and more. Amin Maalouf, the well-known journalist and writer wrote: “I do not doubt that globalization is a threat to cultural differences such as language diversity and lifestyles, I am sure that this threat is much more serious today than it was before”<sup>45</sup>.

He believed that, naturally, the question arises: “Why should we give less attention to human cultural originality, than an animal or plant species diversity? Our such a legal will of protection of our environment, why should not apply to the universal human values? From a nature and cultural point of view, our planet would be very mediocre and boring, if inhabited only by the “useful” species and there appeared only a few other, seemingly “decorative” species or the ones, which acquired a symbolic value”.<sup>46</sup>

Instead of disappearing in the mist of degradation and negligence, as it was going on for centuries, the endangered cultures have the opportunity to fight for survival, try to master the new rules of a game, and use them for their benefit, so that no one in the entire civilization felt excluded and even a little were able to identify what is born before them in the surrounding world.

Despite the complexity of the situation, according to the intellectuals, today's world offers the means of survival to the modern world cultures, and indeed, it would be senseless not to use them. Maalouf himself strongly believes that “The fight for protection of the cultural traditions and maintenance of the diversity would not be desperate, if this fight were far-sighted, future-oriented”.<sup>47</sup> To clarify this opinion, Maalouf uses the metaphor and compares the globalization to the open from each side huge arena, on which thousands of competition or rivalry are held at the same time, and to which people can penetrate through their own activities, opportunities and skill arsenal, relentless zeal and exclamation. He states: “If they want that the world learned about, respected and loved the culture, on the background of which they grew up, if they want a society to which they belong, knew freedom, democracy, dignity and prosperity, they need to fight to make that many centuries of human societies have created to clarify their differences, not to be subjected to the pressure, aiming to reduce these differences”.<sup>48</sup>

Thus, it is essential that in the global civilization everyone to have the opportunity to acquire and be identified in the modernity, so that “No one has come to believe that he is definitely alien to him, and, therefore, hostile as well”<sup>49</sup>.

A human being shares the existence through speech, one of the most important skills defining his/her own essence; each language is a special vision of the world, having its own method and form toward the reality and its marking at the denotative level; each nation, speaking its native language has own vision of the world, conditioning uniqueness and exceptionality of numerous indigenous peoples, residing in different regions of the world (west or east, north or south). The Mexican poet, essayist, critic, translator, Nobel Prize winner (1990) Octavio Paz thinks that “The variety of languages or the work uniqueness does not lead to extreme diversity or mess and chaos. On the contrary, there is created some world of relationships, and created from contradictions and inconsistencies, closeness and estrangements”.<sup>50</sup> So, the difference between languages only reveals the richness of the divine word, and creates all the conditions for each of them to show their potential. People, speaking their native language must not be forced to be excluded. Therefore, it is important that “Clearly, without any slightest ambiguity, to state and keep constantly track of the fact that

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<sup>45</sup> See. A. Maalouf, “Fatal Identities”, translated from French by Dodo Labuchidze - Kheperia. Publishing House Impresi, Tbilisi, 2007, p. 129.

<sup>46</sup> See. A. Maalouf, “Fatal Identities”, Publishing House Impresi, Tbilisi, 2007, p.133.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid* p. 130.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid* p. 124.

<sup>49</sup> See. A. Maalouf, “Fatal Identities”, Publishing House Impresi, Tbilisi, 2007, p.133.

<sup>50</sup> See O. Paz, “Translation - verbosity and accuracy”. Translations into Georgian, Publishing House Arili, Tbilisi, 2002.

every person has a right to preserve his/her identifying language and use it freely”<sup>51</sup>. Many thinkers, including Maalouf, believe that this freedom is more important than freedom of faith, because the native language is not only one element among other elements; - it is the most important of those values, which we recognize, therefore, “There is nothing more dangerous than an attempt to break the native thread that connects people with their own language; when this thread is broken or seriously damaged, it has a devastating impact on a person's integrity”.<sup>52</sup>

Obviously, not all languages were born equal: the language, expressing identity, sometimes is common for hundreds of millions of people, and in some cases for only a few thousands. However, from the intellectuals’ point of view this is less important, as all languages, expressing identity are equally entitled to claim their dignity and respect from society. The only thing to be considered at this level is a sense of belonging: each of us has a demand for this union, expressing strong identity and causing confidence.

But today the question arises: How can the multitude of languages be ruled which are counting tens? In order to escape this dilemma and to avoid linguistic conflicts, each must understand obligation of preservation and development of the national language, for the purpose not to break relations with other languages, but to strengthen them. This is supported by the following characteristic peculiarities of the language: on the one hand, language is a defining element of any cultural identity; on the other hand, it is a tool of communication. Therefore, the “language has a purpose to remain a support for the cultural identity, and linguistic diversity - a base for the whole diversity”<sup>53</sup>. Reasoning from this realities, Maalouf wishes that the language, as a supporting element of identity, be attributed a place which it deserves, while by strengthening relations with other languages, to encourage linguistic diversity, to encourage that in the bosom of every nation there were some other people who knew such other language or languages specialization of which is rarer and therefore, more valuable for a person as well as for the community.

In terms of communication between cultures, this situation makes the translation activity even more important. French writer, philosopher and essayist Maurice Blanche says that “A translator is an enigmatic ruler of the language differences, but his/her goal is not to annul this difference, but to use it to “establish” with dramatic or mild upheavals in his native language initially characteristic alien for the original elements”<sup>54</sup>. Translation, this ancient type of human intellectual activity, is still one of the essential factors; whatever be its price, translation is still preferred.

Despite the difference in semantic and syntactic structure, texts with identical information may appear in any two languages what, according to V. F. Humboldt, is a result of common affinity of all languages and flexibility of concepts and symbols. The clear confirmation of this fact is that the translation experience in a variety of the world languages, including Georgian language which, as the writer and essayist G. Kikodze said, “has a very strong skeleton. Any thought can be conveyed through it in an energetic and laconic manner. Our ancestors left it to us as the heritage of national identity and defense weapon. They expressed the deepest religious and philosophical ideas and the strongest feelings of love and hate through this language”<sup>55</sup>.

One of substantial contacts between cultures is confirmed by the translated monuments. According to K. Kekelidze’s totally correct statement, “The history of human society does not

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<sup>51</sup> See G. Ramishvili, “Substantial differences between the languages, in terms of linguistics and cultural theory” TSU edition, Tbilisi, 1995, p. 11, 116.

<sup>52</sup> See. A. Maalouf, “Fatal Identities”, p.136.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid* p.136.

<sup>54</sup> See M. Blanche, “Translation - verbosity and accuracy”. Translations into Georgian. Publishing House Arili, Tbilisi, 2002, p.25.

<sup>55</sup> See. G. Kikodze. “Letters, essays” Publishing House Merani, Tbilisi, 1985, p. 156.

know an example of absolutely isolated culture”<sup>56</sup>. Therefore, translation goes beyond the limits of purely linguistic ties.

Georgians’ developed culture and thinking level is clearly demonstrated by the fact that in Georgia quality and value of the translation activity was developed to the level of the original literature; specialists with deep knowledge of European languages and culture considered translation from the original be especially important in the matters of universal values, and compared a translator to the hardworking bee that “took the graceful fragrance among various languages and nations and fertilized this or that national culture”.<sup>57</sup>

Throughout the centuries, excellent translations, equal with the originals truly significantly enriched the Georgian culture, introducing the great foreign thinkers’ philosophical works, fiction and poetry to people of many generations which “In a certain degree is a true indication of the existence of the thinking processes. For us, according to the terms and conditions, the extent and criteria of such mentality were really different”<sup>58</sup>. The translated literature of a high professional level with the cultural value, not only enriched the culture with new ideas, but also made the language more perfect. Nowadays, more and more works are being translated; in modern Georgian language any old or new most profound and original scientific ideas, opinion nuances and coloring can be accurately expressed. The interest is more and more growing to the research of issues, related to the adequacy of different style text translation (Moreover, in non-related languages).

Among different (religious, philosophical, historical, fiction, etc.) works translated into the Georgian language, specially should be mentioned philosophical literature translations which are considered to be the development of Georgian philosophical thought and not “the mechanical perception” process. During eight centuries (IV-XII c.c.) the intensive translational work was performed in cultural centers in Georgia and beyond it. Nicholas Marr says, “In contrast to others, for example, Europeans, the Georgians of that time, earlier than others, expressed their opinion on the progress of the new philosophical movement; at the same time they were armed with exemplary at that time weapon of textual criticism and worked directly on Greek originals”<sup>59</sup>.

Despite the translational culture of the philosophical literature, many philosophical works have not yet been translated into Georgian, without complete adoption of which no nation can be considered a maitre of high culture. Implementation of this urgent matter was assumed by Grigol Robakidze University Philosophy and Social Science Research Institute. By the Institute's director, Professor Tengiz Iremadze’s initiative and scientific editorship for the last six years, the Institute's staff translated into Georgian a lot of works of contemporary and classic German, French, English thinkers (B. Valdenpels, B. Moizish, H. Schneider, U. R. Yek, N. Luman, A. Bergson, K. Schmidt, F. Nietzsche, A. Tocvil, L. Strauss, T. Payne, B. Franklin, J. Adams, T. Jefferson, B. Rash, J. Wilson) that contribute to the preparation of people for establishing a reasonable social order. The great interest, caused by translated works of philosophy and sociology into Georgian by the staff of the Institute among broad society, proves how important the role of translation work in the context of intercultural relations is.

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion we can say that each people’s culture and identity is unique, and belong to the sacred things which should enjoy the absolute respect. In the era of globalization

<sup>56</sup> See K. Kekelidze.”History of Georgian literature”, vol. 2. TSU Publishing House Tbilisi, 1958, p 6.

<sup>57</sup> See K. Gamsakhurdia, “Selected works in 8 volumes”. vol. 7. Publishing House “Soviet Georgia”, Tbilisi, 1965, p. 462.

<sup>58</sup> See Sh. Nucubidze, “History of Georgian Philosophy “Publishing House of Georgian Academy of Sciences, vol. I. Tbilisi, 1956, p. 12.

<sup>59</sup> See N. Marr. Ioane Petritsi a Georgian Neoplatonic philosopher, 11-12cc. 1909, p.61.

communication with “dominant” cultures and being “open” for them, is indeed a necessary process not only for enrichment of the Georgian culture, but for the purpose of its survival as well; any culture, like language, once not subjected to a change, will no longer fit the new realities, and, is doomed for stagnancy, and therefore, for perishing.

In terms of communication between cultures, this situation makes even more important the translation activity; definition of its role sets a new task in a global context of intercultural communication and linguistic-cultural awareness. Like protection of the dignity and rights of all human beings, the modern democratic governance should be the guarantor of cultural values.

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