Translation as Manipulation: Causes and Consequences, Opinions and Attitudes

Aiga Kramina

Abstract. The present article focuses on the concept of manipulation in translation, attitudes towards it, as well as its causes and consequences. As opposed to the claims of the Manipulation School scholars the starting point for the present discussion is not an assumption that translation is or implies a certain degree of manipulation, it rather offers a number of arguments for and against this claim. The aim of the present article is to establish whether translation is manipulation, to reflect the attitudes and opinions of scholars on the issue of ‘translation as manipulation’, as well as to look into the possible ways of perceiving this phenomenon. Manipulation is one of the most controversial and blurred phenomena in Translation Studies. Although it has been at the centre of attention of a number of scholars since at least the 1970s, to the author’s knowledge, no comprehensive and unequivocal definition, description or conceptualisation of it has been offered as yet. It might turn out to be an impossible task, considering the multifaceted and to a certain extent evasive nature of this phenomenon.

In the course of the article certain aspects of the evasive nature of manipulation are revealed, seeking answers to two questions, first, whether translation is manipulation, and, second, why it is so difficult to conceptualise this phenomenon.