



Theory and praxis of translation

Gyula Szabó

EFOP-3.4.3-16-2016-00021 „A Debreceni Egyetem fejlesztése a felsőfokú
oktatás minőségének és hozzáférhetőségének együttes javítása érdekében”

Introduction

Definition of Translation

Munday: “the process of turning an original or "source" text into a text in another language”.

Translation vs. Interpretation

Translation ---> written texts

Interpretation ---> uses oral channel

The nature of the translator's activity = creative activity

The translator faces a number of choices and decisions.

- decisions are partly subjective, partly objective (some of the translator's subjective choices are based on objective factors)
- “their ambition to explain translation phenomena and create theories is closely related to the very nature of this activity, regulated, on the one hand, **by certain objective rules**, and permitting, on the other, **a number of subjective choices**”

The medium of the translator's activity = two languages

- communicating in two languages at the same time can never be as instinctive and unconscious as communicating only in one
- in translation, even the most instinctive translator develops ideas about the relationship between the two languages, their similarities and differences, their relationship with reality, the similarities and differences in the way the two languages segment reality linguistically, etc.

The role of a translator: skills

What do you need to become a good translator?

1. Complete knowledge of both source and target speech.
2. Write appropriately in both source and target language.
3. Ability to have language intuition “to grasp various expressions, idioms and specific vocabulary and their uses”
4. Be aware of the ”cultural divergence and diverse strategies in the source and target verbal communication”
5. Be aware of diverse registers, styles of speaking, and social stratification of both source and target language.
6. You have to be provided with encyclopedias and bilingual dictionaries in a specific context
7. You have to take control of the different kind of speeches in both source and target language.

Importance of Proper Translation

- Translation is an important means of communication, especially for Hungarians.
- Dexterous translation helps promotes the mutual understanding while improper translation leads to confusion.

Attitudes to Translation

- Translation process: comprehension(most important) and expression(natural consequence of thorough comprehension)
- Difficulty in practical translation: unusual senses of many words and terms, phrases and idioms, proverbs and says which are difficult to deal with
- Cause: disparity between Hungarian and English
- Approaches: literal translation and free translation

The object of the translator's activity

Theories are related to the object of the translator's activity, i.e. the **text**, because

- every text (e.g., a piece of literature, a scientific research article, an advertisement or an editorial), allows for **several possible interpretations**
- the translator often has to defend his **own** interpretation of the text against the potentially differing interpretations of critics, readers, and the public at large.

Application of Literary and Free Translation

- Literary Translation: get rid of still patterns and rigid adherence to translation rules, instead try to be flexible
- Free Translation: be aware of subjectivity , avoid groundless affirmation or arbitrary fabrication
- Actual Translation: alternation or combination of these two approaches

Other types of translation

Direct vs. indirect Translation:

- Direct: Translating from a foreign language into your mother tongue. Example: a Spanish translator who translates from English into Spanish.
- Indirect: Translating from your mother tongue into a foreign one. Example: a Spanish translator who translate from Spanish into English.

Other types of translation

Specialized vs. Non-specialized Translation.

- Specialized: The translator requires an excellent quality and precision into an area of knowledge. Examples: medical translation; legal translation.
- Non-specialized: It is not required a great knowledge in the area to translate.

Other types of translation

1. **written** translation of a **written** text
2. **oral** translation of a **written** text (sight translation)
3. **oral** translation of a **spoken** text (interpretation)
 - (a) simultaneous translation of a spoken text (**simultaneous interpretation**)
 - (b) consecutive translation of a spoken text (**consecutive interpretation**)
4. **written** translation of a **spoken** text

Translation Process

Garcia Yebra:

Two stages

- Comprehension stage: The translator decodes the sense of the source text into an activity called semasiology.
- Expression stage: recodes the sense of the text in the target language.

Translation techniques

Two levels: Morphosyntax level and Semantic level.

Morphosyntax level techniques:

- Loan Word: A word taken from a language without translating it: Coyote (from Spanish), Pizza (from Italian)...
- Calque: A class of loan where syntax is taken from source language and translated literally.
- Literal Translation: translating word by word from source to target language, respecting the collocations of the target language..

Translation techniques

Transposition: Translating one part of the speech to other one, without changing the sense of the message.

Modulation: Variation of the message, through a change in the point of view.

Translation techniques

- Equivalence: Transmitting the same situation by using different stylistic and structural resources.
- Adaptation: “Cultural equivalence”. E.G.: French talking about Belgian jokes

Translation techniques

Semantic Level

- Expansion: needed amplification for structural reasons. Example: in Spanish is needed to specify the gender.
- Reduction: the same as expansion, but it is needed a reduction.
- Compensation: combination of the other two techniques. Tu/Usted (Sp.) → You (Eng.)

Main questions:

- Can translation and interpretation be taught?
- What is it exactly that can/cannot be taught?
- How can the results of translation studies be applied in organising translation courses and making the teaching of translation more efficient?

The transfer competence of translators

Consists of five elements:

- (1) linguistic competence,
- (2) subject-related competence,
- (3) inter-cultural competence,
- (4) transfer competence
- (5) communicative competence

“competence”

- a particular type of knowledge (language proficiency, subject knowledge, knowledge about culture)
- skills (transfer skills, communication skills)

Transfer competence

- part of the translator's professional competence,
- can develop strategies to overcome problems resulting from the differences between the two languages
- can "freely move" between the two languages: possesses general translation strategies + particular language-pair-specific strategies! (≠merely a mono- or bilingual speaker)

Modelling the process of translation

A **translator**, a professional bilingual person, differs from a speaker of language “A” or language “B” in that he/she knows and consciously or instinctively operates two rule-systems:

- (1) He/she knows the rules according to which signs of language “A” are used by speakers of language “A” to refer to reality (“A” system of rules);
- (2) He/she knows the rules according to which signs of language “B” are used by speakers of language “B” to refer to reality (“B” system of rules).

Modelling the process of translation

Process: the translator,

- with the help of the language "A" rule system, decodes the language "A" text and reaches reality (denotative model) or a semantic deep structure (one subtype of the transformational model);
- re-encodes this reality with the help of the language "B" system of rules to ultimately reach the language "B" text.

Path: **language "A" → reality → language "B"**

The characteristics of the "C" system of rules:

How come that Hungarian texts translated from a FL differ (linguistically) from original Hungarian texts? → 2 explanations:

- (1) The translator goes down to the deep structure from the language "A" surface, but then takes the wrong path towards the language "B" surface; or
- (2) The translator does not go down to the deep structure from the language "A" surface, but directly switches to the language "B" surface. In other words, he/she creates for him-/herself an intuitive translational rule system, a so-called "C" system of rules, and, consciously or unconsciously, applies this system during his/her work.

How can this "C" system of rules be characterised?

It is

- (1) **abstract** – while the rules of systems "A" and "B" relate L signs to reality, rules in the system "C" relate L signs to L signs;
- (2) **subjective** – while the rules of systems "A" and "B" are acquired within an institutional framework by speakers of language "A" and "B", rules in the system "C" are created intuitively by translators on the basis of their own experience;
- (3) **incidental** – the "C" system of rules may be distorted if the translator has received inadequate training in one of his/her languages, or if he/she has received good training in both languages but for some reason cannot relate them appropriately.

The dilemma of translator training

How should translator training deal with this "C" system of rules? → it must reckon with the existence of the "C" system of rules.

Two alternatives:

- (1) It can try to **eliminate** the "C" system of rules, and discourage translators from believing in a direct relationship between languages "A" and "B" → translators should not bother with linguistic form, but should try and grasp content (sense, meaning)
- (2) It can try to **improve and refine** the "C" system of rules, accepting the assumption that some form of relationship does exist, but in a considerably more complicated form than the one intuitively created by the translators → language "A" effects should be avoided by proposing a more sensitive and complicated system of relations (!)

The benefits of linguistic awareness-raising

- **for teachers of translation:** in designing translation courses, selecting texts to be translated, evaluating translations, and justifying teachers' and readers' corrections
- **for translator trainees:** without linguistics only very low-level generalisations can be made from the translators' experience (e.g., "this does not sound nice in Hungarian", "we say this differently in Hungarian", "this doesn't sound OK", or "maybe you should phrase it differently") → the teacher should explain his/her corrections by highlighting the differences between the two language systems and their typical usages (= frame of reference in the decisions of future translators)
- **for practicing translators:** as a result of being aware of the regularities of languages, the translator can multiply his/her own transfer experience + contributes to increasing the prestige of the profession (professional explanations of decisions)

Different approaches to error correction

Process-oriented approach:

- radically denies the importance of error correction;
- teachers do not expect perfect end products from students, but use translations to gain insights into the process of translation and raise questions rather than criticise.

Different approaches to error correction

Product-oriented model:

3 methods:

- (1) method of systematic feedback
- (2) method of student-centred correction,
- (3) humanistic approach to students' errors.

Different approaches to error correction

Method of systematic feedback

- corrections in translations which the students have handed in
- oral discussion in the class covering adequate as well as inadequate renditions,
- feedback form assessing strengths and weaknesses with each student

Different approaches to error correction

Student-centred approach

- (1) the human rights of students should not be disregarded in error correction, that is, students have the right to know the criteria according to which their translations are evaluated and also who assessed their translations, etc.
- (2) error correction should not be aggressive (recommendation: Correction Card, filled in by the students for self-assessment)

Different approaches to error correction

Humanistic approach

- regards errors committed by translators not as violations of linguistic norm, but rather as valuable pieces of information: "...the surface manifestations of the phenomena which are the object of study" (p.74).

Assessment criterion of translations:

- = how much work (correction, editing) is needed to obtain a publishable translation.
- If revising and editing takes more time than the translating itself, then the translation is obviously unusable as a translation.

Difference between revising/editing and marking tests:

- Marking tests = underline mistakes and indicate them on the margins to prepare a subsequent pedagogical discussion,
- Editing/revising = making the text publishable

Types of translation tasks

Text-preparation tasks

- Aim: familiarising students with the texts before translating them
- students should be taught to read as translators do: asking questions like
 - (1) Could you make a guess as to who ordered the translation of the above article and with what purpose?
 - (2) Is it for internal use or for publication?
 - (3) Is it for the radio or for the printed media?
 - (4) To what extent does the supposed use of the translation affect the translator's solutions?
 - (5) What is the text about?
 - (6) Mark the key words of the paragraphs. (“sign-posting”)
 - (7) On the basis of the key words, summarise briefly (in 5-10 sentences) the main points in the text, etc.

Types of translation tasks

Lexical preparation

- = consists of dictionary research
- separate genre-specific general vocabulary and topic-specific special vocabulary. Both can give rise to problems
- work with various dictionary types (monolingual, bilingual, specialised, dictionaries of synonyms, slang, etc.)

Types of translation tasks

Suggested translation with variants

- students begin to translate
- to help them in translations, they are sometimes given "multi-option" translations, in which several different but possible translation options can be found
- students are required to evaluate the options offered, and with this help they can choose their own version of the text.

Types of translation tasks

Guided translation

- = certain parts of some sentences have been translated in advance by one of the authors of the book., and the authors ask the trainee translators to include them in their translations.
- Aim: to develop translators' word selection and sentence construction skills by making them do things they would not have done otherwise.

Types of translation tasks

Revising

= comparison with the original

- It is by no means easy to correct somebody else's translation: many would rather translate the text instead of bothering with corrections.
- Translators must learn to do corrections "with the least possible effort", which does not involve rewriting the text, but "mending" it to make it functionally "usable".

An aerial photograph of the Debrecen University campus, showing several large, multi-story buildings with classical architectural features like columns and pediments. The buildings are surrounded by greenery and trees. The word "Examples" is written in a large, bold, black serif font in the center of the image.

Examples

EFOP-3.4.3-16-2016-00021 „A Debreceni Egyetem fejlesztése a felsőfokú oktatás minőségének és hozzáférhetőségének együttes javítása érdekében”

English original

At the European level, social pedagogy is highly relevant, and yet it seems to be “an important but widely misunderstood member of the social professions” (Lorenz, 2008, p. 625). The way in which social pedagogy has been defined by both practitioners and academics has been to conceive of it as a ‘blurred notion’. One of the main reasons why social pedagogy is conceptualized in a plethora of definitions stems from the multiplicity of dimensions confounding its definition.

Hungarian translation

Európai szinten a szociálpedagógia rendkívül fontos, mégis úgy tűnik, hogy „egy a szociális szakmák fontos, de széles körben félreértett tagja” (Lorenz, 2008, 625. o.). A szociálpedagógiát mind a szakemberek, mind pedig a kutatók által meglehetősen „homályos fogalomnak” tekintik. A tény, hogy a szociálpedagógia fogalmát annyiféleképpen próbálják meghatározni, leginkább arra vezethető vissza, hogy a definíció maga is zavarba ejtően sokféle definícióra épül.

English original

The third approach places the emphasis on social pedagogy being *pedagogy* (Rosendal Jensen, 2006, p. 228), but at the same differs from the individual and general pedagogy by maintaining a historical-societal reflection framework: Social pedagogy in its historical-societal development is regarded as societal responses to address the fact that children, adolescents and elderly have trouble mastering the challenges that are a result of social disintegration (Rosendal Jensen, 2006, p. 234-5).

Hungarian translation

A harmadik megközelítés a szociálpedagógia pedagógiai jellegére helyezi a hangsúlyt (Rosendal Jensen 2006, 228. o.), ugyanakkor különbözik az egyéni és általános pedagógiától azáltal, hogy egy történelmi-társadalmi gondolati keretrendszerben mozog: a szociálpedagógiát történelmi-társadalmi fejlődése eredményeként tekinthetjük egyfajta társadalmi válasznak arra a tényre, hogy a gyermekek, serdülők és idősek nehezen tudják kezelni a társadalmi dezintegráció által okozott kihívásokat (Rosendal Jensen 2006, 234-235. o.).

English original

Social pedagogy is also about politics. In a historical perspective, social pedagogy goes hand in hand with political initiatives to overcome poverty and improve societal wellbeing. While the political strategy was directed against an external social reform, the pedagogical strategy was targeted at society's internal reform through education (Hämäläinen, 2003, p. 136). To summarize, the academic discipline is inclusive, not exclusive.

Hungarian translation

A szociálpedagógia a politikáról is szól. Történelmi nézőpontból a szociálpedagógia együtt jár a szegénység leküzdésére és a társadalmi jólét javítására irányuló politikai kezdeményezésekkel. Míg a politikai stratégia egy külső társadalmi reformot tűzött ki célul, a pedagógiai stratégia az oktatáson keresztül a társadalom belső reformjára irányult (Hämäläinen, 2003, 136. o.). Összefoglalva elmondható, hogy az tudomány befogadó, nem pedig kizáró jellegű.

English original

Sometimes, a variety of problems like migration, crime, or divorce, end up being conveniently aggregated under the label of social pedagogical problems.

Likewise, sometimes social pedagogical problems are attributed to the individual, without understanding that most often they are caused by societal structures.

Moreover, social pedagogy has sometimes been considered a subdivision of general pedagogy and as an education of professionals for a specific professional area.

Hungarian translation

Néha különböző problémákat, mint például a migrációt, a bűnözést vagy a válást, kényelmes módon szociálpedagógiai problémák elnevezés alatt. Hasonlóképpen, néha a szociálpedagógiai problémákat nyilvánítják egyéni problémának anélkül, hogy megértenénk, hogy azokat általában a társadalmi struktúrák okozzák. Ezenkívül a szociálpedagógiát néha az általános pedagógia egyik alcsoportjának, illetve a szakembereknek egy speciális területen nyújtott oktatási tevékenységnek tekintették.

English original

The argument is also found in relation to discussions of intervention not being able to be planned – unless one is caught up in the illusion that pedagogical actions can be controlled. Does this idea stand when it comes down to it? We have the remarkable experience in common, that we have succeeded in affecting human behavior in ways that were both planned and predictable based on targeted effort and sufficient power. The fact that plans sometimes turn out differently or result in surprising consequences does not mean that the alternative is to settle for rules of thumb, prescriptions or manuals.

Hungarian translation

Ezzel az érveléssel azon vitával kapcsolatban is találkozhatunk, ami a beavatkozás tervezhetetlenségéről szól - kivéve, ha abba az illúzióba ringatjuk magunkat, hogy a pedagógiai cselekvések szabályozhatók. Vajon ez az elképzelés ilyen esetben is megállja a helyét? Figyelemre méltó közös tapasztalatunk, hogy sikerülhet befolyásolni az emberi viselkedést tervezett és kiszámítható módon, célirányos erőfeszítésekkel és a megfelelő erő alkalmazás. A tény, hogy a tervek néha másképp alakulnak, vagy meglepő következményekkel járnak, nem jelenti azt, hogy az alternatíva csak a szabályokhoz, előírásokhoz vagy útmutatókhoz való ragaszkodás lehet.

References

- www.translationcentral.com/translation_vs_interpretation.php
- <http://ezinearticles.com/?What-Skills-Are-Required-To-Be-A-Good-Translator?&id=911804>
- Stibbard, R. (1994). The Study of Translation in a Foreign Language Teaching. *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*.
- seas3.elte.hu/coursematerial/KarolyKrisztina/TS-lecture10.ppt
- seas3.elte.hu/coursematerial/KarolyKrisztina/TS-lecture11.ppt