Translation theory and the NON literary text

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General distinctions

• translating v. interpreting
• source language/text – SL / ST
  v. target language/text – TL / TT
• intralingual v. interlingual v. intersemiotic translation
• translation as a profession v. t. in language testing
related disciplines

- Theory of Translation
- Contrastive Linguistics
- Pragmatics
- Discourse analysis
- Stylistics
- Literary Theory
- Cultural Studies
- Communication Studies
- General Linguistics
- Linguistic Philosophy
- Machine Translation
- Artificial Intelligence
Translation skills

Cultural understanding
- What influences the development of the source language?
- National characteristics where the language is spoken
- Hazards of stereotyping

Information technology
- Hardware and software used in producing translations
- Electronic file management
- E-commerce

Project management
- Resources coordination
- Administration
- Quality management
- Added value services such as DTP

Making decisions
- Consulting
- Reflecting
- Analysing and evaluating
- Establishing facts
- Making judgements

Terminology management
- Terminology research
- Terminology database maintenance
- Translation memory management
- Interaction with customer

Language and literacy
- Understanding of the source language
- Writing skills in the target language
- Editing and proof-reading

Communication
- Clarity of expression
- Establishing rapport
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Observing and checking understanding
Holmes’s ‘map’ of translation studies (from Toury 1995: 10)
“Translation Studies” – public perception

as mainly:

– Literary theory
– Cultural studies

and, possibly:

– Communication studies
– Stylistics & genre analysis
“Translation Studies” – linguists’ perception

as related to:

– Contrastive linguistics
– Pragmatics
– Discourse Analysis
– Stylistics

→ once dismissed as useless to Translation Theory all of these areas have been re-animated by

– corpus linguistics
– computer linguistics
IT specialists are increasingly fascinated by human language and translation:

- Machine Translation
- Machine assisted translation
- Knowledge Engineering
- Information Retrieval
- Artificial Intelligence
Translation Theory: the professional perspective

- Translator training
- Translation aids
- Translation criticism
- Translation quality
- Translation policy
- Professional translation standards
Translation theory

can be:

– Product-orientated, i.e. focuses the translation

– Function-orientated, i.e. examines the context and purpose of the translation

– Process-orientated, i.e. analyses the psychology of translation and process

but usually has elements of all three
Early distinctions

People have been arguing for centuries about

- literal v. free v. faithful translation
- word-for-word v. sense-for-sense

e.g. Cicero, St Jerome, St Augustine, Martin Luther, Étienne Dolet, Alexander Tytler, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Arthur Schopenhauer

(see Robinson 1997/2002)
Bible translation

Bassnett (1991: 45-50): "The history of Bible translation is accordingly a history of western culture in microcosm".

- St. Jerome's translation into Latin in 384 A.D.
- John Wycliffe (1330-84) and the 'Lollards'
- William Tyndale (1494-1536), burnt at the stake

→ try http://www.biblegateway.com/cgi-bin/bible
Discussion 1:
translation - art or science?

Can you teach translating?
- systematically or only by good-practice examples?

Do you need linguistics for translating?
- formal, functional, cognitive, ??

Do you need computers for translating?
- to compare, to systematise, to choose, ??
‘Linguistic’ approaches to translation

- language universals v. linguistic relativism
- science of translation
- “equivalence”
- translation ‘shifts’ / quality / norms
- discourse and register analysis
Language Universals v. Linguistic Relativism

Language Universals – presuppose that languages and/or our capacity for language are universal and/or innate
  – is translation simply different surface – same deep structure? (Chomsky)

Language Relativism – different languages show us different ways of viewing the world
  – is translation really possible? (Sapir-Whorf)
Nida (1964): Science of translation

- Linguistic meaning
- Referential or denotative meaning
- Emotive or connotative meaning
- Hierarchical structuring
- Componential analysis
- Semantic structure analysis
- Formal and dynamic equivalence
- Applications to Bible translation
Chomsky and TT
From Nida & Taber (1969: 33)
From Nida (1964: 185-7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek ST:</th>
<th>egeneto anthrōpos, apestalmenos para theou, onoma autō lōannēs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literal transfer (stage 1):</td>
<td>became/happened man, sent from God, name to-him John</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal transfer (stage 2):</td>
<td>There CAME/WAS a man, sent from God, WHOSE name was John</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary transfer (stage 3, example taken from the American Standard Version, 1901):</td>
<td>There CAME a man, sent from God, WHOSE name was John</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

or (example taken from Phillips New Testament in Modern English, 1958):  
A man, NAMED * John WAS sent BY God

Notes: Adjustments from the ST are indicated as follows: changes in order are indicated by the numeral order, omissions by an *, structural alterations by SMALL CAPITALS and additions by italics.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:1</td>
<td>In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.</td>
<td>In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.</td>
<td>In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:2</td>
<td>And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.</td>
<td>Now the earth was without shape and empty, and darkness was over the surface of the watery deep, but the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the water.</td>
<td>the earth was a formless wasteland, and darkness covered the abyss, while a mighty wind swept over the waters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:3</td>
<td>And God said, ‘Let there be light’: And there was light.</td>
<td>And God said, ‘Let there be light’: And there was light.</td>
<td>And God said, ‘Let there be light’: And there was light.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion 2: can we compare equivalence systematically?

Which system? on which level? how?
Can a translation be better than the original?
only in non-literary translation?
Koller (1976/89)
“ÖKorrespondenz und Äquivalenz”

• Denotative equivalence
• Connotative equivalence
• Text-normative equivalence
• Pragmatic equivalence
• Formal equivalence
Baker 1992 ch. 2: Equivalence at word level

- Morphology – lexical and syntactic
- Lexical Meaning
  - Propositional v. Expressive meaning
  - Presupposed meaning
  - Evoked meaning
    - dialect – geographical, temporal, social
    - register – field/tenor/mode of discourse
- Semantic fields and lexical sets
Baker 1992 ch. 3: Equivalence above word level

• Collocation
  – Collocational range and markedness
  – Collocation and register
  – Collocational meaning

• Idioms and Fixed Expressions
Baker 1992 ch. 4: Grammatical equivalence

- Grammatical vs. Lexical categories
- The Diversity of Grammatical Categories:
  - Number
  - Gender
  - Person
  - Tense and Aspect
  - Voice
  - Word Order
Baker 1992 ch. 5:
Textual equivalence: thematic structure

• Thematic and Information Structures
  – Halliday: Theme and Rheme
  – Sentence analysis – S Od Oi Cs Co Cp Adj Conj Disj
  – marked v. unmarked
  – Information Structure: Given and New

• Prague school: functional sentence perspective
  – Word Order and Communicative Function
Baker 1992 ch. 6:
Textual equivalence: cohesion

- Reference
- Substitution and Ellipsis
- Conjunction
- Lexical Cohesion
Baker 1992 ch. 7: Pragmatic equivalence

• Coherence
  – Implicature
• Grice's cooperative principle and maxims of
  • Quantity
  • Quality
  • Relevance
  • Manner
• Background knowledge and politeness
Translation ‘shifts’

Direct translation:
- Borrowing
- Calque
- Literal translation

Oblique translation
- Transposition
- Modulation
- Equivalence
- Adaptation

function at the level of the lexicon, syntax and message
Translation Quality Assessment
House (1997)

Scheme for analyzing and comparing original and translation texts (House 1997: 108)

- Individual textual function
  - Register
    - Field: subject matter and social action
    - Tenor: participant relationship
      - author’s provenance and stance
      - social role relationship
      - social attitude
    - Mode: medium (simple/complex)
      - participation (simple/complex)
  - Genre (generic purpose)

Language/text
Reiss (1971): Text types and translation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text type</th>
<th>Informative</th>
<th>Expressive</th>
<th>Operative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language function</td>
<td>Informative (representing objects and facts)</td>
<td>Expressive (expressing sender's attitude)</td>
<td>Appellative (making an appeal to text receiver)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language dimension</td>
<td>Logical</td>
<td>Aesthetic</td>
<td>Dialogic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text focus</td>
<td>Content-focused</td>
<td>Form-focused</td>
<td>Appellative-focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT should transmit</td>
<td>Transmit referential content</td>
<td>Transmit aesthetic form</td>
<td>Elicit desired response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation method</td>
<td>‘Plain prose’, explicitation as required</td>
<td>‘Identifying’ method, adopt perspective of ST author</td>
<td>‘Adaptive’, equivalent effect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 11.1
Text type and relevant criteria for translation (from Snell-Hornby 1995: 32)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.</th>
<th>Literary translation</th>
<th>General language translation</th>
<th>Special language translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bible</td>
<td>stage/film</td>
<td>modern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>classical literature</td>
<td>poetry</td>
<td>light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>antiquity</td>
<td>before 1900</td>
<td>literature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| B. | Cultural history/literary studies | Sociocultural and area studies | Studies of special subjects |
|    | Creative extension of language norm | Narrowing scope of interpretation | Conceptual identity |
|    | Recreation of language dimensions | Grade of differentiation | Relevance of equivalence criteria | Invariance |
|    | Shifting of perspective | Communicative function of the translation | Information function |

| C. | Historical linguistics | Text-linguistics | Language for specific purposes syntax |
|    | Contrastive grammar | Contrastive semantics | Standardization of terminology/documentation |
|    | Dialectology | Sociolinguistics | Pragmalinguistics |
|    | Psycholinguistics |

| D. | Speakability | Sound/rhythm | Phonological effects |
|    | | | |

focuses on purpose or *skopos* of translation

Rules:

1. A TT is determined by its *skopos*
2. A TT is message in a target culture/TL concerning a message in a source culture/SL
3. A TT is not clearly reversible
4. A TT must be internally coherent
5. A TT must be coherent with the ST
Chesterman’s norms (1997)

Expectancy norms – expectations of readers
  – Allow evvaluative judgements
  – Validated by a norm-authority

Professional norms
  – Accountability norm = ethical
  – Communication norm = social
  – ‘Relation’ norm = linguistic (between SL and TL)
Discussion 3: TL orientation in texts

translation dilemma:
- ST norms = adequate translation
- TT norms = acceptable translation

Do we want to produce at TT that looks like an original?
What can be done to avoid too much standardization?
How can one avoid social or cultural bias?
How can one truly represent the original?
Deconstruction intends to demonstrate the instability of language in general and the relationship between signified and signifier in particular.

'Deconstruction' can and has been used to 'deconstruct' much more than 'traditional literature', e.g.

- Political discourse
- Philosophy
- Psychology & Sociology
- Science
Postcolonial Translation Theory

Spivak (1993/2000) and Niranjana (1992)

Cultural implications - translating between:
- Colonized and colonizing
- Politically powerful and weaker languages and cultures

Power relations

Translational and transnational factors
Venuti (1995)
The Translator’s Invisibility

criticizes those, like Toury, who aim to produce value-free norms and laws of translation
interpretes Lefevere's notions of patronage and its influence in the context of Anglo-American publishing
uses 'Invisibility' to describe the translator's situation and activity in contemporary Anglo-American culture
Discussion 4: the translator in the TT

Can the Translator be ‘invisible’?
Should the Translator be ‘invisible’?
- If, so – when? examples?
Can the Translator be ‘invisible’ and creative?
- If, so – when? examples?
Technology and Translation

- Desktop Publishing
- Translation memories
- Terminology databases
- Translator’s Workbench
- Machine translation
- Information resources
Links

European Commission’s translators’ workshop /seminar /interesting articles:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/translation/theory/seminars_en.htm

Chernitz links:
http://ell.phil.tu-chemnitz.de/