

SOME MAJOR ISSUES OF TRANSLATION

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Summary: *English is widely used in the world nowadays. It has become increasingly important in Vietnam. It has been a compulsory subject in Vietnamese education system. It is not easy to learn and master English. It is even more difficult to translate from English into Vietnamese and from Vietnamese into English. To give certain knowledge of translation, his article will deal with some important issues in translation which is necessary for developing professional competency and skills of every area in our country in the period of development and integration at present time.*

Key words: *important, compulsory, master, translate, integration.*

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH AND TRANSLATION IN THE LEARNING OF FOREIGN LANGUGES

Today, English is becoming more and more popular all over the world. It is not only considered the mother tongue of about 60 million speakers in many countries but also used widely in the world as an international language. Therefore English is the important language of the United Nations, international summit meetings, science, technology, business, tourism, medicine, education etc. As a means of communication, English brings people on Earth together and helps them understand each other and exchange material, cultural and spiritual values of their own countries. Needless to say, English is now an indispensable part of our lives. In Vietnam, English is extremely important for such many fields as diplomacy, economics, tourism, education etc.

In Vietnam, English is a compulsory subject in education, It is taught from primary, secondary, high school and

even at university. In the integration and development of our country, English has been ,nowadays, used in many areas. In the learning of English, translation plays a very important role, it is a comprehensive skill. Translation is obviously perceived as an intrinsic part of the foreign language teaching process. It involves the rendering of a source language text into the target language so as to ensure that the surface meaning of the two will be approximately similar. Translation is an instrument of education precisely because it has to reach readers whose cultural and educational levels are different from that of the readers of the original. Translation is used for multilingual notices, which have at last appeared increasingly conspicuously in public places; for instructions issued by exporting companies; for tourist publicity, where it is too often produced from the native into the 'foreign' language by natives as a matter of national pride; for official documents, such as treaties and contracts; for reports, papers, articles, correspondence, textbooks to convey information, advice and recommendations

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for every branch of knowledge. In my limited time and knowledge, I can, in my writing, deal with “Major issues of translation” which involve the conceptions of translation, types of translation, steps of translation and principles of translation.

II. Major issues of translation

1.1. Overview of Translation

There have been different definitions of translation by different authors so far. In this part of the report, I make use of the opportunity to present some only.

In 1965, Catford stated that “translation is the replacement of textual material in one language (Source Language) by equivalent textual material in another language (Target Language)”.

- Peter Newmark has the opinion that “translation is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text”.

- In Nida’s opinion is somewhat different, “translation is reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style.”(Nida 1982:12)

Wilss in the same year, 1982, said that “translation is a procedure which leads from a written Source Language text to an optimally equivalent Target Language text, and which requires the syntactic semantic, stylistic and text pragmatic comprehension by the translator of the original text”.

Moreover, in 1991 Bell gave the concept that “translating is the transformation of a text originally in one language into an equivalent text in a different language retaining as far as possible, the content of the message, and the formal features and the roles of the original text”.

- In the Macmillan English Dictionary (2003:1530), translation is defined as “spoken or written words that have been changed into a different language.”

- Recently, the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary 10th edition (2020:1666) says “translation is the process of changing something that is written or spoken into another language.”

2.2. Types of Translation

There have been so far different types or methods of translation. Within the area of this paper, I would like to present the necessary ones, if I have good opportunity I will present the research matter in full another time.

1- *Semantic translation*

2- *Communicative translation*

3- *Word-for-word translation*

4- *Faithful translation*

5- *Descriptive translation*

6- *Free translation*

7- *Idiomatic translation*

2.2.1. Semantic translation

Semantic translation is to reconstruct the exact meaning of the original. It must take more account of the aesthetic value of the SL text, compromising on meaning where appropriate. There will be little change if necessary.

For example:

... “The ancient town of Hội An, 30 km south of Đà Nẵng, lies on the banks of the Thu Bồn River. Occupied by early western traders, Hội An was one of the major trading centres of Southeast Asia in the 16th century.”...

... “*Phố cổ Hội An nằm dọc theo hai bên bờ sông Thu Bồn, cách Đà Nẵng 30km về phía nam. Do các thương gia phương tây đến đây buôn bán sớm nên Hội An là một trong những trung tâm buôn bán lớn ở Đông Nam Á trong thế kỷ thứ 16.*”

2.2.2. Communicative translation

Communicative translation tries to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are acceptable and comprehensible to the readers.

The focus is on the message and readers, for example:

... “Vietcombank thành phố Hà Nội triển khai dịch vụ gửi một nơi, rút nhiều nơi.”

... “Vietcombank in Hà Nội city launches a service that allows clients to deposit money in one branch and withdraw it in others.”

The meaning and form of the translated text must be suitable in the target language. If necessary, something should be added to or removed from the original, for example:

..“Mấy năm qua, công cuộc đổi mới trên mặt trận kinh tế của đất nước ta đã mở màn hăm.”

... “Over the last few years, our renovation on the economic front has been unfolded drastically”

Reconstruct badly-written sentences in the original, for example:

... “Nguyễn Văn Siêu sinh năm 1799 quê ở làng Kim Lũ, huyện Thanh Trì, Hà Nội. Ông nổi tiếng hay chữ cùng với Cao Bá Quát “Thần Siêu, Thánh Quát”. Ông viết trên một vạn trang chữ Hán với đủ loại sách: văn học, sử học, địa lý, triết học.”

... “Nguyễn Văn Siêu was born in 1799 from Kim Lũ village, Thanh Trì district, Hà Nội. He and Cao Bá Quát were famous for learned scholars and considered “God Sieu, Saint Quát.” He wrote such different kinds of books of over ten thousand pages as literature, history, eorgraphy and philosophy” ...

2.2.3. Word-for-word translation

It is also called interlinear translation. The SL word-order is preserved and words translated singly by their most common meaning, out of context. Cultural words are translated literally.

For example:

- You are skinny and she is fat.

Anh thì gầy chị ta thì béo

“We are very lucky”, wrote professor Huxley, “to live in a period of history when the earth’s scenery is beautiful and interesting.”

“... Chúng ta thật may mắn”, Giáo Sư Huxley viết, “được sống trong một giai đoạn của lịch sử khi mà cảnh quan của trái đất thì tươi đẹp và lý thú.”

2.2.4. Descriptive translation

In descriptive translation, target language is used to enable readers to imagine an object, a thing, a phenomenon or a concept in the SL text. Descriptive translation can be applied when there is no equivalents in the TL. The main reason for descriptive translation is the difference between the two cultures.

For example:

“nhà sàn”: “house-on-stilts”;

“chế độ biên chế”: Job-for-life system;

“thời kỳ bao cấp”: The period of budget subsidy.

2.2.5. Free translation

Free translation reproduces the content without the form of the original. Usually it is a paraphrase much longer than the original called intralingual translation. The equivalent is not restricted to one unit of translation, for example, one word in SL can be equivalent to a group of words or a phrase in Target Language/.

For example:

Over and over I whisper your name.

Over and over I kiss you again.

*Thầm gọi tên em, ngàn lần anh vẫn gọi
Và hôn em, hôn hoài anh hôn mãi*

Sometimes, translation in TL is shorter than the original.

- *It's raining cats and dogs: Mua tầm tã.*

- *It serves him right: đáng đời hắn.*

A red, red rose

(Robert Burns)

So fair art thou, my bonnie lass

So deep in luv am I,

And I will luv thee still, my dear,

Till a' the seas gang dry.

Bông hồng thắm

(N.X. Thơm dịch)

Em đẹp lắm, ơi cô gái nhỏ

Anh đắm say em tự bao giờ

Anh sẽ mãi còn yêu em đó

Yêu đến ngày biển cạn sông khô

1.1.6. **Idiomatic translation**

Idiomatic translation reproduces the message of the original text the translator tries to find out the equivalent idiomatic expression in the target language

For example:

... "They've done it in black and white" ...

... "*Rõ ràng là họ đã là việc đó*" ...

2.3. Steps of Translation

When talking about steps of translation, we intend to deal with the process of translation which includes: **Information analysis, Translation, Revision, Editing, Producing final draft.**

2.3.1. Information analysis

a- Reading the source-language text

It is necessary to read the source text before translating so that translators can learn about the major content of the text and the intention the source-text writer. Translators should read the whole text two or three times and find the intention, register, tone and mark the difficult words

and passages, even words and structures in and out of the contexts, then analyse them from point of view of the translators.

b- Identifying the intention of the writer or of the source text.

Having read the source-language text, translators will get to know very well the intention of the writer or the attitude of the writer towards events, debates or characters in the source text, which will help translators find out proper words, terms or structures in the right contexts during their translating.

c- The translators' attitude

Having identified the writer's intention, translators should share the common ideas, thought and attitude towards the text with the writer in a way they choose the right words, expressions and style.

d- The reader of the target-language text/ translation

One of the very important points is that translators have to be concerned about the reader of the target text/ translation. Translators must be aware that the reader of target text is very much different from that of the source text. They, therefore, should show their concern for the nationality, culture, religion, social and economic systems of the community of the target-text reader, which will help result in right translation.

2.3.2. Translation

(Reproducing the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message in the target language)

When we are translating, we translate with four levels more or less consciously in mind:

a- The SL text level, the level of language, where we begin and which we continually (but not continuously) go back to.

Working on the text level, you intuitively and automatically make certain conversion; you may transpose the SL grammar (clauses and group) into their ready TL equivalents and you translate the lexical units into the sense that appears immediately appropriate in the context of the sentence. When you translate, your base level is the text.

When translating, translator should make certain conversion;

+ transpose the SL grammar (clauses and group) into their TL equivalents.

+ translate the lexical units into TL in the sense suitable for the context of the sentence.

Eg

...”It is fashionable at present to be concerned for the ‘environment’ people are strongly criticized for the ‘harm’ they do to the atmosphere, to the sea or to the land. But when you consider the subject on a grand scale, and with optimism, as Huxley did, you may realize that man has little effect on the earth...”

... “*Cái mối hiện nay là người ta ‘có vẻ quan tâm đến môi trường’ mà con người đang bị chỉ trích gay gắt về những tác hại họ đã gây ra cho bầu khí quyển, cho biển hoặc cho cả đất liền.*

Nhưng khi bạn xem xét vấn đề môi trường trên một phạm vi rộng lớn với niềm lạc quan như Giáo Sư Huxley thì bạn mới có thể nhận thấy rằng tác động của con người đến trái đất chẳng đáng là bao...”

b- The referential level, the level of objects and events, real or imaginary, which we progressively have to visualize and built up, and which is an essential part, first of the comprehension, then of the reproduction process.

You should not read a sentence

without seeing it on the referential level. Whether the text is technical or literary, or institutional, you have to make up your mind summarily and continuously what it is about, what it is in aid of. For example:

- *This is **John**. **He** has just arrived.*

He refers to **John**.

- *“Economic activity began with the **caveman** who was economically self-sufficient. **He** did his own hunting, found his own shelter, and provided for his own needs...”*

He refers to **caveman**.

c. The cohesive level which is more general and grammatical, which traces the train of thought, the feeling tone (positive or negative) and the various presuppositions of the SL text. This level encompasses both comprehension and reproduction. It gives overall pictures, to which we may have to adjust the language level.

In sentence structures, some lexical units can be used as cohesive means to link phrases.

Means of cohesion:

- Reference

- substitution: nominal substitution, verbal substitution, clausal substitution.

- ellipsis: nominal ellipsis, ellipsis of verb, clausal ellipsis.

- Junction: additive junction, adversative junction, causal junction, temporal junction.

- Exical cohesion: reiteration, collocation, special collocations, collocational

range, collocational errors / clashes.

d. The level of naturalness,

- Naturalness means common language appropriate to the writer or the speaker in a certain situation. This

is generalized level, which constitutes a band within which the translator works, unless he is translating an authoritative text, in which case he sees the level of naturalness as a point of reference to determine the deviation- if any- between the author's level and the natural level. This level of naturalness is concerned only with reproduction.

For the vast majority of texts, you / translators have to ensure:

1-that your translation makes sense;

2- that your translation reads naturally, that it is written in ordinary language, the common grammar, idioms and words that meet that kind of situation.

- Normally, translators can only do this by temporarily disengaging yourself from the SL text, by reading your own translation as though no original existed and remove strange and unnatural words, sentences which don't make sense.

For example:

a-.... *"Chẳng nói chẳng rằng, ba đang tay bọp tai cho nó một cái đánh 'bốp'. Con bé loạng choạng ngã xuống vũng nước bẩn, nước mắt nó ứa ra, chắc là đau lắm. Con ráng chạy lại níu tay ba, nhưng không kịp..."* (Con không muốn thế)

"Without a word you boxed her ear with a 'pop'. The little girl staggered before falling down into the pool filthy water. Tears started to her eyes, possibly because of acute pain. I tried to prevent you, but I failed."

1.1.3. Revision

The translator should:

- look back at 4 levels;
- remove unnatural words and sentences;
- be sure that the translation makes sense;
- forms & meaning are suitable to

the Target Language context;

- and there are no ambiguous sentences in the translation.

1.1.4. Editing

1.1.5. Producing final draft

2.4. Principles of translation

There are some general translation principles which are relevant to all types of translation.

1.1.1. Meaning :

The translation should reflect accurately the meaning of the original text. Nothing should be arbitrarily added or removed, though occasionally part of the meaning can be "transposed-changed the position".

For example:

"The real Vietnam war ended in 1975, everything about it since then has become a war story..."

... *"Cuộc chiến tranh thực ở Việt Nam đã kết thúc năm 1975, từ đó trở đi, mọi chi tiết về cuộc chiến tranh ấy đã trở thành một câu chuyện chiến tranh..."*

- "He made the bed": the meaning of the sentence must be made clear whether he put the sheets, blanket and pillow in neat order on the bed or he as a carpenter made the new bed.

The translator should ask himself:

- If the meaning of the original text is clear, if not where the uncertainty lies.
- If any words are loaded, that is, if there are any underlying implications.
- If the dictionary meaning of a particular word is the most suitable one.
- If anything in the translation sounds unnatural or forced.

The meaning of the source Language must be expressed clearly in the target language, for example:

... "Throughout history creatures have lived on the good things of earth

and sun; there is no other source of life's necessities.

... “Trong suốt quá trình lịch sử các sinh vật đều sống nhờ vào những điều kiện thuận lợi do thiên nhiên ban phát; không còn có nguồn nào khác cần thiết cho sự sống...”

... “The mosquito eggs go through four changes, **until finally** the small mosquito appear...”

... “Trứng muỗi phát triển qua bốn thời kỳ **rồi mới** nở thành muỗi con...”

1.1.2. Form :

The ordering of words and ideas in the translation should match the original as closely as possible. This is particularly important in translating legal documents, guarantees, contracts, etc..

Translation is basically a change of form (lexicon and grammar). When we speak of the form of a language, we are referring to the actual words, phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs etc., which are spoken or written. These forms are referred to as the surface structure of a language. It is the structural part of language which is actually seen in print or heard in speech. In translation, the form of the source language is replaced by the form of the target language.

Let us look at one example that we are translating a Vietnamese sentence into English:

Mấy năm qua công cuộc đổi mới trên mặt trận kinh tế của đất nước ta đã mở ra mạnh mẽ.

Over the past few years, the economic innovation of our country

Qua mấy năm, kinh tế đổi mới của ch/ta đất nước

has us he red drastically.

đã mở ra Mạnh mẽ

If the order of the sentence changes,

the meaning will change, for example:

- *I only **like** blue music.* (Stress on like)

- *Only **I** like blue music.* (Stress in I)

1.1.3. Register :

The term register is used in the same way as 'style' in the field of language

learning and teaching. It is used to refer to all types of situational variation and sometimes also to refer to socially-conditioned variation.

Languages often differ greatly in the levels of formality in a given context.

To resolve these differences, the translator must distinguish between formal/ informal or fixed expressions and personal expressions, in which the writer or speaker sets the tone. The translator should also consider:

- if any expression in the SL would sound too formal/ informal, cold/ warm, personal/ impersonal...if translated literally.

For example:

-Expressing anger:

The slight figure of Maria appeared in the doorway, her eyes flashing,

'You are late, you are late, you are 23 minutes late.'

Or *'Don't you tell me to calm down. You'd like me to be a drudge, wouldn't you, to be a slave, to keep silent while you go out drinking and chasing girls all the nights?'*...

-Expressing formal style,

Would you mind leaving us alone for a few minutes?

Would you open the door for me, please?

1.1.4. Source language influence :

One of the most frequent criticism of translation is that it does not sound natural. This is because the translator's thoughts

and choice of words are too strongly molded by the original text. A good way of shaking off the source language influence is to set the text aside and translate a few sentences aloud, from memory. This will suggest natural patterns of thought in the first language, which may not come to mind when the eye is fixed on the source language text.

For example:

- “From the early days of this administration, I have said to families and veterans groups what I say again here: We **will keep working until** we get all the answers **we can....**”

- ...*Ngay từ những ngày đầu của nhiệm kỳ này, tôi đã tuyên bố với các gia đình và các hội cựu chiến binh những gì tôi sẽ nhắc lại ở đây: chúng ta **nhất định sẽ tiếp tục tìm kiếm cho tới khi nào lấy được hài cốt mới thôi...***

1.1.5. Style and clarity :

The translator should not change the style of the original. But if the text is sloppily written, or full of tedious repetitions, the translator may, for the reader's sake, correct the defects.

For example :

... “Phía Nhật Bản hoan nghênh cải cách kinh tế của Việt Nam đạt kết quả tốt.”

... “*The Japanese delegation acclaimed the success of Vietnamese economic reform*”.

1.1.6. Idiom :

Idiomatic expressions are notoriously untranslatable. The translator tries to find out the equivalent in the target language. These include similes, metaphors, proverbs and sayings, jargon, slang, and colloquialisms and (in English) phrasal verbs, for example:

... “Last year I lifted the trade embargo of Vietnam in response to their

cooperation, and to enhance our efforts to secure the remains of lost Americans and to determine the fate of those whose remains have not been found. It has worked. In seventeen months, Hanoi has taken important steps to help us resolve more cases. Twenty-nine families have received the remains of their loved ones and at last have been able to give them a proper burial. (*Normalization of Diplomatic Relation with Vietnam*)

...”*Năm ngoái tôi đã dỡ bỏ lệnh cấm vận thương mại đối với Việt Nam để đáp lại tinh thần hợp tác của họ, và tăng cường nỗ lực của chúng ta đảm bảo lấy được hài cốt của những người Mỹ và xác định danh tính của những người chưa tìm thấy hài cốt. Việc dỡ bỏ lệnh cấm vận đã có tác dụng. Trong vòng 17 tháng,*

*Hà Nội đã tiến hành những bước quan trọng giúp chúng ta lấy thêm được nhiều hài cốt. 29 gia đình đã nhận được hài cốt của thân nhân mình và cuối cùng đã mai táng thân nhân mình được **mồ yên mỗ đẹp...***”

If the expressions cannot be directly translated, try any of the following :

- retain the original word, in inverted commas.
- retain the original expression, with a literal explanation in brackets.
- use a close equivalent.
- use a non-idiomatic or plain prose translation.

The golden rule is: if the idiom does not work in the L1, do not force it into the translation.

III. CONCLUSION

Translation is an indispensable activity during the teaching and learning of foreign languages. It is a comprehensive skill which helps learners improve their language competence. Translation is the

transformation of a text originally in one language into an equivalent text in a different language retaining the content of the message, the formal features and the roles of the original text. That's why it is the most important for learners to have far and wide language and culture knowledge of both source and target languages. The above-mentioned issues are of necessity learners should have a good command of so that they will become useful translators and interpreters in the future./.

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MỘT SỐ VẤN ĐỀ CHÍNH VỀ DỊCH THUẬT

Ngô Thị Uyên

Tóm Tắt: Ngày nay tiếng Anh được sử dụng rộng rãi trên thế giới. Ở Việt Nam, tiếng Anh ngày càng trở thành một thứ tiếng quan trọng, nó trở thành một môn học bắt buộc trong hệ thống giáo dục Việt Nam. Để học và làm chủ tiếng Anh không phải là một việc dễ dàng. Thậm chí để dịch được từ tiếng Anh sang tiếng Việt và từ tiếng Việt sang tiếng Anh còn là một vấn đề khó khăn hơn nhiều. Để cung cấp những hiểu biết nhất định về dịch thuật, bài báo này sẽ đề cập đến một số vấn đề cơ bản của dịch thuật, một vấn đề cần thiết để phát triển năng lực và kỹ năng nghề nghiệp cho tất cả các ngành ở Việt Nam trong giai đoạn phát triển và hội nhập hiện nay.

Từ khóa: quan trọng, bắt buộc, làm chủ, dịch, hội nhập