

Translation Studies and Lingua-Culturology

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ABSTRACT

The article provides information about the concept of translation, its history and gives the reason of its appearance. Moreover, there is the description of culture and the link between culture, language and translation.

KEYWORDS: translation, culture, interpreter, language, correspondence, cultural experience, text

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Throughout history, written and spoken translations have played a crucial role in inter-human communication, not least in providing access to important texts for scholarship and religious purposes. As world trade has grown, so has the importance of translation. The 1980 was a decade of union for the fledgling discipline known as Translation Studies. It was the push of defining translation as a theory. Translation has been defined variously by different writers who concern in linguistics. It depends on how they view language and translation.

Yet the study of translation as an academic subject only really began in the second half of the twentieth century. In the English-speaking world, this discipline is now generally known as 'translation studies', thanks to the Dutch based US scholar James S. Holmes¹. In his key defining paper delivered in 1972, but not widely available until 1988, Holmes describes the promising discipline as being concerned with 'the complex of problems clustered round the phenomenon of translating and translations. Little

more than a decade later, the editors of the second edition of the "Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation" comment on new concerns in the discipline, its growing multi-disciplinarily, and its commitment to break away from its exclusively Eurocentric origins, while holding on to the achievements of the past decades².

There are four very visible ways in which translation studies has become more prominent. Unsurprisingly, these reflect a basic tension between the practical side of professional translating and the often more abstract research activity of the field. First, just as the demand for translation has increased, so has there been a vast expansion in specialized translating and interpreting programs at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. These programs, which attract thousands of students, are mainly oriented towards training future professional commercial translators and interpreters and serve as highly valued entry-level qualifications for the professions. The types of translation covered at each institution vary. These may applied translation studies, scientific and technical translation, conference and bilateral interpreting, audiovisual

¹James S. Holmes "The name and nature of Translation Studies" 1972.

²Munday, J. "Introducing Translation Studies" 2nd ed. 2008

translation, specialized Sign Language and audio description. A smaller number of programs focus on the practice of literary translation. In Europe, literary translation is also supported by the RECIT network of centres where literary translation is studied, practised and promoted.

While the practice of translation is long established, the study of the field developed into an academic discipline only in the latter part of the twentieth century. Before that, translation had often been relegated to an element of language learning. In fact, from the late eighteenth century to the 1960s and beyond, language learning in secondary schools in many countries had come to be dominated by what was known as grammar-translation. Applied to Classical Latin and Greek and then to modern foreign languages, this centered on the rote study of the grammatical rules and structures of the foreign language. These rules were both practiced and tested by the translation of a series of usually unconnected and artificially constructed sentences exemplifying the structures being studied. This is an approach that persists even today in certain contexts.

The gearing of translation to language teaching and learning may partly explain why academia considered it to be of secondary status. Translation exercises were regarded as a means of learning a new language or of reading a foreign language text until one had the linguistic ability to read the original. Study of a work in translation was generally frowned upon once the student had acquired the necessary skills to read the original. Grammar-translation therefore fell into increasing disrepute, particularly in many English-language countries, with the rise of alternative forms of language teaching such as the direct method and the communicative approach from the 1960s and 1970s³. The communicative approach stressed students' natural capacity to learn language and attempts to replicate 'authentic' language-learning conditions in the classroom. It often privileged spoken over written forms, at least initially, and generally avoided use of the students' mother tongue. This led to the abandoning of translation in language learning. As far as teaching was concerned, translation then tended to become restricted to higher-level and university language courses and professional translator training. It is only relatively recently that there has been a move to restore translation to language teaching.

Translation studies are essentially concerned with a web of relationships, the importance of individual items being decided by their relevance within the

larger context. Translation, involving the transposition of thoughts expressed in one language by one social group into the appropriate expression of another group, entails a process of cultural de-coding, re-coding and en-coding. As cultures are increasingly brought into greater contact with one another, multicultural considerations are brought to bear to an ever-increasing degree. Now, how do all these changes influence us when we are trying to comprehend a text before finally translating it? We are not just dealing with words written in a certain time, space and sociopolitical situation, but, most importantly it is the "cultural" aspect of the text that we should take into account. The process of transfer, re-coding across cultures, should consequently allocate corresponding attributes about the target culture to ensure credibility in the eyes of the target reader. Multiculturalism, which is a present-day phenomenon, plays a role here, because it has had an impact on almost all peoples worldwide as well as on the international relations emerging from the current new world order. Moreover, as technology develops and grows at a hectic pace, nations and their cultures have, as a result, started a merging process whose end point is difficult to predict. We are at the threshold of a new international paradigm. Boundaries are disappearing and distinctions are being lost. The sharp outlines that were once distinctive now fade and become blurred. As translators we are faced with an alien culture that requires that its message be conveyed in anything but an alien way⁴. That culture expresses its idiosyncrasies in a way that is culture-bound: cultural words, proverbs and of course idiomatic expressions, whose origin and use are intrinsically and uniquely bound to the culture concerned. Translators permanently face the problem of how to treat the cultural aspects implicit in source a text and of finding the most appropriate technique of successfully conveying these aspects in the target language. The cultural implications for translation may take several forms ranging from lexical content and syntax to ideologies and ways of life in a given culture. The translator also has to decide on the importance given to certain cultural aspects and to what extent it is necessary or desirable to translate them into the target language. Culture is the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression. The notion of culture is essential to consider the implications for translation and, despite the differences in opinion as to whether language is part of the culture or not, the two notions

³Munday, J. "Introducing Translation Studies" 2nd ed. 2008

⁴Venuti. L. The Translation Studies Reader. USA and Canada. 2004.

appear to be inseparable. Discussing the problems of correspondence in translation, Eugene A. Nida, an outstanding linguist, one of the founders of the modern discipline of Translation Studies, confers equal importance to both linguistic and cultural differences between the source language and the target language and concludes that “differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than make differences in language structure. For every translated sentence, the translator must be able to decide on the importance of its cultural context, what the phrase means, not necessarily what it literally means, and convey that meaning in a way which makes sense not only in the target language but also in the context of the target culture.

The interdependence of languages and culture incidentally improves the translation, because it is a way to enrich the meaning. The importance of passing from one culture to another during a translation from one language to another is required in all textual translation. This requirement motivates, and even gives a particular pleasure, to translators who must know how to manipulate the beautiful interdependence between a translation and culture. They forage the cultural fields of each culture and enrich the references and the context of their translation, bettering its quality and relevance. Translating a text or video requires that the translator has a clear vision of the close and intimate ties between the languages. Translating from one culture to another needs the experience in one's language, in determining its uniqueness from among other languages, and skills in multicultural mediation. Translating requires the know-how and also a culture of translation, that is to say, a cultural experience in this domain. It is absolutely a technical profession; it requires an encyclopedic knowledge and also a curiosity about both the source and the target languages. A translator takes on the responsibility of a cultural mediator. The final text, like the original text, is a semiotic cultural product. The translator is an expert in multicultural communication. They know the best methods of mediation, those most well adapted given the sociocultural context. The culture of each language involved in a translation will determine the creation and interpretation of the meanings. The translator will navigate the gulf between the languages, arriving at the precise meaning by playing with the implicit/explicit relationship of the languages. They must take into account the social norms and practices, national or corporate identities, or relationships within power and political structures, which, in one way or another, influence a translation. Perhaps more than just a

passageway, translations are the key to multicultural dialogues; dialogues that are the best guarantees of peace. A translator is a peacemaker, the builder of bridges between cultures, between peoples, and between languages. They build the bridge that defends cultural diversity and allows it to develop, that expounds on the importance of differentiating differences and ‘strangeness’.

Conclusion: Without translation, we would be thrust into a world of confines, contaminated by ignorance, incomprehension, and even by the fear of ‘others’. Literary translations have a key role; to be a supplementary guarantee to appease the world and to allow it to develop. *“Language is not only an instrument of communication. It is also a symbolic order where representations, values, and social practices find their foundations.”* Ladmiral and Lipiansky.

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