

TRANSLATION, TYPES OF TRANSLATION

Translation (or the practice of translation) is a set of actions performed by the translator while rendering the source (or original) text (ST) into another language. Translation is a means of interlingual communication. The translator makes possible an exchange of information between the users of different languages by producing in the target language (TL or the translating language) a text which has an identical communicative value with the source (or original) text (ST). This target text (TT, that is the translation) is not fully identical with ST as to its form or content due to the limitations imposed by the formal and semantic differences between the source language (SL) and TL. Nevertheless the users of TT identify it, to all intents and purposes, with ST – **functionally, structurally** and **semantically**. *The functional identification* is revealed in the fact that the users (or the translation receptors - TR) handle TT in such a way as if it were ST, a creation of the source text author.

The structure of the translation should follow that of the original text: there should be no change in the sequence of narration or in the arrangement of the segments of the text.

The aim is maximum parallelism of structure which would make it possible to relate each segment of the translation to the respective part of the original.

Of major importance is *the semantic identification* of the translation with ST. It is presumed that the translation has the same meaning as the original text. No exchange of information is possible if there is discrepancy between the transmitted and the received message. The presumption of semantic identity between ST and TT is based on the various degrees of equivalence of their meanings. The translator usually tries to produce in TL the closest possible equivalent to ST.

The translating process includes two mental processes – **understanding** and **verbalization**. First, the translator understands the contents of ST, that is, reduces the information it contains to his own mental program, and then he develops this program into TT. The translating process has to be described in some translation models.

A model is a conventional representation of the translating process describing mental operations by which the source text or some part of it may be translated, irrespective of whether these operations are actually performed

by the translator. Translation models can be oriented either toward the situation reflected in the ST contents or toward the meaningful components of the ST contents.

The existing models of the translating process are based on **the situational** (or referential) **model**, which is based on the identity of the situations described in the original text and in the translation, and **the semantic-transformational model** postulates the similarity of basic notions and nuclear structures in different languages. These postulates are supposed to explain the dynamic aspects of translation. In other words, it is presumed that the translator actually makes a mental travel from the original to some interlingual level of equivalence and then further on to the text of translation.

In **the situational model** this intermediate level is extralinguistic. It is the described reality, the facts of life that are represented by the verbal description. The process of translating presumably consists in the translator getting beyond the original text to the actual situation described in it. This is the first step of the process, i.e. the break-through to the situation. The second step is for the translator to describe this situation in the target language. Thus the process goes from the text in one language through the extralinguistic situation to the text in another language. The translator first understands what the original is about and then says “*the same things*” in TL.

The translating process may be described as a series of transformations. **The transformational model** postulates that in any two languages there is a number of nuclear structures which are fully equivalent to each other. Each language has an area of equivalence in respect to the other language. It is presumed that the translator does the translating in three transformational strokes. First – **the stage of analysis** – he transforms the original structures into the nuclear structures, i.e. he performs transformation within SL. Second – **the stage of translation proper** – he replaces the SL nuclear structures with the equivalent nuclear structures in TL. And third – **the stage of synthesis** – he develops the latter into the terminal structures in the text of translation. Thus if the English sentence “*It is very strange this domination of our intellect by our digestive organs*” is translated into Ukrainian as “*Дивно, якою мірою органи травлення володіють нашим розумом*” we presume that the structures “*domination of our intellect*” and “*domination by our digestive organs*” were first reduced to the nuclear structures “*organs dominate*” and “*they dominate intellect*”, respectively. Then they were replaced by the equivalent Ukrainian structures “*органи володіють*” and “*вони володіють розумом*”, after which the nuclear structures were transformed into the final Ukrainian variant.

The theory of translation provides the translator with the appropriate tools of analysis and synthesis, makes him aware of what he is to look for

in the original text, what type of information he must convey in TT and how he should act to achieve his goal. In the final analysis, however, his trade remains an art.

Contemporary translation activities of a translator are characterized by a great variety of types, forms and levels of his responsibility. The translator

- has to deal with works of the great authors of the past and of the leading authors of today, with intricacies of science fiction and the accepted stereotypes of detective stories;
- must be able to cope with the elegance of expression of the best masters of literary style and with the tricks and formalistic experiments of modern avant-gardists;
- has to preserve and fit into a different linguistic and social context a gamut of shades of meaning and stylistic nuances expressed in the original text by a great variety of language devices: neutral and emotional words, archaic words and new coinages, metaphors and similes, foreign borrowings, dialectal, jargon and slang expressions, stilted phrases and obscenities, proverbs and quotations, illiterate or inaccurate speech, and so on and so forth;
- has to tackle complicated specialized descriptions and reports on new discoveries in science or technology for which appropriate terms have not yet been invented. His duty is to translate diplomatic representations and policy statements, scientific dissertations and brilliant satires, maintenance instructions and after-dinner speeches, etc.

The original text may deal with any subject from general philosophical principles or postulates to minute technicalities in some obscure field of human endeavour. Translating a play the translator must bear in mind the requirements of theatrical presentation, and dubbing a film he must see to it that his translation fits the movement of the speakers' lips.

The translator may be called upon to make his translation in the shortest possible time, while taking a meal or against the background noise of loud voices or rattling type-writers. In simultaneous interpretation the translator is expected to keep pace with the fastest speakers, to understand all kinds of foreign accents and defective pronunciation, to guess what the speaker meant to say but failed to express due to his inadequate proficiency in the language he speaks.

In consecutive interpretation he is expected to listen to long speeches, taking the necessary notes, and then to produce his translation in full or compressed form, giving all the details or only the main ideas.

Each type of translation has its own combination of factors influencing the translating process. The general theory of translation should be supplemented

by a number of special translation theories identifying major types of translation activities and describing the predominant features of each type.

Different types of translation can be singled out depending on the predominant communicative function of the source text or the form of speech involved in the translation process. Thus we can distinguish between **literary** and **informative translation**, on the one hand, and between **written** and **oral translation** (or interpretation), on the other hand.

Literary translation deals with literary texts, i.e. works of fiction or poetry whose main function is to make an emotional or aesthetic impression upon the reader. Their communicative value depends, first and foremost, on their artistic quality and the translator's primary task is to reproduce this quality in translation.

Informative translation is rendering into the target language non-literary texts, the main purpose of which is to convey a certain amount of ideas, to inform the reader. However, if the source text is of some length, its translation can be listed as literary or informative only as an approximation. A literary text may, in fact, include some parts of purely informative character. Contrariwise, informative translation may comprise some elements aimed at achieving an aesthetic effect.

Literary works are known to fall into a number of genres. Literary translations may be subdivided in the same way, as each genre calls for a specific arrangement and makes use of specific artistic means to impress the reader. Translators of *prose*, *poetry* or *plays* have their own problems. Each of these forms of literary activities comprises a number of subgenres and the translator may specialize in one or some of them in accordance with his talents and experience. The particular tasks inherent in the translation of literary works of each genre are more literary than linguistic. The great challenge to the translator is to combine the maximum equivalence and the high literary merit.

The translator of a *belles-lettres text* is expected to make a careful study of the literary trend the text belongs to, the other works of the same author, the peculiarities of his individual style and manner and so on. This involves both linguistic considerations and skill in literary criticism. A good literary translator must be a versatile scholar and a talented writer or poet.

A number of subdivisions can be also suggested for informative translations, though the principles of classification here are somewhat different. Here we may single out translations of *scientific* and *technical texts*, of *newspaper materials*, of *official papers* and some other *types of texts such as public speeches, political and propaganda materials, advertisements*, etc., which are, so to speak, intermediate, in that there is a certain balance

between the expressive and referential functions, between reasoning and emotional appeal.

In *technical translation* the main goal is to identify the situation described in the original. The predominance of the referential function is a great challenge to the translator who must have a good command of the technical terms and a sufficient understanding of the subject matter to be able to give an adequate description of the situation even if this is not fully achieved in the original. The technical translator is also expected to observe the stylistic requirements of scientific and technical materials to make text acceptable to the specialist. Some types of texts can be identified not so much by their positive distinctive features as by the difference in their functional characteristics in the two languages. English newspaper reports differ greatly from their Ukrainian counterparts due to the frequent use of colloquial, slang and vulgar elements, various paraphrases, eye-catching headlines, etc.

Apart from technical and newspaper materials it may be expedient to single out translation of *official diplomatic papers* as a separate type of informative translation. These texts make a category of their own because of the specific requirements to the quality of their translations. Such translations are often accepted as authentic official texts on a par with the originals. They are important documents every word of which must be carefully chosen as a matter of principle. That makes the translator very particular about every little meaningful element of the original which he scrupulously reproduces in his translation. This scrupulous imitation of the original results sometimes in the translator more readily erring in literality than risking to leave out even an insignificant element of the original contents.

Journalistic (or publicistic) texts dealing with social or political matters are sometimes singled out among other informative materials because they may feature elements more commonly used in literary text (metaphors, similes and other stylistic devices) which cannot but influence the translator's strategy. More often, however, they are regarded as a kind of newspaper materials (periodicals).

There are also some minor groups of texts that can be considered separately because of the specific problems their translation poses to the translator. They are *film scripts, comic strips, commercial advertisements* and the like. In dubbing a film the translator is limited in his choice of variants by the necessity to fit the pronunciation of the translated words to the movement of the actor's lips. Translating the captions in a comic strip, the translator will have to consider the numerous allusions to the facts well-known to the regular readers of comics but less familiar to the Ukrainian readers. And in dealing with commercial advertisements he must bear in

mind that their sole purpose is to win over the prospective customers. Since the text of translation will deal with quite a different kind of people than the original advertisement was meant for, there is the problem of achieving the same pragmatic effect by introducing the necessary changes in the message.

In written translation the source text is in written form, as is the target text. In oral translation or interpretation the interpreter listens to the oral presentation of the original and translates it as an oral message in TL. As a result, in the first case the Receptor of the translation can read it while in the second case he hears it.

There are also some intermediate types. The interpreter rendering his translation by word of mouth may have the text of the original in front of him and translate it “at sight”. A written translation can be made of the original recorded on the magnetic tape that can be replayed as many times as is necessary for the translator to grasp the original meaning. The translator can dictate his “at sight” translation of a written text to the typist or a short-hand writer with TR getting the translation in written form.

These are all modifications of the two main types of translation. The line of demarcation between written and oral translation is drawn not only because of their forms but also because of the sets of conditions in which the process takes place. The first is *continuous*, the other *momentary*. In written translation the original can be read and re-read as many times as the translator may need or like. The same goes for the final product. The translator can re-read his translation, compare it to the original, make the necessary corrections or start his work all over again. He can come back to the preceding part of the original or get the information he needs from the subsequent messages. These are most favourable conditions and here we can expect the best performance and the highest level of equivalence. That is why in theoretical discussions we have usually examples from written translations where the translating process can be observed in all its aspects.

The conditions of oral translation impose a number of important restrictions on the translator’s performance. Here the interpreter receives a fragment of the original only once and for a short period of time. His translation is also a one-time act with no possibility of any return to the original or any subsequent corrections. This creates additional problems and the users have sometimes; to be content with a lower level of equivalence.

There are two main kinds of oral translation – **consecutive** and **simultaneous**. In consecutive translation the translating starts after the original speech or some part of it has been completed. Here the interpreter’s strategy and the final results depend, to a great extent, on the length of the

segment to be translated. If the segment is just a sentence or two the interpreter closely follows the original speech. As often as not, however, the interpreter is expected to translate a long speech which has lasted for scores of minutes or even longer. In this case he has to remember a great number of messages and keep them in mind until he begins his translation. To make this possible the interpreter has to take notes of the original messages, various systems of notation having been suggested for the purpose. The study of, and practice in, such notation is the integral part of the interpreter's training as are special exercises to develop his memory.

Sometimes the interpreter is set a time limit to give his rendering, which means that he will have to reduce his translation considerably, selecting and reproducing the most important parts of the original and dispensing with the rest. This implies the ability to make a judgement on the relative value of various messages and to generalize or compress the received information. The interpreter must obviously be a good and quickwitted thinker.

In simultaneous interpretation the interpreter is supposed to be able to give his translation while the speaker is uttering the original message. This can be achieved with a special radio or telephone-type equipment. The interpreter receives the original speech through his earphones and simultaneously talks into the microphone which transmits his translation to the listeners. This type of translation involves a number of psycholinguistic problems, both of theoretical and practical nature.

?? Suggested Topics for Discussion

1. What is translation? What is interlingual communication? How can it be demonstrated that TT has an identical communicative value with ST? In what respect do the TT users identify it with ST?
2. What is the translating process? What mental processes make up the translating process?
3. How can the translating process be studied and described? What is a model of translation? How can translation models be classified?
4. What are the two principles of translation classification? What are the main types of translation? What is the difference between literary and informative translations?
5. How can literary translations be subdivided? What is the main difficulty of translating a work of high literary merit? What qualities and skills are expected of a literary translator?
6. How can informative translations be subdivided? Are there any intermediate types of translation? What type of informative translations

plays an especially important role in the modern world?

7. What is the main goal of a technical translation? What specific requirements is the technical translator expected to meet? What problems is the theory of technical translation concerned with?
8. What are the main characteristics of translations dealing with newspaper, diplomatic and other official materials? What specific problems emerge in translating film scripts and commercial advertisements?
9. What is the main difference between translation and interpretation? Which of them is usually made at a higher level of accuracy? Are there any intermediate forms of translation?