Problems with translation

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Schools of thought

According to the school of thought of *target-oriented translation*, it is necessary to focus on the accuracy of the remarks at the expense of style, when necessary. To "get the message", the translation will sometimes replace the cultural elements of the original text by similar examples, but better known to readers of the target culture. The most important thing is the "meaning" of the message that tries to convey the author. The translator must first get this message so idiomatic and natural for the reader in the target language, while remaining faithful to the language, the registry and the tone used by the author of the text in the source language.

According to the school of thought of *source-oriented translation*, the translator's responsibility is to remain strictly true to form of the original text. The translator must therefore reproduce all the stylistic elements of the original, using the same tone, leave intact all cultural elements and even (far) compel the target language into the shape dictated by the source text. The source-oriented translator will in the first place not to betray the vehicle used by the author, and then will try to return the good sense of the message.

Difficulties associated with specialized domains

Most freelance translators, telling that they are specialized in just about everything, contradict the term of specialization. It is obvious that their behavior is looking for maximum translation work.

It should still not denigrate human capacity to properly learn about over the translations, sources of explanations and other terminological dictionaries, not to mention that the websites of companies dealing with the subjects involved are numerous.

So it may be useful to pay attention to a translator with 20 specializations on his resume.

However, to achieve useful pragmatic translations, it is necessary to master the jargon of the field and know how to use the right terms. A translation that does not reflect current usage and the development of specialized language does not interest her readers in the same way, as we do more articles not written as in 1750.

Some fields (such as computing) evolve at breakneck speed to the point where the jargon of the target language cannot get rich fast enough to follow the evolution of language of origin (e.g. English). In this situation, the translator may face the lack of target language equivalent (hence the need to create a neologism). Several neologisms have roughly equivalent to a choice between a relatively general and well-known term, and more accurate, but less used. term.

The translation software (which has two distinct phases, internationalization and regionalization) is a process that differs from the simple text translation to varying degrees.

The problem of double translation

A well-known difficulty for translators, but there is little awareness outside of them, is the fact that the text to be translated is often already a translation, not necessarily true, and it must, to the extent possible, to try passing it back to the original.

The classic example is the gospels, including the oldest known manuscripts written in ancient Greek, but with sentences probably held in Aramaic. As the original potential in this language seem to be lost, if they ever existed, results scholars' quarrels.

Today, the phenomenon is amplified and comes in various forms.

First, the use of a bridge language. If we have to translate into modern Greek a text written in Estonian, it may be difficult to find a translator familiar with both the two languages and the subject in question. There will be a translation, usually in English, which will be the starting point for the translator. The vagueness of this language can create problems.

English being considered an "international" language, "understood" everywhere, we will often use instinctively, thinking thus to make things easier. The reality is far: besides the fact that only 38 % of Europeans have a more or less good mastery of English and only 2.5% of Japanese, for example, the use of their mother tongue is proven much more efficient and cost effective than the use of a third language such as English. For example, if the head of a Spanish company wants to write to a French company, the easiest way would be he cast his broad in its language, and a secretary would format the text and re-read it before sending it, having thus expressed his thoughts as much as possible. The recipient would give the letter to a Spanish to French translator and receive in return the closest version of the original. In practice, the Spanish official deems more polite to ask a bilingual secretary supposed to write in the language of her Majesty, and therefore the secretary write in English may be imperfect. It is possible that the corresponding, not understanding the gibberish that sends him, to still be forced to go to a translator, and this will make even more difficult to translate that if he had directly in front of him the Spanish text.

A similar state of mind plays when an international company has a German text and an English translation and will need a French translation. It almost automatically uses a translator for the English version, which is likely to ask far more problems than the original, which is almost never thinks to join.

Thoughts about translation

For a "smart", sensible translation, you should forget not the knowledge acquired at school or university, but the corrective standards. Some people want a translation with the touch of the source version, while another people feel that in a successful version, we should not be able to guess the original language. We have to realize that both people have right and wrong, and that their only fault is to present requirement as an absolute truth.

Teachers agree at least on this principle: "*If a sentence is ambiguous, the translation must also be*", no doubt they want the student to take the opportunity to show his virtuosity.

There is another critical, less easy to argue, based on an Italian phrase with particularly strong wording: "*Traduttore, traditore*". This critique argues that any translation will betray the author language, spirit, style … because of the choices on all sides. What to sacrifice, clarity or brevity, if the formula in the text is brief and effective, but impossible to translate into so few words with the exact meaning? One could understand this criticism that it encourages us to read "in the text." It seems obvious that it is impossible to follow this advice into practice.

The translator Pierre Leyris (which among other things reflects the work of Herman Melville) responds to this criticism by saying, "*To translate is to have the honesty to stick to an allusive imperfection.* "