

Cutting Edge Strategies for Training Translators in a Global Age

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Abstract:

Problems of translation in this multilingual globalised environment have attracted increasing attention in recent years. It is argued that translating languages, whether in the multiculturalism of society or in the plurilingualism of the individual, do not exist in a vacuum. Thus, within any translation pedagogy, training translators is placed at the top priority. Based on the assumption that translators seem to be unaware of the potential influence translations can have in shaping cultures, forming national identities, and chronicling ideological shifts, the present paper maps how may training translators have an impact on translation teaching, i.e., it tries to bridge the gap in translation and cross out the possible barriers that may cause mistranslation of information in the target culture, and thus, in the target language.

Key-words:

Translation Studies, Training translators, cutting edge strategies.

Introduction:

Translation seems to be considered as a variable concept in space and time, thus, searching for the very object of inquiry of translation studies may appear as a risky venture. In this sense, scholars have repeatedly pointed out the fundamental weaknesses of any translation theory which fails to take into account the cultural encounters, which may result the possibilities of translating the object of study unlimitedly. Based on the assumption that translators seem to be unaware of the potential influence translations can have in shaping cultures, forming national identities, and chronicling ideological shifts, the present paper maps an intercultural outlook to translation teaching, i.e., it tries to bridge the cultural gap in translation and cross out the possible barriers that may cause mistranslation of information in the target culture, and thus, in the target language.

Translation generally refers to the process of producing a written text that refers to something said or written in another language. The original language text of a translation is called the source text; the text into which it is translated is the target text. Interpretation refers to the process of verbally expressing what is said or written in another language. Interpretation can either be simultaneous, with the interpreter speaking at the same time as the original speaker, or consecutive, with the interpreter

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speaking only during the breaks provided by the original speaker.

Training Translator:

What do translators have to know? Which activities are truly translational activities, and which ones are outside the realm of a translator's work? Where can we draw a line?

The present paper attempts at answering the above questions. It is important to posit that translators should have knowledge of the foreign language and the culture. They can successfully realise their role as interlingual and intercultural mediators only if they take into account both the cultural facets of the target language. In a changing world, the boundaries of knowledge needed by the profession are also changing, thus, translators need to change their vision about the translation process. In this line of thought, Nord (0000:210-211) puts the following points to achieve a satisfactory translation:

- In today's translation practice, translations are needed for a variety of communicative functions which are not always the same as the intended function of the corresponding source text (= professional knowledge).

- The selection of linguistic and non-linguistic signs which make up a text is guided by situational and cultural factors and that this principle applies to both source and target-cultural text production (= metacommunicative competence).

- The ability to spot the “rich points” (Agar 1991: 168) where the behaviour of the representatives of a particular pair of cultures or diacultures in a given situation is so divergent that it may lead to communication conflicts or even breakdowns, and finds ways and means to solve cultural conflicts without taking sides (= intercultural competence).

- Due to culture-specific conventions, apparently similar or analogous structures of two languages are not always used with the same frequency or in the same situation (= distribution) by the respective culture communities and that the use of the wrong set of signs may severely interfere with the text’s functionality.

- The ability to produce a target text serving the desired function, even though the source text may be badly written or poorly reproduced (= writing abilities) and knows how to use both traditional and modern (i.e. electronic) translation aids and knowledge sources (= media competence).

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- Having a good general education and a better specific knowledge of the topic dealt with in the source text – or knows how to compensate efficiently for any lack of knowledge (= research competence).
- Works fast, cost-efficiently, and to perfection, even under high pressure (= stress resistance) and knows what her/his translations are worth (= self-assertion, from the practitioners' point of view and self-assurance or self-confidence, as the trainers see it. This might be put as follows:



Translator Competence:

In order to attain the described training requirements aforementioned, trainers need both practical and theoretical knowledge, i.e., the skills

and abilities that are required in the profession (*practical knowledge*), besides how to describe them using the concepts and terms of some kind of theory (*theoretical knowledge*).

They also need to be trained resources of identifying and recognising patterns of behaviour, The translator, then, serves as the *expert communicator*, because this is classified “*at the crucial centre of a long chain of communication from original initiator to ultimate receiver of a message: a human link across a cultural frontier*’ (Chesterman, 1993: 74).

As we know from language theories, languages are entire systems of meaning and consciousness that are not easily rendered into another language in a word-for-word equivalence. The ways in which different languages convey views of the world are not equivalent, as we noted previously. Thus, in order to achieve a satisfactory translation, translators need to be well trained both theoretically and practically.

The first theoretical phase includes the following activities:

(1) Development of a (contrastive) language and culture competence in two foreign languages and in the native language, including the ability to

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produce texts for a variety of situations and functions, see section three: “Teaching intercultural competence”,

(2) Introduction to translation-relevant aspects of linguistics and pragmatics in order to provide the concepts and terms needed for text and discourse analysis and,

(3) The basic concepts of intercultural communication and translation theory.

Conclusion:

As mentioned before, translator trainers frequently come from a variety of backgrounds. They may have been language teachers or self-made translators. This is not a bad thing in itself, and it may even be an inspirational contribution to the methodological consideration among translator training. But for translator training, it is not sufficient just to produce high-quality translations, nor is it enough to know everything about language, pragmatics and linguistics – or even Translation Theory. The interaction of theory and practice may be more important in this arena than anywhere else. Even though translating as an activity has been approximately for more than two thousand years, Translation Studies is still striving for its recognition as a discipline on its own right.

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