

## **Project 1**

### **Contextual Motivation, Formal Equivalence, Dynamic Equivalence**

To appreciate the difference between literal translation and 'formal' translation (remember, the latter is always 'contextually motivated'), you might want to look at the 'Quotable Quotes' kind of texts which magazines like *Newsweek* or *Readers' Digest* regularly publish (and translate in their bilingual editions). Acquire a sample of such texts and assess the translations to ascertain whether the ST 'point of the quote' is preserved, and if so, how. In cases where formal equivalence does not seem to work, reflect on 'why not': are the constraints linguistic (semantic/syntactic), textual (to do with beyond-the-sentence phenomena such as language variety, level of formality, text structure), cultural?

## **Project 2**

### **Restructuring the Target Message for a Purpose**

'Restructuring' involves a set of procedures by which ST input accrued at a certain point in the process of transfer is transformed into a "stylistic form appropriate to the receptor language and to the intended receptors" (Nida and Taber 1969: 206). An interesting area to research in this domain is how 'purpose of translation' can become an important factor in 'restructuring' strategy. To examine this new dimension, you might want to work with sacred, religious texts and look into the kind of 'restructuring' resorted to in translating the Koran for scholars (ST: Arabic. TT: English. Probably literal/formal). Compare this kind of target text with another sample drawn from the Koran translated for the layman or for children (ST: Arabic. TT: English. Probably highly functional/ dynamic).

## **Project 3**

## ***SKOPOS* or Translation Purpose**

The issue of translation purpose or *Skopos* touched on in Project 2 may be further investigated by examining a sample of sensitive texts: this time of the literary type. The literary sample can include two sets of translations of classics such as *Jane Eyre*, one done for the unabridged version, the other for the abridged version.

The issue to investigate is the kind adjustments to formal equivalence introduced to preserve ST style within the 'restructuring' phase of the translation process.

Alternatively, using a play by Shakespeare as a sample, produce your own translation (or work with an existing translation). On the basis of this master version, produce a parallel text intended for secondary school students or for children. Compare the authoritative master version with the one produced for younger readers and reflect on the changes, assessing the kind of equivalence relations opted for.

## **Project 4** **Equivalence is Relative**

Choose samples of English texts drawn from:

1. Instructions on a medicine bottle
2. Advertisements
3. Charters or Constitutions
4. Editorials

Use existing translations (or produce your own) into your mother tongue or a foreign language with which you are familiar. Use the following scale of equivalence relations (proposed by Koller), iteratively moving to the next level up only if a given equivalence relation does not deliver the desired effect:

*Formal Equivalence* (where an SL form would be strictly replaced by an identical TL form) >

*Referential or Denotative Equivalence* (where, an SL form would be replaced by a TL form that basically refers to the same ‘thing’).

*Connotative Equivalence* (where ‘similarity of association’ is aimed for)

*Text-normative Equivalence* (where higher-level textual-contextual criteria are invoked)

*Pragmatic or Dynamic Equivalence* (where similarity of effect is sought to meet reader expectations)

What kind of equivalence relations has proved most productive with what kind of text?

## **Project 5**

### **Coherence, Inferencing, and Relevance**

To research this area of the translation process, it may be useful to operate within a framework of intercultural communication, and deal with cross-cultural difficulties in seeing the relevance of what we read or write, hear or see. An ideal sample to analyze would be tourist brochure material intended for a particular user, within a particular language and culture. The coherence of such source texts can be maintained in the target language only when appropriate inferences are drawn regarding, for example, why mention this, why here. This is what constitutes the relevance of particular features for a particular reader. Readers from other cultures may not be able to appreciate such implications. The translator of tourist brochures must therefore mediate to facilitate the process of relevance retrieval.

## **Project 6**

### **Descriptive vs Interpretive Translation**

Use existing translations (or produce your own) into your mother tongue or into a language with which you are familiar of tourist brochure or similar publicity material. The translation brief to which you would be working requires you to produce a functional translation intended to guide tourists round a museum, for example. That is, the target text will be intended to achieve relevance in its own right and not as a 'translation', an example of so-called 'descriptive translation'.

Now adjust your strategy and produce another version, this time working to a different brief: to produce a translation that resembles the original in all relevant aspects, perhaps for the benefit of a tourist brochure production company interested in having an insight into rival marketing strategies, and wanting to know what a text says, warts and all, a case of so-called interpretive translation.

Look into the nature and scope of changes you have made in operating descriptively and compare with the interpretive strategy.

## **Project 7**

### **Minimax**

In choosing between a number of solutions to a given problem, the translator ultimately settles for that solution which promises maximal effect for minimal effort. The kind of questions the translator asks is: would preserving a certain feature of an ST (e.g. rhyme) be worth the target reader's effort?

Translating humour is an interesting area to research for Minimax problems: would the 'relevance' of the joke be accessible to the target reader, or is it likely to strain the effort-reward balance, since what we see as laughable can vary dramatically across languages. An English sample such as *Yes Minister* (the book version) may give you ideas of the kind of texts likely to prove both demanding and illuminating to work with. Using existing translations (or produce your own) into your mother tongue or a language you are

familiar with, and comment on some of the problems encountered in the sphere of inferencing/coherence, relevance and Minimax.

## **Project 8**

### **Functionality**

To be meaningful and to maintain minimax balance, any instance of target text non-ordinariness (i.e. salience) must always be communicatively motivated. News reports is a rich area to examine for the functional/afunctional distinction regarding source text non-ordinariness.

If your first language is not English, collect a sample of news reports from the front pages of your local paper and produce a fairly literal translation into English. Get these translations revised by a native speaker of English. Do the selection, a fairly literal translation and revision if you are a native English speaker. Examine the changes introduced, paying special attention to how English tends to be particularly stringent about functionality and motivatedness. For example, Arabic, French or Spanish news reports tend to vary 'verbs of saying' rather excessively, often 'saying' what is not borne out by the essence of 'what is said' ('declare' when no 'declaration' exists, 'announce' when no 'announcement' exists, and so on).

## **Project 9**

### **Direct vs. Indirect Translation**

Choose a translation of an English poem into a language you know well (or produce your own). Would you say that the translation is predominantly Direct (preserving both what is said and how this is said) or Indirect (glossing away the 'how')? If Indirect, choose a passage and turn into Direct. What differences in effect emerge from this switch? If the translation is already Direct, reflect on the situation and examine the notion of 'resembling the original closely enough in relevant respects'.

## **Cohesion, Markedness, Dynamism**

To research markedness and whether this is 'functional' and must therefore be preserved in translation, it may be useful to focus on a text sample of the 'absurdist' drama type in English or any other language with which you are familiar. Such texts are often domesticated in translation, mostly for reasons to do with the non-availability of the genre or, particularly in the case of English, the pressure to produce a fluent translation. Examine the translator's strategy. If domesticating, experiment with a foreignizing strategy. If foreignized, experiment with domestication and assess difference of effect.

### **Project 10**

#### **Text-based Information**

There has been confusion surrounding the issue of *text-based information*, which Unit 9A/B/C sought to clarify. The term is a misnomer, and the focus has been erroneously placed on 'form or content *concretely present* in the text', which is not necessarily always the case. Rather, it is what is 'said' vs what is 'intended' and how the two perspectives combine that can properly signal what 'text-based' information is about. Thus, text-based information is yielded not by "purely formal features, but rather as the result of an intense ... evaluation of the communicative relevance of formal features" (Beaugrande 1978: 95).

A useful way of investigating this issue is to examine texts in languages where what is said is invariably at variance with what is intended, not in any motivated manner but merely as a 'fashion of speaking' that has to be approached critically by the translator. An ideal sample of texts from such languages as Arabic (which exhibits this phenomenon most clearly) is editorial writing. Examine texts of this kind from your own language or (if your mother tongue is English) from a foreign language with which you are familiar. Use existing translations (or produce your own) and reflect on the problems likely to be caused by a restrictive approach to text-based information.

## **Project 11**

### **Reader-supplied Information**

Ideology in translation is a rich area to research from this perspective. Look at the output of an English-medium foreign satellite station serving the values of a certain ideology (e.g. *Islam on Line*) and compare with a media output serving a different ideology (e.g. *CNN*). Reflect on the translation problems likely to be encountered.

## **Project 12**

### **Text Type Hybridization**

Text-type hybridization is an ideological tool. Examine a similar output to the one used in Project 11, and ascertain how text types, discourses or genres may be shifted to serve different ideological values.

What could the aim be in using this kind of marked texture or text structure? Is there any justification for preserving the hybridization we see in the translation of a text like the Charter of the Palestinian militant group Hamas, for example.

## **Project 13**

### **Text Function: Purpose vs Use**

Consider texts such as the Charter of the Palestinian resistance group Hamas, or the Syrian Constitution. These are certainly 'regulative' in function, like their western counterparts. However, Arabic texts of this kind tend to serve ideological purposes rather too conspicuously, and are thus far more argumentative and editorializing than their counterparts in other languages.

Examine a sample of such texts in your mother tongue or, if this is English, from a foreign language with which you are familiar. These are bound to appear in English translations, normally produced locally and invariably done within a literal strategy.

Compare with examples of their counterparts in English. The differences will most likely be fairly drastic. Target language preferences must be borne in mind in translating these texts since translation function can and often does override source text function: target text readers would not be concerned with the ST peculiarities, and, to function effectively, the English translation should not therefore be too defamiliarizing.

## **Project 14**

### **Covert and Overt Translation**

Examine the output of an organization like the BBC monitoring Service. Invariably, such organizations are required to operate within an ‘overt’ (warts and all) translation strategy. Although often ‘pragmatic’ and should ideally be rendered in English functionally and covertly, texts are nevertheless generally seen as politically sensitive and should therefore be ‘overtly’ for the benefit of the English-speaking policy maker, etc. Or so the argument of some of these organizations goes. Is this a useful or a misleading way of informing the policy makers these organizations are meant to serve? Through your research, you should be able to shed light on this and related issues.

## **Project 15**

### **Intertextuality**

Two kinds of intertextuality may be distinguished: Horizontal, as in straight ‘quoting’, and Vertical or ‘allusion’.

An interesting phenomenon to examine in political rhetoric and in advertising is the use of intertextuality as a means of ‘persuasion’. Examine a sample of political speeches and their translations, alongside a sample of adverts (and their translations or bilingual versions). Focus on the issue of intertextuality and assess how effectively vertical or horizontal intertexts are preserved.

## **Project 16**

### **Genre Shifts**

An interesting area to research is genre shifts in translation. You may want to examine the English output of any foreign website, and determine how certain standard English legal or journalistic genres are often gratuitously violated. Revise to restore adequacy.

## **Project 17**

### **Text Shifts**

Text-type formats may be violated in translation, in two basic areas: (a) structure (where ST compositional plan may be potentially alien to the target reader and has to be re-organized while still fulfilling the coherence requirement in the target language, and (b) texture (where ST repetition etc has to be made leaner while still preserving its cohesive function). Staying with foreign website materials, examine how certain standard English text formats (e.g. counter-argumentation) are gratuitously violated. Revise to restore appropriateness.

## **Project 18**

### **Discourse Shifts**

Pursuing a given rhetorical goal in a text thus requires that the process be conducted within the confines of a particular genre structure. But to be a viable unit of communication, a text must also strike an ideological note of some kind. That is, in their attempt to pursue a given rhetorical purpose, within the do's and don'ts of a particular genre, producers and receivers of texts necessarily engage in the negotiation of 'attitudinal' meanings and the espousal or rejection of a particular ideology (e.g. Euro-scepticism, Thatcherism, feminism).

Examining foreign website output, focus on how 'discourse' is particularly handled in English: does the treatment strike you as natural or aimless and distorted. Identify where the problems lie, and revise to restore effective discorsal thrust.