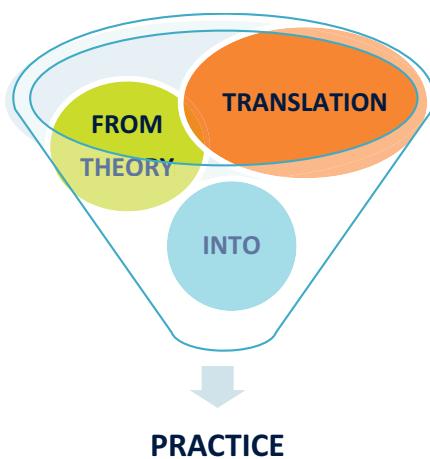


ILEANA CHIRU JITARU

**TRANSLATION
:
FROM THEORY INTO PRACTICE**

ILEANA CHIRU JITARU



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PREFACE

The present book is dedicated to undergraduate and graduate students attending a study program in translation. Stemming from a personal conviction, a disclaimer is due to a *zero degree* of translation: translation theory is useless unless accompanied, complemented, explained, enriched, cautioned by applied work, which explains the motto that has guided my translation classes for long: “Let’s theorise less and practise more”. This credo has meant for several years an unavowed tendency to deny any rationale of translation theory that meant ‘theory for theory’s sake’. Admitting that this introductory course in Translation Studies is a heterogeneous canvas of concepts, theories and tools, it is a simultaneous attempt to demonstrate that translation theory translated into practice may become festive and rewarding in the process. Whether to the use of students / prospective translators / young trainees, this book is a promise that translation may be amusing, delightful, entertaining, gratifying even in the arid land of theory. If the act of reading reveals a *quod erat demonstrandum* (QED) in the reader along the way, then the pains of writing will have been entirely rewarded.

Certainly, the more QEDs the better.

Ileana Jitaru

INTRODUCTION

Translation is language.

Language is a world.

Translation is a world.

A pluridisciplinary area of research and practice, translation is not a mere transfer from one language into another, but one that invites an analysis of the social, cultural, psychological, communication, historical or linguistic context. This complex array of intersections places translation in a patchwork of overlapping voices whose disciplines include Linguistics, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics, Pragmatics, Semiotics, Discourse Analysis, Sociolinguistics, Literary Theory, Anthropology, Sociology, Cultural Studies, Philosophy, Cognitive Psychology, Film Studies. This multitude of intersections opens a polysystem of translation typology, ranging from literary, technical, scientific translation to special language translation, from interpretation, screen translation to localization.

Irrespective of their specific labels, these ventures have a common denominator: language, a concept most difficult to define given its intricate nature. The study of language has a long history going thousands and thousands of years back. Trying to decipher the mechanisms behind linguistic output, the German scholar Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz noted in the 17th century "Languages are the best mirror of the human mind" (qtd. in Dascal 1987: ix). At the same time, Anna Wierzbicka argues that "languages are the best mirror of human cultures" (22) out of a belief that it is the vocabulary of languages that allows the discovery and identification of the cultural specificities of different nations. Inquiring into the study of language, the pioneer of modern linguistics and biolinguistics Noam Chomsky published a collection of studies on the inseparable connection between language-mind-knowledge. In *Language and Mind* (1968),

Language and the Study of Mind (1986) and *Knowledge of Language: Its Nature, Origin, and Use* (1986) Chomsky expanded on the nature and acquisition of language as a biological system genetically endowed which he called '*Universal Grammar*' (UG). This grammar is specific to people, it is what distinguishes us from beings of the animal world. Chomsky's most obvious example of Universal Grammar is the argument that children acquire their native languages in a short time; he also states there is a wide gap between the small amount of linguistic stimuli children are exposed to and the richness of linguistic knowledge they attain, a concept that he calls the "poverty of stimulus" argument (1986:148). The tool that bridges this gap is the knowledge of *Universal Grammar*.

In *Knowledge of Language: Its Nature, Origin, and Use*, Chomsky's initial pose included three queries: 1) what constitutes knowledge of language; 2) how knowledge of language is acquired; 3) how knowledge of language is put to use (1986: 3). The answers to question 1 lie in the generative grammar, a theory about the state of the mind of a person who masters a language. Accountable for query 2 is a specific feature of the UG together with the mode in which its principles cooperate with experience to produce a particular language. In addressing question 3, Chomsky invoked a theory of the manner in which the language knowledge we gain leads to thinking output and to understanding of language samples, and, indirectly, to communication and other special uses of language. Translations would fit into this third category.

As a "theory of the 'initial state' of the language faculty prior to any linguistic experience" (*ibid.*), the connection of language and knowledge becomes manifest in Chomsky's view by a practical skill to speak and understand, which confirms the answers to questions 2 and 3 above:

Knowledge of language is normally attained through brief exposure, and the character of the acquired knowledge may be largely predetermined. One would expect that human language should directly reflect the characteristics

of human intellectual capacities, that language should be a direct “mirror of mind” in ways in which other systems of knowledge and belief cannot. (Chomsky 2006: xv)

The scientific approaches to language have relied on the construction of grammar, organising the possible actions, statements, or linguistic forms, the juxtaposition of sentences and meanings. Chomsky calls these technical concepts instances of “externalised language” (1986:20) or E-language, which is independent of the faculties of the mind. In this respect, grammar includes a number of descriptors of E-language, a number of real or possible linguistic utterances, sometimes accompanied by a description of its context of use or of its semantic content. Technically, grammar may be understood as a function that includes the components of E-language or as a property of E-language. Based on Otto Jespersen’s “notion of structure” in a speaker’s mind (1986:21), Chomsky’s second approach to language implied a shift in perspective toward what he called “internalised language” or I-language (*ibid.*). This I-language is an intrinsic component of a person who knows a particular language, it is acquired by a person who is leaning a language, and it is used simultaneously by speakers and listeners in an instance of communication.

The study of language and grammar involves a change of focus from E-language to I-language, from the study of language as an externalised object to language as a system of knowledge that is hosted inside the brain. The movement from E-language to I-language is similar to the shift from the surface-structure level to the deep-structure level that Chomsky had advanced in his 1957 seminal study *Syntactic Structures*, a binary system that was to be replaced in the 1990’s by another binomial level of representation, i.e., Logical Form (LF) and Phonetic Form (PF) (1995: 220).

In other words, the linguistic knowledge or the ‘knowledge of language’ lying in the mind of the speaker represents I-Language whilst the palpable linguistic output

(words, sentences, texts) surfaces as E-Language. At a conceptual level, this is the distinction between the object of study of Chomskyan linguistics (namely I-Language) and that of other disciplines such as discourse analysis, literary studies or **translation**, which focus on E-Language. Each individual speaker in a language group has ingrained an I-Language in their mind, and is able to produce a potentially infinite number of E-Language utterances. These two components exist in a cause-effect relationship, in which I-Language is the cause and E-Language is the consequence. If Chomsky expanded on a “shift of focus from E-language to I-language” (1986:24) inside the study of generative grammar, from “actual or potential behaviour and the products of this behaviour” (*ibid.*) to a system of knowledge that lies at the basis of the use and understanding of language, it would be appropriate to consider translation within this E-language / I-language duality. First, translation as a process may be regarded as a shift of focus from E-language to I-language, i.e., as the study of language as an external output (colocations, structures, word-patterns) to the study of language knowledge as a process occurring inside the mind of the translator (decisions taken in the process of rendering SL meaning into TL form). In a reverse directionality, translation may be approached as a product whose change of focus moves from I-language to E-language, from a process of intentionality in the translator’s brain (I-language) that leads to a set of conventionalised output (E- language). It is thus evident that E-Language and I-Language are reciprocal in their interdependence; concurrently, translation may be E-language - centred or I-language-centred whether conceptualised as a process or as a product.

*

Translation: Theory into Practice adopts a global outlook on translation and includes major areas of research and practice in Translation Studies. Although heterogeneous in book form, each chapter provides a contribution to the understanding of the translation field in both theory and practice. The reader

will acquire the basic concepts, tools, translation types that define this area (Chapter 1 – Introducing Translation Studies). The process of translation may be approached in terms of elements involved decided by the each type of text (Chapter 2 - *Language functions in translation*). Before becoming involved in the process, the translator will find it useful to assess the type of text they have to translate, since this will imply different degrees of involvement on the part of the reader. Thus, a contract, for instance, will require less effort from the reader than a poem. These considerations crystallise in various text types that are determined by a range of dominant characteristics. Peter Newmark (1995) considers the role of the author/sender central in a literary text while the reader/receiver takes central position in the reception of a user's guide. At the same time, the context is central to informative reports just as it is for factual newspaper articles. The translator trainees will learn to assess the implicatures a statement opens and the appropriation of various translation procedures (direct/indirect) in translation according to the intention of the original or taking into consideration the receiver of the target text (Chapter 3 - *Translation techniques*). Also, they will be able to identify translation units and the functions these units have in a source and target text (Chapter 4 - *Translation unit*). The old distinction between 'faithful' and 'free' translation that was examined earlier in the book will be reformulated as an opposition of trends or types of opposite equivalence formulated by Eugene Nida in "Principles of Correspondence" (1964): formal equivalence (SL oriented) and dynamic equivalence (TL-oriented). As far as translation is concerned, John Cunnison Catford makes an important distinction between formal correspondence and textual equivalence, which was later to be developed by Werner Koller in 'Equivalence in translation theory' (1979) (Chapter 5 - *Translation as equivalence*). When focussing specifically on the 'aim' or 'purpose' of translation, the concept 'skopos' was introduced into translation theory as a technical term to

describe the purpose of a translation and of the action of translating. Introduced by Hans J. Vermeer ("Skopos and commission in translational action", 1989), *Skopos theory* is concerned with the purpose of the translation, which determines certain translation methods and strategies to be employed in order to produce a functionally adequate result (Chapter 6 - Functional theories. *Skopos theory. Text types in translation*). While textual equivalence is connected to a particular ST-TT pair, formal equivalence concerns a more inclusive system-based concept between a pair of languages. When the two concepts diverge, a translation shift is bound to occur. According to J.C. Catford, translation shifts are "departures from formal correspondence in the process of going from the SL to the TL" (1965:47), and envisage two types of movement: (1) a shift of level and (2) a shift of category. The question of shifts in translation was also studied by Kirsten Malmkjaer (*Linguistics and the Language of Translation*, 2005), who argued that through pattern analysis, it may be possible to make a distinction between choice-based shifts and actual errors (Chapter 7 - *Mistakes and errors in translation*). While shifts would be documented by semantic patterning, errors are 'possible' by formal patterning. Synonymy and polysemy form another point of investigation in translation studies, since they comprise one-to-many relationships between form and meaning (Chapter 8 - *Synonymy in translation*). Translation as an embodiment of language in texts must take into account the sociocultural messages and the power relations in language. These relations represent discourse defined as modes of writing or speaking, which involve social groups acquiring a particular outlook towards certain areas of sociocultural positions (racist, business, bureaucratic, political discourse). Basil Hatim and Ian Mason suggest that idiolect and dialect perform a semiotic function (*The Translator as Communicator*, 1997) and consider idiolect within the analysis of tenor and register (Chapter 9 - Discourse, context, register, dialect in translation). In many

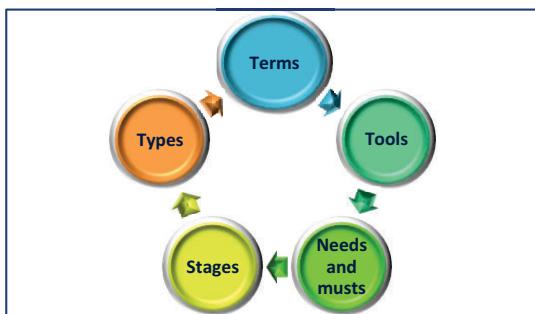
instances, translations involve not only a linguistic transfer, but also a cultural appropriation, which is why the closeness or distance between source text and target text may be assessed in the culture-bound elements the former includes. Thus, Chapter 10 (*Bridging cultures thorough translation*) will provide techniques able to bridge such cultural gaps and signal a felicitous translation. Despite the range and long history of literary translations, there have been relatively few theoretical studies dedicated to them. Antoine Berman warned about a set of distortions the translator of a literary source text might produce. On the other hand, with technical translations, the translator's purpose is to convey the equivalent effect or, in other words, to obtain the same cognitive effect on his reader as the author of the source text. In this respect, the primary aim is "factual textual accuracy" (Newmark 1976: 45) and only second comes a natural flow of writing that will interest his reader (Chapter 11 - *Literary and non-literary translations*). Chapter 12 (*New perspectives in translation: corpus-based approaches and localization*) will cover basic concepts of localization theory (a more recent concern in translation studies) which is capable of producing effects in the actual practice of translation, considering that localization involves serious constraints inside the industry it operates.

*

The relation between practice and theory may be that theories in translation studies have reached a point when the evolution of new ideas is likely to continue at a slower pace than in the past decades. In a simultaneous development and as an effect of an increasing need for translation work, it is conceivable that practice will outgrow theory. The concepts that translation theory has developed along the centuries have led to the realization of the fact that the intricacy of theory may be surmounted when theory is summoned to work in practice.

CHAPTER 1

Introducing translation studies. Translation types and typologies.



1. General concepts in translation studies.

At a basic level, **translation** is the process of rendering meaning from one language into another in an exchange of linguistic information based on the following main terms:

- source language (SL) is the language of the original text which is to be translated;
- target language (TL) is the language into which the original text is to be translated;
- source text (ST) or source language text (SLT) is the text which requires translation;
- target text (TT) or target language text (TLT) is the text which is a translation of the source text.

Depending on the focus of 'cause' or 'result' translation can be regarded as:

1. A process is the action or process of expressing the sense of a word, passage, etc., in a different language by preserving the semantic, stylistic and pragmatic features of the original.

2. A product: 1. translation as a product is the result of this process; a version in a different language; 2. the expression or rendering of something in another medium, form, or mode of expression.

2. Translation tools.

The practitioner and the trainees in the field of translation have a varied array of tools:

- dictionaries [bilingual/monolingual, electronic, online], forums, glossaries, specialized literature, journals and magazines, the Internet, terminological systems, translation memories and machine translation, internet browsers (google.com)
- Computer Assisted Translation [CAT] tools
- IATE (Inter Active Terminology for Europe) is an inter-institutional terminology database, which became fully operational within the European Commission at the beginning of 2005 (<http://iate.europa.eu/>)
- Quest: a meta-search interface which translators can use to query several databases simultaneously (<http://www.quest.com/>)
- SDL TRADOS Translator's Workbench (TWB) is an integrated translation support tool
- Machine Translation
- Voice recognition machines (Dragon Naturally Speaking)
- The World Wide Web

3. The translator's needs and musts.

3.1. The translator's needs:

- appropriate terminology (dictionaries, glossaries, terminological databases, etc.);
- reference documents (papers, electronic archives, aligned texts, etc.);
- a facility enabling them to re-use previously translated texts (copy-pasting from other

applications, electronic archives, translation memories, etc.);

- assistance in pre- and post-processing

3.2. The translator's musts are:

A) **text-related**

- thoroughness, attention to detail;
- attention to the user's needs: the translator must take into account the client's desire regarding the text to be translated [type, way of rendering it];
- research: the translator must carry out a detailed research in order to achieve a reliable translation;
- double checking: the translator has to check the final product for accuracy, lexical compatibility, grammatical correctness, stylistic appropriateness, semantic accuracy; if necessary or if in doubt, they will cooperate with an expert in the industry;

B) **client-related**:

- versatility: the translator has to prove the aptitude to manage for varied subjects outside their strict area of specialization;
- deadlines: the translator must keep in with the promised deadline; if circumstances hinder the translator from meeting the set deadline, they must contact the client and negotiate a new term or deadline;
- confidentiality: the translator MUST not reveal confidential issues learned during the process of translation, especially if the client specifically mentions this when the contract is signed.

4. Translation as a process - basic stages

Regarded as a process, translation is a complex entity that engages several stages:

- 1) reading and understanding the text;
- 2) clarifying the lexical ambiguities, uncertainties, obscurities of the text;
- 3) looking up new words in the dictionary, glossaries;
- 4) compiling a list of New vocabulary (for General English texts and literary texts) or a Glossary for non-literary (sectorial texts);
- 5) translating the text and obtain a first draft;
- 6) revising and reread the first draft. Perform adjustments in terms of: readability, sentence structure, syntax, fluency, appropriateness of terms in the TLT;
- 7) proofreading and polishing into the final version so that the final product is natural and beautiful.

Decoding means extracting a message by comprehension and interpretation from a given form of words. **Encoding** means re-expressing by formulation and re-creation the contents of the original.

5. From a functional perspective, translations may be classified according to the area and jargon of the trade into the following **types**: administrative translations, commercial translations, computer translations, economic translations, financial translations, general translations, legal translations, literary translations, medical translations, technical translations.

Administrative translations

Although ‘administrative’ has a very broad meaning, in terms of translation it refers to common texts used within businesses and organizations that are used in day to day management. Administrative translations can also be stretched to cover texts with similar functions in government.

Commercial/business translations

Commercial translation or business translation covers any sort of document used in the business world such as

correspondence, company accounts, tender documents, reports, etc. Commercial translations require specialist translators with knowledge of terminology used in the business world.

Computer translations

Computer translations must not be confused with CAT, computer assisted translations, which refer to translations carried out by software. Computer translation is the translation of anything to do with computers such as software, manuals, help files, etc.

Economic translations

Similar to commercial or business translation, economic translation is simply a more specific term used for the translation of documents relating to the field of economics. Such texts are usually a lot more academic in nature.

Financial translations

Financial translation is the translation of texts of a financial nature. Anything from banking to asset management to stocks and bonds could be covered.

General translations

A general translation is the simplest of translations. A general text means that the language used is characterised by a high degree of specialization and generally includes non-professional terms. There is no specific or technical terminology used. Most translations of newspaper articles fall under this category.

Legal translations

At a simplest level, a legal translation means the translation of legal documents such as statutes, contracts and treaties. A legal translation will always need specialist attention from professionals since it is culture-bound and requires a translator with an excellent understanding of both the source and target *cultures*. When translating a text within the field of law, the translator should keep the following in mind: the legal system of the source text is structured in a way that suits that

culture and this is reflected in the legal jargon. Similarly, the target text is to be read by someone who is familiar with another legal system and its language.

Literary translations

A literary translation is the translation of literature such as novels, poems, plays and poems. The translation of literary works is considered as one of the highest forms of translation as it involves more skills than simply translating text. A literary translator must be capable of also translating feelings, cultural nuances, humour and other subtle stylistic elements of the original work.

Medical translations

A medical translation will cover anything in the medical field from the packaging of medicine to manuals for medical equipment to medical books. Similar to legal translations, medical translation is a specialization where a mistranslation can have serious consequences.

Technical translations

A technical translation has a broad meaning. It usually refers to certain fields such as IT or manufacturing and deals with texts such as manuals and instructions. Technical translations are usually more expensive than general translations as they contain a high amount of terminology that only a specialist translator may render it.

From a linguistic perspective, different scholars have divided **translations into various types**, according to different criteria, at different levels of generality or specificity.

Types of translations

| Source-language oriented: | Target-language oriented: |
|--|---|
| 3.2.1. Word-for-word translation | 3.2.5. Adaptation |
| 3.2.2. Literal translation | 3.2.6. Free translation |
| 3.2.3. Faithful translation | 3.2.7. Idiomatic translation |
| 3.2.4. Semantic translation → focus on the SL | 3.2.8. Communicative translation → focus on the TL |