

DICTIONARY *of* TRANSLATION STUDIES



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“the ratio between the number of units of information and the number of formal units (i.e. words)” (Nida & Taber 1969/1982:198). The more information that a message contains, the less predictable it is likely to be and thus the harder for the receptor to understand; therefore it is always necessary to ensure that a message contains an amount of REDUNDANCY appropriate to the audience in question, in order to prevent the receptor’s channel from becoming overloaded (1964:131). In the context of interlingual communication, this means that a translation which is based on the principle of DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE will require proper ADJUSTMENT and the addition of a certain amount of redundancy to allow for differences between the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the two audiences; conversely, a LITERAL translation will generally be harder for TL receptors to process than ST was for its original audience, since it will be likely to contain a degree of “linguistic awkwardness” (1964:131). Further reading: Nida 1964.

Communicative Translation 1 (or Communicative Approach)

A term used to refer to any approach which views translation as a “communicative process which takes place within a social context” (Hatim & Mason 1990:3, emphasis removed). Obviously, all approaches will to some extent consider translation as communication; however, a so-called communicative translation will typically be generally oriented towards the needs of the TL reader or recipient. Thus for example a translator who is translating communicatively will treat ST as a message rather than a mere string of linguistic units, and will be concerned to preserve ST’s original function and to reproduce its effect on the new audience. In other words, a communicative translation is one which contrasts with, for example, INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION, LITERAL TRANSLATION 1 OR WORD-FOR-WORD TRANSLATION in that it treats the ST wording as merely one of a number of factors which need to be borne in mind by the translator. An example of a translation model based on this type of approach is provided by Roberts, who argues that translation which adheres too closely to the original wording “does not often result in effective communication in the other language”, but rather can frequently lead to “distortion of the message” (1985:158). Roberts uses Spilka’s definition of a translator as a mediator between “two parties who would otherwise be unable to communicate” (Spilka 1978, quoted in Roberts 1985:142); it is the translator’s function to transmit the source message (ibid), which Roberts understands as the ST

Holmes 1988e; Koller 1979/1992; van Leuven-Zwart 1991; Toury 1985, 1991, 1995.

Diagrammatic Translation (French *Traduction Diagrammatique*)

According to Gouadec (1990), one of seven types of translation (or translation-like processes) which serve to meet the various translation needs which occur in a professional environment. In diagrammatic translation the content of ST is transferred to TL by means of a diagram rather than by text. Sager comments that this way of providing information “exceeds what is [by many] considered translation” (1994:184). See also ABSOLUTE TRANSLATION, ABSTRACT TRANSLATION, KEYWORD TRANSLATION, RECONSTRUCTIONS (TRANSLATION WITH), SELECTIVE TRANSLATION and SIGHT TRANSLATION. Further reading: Gouadec 1990; Sager 1994.

Dialogue Interpreting See COMMUNITY INTERPRETING.

Didactic Fidelity According to Beekman & Callow (1974), one of two complementary principles of fidelity which are used in the translation of Biblical texts (see also HISTORICAL FIDELITY). Didactic fidelity is defined as the strategy of adapting the text where necessary to fit in with the different culture of the target audience; it is used to translate instructive rather than narrative passages. Translation according to this principle thus utilizes CULTURAL SUBSTITUTION where appropriate. However, the situation is complicated by the fact that some Biblical teaching is based on cultural items which also anchor the passage in which they occur in a specific historical period, with the result that tension between didactic and historical fidelity can arise (1974:36). In situations such as this Beekman and Callow suggest that a possible solution is to use a more general term to translate the problem item (1974:37). See also FAITHFULNESS. Further reading: Beekman & Callow 1974.

Differentiation, Degree of (German *Differenzierungsgrad*) See DEGREE OF DIFFERENTIATION.

Direct Translation 1 A term used by a number of writers (e.g. Toury 1980, 1995) to refer to the type of translation procedure in which a TT is produced directly from the original ST, rather than via another, intermediate translation in another language. Direct translation tends

FORMAL EQUIVALENCE. See also CORRESPONDENCE and EQUIVALENCE. Further reading: Catford 1965.

Formal Equivalence (or Formal Correspondence) Defined by Nida as one of “two different types of equivalence” (see also DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE), which “focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content” (1964:159). Formal equivalence is thus the “quality of a translation in which the features of the form of the source text have been mechanically reproduced in the receptor language” (Nida & Taber 1969/1982:201). Nida proposed his categorisation in the context of Bible translation, and in many respects it offers a more useful distinction than the more traditional notions of FREE and LITERAL translation (Hatim & Mason 1990:7). The aim of a translator who is striving for formal equivalence is to allow ST to speak “in its own terms” rather than attempting to adjust it to the circumstances of the target culture; in practice this means, for example, using FORMAL rather than FUNCTIONAL EQUIVALENTS wherever possible, not joining or splitting sentences, and preserving formal indicators such as punctuation marks and paragraph breaks (Nida 1964:165). The frequent result of such strategies is of course that, because of differences in structure between SL and TL, a translation of this type “distorts the grammatical and stylistic patterns of the receptor language, and hence distorts the message” (Nida & Taber 1969/1982:201). For this reason it is frequently necessary to include explanatory notes to help the target reader (1964:166). Like its converse, dynamic equivalence, formal equivalence represents a general orientation rather than an absolute technique, so that between the two opposite extremes there are any number of intervening grades, all of which represent acceptable methods of translation (1964:160). However, a general tendency towards formal rather than dynamic equivalence is characterized by, for example, a concern for accuracy (1964:159) and a preference for retaining the original wording wherever possible. In spite of its apparent limitations, however, formal equivalence is sometimes the most appropriate strategy to follow: besides frequently being chosen for translating Biblical and other sacred texts, it is also useful for BACK-TRANSLATION and for when the translator or interpreter may for some reason be unwilling to accept responsibility for changing the wording of TT (see Hatim & Mason 1990:7). It should be noted that when Nida & Taber (1969/1982) discuss this concept they use the term *formal correspondence* to refer to it. See

“almost inescapable” (Benjamin 1989:61). See also *TRANSLATABILITY*. Further reading: Davidson 1984; Harrison 1979; Malmkjær 1993; Quine 1959/1966, 1960.

Indirect Translation 1 (or Intermediate Translation, or Mediated Translation, or Retranslation, or Second-Hand Translation) A term used to denote the procedure whereby a text is not translated directly from an original ST, but via an intermediate translation in another language. According to Toury (1980, 1995), such a procedure is of course *NORM*-governed, and different literary *SYSTEMS* will tolerate it to varying extents. For example, it is frequently encountered in weak *POLYSYSTEMS* which depend on other, stronger systems for literary models and precedents, particularly where the language of the dominant system is widely spoken; in stronger polysystems it can be seen in the practice of established TL poets “translating” an ST (in an SL of which they have no knowledge) with the aid of a TL crib. Another situation in which indirect translation is turned to is where there is no suitable bilingual dictionary in existence. TTs produced in this manner have a greater tendency towards *ACCEPTABILITY*, as the original ST is frequently not even available to be consulted, and the parameters of an ST which is a translation in its own right are less likely to be held to be inviolable. In spite of the fact that indirect translation is relatively widespread in some parts of the world, it is not a procedure which is generally approved of; the *NAIROBI DECLARATION*, for example, states that recourse should be had to it “only where absolutely necessary” (Osers 1983:182). See also *DIRECT TRANSLATION 1*, *PIVOT LANGUAGE*, *PRELIMINARY NORMS* and *RELAY INTERPRETING*. Further reading: Toury 1980, 1995.

2 According to Gutt (1991), one of two possible types of translation (see also *DIRECT TRANSLATION 3*). Gutt introduces the notion in the framework of Sperber and Wilson’s (1986) relevance theory, and uses it to investigate the theoretical implications of the concepts of *DYNAMIC* and *FUNCTIONAL EQUIVALENCE* which originate within the Bible-translating tradition. Indirect translation is defined as the strategy used by the translator when the dilemma between “the need to give the receptor language audience access to the authentic meaning of the original, unaffected by the translator’s own interpretation effort” (1991:177) and “the urge to communicate as clearly as possible” (1991:177) is resolved in favour of the latter. An indirect translation will typically expand upon and elucidate ST so that

such as contrastive linguistics (1985:17, emphasis original). According to Toury this situation is remedied by acknowledging that Translation Studies consists not only of applied but also of DESCRIPTIVE and THEORETICAL branches; within such a framework it is possible to develop methodologies for viewing translations as target *facts* which can be studied on an empirical basis, while the applied extensions will – rightly – remain prescriptive in nature (Toury 1995; see also Holmes 1988e). See also SOURCE TEXT-ORIENTED TRANSLATION STUDIES. Further reading: Toury 1980, 1985, 1995.

Primäre Übersetzung See PRIMARY TRANSLATION.

Primary Translation (German *Primäre Übersetzung*) According to Diller & Kornelius (1978), one of two ways of translating (see also SECONDARY TRANSLATION). A TT is considered to be a primary translation if the aim is “to produce a communication between an SL sender and a TL receiver” (1978:3). In other words, the translator of a primary translation will attempt to create a text in which the target recipients seem to be addressed directly rather than being presented with a message which was originally intended for someone else. Thus primary translation is said to occur, for example, when two people converse via an interpreter, or when a bilingual secretary translates a business letter, since in both these cases the TT recipient is the intended recipient of the original communication. See also COVERT TRANSLATION. Further reading: Diller & Kornelius 1978.

Problem-restricted Theories of Translation A term used by Holmes (1988e) to refer to one of six PARTIAL THEORIES OF TRANSLATION. Problem-restricted theories of translation deal with specific translation-related problems, such as for example that concerning the nature of translation EQUIVALENCE, or the translation of metaphors or proper names. See also AREA-RESTRICTED, MEDIUM-RESTRICTED, RANK-RESTRICTED, TEXT-TYPE RESTRICTED and TIME-RESTRICTED THEORIES OF TRANSLATION. Further reading: Holmes 1988e.

Process-oriented Translation Studies (or **Process-oriented Descriptive Translation Studies**) According to Holmes (1988e), one of three varieties of DESCRIPTIVE TRANSLATION STUDIES. Process-oriented Translation Studies is concerned with an examination of the mental processes involved in the act of translating. Clearly, such processes

tion strategies from those for which OVERT TRANSLATION would be more appropriate, with the result that different types of equivalence will be established in each of these two types of translation. Similarly, a text which would be considered highly untranslatable using, for example, a strategy based on FORMAL EQUIVALENCE might be held to be more translatable if the opposite approach, that of DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE, were to be employed. Because of such considerations Wilss concludes that the translatability of a text can “be measured in terms of the degree to which it can be recontextualized in the TL, taking into account all linguistic and extralinguistic factors” (1982:49). See also INDETERMINACY and TERTIUM COMPARATIONIS. Further reading: Catford 1965; Koller 1979/1992; Toury 1980; Wilss 1977, 1982.

Translation An incredibly broad notion which can be understood in many different ways. For example, one may talk of translation as a process or a product, and identify such sub-types as literary translation, technical translation, SUBTITLING and MACHINE TRANSLATION; moreover, while more typically it just refers to the transfer of written texts, the term sometimes also includes INTERPRETING. A number of scholars have also suggested further distinctions between different types of translation (see for example COVERT VS. OVERT TRANSLATION, OR DOMESTICATING VS. FOREIGNIZING TRANSLATION). Furthermore, many writers also extend its reference to take in related activities which most would not recognize as translation as such (see for example DIAGRAMMATIC TRANSLATION, INTER-SEMIOTIC TRANSLATION, PARAPHRASE and PSEUDOTRANSLATION 1). Translation is frequently characterized metaphorically, and has – amongst many other things – been compared to playing a GAME or making a MAP. Each of these analogies, however, is only intended to capture one particular facet of translation. Not surprisingly, many formal definitions have also been offered, each of which reflects a particular underlying theoretical model. The linguistic aspects of the translation process have been encapsulated in a large number of definitions, mostly dating from the 1960s or earlier. Thus Catford, for example, defines translation as “the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)” (1965:20). However, as Sager points out, most older definitions of this type tend to centre around the importance of maintaining some kind of EQUIVALENCE between ST and TT (1994:121). Thus for Sager Jakobson’s definition is in this

emporté par le vent (1958:105, 1958/1995:103). Transposition is classified as one of four types of OBLIQUE translation, in that it does not involve a direct transfer between parallel SL and TL categories or concepts (1958:46, 1958/1995:31). See also ADAPTATION 2, BORROWING, CALQUE, EQUIVALENCE 2, LITERAL TRANSLATION and MODULATION 1. Further reading: Vinay & Darbelnet 1958, 1958/1995.

Übersetzen (Written Translation) (German) The usual German word for written TRANSLATION, redefined by Kade (1968) to include any act of interlingual transfer in which ST is fixed, or can be repeated at will, and which may consequently be checked or corrected by the translator on a subsequent occasion. This means, for example, that the translation of a recording of a speech belongs to the activity of *Übersetzen*. See also CORRECTABILITY, *DOLMETSCHEN* and VERIFIABILITY. Further reading: Kade 1968; Reiss & Vermeer 1984.

Unbounded Translation A term used by Catford to denote a type of TOTAL TRANSLATION in which “equivalences shift freely up and down the rank scale” (1965:25; the “rank scale” is a kind of hierarchy of linguistic units which is used in Halliday’s (1961) grammatical system.) In other words, what unbounded translation describes is a “normal” translation in which the translator is free to translate an SL grammatical unit of a certain size by a TL equivalent of a different size (for example, a word by a clause or a morpheme by a word). The opposite of unbounded translation is RANK-BOUND TRANSLATION, a somewhat artificial procedure which nevertheless has some limited practical application; however, the inevitable linguistic discrepancies which occur even between two “closely related” languages make unbounded translation in most contexts a necessity. See also FREE TRANSLATION. Further reading: Catford 1965.

Undertranslation A term used by Newmark (1981/1988) to refer to one of two phenomena frequently found in translated texts (see also OVERTRANSLATION 2). According to Newmark, the inevitable loss of ST meaning entailed by every act of translation can, depending on the precise circumstances, lead to an increase in either detail or generalization in TT; if it leads to the latter, it is termed *undertranslation*. An example of undertranslation would be if, translating for a general audience, a translator decided to render the Russian *bely grib* (“white mushroom”) in general terms as *wild mushroom*, rather than using the