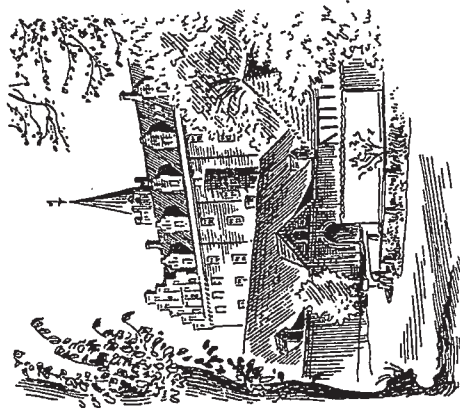


13. The word culture here encompasses a broad stratum of elements such as social and government structures, human relationships, literary genres, or even the word order in certain poems.



Tranekær Slot

Perspectives: Studies in
Translatology 1:1

CREATIVITY IN NON-LITERARY TRANSLATION

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Abstract

Non-literary texts submitted for translation are often so inaccurate and muddled in their formulation that they call for exegesis and in-depth rewriting. This sometimes demands a high degree of creative imagination in the translators.

The article considers three instances in different areas: an advertisement for a paying guest agency, a popularizing book in Neuro-Linguistic Programming, and the abstract of a film script. In each case meaning had to be retrieved behind the words as used in the texts and rephrased so as to be immediately understandable. The context has to be taken into account: who wants what? and will they pay for it?

I conclude with some general considerations on the skills required.

Introduction

The present article is based on my practice as a professional translator and as a teacher of translation at the "Maîtrise en Traduction" at the University of Liège. Our students are systematically exposed to real-life situations, through which we hope to make them aware of what is actually demanded in the job.

As Jean Datta (1991) has shown, the strategy of the translator depends on the kind of text to be translated, on the expectations of the client, and on the purpose of the translation. In spite of their different fields of application, the three instances introduced below all belong to the category of texts meant to convince an extensive audience of the excellence of whatever they present. In such cases, as we will see, the duty of the translator often goes beyond mere translation.

My article does not aim at any kind of theoretical exhaustiveness. The few works mentioned in the bibliographical references have much better claim to a clear and thorough treatment of translation problems. It merely records and comments in detail on three occasions when translating called for extensive rewriting.

EN FAMILLE AGENCY

(The French extracts should have "sic" everywhere.)

"What is En Famille Agency?"

The En Famille Agency was founded in 1945 by people who were interested in the idea of international cooperation. They wanted to help people from different countries to get to know each other and learn the language, by staying with them in their private homes. We have the lively co-operation of many hundreds of host-families throughout the whole of Britain who are eager and willing to share their home and family life and social activities with paying guests from overseas who stay with them "en famille" - that is, living as a member of the family and enjoying all the benefits of a friendly environment.

"Qu'est-ce que c'est l'Agence En Famille?"

L'Agence En Famille a été fondée en 1945 par des gens qui s'intéressaient à l'idée de la Hospitalité Internationale. Ils voulaient aider des gens qui venaient de pays différents de se connaître, d'apprendre la langue, en demeurant chez eux dans leurs maisons particulières.

Nous avons la coopération animée de plusieurs centaines de familles d'accueil partout en Grande Bretagne, qui sont désireuses et prêtes à partager leur foyer et leur vie familiale et à faire des activités sociales avec des hôtes payants de l'étranger qui demeurent chez eux "en famille" - en demeurant comme un vrai membre de la famille et en jouissant de tous les bénéfices d'une ambiance amicale.

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"Can I improve my English?"

Yes - the easiest and most natural way to learn or improve existing knowledge of the language is by staying with a family where English is spoken all the time, with a harmonious family background. The atmosphere is friendly and relaxed, and the host-family is able to give help and encouragement in daily conversation and family activities.

"Puis-je améliorer mon anglais?"

Oui - façon la plus facile et le plus naturel d'apprendre ou d'améliorer une langue est en demeurant chez une famille où on parle l'anglais tout le temps, dans un milieu familial. L'ambiance est amicale et relaxée, et la famille d'accueil peut donner de l'assistance et de l'encouragement dans entretiens journaliers et des activités familiales.

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"Will my child be looked after properly?"

Parents and teachers may have confidence that the young guest is treated entirely as a member of the family, with responsibility and care.

"Est-ce que l'on s'occupe de mon enfant comme il faut?"

Des parents ainsi des instituteurs peuvent être traité entièrement comme un membre de la famille, avec de responsabilité et avec soin.

.

"Can you arrange group visits?"

Yes - if you let us know what is required and the different areas of Britain that are of interest, special group rates will be sent immediately.

"Est-ce que vous pouvez arranger des visites pour les groupes?"

Oui - Nous serions heureux envoyer les prix particuliers sur demande.

Illustrations

The three selected instances are taken from different areas of experience and involve a different relationship to the client. In each case I shall first comment on the negotiating situation and second discuss some aspects of the actual work involved in the translation.

'En Famille' Agency: a leaflet advertising Paying Guests Holidays in Britain

Negotiating situation

Excerpts from this bilingual leaflet is shown on the left hand page. The French text was so appalling that we decided to rewrite the advertisement as a classroom exercise. Afterwards we tried to sell our work to the agency. They were duly thankful but did not offer any payment. From this we learned that translators are not charity workers, and that next time whoever wanted a correct translation would have to pay for it.

Rephrasing

The mistakes that had drawn our attention were of different kind. Some were printer's errors showing that the proof-reader had an inadequate command of French ("la vie de la camagne anglaise"), others incorrect syntactical constructions ("les familles vous donnent de sollicitude et de conseil"), and more or less understandable but definitely "unidiomatic" use of words ("la coopération animée de plusieurs centaines de familles"). Such blunders are typical of dictionary-wielding transcoding as opposed to actual translation, and are fairly easy to remedy.

But as we were revising the translation we realized that even in English the text was awkwardly organized. So in our translation we suggested that after their introduction of host families the agency ought to explain what categories of guests where concerned, with one paragraph on children (last paragraph in column 1) and one paragraph on adults and families. After this they could address the linguistic advantages of this kind of stay, then turn to hobbies, and conclude with something on 'Bed and Breakfast' holidays.

A sentence such as "All our arrangements are made on a personal basis for the individual - of any age or nationality, for any time of the year", which at all events is not a good sentence, belongs in the introductory paragraph.

As a whole we felt free to reorganize this text and to dispense with some redundant or meaningless information. We also found that the paragraph on group visits could be effectively replaced by a single sentence added to the practical information at the end ("Prix spéciaux pour groupes sur simple demande"). Another alteration consisted in doing away with the dialogue form in the subtitles. True, the form is sometimes used in French, but in the translation of this ad, the questions sounded stilted and artificial.

Using your Brain - for a Change

Negotiating situation

Using your Brain - for a Change is a book on Neuro-Linguistic-Programming. Neuro-Linguistic-Programming is a branch of applied psychology which claims to help understand and structure what is going on in your own and other people's minds and to tell you how to change habits or even beliefs which you have come to regard as limiting. Scores of Neuro-Linguistic-Programming publications are only available in English, so there should be a market for translations.

I first used the book *Using Your Brain* for classroom exercises and explained why it might appeal to publishers. One of my students was interested in translating a substantial part of it as the translation requirement for the degree and I therefore tried to do things the proper way: I wrote to the nominal author (Richard Bandler) and to the publisher, who also turned out to be the editor of the text. The latter was most helpful. He sent me all the necessary information, and gave me permission to try and find a publisher for a French translation. I wrote to several and spent hours on the telephone talking with receptionists and secretaries. Eventually I established what looked like a promising contact with a lady who had very specific requirements for our sample translation. It involved in fact a fairly thorough rewriting of the text. She found our work satisfactory and sent a draft contract. We insisted that we should be paid for the amount of rewriting work to be done, and we lost the contract to a less demanding translator, who did not bother to rephrase anything, as appears from the published French version.

In this case there had been no objection to our making the French text

more coherent than the original, on the contrary. But the publisher was ultimately more interested in keeping costs down than in bringing out a high quality translation.

Rephrasing

The original text is a sloppy transcript of a series of seminars. It raises several problems.

One of them concerns *outward structuring*. We felt that a more varied *layout*, distinguishing clearly between dialogues with participants in the seminar, comments and conclusions, would have made the book far more attractive, and therefore more marketable.

Other problems were raised by *language usage*.

(a) Chapter V deals with our understanding of "why people do things." This is characteristic of the text as a whole: the *vocabulary* is deliberately limited. The number of occurrences of the verb "do," of the noun "thing," and of the compound predicative "feel good/bad" is staggering. Both repetitions and poverty of vocabulary called for change in the French version.

(b) Another problem related to vocabulary is the use of words in the special meaning they have acquired within applied psychology. "Parts of the self" in Transactional Analysis, for instance, are "Etats du Moi," not "parts" or "parties de moi-même"; and "reframing" in French is customarily called "recadrage."

(c) The title of the chapter is "Going for It," and the language throughout is often *idiomatic*. Judging from the published translation, and from some misreadings in my student's translation, this is a source of difficulty. For instance, when Bandler asks someone who has a "nice loud" critical voice inside him whether he can hear it and the participant answers: "Yes, it's criticizing me for *speaking up*," the phrase means "prendre la parole," not (as the printed version has it) "parler fort".

The most serious problem, however, arises from the use of a *muddled syntax* and a *confused logic*. To illustrate my point I shall comment on two paragraphs towards the beginning of Chapter V (see next page).

The first sentence is a case in point: "the field of psychotherapy," we are told, "has developed many models that they later found simply weren't the case." It is not entirely felicitous to have a field "developing models," but the

USING YOUR BRAIN -- FOR A CHANGE Chapter V: "Going For It"

In an attempt to understand why people do things, the field of psychotherapy has developed many models that they later found out simply weren't the case. However, many psychologists continue to hang on to them. We still have people who are looking for Ids and Egos, and they're likely to find that as a "parent," a "child," or an "adult." I think that most psychologists must have watched too many horror movies when they were children. "You have a parent, an adult, and a child inside you that make you do things." It sounds like you need to be exercised. People used to say, "The devil made me do it." Now they say, "My parts made me do it."

.....

Who wants to listen to a voice that yells and criticizes Real parents should try this technique too [changing the tonality of their voice], when they want their kids to listen to them. If you use a nice tonality, children will listen to you. They may not agree with what you say, but at least they'll hear it. This procedure is something we've been calling "Reframing," and it's the basis for a set of negotiation skills that are useful in family therapy and business, as well as inside your own brain. If you want to learn more about it, read the book *Reframing*. The point I want to make here is that Fred's [critical inner] voice had forgotten its outcome until I reminded it. It wanted to motivate him to succeed, but all it was actually accomplishing was to make him feel bad.

While the women's liberation movement has had much positive impact, in some ways it has done the same thing. The original goal was to motivate people to change the way they think about and treat women. Women got educated about what kinds of behaviors are sexist. Now when someone else makes a sexist remark, you have to feel bad! It doesn't strike me as progress that now the "liberated" people have to feel bad when someone else uses a sexist word! What kind of liberation is that?

Reference:

BANDLER, Richard. 1985. *Using Your Brain -- For a Change*, Moab (Utah): Real People Press.

end of the sentence is worse. In some circumstances these words might mean that these models were not really models at all, as the published translation has it: "et découvert par la suite qu'ils n'en étaient pas." Yet it is clear from the context that they were models all right, but models that proved not to have the predictive value which was expected of them. We had translated this as "Dans leur effort pour comprendre les motivations des individus, les psychothérapeutes ont développé de nombreux modèles qui ont été invalidés par la suite."

Two other instances of confusion reinforced in the published translation are to be found in the second extract. The passage introducing reframing is far from clear in the English text. From what is written it is almost impossible to determine what is called reframing in Neuro-Linguistic Programming. The process is in fact more closely related to what is presented at the end of paragraph. Our translation, contrary to the published one, involved extensive alterations, a change in the order of sentences, and some added connections.

The logical connection between this passage and the reference to the Women's Liberation Movement is that the latter, like Fred's cautionary inner voice, has used means that were not suited to its ends. The sub-clause is merely a way of preventing anyone from reading what follows as an attack on the Women's Movement. This is even further obscured in the published translation, which reads "Si le mouvement de libération des femmes a été très positif, il a, dans un sens, opéré de la même manière." We had departed from the letter of the text and proposed: "Certes, le Mouvement de Libération de la Femme a eu des conséquences positives; mais à bien des égards lui aussi exigerait un recadrage. Le but initial," etc.

Filmscript on 'Rituals of Love', to be entered in an international competition

Negotiating situation

I worked on the translation of this text (following page) with Dr James Gibbs, who is our current English "lecteur" at the University of Liège. The author of the script is a French-speaker with a degree in French, so lack of expertise in the use of words couldn't be argued. Yet as it stood the text was often so opaque as to defy understanding. We managed to clarify most of it,

Filmscript RITUALS OF LOVE

Nous considérons que l'intention des rituels de l'amour réside en la recherche absolue de la possession par le plaisir (partagé?).

Ces démarches débute systématiquement par la recherche d'un contact qui implique généralement deux personnalités (qui peuvent éventuellement se fondre en une seule et même personne dans un rituel narcissique!).

Toutes ces démarches individuelles ne s'inscrivent-elles pas dans un code universel?

Là n'est pas notre propos.

Les rituels de l'amour ne viseraient-ils en fait qu'à la sacralisation ou à la soumission de l'autre? Ne conduiraient-ils pas à une certaine sécurité (sociale?) insérant les libertés de l'individu dans son milieu?

Le projet et sa mise en forme

Nous souhaitons aborder le thème des rituels de l'amour par le biais de la notion de transfert, c'est à dire par des corrélations existantes entre les différents rituels, qu'ils soient sexuels, cartésiens, religieux, gourmands. ... (? les péchés capitaux?).

Ce qui nous importe, c'est l'approche des rapports entre un rituel lié à une forme de sexualité (gourmande) et un autre attaché à une gourmandise (sexuelle).

Cette similitude dans ces rituels serait mise en évidence à travers une fiction relatant la sexualité nocturne d'une prostituée et sa journée gourmande durant laquelle elle transfère la situation et les manies de ses clients face aux vitrines.

L'accent sera mis davantage sur la démarche de la prostituée livrée à ses choix gourmands.

Viendront s'incruster dans cette narration et la rythmer des images représentant les nombreuses et diverses facettes des rituels de l'amour perçues comme lieux communs dans notre culture.

La bande sonore, très présente, devra suivre le même discours.

and - I think - turn it into a much better scenario too, which was in fact shortlisted for a prize in the competition it was entered for.

In this case transactions were entirely satisfactory. We opted for a barter: while we did his translation, the author of the script undertook to make a videotape recording of a conference I was organizing.

Rephrasing

There are two main reasons why this text poses problems: one is the effort at extreme condensation and the other one, the repeated use of trendy words such as "démarche."

Let's start with some of these vocabulary problems. Why (in the first sentence) should the "search for possession" be "absolute"? The adjective is used in the same loose way as in the phrase "Il faut absolument que tu le voies." We translated as "relentless search." The first two "démarches" have been retained as "moves," and the first one has been clarified by adding "in such rituals." The third one has been omitted as empty of meaning. The adverb "systématiquement" has been qualified into "almost always." "Personnalités" has been toned down to "people." A "very present" sound track is a most curious thing, which we have made explicit as "Viewers will be very much aware of the sound track," and the trendy "suivra le même discours" has become "will, in its specific way, tell the same tale."

Almost everywhere the translation is longer than the excessively dense original. Compare the following two sentences in the original:

Cette similitude dans ces rituels serait mise en évidence à travers une fiction relatant la sexualité nocturne d'une prostituée et sa journée gourmande durant laquelle elle transférerait la situation et les manies de ses clients face aux vitrines. L'accent sera mis davantage sur la démarche de la prostituée livrée à ses choix gourmands. with their translation:

This parallel in rituals will be emphasized by presenting the greedy morning of a prostitute who systematically transfers, when in front of trays of Belgian chocolates displayed in shopwindows, her customers' night-time sexual greediness as they do their own window-shopping in the streets of sex. Rather than present the woman's professional passivity (she is an object chosen by others) we shall dwell on her own day-time greedy choices.

In this case we were fortunate to have the author himself at hand, to supply all missing pieces of information.

Pedagogical conclusions

Preliminary cautions

First it is important to distinguish between texts. Not all texts can be submitted to rewriting in the same way. Some kinds of non-literary texts, such as legal documents or European Commission "nine-language originals", demand literal faithfulness, whatever their faults, or require adaptations that have less to do with clearer logic or more correct syntax than with different conventions. So a first precaution will be to make sure that the text to be translated belongs to a category where a certain amount of rewriting is acceptable.

Secondly, before one tries to improve on the defective text, it is advisable to come to terms with the client (and with the author if they are not the same person). In some cases this may require some diplomacy to make author (or client) recognize imperfections. Tactfully handled, however, most clients will be grateful for improvements, and will see a hallmark of quality in a translator's concern for clarity.

Thirdly it is wise to make sure that rewriting of the original will be paid at a reasonable rate, without necessarily, as had perhaps been our mistake in the second example, expecting it to be fully rewarded. The time translators spend trying to understand a text and to rephrase it is hard to estimate, and is often impossible to compensate for in terms of money. However, negotiating skills are a useful part of the translator's resources. An essential negotiating skill is flexibility. We have experienced too that working on the basis of an exchange of services could be a profitable bargain for both sides.

Specialized expertise

Obviously translators have to understand the processes described in the texts they translate and have to check on the special terminology in each field. But if they are conscientious and inclined to a healthy degree of doubt, technical expertise is rarely a real stumbling-block. The right attitude in translators is to go and ask for help: specialists generally know more about their own fields than what translators can hope to master, and they are often willing to provide the correct equivalents of specialized usages. (In fact listening to an expert can be so fascinating that one might end forgetting the

business in hand.)

Rather than try to learn a little about everything, students should be shown how to get information, how to get in touch with resource persons, and how to elicit explanations. To do this, they first have to be aware of their ignorance.

Linguistic competence

by contrast, is the translator's prerogative. The importance of would-be translators having perfect mastery of their mother tongue is often emphasized. But I hope these examples show how important their knowledge of the source language is too. They must feel their way in the most intricate syntax and contorted logic. They must be able to spot faults and rectify them. They must identify idioms and determine how they can best be rendered in the target language.

The translator as author

In order to translate both quickly and well, even when faced with the most unwieldy texts, students in translation should learn how to use their minds not only in a rational, methodical way, but in an intuitive, creative way.

As has been shown, the translators of non-literary texts are expected to be at least as "creative" as those who deal with literature, though in an altogether different way.

Literary translators have to be creative because their source texts, if they deserve the name of literature, use language creatively. In a literary text the form is part and parcel of the content, so that if a sentence is clumsy or badly balanced, we can assume that the effect was intended, and the translator must resist the urge to "improve" or "clarify" and must retain, and indeed re-create, the awkwardness of the original. This requires insight, sensitivity and skill, but not the kind of creative imagination translators of technical, medical or publicity material are expected to possess, considering the degree of *unintentional* obscurity to be found in many of the texts they are supposed to translate.

In many cases non-literary texts, whether advertisements or instructions, scientific studies or popular science, do not call for literal faithfulness but for an interfering mind who will make them clearer and more transparent to

readers. Faced with muddled or inaccurate texts translators are called upon to provide the lucidity and logic which is wanting, that is, to become authors in their own right.

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A PSYCHOMETRIC APPROACH TO THE SELECTION OF TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING STUDENTS IN TAIWAN

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Abstract

The article describes the development of numerous tests for the selection of translation and interpreting students at Fu Jen Catholic University in Taiwan. The moot point was that - in accordance with Chinese educational traditions, students must be sure of passing the final examination, once they had been accepted for graduate studies. The procedures were highly successful in meeting this goal. The article finishes with a discussion of the usefulness of a rigid entrance examination allowing for a nearly one hundred per cent guarantee that students eventually graduate as interpreters as opposed to traditional selection methods where student attrition is much higher.

Introduction

This article describes the process used to develop a battery of tests for selecting the first three incoming classes for the Graduate Institute of Translation and Interpretation Studies (GITIS) at Fu Jen Catholic University. This article describes the selection of students for the English, Japanese, Mandarin, and Spanish programs. However, description focuses on the English test sections, since these sections constituted the core testing framework¹ from which parallel test sections in the other languages were developed.

The GITIS is the first attempt to create, in the Republic of China on Taiwan (ROC), a graduate-level professional school for translation and interpreting studies focusing on training practitioners in Mandarin Chinese and languages important to the Asia-Pacific region. The literature on existing Translation and Interpreting screening examinations generally focuses on descriptions of test structures and the types of mistakes the examinees make. We need a literature that addresses rater-training issues, decision-making rules, reliability and validity issues, scaling, scoring, and test equating procedures (Gerver & Longley, Long & Lambert 1984; Lambert & Meyer 1988; Stansfield & Scott & Kenyon 1991). This article attempts to address this need by discussing a psychometrically based approach used to develop the entrance examinations at GITIS.

The research basis of GITIS examinations

The test construction process herein described is guided by findings from



Holckenhavn