PERSPECTIVES OF TRANSLATION PRACTICE WITH MAIN REFERENCE TO ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

Ana-Maria STOICA
Universitatea din Pitești

Abstract: *The present article offers an insight into the complex process of translation, emphasizing mainly the difficulty encountered when translating specialized texts and the importance of lexical relationships between words, especially in the context of financial, economic or law translations. These relationships are fundamental if we wish to make an appropriate textual and contextual interpretation. They represent the supporting element that gives clarity to a specialized document.*

Keywords: *translation, lexical relationships, interpretation*

Although the general tendency is to consider translation as something that anybody can do with the help of an adequate dictionary, the fact of producing a written text using another text as a basis is a much more complex phenomenon than what is commonly believed. Translation for the professional translator is a constant learning cycle that moves through the stages of instinct, experience and habit, and, within experience, through the stages of abduction, induction and deduction. The translator is a professional for whom complex mental processes have become second nature, and a learner who must constantly face and solve new problems in conscious analytical ways.

One useful way of mapping the connections between experience and habit onto the process of translation is through the work of Charles Sanders Peirce, the American philosopher and founder of semiotics. Peirce addressed the connections between experience and habit in the framework of a triad, or three-step process, moving from instinct through experience to habit. Peirce[1] understood everything in terms of these triadic movements: instinct is a first, or a general unfocused readiness; experience is a second, grounded in real-world activities and events that work on the individual from the outside; and habit is a third, transcending the opposition between general readiness and external experience by incorporating both into a "promptitude of action", "a person's tendencies towards action", a "readiness to act". The process of translation in Peirce's three terms might be summarized simply like this: the translator begins with a blind, intuitive, instinctive sense in a language, source or target, of what a word or phrase means, how a syntactic structure works (instinct); proceeds by translating those words and phrases, moving back and forth between the two languages, feeling the similarities and dissimilarities between words, phrases and structures (experience); and gradually, over time, sublimates specific solutions to specific experiential problems into more or less unconscious behavior patterns (habit), which help him or her to translate more rapidly and effectively.

[1] Peirce, Charles Sanders (1931-58): *Collected Writings* (8 Vols.). (Ed. Charles Hartshorne, Paul Weiss & Arthur W Burks). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Thus, translation should be given the importance it deserves, rather than considering it a mechanical process that can be carried out with the help of a dictionary alone. The aforementioned complexity becomes even more evident when the text in question deals with specialized subjects such as law, finance, banking, etc. In this particular case, when words belonging to the so-called General English appear next to specific terms and within a specific context, they contain nuances that must be accounted for in the final translation.

According to Halliday and Hasan, "the word text is used in linguistics to refer to any passage of whatever length that does form a unified whole."[1] We add however, that not all textual segments share the same internal structure and the same features; the context in which they are immersed will determine, to a great extent, these differences.

The set of terms gathered together in a text and considered more or less specific establishes a helpful context for the reader to interpret and subsequently to translate. In other words, the translator will be able to process and understand the information he/she has at his/her disposal. Such a contextual aid becomes much more evident when translating a text of an eminently law, economic or financial nature, making it practically impossible to analyze outside its context. Therefore, the nuances added by the contextual area will have the specific mission of confirming the correct meaning of a given term, while the rest of irrelevant entries that can be found in a specific dictionary or encyclopaedia should be ignored. This highlights that a translation, apart from being cohesive, must also be coherent. The translator must take into account the contextual clues embedded in the discourse in order to avoid ambiguities in the produced document, as long as such ambiguity did not exist in the original one.

The ability to understand and interpret specific information entails some knowledge, as deep as possible, about the syntactic and morphological structure of the foreign text, apart from establishing the lexical relationships among the different words, relations which will differ depending on the specific situations in which specialized texts are embedded. Discourse markers, lexical coherence or modal verbs signal the relationship between words and contribute to the coherence and cohesion of the text. That is to say, the main task of the translator is to eliminate from the original text all those textual elements which do not belong to the cultural background of the potential reader and to produce an easy-to-understand and correct document.

However, although it is necessary to recognize these guidelines, it is also evident that any theoretical principle needs to be put into practice in order to prove effective. The best way of doing so is by analyzing a text.

A wide variety of specific words belonging to the field of law or economics, as well as a great number of noun clusters and polysemantic terms can be found in specialized text. This makes, if possible, the task of both the unspecialized reader and the translator even more difficult. Speaking English is now an essential requirement for taking part in a technologically and culturally advanced society. Nowadays both students and professionals belonging to the law, banking and financial sectors are compelled to deal with English texts, which sometimes include a difficult-to-understand language if we take it out of its natural context.

The translator who dedicates himself to the task of trying to convey the meaning of a text as faithfully as possible must follow his/her own intuition which can

[1] Halliday, M.A.K. & Hasan, R. *Cohesion in English*. London : Longman, 1976

help him/her to translate the text in an appropriate way. A translator could also make use here of his/her previous knowledge about the text to be translated.

An important problem when translating specialized text from English is the high frequency of noun clusters. Noun clusters can be defined as "groups of words consisting of a chain of elements, all of them pre-modifying a final noun which is the nucleus of the series”[1]. In addition, a well-known researcher, David Trimble, says that noun clusters are "two or more nouns plus necessary adjectives that together make up a single concept; that is, the total expresses a single noun idea" as found in "supply-side issue," "large but undynamic ex-state banks" or "industry-wide wage negotiations." Such noun clusters usually form part of both scientific, economic and law documents, since it is often necessary to give a large amount of information in a restricted space at our disposal. The problem arises when trying to translate these expressions as correctly as possible. In English however, the more specialized the topic, the greater the number and complexity of noun clusters. So, what can we do to render them without altering their original sense? As we have already mentioned, the first thing we have to do is to take into account the context in which they are immersed as serious errors can produce an ambiguous or erroneous translation. As a case in point, extracting the noun cluster "labour arrangements" from a purely financial or economic context and placing it in an agricultural context, we observe a transformation in meaning i.e., human resources management in the former and soil preparation in the latter, for example. The widespread tendency is to start translating the last element of the group and then continue in reverse order until we get to the first one, keeping in mind the fact that we must produce a piece of information which can be clearly and properly understood.

On the other hand, a sociolinguistic analysis calls for cross-cultural expertise on the part of the translator, and this is where translation becomes interpretation.

Therefore, in a step-by-step translation process, we can take as a first example the following noun cluster taken from The Economist: "England's two-way trade in goods and services." Although at first sight its meaning in English is clear, it is rather complicated to render it properly in Romanian without altering its essence. Since the English sentence has three different qualifiers of the noun "trade" ("England's," "two-way," and "(in) goods and services," all of which would require a preposition in a literal translation into Romanian, one solution is to replace "two-way" (which would be literally translated as "în sens dublu") with the adjective "bidirecțional" The entire phrase then becomes "comerțul bidirecțional de bunuri şi servicii al Angliei" The phrase can be further simplified by replacing "two-way commerce" with "vânzare-cumpărare" (purchase and sale).

Students have considerable difficulties when translating a noun series consisting of more than four words. Furthermore, if we have the additional problem of using dictionaries which do not contain the expected equivalence, we can conclude that this activity is not as simple as it may appear at first. Examples like this one are quite frequent in a linguistic field dealing with law, financial and economic topics. As we have already stated, some words belonging to the so-called General English, when they appear next to specific nouns or accompanying words, acquire different meanings and nuances that must be reproduced in the final translation. It is clear to see that the word "labour" can have nine different meanings. This gives an approximate idea of how complex it becomes to translate a concept several times in the different ways intended by the transmitter. The examples encountered are "mobile labour"(forță de muncă

[1]Duff, Alan. *Translation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989

mobilă),"flexible labour"(program flexibil de lucru),"labour market"(piața forței de muncă), "labour efficiency"(eficiența muncii), "shedding labour"(reducerea forței de muncă), and "labour law"(dreptul muncii) which is different from "labour legislation" (legislația muncii) etc. As can be seen, the word has a variety of possible translations depending on the specific context that it is necessary to highlight nuances we cannot find in a bilingual dictionary. In fact, if we looked up such terms in one of these dictionaries, we would find that it is often nearly impossible to get more than a general sense or meaning. In contrast, when we make use of specialized dictionaries, the result can be quite different and it is easier to find the right definition corresponding to each of the noun phrases. However, it is still necessary to add some cultural nuances so that the translation can sound proper.

This shows that we must take into account not only the elements present in the text, but also the entire underlying social-cultural framework, together with a general knowledge of economics, finance or law, in order to produce a good translation.

In this article we intended to show, in the first place, the importance of lexical relationships between words, especially in the context of financial translations. If they are essential when dealing with General English, they become the supporting element that gives clarity to an economic, law or financial document. Secondly, the consultation of specialized reference works in specific areas, as opposed to the use of general language dictionaries, aid the translator in carrying out the process efficiently. Thirdly, we reaffirm the necessary played by context when dealing with documents that leave no place for ambiguity since they include clear and straightforward concepts, which must be translated with the same scientific rigor they had in the original text. Therefore, an accurate translation cannot be achieved by simply putting disconnected elements together; instead, associated elements must work together to form a coherent whole.

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