



Multi-Languages Newsletter

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Multilingual Medical Terminology Database Project Healthcare Interpretation Network HIN – School of Translation, Glendon College

The Healthcare Interpretation Network (HIN) has been working to improve interpreter training and raise interpretation standards for the delivery of primary healthcare services to patient populations who have limited proficiency in English and French.

A project to develop a multilingual terminology system (TMS) that will serve as a language tool in the field of healthcare is being planned.

The aim of the project is to build a multilingual terminology database to manage terminology used in the healthcare community of Greater Toronto. The development of the system will be a joint project of interpreters from the HIN membership and the Research Group for Translation and Transcultural Contact at York University. The database structure will be developed by the students enrolled in the terminology management course in the graduate M.A. program in Translation offered at Glendon College, York University. Each student will be paired with an interpreter. The role of the student will be to work with the interpreter to characterize the language in question, identify the data categories pertinent to the language and any language variants, as well as, identify terminology resources and specialists. The role of the interpreter will be to guide the student in the development of the database and to select and input the terminology equivalents from the terminology resources provided by the student. As course director, Nelida Chan will lead the project and will be supported in part by the Terminology Committee of HIN.

The database will have the dual purpose of being used as a pedagogical and research tool in terminology, translation and transcultural research as well as a language tool to assist language professionals better serve the healthcare community.

As a key feature this multilingual database will be designed to include not only the technical and medical terminology used by healthcare professionals but also the corresponding term used in plain language for the same

concept. The two official languages, English and French, will act as the core languages.

Adapted from Nelida Chan presentation to HIN members

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The Committee will be working with interpreters, sponsors and an advisory committee. Information coming soon to the HIN site.

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What Every Novice Translator Should Know

By Antar Solhy Abdellah Ph.D. on translation

The nature and importance of translation

Translation is ultimately a human activity which enables human beings to exchange ideas and thoughts regardless of the different tongues used. Translation is, in Enani's (1997) view, a modern science at the interface of philosophy, linguistics, psychology, and sociology. Literary translation in particular is relevant to all these sciences, audio-visual arts, as well as cultural and intellectual studies.

Translation is a heavily subjective art, especially when it deals with matters outside the realm of science where precisely defined concepts are more often expressed by certain generally accepted terms.

In the final analysis, translation is a science, an art, and a skill. It is a science in the sense that it necessitates complete knowledge of the structure and make-up of the two languages concerned. It is an art since it requires artistic talent to reconstruct the original text in the form of a product that is presentable to the reader who is not supposed to be familiar with the original. It is also a skill because it entails the ability to smooth over any difficulty in the translation, and the ability to provide the translation of something that has no equal in the target language.

In translation, the richness of vocabulary, depth of culture, and vision of the translator could certainly have very conspicuous effects on his/her work. Another translator might produce a reasonably acceptable version of the same text, which, however, may very well reflect a completely different background, culture, sensitivity, and temperament. Such differences cannot, in Chabban's view (1984), detract from the merit of either translator. This is simply because translation is decidedly a more difficult job than creation.

Criteria for a good translation

A good translation is one that carries all the ideas of the original as well as its structural and cultural features. Massoud (1988) sets criteria for a good translation as follows:

1. A good translation is easily understood.
2. A good translation is fluent and smooth.
3. A good translation is idiomatic.
4. A good translation conveys, to some extent, the literary subtleties of the original.
5. A good translation distinguishes between the metaphorical and the literal.
6. A good translation reconstructs the cultural/historical context of the original.
7. A good translation makes explicit what is implicit in abbreviations, and in allusions to sayings, songs, and nursery rhymes.
8. A good translation will convey, as much as possible, the meaning of the original text (pp. 19-24).

From a different perspective, El Touny (2001) focused on differentiating between different types of translation. He indicated that there are eight types of translation: word-for-word translation, literal translation, faithful translation, semantic translation, adaptive translation, free translation, idiomatic translation, and communicative translation. He advocated the last type as the one which transmits the meaning from the context, respecting the form and structure of the original and which is easily comprehensible by the readers of the target language.

El Zeini (1994) didn't seem satisfied with such criteria for assessing the quality of translation. Hence she suggested a pragmatic and stylistic model for evaluating quality in translation. She explains that the model "places equal emphasis on the pragmatic component as well on the stylistic component in translation. This model covers a set of criteria, which are divided into two main categories: content-related criteria and form-related criteria" and expected that by following these criteria, "translators will be able to minimize the chance of producing errors or losses, as well as eliminate problems of unacceptability" (p. xvii).

Translation problems

Translation problems can be divided into linguistic problems and cultural problems: the linguistic problems include grammatical differences, lexical ambiguity and meaning ambiguity; the cultural problems refer to different situational features. This classification coincides with that of El Zeini when she identified six main problems in translating from Arabic to English and vice versa; these are lexicon, morphology, syntax, textual differences, rhetorical differences, and pragmatic factors.

Some of the major problems of translation are over-translation, under-translation, and untranslatability.

Culture constitutes another major problem that faces translators. A bad model of translated pieces of literature may give misconceptions about the original.

The translator's work

These problems, and others, direct our attention to the work and the character of translators, how they attack a text so as to translate, and the processes they follow to arrive at the final product of a well-translated text in the target language.

Enani (1994:5) defines the translator as "a writer who formulates ideas in words

addressed to readers. The only difference between him and the original writer is that these ideas are the latter's". Another difference is that the work of the translator is even more difficult than that of the artist. The artist is supposed to produce directly his/her ideas and emotions in his/her own language however intricate and complicated his/her thoughts are. The translator's responsibility is much greater, for s/he has to relive the experiences of a different person. Chabban (1984) believes that, however accurately the translator may delve into the inner depths of the writer's mind, some formidable linguistic and other difficulties may still prevent the two texts from being fully equivalent. Therefore we do not only perceive the differences between a certain text and its translation, but also between different translations of the same text.

On the procedural level, El Shafey (1985:95) states: "A translator first analyzes the message, breaking it down into its simplest and structurally clearest elements, transfers it at this level into the target language in the form which is most appropriate for the intended audience. A translator instinctively concludes that it is best to transfer the "kernel level" in one language to the corresponding "kernel level" in the "receptor language."

Translation skills for novice translators

The present study suggests four main macro-skills for any translator who begins his/her work in the field of translation. These are: reading comprehension, researching, analytical, and composing skills. These macro-skills include many sub- or micro-skills that need to be mastered.

Reading comprehension

While we are translating, we do not think of our activity as being broken down into phases. After doing our first translations, many automatic mechanisms come into play that allow us to translate more quickly; at the same time, we are less and less conscious of our activity.

Osimo (2001) indicates that in order to think about the translation process and to describe it, our essential task consists of analyzing its phases. The first phase of the translation process consists of reading the text. The reading act, first, falls under the competence of psychology, because it concerns our perceptive system. Reading, like translation, is, for the most part, an unconscious process. If it were conscious, we would be forced to consume much more time in the act. Most mental processes involved in the reading act are automatic and unconscious. Owing to such a nature-common and little-known in the same time-in our opinion it is important to analyze the reading process as precisely as possible. The works of some perception psychologists will be helpful to widen our knowledge of this first phase of the translation process.

When a person reads, his brain deals with many tasks in such rapid sequences that everything seems to be happening simultaneously. The eye examines (from left to right as far as many Western languages are concerned, or from right to left or from top to bottom in some other languages) a series of graphic signs (graphemes) in succession, which give life to syllables, words, sentences, paragraphs, sections, chapters, and texts.

Simply reading a text is, in itself, an act of translation. When we read, we do not store the words we have read in our minds as happens with data entered using a keyboard or scanner into a computer. After reading, we do not have the photographic or auditory recording in our minds of the text read. We have a set of impressions instead. We remember a few words or sentences precisely, while all the remaining text is translated from the verbal language into a language belonging to another sign system, which is still mostly unknown: the mental language.

The mental processing of the read verbal material is of a syntactical nature when we try to reconstruct the possible structure of the sentence, i.e. the relations among its elements. In contrast, it is of a semantic nature when we identify the relevant areas within the semantic field of any single word or sentence; and it is of a pragmatic nature when we deal with the logical match of the possible meanings with the general context and the verbal co-text.

The difference between a reader and a critic is negligible: the reader trying to understand has the same attitude as the critic, who is a systematic, methodical, and self-aware reader. While reading, the individual reads, and perceives what he reads, drawing interpretations and inferences about the possible intentions of the author of the message.

Holmes (1988) suggested that the translation process is actually a multi-level process; while we are translating sentences, we have a map of the original text in our minds and, at the same time, a map of the kind of text we want to produce in the target language. Even as we translate serially, we have this structural concept so that each sentence in our translation is determined not only by the original sentence, but also by the two maps—of the original text and of the translated text—which we carry along as we translate.

The translation process should, therefore, be considered a complex system in

which understanding, processing, and projection of the translated text are interdependent portions of one structure. We can therefore put forward, as does Hnig (1991), the existence of a sort of "central processing unit" supervising the coordination of the different mental processes (those connected to reading, interpretation, and writing) and at the same time projecting a map of the text to be.

Novice translators as well as student translators are advised to master the following basic reading comprehension skills.

- * Read for gist and main ideas.
- * Read for details.
- * Identify the meaning of new words and expressions using one or more components of the structural analysis clause; prefixes, suffixes, roots, word order, punctuation, sentence pattern, etc.
- * Identify the meaning of new words and expressions using one or more of the contextual analysis; synonyms, antonyms, examples, etc.
- * Identify the writer's style: literary, scientific, technical, informative, persuasive, argumentative, etc.
- * Identify the language level used in the text: standard, slang, religious, etc.
- * Identify cultural references in the choice of words in the text.

Researching skills

Enani (2002b) notices that "the most commonly heard advice to translators is 'if you don't know the meaning of a word, look it up in *the* dictionary.' It is the commonest and the vaguest insofar as the definite article suggest that the dictionary is known to both speaker and listener." He indicates that there are different kinds of dictionaries that a translator should refer to; a bilingual dictionary, a dictionary on a historical basis, dictionaries of current English, dictionaries of idioms, specialized dictionaries (dictionaries of common errors, dictionaries of idiomatic usage, slang dictionaries, technical dictionaries) encyclopedic dictionaries, dictionaries of neologisms, and monolingual dictionaries.

Despite this long list of different kinds of dictionaries, it is a single dictionary that the translator is supposed to refer to each and every time s/he translates. The choice of the *best*, or the most appropriate, dictionary depends on the style of the protext (original text, text before translation) and on the different types of users of the translation.

Calderaro (1998) indicates two major users of the meta text (text after translation) who may use the translated version; the specialist user and the lay user. Identifying the prospective users of the metatext is very important in the process of researching, as this will determine which kind of dictionaries the translator will refer to, which level of information should be presented and to "detect the exact moments when it is necessary to establish a balance between the scientific level of the author and the knowledge the user supposedly has."

Novice translators, as well as student translators are encouraged to use the following basic researching tips;

- * Use bilingual dictionaries for looking up meanings of new words.
- * Use monolingual dictionaries to check the usage of the new words in the source language and in the target language.
- * Use related encyclopedias and glossary lists for specialized terms;
- * Use software dictionaries if necessary and available.
- * Refer to specialized magazines and journals to help you familiarize yourself with the text, particularly when it is a technical text.

Analytical skills

The translation process is characterized by an analysis stage and a synthesis stage. During analysis, the translator refers to the prototext in order to understand it as fully as possible. The synthesis stage is the one in which the prototext is projected onto the reader, or rather, onto the idea that the translator forms of who will be the most likely reader of the metatext.

The text, according to Bell (1998) is analyzed in two ways: micro- and macro-analysis of the actual text: monitoring for cohesion and coherence, and checking for coherence between the actual text and the potential text-type of which it is a token realization. Micro-analysis has the purpose of verifying text cohesion and inner cohesion of the single units of text. Macro-analysis is aimed at checking for coherence and cohesion between the created text and the model in the category to which the text belongs. For example, if the text is an instruction booklet for a household appliance, or a story for a newspaper, often there are models for such types of text to which we frequently (consciously or unconsciously) adhere.

Such an analytic exam was necessary in order to identify the individual mental processes involved in the above-mentioned activities; we know, however, that

such activities are actually carried out in very short time span. During this mental work, there is a constant shift of focus between micro-analysis and macro-analysis, between micro-expression and macro-expression, i.e. a constant comparison between the meaning of the single utterances and the meaning of the text as a whole, or, on a larger scale, a constant comparison between the sense of the specific text and the comprehensive sense of the corpus which forms the "intertext," whether or not the translator is aware of this fact. In this context, "intertext" should be understood as the intertextual universe in which a text is located.

Translators are advised to use the following strategies in the analysis stage:

- * Identify beginnings and endings of ideas in the text and the relationships between these ideas.
- * Identify the "best" meaning that fits into the context;
- * Identify the structure in the Target Language that "best" represents the original;
- * Identify transitions between ideas and the "best" connectors in the target language that represent the original.

Composing skills

At this point, the mental construction resulting from interpretation seeks an outer expression.

Osimo (2002) suggests that, in this expression stage, there are two sub stages. One is aimed at expression, the other at cohesion. The translator, having finished his/her interpretative work, has two needs: first, to externalize the set of impressions caused by the text and translate into speech elements the impressions the mind produced by contact with the prototext; and second, to make this product coherent within itself, i.e., transform the set of speech elements into a text (the metatext).

He describes the passage from mental content to written text in these terms:

- * pinpointing elements useful for discrimination of the content to be expressed from similar contents;
- * pinpointing redundant elements;
- * choice of words (lexicalization) and attention to their cohesion (inner links);
- * choice of grammatical structure(s);
- * linear order of words;
- * parts of speech;
- * sentence complexity;
- * prepositions and other function words, and
- * final form.

Translators are invited to make use of the following basic strategies:

- * Use correct word order as used in the target language.
- * Use correct sentence structures as used in the target language.
- * transmit the ideas of the text in clear sentences in the target language.
- * Rephrase certain sentences to convey the overall meaning translated;
- * Make changes to the text as a whole to give it a sense of the original without distorting the original ideas.
- * Try one or more of the following strategies when facing problems of untranslatable.

Syntactic strategies:

- Shift word order.
- Change clause/sentence structure.
- Add or change cohesion.

Semantic strategies:

- Use superordinates.
- Alter the level of abstraction.
- Redistribute the information over more or fewer elements.

Pragmatic strategies:

- Naturalize or exoticize.
- Alter the level of explicitness.
- Add or omit information.

Conclusion

This study described the basic skills and strategies that novice translators as well as student translators need to master in their daily experiences with translation tasks. The main skills proposed are: reading comprehension, researching, analytical, and composing skills. The study suggested other sub-skills and strategies for planting one's feet firmly in the land of translation. The skills and strategies presented in this study represent just the basic level for beginners and students. However, advanced and professional translators may find them relevant as well.

Academic Programs - Professional Development

Glendon College - York University

Certificate in Translation
(English-Spanish)

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BA in translation
(English-French)

Certificate in Technical and Professional Writing
translation@glendon.yorku.ca

MA in Translation

jangoh@glendon.yorku.ca

Website: www.glendon.yorku.ca

Seneca College Language Interpreter Training

Language Interpreter Training Certificate

This introductory 180 hour (six 30 hour credit subjects) Certificate (pending) program is intended to train interpreters to work in various settings including health care, social services private industry and the legal system.

LITP Assessment and Placement

Before you can enroll in any of the Language Interpretation subjects listed in this package, you must complete the Language Interpretation Assessment and Placement test (EAP100) or apply for Advanced Standing in order to determine your initial placement level in an English subject. EAC149 is the suggested co requisite for most non-literature Liberal Studies subjects. Please refer to the English and Communications Program Information Package available from the Faculty of Continuing Education Office for detailed information.

Courses

- * Introduction to Spoken Language Interpreting
- * Consecutive Interpreting
- * Skills Development - Sight Translation
- * Skills Development - Simultaneous Interpreting
- * Setting Specific Interpreting
- * Capstone Course, Skills Integration

Email: jake.attleslander@senecac.on.ca

www.senecac.on.ca/parttime/pip-language_interpreter.html

We require our interpreters to have the CILISAT/ILSAT as well as interpretation training of at least 60 hours (information sessions don't count as training). The new College Certificate will be mandatory in the near future.

Coming Events

* **Translator Formation: Pedagogy, Evaluation and technologies**

XXth congress of the Canadian Association for Translation Studies CAST
26-28 May
University of Saskatchewan,
Saskatoon, Canada

<http://www.uottawa.ca/associations/act-cats/Eng/congress/congress.htm>

* **American Translators Association's Medical Division Mid-Year Conference**

May 31-June 3
Cleveland, Ohio

<http://www.ata-divisions.org/MD/2007/>

* **American Translators Association's 48th Annual Conference**

San Francisco, California
October 31-November 3

<http://www.atanet.org/>

* **Multi-Languages Conference**

Toronto - November

Please send us your ideas and suggestions for our upcoming conference

"Man's mind stretched to a new idea never goes back to its original dimension."

Oliver Wendell Holmes

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