

TRANSLATION MODEL, TRANSLATION ANALYSIS, TRANSLATION STRATEGY: AN INTEGRATED METHODOLOGY

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Abstract. The paper revisits the concepts of translation model, translation analysis, and translation strategy from an integrated perspective: a translation strategy naturally follows translation analysis performed on a given set of textual, discursive and communicative parameters that form a valid translation model. Translation modeling is reconsidered in terms of a paradigm shift and a distinction between a process-oriented (descriptive) model and an action-oriented (prescriptive) model. Following the discourse and communication translation model, we put forward a “model - analysis - strategy” concept and a “features - difficulties - solutions” concept to reformulate a translation strategy as a flexible, variable and, to a certain extent, individual (but not unique) algorithm. We also introduce the notion of a discursive profile framed on existing discourse-related data in translation.

Keywords: translation model; translation strategy; discourse and communication translation model; translation analysis; discursive profile; institutional discourse.

Introduction

Linguistically oriented translation models attempt to describe the translation process that ultimately aims to achieve equivalence between the source text and the target text. However, Christiane Nord postulates that “functional equivalence between source and target text is not the “normal” skopos of a translation, but an exceptional case in which the factor ‘change of functions’ is assigned zero” [1: 26]. Translation process is largely viewed as “communication of translation” [2]. Some of the key translation model components are grouped around a “translation mechanism”, “translation process stages”, “non-linear intellectual operations”, “selection process”, “creativity”, and “assessment” [3]. This is in line with a paradigm shift focused on the “nature of translation”, a “communicative approach”, “integration”, “strategy” and “discourse”, “cognitive processes”, “polyparadigmatism” and “interpretation” [4].

We may therefore emphasize *two important trends in contemporary translation modeling*. First, following the basic distinction between a model that describes the translation process and a model that describes the translator’s actions, as discussed elsewhere [5], we would differentiate between a descriptive (static) translation model and a prescriptive (dynamic) translation model, and hence a model that either explains an “operating principle” or functions as an “operation manual”. Second, a translation model may pro-

ductively function as an applied framework for working out a translation strategy [6: 17-18] and hence as a tool for the translation (source text oriented) analysis.

Methodology

Our *discourse and communication translation model* (fig. 1) is the type one model – descriptive and explanatory in character - that gives a variety of features (translation-relevant communicative discourse parameters) for working out a translation strategy. The concept is focused on how to build a translation strategy and therefore does not either provide any set strategies or seek to give universal guidelines.

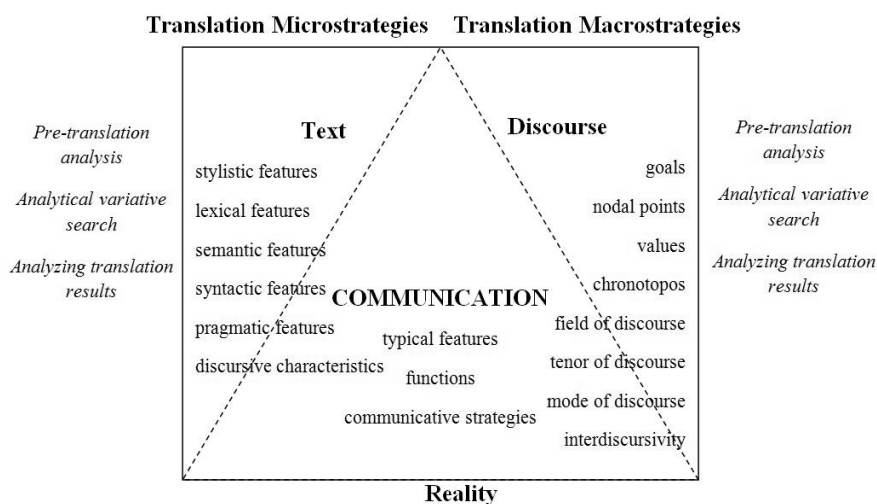


Fig. 1. Discourse and communication translation model

The discourse and communication translation model (for a more detailed description and references see [5]) is based on a set of interrelated levels: a textual level, a discursive level, and a communicative level. Within this framework, the process of translation is cyclic: decisions are made at each level, and as the translation process unfolds, the cycle may be repeated.

A translator analyzes for the source text properties and features: linguistic (lexical and semantic, syntactic, stylistic, and pragmatic) source text parameters, its discursive characteristics (text authorship, addressness, and narrative), discourse nodal points, discourse constitutive features (goals, values, chronotopos, topic and participants of discourse, and interdiscursivity), and communication-related functions, typical features and strategies define decisions made by a translator and build up translation microstrategies on the textual level and translation macrostrategies on discursive and communicative levels.

Discussion

How does discourse complement the source text proper? As the additional layers of discourse and communication unfold, they allow a translator (interpreter) see the “world behind a text” [7]. Using the model parameters as a tool for analysis helps a translator (interpreter) “find their way” in this “text world”.

How does the model differ from the existing communicative concepts (e.g., a communicative-functional approach to translation or skopos theory)? On the one hand, the model aims at creating a fairly rigid structure, a template that a translator (interpreter) “places over” the source text to check what parameters (translation dominants) have and what have not been heeded. On the other hand, the model aims at creating a deeper multilayer system that would take into account the discourse and communication parameters rather than be limited to textual features only.

A scope of the discourse and communication translation model application includes diverse kinds of institutional discourse and a range of related texts both in translation and interpreting, and hence in translator and interpreter training. When applying the same model to both translation and interpreting, though at different stages, we follow the integrated approach put forward in: “the differences between these two activities are essentially associated with the cognitive stress interpreters face under the pressure of time (with far-reaching implications on strategies and online tactics), but <...> the similarities are fundamental and deserve to be highlighted for the benefit of all. <...> it is useful for translators to know something about interpreting and vice versa” [6: 3].

To revisit the notion of a translation strategy let us quote Douglas Robinson for the following useful distinction: “from the user’s external point of view, the only possible reason for translation theory to exist is to develop and enforce normative standards”, whereas “from the translator’s internal point of view <...> translation theory exists largely in order to help them to solve problems that arise and to defend their solutions” [8: 170]. A translation strategy as a sequence of actions is per se “only applied to the text as a whole” [9: 48]. A “strategy - tactics - operations” concept is one productive way of looking at a translation strategy [10]. We would, however, tentatively suggest a “*features - difficulties - solutions*” concept, which is largely source text based, but which heeds the target text parameters in the “solutions” phase and is in line with the discourse and communication translation model.

Our algorithm for working out a translation strategy runs as follows: a translator analyzes the source text for various features, some of which may be regarded as translation difficulties, and finds solutions for these difficulties that build a translation strategy. A translation strategy is not a rigid program, but a *flexible* and, to a certain extent, *individual* action plan, a non-

linear sequence of translator's actions (solutions) shaped but not limited by the discourse and communication translation model. Translation microstrategies and macrostrategies may be applied quite liberally in accordance with the translation brief, translation setting, text type, and presumed recipient. Decisions made by a translator are split into microstrategies and macrostrategies solely for analytical purposes, allowing a translator to explore the source text in an integrated manner, pinpoint the translation difficulties, and find possible solutions.

Source text features (difficulties) may certainly prove universal for various kinds of discourse. Similar features, difficulties, and solutions may form similar translation strategies that are otherwise individual, though not unique. We do not find splitting strategies into tactics strictly necessary as the multiple existing translation techniques seem quite sufficient if the aim is to work out a variable translation algorithm rather than frame specific translation procedures.

One way of looking at a translation strategy in translator training is have students hand in short "strategy reports" together with their translations (cf. reports, diaries, and the IDRC framework in [6]) that are largely based on their previous translation analysis. A translation strategy naturally follows translation analysis with a given set of parameters to analyze and feeds back into the "*model - analysis - strategy*" concept. D. Robinson outlines the importance of analysis with a number of key statements, encouraging a translator to "always analyze for text type, genre, register, rhetorical function, <...> analyze the source text's syntax and semantics, <...> pay close attention to the translation commission and <...> the special nature and needs of your target audience" [8: 208]. It would be fair to note that some exclusively text-oriented (and often loosely structured) approaches to translation analysis either provide no models and use no discourse-related data or incorporate only the most basic discourse-related parameters. A translator may, however, rely on existing discursive research or their own individual or collective experience, "filling up" the discourse and communication translation model with data. As a result, a "*discursive profile*" is composed for a particular source text following the model threefold set of parameters. Depending on a text type, a translation setting or a particular kind of (institutional) discourse, a discursive profile may be more or less standardized.

Conclusion

A paradigm shift in translation modeling towards the "translation process - translator's actions" and "descriptive model - prescriptive model" distinction justifies the "*model - analysis - strategy*" concept: a translation strategy naturally follows translation analysis performed on a given set of parameters that form a valid translation model. The discourse and communication

translation model combines contemporary linguistic concepts with a comprehensive communicative and discourse-based methodology for translation analysis aimed at working out a translation strategy. A translator analyzes the source text features at all levels to form a pool of translation difficulties and find the relevant solutions. Quite exhaustive fundamental research on institutional discourse may therefore be directly applied to translation through discursive profiles.

The model varied applications suggest that the discourse and communication translation model may be regarded as a concept broader than a translation model per se. The model is descriptive and explanatory in character, focused on both the source text and the target text through a translation brief and a cyclic multilayer template with a set of parameters to analyze for. The translation brief (translation purpose) is extralinguistic, and translation analysis is largely source text oriented. The model helps frame discursive profiles applying discourse-related data to translation, interpreting, and training. Following the “features - difficulties - solutions” concept, a translation strategy is reconsidered as a flexible and variable category, with a technical distinction between micro- and macrostrategies formulated on textual, discursive and communicative levels.

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