

Professional Translation as New Trend of Translation

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Abstract

The development of Translation theories can be divided into four periods: 1. The Period of Literature theory of Translation; 2. The Period of Linguistics Theory of Translation; 3. The Period of Culture Theory of Translation; and 4. The Period of Professional Theory of Translation. During the Period of Literature theory of Translation, Translators paid special attention to the art and aesthetics of translation. During the Period of Linguistics theory of Translation, translators paid attention to the transfer of grammar, then to the language meaning, and finally to pragmatic linguistics. During the Period of Culture theory of Translation, translators paid special emphasis on the transfer of cultural messages with debates on authors-centered Domestication Translation strategy and readers-centered Foreignization Translation strategy. And during the Period of Professional theory of Translation, translators paid special attention to the acquirement and application of professional knowledge and ability. The Professional theory of Translation is the current trend for translators. The translators had better have professional knowledge and ability for the translation fields, so as to be competent in translation.

Keywords: Professional Translation, Unprofessional Translation, Translation Theories, Linguistic theory, Academic Discipline

1. Introduction

There are two kinds of translation, professional translation and unprofessional translation.

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Professional translation pays attention to the implementation of multiple theories of translation from a variety of disciplines and discourses to better analyze the variety meanings and functions produced, and also pays attention to academic training as well as vocational training in a variety of departments of translation studies for under-graduate and post-graduate students, just like Mona Baker has said :”There are two main types of training that a profession can provide for its members: vocational training and academic training. Vocational courses provide training in practical skills but do not include a strong theoretical component...an academic course always includes a strong theoretical component” (Baker, 1992:1)

Unprofessional translation sees translation as tools for learning languages, and generally taught in foreigner language institutions. After a period of disfavor, translation has made a strong comeback as a component of foreign language instruction, vindicated by a growing body of research that demonstrates its effectiveness in developing language skills.

Even in the foreign language courses, translation studies are regarded as important for the cross-linguistic and cross-cultural communication. In an era of globalization, rapid development of science and technology, and the dominance of English, language identity and cultural preservation still can not be neglected. For example, Guy Cook states his case in bold style in his book: *Translation in Language Teaching*: “I shall argue that for most contemporary language learners, translation should be a major aim and means of language learning, and a major measure of success.”(Cook, 2010). Maria Gonzalez - Davies pays special emphasis on teachers role appropriate either as communicators, final adjudicators or leaders appropriate for the students in the translation classes with diverse orientations of linguistic, cultural, cognitive, and functional approaches (Gonzalez Davies, 2004:14-15) 。

Professional translation is a current trend for translation. The purposes of this paper are firstly, to point out the importance of interdisciplinary knowledge for professional translation; and secondly, to stimulus scholars for further research.

Professional translation is here meant by: translation as an academic discipline; translation as interdisciplinary; and translation as a profession.

1-1 Translation as an Academic Discipline

Translation was once upon a time a sub-discipline of language or comparative literature, but now is treated as an academic discipline.

Jeremy Munday describes that translation studies is the new academic discipline related to the study of the theory and phenomena of translation. By its nature it is multilingual and also interdisciplinary, encompassing languages, linguistics, communication studies, philosophy and a range of types of cultural studies (Munday, 2001:1). However, some scholars still doubt that "it is unclear whether translation studies are yet recognized as an independent academic discipline. The National Science Council in Taiwan has categorized it is a sub-discipline under linguistics. Increasing the quality, breadth and depth may help translation of research into the multi - dimensional mental activity that is translation may help translation studies become an accepted academic discipline (Lan Y, Dong D., & Chiu A., 2009:177). Now, lots of department of translation studies have been established in Taiwan and all over the world dealing with teaching, research and occupation training, we can say that translation is already an independent academic discipline.

1-2 Translation as Interdisciplinary

Translation is interdisciplinary, for example, Edwin Gentzler argues that "The number of borders being crossed in one translation are always multiple. Thus I argue in favor of the implementation of multiple theories of translation from a variety of disciplines and discourses to better analyze the variety meanings and functions produced; hence the title of the book. Given how the boundaries of the field have expanded from linguistic and textual analysis to that entire network of complex signs that constitute culture, no one scholar from one discipline can possibly hope to provide all the answers. We are at the verge of an exciting new phase of research for the field, one that is forcing scholars to combine theories and resources from a variety of disciplines and which is leading to multiple new insights. I hope this revised second edition will contribute some small way to expedite the process" (Gentzler, 2001:203).

Susan Bassnett indicates that what we can see from both cultural studies and translation studies today is that the moment of the isolated academic sitting in an ivory tower is over, and indeed in these multifaceted inter-disciplines, isolation is counterproductive.

Translation is, after all, dialogic in its very nature, involving as it does more than one voice. The study of translation, like the study of culture, needs a plurality of voices.

And, similarly, the study of culture always involves an examination of the processes of encoding and decoding that comprise translation (Bassnett, 1988:138-139) ; And that “Once seen as a sub-branch of linguistics, translation today is perceived as an interdisciplinary field of study... Translation Studies is more comfortable with itself, better to engage in borrowing from and lending techniques and methods to other disciplines” (Bassnett, 2002:2-3).

Mary Snell-Hornby states that one of the features of our “inter-discipline” during the 1990s is that it did not only “import” from outside, but integrated and coordinated the various new strands of knowledge from within. One invariable factor is the reader (Snell-Hornby, 2006:104).

Eugene Nida expresses that a more useful approach to the study of the diversity of translation theories is to group together variously related theories on the basis of the disciplines that have served as the basic points of reference for some of the primary insights: philology, although often spoken of as “literary criticism” or “literary analysis”; linguistics, and especially sociolinguistics (language used in communication); and semiotics, particularly socio-semiotics, the study of sign systems used in human communication. This order of disciplines reflects a somewhat historical development, but each of these orientations in translating is endorsed and favored by a number of present day scholars. At the same time it is important to recognize some of the important contributions being made to translation by other related disciplines, for example, psychology, information theory, informatics, and sociology (Nida, 2001:108-109).

Susan Sarceive, after analyzing the profile of the legal translator in the past, present and future, her paper emphasizes the need for interdisciplinary programs that provide special training in legal translation. She suggests translation schools should be encouraged to offer interdisciplinary programs that combine translation skills with in-depth legal knowledge” (Susan Sarceive, 1994:302-305).

1-3 Translation as a Profession

Scholars around all the worlds see translation as a vocational field of study, for example, graduate programs in Taiwan are concerned about how resolve the problem of translation practice and instruction.

In Australia, in order to meet the demands of translation due to multiculturalism, National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpretation has been established to maintain the quality of professional & para-professional translation. (www.naati.com.au).

2. The Development of Translation Theories

Is translating simply the act of transferring the meaning of a text from one language into another or does it depend on some theory of similarities and contrasts between languages? In order to analyze and to direct such an activity, a number of specialists in translating have elaborated numerous theories: linguistic, sociolinguistic, communicative, free, literal, hermeneutic, semiotics, relevant, skopo, Marxist, transformational, and even gender – to mention only a few. But what seems even more strange is that for the most part of the best professional translators and interpreters has little or no use for the various theories of translation. They regarded them as largely a waste of time, especially since most professional translators regularly and consistently violate so many rules laid down by theorists (Nida, 2001:1).

There are lots of issues and debates in translation studies, including translation process and product; objectivity/subjectivity; literal versus free; faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance; formal and dynamic equivalence; style and content; author-centred and reader centred; laws of translation, etc. Among which, accuracy of content is one of the most important issue. Accuracy of content should not be judged primarily in terms of “being true” to the author, but in not causing misunderstanding of the message by those for whom the translation is intended. What clients need and general demand is first and foremost accuracy. If a translated text can also be easy to read, that is indeed a plus factor, and if it can be culturally appropriate, the translation is obviously a success (Nida, 2001:3).

A. F. Tytler, whose *Essay on the Principles of Translation* was the first whole book in English devoted to translation studies, propounds three “laws of translation”: that the translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work; that the style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original; that the translations should have all the ease of original composition. A more recent formation of the “basic requirement” of a translation is to be found in Nida.

The similarities are striking: making sense; conveying the spirit and manner of the origin; having a natural and easy form of expression; producing a similar response. The fourth requirement is an addition to Tytler's list, reflecting modern concern with reader response (Hatim & Mason, 1990: 16).

Scholars have different points of view on different orientations in regard of translation theories, for example, Edwin Gentzler has traced five approaches : North American translation workshop, translation science, early translation studies, poly-system, and deconstruction(Gentzler,2001:187); Mary Snell-Hornby has talked about translation as an independent discipline, pragmatic turn, cultural turn, interdisciplinary, empiricism, globalization, and sociology turn(Snell-Hornby, 2006); Eugene Nida has traced theories based on philological insights, theories based on linguistic insights, and theories based on socio-semiotics (Nida, 2001:108-113) ; and Anthony Pym has traced a plurality of paradigms including equivalence, purpose, description, uncertainty, localization, and cultural translations(Pym, 2010).

In this paper, I will discuss the four period of the development of translation theories based on whether professional translation has been emphasised. There are: The Period of Literature theory of Translation; The Period of Linguistics Theory of Translation; The Period of Culture Theory of Translation; and The Period of Professional Theory of Translation.

2-1 The Period of Literary Theory of Translation

During this period of literary translation, scholars pay attention to the aesthetics of the translation, and treat translation as art. Philology, the study and evaluation of written texts, including their authenticity, form, meaning, and cultural influence, has for more than 2000 years been the primary basis for discussion translation theories and practice. In general such texts have been literary productions because they seemed to be the only texts that warranted being translated into other languages (Nida, 2001:109).

2-2. The Period of Linguistic theory of Translation

Earlier in this period, scholars see translation as science and pay attention to syntactic structure such as grammar and lexis; later, scholars pay attention to semantic meaning such as referential meaning and connotative meaning; and finally scholars pay attention to the pragmatic use of language and see translation as communicative process in the social context.

The linguistic orientation in translating has been especially enlarged by work in sociolinguistics, in which the emphasis is not on language as a structure but on the role of language as used by speakers and writers. Sociolinguistics has called attention to the function of levels and registers in language, linguistics, the role of power and solidarity in language use and in the systematic character of what some linguists in the past have treated a mere accidental variation (Nida,2001:111)..

2-3.The Period of Cultural Theory of Translation

During this period, scholars pay special attention to culture, for example, Lawrence Venuti has talked about the translation strategies of foreignization and domestication. “Invisibility” is the term he has used to describe the translator's situation and activity in contemporary Anglo-American culture. It refers to two mutually determining phenomena: one is an illusionistic effect of discourse, of the translator's own manipulation of English; the other is the practice of reading and evaluating translations that has long prevailed in the United Kingdom and the United, among other cultures, both English and foreign languages. The appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation, but the “original”. The illusion of the transparency is an effect of fluent discourse, of the translators effort to insure easy readability by adhering to current usage, maintaining continuous syntax, fixing a precise meaning...What is so remarkable here is that this illusory effect conceals the numerous conditions under which the translation is made, starting with the translator's crucial intervention in the foreign text .The more fluent the translation, the more invisible the translator, and presumably, the more visible the writer or meaning of the foreign text (Venuti, 1995:1-2).

2-4.The Period of Professional Theory of Translation

During the period of professional theory of translation, as mentioned above, scholars pay special attention to translation as an independent academic discipline; translation as interdisciplinary; and translation as a profession.

3. Translation Methods

Scholars from all over the world in the past and now have suggested diverse translation methods and process, both in macro and micro dimensions, for example, the Macro, which includes: content accuracy attitude, function equivalence, equivalent effect, foreignization and domestication; the micro which includes syntactic structure (grammar, lexis). The translation process which includes: analysis, transfer, re-structuring, and testing (Nida & Taber, 2004).

However, the practice of professional translation must pay special attention to the interdisciplinary professional knowledge and ability in the practice of translation. For example, if you translate a legal document, you had better have sufficient knowledge of translation as well as laws; if you want to translate a ballroom dance document, you had better have sufficient knowledge of translation as well as ballroom dance; and if you want to translation a text on modern China, you had better have sufficient knowledge of translation as well as Modern China to cope with the translation practice. Here we have an example translating English into Chinese Mandarin. The English version is as the following:

"The Revolution of 1911 was not much of a revolution: There was no fundamental overthrow of the existing social order, nor was there a significant shift in the allocation of political or economic power at the local level. Without the backing of a well-organized movement, the revolutionaries achieved a dominant role in the ending of imperial rule and the establishment of a successful political order in only four provinces - Kwangtung, Anhwei, Kiangsi and Hunan. Thanks to a shortage of defenders of the throne's interest, the Revolution was a relatively bloodless affairs. The precipitate cease-fire and general acceptance of a political rather than military solution reflected widespread acceptance, almost from the start of the eventual solution - a republic under Yuan Shih-k'ai" (Louis, S., 1979:111).

The first stage of the translation process is the comprehension of original text, including the grammar, the lexis, the semantics, and the pragmatic dimension.

If completely bilingual persons have a clear understanding of a text to be translated from a source to a receptor(or target) language, they do not need to instruct their brains about how to use a noun, verb, adjective, or participle to represent a particular concept or to place a qualifying clause at the beginning or the end of a sentence, all such decisions are largely automatic because our brains are excellently organised to carry out all such decisions in a largely unconscious manner (Nida, 2001:3); The second stage of translation process is the transfer of the meaning of the original text accurately into the target language, Mandarin; And the last stage of the translation process is to express the message accurately , fluently and appropriately in Mandarin.

During the process of translation, however, professional knowledge on modern China is the most important. You must know there are diverse interpretations on 1911 Revolution for this modern China discipline. For example, the nature of 1911 Revolution is debatable, one says that it is a revolution by diplomacy; another says that it is an all-people revolution (Chang, Y. 1988:52,72); the other says that it is a bourgeoisie revolution (Wu ,Y., 1961:26); still other says that it is just a dynastic revolution:

"The Revolution of 1911 turns out to be a dynastic revolution. This supposition is supported by two facts. One is that what attracted students, secret societies, and officers and soldiers of the New Army to the Revolution were nothing more than the anti-Manchu racism in Sun Yat-senism. The other is that no great economic and social changes can be detected between the period before and after the Revolution. Of course, there was some progress in industrialization, but this may be explained as natural growth than the result of the Revolution" (Chuzo, I., 1968:313).

And still other says:

Nevertheless it is equally difficult, despite the role played by conservative elements, to regard the 1911 Revolution simply as a traditional rebellion bringing about the fall of one dynasty and the founding of another. This revolution, although it followed the traditional pattern, had a new set of slogans, such as democracy, liberty, and national independence"(Marie-Claire, B., 1968:294).

All the above scholars are able to justify their arguments wisely with evidences. However, there is no doubt that the 1911 Revolution was able to be achieved mainly due to the success of the South North Negotiation among all parts struggling for power and interests. Without the success of the South North Negotiation, the 1911 Revolution might have been pacified by Yuan, Shih-k'ai, then the prime minister of the Ch'ing Court, and the birth of the Republic of China would not be possible. Of course, Yuan, Shih-k'ai had taken into consideration of his own best interest and accepted the negotiation so as to become the president of the Republic of China. The 1911 Revolution indeed was accomplished by negotiation and it can be said that it was a "revolution by diplomacy" (Sun, S., 2013:10).

After these professional scholarship considerations, and this text can be translated accurately, fluently and adequately into Chinese Mandarin, as in the Appendix.

4. Conclusion

As the above you can see, the professional theory of translation is the current trend for translators. The research finding and implication is as the following:

“The translators had better have professional knowledge and ability for the translation fields, such as Modern China, Laws and Politics, Finance and Economy, Mass Media, Science and Technology, Environment, and even Ballroom Dancing in each respect so as to be competent in translation. During the process of translation, the interdisciplinary professional knowledge and ability is the most important for translation”.

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Appendix: the Chinese Mandarin version of 1911 Revolution

“辛亥革命算不上是徹底的革命:既存的社會秩序沒有根本的推翻，地方政治經濟權力的分配也沒有重大改變。革命派缺乏良好組織運動的支持，僅在廣東、安徽、江西、湖南四省成功建立政治秩序，卻主導了推翻滿清。這次革命較無流血事件，蓋少有人維護滿清利益。突然的停火協定，及採取政治而非軍事解決的共識，反映出由袁世凱擔任共和國總統的最終解決方式，從一開始就被普遍的接受”。