

University of Abou Bakr Belkaid

Department of English

Translation techniques

Second semester

Unit two

Oblique (indirect) translation techniques

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Introduction

It was Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) who first put oblique translation technique on the map, which allow translators to exert a strict control over the reliability of their efforts.

Oblique translation procedures are used when the structural or conceptual elements of the source language cannot be directly translated without altering meaning or upsetting the grammatical and stylistic elements of the target language, the translators use Oblique or indirect Translation Techniques which includes:

- Transposition
- Modulation
- Reformulation or Equivalence
- Adaptation
- Compensation

Lecture 1 -Transposition -

Here, the translator changes the grammatical category of the word. It may be compulsory or optional and multiple combinations are possible. It is a shift in word class without changing meaning. (verb-adjective-adverb-preposition...).

Examples:

Source language	Target language
Noun The hour of indulgence	Verb le moment de se faire plaisir
Noun At some level of consciousness	Adverb plus ou moins consciemment
Adjectif festival paper	Noun papier-cadeau, litt. : papier de fête
Adjectih Endless	Verb ne s'arrête jamais, n'en finit pas,
Verb Ta bleep	Noun le bip-bip
Adverb with a certain testy reluctance	Noun avec une certaine réticence et quelque irritation

Source language	Target language.
proposition Into a shallow rippled expanse	verb pour former une étendue peu profonde et ridée.
driving through the city	Traversant la ville en voiture
run up the stairs	monter l'escalier en courant.
ski down the slope	descendre la piste à ski.
verb heralding the approach This is an optional transposition of the relative to the participal but it does lighten the syntax. An additional transposition, of the substantive passage to the participle approaching might have been envisaged were it not for the rather awkward effect of	preposition qui annonçaient le passage

two successive participle forms.	
<p>dans l'espoir</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This is an almost obligatory transposition of the preposition and substantive to the participle form, since a more literal rendering by the noun phrase in the hope would convolute the syntax of the sentence. 	hoping
<p>qui suivait</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Here the transposition of the relative, while optional, just as in our first example supra, nonetheless allows the sentence to run more smoothly. 	travelling
<p>son passage</p> <p>This is an obligatory transposition since English does not possess a substantive for passage in this context</p>	as he walks by
<p>son genre de vie</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is an optional transposition. It is advisable, however, in order to avoid a term such as lifestyle the register of which is too familiar. 	the kind of life he leads

Lecture 2 –Adaptation-

Here we reach the outer limit of translation. Adaptation needs to be used in situations where the metalinguistic situation referred to in the original text does not exist in the target language. It is therefore necessary to adapt the original reference to a phenomenon which does exist in the target language, in order to preserve the meaning of the allusion.

Examples:

à qui les entendrait le dernier (at who-heard-it-last),: this slight adaptation seems necessary in English to underline the habitual character of their game. le beau para d'Indochine (her wild colonial boy),: while the French is not, strictly speaking, a collocation, it has the ring of one and we opted to translate it by reference to the popular ballad.

Lecture 3 –Modulation-

This procedure involves switching angle or point of view in order to translate a word or expression that "moves" awkwardly from one language to another. It operates by metonymic transfer- the part for the whole, the container for the content, etc...

Examples:

les occupations auxquelles il passe la plus grande partie de ses heures (the occupations that take up most of his day),: There à a double modulation here, the dative relative pronoun becomes the nominative and the metonymic "heures" is expanded to "days".

le milieu avec lequel il est en contact (the circles in which he moves),: The quasi-collocational character of the phrase makes it necessary to opt for the dynamic verb in English.

vu son attitude (in view of his behaviour),: Similarly, this compulsory modulation involves swapping a static lexeme, "attitude", for the more dynamic "behaviour". The problem is that the English "attitude" concerns either a general approach to a problem or, on a more physical technical register, the angle or posture adopted by a person or an object.

There are two types of modulation :

Metonymical modulation:

The translator changes the part for the whole or the cause for the effect or the container for the content.

More Examples:

Source language	target language
he swung the bill in my face	Il m'agita l'addition sous le nez. the part for the whole
He chin nuzzled into his breast	le monton rentré dans le cou.
She cleared her throat	elle s'eclaircit la voix.
Life jacket	gilet de sauvtage.
Sun-lamp	lampe a bronzer.
Sac de couchage	sleeping bed .
Paper weight	presse -papier .
Windshield	pare-brise.
I 've got you under my skin.	Je t'ai dans la peau
he died one hundred years ago.	Il est mort depuis cent ans

Grammatical modulation:

The translator changes affirmative to negative or injunction to interrogation or passive voice into active. Etc....

Examples:

Source language	target language
not unlike his own	un peu comme le sien. (The opposite in the negative form) .
A gaudy tie	Une cravate peu discrete

He has been a source of disturbance ever since	Il n'a cessé d'être une source de problèmes depuis
Quite maliciously. .	Non sans malice.
The flight was not yet being called	on n'avait pas encore annoncé leur vol (Active instead of passive
He left a sudden lurch of money	un brusque déclic se fit soudain dans sa mémoire.
The joke was on me	je fis les frais de la plaisanterie(.the subject becomes the object).
Follow the fleet.	en suivant la flotte.(injunctive from substituted for affirmative form)
Say the word and you are dead	dit u pronounces ce mot, t'es mort .

Lecture 4 - Reformulation or Equivalence-

This technique is often used when translating names of institutions, interjections, idioms or proverbs, translators used completely different expression to transfer the same meaning it is used for rendering more elaborate structures between SL and TL. The process is creative, but not always easy. Would you have translated?

Example: *Chat échaudé craint l'eau froide* ⇒ *once burned, twice shy.*

Lecture 5-Adaptation-

The most complex of Vinay and Darbelnet's translation procedures is the final one, adaptation which occurs when something specific to one language culture is

expressed in a totally different way that is familiar or appropriate to another language culture. It is a shift in cultural environment. Should pincho (a Spanish restaurant menu dish) be translated as kebab in English? It involves changing the cultural reference when a situation in the source culture does not exist in the target culture (for example France has Belgian jokes and England has Irish jokes). Example: *baseball* ⇒ *football*

Lecture 6-Compensation-

There is another translation technique called compensation ,it's used when the meaning is lost and the word or the expression can not be translated from source to target language i.e it allows the translator to change a stylistic difficulty into another section of the language .

Translators use compensation Translators know that compensation needs careful ,strategic application. because the transfer of meanings from the source language to the target language continually involves some degree of loss .this is the reason why the translator must decide if and when this technique is used.

There is an example mentioned by Peter Fawcett.It concerns the translation of formality which use forms like (tu and used in Spanish and tu and vous in French ..ect) knowing that English has only (you) to expresses degrees of formality in different situations.

Lecture 7-General conclusion

Finally, translation shifts can be viewed either as unwelcome deviations from the source text in the course of the translation act or as something indispensable and desired to overcome specific differences between the SL and TL (Bakker, Koster & van Leuven-Zwart 1998). Although the taxonomy introduced by Vinay and Darbelnet has been criticized for being nothing more than a comparison between English and French at the level of words, phrases, and sentences taken out of the context, it can be regarded as the proposal that formed a springboard for later taxonomies of translation techniques and strategies.

Vinay and Darbelnet's taxonomy of translation procedures encourages one to look beyond simple structural alterations between SL and TL to see the role of the translator as a creative intermediary between the original author and the target audience in the process of translation-mediated communication

Scholars exploring the translation shifts labeled and re-labeled them in the term translationese is a pejorative term used to refer to the language of translation that derives from calquing ST lexical or syntactic patterning (see Duff 1981). Newmark (2003: 96) uses a similar term translatoresese to refer to the automatic choice of the most common dictionary translation of a word where a less common alternative would be more appropriate. Translation Procedures various ways to achieve a more comprehensive and clear-cut categorizations (see Marco 2009 for a review of inconsistencies between the terms procedure, strategy, method, and technique within translation studies). For example, Nida (1964) uses the term techniques of adjustment to discuss processes targeted at producing semantically equivalent structures from a communicative perspective.

Finally ,We can say that translation is the result of a series of phrases that the translator undergoes consciously or unconsciously more or less intricately according to factors such as the characteristics of the original text to be translated, the translator's intellectual and material resources, the source and target language involved, the purpose of the translation and other basically external influences such as time and physical or emotional conditions for the task.

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