Language Awareness and Translation

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Introduction

The deceptively simple title of this chapter hides a bewildering complexity associated with the innocent-looking noun ‘translation’ – a complexity that must be dwelt upon before the relationship between translation and language awareness can be addressed. Similarly, it is necessary to operate with an understanding of language awareness in a discussion about the relationships that may exist between it (language awareness) and translation, so although the phenomenon of language awareness receives detailed discussion elsewhere in this volume, I shall need to consider and elaborate on the subject with translation in mind.

Translation and Interpreting Studies

The discipline of translation studies is sometimes thought of as focusing on writing and written material, while what is, in that case, considered the separate, though related, discipline of interpreting studies (IS) is concerned with speech and spoken material. However, in many cases, the term ‘translation studies’ is understood to include the study of interpreting (see for example Pym, 2006: 19). This chapter is neutral with respect to this issue, but I will discuss the relationships between language awareness and both the spoken and the written activity of relating a text in one language to a text in another language in cases where one text is being thought of as the source text (ST) for the other. I shall consider this other text a translation if it is written and an interpretation if it is spoken. A translation and an interpretation are outcomes of, respectively, the activity and process of translating and the activity and process of interpreting. I mean, here, by ‘activity’ the physical act of writing or speaking, and by ‘process’ the cognitive processes that precede and accompany the physical act of translating or interpreting. I will also address the relationship between language awareness and the stylistic study of the two outcomes (spoken interpretations and written translations) of these processes and activities. I call the stylistic study of interpretations and translations in relation to their STs, Translational Stylistics (Malmkjær, 2003, 2004a). Translational Stylistics
asks why, given the way a source text is constructed, a translation of it has been shaped in a particular way. It assumes that answers to this question may be developed by way of looking for patterns in the relationships between translations and originals and that these answers rather often need to take into consideration both language constraints and social context, as well as, or even more than, free choice.

Often, the ST for a translation is itself written and the ST for an interpretation is itself spoken, but it can also happen that a spoken ST receives a written translation – as when, for example, a speech in Language A is rendered in a newspaper report in Language B – and that a written ST receives a spoken interpretation – as when, for example, a court interpreter is asked to read aloud in Language B what a written document in Language A says.

The Importance of Awareness of Translation and Interpreting

It would be advantageous for populations to be more aware of translation and interpreting than they seem to be. This argument runs counter to practices such as the European Union’s (Schäffner, 1997; Wagner, 2001) and the Canadian government’s (Gagnon, 2006) of presenting all/both language versions of a document as equivalent originals – practices that of course are instigated for egalitarian reasons, but that tend to obscure the ubiquity and nature of translating. Surveys of awareness of translating and interpreting activities are hard to come by, but if Venuti (1998: 88) is to be believed, awareness of translating and translations among the general population in both the US and UK is low, a phenomenon also illustrated by the regularity with which translations are used or cited apparently without any awareness that they are translations. For example, Schiavi remarks that in Chatman (1978):

in the same theoretical context, we see passages from English and American literature – Mansfield, Joyce, Hemingway, Trollope, James, Conrad, Hardy, Thackeray – alongside examples taken from other literatures – Sartre, Diderot, Balzac, Hesse, Flaubert – in English translation, without even mentioning that these passages are translated.

Schiavi, 1996: 2

This is worrying when we consider how much information reaches us in translation. As Bielsa (2007: 151) points out, “the role of translation in the production of news is invisible”, yet translation fulfils a pivotal role in the circulation of global news by producing significantly different local versions of international events … Global and local media organizations rewrite texts so that we [think we] are, and in fact we are not, watching, listening to and reading about the same events and a multitude of local versions and narratives of global events exists.

This invisibility extends to interpreting and interpretations, even among the actors in the media through which these phenomena reach most of us. As Holland (2006: 231) points out, “questions must be asked about the extent to which [the media] are attentive to – or even aware of – the interlingual and intercultural issues involved” when and if “newsmakers” take the opportunity to “give one message to the national audience in the mother tongue and another, in English, to the ‘international community’”. Of
all the British daily national newspapers, he points out, only *The Guardian* (13.9.1999, p. 1) commented on linguistic differences between two speeches made by the then president of Indonesia, B. J. Habibie, on the previous day about the deployment of UN peacekeeping forces to East Timor (Holland, 2006: 238). Yet, as, Bielsa and Bassnett (2009: 56) point out, “news agencies can be viewed as vast translation agencies, structurally designed to achieve fast and reliable translations of large amounts of information” – even though the reliability of the translations being produced can often brought into question (see for example Schäffner, 2005, 2008, forthcoming).

**Definitions of Language Awareness**

The Association for Language Awareness defines its subject as “explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use” (emphasis in the original). This is neither particularly explicit about what form the knowledge might take, nor about what it might be knowledge of. Svalberg (2016: 8–9) helpfully lists the topics of articles published in the journal *Language Awareness* between 2010 and 2014 (numbers in brackets indicate the number of articles that discuss the topic listed): Skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) (20); Learner and teacher strategies (17); Collaborative learning/interaction (15); Grammar (10); Lexis/morphology (5); Phonology (4); Pragmatics (4); Culture (7); Varieties/sociolinguistics (13); Language ideologies (6); Bilingualism (6).

Clearly, this list includes aspects of language that one may be aware of and understand if one has language awareness, but like all definitional lists (not that this list set out to be definitional, of course), this one is open to questions about whether each and every item in the list is a requirement for the realization of the phenomenon we are interested in. If not, how many are? Are some more important than others? And how deep must one’s knowledge be of each? Here, I will work with an understanding of language awareness that is less general than the definition given by the Association of Language Awareness, but less detailed than the list of aspects of language that has exercised authors of articles in recent volumes of the eponymous journal. I offer the following:

Language awareness involves the ability to think about language as a structured phenomenon that humans use to get along in the world of sentient beings, processes and things and by means of which a number of human purposes can be pursued more or less successfully, depending, at least partly, on how finely tuned interactants’ language awareness is. It includes (i) awareness that there are different languages in the world and often also in one country, sometimes in the form of, or known as, different dialects; but also (ii) awareness of the existence of idiolect: that no matter how similar two people’s language habits are, even when they declare that they are speaking the same language, in fact no two people’s language habits are the same; (iii) awareness that language is closely related to context and that the social world is to a significant extent built by language; and (iv) awareness that different language choices give rise to different nuances of meaning, and of the power of language to persuade, sometimes without seeming to be doing so. With regard to this latter aspect of language awareness, it is worth reminding ourselves that an individual’s “capacity to make a meaning stick”, as Thompson (1984: 132; italics in the original) puts it, can be closely related to what might be termed their successes in life, and so is their ability to sense when someone is trying to manipulate them. Language awareness is therefore a valuable asset for everyone, and it is important to seek varied ways to promote it. I shall not focus directly on critical language awareness...
here (for which consult for example the articles collected in Fairclough, 1992), but given the differences between languages, a source text and its translation almost inevitably constitute different variants of the ‘same’ narration: a set of choices will have had to be made in the creation of the translation and this inevitability can be exploited in pursuit of particular goals. Therefore, pairings of texts and translations of them lend themselves well to exploration from a ‘critical’ point of view, especially where more than one pairing exists for a given source text or set of source texts, as we shall see below.

**Language Awareness and Cross-Linguistic Awareness**

Understood in its ‘neutral’ sense (e.g. Hawkins, 1984), language awareness has been thought of as providing someone with a “language apprenticeship” (Hawkins, 1999: 124) in “learning how to learn a language” (p. 125). This would enable a person to learn new foreign languages, other than any that they might have studied at school, later in life. Halliday (1971: 10; see Hawkins, 1999: 125) was the first to use the term ‘awareness of language’ in this sense, although a movement to encourage something into the UK school curriculum that would “do what Latin [which was disappearing] does” had been developing since the 1950s within the Central Advisory Council for Education in England, which issued a call for something of this kind in 1959 (Hawkins, 1999: 125). Subsequently, the Bullock Report of 1975 into standards of literacy in English schools “went beyond its brief, and considered the wider question of the place of language in education, making a powerful theoretical case for language across the curriculum” (Hawkins, 1999: 126). This was partly in light of the fact that “many pupils [in English schools] were simply failing to learn the language in which the school curriculum was delivered and examined”, and, in addition, there was a “linear correlation between pupils’ performance in French and their parents’ occupation” (Burstall, 1970: 26); moreover, this mirrored a correlation between their performance in English and their parents’ occupation (Hawkins, 1999: 130). Language awareness, therefore, came to be seen to extend beyond awareness of foreign languages to include awareness of how one’s own language works, and, especially importantly when the relationship between language awareness and translation is at issue, “knowledge of the relationships holding between one’s two [or more] languages” (James, 1996: 139). When this knowledge is held at the explicit level of metacognition, James refers to it as Cross-linguistic Awareness (XLA). This, according to James, enables a learner to transfer selectively from the first language to the other or others, avoiding the kind of negative transfer that some scholars (e.g. Gatenby, 1948; Lado, 1964) have believed is likely to occur if translation exercises are used in language learning and teaching. According to James (1996: 147), “Translation is a particularly effective way to raise XLA, since, uniquely, in the act of translation two manifestations of MT and FL are juxtaposed”. What is being talked about here is probably the act of translating, whereas this chapter will focus not only on that, but also on what one can learn from *studying source texts and translations together*, that is, from engaging in Translational Stylistics. The latter activity is particularly helpful in classrooms of students with different sets of languages or students who are monolingual; in a monolingual classroom, translated texts can be provided in what is known as “back-translation”, which is a translation of a translation back into the language of the source text. Nancy Sheppard’s (1975/1992) bilingual (Pitjantjatjara and English) edition of *Alitjinya ngura tjukurtjaranga / Alitje in the dreamtime* (1975/1992) is a version of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland* (1865), and on each page of her book the Pitjantjatjara
text and the English backtranslation of it are set out side-by-side. Figure 28.1 shows the opening few sentences of the English backtranslation of the Pitjantjatjara text alongside Carroll’s own English text.

Clearly even this brief example invites discussion, for instance of the differences between the rather passive, primarily individual activity of reading books and the more active, cooperative telling and acting out of stories, issues which might be used as a basis for intercultural awareness-raising, if not exactly language awareness-raising, to which we must return.

Translators and Language Awareness

For translators and interpreters, language awareness is doubly important, because they have to make of a text in one language, following its own rules and spoken by its own native speakers in their own native setting, a text that is fit for purpose in another language with another rule-system for another population in another setting. Their dilemma is this: the standard expectations with regard to translation and interpreting are that (i) on the one hand, there will be strong semantic similarity between a text and its translation or interpretation; and (ii) on the other hand, there will be weak or ‘hidden’ syntactic, collocational and phonetic similarity between a text and its translation or interpretation; but (iii) linguistic and contextual formalities contribute to meaning; therefore texts in different languages cannot, in theory, mean exactly the same. A translator or interpreter who is able to achieve the requisite level of “semantic similarity in linguistic difference” (cf. Jakobson, 1959: 233, who however speaks more optimistically of equivalence in difference) may be assumed to possess language awareness in ample measure so that studying their activities and the results of their activities may be expected to be helpful for other people attempting to reach respectable levels of language awareness. Not, of course, that all translations or interpretations are excellent – some may not even be judged satisfactory – but such translations can be as helpful to seekers of language awareness as the excellent ones, especially when it is possible to compare the two sets.

Below, I shall mainly make use of examples of translated texts and their STs, because it is difficult to incorporate context into written examples, and context is very significant in interpreting. Nevertheless, much of what I say about translation holds true for interpreting too.
Creative Translating

A translator’s understanding of the purpose of the translation and of who its audience is will affect the degree to which the translator decides to comply with the expectation of semantic commonality between the source text and the translation. This is illustrated well in the examples from Alice in Wonderland and its translation into Pitjantjatjara that we looked at above. As Ker Wilson explains in her preface:

Like all languages, Pitjantjatjara is the cultural expression of its people, descriptive of the terrain, the fauna and flora and way of life known to them; it follows that the characters and setting of Alice have been adapted accordingly. Thus, the White Rabbit, with his gloves and fan, becomes the Kangaroo, with dilly-bag and digging-stick – not, it should be emphasized, because there is no Pittjantjatjara word for ‘rabbit’, but simply because an Aboriginal Alice would naturally have seen a kangaroo in her dream.

Ker Wilson, 1975: viii

She goes on to mention other adjustments that have been made to the story in order to fit it to its new surroundings. These are so numerous that the story is arguably not a translation of Carroll’s book, but an adaptation, as the quotation above also suggests. It is difficult to distinguish adaptations, or ‘versions’ from translations and there are no clear criteria for doing so (see for example Gagnon, 2006: 76; Windle, 2011: 159–168), but changes to scenery and participants of the type illustrated by the Alice example usually lead people to consider the new text to be an adaptation rather than a translation. In contrast, adjustments such as those made by the first translator into English of Hans Christian Andersen’s novels and stories, Mary Howitt (1799–1888), although remarkable, are not normally considered so significant that talk of translation is inappropriate. Howitt called her collection of 1846 “Wonderful Stories for Children”, and there are clear traces in her translations of her understanding of what would be suitable in her opinion for such an audience. For example, where Andersen has:

“Now we’ll be revenged!” they [a group of young storks] said.
“Now let’s have revenge,” said they.
“Leave off talking of revenge,” said the mother. “Listen to me, which is a great deal better.”


Howitt has:

“Now we’ll be revenged!” they [a group of young storks] said.
“Now let’s have revenge,” said they.
“Leave off talking of revenge,” said the mother. “My plan is just right!”

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Her contemporary fellow translator, Henry Wiliam Dulcken (1832–1894), whose earliest translations of Andersen’s stories were published a mere 18 years later than Howitt’s earliest efforts, laboured under the same sociocultural conditions and mores as she did, but is rather more creative, I want to argue, in how he deals with them in the context of his translations. In the case of the story about the storks, Dulcken in fact retains more or less what the ST has:

“Now we will be revenged!” they said.
“Yes, certainly!” said the mother stork. “What I have thought of will be the best. …”

However, in other examples, Dulcken feels constrained to take adjusting action in order that his translations be not too offensive to Victorian sensibilities. Consider the following examples of Andersen’s STs in my close translation followed by Howitt’s translation, followed by Dulcken’s:

**Example 1**

From *Ole Lukøie* (Andersen, 1842, my translation; my emphasis – in Dal, 1963–1967):

… and they all talked about themselves, except the spittoon, which stood silent, cross that they could be so vain as to only talk about themselves and only think about themselves and have no thought for it, even though it stood so humbly in the corner and let itself be spat on.

Howitt (1846) *Olé Luckoiè* (my emphasis – in Andersen, 1846):

Everything talked except the old door mat, which lay silent, and was vexed that they should be all so full of vanity as to talk of nothing but themselves, and think only about themselves, and never have one thought for it which lay so modestly in a corner and let itself be trodden upon.

Dulcken (1866) *Ole-Luk-Oie* (my emphasis – in Andersen, 1866):

each spoke of itself, with the exception of the spittoon, which stood silent, and was vexed that they should be so vain as to speak only of themselves, and think only of themselves, without any regard for him who stood so modestly in the corner for everyone’s use.

Here, Dulcken retains the object from the original text which Mary Howitt clearly finds too offensive, the spittoon, but avoids mention of the act of spitting by way of the less offensive “for everyone’s use”.

**Example 2**


The most beautiful girls, floatingly slim, dressed in waving gauze, so that their lovely limbs were visible, floated in dances

Howitt (1846) “The Garden of Paradise” (in Andersen 1846):
The most beautiful maidens floated in the dance
Dulcken (1866) “The Garden of Paradise” (in Andersen, 1866):
The most beautiful maidens, floating and slender, clad in gauzy mist, glided by in the dance

Here, Dulcken retains the gauzy mist so that although the maidens’ limbs are not exactly mentioned, the reader is at liberty to imagine them visible through the thin material in which the maidens are dressed.

In example 3, we begin to see how translations in comparisons with their source texts may enhance language awareness.

**Example 3**

From *Rosenalfen* (‘The rose elf’; Andersen, 1839 – in Dal, 1963–1967; my close translation; my emphasis):
Farewell my sweet bride, for that is what you are to me!
Howitt (1846) “The rose elf” (in Andersen, 1846):

Dulcken (1866) “The rose elf” (my emphasis, in Andersen, 1866):
Farewell, my sweet bride, for that you shall be!

Example 3 shows how, by an elegant tense change from the original’s present to the translation’s future, Dulcken prevents any thoughts of the sense in which the young unmarried couple in this story might nevertheless already be as husband and bride; the less creative Howitt simply leaves the remark unsaid.

As example 3 suggests, published translations often illustrate language awareness on the translator’s part because, as mentioned above, languages differ whereas the meanings to be expressed in a translation are very often supposed to be ‘the same’ as the meanings of the source texts. Occasionally, a translator may opt for ‘censorship’ in the form of deletion or substitution, as in Mary Howitt’s case, and when we compare her means of dealing with potentially offensive material with Dulcken’s we might want to argue that her censoriousness results from a lack of language awareness on her part.

**Language Awareness-raising by Means of Translational Stylistics**

In this section, we shall look at a number of extracts of translations and their STs, the study of which might help raise awareness of the functions of various aspects of language. Every nuance of language and of linguistic artistry can be illustrated, and awareness of it heightened, by means of exercises in translational stylistics, but it will clearly not be possible to provide examples of every aspect of language in original and translation here.

Above, I spoke of translations as being “fit for purpose”. As we have seen, when comparing Howitt’s and Dulcken’s translations of the same passages from Andersen’s stories, translators will not always agree on what is “fit for purpose”; and what is “fit for purpose” in translational terms need not always be what is closest in semantic
terms to the ST. For a one-time managing director of the Danish company, VELUX, for example, the most important feature of a translation would be to create the illusion that VELUX was native to the country of the language of the translation: “We want Frenchmen to consider VELUX French. In the same way as the Germans consider VELUX German and the British [consider] VELUX British” (quoted in Mousten, 2008: 95). In such cases, a considerable degree of “domestication” (Venuti, 1995) may take place that will result in a text that bears less resemblance to its ST than the naïve reader might expect (see also the examples above and the brief discussion of adaptation versus translation). Nevertheless, in order to make my points as clearly as possible in this section, I shall assume that the translators whose efforts I will be examining in the contexts of the STs they have set out with have striven for semantic closeness to the latter. I shall seek to provide examples relevant to the aspects of language awareness that I outlined above.

Language Varieties

There can be no doubt that translating and translational stylistics can be used to enhance people’s awareness that there are different languages and dialects in the world. Clearly, most people are aware of that, but reminders of their potential effects may nonetheless be appropriate.

The translation of dialects poses particular challenges for translators (see Federici, 2011), especially translators of literature. As Jones (2014: 33) remarks, “In literature, regional voice ties its speakers … to a geographic space by means of place-specific accent, vocabulary and/or grammar”, and it is obvious that (unless a region is bilingual) the specific place of a regional voice will not exist in the place where the language to be translated into operates: “Only Italy has a Rome-based voice” (ibid.). But because “the creative use of linguistic varieties in literary dialogue … becomes a textual resource that helps the reader to define the sociocultural profile of the character, as well as his/her position in the sociocultural fictional context” (Ramos Pinto, 2009: 291), comparisons between texts in which dialects are represented and their translations, in which they are less clearly observable, can be instructive of the role that dialects play in people’s lives. Delaere et al. (2012) show that “texts translated into Belgian Dutch make more use of standard language than non-translated Belgian Dutch texts”, a finding that supports Toury’s (1995: 267–8; bold in the original) so-called law of growing standardization: “in translation, textual relations obtaining in the original are often modified, sometimes to the point of being totally ignored, in favour of [more] habitual options offered by the target repertoire”.

A repertoire is, roughly, a register in Halliday’s (1978) sense of the selection of semiotic resources that people typically associate with a particular configuration of contextual variable (who, what, where, why, etc.). There are, of course, cases in which translators have tried to retain a dialect. For example, the Danish translator of Evelyn Waugh’s Decline and Fall (1928, section VIII “The Sports”) renders Waugh’s attempt to represent a version of English spoken by native speakers of Welsh:

We are the silver band the Lord bless and keep you … the band that no one could beat whatever but two indeed in the Eisteddfod that for all North Wales was look you…. Three pounds you pay us would you said indeed to at the sports play
As:

Vi være Byorkeste Herren signe og bevarene Dem aldrig ved man … det Orkeste
som have besejre all andre i hele Nordwales undtage to da vi spille om Kappe i
Eisteddfod … De altid love os trene Pund for Stævnespille aldrig ved man

Waugh, Forfald og Fald, 1945, tr. Vibeke Bloch

[We be town-orcheste the Lord bless and keep you, never one knows … the orcheste
which have conquered all otheres in all Northwales excepting two when we played
competition in Eisteddfod … you always promise us threefold pounds for match-
playing never one knows]

The success of this valiant attempt is a matter of opinion, but it certainly impresses on
the reader that a non-standard variety of language is in use at this point in the novel.

Idiolects

I also suggested above that language awareness encompasses awareness of the existence
of idiolect. Personal speaking or writing styles may not be reproduced in translations,
first of all for the obvious reason that in a translation the language used by people,
whether fictional or real, is going to be a different language from that used in the ori-
ginal text, and a person's idiolect is certainly bound to one language (unless they are
bilingual). Nevertheless, it is possible for a translator to select aspects of the language
being translated into and make them characteristic of the person speaking or writing
in the target text; for example, I have suggested (Malmkjær, 1995) that Andersen’s par-
ticular use of the Danish adjectives ‘rigtig’ and ‘virkelig’ can be matched in English by
the use of the English adjective ‘real’ for ‘rigtig’ and ‘genuine’ for ‘virkelig’. Such con-
sistency with ST linguistic features, however, is often not maintained in translations;
sometimes, this may be because individual translators have not translated enough of a
particular writer’s ouvre to notice the consistencies in the original. On the other hand,
the retention of inconsistencies in idiolect may be equally important to reproduce. For
example, van Leuven-Zwart, comparing the original text of Cervantes’ Don Quixote
with its translation into Dutch, shows that:

In those passages where Don Quixote talks to other characters, stylistic modu-
lation/specification of archaic elements is the key factor in the social distance
between Don Quixote and the others. In the original text, such a distance is only
created in those passages where Don Quixote is disturbed by his illusions, i.e. when
he is behaving and talking like a medieval knight. When this is not the case, he talks
like the other characters, in an informal, familiar tone. In the translation, however,
Don Quixote’s speech is archaic throughout, which means that there is a social
gap between him and the others; he consistently behaves like a medieval knight,
and is therefore excluded from the world of the other characters. This shift … has
far-reaching consequences for the characterization of Don Quixote. In the original
text, his speech is an indicator of his state of mind: when it is archaic, he is mad;
when he talks like the others, he is not. In the translation, however, this distinction
is not made, so that to the reader Don Quixote is mad whenever he talks.

van Leuven-Zwart, 1990: 74
Again, van Leuven-Zwart’s analysis of *Don Quixote* in Spanish and Dutch illustrates the third aspect of language awareness that I posited above, namely that language is closely related to context and that the social world is to a significant extent built by language. For example, terms of address function in many languages to indicate social distances between members of a society, and Van Leuven-Zwart (1990: 73) points out that a shift in the Dutch translation of *Don Quixote* from the original text, in which, in Chapter 22, a galley slave addresses Don Quixote with the informal, familiar “voacé”, to the pronoun “u”, which is unmarked, suggests less impudence on the galley slave’s part than is the case in the original.

An excellent example of the nuances of meaning that different language choices give rise to can be found in the very existence of language varieties whose terms are in a sense untranslatable. For example, Mezei (1995) argues that certain *joual* terms – terms belonging to the variety of Quebec French often used by artists – cannot be translated because it is part of their meaning to be *joual* terms. In other words, the very act of speaking *joual* makes a particular statement that can only be made by that act and which cannot, therefore, be translated into any other language. As Simon (2006: 56) phrases it, “When language is a rallying cry and where cultural identities are pitted one against the other, there is little chance of mutual exchange”.

**Thematization**

More optimistically, different translations of the same text, especially by the same translator, can also illustrate translational nuancing and hence raise awareness of its effect. For example, Klitgård (2007: 145–146) notes how the difference in word order in two translations into Danish of Joyce’s (1922) line, “A pleasant smile broke quietly on his lips”, affect the reading experience. The two translations are by the same translator, Mogen Boysen (1910–1987), who made no fewer than three translations into Danish of *Ulysses*, in 1949, 1970, and 1980. The 1949 translation has “Et venligt smil brød umærkeligt frem på hans læber” [“A friendly smile broke imperceptibly out on his lips”; my gloss], which maintains the original’s word order and in this way clearly emphasizes the friendliness (pleasant nature) of the smile; the translation of 1970 has “Roligt brød et venligt smil frem på hans læber” [“Quietly broke a friendly smile out on his lips”; my gloss], which emphasizes the manner in which the smile (which was friendly) appeared.

Changes in focus in translations occur in many text types, not only in literary translations. For example, in the 1985 quadrolingual publication by the Vikingship museum in Roskilde, Denmark, entitled, *Stambåde* (Dugout), the original Danish text by Jan Skamby Madsen begins:

I Vikingeskibshallens forskning omkring de ældste bådtyper er turen nu kommet til både tildannede af udhulede træstammer, – også kaldet stammebåde.

A close gloss translation might render this:

In the Viking-ship-hall’s research around the oldest boat-types the turn has now come to boats formed of hollowed out tree-trunks – also called trunk-boats.

The English translation begins somewhat awkwardly with the odd expression “series of research”:

460
In the series of research into ancient boat types carried out by the Viking Ship Museum the turn has now come to the so-called dugout – boats made from hollowed out tree trunks.

Although both texts begin with a propositional group (I Vikingeskibshallens forskning omkring de ældste bådtyper / In the series of research into ancient boat types carried out by the Viking Ship Museum), the Danish text presents the museum as the ‘owner’ of the research and focuses on the museum by placing the term that denotes it right after the preposition ‘I’ (In). The English text focuses on the research, which is mentioned immediately after the preposition, ‘In’, while the museum is presented at the end of the prepositional group as an ‘instrument’ or agent in a passive construction.

Below the English translation, we find the translation into German, which more or less follows the pattern of the English text:

In der Forschungsarbeit der Wikingerschiffshalle betreffs der ältesten Bootstypen ist jetzt die Reihe an Boote aus ausgehöhlten Baumstämmen gekommen – auch Einbäume genannt.

[In the researchwork of the vikingship-hall concerning the oldest boat-types is now the turn to boats of out-hollowed tree-trunks come – also dug-outs called; my gloss]

Finally, the French is closer to the Danish text, although the structure of the nominal group (or noun phrase) in French requires the museum to be mentioned before the boats and the boats before the Vikings. However, the French text has the research as an agent (and as the grammatical subject) in an active voice clause:

Au musée des bateaux Vikings, la recherché sur les types de bateaux les plus anciens s’en prend maintenant aux embarcations formées de tronc d’arbre évidé, également nommées piroques.

[At the museum of boats Vikings, the research into the types of boats the most old it takes now to boats made of trunks of trees hollowed also named dugouts; my gloss]

This series of texts illustrates both (i) more or less free choice in language and (ii) constraints imposed on translators by the rules and tendencies of languages. This duality may strike people more clearly and as more interesting when its effects are illustrated by way of translational examples than when it is dealt with monolingually; one’s own language can seem remarkably logical until contrasted with others by way of translations. In each of these languages, word order, that is, the order in which elements of a clause can be presented, is relatively free, whereas there is less choice within the groups that form the elements of clauses. It would not be possible for the French text to call the Viking Ship Museum a “Viking bateaux musée”, but it would have been possible for the French clause to have followed the German text’s ordering of the elements that form the clause. Where free choice is available in language, different foci can be created in texts. The Danish and French texts focus initially on the museum – a location – whereas the English and German texts focus initially on the research, a process.

Similarly, a comparison between the English and Spanish opening paragraph of Joseph Conrad’s Heart of Darkness (1902) / El corazón de las tinieblas (2001, tr. Amado...
Diéguez Rodríguez) illustrates a language-imposed focus in the Spanish text on processes where the original has a focus on features of the environment:

The *Nellie*, a cruising Yawl, swung to her anchor without a flutter of the sails, and was at rest. The flood had made, the wind was nearly calm, and being bound down the river, the only thing for it was to come to and wait for the turn of the tide

La *Nellie*, una yola de crucero, giró sobre el ancla sin el menor movimiento de las velas y quedó inmóvil. Había subido la marea, apenas soplaba el viento y, puesto que se dirigía río abajo, solo le quedaba fondeer y esperar al cambio de la marea.

The clauses in the first sentence in Spanish follow the structure of the English clauses exactly. But in the second sentence, where the first two English clauses begin by mentioning the agent (the flood, the wind – each a feature of the natural world) of the process or state being described (had made, was nearly calm), the Spanish text places the processes (Había subido, apenas soplab) before the agents (la marea, el viento). To mention the agent before the process would be highly marked in Spanish.

The Representation of the World: Deixis

The deictic systems of languages enable speakers and writers to indicate:

the location and identification of persons, objects, events, processes and activities being talked about, or referred to, in relation to the spatiotemporal context created and sustained by the act of utterance and the participation in it, typically, of a single speaker and at least one addressee.

*Lyons, 1977: 637*

These systems are realized through (Fillmore, 1975: 39) reference to people taking part in the communication situation (person deixis); the place or places in which these individuals are located (place/spatial deixis); when the communication act takes place (time/temporal deixis); social relationships between participants (social deixis); and reference by means of “lexical or grammatical elements … to some portion or aspect of the ongoing discourse” (Fillmore, 1975: 70) (discourse deixis).

Every text has a deictic centre, which is usually the speaker’s or writer’s conscience and place, but which may also or alternatively or simultaneously be that of a character. For example, in the opening passage of Andersen’s story, *Den grimme Ælling* (1844) (“The ugly duckling”), the deictic centre begins as the author’s, but switches to that of the mother duck who is about to hatch the eggs from one of which the central character of the story is to emerge. The story begins as shown below. The ST is presented first, followed by my gloss, which reproduces as exactly as possible the deictic terms of the original, which are very like the matching English terms. The point to be illustrated is, however, that their rules of use differ in the two languages so that an identical switch of deictic centre to that which takes place in the ST cannot be as clearly marked in the TT as it is in the ST. This kind of exercise can highlight and hence raise awareness of the effect of deixis in narration.
Der var saa deiligt ute på Landet; det var Sommer, Kornet stod guult, Havren grøn, Høet var reist i Stakke nede i de grønne Enge, og der gik Storken på sine lange, røde Been og snakkede ægyptisk, for det sprog havde han lær af sin Moder. Rundtom Ager og Eng var der store Skove, og midt i Skovene dybe Søer; jo, der var rigtignok deiligt derude på Landet! Midt i Solskinnet laae der en gammel Herregaard med dybe Canaler rundt om, og fra Muren og ned til Vandet voxte store Skræppeblade, der vare saa høie, at smaa Børn kunde staae opreiste under de største; der var ligesaav vildsomt derinde, som i den tykkeste Skov, og her laae en And paa sin Rede; hun skulde ruge sine smaa Ællinger ud, men nu var hun næsten kjed af det, fordi det varede saa længe …

My gloss (note that the graphic form ‘der’ of the place deictic adverb in Danish is shared with a pronoun that corresponds to ‘which’ or ‘that’; the instance of ‘der’ in the ST that is not in bold is that pronoun):

There was so lovely out in the country; it was summer, the corn stood yellow, the oats green, the hay was raised in stacks down in the green meadows, and there walked the stork on his long, red legs and talked Egyptian, for that language had he learnt from his mother. Around field and meadow were there large forests, and in the middle of the forests deep lakes; yes, there was indeed lovely out there in the country! In the middle of the sunshine lay there an old manor house with deep canals around it, and from the wall and down to the water grew large dock-leaves which were so high that small children could stand upright under the largest; there was just as wildsome in there as in the thickest forest, and here lay a duck on her nest; she had to hatch her small ducklings out, but now was she nearly bored with it, because it took so long

The source text provides a standard type of literary text opening. It begins with a description of a location distant from the narrator, who places it “(out/in) there” and hence distant from the reader. It remains distant until the sudden shift from distal “there” to proximal “here” when the narrating point of view, which the reader follows, gets to the duck and is “here”. The time is now also the duck’s time, “now”, although a reminder of the narrator’s time remains in the “was” giving the “present-in-past” effect of “now was”, which allows the reader to adopt the present-ness of the point of view of a character being told about in the past. We are in the same place as the duck, “here”, and we can empathize with her. It is not possible to retain the line towards the sudden deictic shift as clearly in translation into English as we find it in the ST, because English cannot begin with “there” in atmosphere contexts of the kind we find in the opening clause of the ST. In Malmkjær (1999), I examine nine translations into English of this passage, showing that none maintains a progression from there to here as clearly and consistently as the ST does.

Future Prospects

Pym et al. (2013) suggest that the use of translation in language teaching and learning is more common than some scholars and teachers would like to believe or admit; they
provide a range of activity types that might be employed in classrooms, taken from work that recommends their use in language learning contexts (e.g. Leonardi, 2010; García and Pena, 2011), and many scholars now argue for this practice (e.g. Cook, 2010; Laviosa, 2014). Several recent studies have also emphasized the enjoyment that translation-related exercises provide for language learners and teachers alike (Carreres and Noriega-Sanchez, 2011; Kelly and Bruen, 2015). In addition, voices from within the English Language Teaching world have suggested that language learners might benefit from “what has been called consciousness raising (CR) tasks” aimed at helping them to come to understand an aspect of the language being learnt “by carrying out a task on some L2 data” (Svalberg, 2013: 378; small capitals original). I would argue that translating is a task that involves the L2 very naturally, so long as the students are provided with a naturalistic brief, that is, so long as they are able to conceptualize a purpose that their translation is to serve for a particular audience, and as long as they know the origins of the source text.

Be all that as it may, there is a dearth of empirical research in this area; so the most helpful future activity would be well-designed, empirical investigations aiming to establish the actual relationships that may or may not exist between language awareness and translation and interpreting.

**Related Topics**

Interpreting studies; translation studies; translational stylistics; stylistic

**Note**

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**References**


Ker Wilson, B. (1975) *Preface to Alitjinya Ngura Tjukurtjarangka / Alitji in the Dreamtime*. Adapted and translated from Lewis Carroll’s story *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* by Nancy Sheppard. Adelaide: Department of Adult Education, the University of Adelaide.


