Exploring the meaning behind "Technical Translation"

Deepika
(Gold medal in Post Graduation)
Research Scholar
University Department of English
TMB University, Bhagalpur
Faculty of Humanities,
DPS International, Singapore.

Abstract

Technical Translation is a type of specialized translation involving the translation of documents produced by technical writers, or more specifically, texts which relate to technological subject areas or texts which deal with the practical application of scientific and technological information. While the presence of specialized terminology is a feature of technical texts, specialized terminology alone is not sufficient for classifying a text as 'technical' since numerous disciplines and subjects which are not 'technical' possess what can be regarded as specialized terminology. Translation is the concept of double understanding. Translation as an activity is required for the better understanding of text in the exchanging socio-cultural context. In a way the activity of translation deals with and also highlights the process of transformation of language. Translation serves as a means to study the progressive course of language in the changing frame, frame here including the social, cultural, historical and psychological perspectives.

Keywords: Translation, Terminology, Deep Structure, Connotation

The close study of translation discloses the process of incorporation, usage, dropping and disappearing of certain elemental words, phrases or structures. Not only this it also focuses on the transfer of structure from one language system to another thereby producing a new, easily understandable and comprehensible language structure taking into account the theory of 'double understanding' of text. Double understanding of text literally means proper inference obtained from the two language system, the source language system (ST) and the target language system

(TL). When a translator performs his task he takes into account the two systems SL and TL in order to deduce or decode SL and encode the message into TL in such a way that minimal extra effort is put by the readers for the understanding of the text. Language and mind approach plays an important role in proper understanding of text.

The great linguist Noam Chomsky has already made a language analysis distinguishing between 'surface structure' and 'deep structure'. The distinction made serves as a helping hand in the act of translation. 'Surface structure' refers to the arrangement of elements on the surface of discourse, the words on the page whereas the 'deep structure' deals with an underlying structural arrangement reflecting the actual relation between the concepts and entities involved. The role of translator as such is to establish connectivity between the two structures 'surface or deep', in order to provide the readers with a better understanding and concept, both concise and comprehensive. The translators mental activity though problematic at this stage turns to deny and defy idealized and decontextualised analysis of the data, as 'deep structure' is taken as a syntactic entity. Moreover utterance, in the absence of a plausible context cannot form the basis for a useful discussion of translation as the priority to the investigation of 'competence' i.e. the ideal speaker or hearer's language faculty over the investigation of performance i.e. the implementation of competence in production and reception of particular texts lead to the withdrawal of attention from language as communication which is the very substance of the translator's work.

Widdowson (1979: 8) makes a useful distinction between usage and use. Usage as codified in dictionaries and grammars, is 'a projection of the language system or code' and hence it should never be mistaken for the actual use of language in communication. It is evident that the preoccupation in translation studies with noncorrespondence of grammatical categories in individual languages is an exercise in usage rather than in use, in language – as – system rather than in language – as – communication.

Technical Translation is one part of specialized translation potentially non-cultural, therefore 'universal', primarily distinguished from other forms of Translation by terminology, although terminology usually makes up only about 5%-10% of a text, written in a technical style free from emotive languages, connotations, sound effects and original metaphors. Institutionalized Translation is always concept- centered where as Technical Translation is always object-centered. Technical Translation is a type of specialized translation involving the translation of documents produced by technical writers, or more specifically, texts which relate to technological subject areas or texts which deal with the practical application of scientific and technological information. While the presence of specialized terminology is a feature of

technical texts, specialized terminology alone is not sufficient for classifying a text as 'technical' since numerous disciplines and subjects which are not 'technical' posses what can be regarded as specialized terminology. Technical Translation covers the translation of many kinds of socialized texts and requires a high level of subject knowledge and mastery of the relevant terminology and writing conventions.

In addition to making texts with technical jargons accessible for a wider ranging audience, technical translation also involves linguistic features of translating technological texts from one language to another.Translation as a whole is the balance of art and science influenced by both theory and practice. Having knowledge of both the linguistic features as well as the aesthetic features of translation applies directly to the field of Technical Translation.

As a field, Technical Translation has been recognized, studied and developed since 1960's. Stemming from the field of translation studies, the field of technical translation traditionally emphasized much importance on the source language from which text is translated. However, over the years there has been a movement away from the traditional approach to focus on the purpose of translation and on the intended audience. This is perhaps because only 5%-10% of items in a technical document are terminologies, while the other 90-95% of the text is language, most likely in a natural style of the source language. Though technical translation is only one subset of the different types of professional translations, it is the largest subset as far as output is concerned. Currently, more than 90% of all professionally translated work is done by technical translators, highlighting the importance and significance of the field.

The role of the technical translator is not only to be a transmitter of information, but also to be a constructor of procedural discourse and knowledge through meaning, particularly because often times, the technical translator may also take on the role of technical writer. Research has demonstrated that technical communicators do, in fact, create new meaning as opposed to simply repackaging old information. This emphasizes the important role that technical translators play in making meaning, whether they are doing technical translation in one language or in multiple languages.

Much like professionals in the field of technical communication, the technical translators must have a cross-curricular and multi-faceted background. In addition to grasping theoretical and linguistic orientations for the actual translation process, an understanding of other subjects, such as cognitive psychology and technical communication, is important. Moreover, technical translation experiences rapid change in the field because of rapid change in technology. Hence institutionalized translation, where terms are transfer in context depends on culture, technical translation depends on the advancement of technology.

Exploring the meaning behind "Technical Translation"
By
Deepika

While translating a technical text, the translator have to be able to stand back and understand roughly what is happening in real life, not just that, but has to convince himself that the sentence translated makes sense linguistically. Even though much scientific and technological language and terminology can be translated 'literally' and also there are subjects containing increasing number of internationalisms, the present validity in the register and dialect should be checked.

Technical terms that appear on the periphery of a text say relatively context free in a list or a foot note, are not as important as those that are central. In science, the language is concept-centered where as in technology it is object centered. To explain, referring to any topic in science, a sub-text can be created along with the equivalent effect for proper explanation in TL but in case of technology, a particular term has to be given an equivalent which can lead to ambiguity.

Bibliography

1. Simon Murison-Bowie: Linguistic Corpora and Language Teaching, Annual Review of Applied Linguistics / Volume 16 / March 1996, pp 182 – 199
2. Nancy SchwedaNicholson: Translation and Interpretation, Annual Review of Applied Linguistics / Volume 15 / March 1995, pp 42 – 62
3. Adam Nádasdy: Phonetics, Phonology, and Applied Linguistics, Annual Review of Applied Linguistics / Volume 15 / March 1995, pp 63 – 80
4. Braj B. Kachru: World Englishes and English-Using Communities, Annual Review of Applied Linguistics / Volume 17 / March 1997, pp 66 – 87
5. Eric Kellerman: Crosslinguistic Influence: Transfer to Nowhere?, Annual Review of Applied Linguistics / Volume 15 / March 1995, pp 125 – 150
6. Alice F. Freed: Language and Gender, Annual Review of Applied Linguistics / Volume 15 / March 1995, pp 3 - 2

Exploring the meaning behind "Technical Translation"
By
Deepika