cultural translation. The question of ethics may be a productive place to start, ensuring, among other things, that translation in the conventional sense is not emptied of all meaning. Indeed, future research has the potential to demonstrate that interlingual translation holds the very real potential to improve scholars' understanding of the different ideas they have placed under the rubric of cultural translation.

See also:
COSMOPOLITANISM; ETHNOGRAPHY; HYBRIDITY; MIGRATION; THICK TRANSLATION

Further reading

Conway, K. (2017) *Little Mosque on the Prairie and the Paradoxes of Cultural Translation*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Discusses how the producers of a popular television show about a mosque in rural Canada translated Muslims for non-Muslim viewers, demonstrating the influence of a commercial broadcasting system on cultural translation by identifying a paradox whereby producers erased visible signs of difference in the name of diversity.

Geertz, C. (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected readings*, New York: Basic.

A key text that has influenced the fields of anthropology and cultural studies; although it does not speak of cultural translation as such, it discusses techniques to address the paradoxes that arise when scholars explain how people from other cultural communities make sense of the world.

Maitland, S. (2017) *What Is Cultural Translation?*, London: Bloomsbury.

Draws on the hermeneutical approaches of Paul Ricoeur and George Steiner to develop an approach to cultural translation that challenges and synthesizes past approaches, arguing for an application of the idea grounded in the practice of interlingual translation.

Papastergiadis, N. (2012) *Cosmopolitanism and Culture*, London: Polity.

Explores the aesthetic dimensions of cultural translation by examining avant-garde art collectives, placing the emphasis on situations where power between groups coming into contact is distributed in radically uneven ways.

KYLE CONWAY

Culture

In the English-speaking world, *culture* is a "top look-up" (Merriam Webster 2014), supporting Raymond William's (1976/1985:25) comment that "[c]ulture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language". Until the eighteenth century, however, culture – in Europe at least – referred exclusively to the humanist ideal of what was considered civilized in a developed society. A second meaning of culture emerged with the rise of anthropology, the study of *anthropos*/humankind. The focus was originally on studying the way of life of so-called primitive peoples, but now includes the study of "dispersed networks in cities or institutions [or] intercontinental migrant communities" (Erikson et al. 2001:162). Merriam-Webster's (2014) own online analysis of the spike in interest points to a more sociological understanding of culture: "a kind of academic attention to systematic behaviour [which] allows us to identify and isolate an idea, issue, or group". With the development of disciplines such as cultural studies, a distinctly different meaning has emerged, with culture being understood as an ideological force operating on society (Jenks 2005). Hence, depending on the definition adopted, culture may be an expression of excellence, a way of life classified by others as key, characteristic or even exotic, or something to problematize and be wary of. It may be formally learned, unconsciously shared or function as a site of conflict. To complicate matters further, anthropologists themselves now seriously question "the old idea of 'a people' possessing 'a shared culture'" (Erikson et al. 2001:162).

Most translation scholars accept that the meaning of a text is context dependent, that some form of cultural filter (Katan 2009a; House 2016:75–76) operates during translation; and that a professional translator should have (inter) cultural competence (Kelly 2005:74; EMT 2009), which Katan (2009b:284) defines in terms of the translator's ability to perceive and handle difference (Tomozeiu et al. 2016). At the same time, there is much resistance by professional organizations to practitioners mediating texts, i.e. taking the responsibility for, and dealing with, the inevitable refraction between one reality and another (Liu and Katan 2017). This resistance is

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particularly noticeable where the interpreting or translating takes place for the benefit of community outsiders, such as tourists or immigrants.

Different understandings of culture

Various understandings of culture can be presented as hierarchical frames or levels, each one (to some extent) embedded within larger frames. This hierarchy is based on the Theory of Types (Bateson 1972), which allows for each of the competing types of culture to be linked to an aspect of translation theory and practice. The levels themselves (referred to as technical, formal and informal) are based on E.T. Hall's popular anthropological iceberg model, the Triad of Culture model (1959/1990), which divides understandings of culture into what is visible (above the waterline), semi-visible and invisible. This iceberg metaphor parallels Freud's own iceberg theory involving three levels of the mind, which move from the conscious to the unconscious (McLeod 2015). The types, or frames, below the waterline are progressively more hidden but also progressively closer to our unquestioned assumptions about the world and our own (cultural) identities. A further dimension of hegemonic forces operates on the iceberg itself, as each level also reflects a different way in which society impinges on learning: technically, through explicit instruction; formally, through trial-and-error modelling of others; and informally, through memes, the unconscious inculcation of principles and worldviews in society. The extent to which a translator should intervene – i.e. interpret and manipulate rather than operate a purely linguistic transfer – will be negotiated in accordance with beliefs about the translator's role and the extent to which context should be taken into consideration.

The first cultural frame, or level, is at the tip of the iceberg and coincides with the humanist concept of culture. The focus is on the text, and on straightforward extratextual references. At this technical level, any associated hidden values are considered universal. Translation courses that engage with culture routinely focus on this area of "cultural knowledge" (Tomozeiu et al. 2016:253), what Newmark (1981:184–185) calls "the cultural value" of translation. Indeed the bylaws of the International Federation of Translators (FIT 2011) similarly assume that the value of translation is that it contributes "to the spread of culture throughout the world". Culture here is a thing to be imparted, such as literature, religion, philosophy and science (Delisle and Woodsworth 2012). Although spreading the new ideas might be perceived as an affront or as the wielding of hegemony rather than as enlightenment, at this level, the main concern of translators is to mediate the culture-bound referents for the new readership to reduce possible culture bumps (Leppihalme 1997). The assumption, at this level, is that once the culture-bound reference is made manifest in the translation, the communicative effect (efficacy) and the more psychological communicative affect will be context-independent.

Eugene Nida, a Bible translator, was a pioneer in this field. He highlighted the fact that new readerships would be unable to make manifest the culture-bound references of a text written 2000 years ago if a formally equivalent approach were used. He suggested, instead, a dynamic (or functional) equivalence approach, which "tries to relate the receptor to modes of behaviour relevant within the context of his [or her] own culture" (1964:159). Later work along these lines has been undertaken by scholars of audiovisual translation (Chiaro et al. 2008; Pedersen 2011; Ranzato 2016). Most work focuses on how to account for cultural references, which Pedersen divides into intralinguistic and extralinguistic, the latter termed ECRs. The intralinguistic include the translation of idioms, proverbs, slang and dialects, while ECRs include – following the European Master of Translation's intercultural competence descriptors – "[k]nowing how to grasp the presuppositions, the implicit, allusions, stereotypes and intertextual nature of a document" (EMT 2009:6). EMT (2017:6) later reclassified this competence, as "Language and Culture", and made it "the driving force behind all the other competences", though the cultural descriptors are no longer defined.

Since Vinay and Darbelnet (1958), various scholars have offered a plethora of strategies to compensate for lack of equivalence (Ranzato 2016), from word level to pragmatics and beyond (Baker 1992/2018). Pedersen (2011:101–102) usefully classifies intervention in terms of degree. Minimum intervention includes

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retention, specification and direct translation, while more marked intervention includes generalization, substitution and omission. Intercultural mediation (IM) (Katan 2013; Pöchacher 2008; Garzone and Archibald 2014; Taibi and Ozolins 2016) begins at this level of marked intervention. For Katan (2016a), IM represents the degree to which the translator uses her cultural insider skills to interpret and account for the intended meanings and likely reception of the text. The degree of intervention and the risks involved increase as we move down to the levels below the waterline, and to where the textlinguistic cues are more context dependent.

Hall's second, formal level of culture derives from anthropological definitions of culture, which focus on normal or appropriate practices. Vermeer's definition of culture, the "standard among German-speaking translation scholars" (Snell-Hornby 2006:55) focuses on this formal level: "the totality of norms, conventions and opinions which determine the behaviour of the members of a society, and all results of this behaviour (such as architecture, university institutions. . .)" (1990:9, trans. Snell-Hornby 2006:55). This is also the level of translation norms, for which Toury (1995/2012:63) is best known (Chesterman 2017:167–183). Toury also calls norms "performance 'instructions'", defining them as "the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community – as to what would count as right or wrong, adequate or inadequate". Toury's definition follows the same tripartite iceberg model outlined here: values guide norms that in turn shape performance. Here, the translator's focus of interest moves from encyclopedic knowledge to culture-specific discourse preferences.

At this formal level, anthropologists, linguists and translation scholars have investigated "cultural grammars" (Duranti 1997:27; Goodenough 2003:5), defined by Wierzbicka (1996:527, 2003, 2006) as "a set of subconscious rules that shape a people's ways of thinking, feeling, speaking, and interacting". These and their associated scripts form an integral part of the ethnography of communication, which has also been studied at discourse level, particularly in the field of second language learning, under the umbrella term of contrastive (now intercultural) rhetoric (Connor 2011). Cultural grammars have also been referred to as cultural conceptualizations, which Sharifian (2017) subsumes under the term cultural linguistics.

Translation, at this formal level, is sometimes referred to as pragmatic translation (Kübler and Volanschi 2012), though most research has focused on discreet units, generally using parallel and comparable corpora to investigate functional equivalences (Zanettin 2014b; House 2016; Manca 2016; Levisen and Waters (2017) – a focus not generally consonant with pragmatics itself. Culture-bound multimodal features of discourse, such as in museum brochures (Cranmer 2016) or soundscapes in audio guides (Fina 2017), are also being investigated at this level. 'Accessibility' is the key issue here, which amateur, untrained 'natural' translators, mediators and cultural informers are often more aware of and willing to account for (Katan 2016a, 2016b).

Hall's third level of culture, referred to as informal or out-of-awareness, closely parallels Freud's concept of superego (McLeod 2015), the area of conscience and of affect. Culture here is a more or less shared context (Malinowski 1935:51–52), a *weltgeist* (world spirit) and *weltanschauung* (worldview); a model or map of the world (Korzybski 1933/1958) which the interculturalist Hofstede (2001) reinterprets as mental programming. The most systematic treatment of culture for translators, according to Tymoczko (2007:224), explains this programming as "a system of congruent and interrelated beliefs, values and strategies" that guide action and interaction (Katan 2004, 26). This mentalist and symbolist understanding of culture is perhaps best exemplified by the ethnographer Geertz, who defines culture as "webs of significance [a community] has spun" (1973:5). Many of Geertz's ideas are now mainstream in translation theory, and Blumczynski (2016:136) argues that he is the ideal translation scholar's alter ego. Another ethnographer who is often appealed to in the literature (Nord 1997:24; Pedersen 2011:47; Munday 2012:2; House 2016:33) is Agar, who talks of "languaculture" and "rich points" (1994a: 60; 1994b:232), where terms "loaded with associations" (2015:20) are lost through technical level translation. These rich points are also what Levisen and Waters (2017) call cultural keywords, the site of Sapir-Whorf's linguistic and cultural relativity, Sapir (1929:209) famously purported that "[n]o two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be

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considered as representing the same social reality". This does not mean that translation is impossible, but that language is an integral part of the cultural filter (Katan 2004:29), and that mediation (or IM) should take place to ensure that translation is mindful of both effect and affect. At this informal or out-of-awareness level, culture is truly thick (Geertz 1973) in that even a single term or action has a potential series of effects and affects related to the particular webs spun. Appiah (1993) introduced the idea of thick translation, which a number of translation scholars have taken up (Hermans 2003; Sakellariou 2011). Appiah suggests reducing refraction by explaining the loads of associations through largely extratextual footnotes, glosses and annotations. The result, however, can lead to what Carbonell (2004:34) calls "academic foreignising", where emotively felt shades of meaning are made technically clear but at the same time lose their affect.

Apart from a languaculture's affective orientation towards particular lexical associations, cultures distinguish themselves through their adherence to more general core values (or dimensions and orientations). Interculturalists, such as E.T. Hall, who coined the term intercultural communication (1959/1990), have attempted to isolate communication orientations based on the core values of a community, usually defined in national terms. The classification of orientations produced by, for example, Hofstede (2001) on the basis of quantitative psychometric research has been used to account for particular translation and interpreting choices (Katan 2004; Katan and Straniero 2001; Cucchi 2015). These core orientations foster norms which may clash with imposed formal-level translation norms. Bennett (2014), for example, argues that translation into a globalized (Anglo) academic style contributes to what she calls epistemicide, the stifling of other cultural knowledge(s) and epistemologies. In literary translation, affect can similarly be lost. Spivak (1993:180) famously noted how Third World writers lose their individual culture, and the alterities they write about, through a homogenized translation, "so that the literature by a woman in Pakistan begins to resemble, in the feel of its prose, something by a man in Taiwan". The need to safeguard a culture's particular constellation of values against this Anglo-American (and male) driven homogenization is stressed by many (Baker 2013; Flotow and Farahzad 2017). Venuti originally proposed foreignization (1995/1998) as the only ethical translation strategy, but later accepted mediation as the realistic approach, given that a text's "distinctive linguistic features are the support of meanings, values, and functions specific to its originary culture, and these features do not survive intact, without variation, the move to a different language and culture" (2013:3).

From culture to cultures

Culture then has traditionally been viewed in terms of an identifying entity – whether it be a cultureme, a way of acting or a value – which through translation may be protected, distorted or lost. This is what House (2016:34) calls "old thinking about culture". The new thinking arrived with the upsurge of postmodern cultural studies, which problematizes any form of essentialist modelling, and suggests that neither the language nor the location of one's birth and/or upbringing uniquely determines one's culture. This renders the concept of culture more complex, leading Vertovec (2007) to argue for adopting the term super diversity, which encapsulates well the world of the twenty-first century, where countries traditionally imagined as almost fossilized in terms of people, language and ways of life are now being reimagined to encompass people with multiple-origins, fully including members of transnationally connected immigrant groups, as well as groups linked through cultural globalization. Indeed, culture here emerges as whatever it is (apart from the language) that connects a particular text and reader(ship). Translating thus cannot be reduced to a priori static models of culture. It is a dynamic process, and the effect/affect is unpredictable because "the meanings of the translated text are constructed and negotiated by the multiple agents involved" (Kershaw and Saldanha 2013:9). Canagarajah (2013a) goes further, suggesting that we are all translinguals, and that therefore it is through the language we use at any given moment – such as English as a lingua franca – that the webs of significance can be

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studied. Cultures here are not just dynamic but fleeting. Indeed, Street argues that "[c]ulture is a verb", meaning that culture is an active (and contested) process of meaning-making (1993:25). This is culture as a sociological phenomenon, with the implication that ethnic and national factors will have less effect on writing and translating than the conventions of the genre or the repertoires that are familiar to the particular social/professional grouping addressed. This grouping has been theorized as a community of practice by some (Wenger-Trayner and Beverl 2015) and as a small culture by others (Halliday 1999), in both cases avoiding the essentialist assumptions that underpin the literature on large cultural groupings. Nevertheless, Chinese scholar Li suggests that "[t]he world is not as free-flowing as postmodernists would like us to believe" (2008:16). Her analysis of writing and preferred academic essay topics shows that Chinese writers are adapting to this particular small culture genre like "a glacier" (ibid.).

Two other fundamental differences distinguish this cultural studies approach from the old thinking model. First, whatever was considered normal or ordinary in culture is now understood as the result of competing forces that privilege or suppress one or another set of values. At best there is negotiation within a set of complex cultural systems that are constantly jockeying for power. At worst, there is only survival of the most powerful. In translation studies, scholars drawing on polysystem theory (Evan-Zohar 1990), postcolonial theory (Orsini and Srivastava 2013) and narrative theory (Baker 2006) all focus on this more reflective level of culture. Today, we can speak of a translation culture or regime (Pym 2006), composed of forces in society within which translators are located as they participate in constructing the world. At this broader, reflective level, translators acknowledge that texts, and they themselves, are carriers of ideologies (Hatim and Mason 1997:147), with translation as an activity being regulated by societal forces (Wolf and Fukari 2007; Angelelli 2014b). The translator operating at this level is no longer a detached mediator; and once power relations are taken into account the idea of translators being located in-between cultures can be seen as naïve (Tymoczko 2003; Batchelor 2008) or "suspect" (Baker 2006:41). Indeed, translators at this informal level must decide if they are working for the weaker, more vulnerable "community" or for the dominant "system" (Leanza 2007:29). The ideal translator for a number of scholars becomes "an ethical agent of social change" (Tymoczko 2003:181), and an activist engaged in renarrating the world (Baker 2006; Tymoczko 2010b). This view clearly clashes with the current professional translator association view of culture as fully working within 'the system', and has led to practitioners, especially in Public Service Interpreting and Translating, feeling that they are located in "zones of uncertainty", where they are unsure "as to how to 'occupy' particular social spaces they come to inhabit" (Inghilleri 2005a:71).

It should be remembered, however, following Bateson (1972), that no level invalidates any of the other levels, and all understandings are useful. Ultimately, culture, at whatever frame-level it is envisaged, is that web of significance which locates a text, a translator and a reader within a particular set of contexts, understood in terms of place, community, idea or ideology.

See also:
COSMOPOLITANISM; ETHNOGRAPHY; GLOBALIZATION; HYBRIDITY; MIGRATION; THICK TRANSLATION; TRANSLATABILITY

Further reading

Hall, E.T. (1959/1990) *The Silent Language*, New York: Anchor Books.

A key text by the author who coined the term intercultural communication and popularized the iceberg theory metaphor; introduces the Triad of Culture and explains them in detail with practical examples, including how each level is taught, learned or acquired.

Katan, D. (2004) *Translating Cultures. An introduction for translators, interpreters and mediators*, London: Routledge.

Details current understandings of culture and their relevance for the translating professions, and explains cultural dimensions and how they impinge on texts.

Kuper, A. (1999) *Culture: The Anthropologists' Account*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

A lively account of how culture and similar terms have been understood in academia

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from the period of German and English romanticism to the rise of cultural studies.

Tymoczko, M. (2007) *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators*, London: Routledge.

Calls for a more enlarged understanding of translation to include translating culture; highlights the limitations of Katan's volume; and extends the discussion outside the largely Eurocentric anthropological model to include self-reflexive theoretical perspectives.

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