



Translation Studies and Language Teacher Training

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Abstract. Oral and written translation has always been one of the most important ways of communication as people of the world use different languages in different places. The history of translation goes back to around the first century B. C. in Iran, India and Egypt. Translation has actually found its way very cleverly and silently in the course of history for peacefully penetrating into the hearts of other cultures, customs, traits and even societies by changing and enriching them and has always been working as a very valuable factor for globalism and strengthening the pillars of international peace and friendship and can serve as a means of reducing religious and racial differences. (Toossi, 2014) In this paper the researcher will explain the theories of good and acceptable translation. He also gives some examples of effects of translation of Eastern literature on the west and vice versa and the great changes made by translation in different societies. Finally some suggestions for training better language instructors and better translators will be given and explained.

Keywords: Translation – Translation history – Methods of translation –globalism - Language teacher education and training

1. INTRODUCTION

As people of the world use different languages in different places with different cultures, need for communication in different ways has always been a crucial issue. Oral and written translation has been one of the most important ways of communication. “The history of translation, with its great contribution to the cultural enrichment in the modern era dates back to many centuries ago”. (Delisle and Woodsworth (1995).

In most western sources it is mentioned that the history of translation goes back to around B. C. 300 in ancient Egypt. Maybe western historians did not have access to eastern sources in Iran, India and China, the countries which have had translations as old as Egypt or even older.

In Iran for example, a document belonging to more than 3000 years ago has been found which is for selling a vineyard written in two languages, Aramian and Old Persian (Toossi, 2002).

All petroglyphs from ancient kings and emperors of Iran like Cyrus and Driyush, which still exist, are written in two languages, too. As Iranian empire extended from Mediterranean Sea to parts of India and China with people of different cultures and languages translation was inevitable. The means of contact of the central government with these people had also to be translation.

Translation actually became important in the West from 300 BC when Romans took over Greeks. To enrich their native tongue and literature they started translating sense for sense. (Khoujavi, 2013).

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Between 12th to 15th century the Spanish Kings and Queens re- conquered Spain from Moors and they set up Toledo School of Translators. They translated Arabic versions of Greek science and philosophy into Spanish. (Ibid)

The majority of these sciences and literature were translated from Sassanid Pahlavi Persian into Arabic by Iranian elites after occupation of Iran by Arabs. This was done in translation centers established by Iranians and was the basis for great Islamic civilization, at least eight to ten centuries before Toledo.

During Renaissance (14th to 16th century) well-known translators emerged. Their works were revolutionary, nationalistic, and bold based on imitating classical models and tended to emphasize “spirit” of the original. The word Renaissance refers to the revival of arts based on ancient Greek learning. As you know during the Middle Ages, from about AD 1100 to 1500, arts and science was forbidden and only religious matters under the supervision of the Pope was permitted. It is called Dark Ages by Europeans because of the strict unfair governing of the church in Europe.

During Romantic period, i.e., late 18th to 19th century, translators acted against neo-classicism (formal harmony and rationalism). They began a movement toward irrationalism, vitalism, imagination and genius of the individual. Due to contact with other cultures, especially translations of Persian Literature, translation expanded in Europe. Translated literature exerted impressive influence on source languages. They considered translation mainly as work of creative genius or mechanical process. Twentieth century is called the age of translation and 19th century ideas continued. Modern linguistics including communicative theory and structuralism emerged and translation was accepted as a science. (Ibid)

In Iran translation gained the value of an academic subject since 50 to 60 years ago when the first generation of Melli higher education institutions emerged. One of them was “Higher Education School of Translation” in Tehran.

Having in mind the great potential effects and the benefits of translation in the progress of science, technology, and expansion of cultures, reducing bias and prejudice, solving religious and racial differences, it seems that human beings delayed in employing translation as a university discipline. Today with expansion of science and technology translation is not an art only, but a science with numerous branches. This is why today we need teaching and training able translators proper for each branch of science as well as general ones.

In this case the debate on whether translation should be ‘literal’ or ‘free’ and ‘domesticated’ or ‘foreignized’ depends on the different branches of literature and sciences.

Referring to the theories, the debate over ‘word-for-word’ (literal) and ‘sense-for-sense’ (free) translations is related to Cicero in the first century B.C. and St Jerome in the late fourth century. As Munday (2001) states “In Roman times ‘word-for-word’ translation was exactly what it said: the replacement of each word of source text with its closest grammatical equivalence in target text” While ‘sense-for-sense’ translation, according to Baker (1998), was defined as producing fluent target texts which delivered the meaning of the original without distorting the target language.

Another reason for word for word translation is related to religious texts which were considered ‘sacred’ and free translation could be blasphemy as it would spoil the exact intentions hidden in the holy verses.

Today there is a debate on Domestication or foreignization of translation.

Domestication and foreignization are the terms coined by Venuti (1995) to describe the common stands toward translation in Anglo-American culture.

In this sense translations are judged acceptable when they are read like originals; when the translated texts deliver the impression of originals. In other words, domestication is a process that “signifiers of the source-language text are substituted by a chain of signifiers in the target language” (Venuti, 1995:17). Venuti in fact calls for a foreignizing method of translation whereby translators try to resist the dominant values in the receiving culture in order to signify the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text in translation. (in Khujavi, 2014)

Generally, in Venuti's view, the feasibility of a translation is expanded by its relationship to the cultural and social conditions under which the translation is produced and read.

Domestication, in simple terms, refers to a translation strategy in which the translator adopts a clear and fluent style to decrease the foreignness of the foreign text for target language readers, in simple words, such as using (خواهی نشوی رسوا هم رنگ جماعت شو) /xahi nashavi rosva hamrange jema'at show/ for (In Rome do as Romans do) or: (زیره به کرمان بردن) /zireh be kerman bordan/ for (Carrying coal to New Castle) Or روند /ravand/ for process.

Foreignization refers to that kind of translation strategy in which the translator “deliberately breaks target conventions by retaining something of the foreignness of the original” (Shuttleworth & Cowie 1997:59). i.e. پروسه /prosseh/ for process, not روند /ravand/

Or: That man has eaten my money. Or He has put a cap upon my head! (meaning: he has cheated me)

(In this case we need to give a footnote explaining the meaning.)

Although these examples are some kind of simplification of the term, they clarify the point in discussion. Which of these are acceptable is related to the text, to the translator and is another long story in need of other papers.

In general we can refer to the fact that modern theories of translation do not pay much attention to the correctness of meaning and *fluent* transfer of the ‘spirit’ or meaning of the message in the original text rather than strict faithfulness to the source language.

"Naturalness of expression" shows the importance of a fluent strategy to this theory of translation, and in Nida's work it is clear that fluency involves domestication. As he says, "... translator must be a person who can draw aside the curtains of linguistic and cultural differences so that people may see clearly the relevance of original message." (Nida and deWaard 1986:14).

According to Angellili (2009) A translator must have the ability of presenting a fluent translation, preserving the style and ability of correct translation of vocabulary and cultural meanings. S/he also should be able to recognize and solve the problems engaged in translation as well as proper usage of grammar (in target language) and correct punctuation. (I must confess that unfortunately, most of our students of translation studies have serious problems with writing of their mother tongue).

In order to reach the heart of original message the translator needs to obtain the essence of that message. The writer believes that in this point culture plays the crucial role. This is what Nida has also referred to as concept of “dynamic” in translation.

Nida's concept of “dynamic” or “functional equivalence” in translation introduced first in 1964 mentions that “A translation of dynamic equivalence aims at complete naturalness of

expression and tries to relate the receptor to modes of behavior relevant within the content of his own culture" (Nida,1964:159).

A good translator should have proper information about not only the target-language culture, but also the source language as well. This is something with which many foreign translators are usually not concerned with when they work on a foreign text, so that relevance can be established in the translation process only by substituting source-language features that are identifiable with target language ones.

Therefore when Nida states that " an easy and natural style in translating despite the extreme difficulty of producing it[...] is nevertheless essential to producing in the ultimate receptors a response similar to that of the original receptors."(Nida 1964:163)

He mentions that dynamic equivalence is consistent with a notion of accuracy. The dynamically equivalent translation does not haphazardly use "anything which might have special impact and appeal for receptors, it rather means thoroughly understanding not only the meaning of the source text but also the manner in which the intended receptors of a text are likely to understand it in the receptor language." (Nida and daWaard 1986: vii-viii, 9).

According to Larson translation is studying the lexicon, grammatical structure, communication situation, and cultural context of the source language text, analyzing it in order to determine its meaning, and then reconstructing this same meaning using lexicon and grammatical structure which are appropriate in the receptor language and its cultural context. (Larson, 1984: 3)

When translations convey the message of the source language to the audience of the target language in the way that it was meant by the writer of the source language, it can be more effective for progress and helping for advance of globalism, too.

As globalism and change are inevitable, the most powerful and effective peaceful changes in societies have taken place by translation, literature and friendly contacts not by force! This proves that language is the most powerful weapon for penetrating into and occupying other lands! (Toossi,2005)

Translation has actually found its way very cleverly and silently in the course of history for peacefully penetrating into the hearts of other cultures, customs, traits and even societies by changing and enriching them and has always been working as a very valuable factor for globalism and strengthening the pillars of international peace and friendship. (Toossi, 2014a)

Let's give some instances of the great effects of translation which has taken place in history and caused changes in societies, customs, etc. As I have explained these facts in details in another paper, here I will refer to some of them briefly.

Around five centuries B.C. the translation of Avesta, the holy book of Zoroaster, had direct influence upon the modeling of Greek philosophy. Pradicus explains that Socrates and his followers had a copy of translation of Avesta with them in all their travels. (Farhang Mehr and Ashtiani).

During the British occupation of India, the official language of that country was Persian and Persian poetry and literature was quite wide spread in India. Members of British governing body had to communicate with officials and other people through translators. But for different reasons, including not trusting them completely, some educated British officers like Sir Williams Jones, Hustinger and many others started to learn Persian. They were fascinated by the treasure of Persian literature and translated many poems and other forms of literature into English and French which were translated into other European languages later.) (Hadidi, 1373,

Esmail Azar, Toossi, 2012 and 2005). Sir William Jones also edited a book of Persian grammar for British employees to learn this language. This book became a text used in British universities.

Yuhannan, (1977), the British writer, believes that during the past three or four centuries many translations of Persian poetry and literature into European languages took place, mainly by European orientalists which had deep effects on European literature.

Professor Tudoa, head of academy of Georgia, insists that the breeze of Renaissance started to blow by the translations of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh in Europe. (Magali Tooda).

John D.Yuhanan mentions that, "Almost all literary works in Europe in the past three centuries were under the influence of Persian literature which took place by European orientalists, writers and poets like Sir Williams Jones, Cavell, Mathew Arnold, Gaute, Tennison, Fitz Gerald, Volter and by Emerson in the United States, and many other countries. These created a lot of changes in literature and societies in European countries".(Yuhanan and Esmail Azar, 1387 in Toossi, 2014)

He adds that during the sixteen to twentieth century, the influence of Persian culture and literature in European countries and translations of Ferdowsi, Saadi, Mowlana, Hafiz, Jami and Khayyam's poetry and prose like 'One Thousand and One Nights' are good examples.

This book originally was 'panja tantara' a collection of Indian stories translated into Persian and along with many other scientific and literary works, was translated from Persian of Sassanid era, Pahlavi, into Arabic after the occupation of Iran by Arabs (in the seventh century AD) and from Arabic to other European languages repeatedly. (Ibid)

Buckner Travick in "The World's Literature", printed by Oxford University, Britain, explains that 'in the 18th century this book had an influence close to the influence of the Holy Bible. (For more details please see Toossi 2014)

In Iran the graduate returnees from Europe mainly from France and Belgium (around one hundred years ago) were the main cause of modernization and Constitutional Revolution, establishment of parliament and change of the system of government. (Toossi, 1391)

These and many other examples show the power of language and translation in penetrating into other countries and creating progress and peaceful relations between different people with different religions and different cultures.

If translation has so many benefits for making useful changes in societies and for expansion of cultures, why should we not pay more attention to train better experts in language teaching for both preparing better translators and for other purposes? In this case, in addition to education and training, internal talents, personal intelligences and cultural understanding are also needed as well as acquaintance with the people and culture of the target language. (Toossi, 2014)

It is worthwhile to mention that all great effective translations in the course of history have taken place by those who were lucky enough not to be trapped in our university classrooms and end up with unemployment!

It goes without mentioning that at those days sciences had not become so widespread and divided into so many branches which need specialized translators in different fields for academic purposes as well as commercial, political and cultural relations.

What can we do for having adequate able foreign language teachers and good translators in consequence?

Larson (1984), notes that “the translator needs to understand beliefs, attitudes, values, and the rules of the source language audience in order to adequately understand the source text and adequately translate it for people who have a different set of beliefs, attitudes, values, and rules (p. 431).

Middlewood (2001) explains the question of defining good teaching has concerned educationalists and academics for some considerable time. (p. 2)

Theories and techniques of teaching are the center of almost all teacher education and training programs. But teaching, in fact, need enthusiasm, love and sense of responsibility. These are the essence of teaching which should be added to technical awareness and abilities.

According to Sugrue Ciaran, (2001) if you want to improve learning, improve teaching. A fundamental reform is needed to improve the quality of teaching. “Training teachers in the skills and strategies of ‘effective’ pedagogy, setting and applying professional standards of what teachers should know and be able to do, even testing teachers periodically on their basic, subject-matter knowledge – these are the sorts of methods that reformers have employed to try and raise standards in teachers.” (p. 4)

In addition, programs should help to improve teachers’ thinking, planning, behavior, class management and professional knowledge.

In order to reach the heart of teaching profession, especially for training proper translators, general understanding and professional and cultural intelligence will help a lot. This is why emphasis should be put upon selecting students with the above mentioned characteristics for the teaching profession in general and for language teaching specifically. Teachers must be selected from among wise and witty volunteers with some sense of humor! (Toossi, 2008 and 1995)

Teachers to be should be taught to know “a safe and orderly climate is needed for learning to take place”. They should be aware that emotional and personal problems affect learning. They should know that they are working with sensitive living creatures full of emotions! That teaching is working with human feelings. Some experts believe that being aware of human senses and feelings is more useful for teachers than technical teaching theories. Theories, in fact, are tools. Why do we use these tools? This is the question!

In addition, in teacher education and training courses we cannot suffice on theories and techniques without practice. Brigit & Hulstijn suggest: Language awareness activity should involve doing rather than just expert input (Wright), working with examples of *authentic* language. (p. 6).

Full command on L 1 and L 2 which is necessary for translators, practice and practice along with competence in different aspects is necessary. It is a multi componential activity which draws on diverse knowledge and skills. It involves linguistic competence which needs to be aware of language differences in relation with culture. (Toossi, 2014)

Proper language learning ‘involves the transposition of thoughts expressed in one language by one social group into the appropriate expression of another group, entails a process of cultural de-coding, re-coding and encoding which are not separable from the concept of culture. ... There are so many cultural words, proverbs, idiomatic expressions, etc... which are specific to that culture. (Karamanian, 2011). Language is not separated from culture.

Presas (2000) believes that cultural competence is different from other competences. Ability in understanding culture of other people needs special talent and intelligence, because human beings are bound to their beliefs and captured by bias.

Creativity is also crucial for translators. According to Torrance (1969) creativity is “the process of sensing a problem, searching for possible solutions, drawing hypotheses, testing and evaluating and communicating the results to others.” He adds that the process includes the original idea, a different point of view, breaking out of the mould and recognizing ideas.

For cultural intelligence Early & Ang, (2003) explain, “Having a high level of cultural intelligence means that individuals are more able to extract and logically interpret information gathered from cross cultural interactions, and are more flexible in adjusting to different settings.” (In Ghasemipour, 2013). Evidences show that related training with proper courses for making the inner abilities stronger can be a positive factor for better language teachers and better translators, as well as in other arts. So, revising of university programs is needed.

And finally, if we need translators for globalism and international peace and friendship we need texts free from bias and prejudice, free from religious intolerance and racial bigotry.

People of the world have to understand some day that there is no difference between people of the world except in their faith and sincerity and “*their taghva*”. *Translation can really help!*
Thank you

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