The relations between translation and material transfer

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Abstract: *If translation is approached from the perspective of text transfer—understood as the material moving of texts across space-time—, the relationships between these two phenomena can be seen as not only causal (texts are translated because they are transferred), but also economic (translation is one of several options for the distribution of textual resources), semiotic (translations represent acts of transfer) and epistemological (attention to transfer affects the way translations are perceived). Awareness of these relationships should open up new possibilities for strongly interdisciplinary research into the nature and history of translation.*

Résumé: *Si l'on aborde la traduction à partir du transfert—compris comme le déplacement matériel de textes à travers l'espace-temps—, les relations traduction-transfert peuvent être considérées comme étant non seulement causales (les textes se traduisent parce qu'ils sont transférés), mais aussi économiques (la traduction est une option possible de distribution des ressources textuelles), sémiotiques (une traduction représente un acte de transfert) et épistémologiques (la considération du transfert influe sur la façon dont les traductions sont perçues). La prise en compte de ces relations devrait ouvrir de nouvelles voies pour la recherche interdisciplinaire sur la nature et l'histoire de la traduction.*

Itamar Even-Zohar (1990) has proposed that translation be studied within the wider frame offered by a general theory of transfer. Rather than exclude all the non-translational results of transfer, he suggests we should consider them of extreme pertinence to the very definition of our field and procedures:

> Some people would take this as a proposal to liquidate translation studies. I think the implication is quite the opposite: through a larger context, it will become even clearer that 'translation' is not a marginal procedure of cultural systems. Secondly, the larger context will help us identify the really particular in translation. Thirdly, it will change our conception of the translated text in such a way that we may perhaps be liberated from certain postulated criteria. And fourthly, it may help us isolate what 'translational procedures' consist of. (1990: 74)

I agree with this general proposal and am optimistic about its declared aims. However, I am not entirely sure of what is meant by "transfer" here, nor do I know if Even-Zohar is arguing that the fundamental relation between transfer and translation is anything more than something like spatially placing an object against a background, which might well help one to trace an outline of the object but should not be confused with an understanding of any complex phenomenal relationships. In short, the proposed project sounds a little too easy.

In what follows, I would like to summarize my own understanding of translation and transfer (elaborated in Pym 1992) and then, seeking general inspiration in the four

advantages outlined by Even-Zohar, posit that the relation between these phenomena can be conceptualized in causal, economic, semiotic and epistemological terms, as well as through the traditional spatial metaphor underlying system theory. If all goes well, consideration of these relationships should lead to a useful and slightly more complex understanding of the discontinuity between translations and the non-translational results of transfer.

Internal and External Transfer

The term "transfer" finds uses in psychoanalysis, psychology, computer science, law, commerce, development economics, reprography and professional football, as well as translation studies. But these diverse and vaguely defined values nevertheless have a common core: in all uses of the term, something moves or is seen as moving.

Within translation studies, there are at least two distinct ways of thinking about this movement. On the one hand, the notion of "transfer mechanisms" (as found in Nida 1964: 146 ff.) would refer to sets of rules or procedures for adapting structures to new interpretative systems. On the other, "transfer" can be seen as the moving of a material object through time and space, quite independently of any rules for adaptation or interpretation. The first sense would describe something that happens within the brain or machine responding to moving objects; the second concerns the objects moving externally to brains and machines. Of these two uses, I suspect that system theory, which is more interested in structure than in substance, would tend towards transfer in the "internal" sense. Personally, however, I am far more interested in the second sense of the term, in transfer as external material movement. My preference is based on fear of two shortcomings:

- Taken in what I have termed the internal sense, the notion of transfer has been used both as synonym for translating and to denote a partial phase of translation as a process (cf. Wilss 1977: 63). And yet all the advantages Even-Zohar foresees depend on a clear initial *distinction* between transfer and translation.

- When applied to the actual work of translators, the internal sense too easily becomes a behaviourist surrogate for processes that are subject to high degrees of social and cultural conditioning. As a general approach, this involves major ideological presuppositions that are not always fruitful.

It must nevertheless be admitted that both senses of transfer have their place, since the external aspect would not exist without the internal one, and vice versa. That is, internal transfer would be entirely unnecessary if external objects were not moved, and external objects would not be moved if there were not some mental prefiguration of how they will be interpreted in their destination or desired state. Psychologists are thus quite free to

focus on the internal aspect, just as archeologists are free to insist on the external aspect. And translation theorists, by virtue of the very nature of their interdiscipline, are probably condemned to take at least a little of both senses. However, translation studies should perhaps keep its terminological ambiguities to a minimum by referring to the internal side of transfer as "translating" (the activity that goes from source-structures to target-structures), and then describing the external aspects as "material transfer".

This is not to overlook the fact that the two sides of transfer are joined by their mutual *product*, the text transferred. I suspect this is what theorists like Even-Zohar actually have in mind when they talk about transfer: The thing they are trying to incorporate is not really a mental activity or a material process but a range of products resulting from such activities or processes. The products of transfer would then include all kinds of displaced texts, not only "foreign" texts but also the results of textual reproduction and representation through procedures like publication, citation, commentary, elaboration, editing, paraphrase and summary. Translations could then be described as one particular kind of product within this range. Or at least, this is quite a diplomatic way of understanding what Even-Zohar describes as the "larger context [which] will help us identify the really particular in translation". Indeed, many ideological disputes may be side-stepped if we adopt this range of possible products as our point of departure, putting into temporary parentheses my personal preferences for the material side of life.

Why Translations are Produced and How they are Received

Imagine that a series of texts have arrived in a given place where all kinds of readers, editors, critics and various translators are ready to work. Material transfer is over. We are at the moment when some of these texts are going to be left as they are, some are going to die in wastepaper baskets or faulty memories, others are about to be shortened, still others are going to be expanded, and some are going to be translated. But which ones are to be translated and why? And how will we recognize the result as being translational?

Some basic hypotheses might be reached through an example.

I have in front of me an advertisement (Figure 1) in which the State of Kuwait announces "prequalification of international contractors to participate in tenders", published in *Le Monde* on 15 November 1991. Strangely enough, the French newspaper has presented the announcement in English. But an official hand has added three lines of small print below the English text, beginning "La publicité ci-dessus est relative à une préqualification internationale des contractants pour participer aux offres concernant..." ("The above announcement concerns an international prequalification of contractors to participate in tenders concerning..."). Although this French version presents a suggestive reattribution of the adjective "international", linguistic criticism is not what interests me

here. What I want to know is why the State of Kuwait should be speaking English in a French newspaper.

Figure 1. Announcement from the State of Kuwait published in Le Monde

Kuwait is no doubt speaking English because the receivers it wants to "prequalify" have to be able to understand English; non-English speakers are implicitly not invited to submit tenders. That is, the choice of English—the choice of transfer without translation into French—is one of the determinants profiling a certain *implied receiver*. If the text had been translated into French, the profile of this implied receiver would have changed accordingly. So far, so good. But what then are we to make of this small French text that insists on explaining the English text? For whom was it written? Who is *its* implied reader? Is it a translation? Could it become translational?

It would be fair to say that the French text, perhaps like all translations from English, is ostensibly for readers unable to understand the English text. It thus addresses an implied receiver *excluded* from communion with the implied receiver of the English text. The function of the translational code-switching is to overcome such exclusion, to allow a previously excluded implied receiver to become a non-excluded implied receiver. That is

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one of the reasons why the main terms of the announcement have been translated into French. But even then the receiver of the French text, although lingually non-excluded, by no means shares the same discursive status as the implied receiver of the English text. Readers of the English text are potentially able to respond to the advertisement and submit a tender to the State of Kuwait; they can accept the invitation to participate in a wider speech act, whereas the reader of the French text cannot. Although not excluded, this second implied receiver is not properly *participative* : the text sets in place a peculiar receiving position that we might describe as *observational*. That is, the French was written for an observational implied receiver.

We have thus isolated three receptive positions or implied receivers pertinent to this announcement: the *excluded* receiver for whom the French text was ostensibly necessary, the *observational* receiver corresponding to the French text, and the *participative* receiver who can presumably respond to the English text by contacting Kuwait. In principle, translation enables shifts between these three positions.

But is the French text properly a translation? There seems to be no clear answer. On the one hand, it must be partly translational in that it overcomes an excluded implied receiver, using code-switching to the same end as all ostensible translations (although translation can of course also *create* an excluded reader, since the inclusion of one person may well involve the exclusion of another). On the other, the French text is surely not quite translational because its deictics ("La publicité *ci-dessus* est relative à...") refer to a gap between itself and the English text, distancing its observational receiver from the participative receiver of the English. This discursive distancing would appear to be non-translational. Thus, the French text is thus partly translational in that it results from code-switching, but not wholly translational because it overtly blocks the potential adoption of a participative position inherent in the communication situation.

Now, could the French text be linguistically transformed into an entirely satisfactory translation? Let us magically remove the disturbing deictics, rewriting indirect discourse as properly translational discourse (cf. Bigelow 1978; Mossop 1983, 1987). The result would be something like "L'État de Kuwait annonce une préqualification des contractants internationaux...", albeit still published in small print below the English announcement. Is the implied receiver of the French text now properly participative? No, of course not. Although the translational French text has a linguistic performative ("hereby announces"), the receiver cannot properly participate in this performance simply because the truly performing performative is obviously in English, in the bigger advertisement that precedes the translation both in time and on the page. More generally, one could posit that *an explicitly translational performative cannot perform*. No tenders are going to be accepted in French, even when the French text is rewritten as a linguistically well-formed translation.

We thus find that, although properly translational code-switching is designed to overcome the exclusion of an implied receiver, the result is not necessarily a participative receptive position. The observational position we have located through the French text continues to be observational even when the necessary transformations make the text discursively translational. Of course, if we then went one step further and presented the French translation *without* the English text—that is, without any presentational or deictic distancing of an anterior text—, then the resulting implied receiver could indeed be participative. But the Kuwaiti tender criteria would have been implicitly altered, creating possible divergence between linguistic well-formedness and a commercially acceptable translation.

The categories I am attempting to illustrate here rely on three basic propositions:

- Texts are ostensibly translated in order to overcome the *exclusion* of an implied receiver.

- A translation can convert an excluded receiver into an *observational* receiver.

- A translation can convert an excluded receiver into a *participative* receiver, although there might be doubts about the commercial acceptability of the result.

This kind of analysis does not really add much to the past few decades of translation theory. Indeed, the categories of observational and participative reception can fairly easily be made to correspond to distinctions between non-illusory and illusory translation (Levý 1969), overt and covert translation (House 1977) or documental and instrumental translation (Nord 1988). And yet the above approach does not simply present the translator with two possible modes of action and leave it at that. There are certain conceptual differences here. Most importantly, the choice of one kind of reception or another depends not just on the text, nor solely on the translator or the words he or she fancies, but more directly on the *reasons for the transfer,* the ensuing profile of the *appropriate implied receiver,* and of course the *mode of text presentation*. That is, the discursive logic articulating what can be done within translation largely concerns factors that are mostly beyond the translator's direct control. They have more to do with the real-world conditions of material transfer, controlled by monied clients, principled or unprincipled editors, potential contractors, and other agents wielding rather more social power than do those who merely translate.

I hope I have taken sufficient care to distinguish the discursive logic of implied receivers from the latter far more complicated world of concrete receivers and the social reasons for individual translations. A sociologist could probably tell us that only a very small percentage of *Le Monde*'s public actually lacks the minimal English necessary to determine whether the Kuwaiti announcement is of interest to them. The analyst of real-world factors would then probably conclude that the French translation is quite superfluous as a bridge against effective exclusion; one might find that it was published in

response to the newspaper's policy concerning the protection and development of the French language (cf. "fast food" in the cartoon on the same page). And then it could well turn out that the announcement itself, which has several basic grammatical and typographical mistakes, is a translation from an absent Arabic text, rendered into defective English not wholly for the purposes of conscious exclusion, but perhaps also because it can thus be seen and controlled by the State of Kuwait as it makes its way through a series of major foreign-language newspapers across the globe. Such a sociological analysis of fairly specific real-world factors obviously goes well beyond the general discursive logic I have tried to base on the notion of implied receivers. But this should not stop us from concluding that translation has its own internal logic, which is then inserted into the wider social logics bearing upon the why and wherefore of material transfer.

Transfer and the Causality of Translation

Let us now go back to material transfer. Texts are moving: the advertisement is being sent from the Kuwaiti Ministry of Public Works to an international publicity agent (where? in London?), then to newspapers all over the world. But also, now, in front of me, the announcement I am looking at is moving through time, approaching the closing date for prequalification (30 November 1991), and will move further through time so that, when you read these words, it will be too late to apply for prequalification; participative reception will no longer be available; we shall all be observers; and eventually, when all the newspapers have been folded and filed away on microfilm or whatever, closed to all but the most inquisitive researchers, the Kuwaiti text will have reached a stage of dormant transfer, almost excluded from human observation, awaiting extinction with the final destruction of our libraries. Four points need to be made here:

  - *There is no general supply of texts*. Although system theory currently posits that the receiving system is ultimately responsible for selecting foreign texts and having them translated according to its requirements, can anyone really believe that *Le Monde* alone actively chose the Kuwaiti announcement and determined the combination of non-translation plus partly translational sub-text? A French editor might have complained about the use of the English language, but it would be reasonable to suppose that, in the end, Kuwaiti money won out. That is, the *sender* partly directed the mode of presentation and translation. More generally, does anyone really believe that societies are no longer interested in *exporting* texts to other societies, or in having them translated into foreign languages? Is there no longer any cultural imperialism? Even beyond the strictly commercial domain, I can name at least four governments—those of Australia, Canada, Catalonia and Spain—that give subsidies for translations of their national literatures into

foreign languages. It must be concluded that there is no general supply of texts: senders also have their say in the movements of transfer.

- *Transfer changes textual values*. Although the text leaving the Kuwaiti Ministry no doubt had more or less the same semantic content as the text published in *Le Monde,* there is a clear difference between the supposed Kuwaiti reading ("Will we attract serious contractors?") and that of the participative receiver ("Is this serious? Where can I find more information?"). Thus far, transfer sets up fairly reciprocal reading positions. But transfer tends to continue beyond such reciprocity, creating the possibility of asymmetric participative and observational mixtures within the reception situation, thus significantly altering the range of possible readings (for instance, "Is this serious? Why isn't it in French?"; or even, if anyone still remembers the Gulf War, "Surely the tenders have already been won by dead soldiers?"). We might talk of these changes in readings as *value transformations,* understood as changes in the global value the text has in a particular situation of social reception. The simple point I want to make is that, rather obviously, *transfer leads to value transformation*. But this principle could become the far more interesting hypothesis that *the further transfer continues, the higher the proportion of observational over participative values*. That is, transfer not only changes values, but tends towards observational values, and finally, as time elapses, to exclusion.

- *Value transformation has thresholds*. Value transformation clearly involves much more than simple quantitative movement across time and space. In the case of the Kuwaiti announcement, the potentially constant change process is altered by a point of rupture: the deadline beyond which no participative readings are valid. In other cases, features of supports or content will determine the transformations of reading positions: the question "What is the time?" cannot really be participative if transferred in writing; or again, a letter offering me a job will have a participative value for as long as it is possible for me to accept, but a letter refusing a job application will be met with a far more observational reception. Although many text typologies do not distinguish between written and oral language, or would put the two letters in the same genre or category (from the perspective of register and formal discursive relationships), attention to transfer shows that value transformation can depend on the nature of the support or even the difference between a simple yes or no (more exactly, the *directionality* of a yes or a no). Transfer analysis obviously requires its own kind of text typology. But my simple point here is that *the value transformation resulting from transfer is not constant,* but is subject to discontinuity in the form of ruptures and thresholds.

- *Texts can be transformed to withstand thresholds*. In principle, a text's relative capacity to withstand radical value transformation and remain within thresholds can be enhanced by relative explicitness and discursive generality. That is, since shared referents progressively narrow with increased transfer, implicit material must be made explicit if

radical value transformation is to be avoided (cf. Nida 1964: 131). Similarly, as an extension of the same reasoning, communication to a particular receiver (say, a love letter to George Sand) will involve a greater degree of implicit material than a more general communication (an official letter "to whom it may concern") but can be made more transferable by widening the scope of the implied receiver, explicating and thus framing the anterior receiver. It may well be discovered that literariness is a capacity to use such framing in order to maintain a mode of *participative* reception over long-distance transfer (Flaubert's letters to George Sand remain strangely participative for many other readers), and that scientific texts, in principle the most explicit, are able to maintain *observational* receptions over similarly long distances.

What do these general principles have to do with the causality of translation? Obviously, some thresholds are so radical—they result in such radical exclusion or limitation of participative possibilities—that they require extensive rewriting, possible framing, and a new support if the text is to withstand value transformation. This marking of a new support is one way of describing the work of the translator, transforming a text in order to withstand a radical value transformation ensuing from transfer. To translate is thus to struggle against radical value transformation (some would describe this as a struggle for equivalence). That is, the translator's skills are called upon at certain points where transfer makes certain shifts desirable between excluded, observational and participative receptions.

Although this reasoning says nothing about the techniques a translator should use to overcome exclusion or to enhance participation—changing one language for another is only one of many possibilities—, it can suggest why translation should occur, why it should embrace a range of transformational possibilities, and why it should occur in the specific times and places where texts themselves are unable to withstand value transformation. That is, transfer analysis can formulate a causality for translation in general and, potentially, for each particular translation situation.

Economic Relationships

Beyond this fundamental causality linking transfer and translation, it is possible to look for wider causal relations between the kind of transfer involved in translation and other kinds of transfer. Texts are not the only things that move between cultures. Indeed, if texts are transferred and/or translated, it is only because there is movement on some other level: people and capital also move; the kind of transfer most talked about these days is that of technology and expertise; and then there are accumulations of movements able to displace the frontiers of languages and cultures themselves.

From this perspective, it is insufficient to see the translation situation as beginning with the arrival of the client, text in hand, and ending with the delivery of the translation. Consideration of transfer movements suggests that translation situations are rather more complex, finding their rationality in relation to other transfer alternatives.

When the French car manufacturer Renault took over the US manufacturer American Motors, its decision was based on numerous translated documents (mostly from English into French). The transfer of capital required a transfer of information, leading to a demand for translations. But when Renault later decided to establish itself directly in Detroit, the amount of information needed was so great that it was no longer economical to work solely through translators or to rely exclusively on a technical translation department. It was more advantageous to have French executives trained to speak English, thus instituting a language-learning movement from French into English. This calculation was made on quantitative grounds, on the volumes, directions and costs of the information flows concerned. In fact, the economics were such that I gave up translating for a while and indulged in the more lucrative and not unenjoyable task of teaching Renault executives English.

In this example, the demand for translations finds its rationality between the relative transfers of capital, expertise, personnel and language. If there had been no desire to enter the American market, there would have been no demand for translations. And once transfer reached a certain level—once Renault realized it had to adopt an "all or nothing" approach—, translation alone was no longer a rational way of responding to the demand. Only at an intermediary level of transfer (the initial takeover) was translation considered an economically viable general policy.

Such economic relations between transfer and translation need not be limited to the commercial sphere. The same model can be applied to literary history. Consider, for instance, three major prose texts influencing European aesthetics of the later nineteenth century: Huysman's *A rebours* (1884), Nordau's *Entartung* (1892-94) and Zola's *Manifeste des intellectuels* (1898). All three texts were transferred, commented upon and imitated in numerous countries in the years immediately following their publication, but

only *Entartung* and the *Manifeste* were widely translated. In fact, I have managed to find no Spanish or English translations of *A rebours* before well into the twentieth century. Why was there apparently no demand for translations of this particular text? Certainly not because it was any more scandalous or less revelational than the other two. Its relative non-translation was instead due to the fact that the international target public concerned was able to read it in French. In this case, unlike the Renault example, the language had been transferred *before* the text, making translation relatively uneconomical.

This kind of analysis suggests that the relation between transfer and translation is not only causal, but also economically *rational*, in the sense that translations should only take place when and where alternative transformations require greater expenditure. I suspect, however, that this neo-classical principle only holds in the very long-term view. The French explanation of the Kuwaiti announcement does not correspond to any law of least effort, but it does have a lot to do with the relative symbolic and political values of the English and French languages. Similarly, the fact that translation is the cultural policy of the European Communities is not at all due to economic rationality, but is instead a question of symbolic cultural reciprocity between supposedly sovereign states. Since good translators and interpreters are expensive to train and expensive to keep—and since the mistakes made by bad translators and interpreters often turn out to be even more expensive—, it is generally more economical to promote multilingualism or to adopt an official or trade language. But the reasons for preferring translation over alternative strategies are not always rationally economical. They can more often be attributed to the highly sensitive role of language in socialization processes and cultural identification. That is, translation is one of those areas in which social intervention often has priority over free-market or systemic liberalism. I suspect this means that there tends to be *more* translation than is economically rational, which in turn suggests that the causal relationships involved are by no means mechanistic.

For these reasons, the economic causality linking transfer and translation is best suited to large-scale historical analyses. But there is a further reason as well. When one is looking at an individual translation, it is reasonable to assume that a stable cultural or linguistic frontier separates the source and target poles, such that the cultures stand still while the translator works from one side to the other. In the long-term view, however, it is clear that *cultural and linguistic frontiers are also in movement* and the choice of translation must be seen as affecting them one way or another. It is from this second point of view that the economic relation between transfer and translation becomes particularly susceptible to the non-economic moralities of official language policies.

Semiotic Relationships

I have so far described transfer as setting up situations in which translation might be required, making translation one of several possible responses to transfer. However, it is also possible to see translations as representing and often misrepresenting transfer, in the same way as a sign represents and can misrepresent a referent. Since the textual basis of this representation is the same as that entering traditional translation analysis (source text and target text), it is important to understand why transfer analysis is not just a simple process of linguistic comparison.

The relationship we are concerned with here is is not the way one *text* represents another. It is about translation itself as a *discursive situation* grounded on *distance*; it concerns the way this distance is represented by certain *peculiarly translational* signs.

In the Kuwaiti example, how do we know that the French and English texts are related by transfer? How do we know that one came before the other? That is, how can we tell that one is a translation and the other a source text? Part of the answer lies in the apparently superfluous phrase "La publicité *ci-dessus*...", referring to "the above text" in a way in which the English text cannot reciprocate. We have already noted that the deictics of this phrase seem not to be properly translational, but we must now ask what happens when similar deictics ensue from less deviant features like title pages ("Translated by..."), translator's notes and prefaces, explicit indicators of additions and deletions, and of course a wide variety of peculiarly translational errors (archaisms, exotic terms, calculated translationese) and translational mistakes (false friends, defective translationese). Although all these wholly translational features can indicate the directionality defining the target text, *they themselves are not properly part of that text* (since they cannot be reciprocated in the source text). Strictly speaking, they are *paratexts* (adopting the term from Genette, whose 1978 survey of the subject peculiarly overlooks translation); they are on the *limits* of translated texts, but do not properly belong to the part of the text that can be said to have been translated.

The study of translational paratexts is the study of signs that not only signal translational status but also represent the distance of a non-translational text, retrospectively called the source or original. Once this basic directionality has been established, the range of the signs we have listed can be further extended to take in the purely material features of presentation indicating the nature of the distance between one text and another. It becomes important to assess the meaning of various modes of double presentation, the quantitative relations between target and source texts, and the use of typographical distinctions. These kinds of signs—and their possible combinations—offer a restricted language which can talk about transfer, implicitly positioning a source text culturally close to or far from the receiver of the translation. In this way, paratexts can be

seen as setting up participative and observational positions, since participative reception can be blocked by extensive or intrusive paratextual features, whereas observational reception tends to depend on the judicious use of such signs.

Analysis of participative and observational positions in these terms ultimately leads to the *ethical* problem of paratexts which, because of their limited or wholly transitory nature, allow target texts to be received as if they were source texts; that is, as if there had been no transfer and no translation. Such participative ideals are perhaps no less innocent than pseudotranslations, which also play with relatively harmless lies about their origins. However, these radical misrepresentations of transfer should also be questioned as an eclipse of intercultural distance and thus as a potentially pernicious imposition of cultural homogeneity. This is a very real ethical problem. But few contemporary approaches to translation have terms with which to address it.

Epistemological Relationships

We have seen that translational procedures both respond to transfer and represent transfer. Together, these two aspects not only offer quite different questions that can be asked of translated texts, but also indicate something of the way in which transfer can be approached as a social conditioning of translation.

Standard purpose-based translation analysis can ask "Why translate this text?" and then come up with some kind of general answer based on the various factors surrounding the translator. It could be supposed, for example, that the Kuwaiti text was translated into French because of *Le Monde*'s general policy concerning foreign languages. But transfer analysis can ask the same question in a slightly different form: "Why should this text have been *moved* to a position where it should be translated?". That is, why should the Kuwaitis have had the English text sent to a French newspaper in the first place? This second kind of question leads to a different kind of answer, involving far more than the one-off factors concerning the translator's immediate situation. Translation analysis tends to locate individual purposes for individual cases; transfer analysis tends to look for social purposes for general cases.

What this second mode of questioning assumes is that, thanks to the loose causality described above, the way a text is translated will be conditioned by the social reasons motivating the transfer of that text. But it cannot be assumed that the translator, condemned to work against value transformation, is necessarily condemned to follow all the social instructions as to the mode and nature of the implied receiver appropriate to the target text. Obviously, since translational paratexts can radically misrepresent cultural distance, the translator can contest, reproduce or hide some of the interests motivating the transfer. But this can only be appreciated once the purposes of the *transfer situation* are

known. Only through transfer analysis does it become possible to assess the real extent of the translator's liberty and responsibility, and thus the real extent of the translator's capacity to play a role in the prose of the world.

In this way, the double epistemology I am outlining could hopefully connect translation studies with general transfer situations, and thereby with the wider social sciences bearing on the more general aspects of intercultural communication.

Moreover, an epistemology incorporating transfer should affect the way translated texts are perceived and evaluated within translation studies. In particular, it should show that translation is not a given need but an option causally determined at certain times and places; it should reformulate the ethical problem of the way translations represent intercultural distances; it should promote a wide but centred interdisciplinary; and it should increase awareness that translation is a very particular mode of text transformation, with a potentially active role to play in the history of intercultural communication. One further possible advantage is that transfer analysis might prevent translation studies from becoming boring.

Consequences for a General Theory of Translation

For the past century or so, thought on translation has been moving towards increasing functional independence of the target with respect to the source. This tendency is in keeping with factors like the liberalization of theology, the rise of sociology, the development of communication linguistics and communicative language teaching, a massive increase in the number of authorless or weakly authored source texts, and, underlying all these, a constant growth in intercultural exchanges. In the long-term historical view, however, I think it could be shown that our increasing functionalism is fundamentally a reaction against the development of juridic authorship structures in the nineteenth century. That is, I think we are really just returning translation to what it has almost always been, the production of new texts to satisfy the criteria of new communication situations.

I believe that this tendency is correct, fruitful and adequate to the current situation of translational practice, particularly if it can incorporate a properly ethical consideration of paratexts. However, I suspect that most current attempts to consider translations as "new texts for new situations" assume a generality that is rather too powerful for their object. They run into numerous problems when trying to delimit translation from the non-translational products of transfer. In fact, although they spend a great deal of time talking about translation, their general concepts mostly concern the wider generality of transfer. Which is why they might benefit from some serious thought on the relation between transfer and translation.

Examples of this difficulty are not hard to find. When Gideon Toury's descriptive theory accepts the extreme relativism of leaving the definition of translation to each culture ("...a 'translation' will be taken to be any target-language utterance which is presented or regarded as such..." 1985: 20), the move is tantamount to a conceptual defeat, since the problem is merely displaced to the level of selecting and comparing different translations of the word "translation", which surely requires a normative intervention. Definitional problems also appear in James S. Holmes (1970), whose location of translation as a vague overlap between the continua of imitation and criticism can certainly say what translation is *not* (criticism and imitation are presumably non-translational), but not what it *is*. And then, a strangely obverse defeat is implicit in Hans J. Vermeer, who uses *skopos* as general term for communication purposes, then isolates specifically translational *skopoi* defined in terms of "adequacy" or "textual coherence", and finally defines these latter terms, supposedly specific, as "translational" versions of the general term *skopos*.[1] This theory goes round in circles, endlessly repeating what translation *is* but never saying what it is *not*.

None of these approaches succeed in identifying what Even-Zohar, in the passage cited at the beginning of this article, calls "the really particular in translation", nor do they adequately "isolate what translational procedures consist of". A pervasive and over-generous relativism does indeed threaten to "liquidate translation studies", simply by making it impossible to delimit the phenomenal form of translations. This is why I have tried to use transfer analysis in order to identify basic categories—excluded, observational and participative receptions—which go some way towards defining the nature and function of translation as a phenomenal form whenever and wherever it occurs. These categories can be used with or without a local term for "translation"; they are not arbitrarily delimited sections from a continuum of possibilities; and their relation to translation is causal rather than tautological. Moreover, if the translator's negative struggle against value transformation can be seen as a positive struggle for equivalence, and if belief in equivalence can be substantiated in terms of translational paratexts and discontinuity with indirect discourse, transfer-derived categories are potentially able to locate the specificity of translation within a highly interdisciplinary framework. For these reasons, I believe the complex relations between transfer and translation merit serious consideration as a general frame for future research.

Note

1. "Adäquatheit ist [...] die Relation zwischen Ziel- und Ausgangstext bei konsequenter Beachtung eines Zweckes (Skopos), den man mit dem Translationsprozess verfolgt" (Reiss/Vermeer 1984: 139); "Intertextuelle Kohärenz meint einen skoposadäquaten Zusammenhang zwischen einem Translat und einem Ausgangstext" (Vermeer 1990: 83).

In both definitions there is a tautological relationship between the general term (Skopos) and the supposedly specific traits of translation (Adäquatheit, Intertextuelle Kohärenz). In other words, translation is what happens when one sets out to translate and succeeds. Which is harmless enough, but it adds nothing to our knowledge of the world.

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