应用语言学研习丛书

Linguistics and the Language of Translation

语言学与翻译的语言

Kirsten Malmkjær

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出版说明

对于中国这样一个英语教学大国，和语言教学相关的话题一直受到语言学界的关注。应用语言学作为一个涵盖范围十分宽广的研究领域，尤其受到我国学者及语言学方向师生的重视。本世纪初，外教社陆续引进出版了“牛津应用语言学丛书”、“剑桥应用语言学丛书”等国际优秀学术成果，因其内容权威、选择精当而受到外语界的好评。

近年来，应用语言学研究取得了很多新的进展，如何引导我国语言学方向的研究生快速便捷地了解这一领域的发展全貌和研究热点，成为我国语言学界老师面临的一个重要问题。有鉴于此，我们又从爱丁堡大学出版社、Multilingual Matters 等国际知名出版社精选了一批图书，组成“应用语言学研习丛书”，以更好地满足广大师生和相关学者的需求。

本丛书的各分册主题均为近年来应用语言学研究领域的热点话题，其中既有对所论述主题的理论回顾和梳理，也有对较新的发展和应用所做的阐释和分析，脉络清晰，语言简洁，共同反映了这一领域过去三四十年间的成果和积淀。

相信本套丛书的出版将为国内应用语言学研究带来新的启示，进一步推动我国语言学研究的发展。

Linguistics and the Language of Translation

Kirsten Malmkjær

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Preface

This book is for students of translation, languages and linguistics who would like to enhance their understanding of the relationships between translation studies and linguistics – of how linguistics can be applied to the creation, description and constructive criticism of translations.

The book can be used at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. It includes a chapter on the development of translation studies in the west (Chapter 1) and one on contemporary approaches to the discipline (Chapter 2). These provide the disciplinary context within which the processes and products of translating are studied; it is useful to be familiar with this context before tackling the more applied parts of the book.

The third chapter outlines the theory of meaning underlying the book and the mode of application of linguistics to translation studies adopted here. It is interesting that in the relatively recent past, 'linguistic science' as a whole, or at least comparative linguistics, has been viewed as what might justifiably be called 'applied translation studies' by one set of scholars (see especially Roman Jakobson 1959: 233–4, see Chapter 3, section 3.6.i), while translation theory, almost simultaneously, has been viewed as an area within applied linguistics by another group of scholars (see especially Ian Catford, 1965, who subtitles his book on translation theory *An Essay in Applied Linguistics*; see Chapter 2, section 2.3.i). This book adopts neither of these stances: There is obviously more to linguistics than the comparison of expressions and texts in different languages; and the discipline of translation studies can no more be exhausted by applying linguistics to it than disciplines such as literary studies, journalism, or dramatology. Here, linguistics is applied to translation studies as a way of attending to the language used in translations and their source texts: linguistic insights, theoretical concepts and descriptive categories are drawn on in discussion of the creation, description and constructive criticism of such texts. Chapter 3 thus provides a broader theoretical and academic context for the chapters where application is focal; this will be helpful especially at postgraduate level. Undergraduate students may find the chapter challenging, and prefer to move straight to the remaining chapters (Chapters 4–8) which apply more directly descriptive and theoretical linguistic notions to original texts and their translations.

The rationale for this application is that texts, whether translated or not, are made up, concretely, of language. Texts have power to evoke a multitude of cognitive and emotional responses to the ways in which language shapes them, and aspects of these responses must be assumed to be sharable; if they were not, there would not be communication through language. However, degrees of sharability are likely to be affected by linguistic, cultural and temporal distances between the participants in speech events, and, at points where these distances become too great for mutual comprehension to be immediately possible it may be restored through the mediation of a translator.

Whereas a first writer is relatively free to write what they desire, a translator may be thought to be doubly bound: bound to produce a text that is based more or less closely on the original, translators' choices of what to say are restricted; and bound by the relationships between the languages and cultures involved, translators' choices of how to say it are restricted too. On the other hand, this also presents translators with tremendous opportunities to be creative: The double bind becomes a double delight at shaping a text world (Werth 1999) to suit a community of readers.

Translators act as reader/writers who respond to a text and who produce a text for others, in turn, to respond to. In some cases, translators hope for a high degree of overlap between readers' responses to the translation and the first writer's presumed intentions. In other cases, translators seek to produce somewhat different responses in their readers than those which they assume that the first writer desired to produce. In either case, it is as well for translators to be conscious of what they are doing and for observers to be conscious of what is going on, so that they can function creatively in translating and in reacting to translations. It is my hope that this book will enhance its readers' creativeness by fine-tuning their awareness of the language of contextualised translation.

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Dedication

This book is for students of translation – those who appear in it as well as those who do not – and especially those who have helped me develop its content and been exposed to its numerous permutations.

Contents

Chapter 1

From writings on translation to translation studies

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter highlights a number of important steps in the development of the European tradition of translation studies from its inception in Greece and Rome to the important 'Target Text Turn' within the discipline in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Then, a number of theorists began to advocate a shift of attention away from an exclusive occupation with discovering ways of representing a Source Text faithfully in a translation, towards viewing a translation as a factual phenomenon displaying a number of relationships, which might be called relationships of translation equivalence, with the Source Text.

This turn paved the way for the discipline to secure its place within academia, because it established that translations were legitimate objects of description, so that a set of descriptive statements could be developed and used to foster and test theory. The substantial body of empirically based research which has developed since this turn took place also opened the way for the division of the discipline into a number of sub-areas and for a number of approaches to translation, which will be introduced in Chapter 2.

The discussion will move along European lines, not because of any disrespect for other traditions of thought about translation, but because this book is not primarily historical in orientation. It could not hope to do justice to several traditions.[1] What is provided here is far less a history than an account of how a number of issues which have remained of concern in translation studies were introduced to the discipline. Some of these issues have been focal in other traditions of thought about translation too, and some remain among the concerns of a discipline which is itself becoming increasingly international in nature, scope and aims.

1.2 THE ROMANS

In Europe it is common to write as if translation theory begins with the Romans, Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 to 43 BC) and Horace (65 to 8 BC) in particular. For example, Steiner ([1975] 1992: 248) identifies Cicero's *Libellus de optimo genere oratorum* of 46 BC and Horace's *Ars poetica* of circa 20 BC as the starting points for

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theorising about translation, and most other European theorists follow suit (see e.g. Bassnett-McGuire [1980] 1991; Qvale [1998] 2003).

The reason is that these are among the earliest writings about translation still extant and that they have had a significant effect on the development of translation theory in the West. But it is important to be aware that translation is likely to have been taking place for as long as languages have been written down, and that traces of translational activities dating from long before Cicero was born have been found in several parts of the world outside Europe. For example, Hung and Pollard (1998: 366) note that there were government officials with special responsibility for translation during the time of the Zhou Dynasty in China in the ninth century BC, and Krishnamurthy (1998: 464–73) traces the origins of the tradition on the Indian subcontinent back to the fourth century BC. Even the Roman tradition itself predates Cicero, as Kelly (1998: 495–503) points out. It is obviously very likely that translators and scholars from these early times thought about the nature of both the products and the process of translation. But we have no records of the outcomes of their thinking; hence the habit of starting with Cicero and Horace.

Translation in the Roman period was mainly of philosophical and literary texts and almost always from Greek into Latin (see Kelly 1998: 495–6). The audience for these texts was small, and consisted of those who, being educated, were perfectly capable of reading the original Greek texts. Translation, however, was perceived to provide added value to the texts, the target literary system and the target language, a notion that remains alive to this day. Cicero (106 to 43 BC) writes (*De Oratore* I: 35; quoted in Lefevere 1990: 23–4):

> by giving Latin form to the text I had read, I could not only make use of the best expressions in common usage with us, but I could also coin new expressions, analogous to those used in Greek, and they were no less well received by our people, as long as they seemed appropriate.

This quotation raises issues which remain current in contemporary translation theory: Cicero seems to have sought a middle way between two extremes: foreignisation and domestication, to give them their most modern names (see Venuti 1995). The text is given a Latin form, and Cicero chooses expressions common in the vernacular, which will have a domesticating effect. However, the vernacular expressions are intermingled with expressions derived from Greek, and hence novel with respect to Latin, and this seems foreignising; but Cicero stresses that these innovations must seem appropriate to the target audience of educated Romans. They must, at least, be able to slot into the Roman conception of appropriateness to the text, the situation and the language. This issue of audience expectations again remains topical in many current approaches to translation theory.

There is no sense among Roman scholars of resistance to the foreign – quite the opposite. The prevalent Homeric and Hesiodic tradition saw poetry as the product of divine inspiration, and therefore eminently worthy of imitation. In fact, imitation was generally considered preferable to innovation: 'you must give your days and nights to the study of Greek models', Horace (65 to 8 BC) advises the budding Roman poet (*Ars Poetica*, 268–9; Dorsch 1965: 88):

> it is better for you to be putting a Trojan tale into dramatic form than that you should be the first in the field with a theme hitherto unknown and unsung. A theme that is familiar can be made your own property as long as you do not waste your time on hackneyed treatment.

1.3 BIBLE TRANSLATORS

A second tradition that has been extremely influential in shaping Western translation theory is Bible translation. While creativity and the attendant sense of licence with regard to the precise details and meaning of the source text was considered virtuous by the Romans, where Bible translation is concerned, the main consideration tends to be the production of the most authentic, though accessible, guide to the words of the deity. While the quest for authenticity tends to pull Bible translators in the direction of exact rendition of the original, the quest for accessibility tends to make them lean toward a degree of licence, particularly in matters of imagery, and this tension culminates in Nida's (1964) distinction between Formal and Dynamic equivalence (see Chapter 2, section 2.3.i below).

The Bible translator, Eusebius Hieronymus Sophronius, known in English as St Jerome, is perhaps the most famous western translator of all time. He is the Patron Saint of translators and the date of his death, 30 September (the year is thought to be 419 or 420), is celebrated as International Translators' Day. St Jerome is believed to have been born in about 340 in the town of Strido in Dalmatia (later Croatia). In 382 he was commissioned by Pope Damasus to revise the Latin translation of the New Testament, and when Damasus died in 384, Jerome settled in Bethlehem where he translated the Old Testament into Latin directly from Hebrew and the New Testament and the Psalms into Latin from Greek. Jerome's Latin texts form the basis of the Roman Catholic Vulgate in use today (Qvale 1998: 19–20). Jerome's preferred method of translating is documented in his letter to Pammachius, *Liber de optime genere interpretandi* (ed. Bartelink 1980), in which he explains that except when translating sacred texts, he prefers to translate sense for sense: *Non verbum e verbo sed sensum experimere de sensu*, as he puts it in a much quoted passage (see e.g. Qvale 1998: 20; Snell-Hornby 1988: 9; for a translation of the whole letter, by Paul Carroll, see Robinson 1997: 23–30). In the case of Holy Scripture, however, Jerome advocates word-for-word translation. He says (tr. Caroll in Robinson 1997: 25) 'except of course in the case of Holy Scripture, where even the syntax contains a mystery – I render, not word for word, but sense for sense'. For a discussion of this distinction, and attendant exercises, see Chapter 5, section 5.1.ii.

Accuracy remains foremost in the minds of early translators of the Bible into English, though in their case, accessibility and use of the vernacular also comes into play. For example, Richard Rolle (c. 1300–1349), who translated the Psalter into English some time during the 1330s, tries to combine faithfulness and accessibility by exploiting the influence on English of Latin (tr. Rosamund S. Allen in Robinson 1997: 49–50):

> In this work I shall not be using learned expression but the easiest and commonest words in English which approximate most closely to the Latin, so that those who do not know Latin can acquire many Latin words from the English. In the translation I follow the letter as much as I am able to, and where I cannot find an exactly equivalent English word, I follow the sense, so that those who are going to read it need have no fear of not understanding.

The first complete translation of the Bible into English was the Wycliffite Bible, translated from Latin between 1380 and 1384 and named after John Wycliffe (c. 1320–84). Wycliffe believed that everyone should have access to the word of God in a language that they could understand; and for all but the educated elite in England, that meant English. A second edition, believed to have been revised by John Purvey, was complete by 1408 (Bassnett-McGuire [1980] 1991: 46–7). Whereas the first edition, probably mainly the responsibility of Nicholas of Hereford, was strictly literal, Purvey's edition is a sense-for-sense translation; the preface says (Robinson 1997: 54): 'the best translating out of Latin into English is to translate after the sentence, and not only after the words'. But such liberalism vis-à-vis the word of God did not by any means meet with universal approval; and the Archbishop of Canterbury banned the use of all unlicensed Bible translations in 1409. From then on the Wycliffite translators had to operate in secret (Ellis and Oakley-Brown 1998: 336).

The first Bible in German was made by Martin Luther (1483–1546), who published the New Testament in 1522 and the Bible in 1534. He explains his views on Bible translation in *Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen* ('Circular letter about translation', 1530): The Lord's message must be interpreted by the translator and conveyed in language that will appeal to its recipients. This means sacrificing the original's grammar for that of the target language, and Luther also advocates the judicious employment of vernacular imagery when appropriate (Bassnett-McGuire [1980] 1991: 49). According to Robinson (1997: 84), Luther's most important contribution to translation theory lies in his 'reader-orientation'.

The next great English Bible translator was William Tyndale (1494–1536) whose New Testament in English was printed in 1525. It was based on Erasmus's Greek edition,[2] published in Holland, and smuggled in 1526 into England where it was burnt as heretical in the same year. Tyndale himself came to share that fate in 1536; by this time, he had revised his New Testament (1534) and translated parts of the Old Testament from Hebrew (Bassnett-McGuire [1980] 1991: 47; Ellis and Oakley-Brown 1998: 337).

The King James Bible, so called because it was commissioned by King James I/VI (1566–1625), is the work of a team of forty-seven scholars and translators. Work began in 1604, one year after James's accession to the English throne, and was completed in 1611, by which time more than fifty English Bibles had been published. The King James team had been especially encouraged to consult the Bishops'

Bible of 1568 and Tyndale's (1525), Matthew's (Antwerp 1537), Coverdale's (Zurich 1535, England 1537) and Whitchurch's (1539) Bibles, but are known also to have consulted the Middle English Gospels and Psalter and the Wycliffite Bible (Steiner [1975] 1992: 366). The translators allowed all of these older versions to influence their work, and, according to Steiner, this strategy of deliberate archaism (predominantly Tudor rather than Jacobean usage) enabled the 'vitality' and 'logic of a cumulative tradition' to transmute the 'Hebrew, Greek, and Latin sources into English sensibility, where it continues to play a part more immediate than that of Scripture in any other European community, more linguistically central and theologically diffuse' (Steiner [1975] 1992: 367). It is thus a fascinating example of a translation which stands at the end of a long line of translations of the same work, in the role of a text native to its host culture. According to Nida (1998: 25), The King James Bible (also known as the Authorised Version) is regarded as highly by English speaking Protestants as the Vulgate is by Catholics. Notes made by one of the contributors exist in a version edited by Ward Allen (1969), and the preface, written by Miles Smith (d. 1624) in 1611 is reprinted in Robinson (1987: 139–47).

During the period which Nida (1998: 23) designates as 'modern' in Bible translation, namely 1885 till the present, revisions and new translations have been made of the Bible, first into the European languages, and later into the languages of the so-called Third World. Translations into the latter group of languages have been largely the responsibility of a number of missionary societies, most notably the Wycliffe Bible Translators, also known as the Summer Institute of Linguistics. Bible translators often work in teams of three to five full time translators, and generally agree that Bible translation should be based on the most reliable scholarly interpretations of the Greek and Hebrew Bible texts, that the Target Text should be intelligible and acceptable to its intended audience, and that background information must be included in either notes, prefaces or word lists rather than in the text itself (Nida 1998: 27–8).

1.4 THEORISTS

As is evident from the above, thinking translators typically develop principles to guide their practice, and we inherit some of the most firmly established concepts and dichotomies in translation theory from the Romans and from translators of the Bible. These remain in focus for later translators and for translators of other text types and form the basis of further developments in translation theory. These developments fall into two main categories. First, there are lists of requirements for good translation, such as those provided by for example Dolet, Chapman and Batteux. This largely prescriptivist tradition of producing lists of hints, guidelines or rules to be followed in the production of translations has survived tenaciously into the present century, for example in much of Peter Newmark's work.

Secondly, there are advocations of a particular method of translating, which may more properly be called theoretical because they are accompanied by a justification of or reason for preferring one method over another. They include writings by for example Denham, Cowley and Perrot, who argue for free translation, Huet who argues for closer adherence to the source text, Dryden, Pope and Batteux, who argue for a balance between these two extremes, and finally theorists such as Tytler and Herder, for whom the opposition between word-based and sense-based translation seems less straightforward and also perhaps less of a central issue, and who advocate and describe more complex theories and methods of translation.

Of special interest here are theorists within the second category who take an interest in specifically linguistic issues connected to translation. These include Schleiermacher, von Humboldt and Walter Benjamin and before them Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716), whose essay, *Unvorgreifliche Gedanken, betreffend die Ausübung und Verbesserung der Deutschen Sprache* ('Unexpected thoughts about the use and improvement of the German Language', 1697) advocates translation as a means of coming to a closer understanding of the language being translated into: 'The true test of a language's superfluity or deficiency lies in the translation of good books from another language, for that shows what is lacking and what is available' (in Robinson 1997: 185). This remark foreshadows e.g. Dagut's (1981) notion of semantic voids; and Leibniz's notion that everything *can* be said in any language is repeated by Jakobson ([1959] 1987: 431).

Many scholars of the past, other than those discussed here, have written about translation, and a good selection of their writings on this topic can be found in Robinson (1997).

In his *La manière de bien traduire d'une langue en aultre* (How to translate well from one language to another, 1540), Étienne Dolet (1509–46), 'one of the first writers to formulate a theory of translation' according to Bassnett-McGuire ([1980] 1991: 54), claims that the quality of a translation depends upon five things (see David G. Ross's translation in Robinson 1997: 95–6): (1) the translator's grasp of the author's meaning and motives; (2) the translator's familiarity with the language of the source text and with the language it is being translated into; (3) the translator's ability to free himself from reliance on word-for-word translation; (4) the use of 'normal diction' without any 'extravagant neologisms'; (5) adherence to the principles of rhetorical harmony (Steiner [1975] 1992: 276–7). Dolet's interest in philosophy led to his downfall: he was burnt at the stake in 1546, together with his books, for having translated a passage from Plato's dialogue, *Axiochus*, in a way that could be construed to contradict the Christian doctrine of the survival of the soul after the death of the body.

A list of principles similar to Dolet's can be found in George Chapman's (1559–1634) preface to his translation of Homer's *Iliad* (1611). He says (in Robinson 1997: 137):

> It is the part of every knowing and judicial interpreter not to follow the number and order of words but the material things themselves, and sentences to weigh diligently, and to clothe and adorn them with words and such a style and form of oration as are most apt for the language into which they are converted.

However, Chapman also insists that the meaning of the original should be preserved, and considers his own translation of Homer less free than earlier translators'.

The list produced by Charles Batteux (1715–80) in his 'Principles of Translation' (from *Principes de littérature*, 1747–8) is extensive and closer to theorising proper than earlier efforts insofar as Battaux tries to justify his principles with reference to nature, previous authority (for example Cicero) and the alleged universality of patterns of thinking. The list includes for example: That the original's order of events and of ideas should not be altered in the translation; that sentence breaks should not be altered; that conjunction should be preserved, adverbs be kept next to verbs and symmetrical sentences kept symmetrical; and that sentence mood, tropes and proverbs be reproduced faithfully.

Famous in the seventeenth century for poems of his own creation, Sir John Denham (1615–69) remarks in his preface to his translation of Virgil's *The Destruction of Troy* (1656) (from the *Aeneid*) that it is not the business of a poetry translator just to translate language into language, but, rather, to translate poetry into poetry, 'and poesie is of so subtle a spirit, that in pouring out of one language into another, it will all evaporate; and if a new spirit be not added in the transfusion, there will remain nothing but a *caput mortuum*' (head of death; skull; figuratively: useless leftover) (in Robinson 1997: 156). This sentiment is also expressed by Abraham Cowley (1618–67) in his preface to his translation (1656) of Pindar's odes (in Robinson 1997: 161):

> If a man should undertake to translate Pindar word for word, it would be thought that one madman had translated another ... And surely rhyme, without the addition of wit and the spirit of poetry ... would make it ten times more distracted than it is in prose.

We meet the view that poetry translation is special and more like re-writing again two centuries later with Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822), who expressed one of the most famous metaphors of translation in his *Defence of Poetry* (1821, published 1840; in Robinson 1997: 244–5):

> it were as wise to cast a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal principle of its colour and odour, as seek to transfuse from one language into another the creations of a poet. The plant must spring again from its seed or it will bear no flower – and this is the burthen of the curse of Babel.

Many later translation theorists have similarly proclaimed the special nature and difficulty of poetry translation and insisted that it can only be carried out successfully, if at all, by someone with a poetic genius of their own.

Cowley justifies free translation – 'I have in these two Odes of Pindar taken, left out, and added what I please' (in Robinson 1997: 162) – with reference to the distance in time, space and culture that may exist between an original and a translation. The two cultures may have different religions, customs, landscapes and peoples, all of which may affect their literatures and make it difficult to translate closely. They may, furthermore, have different types of poetry employing different

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