BENCHMARKS OF TRANSLATION EVALUATION IN DIDACTICS

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ABSTRACT: *The evaluation of translations intends to assess the quality of those texts. However the perspectives on quality by the translator trying to formulate a translation, by a client who pays for it, and by the translation teacher who has to evaluate the learning progress, are different. Classroom evaluation is based on a static text analysis, while the client has a prospective interest in translations to use them functionally for proper interest. The translator applies a dynamic strategy in search of an adequate formulation. All three perspectives on translation quality can be subsumed under one model of the translational categories.*

KEYWORDS: *quality assessment; perspective; thematics; lexis; pragmatics; stylistics.*

Translation practice is the rendering of a text previously understood in another language. This activity in the service of communication among people is situated in a network of multiple expectations that all converge in translation competence. The modern translator must be able to constantly concentrate on new text material and specialist areas, as well as to reflect his or her decisions and guide the translation work consciously. In a hermeneutic view (see Stolze, 1997), the translator as a person is the central factor in translation. One cannot ignore his or her knowledge base and methodology as parts of the translation competence. In this context the translation is seen from different angles.

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Translation pedagogy has the objective to build up such a translation competence, and one teaching aid is the evaluation of test translations which then constitute an *object* of analysis. Later the professional translator will have to evaluate his or her own translational decisions in the *process* of translation. And finally the client or "initiator" as the purchaser of translations as *products* will also evaluate them before accepting them.

The set target in each case is a "good" translation. However the perspectives in evaluation are different, according to the particular interests. An adequate translation is not simply a "usable" text. It requires "that the translator should aim at producing a functional target text which conforms to the requirements of the translation scopos fixed by the initiator, respecting, at the same time, if necessary, the legitimate interests of both the author of the original and the readers of the translation" (Nord, 1992, p. 40). However those requirements are still to be defined. Since translation is a form of language behavior, they can be described by linguistic categories like THEMATICS, LEXIS, PRAGMATICS and STYLISTICS.

Economic quality management defines quality as the coming up to the set specific standards. Professional clients will evaluate the translation presented to them prospectively for their interests, without comparing it with the original. Some often applied criteria are:

Layout	Does the layout of the translation correspond to given standards regarding form, length, completeness? (THEMATICS, PRAGMATICS)
Coherence	Is the translation clear and intelligible, free of unplausible statements, and correct in grammar and spelling? (THEMATICS)
Terminology	Is the terminology correct and consistent throughout the text? (LEXIS)
Text-type	Is the translation useful according to style norms of Technical writing, of legal language, of the wanted scientific style, of correspondence laws? (PRAGMATICS, STYLISTICS)

Style   Is the translation easy to read, fluent, free from strange elements? Does it conform with corporate identity, with the style of text parts already finished? (STYLISTICS)

In the translation process the translator is in dynamic search of an adequate formulation. In a holistic approach he or she views individual problems within their role in a total strategy, rather than focusing mainly on a single fact. There are three questions normally applied intuitively to a text to be translated:

Clarity   What is the text's situation (author and context)? Have I fully understood that text? What is its substantial structure? Does it contain defective parts? Which status has it? Is there cultural divergence compared with the target culture? (THEMATICS, PRAGMATICS)

Faithfulness Which is the exact terminology? Is there a dominant word field in the text? Which formal markers are discernible? Are numbers and data precise? (THEMATICS, LEXIS)

Impact   Who is the addressee of the translation? What kinds of changes are required by the translation assignment? Which stylistic qualities do I want to show? Which text-type is wanted for the translation? Do I adequately use specialist word formation? (PRAGMATICS, STYLISTICS).

The task of translation teaching is to render a scholarly basis for those rather general criteria. The evaluation of tests, with the pedagogic framework such as study level, knowledge presentation, learning targets and the like, is necessary, and it is not identical to the evaluation by clients or professional translators. Translation in the classroom is an object of analysis. As translation teaching very often is also combined with language learning, an objective error analysis and error avoiding therapy is needed. The assessment of translations is mostly performed

as translation criticism by means of a comparison between the translation and the original text. An equivalence-based translation criticism is always static (see Reiß/Vermeer, 1984, p. 139). The classification of errors, necessary for giving marks, remains a contentious point. I would like to suggest a simple list:

Gr - infringement of orthography, grammar and syntax in the target language, probably by linguistic interference;

Se - wrong sense as a semantic deviation from the original by ignoring/misunderstanding a word, omission of important text parts, wrong specialist term, wrong numbers, often caused by slips (THEMATICS, LEXIS);

Ic - incomprehensible passage, lack of coherence, confused ideas (THEMATICS);

Ex - fault of expression by lack of addressee-orientation, inadequacy in target culture (PRAGMATICS);

Tt - infringement of typical text-type norms, inadequate stylistic register (STYLISTICS).

The various perspectives on quality and its evaluation by clients, translators and teachers raise the question whether the prospective, the dynamic and the static aspects could be integrated in one model, since the student should acquire an insight into the entire complex structure of the translation process.

The quality requirements for a translation, in the reader's view an independent text, for the translator an assignment to realize, and for the teacher an object of criticism, can be explained by the translational categories of THEMATICS, LEXIS, PRAGMATICS and STYLISTICS (see Stolze, 1992, p. 98ss).

THEMATICS. While the client, under the category of THEMATICS, asks for coherence in text form and logic structure, translation didactics may present this category under the topic of "external and internal factors in text understanding". There will be an extensive source text analysis in view of the place of issue, the author and the aspect of media and layout.

The student translator learns, in reading a text for clarity, to grasp its thematic structure through context, speaker's perspective, thematic progress, signals of paragraph beginnings, etc. He or she will ask for the text status between technical or pragmatic or literary texts on the flexible scale of Snell-Hornby (1988, p. 115). The definition of a text genre might give a general hint on the text structure and determines any further procedure.

A key for text understanding by the translator is often found in central ideas that constitute an isotopic line and semantic net in the text. The theme of a text is indicated in recurrent synonymous words. On the other hand such a word field represents already a base structure for the target text. The reader expects coherence in the sense of plausibility. Rather often we can observe, that translations are selectively equivalent, but the overall coherence in word fields is missing.

Didactics can point out to that by semantic analysis. The function of the language sign will be discussed regarding denotation in the language systems, connotations in the cultures and associations in individual understanding. The exact meanings of words, the knowledge of equivalents as well as the semantic and phraseological compatibility are a central question. Many errors can be pointed out here. Different from the professional translator's holistic approach, translation didactics concentrates more on the single text element in its field of meaning.

Lexis. The category of Lexis regards specialist communication. The professional client will normally check the consistency of terminology from his point of view regarding the specialist domain and his own corporate preferences. Any variation of terms might lead to a misunderstanding of the translation.

Didactics must point out the different ways of terminologization as well as syntactic aspects of the language for special purposes. Thus the translator is made sensitive to consider the differences in text constitution and in terminology in sciences compared with humanities.

The terminology in natural and technical sciences serves the progress of science and the description of objects. It contains terms with an exact definition fixed in a closed conceptual system. During scientific development the amount of terms is constantly growing and needs standardization and notation in databanks. Differences and lacunae are detected by a comparison of terminological systems in a language pair. A special problem is synonyms often created contemporaneously from a different scientific point of view.

The specialist terminology in humanities and the social sciences on the other hand is open for interpretation. It describes feelings and ideas of people as well as procedures and processes of life. The definitions as the contents of the concepts are agreed conventionally among the authors in their academic discourse. Often they remain contentious. A scholar will therefore usually define his terms before proceeding in the statement. Any idea and scholarly statement may only be understood adequately against the background of the relevant philosophy.

Since this specific language is oriented towards the interpretation of the life and thinking of people rather than of extralingual objects, the words are closer to the general language. A change of meaning in most cases leads to a redefinition or a new interpretation of the concept already existing. The principal translation problem arising from that is the need to recognize such specialist terms in a text which at first glance seems general language with a general meaning. This applies also to legal texts, where a large number of terms are general language words with a special meaning. Names of institutions cannot be transferred into the target legal system because this would suggest a non existing identity of institutions.

PRAGMATICS. The category of PRAGMATICS refers to the addressees in the target culture. The client in his interest to fulfill business objectives, or the reader in his interest to read a letter or a novel or the like, might simply ask for the functional adequacy of the translation. He or she will reject any text that is not conform to the expectations, or at least find it "strange". A specialist "trans-

lation must not be deviant or strange compared to what is normal in genuine target texts of the same type" (Nielsen, 1994, p. 25).

Didactics should discuss systematically the possibilities of approaching cultural differences. This is performed by developing an awareness of cultural incongruity, the exercise of specific sociolects in the target language, and the discussion of translation problems in the language pair. Here the static analysis will focus on multiple errors like false friends and polysemy on the word level, and syntactic differences.

The translator in his dynamic search for an adequate formulation will consider the scopos of the translation, i.e. his assignment and the intended purpose in its medium. The form of communication – internal specialist communication among scholars, or external communication with the public in the sense of a knowledge transfer – requires different ways of formulation. The translator who anticipates comprehension barriers in his readers will apply compensatory strategies by explicating, paraphrasing, simplifying or modifying the original text element (see Stolze, 1992, p. 207ss).

The translator will also respect sociolects in the target language, i.e. the language of special groups like development agencies, churches, political parties, the specific diction of a firm, etc. Membership in a speaker's group shows in the professional jargon and in ideological diction. In order to assure the acceptability of a translation, it is very important to consider such speech preferences and norms, independently from those valid in the source language text. The "functional approach in translation" as defended by Vermeer is often illustrated by the change from the lush, classical language in Portuguese into a more neutral, functional language of scholarly texts in German (see Wolf, 1997, p. 11).

STYLISTICS. Every meaning is carried by words, but translation is more than verbal transcoding. The category of STYLISTICS focuses on the formulation itself as a rhetoric phenomenon. Style is not just a decoration, it is the appropriate way of expressing oneself in a given situation. Even if the client might only expect that a translation should be correct in grammar and syntax, easily read-

able and fluent in style, it is the task of didactics to create a metalinguistic knowledge of style elements, text-type conventions and functional jargon. The technical word formation by compounding, syntagmatic extension, affixation, etc., and typical differences between languages shall be discussed, since that is a source of translation errors.

As scientific syntax and the style of administrative texts for instance are divergent in the various language communities, translation teaching should particularly focus on that. While technical texts tend to a clear, linear structure to promote understanding, we observe that humanistic texts with their argumentative content often present more signals of cohesion to guide understanding.

Standards of text-type and functional jargon in the target language, such as nominal style, passive voice, attributive adjuncts, will have to be analyzed. The Technical writing meanwhile is a subject of special research and creation of writing norms. There are a special macro-structure and fix pieces in certain texts (see Göpferich, 1995, pp. 217, 389). Such functional styles are a conventional selection from the language potential.

It is only in literature that the expressive wealth of a language is fully realized. Here the creativity of authors in unusual syntactic forms or novel metaphors should find its counterpart in the translator. Therefore it is also part of translation didactics under the category of STYLISTICS to present methods of creating metaphors and their images, the stylistic role of foreign words in German, aspects of sound, rhythm and other style elements. Publicity and journalistic texts require a special expressive language.

The translational categories are visible in various degrees in every individual text and they are also interrelated. Their application is only possible when we view both text and translation as a whole. Language proficiency and subject knowledge are prerequisites for translating and therefore not specially mentioned here.

In talking about the evaluation of translation we should bear in mind that the perspectives on quality from a client, a translation teacher or the translator himself are different. The professional translator can use the categories to back up his or her decisions against criticism. The translation teacher may find in those categories a systematic survey of all the linguistic problems normally discussed in the classroom. The "user" of translations may probably find here a more scientific description of his quality standards.

The awareness of the different perspectives and their holistic integration might improve our understanding of the whole translation process. At least it shows the meaning of a presentation of linguistic aspects in translation teaching, when such phenomena do not appear isolated but in their significance for the overall complexity of translation.

The translational categories of quality assessment

THEMATICS		
dynamic	**static**	**prospective**
Semantics	*Source text analysis*	*Coherence*
Thematic structure	Place of issue	Form of text
• context (author, place, time)	• editor	• text with title
• interrelation of themes	• magazine	• text with footnotes
• speaker's perspective (1./2./3. persons, passive, infinitive)	• mass media	• layout, script fonts
	• speech	• graphics in a text
	•official document, contract	• legends as text
	• public announcement	• video script (relation to picture, length of speech)
• semantic net	• user's information	
	• time of publication	
Selective markers	• author	Logic structure
• signals of text type (address and opening, intermediate titles)		• theme: starting point in communication
	Meaning of words	• rhema: the comment on it
	• lexicographic entry as core meaning	
	• word field in the language	• plausibility: no obscure parts in text
• enumeration (culturally different)	• isotopic lines in text	

• signals of beginning and ending of paragraphs The status of the text • entertainment, edification (literature) • information (specialist books, correspondence, manuals, reports) • exhortation (orders, prescriptions, sentences) • confirmation (documents, acts, contracts, invoices) • persuasion (advertising copies, sermons, tendentious literature)	• precise phrase meaning • multifunctional lexems and collocation • semantic compatibility of words Sign functions • designation, expression, appeal • system, norm, speech • connotations (level and frequency of use, alliterations, word play) • associations (phatic aspect, citations, onomatopoeia, ideologisms)	• completeness: no unmotivated gaps

LEXIS		
dynamic	**static**	**prospective**
Special hermeneutics	*Exact terminology*	*Consistent terminology*
<u>Specialist communication in natural sciences and technology</u>	<u>interlingual equivalence of terms</u>	<u>domain-specific terms</u>
• definition, concept and term	• analysis of conceptual systems	• exact terms of the domain
• cumulative creation of concepts	• comparison of conceptual systems	• corporate preferences
• problem of synonyms	• solution of lacunae	<u>consistent use of terms</u>
• standardisation	• terminography	• same meaning = same term
• data-base retrieval	• polysemy	• no variations
	• common minimum and optimum of concept translation	
<u>Communication in the social sciences</u>	• interpreting legal concepts	<u>juridical adequacy</u>
• open terms for interpretation of processes and situations	• differences of legal systems (common/ civil law)	• legal sphere (civil/ penal/ administrative law)
• approximate and conventional formation of concepts	• transparent formulation	• names of institutions
• polysemic words from general language with domain specification		• standard formula
		• macrostructure of document preserved

PRAGMATICS		
dynamic	**static**	**prospective**
Textual function and the receivers	*Approach to cultural differences*	*Functional adequacy*
Scopos of translation • translation assignment (whole text, survey, new version) • purpose of translation • media • form of communication (internal, external to the specialist domain)	Awareness of cultural differences • real incongruity (unknown objects and specialities of source culture, national technical norms) • formal incongruity (cultural text structures, forms of personal address, indication of date, titles, etc.)	Text function • information, report • document • users manual • advertisement • warning • spoken text • literature
Compensatory strategies in case of comprehension barriers • explicative • paraphrasing • referential • modifying	• semantic incongruity (different connotations of a word, value systems, stereotypes) • stylistic incongruity (national writing styles and speech maxims)	Adequate group language • corporate identity • language of institution • commercial style and form • receiver-oriented formulation
Sociolects in target language • specific diction of firm • language of development aid • church language • sociologic jargon • feminists • style of political parties • scientific level of language use	Special translation problems of language pairs • interference by false friends • differences in compound formation • polysemy in roman languages	
Document translation • keep original text structure • identity of form • legal rules • authentication of translation		

Advertisement texts
- cultural specifics
- actuality (relation to spirit of time)
- personalization (personal address)
- positive affirmation
- expressive language
- empty words (easy style)

Literary texts
- no purpose
- cultural

- explicitness of German and English in words
- indirect speech and sequence of tenses
- focusing in English and German (inversion, cleft-sentences, particles, converse verbs)
- quantitative differences in the use of article
- abstract noun phrases

STYLISTICS		
dynamic	**static**	**prospective**
Conventions of text genre and functional style	*Style analysis*	*Idiomatics and comprehensibility*

dynamic

Conventions of text genre and functional style

Expectation norms of a text-type
- user's manual
- medical information
- electronic manual
- manual for mechanical workshop
- cooking recipes
- specialist article
- conference report
- business letter
- articles of association
- contract for sale
- news from stock exchange
- patent text
- court sentence
- employer's reference
- school certificate
- international agreement (EU texts), etc.

Media language and journalistic texts
- means of expressive language (adjectives, common sayings, metaphors)
- irony, allusions
- foreign term in German
- alliteration, word plays, artificial words

static

Style analysis

Style analysis
- Style as selection by the author from the linguistic potential
- style is, what the reader sees
- macrostylistic and microstylistic analysis
- stylistics as a collection of rhetoric means
- characteristics of an époque
- metaphor
- idiolect as individual stylistic feature
- sociolect as group language
- artistic deviation from norm and expressive language

Syntax of specialist language
- economy of expression and simple sentences
- nominal constructions, functional verbs with imbedded nouns and meaningless verbs
- impersonal speech (1. and 3. person sg./pl.)

prospective

Idiomatics and comprehensibility

Idiomatics
- orthography
- correct grammar
- syntax

Comprehensibility
- clear text structure
- right level of style
- fluent style

Specifics of text-type
- typical macro structure
- typical fix pieces of text

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Technical writing                  • lack of past tense
• clear thematic order             • priority for passive
  without backcoupling               construction
• avoidance of  logical            • indicators of
  lacunae in the text                illocution
• chronological                      (performative
  sequence of action by              verbs, modal
  sentence perspective               words)
• technical word                   • interlinguistic
  formation                          differences
• consistency of
  terminology                      Technical word
• syntactic formula                formation
• directive language of            • word compounds
  instructions                     • syntagmatic
• relationship of text               extension
  and figures                      • relative adjective
                                     adjunct
The German functional              • derivation
style of administration            • abbreviation
• classification by                • Greek and Latin
  deverbative nouns                  affixes
• more accusative than             • phraseology
  dative                           • terminologization
• impersonal and                     of general
  generalizing                       language words
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