

Training for translation: the case of specialized translation training and art texts

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ABSTRACT

Translation training is a subject which has been widely discussed and many diverse approaches have been put forward. However little research has been done to investigate translation training courses and even less data has been gathered to validate any claims as to the effectiveness or pedagogical value of these approaches to translator education.

The present study looks into the training of the translator providing data as evidence about the effectiveness of specialized translation training. Art, and painting in particular, serves as a case study. The field of painting was chosen because it is a vast field that has its own and unique way of expression, terminology, certain way of structuring language and a complex system of metaphors, similes and symbols. Undoubtedly this “pleasant” field hides many traps for the translator. Moreover, no course offers specialization in this field. Thus the main aims of the research are pedagogical ones. Numerous aspects of text analysis and translation theories as well as pedagogical issues in translation training were raised and had to be examined to find satisfactory answers. Establishing art translation and identifying what art translation is were subordinate aims.

The research needed an empirical dimension to help gather the data required to support its claims. During the first stage a pilot study took place that later on evolved into a bigger scale case study. The pilot study focused on the parameters and specific problems of this genre of translation, what are the criteria that determine a successful translation of an art text and who is involved in the decisions about those parameters and criteria. Publishers, agencies, freelance translators and teachers who provided alternative perspectives on the issue of training made important contribution to the research.

The second stage of the empirical study took the form of an experiment and was more concerned with the pedagogical aspects of translation training which more often than not seem to be neglected. The variables in pedagogical research that had been identified in the pilot study (e.g. age, gender, distance learning etc.) had to be taken into consideration. The focus of this experiment will be to determine the expectations of the learning outcomes of specialist training and try to measure its effectiveness. Students tend to evaluate their needs differently from their tutors. Tutors on the other hand have the experience of teaching, observing their students and monitoring their progress.

The data gathered included school records, translations of published books as well as students’ translations, interviews with school directors, tutors and translators, feedback from the students and readers. The data was then analyzed to help reach decisions on curriculum design and to reach conclusions concerning the research questions.

This data revealed that translators in fact need specialist training. Even though this hypothesis may seem obvious, there have not been enough (if any) studies that examine the complex variables in translator education. The research revealed how complex the matter is and the fact that not all pedagogical dimensions are taken into consideration in translation training. Last but not least the present study paid great attention to the quality assurance aspects of all

the parts of the process, something that is sadly absent in the current state of classroom-based research.

KEYWORDS: art texts, pedagogy, specialized translation, translation training.

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