

## Training Tools for Translators and Interpreters

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The present paper reviews the traditional methodologies of translator training and proposes an eclectic multi-componential approach that involves a set of interdisciplinary skills with the ultimate objective of meeting market demand. Courses on translation for specific purposes (TSP) and think-aloud protocols (TAP) along with self-monitoring and self-evaluation mechanisms go in parallel with group projects to provide trainee translators with a fair knowledge of the tactics of target text production, teamwork cooperation and labour division. Simulated conference interpreting prepares trainees to research terminology and background information and refers to documentation from previous conferences with an emphasis on memory, attention, and automaticity. Peer review and revision enable not only the teacher to give positive feedback in the classroom but also the students to find out why the interpretation went wrong by evaluating their colleagues or themselves. Finally, it is important to enhance TT delivery skills as the key to successful interpretation in the interpretation market. The ability to render the target text verbally or in writing is as important as the ability to understand the source message.

**Key Words:** TAP, TSP, delivery, discourse analysis, internship

### **1 Introduction:** A hybrid and eclectic approach

Training translators is not solely an academic track and should not be confined to a theoretical debate in linguistics or comparative literature. Instead, it is an ongoing 'in service' professional vocational training, similar to training computer programmers, auditors and customs officials. Ideally, one would look for a single approach to professional translator training. However, pragmatically, we would be safer with Douglas Robinson's approach who, in his seminal work of 1997, pioneered a hybrid methodology involving social, cultural and cognitive approaches. Consequently, trainers aim at developing what Pym (2003) refers to as a multicomponent competence, involving sets of skills that are linguistic, cultural, technological and professional with the ultimate objective of meeting market demand.

The traditional linguistic approach emphasized language proficiency as the key to successful translation. The dominance of the linguistic approach impeded the development of specialized creative training based on an

interdisciplinary approach that comprises discourse analysis, acculturation and information technology (Venuti, 1998). Wilss (1996) refers to translation teaching as 'an open field which calls for experiment and innovation' while Nord (1991) introduced a functional (skopos) perspective to training that combined professional realism with pedagogical progression. On the other hand, Don Kiraly (2000) proposed a social constructivist theory which formed a departure from the transmissionist teacher-centered approach. With the proliferation of translation centres and the global demand for qualified translators the need for professionally oriented translator training gained momentum and translation training became an integral part of applied translation studies (Holmes, 2000). A selective overview of the literature on training indicates that research has been carried out into diverse topics ranging from the acquisition of translator competence, the development of creativity, training quality assessment interdisciplinary cooperation, curriculum design, the development of computer tools, virtual learning environments and training the trainer (Kelly, Dorothy & Catherine Way, 2007).

Until recently, universities in the Arab world used to teach translation as an academic minor subsidiary to the theoretical courses on linguistics and literature. The exposition to actual translating practice was restricted to a few courses that focused on language A or B as the source while private institutes offered short term courses with an emphasis on business related texts. Other training courses are occasionally offered by the centres for continuing education and the centres for consultation and training affiliated with some universities in the Arab world. Examples of recent training courses include consecutive translation, simultaneous conference translation and TSP offered by Kuwait University, Yarmouk University, Jordan and Birzeit University, Palestine.

## **2 TSP**

Practicing translators generally focus on a few related subject areas, depending on their backgrounds and interests. The same should occur in a translation program. The traditional approach to translator training relied on assigning random texts from a sundry of subjects to all trainees regardless of the nature of their backgrounds or their sought careers. The inadequacy of such an approach stems from the fact that it does not prepare translators for the job market where a specialized experience in a given track is required. Graduates of such training programmes usually spend several years acquiring TSP skills on the job while risking translational pitfalls owing to their inadequate experience in the field. Therefore, having all students in all language combinations work through the same set of exercises is not practical to career-oriented graduates. For instance, a student with an interest in legal translation will not benefit from training in metallurgy or horticulture as much as he or she would from doing

more in an area that is in demand in the job market. Similarly, employers rarely if ever ask for translators who simply have a modicum of ability and familiarity with a wide range of texts; rather, they would prefer graduating students who are capable of handling one subject efficiently.

It is more practical to introduce different sections of courses that teach translation for specific purposes whereby each section focuses on a given domain. After an introductory period of basic translation exercises and development of secondary skills like word processing and terminology management, students should pick a subject area and focus on it. A translation program should therefore offer academic tracks—such as in finance, social science, natural science, medicine, law, computers or any other subject areas in accordance with demand in the translation market.

Recently, the emphasis has shifted in some university and college programmes in favour of introducing courses on translation for specific purposes (TSP). The latter will first screen trainees and group them into batches according to the requirements of the subject field or the 'prospective' corporate line of work. The training material will often consist of texts provided by the employing firm and enhanced with related literature from specialized books and manuals. Some of the frequently trodden areas include pragmatic texts such as business, economic, legal, journalistic and technical texts with their special formats and jargon. The ultimate objective of such programmes is to provide first hand vocational training based on a context-bound and example-oriented approach whereby trainees are prepared for the translation market without further ado.

It should be pointed out, however, that TSP may become a debatable issue particularly for conventional methodologist who may argue that trainee translators need to know how to adapt themselves to the demands of an ever-changing market. A valid claim in this regard is that since trainees cannot predict the areas in which they will be working after graduation, it becomes crucial for them to learn how and where to quickly and efficiently research new domains. Training programmes, therefore, should aim at developing their students' sensitivity and flexibility to textual types and standards. Such a controversy may be resolved by a study of market needs and job requirements and by offering on the job in-service TSP courses. By the end of the day, the aim of any training institution is to produce translators who meet market needs and who can find jobs at the completion of their studies.

Another point of controversy in TSP concerns the hybridity of genre and the multifunctionality of some texts. For example, the category of newspaper texts may include different text types, with very different translation problems (opinion, information, literary, advertising, scientific...etc.). Therefore, specialization is a complex question of degree and depends on multiple factors such as sender and receiver, vehicle, genre, and so on, not just subject matter (Asenso, 2007).

### 3 Group Projects Practicum

Translators need to have a fair knowledge of the tactics of teamwork cooperation and labour division. Trainers commonly use group work in translation classes, as it is thought to provide a beneficial learning experience that enhances students' understanding and preparation for a career in translation. In a Task-Based Translation Teaching (TBTT) approach the teaching process is a simulation of real-world experiences whereby students work through groups towards achieving a common goal, by sharing information to identify potential problems and find resources to solve them collectively. Their tasks include textual analysis of the background, structure and vocabulary of the source text, terminology research and other related writing, editing and revision skills. Quality assessment tests are administered in the editing phase in order to ensure accuracy of expressions, coherence, overall cohesion and naturalness. Back-translation tests are conducted on the pre-final product in order to evaluate TT fidelity through textual comparison with the ST.

Some university programmes require senior students to work on a graduation project on terminology or translation criticism of existing works or an investigation of a theoretical or professional issue in translation. Alternatively, students are often assigned a large text, with each student translating a segment while some students are designated as editors and revisers. The trainer nominates one trainee as a project coordinator cum liaison officer. Terminology research becomes a shared venture and background research is done in teams. It is a practice-based approach that aims at student collaboration in order to gain a first hand experience. Kiraly (2000) conducted a case-study on a translation class of 24 students in which students were translating from their mother tongue as a source language. Students worked in small groups and the class was given a chapter of a book to translate. The role of the professor was that of a moderator who coordinates student roles and supervises peer editing. The ultimate goal of this social constructivist approach is to empower students in order to bring their personal experiences and approaches to solving translational problems instead of the traditional uni-directional transmissionist method where students are treated as recipient objects who copy the authoritative 'correct' rendition of their professor who acts as the 'guardian of translatory truth' (Kiraly, 2000, p.122; Kiraly 1995, p.99).

The author of this article conducted a similar study on three senior classes at Kuwait University in 1998 culminated in the translation into Arabic of Baker's *In Other Words*. While the student trainees were ecstatic at the completion of such a great feat, the feedback that was not all positive. From a trainers' perspective, group work was impeded by the problem of mixed standards which, in turn, made it difficult to assess individual achievements. Further, the collaboration of all the students on the same assignment often limited one's judgment of individual student's progress and made graded

assessment a formidable task. Students complained that some of their peers either had insufficient background or lacked the language proficiency required for such a task. Consequently, the actual burden was not evenly distributed since some students and editors had to shoulder the task of overhauling incomplete assignments of certain team members.

Better results can be achieved with small size classes and the application of screening methods in order to ensure a homogenous competence. Students have to take a pre-test, in which their sample translations are evaluated in order to filter out students who lack the language ability that translation needs. In 2005, a similar experiment was carried out with a group of twelve students who were interviewed and tested for an audio-visual course on subtitling and dubbing. The results were far more encouraging than the earlier one and the coordination was a breeze. The course culminated in the dubbing of a local Arabic soap opera and the subtitling of a documentary aired on the *Discovery Channel*.

Effective group projects require that instructors possess practicing experience as translators themselves in order to use their professional contact in providing real 'community' translation jobs for the training workshop. Being the main stakeholders in the process, trainees should be involved in the selection phase, negotiation and the production of the final product under real constraints, but with the collaboration and supervision of a professional translator. Kiraly emphasizes the importance of empowering translators to function autonomously and confidently as mediators in the professional world. He argues that the translation classroom should maintain a link with the real world through teaching based on "authentic situated action, the collaborative construction of knowledge, and personal experience" (Kiraly, 2000, p.3). Students' motivation increases tremendously if they are given authentic translation tasks which will eventually be published on the web or in any other media form.

#### **4 Simulated Conference Interpretation**

An increasing number of schools for interpretation include courses that are designed to mirror actual conference setting (ACS) in their curriculum, considering them to contribute to the development of prospective interpreters in ways that regular interpretation classes can not (Lee, 2005). Virtual learning workshops can be organized to explain the techniques used to interpret in the conference booth with audio equipment, to give practice from live speeches on political, technical or economic topics. This method can prove to be an efficient way of teaching interpretation provided that instructors are aware of the limitations in replicating the exact same conference environment in class and teaching.

Prior to an ACS session, instructors emphasize the importance of holding specialized meetings by interpreters as an important part of their work prior to any conference. During such meetings interpreters acquaint themselves

with the theme and sub topics (conceptual preparation), research jargon terms and compile glossaries (terminological preparation) as well as assess the background of participants and venue logistics. Interpreters base their preparations on the documentation provided by organizers supplemented by internet search, consulting experts and referring to documentation from previous conferences. ACS sessions may include an investigation on the techniques of both simultaneous and consecutive interpretation, components of cognitive processes of interpretation with an emphasis on memory span, attention, overlap and recovery, automaticity and L1 /L2 interference (Kim, 2003). The significance of holding preparation meetings has been stressed by the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) which included a clause about the provision of conference documents to interpreters for the purpose of preparation in the interpretation contract it recommends for use with clients (Daniel, 2002).

In ACS training sessions the particular nature of conference interpretation as distinct from written textual translation should be highlighted. Regardless of the quality of interpreters, lack of adequate preparation may result in embarrassing situations, unexpected turn of events and can even lead to a complete communication breakdown among the participants. An interpreter may fail to perform well if he or she does not study the setting logistics and the background of participants in a given event. For instance, the presentation can take any form from an improvisation to a text written to be presented as speech, a text in slide form and a text written in English but read by a non-native speaker. In a situation where the text is written for speech, the speaker may read the text too quickly or instead moves abruptly by simply touching upon the important points. Aside from obtaining the proceedings, an interpreter is required to initiate contact with the organizers and the speakers in order to acquaint himself with the time limit allowed for each speaker, the length of the text, and the speakers' delivery habits (skimming, slide show, audience Q&A). If this is unfeasible, it is preferable to rely on the orally delivered remarks rather than the speech text and in case the speaker speaks too fast, an interpreter should try to convey the gist of what is said (Son, 2001).

Another important ACS skill that needs to be developed in training is "probability prediction mechanism". Chernov (1979) has constructed a model for predicting probability in simultaneous interpreting, based on an increased redundancy from the syllabic level to the word level and on the levels of the clause, the sentence, the message, and the situation. He believes that our ability to extract the implications of a message after having heard part of it can only succeed through linguistic, cognitive, deictic and pragmatic redundancy. The latter is a necessary component in any communication channel in order to overcome noise and interference. A trainee can be instructed to pace his renditions by exploiting redundancy gaps such as repetition, excessive synonymy, ellipsis and glosses. Similarly, if there is no

authorized or established translation of a source language term, the interpreter may have to resort to creating redundancy in the TL through explication and paraphrase of the SL concept as a means of balancing the gap in the TL vocabulary. Quite often the interpreter may act as a lexicographer or a morphologist in order to create an *ad hoc* neologism as a kind of makeshift "substitute equivalent".

### **5 TAP, Revision and Editing**

Instead of product-oriented translation studies, the process-based think-aloud protocols (TAP) method examines the cognitive processes in the brain of a translator while translating. The findings of TAP could contribute to changing the course of translation education by adopting an introspective psycholinguistic model of translation in which the process-oriented approach is given equal footing with the traditional product-oriented approach. What is needed is a systematic analysis of the dilemmas, procedures and solutions during the decision-making process. Instead of conducting an SL/TL product-to-product critique, trainees are guided through the pathways of the negotiating phase (Hatim & Mason, 1990). Thus the TT can be viewed as the result of motivated choices whether at the lexico-grammatical or the cultural-pragmatic levels within the constraints of the intentions of the ST producer, TT norms and the TT audience needs. It is hoped that more process-oriented training courses are conducted by using recordings and editing notes of actual think-aloud processes to provide trainees with insights into the workings of the cognitive analysis of an ST and the reconstruction of a TT text in the making. This approach may prove more effective if used concurrently with a minimalist approach while conducting sight translation. TAP has proven to be an effective tool in revealing aspects not always apparent in the finished written product.

On the other hand, revision of translated texts is part of the overall translation production process and thus is an important concept in understanding the nature of translation. Its objective is to improve TT quality through corrective action either by applying a priori top-down concept of preconceived standards of improvement or a bottom-up approach whereby we decide what we are or aren't going to do by looking at what we have in front of us. Therefore, it is preferable that revision be carried out in tandem or at least in close contact with the translator (Martin, 2007). Revision alone can never ensure that an intrinsically bad product will be rendered flawless. Therefore, it can be used as a tool to provide feedback to the translator in order to effect corrective actions (Martin, 2007).

According to the EN-15038 European Quality Standard for Translation Services, paragraph 5.4.3, revision must be carried out by a person other than the translator thus distinguishing it from self-revision which it sensibly calls 'checking'. Revisers are required by the standard to examine a translation for its

suitability for purpose and to compare the source and target texts and recommend corrective measures. The main reason for revising a translation is to eliminate any errors it may contain. Improvement is an added bonus to be determined according to the type of text and readership involved (Martin, 2007).

However, revision has so far been treated only as a secondary task in the translation process and has not received proper attention in the field of translation training studies. The evaluation and criticism of authentic translations are effective tools that open the minds of trainees to the processes that the translator has been through and promotes sensitivity to the various alternative renditions. Trainees should be made aware that unlike proofreading, revision is not limited to correcting grammatical, spelling or punctuational errors. A reviser should weigh the source text, the commissioner's objectives and the background of the recipients as well as the degree of fidelity according to text typology. Nord (2001) mentions that revisers bear a moral obligation to make certain revision strategies explicit in a preface or in footnotes. Revision strategies and the degree of loyalty vary according to text type. For instance, an installation guide should read smoothly and if the translator fails to do so then it is the task of the reviser to correct the translation even if this requires changing word order. Similarly, a reviser may change the translation of an advertising text if he deems that the text does not have to be translated literally. In such instances, the strategy of a pragmatic functional translation is favoured to loyalty (e.g. legal or technical translation). Either way, we should retain a healthy fear of translation errors in texts with a serious legal, political or commercial dimension which must surely account for a large chunk of most corporate and freelance workloads (Martin, 2007).

Künzli (2007) conducted an analyses of the think-aloud protocols from professional translators who were asked to revise three draft translations. The analyses revealed a number of ethical dilemmas and loyalty conflicts between the different parties involved in the revisions: source-text author, commissioner, translation agency, target-text reader, translator, and reviser. The TAP protocols contained many verbalizations that illustrate the conflict between the economic demand for speed and the ethical demand for thoroughness, reliability or quality. The large number of verbalizations indicates that revisers must compromise with respect to the values or ideals they pursue in their work due to time constraints or lack of access to an information source.

A further problem revealed by the TAP analyses and that seems to deserve further attention in translator training is the need for the reviser to work on the basis of a specific revision brief about the fictitious target readers or the client. Revisers need a *revision brief*, stating explicitly what is expected from them in terms of full or partial revision and what parameters of the draft translation they are supposed to check. During the final stage of a group training project, students are required to do a final post-test of three

checklists, namely the translator's, the editor's and the proofer's to make sure that the tasks assigned to each of them have been executed efficiently.

## 6 A Minimalist Approach

Pym explains that a minimalist approach to translator training sees translating as a process of producing and selecting between hypotheses. The postmodern plethora of information makes the production of alternative TTs easier, which means that more emphasis has to be placed on the elimination of possible TTs (Pym, 2003). The model implies that translation approaches may help translators produce more alternatives and also eliminate possible alternatives. Theories would thus be productive and/or reductive. In other words, a trainee translator is gauged for his ability to generate a series of more than one viable target text (TT1, TT2 ... TTn) for a relevant source text (ST) and the ability to select only one possible TT from this series, quickly and with justified confidence. It is a process of generation and selection, a problem-solving process that often occurs with apparent automatism.

Whether at the macrotextual or microtextual levels, the concept of translation problem is subjectively defined. What constitutes a problem for one translator may not be so for another and what is a problem for a translator at one point in time may be otherwise later. Trainees may apply a minimax principle whereby they automatically process the text by applying the default solutions for a given translation problem. However, when the variables of the situation change a more reflective procedure is introduced and alternative solutions are sought (Asenso, 2007). The course designer makes the decision as to which problems to include in the teaching material while the instructor collaborates with the students in eliminating possible solutions by analogy, comparison, deduction and common sense within the framework of the social communicative function of TT.

Minimalism challenges the equivalence-based approach to translation which is based on the authoritarian role accorded to the instructor of translation. This means that, although teachers have every right to give their own TTs and to assess the divergent TTs of individual students, the actual training of translators should not mirror the individualism of such assessment procedures (Pym, 2003). Likewise, individual translators need to explore other resources like academic specialists, translation memories and clients to help them generate and eliminate alternatives.

An example of how a minimalist approach may solve translational problems is the following sentence from an Arabic insurance policy that was collectively rendered into English by a group of trainees.

يعتبر شرطاً أساسياً لإيفاء الشركة بالتزاماتها صحة البيانات والإقرارات الصادرة  
عن المؤمن له.

The fulfillment of the company's obligations is made conditional upon the validity of the declarations made by the insured.

Using on-line and specialized dictionaries the trainees produced variant renditions of the word إقرار as 'acknowledgement, concession, admission, endorsement, declaration, statement'. While each rejecting the other's translation they were asked to present their own justifications in defense of their individual choice. After a few elimination strategies were implemented in view of the type and purpose of the text and the nature of the prospective end-user, two equivalents 'statement, declaration' were selected. Those in favour of 'statement' argued that 'declaration' can only be used in the context of a formal statement in the sense of 'proclamation' of war or a state of emergency. However, after referring the trainees to specialized dictionaries on legal terminology, the cons realized that 'declaration' can also be used in the sense of 'a statement of goods, income, etc., especially for the assessment of duty, tax, insurance or the like.'

It should be pointed out, however, that minimalism would not be an effective training tool in cases where one-to-one natural equivalence is already established. In order for such an approach to work, it requires the presence of a problem and the generation of more than one rendition usually in a setting that involves a group of trainees.

## **7 Self-evaluation and Peer Review**

This approach enables not only the teacher to give positive feedback in the classroom but also the students to find out why the interpretation went wrong by evaluating their colleagues or themselves, thereby identifying their weaknesses on their own or through the help of their study partners. Through self-evaluation, students may build up confidence by realizing that they have the potential to make more progress in areas unperceived to them before applying self monitoring and peer review techniques. One of the techniques I have used with great efficacy in undergraduate courses is group discussion of a back translation of the target text. This method reveals points of divergence either as a result of mistranslation or a socio-cultural disparity between the ST and the TT. Another equally beneficial procedure is to assign the students a text that has already been translated or published in books, magazines or newspapers. The translated version will then be presented as a benchmark for comparison.

The need for self-evaluation is justified by the fact that students spend more time practicing in groups or individually outside class than in class with the teacher. This indicates that self-evaluation can come in handy by effectively making maximum use of practicing when students are on their own (Jung-Yoon 2004). It is hard, however, for novice learners to self-evaluate and make progress without understanding the fundamental cause of their shortcomings. As with group project, without proper screening, peer review is fraught with the problem of mixed standards which, in turn,

makes it difficult for a low achievement student to assess the work of other peers.

### **8 Enhancing Delivery Skills**

One recurrent issue in the design of curricula for translator training programmes is the question whether to train translators into their native language as a TL or prepare them as bi-directional translators from or into their mother language as both a SL and a TL. According to the directions of most international translators' organizations and associations (AIIC, ATA, ITI), professional translators usually translate into their native language (their A language) rather than the foreign language or language B. Rather than having a translation student struggle to create a good translation in the B language, the student would be better served by developing more insight and understanding into the B language as an SL through reading, terminology acquisition, cultural training, and subject area familiarization. Instructors would have more time to focus on nurturing in their students translation and writing skills that the students will use in writing the TT, rather than merely correcting and explaining the subtleties of idiom and usage in the students' B language.

The problem of tertiary level translating courses in the Arab world is that the curricula used for teaching Arabic as a TL is inadequate. A number of schools admit students just out of secondary schooling and, therefore, have to focus on both SL (often English) and TL (often Arabic) enhancement at the expense of translation proper. With the Anglicization of the medium of instruction in the fields of science, IT, business and media majors, to name but a few, the overwhelming influence of English over the internet and satellite channels and the presence of a large community of Asian and European expats particularly in Gulf countries, mother language proficiency can no longer be taken for granted. Coupled with the introduction of English at the primary (elementary) stage of education in several Arab states, the degree of exposure to the mother tongue has become inadequate. Likewise, the mushrooming of private English and American schools has relegated Arabic as a foreign language. Indeed, students at such schools may enroll in Arabic as a Foreign Language (AFL) courses which are made optional for senior students in some IB schools. Further, the diglossic dichotomy in the Arab world has aggravated the situation owing to the fact that the low variety (i.e. colloquial) version(s) of Arabic is used at home and in the street for everyday communication while the high variety (standard) Arabic is confined to formal settings as in writing, education, speeches and clerical work. In fact, aside from promoting foreign language skills, translation instructors are equally concerned with students' deficiency in understanding Arabic vocabulary as an SL and the lack of proficiency in rendering Arabic as a TL. Therefore, the assumption that Arabic is the default TL should be taken with a grain of salt.

As Nord rightly says, "linguistic and cultural competence both on the source and the target side is the main prerequisite of translation activity" (Nord, 1992, p.47). It follows that equal emphasis should be placed on advanced Arabic language skills in writing and speech. With the deteriorating proficiency levels in spoken and written Arabic of high school graduates, it would be wise to introduce intensive courses in the writing and speaking skills of Arabic in translation programs. The ability to give a speech and write quickly and effectively in the target language can be the key to a successful career in the translation/ interpretation market where interpreters are expected to be equipped with perfect target language ability and speech delivery skills. Once an interpreter begins to interpret a source language, he becomes the speaker (or writer) for the target audience. Therefore, the ability of the interpreter to render an SL speech or text in a variety of styles is as important as the ability to understand the speaker's message. Creative renditions are imperative because the means of the TL are not identical with those of the SL.

To arrive at an adequate TL version, new resources have to be tapped. In terms of training courses, this requires intensive reading, writing and presentation skills. However, training institutions of interpretation in Arabic do not provide students with structured Arabic speech training. Rather, they tend to focus on training students with their foreign language ability with the misconception that students are naturally proficient in their mother tongue. Unfortunately, the latter is a hypernym for a number of regional dialects that reflect differences in accent and vocabulary. A sound knowledge of standard Arabic articulatory skills, grammar and rhetoric is essential to the interpreter's efficient delivery skills. For instance, the grammatical function of the word in Arabic is determined by its inflectional ending which could be in the form of a postscript diacritic or a segmental change. Failing to produce the correct inflectional marks will lead to erroneous renditions and may alter the semantic relations and the rhetorical effects intended by the ST producer. Similarly, novice interpreters tend to mimic the ST discourse beats, pauses, pitch and intonational contours. Unlike some dialectal variations in English, a rising pitch will almost invariably indicate exclamation or interrogation in Arabic; a regular statement should end with a low tone and a falling intonation. Through intensive Language courses in TL rhetoric and stylistics, trainees should be made aware that each language has its own verbal delivery skills which reflect its cultural and rhetorical patterns.

## **9 IT Skills and Online Resources**

The translation market has changed rapidly and dramatically following the use of the computer and the advent of the World Wide Web and globalization. The need for speed, accuracy and timely delivery requires that training should include as many online tools and electronic resources as possible.

Translation is an area that lends itself easily to computer and on-line training. Nonetheless, traditional approaches to training placed undue attention to linguistics-based methodologies while technology has been a neglected area. In our increasingly technology-mediated world, integrated methodologies may blend together selected features of online and face-to-face training that enhance the experience of both trainers and trainees. With new media, new tools and new resources, translation is no longer an individual solitary activity. New translation tasks involve the versatile use of state-of-the-art hardware and software and on-line collaboration with fellow translators.

Trainee and professional translators should be prepared to adapt to the rapid technological progress which can solve an array of translation difficulties with a focus on technical and pedagogical aspects of on-line translator training courses. One of the on-line training tools consists of using software to build corpora, its evaluation as a process and the overall quality of the final product. Likewise, terminology databases and electronic dictionaries (e.g. AcroLexic abbreviations and acronyms dictionary) offer more updated terminology and enable the translator to access a wide range of lexicons in a split-second. Mackenzie and Vienne (2000, p.127) stress the importance for the translator to be *au fait* with the use of state-of-the-art translation memory tools such as Trados, Déjà vu and Wordfast,

"the ability to acquire, manage and utilize resources is part of the translator's competence and should be taught and practiced systematically during training."

Likewise, Munday (2001, p.183) stresses the importance of information technology,

"training should include as many computer tools and electronic resources as possible in the interests of speed and translation precision."

Trainees need to acquire the speed and accuracy of a professional translator. They have to acquire note-taking skills, word processing, and desktop publishing software. They need to learn how to type quickly with the aid of voice recognition dictation softwares and work efficiently in current software applications and on the Web. IT know-how is a rudimentary requirement in the reproduction of ST graphological designs and special formats that often accompany visual illustrations. Likewise, the softwares used in compiling corpuses, interpreter self-training (e.g. AUDACITY software) as well as dubbing, subtitling technology, terminology databases and translation memory tools constitute an indispensable component of any training programme. Students should also be exposed to on-line web translation in order to test and evaluate softwares as well as discover the

problems associated with web translation such as coding, consistency, style and post-editing. The current job market requires us to teach our translation students a wide range of electronic tools running the gamut from basic word processing to advanced formatting, localization of software, basic DTP and HTML files, as well as terminology and glossary databases, word and character count software...etc.

Trainee translators should possess at least basic computer skills and be internet savvy in order to make use of online corpuses and dictionaries, translation memories, terminology data banks, machine translation engines (MT), computer assisted technology (CAT) and other software tools common in translation work and localization services. This will prepare them for the demands of the translation industry. Anything less will simply give them more to learn after they graduate, defeating the purpose of the training they have paid for and worked through. Nonetheless, Information technology resources rarely involve the selection of alternatives. They speed up the production of alternatives and can be viewed as aids in the training class but the prime elimination by way of minimal exclusion remains to be acquired by the translator.

Moreover, trainees could take part in beta test sites for localization and MT/MAT products. A beta of the next version of Trados, Systran, Babel Fish or TM2 could help trainees learn about the systems and provide the manufacturers of these products a pool of highly capable linguists and translators as testers. A similar experiment was conducted at Kuwait University in the late 1990's where graduate students were involved in evaluating the beta version of Tarjim developed by Sakhr Electronics as an English-Arabic translation engine. The trainees gained from writing their critical assessments of the software and proposed their amendments. In turn, the feedback was of immense help to the company in updating its programme which can be accessed online at: <http://translate.sakhr.com/sakhr>

## **10 Discourse Analysis**

One recurrent question in designing a translation training course is to determine which theory the trainer can adopt in delivering the teaching material. In his book, *Training the Translator*, Kussmaul (1995, pp. 2-3) writes that "he will draw on psycholinguistics, text linguistics, speech act theory, text typology and functional sentence perspective." Along these lines we propose an eclectic approach that emphasizes the interpretive theory of translation that prioritizes sense according to context and situation. Instead of focusing on either textlinguistics or FSP, trainees should be encouraged to perform ST discourse analysis as part of their pre-translation competence before embarking on the process of reformulation into TL. Within a socio-cultural framework, this approach underscores the role played by translators in understanding the discursal processes involved in the production of the source text, its function

and the translator's role in carrying its sense across language barriers (Lederer, 2007).

One of the prime causes of false TT renditions is that translators' training is insufficient to enable them to read between the lines in order to extrapolate embedded meanings. Sometimes, this could be the result of lack of training to appreciate the background of the source text including genre, setting, spatial and temporal dimensions, extralinguistic knowledge and information about the author, prospective target audience, the purpose of writing the ST and the objectives of its translation. This may involve text reformulation in the form of explicitation, implicitation, structural changes and style shift.

Atari (1994) states that source text comprehension is identified as a problematic area in English-Arabic translator training programmes. Before embarking on the production of the TT a translator's primary task is to determine text typology and assess the temporal and social aspects of the ST, field and mode of discourse, register and intentionality. The different levels of inferencing and supposition should be integrated within a socio-pragmatic analysis of ST. The latter may include a study of language varieties as per setting, dialects and slang. Trainees should also be introduced to the issue of exoticism, naturalization, acculturation, conversational maxims and politeness in translation.

In the subtitles below, the erroneous translation is not the result of a lexical mismatch but rather a lack of sensitivity to style and register.

We are cool!

أبلىنا بلاء حسنا [we acquitted ourselves heroically.] or [we fared well.]

MBC Action: *Monster Garage*, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009)

Instead of نجحنا [We succeeded.] or أنجزنا العمل [we did it.]

Get out of here!

لا تتماحك معي [don't bicker with me.]

(MBC Action: *Monster Garage* April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009)

Instead of لاأصدق ماتقول [I don't believe you.] or [you must be kidding.]

We goofed this time! إرتكبنا خطأ فاحشا هذه المرة [We committed a grave mistake this time.]

Instead of: أخطأنا هذه المرة [we made a mistake this time.]

You caught me with my pants down.

أخذتني علي حين غرة. [you took me completely off guard.]

Instead of: فاجأتني [you surprised me.]

It is noteworthy that the Arabic translation shifts the vernacular phrases in the above examples to a formal style without paying attention to the nature of the T.V. programme, the context of utterance and the diglossic nature of the Arabic language. Hence the importance of introducing discourse analysis as a topic in the training sessions in order to give the text as many interpretations as readers of the original were able to entertain (Lederer, 2007).

### **11 Internship and In-service Training**

There is a growing interest in both educational institutions and translation industry firms to include internships as an integral part of translator and interpreter training programmes particularly at the graduate level. Under the supervision of the programme coordinator, students can work for one or two semesters at a selected firm either with pay or with a promise for hire after graduation. Government agencies, NGO's and international organizations (e.g. UNESCO, WTO, UNDP, IMF) can offer training opportunities or provide the programme coordinators with on-the-job training materials. Senior professional translators with a long track in specialized translation can be invited as advisors, consultants, or guest lecturers. For instance, at the Master's degree at Kuwait University, professional translators from customs, news agencies, T.V. and newspapers are frequently invited to lecture to graduate students. Likewise, trainees can participate in ongoing conferences as observers in the interpreter's booth or may even engage in the pre-conference preparation work on terminology.

In-house translators can still be trained on-the-job by engaging them in practicums; some may be trained at postgraduate level or take a series of short-term in-service courses. Whatever the nature of the course or the domain covered, the training materials should not be recycled as the translation profession changes too quickly to allow last year's translation texts to be used more than perhaps a couple of years in a row. As Pym (2005) points out, having students work on patents from five years ago may mean they will not learn the currently accepted format for a patent; similarly having students work on a hardware or software manual from even three years ago will deny them much needed current terminology and subject knowledge.

Finally, special advanced programmes should be tailored for training the trainers. Indeed, some translation instructors are by profession TESOL or TEFL specialists while others are graduates of language departments where translation is not a major. Trainers who use impressionistic traditional methods need to be updated with new developments in the field by organizing periodical seminars and workshops to standardize their approaches and skirt recurring problems.

## 12 Conclusion

As translator training courses have existed only for a few decades, an ideal methodology for the training of translators and translation teachers has not yet been properly developed. Indeed, examples abound of intuitive, "impressionist" methodologies, based for the most part on models imported from other areas and on the standards adopted by the institutions offering such courses. They do not contribute to establishing systematic procedures which guarantee some degree of efficiency in training translators for the real world. In other words, there seems to be a lack of educators in these institutions who can do research on their groups and assess the ever-changing knowledge and skills needed by their students, in an attempt to create an environment that fosters a professional competence based on reality.

The traditional approach to training is based on text typology with an emphasis on specialization in a given subject area. An alternative methodology is to classify texts according to function (informative, persuasive, argumentative...etc.). Yet, texts can be hybrid in genre and function. The same text can be classified as economic and legal while function cannot be defined independently of the communicative context. As Asenso (Asenso, 2007) suggests it would seem reasonable to approach training not from text typology but rather from the specific translation problems present in each text. In this regard, trainers may apply a minimalist approach to solving problems alongside the analysis of texts at the microtextual and macrotextual levels within the framework of the social communicative function of TT.

Future training programs should be organized around a hybrid methodology, an eclectic approach that would provide the translator with a multicomponent competence involving linguistic, social, cultural, cognitive and professional skills with the ultimate objective of meeting market demand.

A number of schools in the Arab world still hire language teachers to teach translation. This practice is problematic, because, as Lederer (2007) argues, in order for someone to teach translation, one has to be an expert practitioner in order to understand translation procedures and problems as well as understand what is expected from translators in the work market. We would suggest, therefore, that expert translators be recruited as teaching assistants in practicums after attending a course on theoretical principles and teaching methodology. This underscores the importance of introducing courses to train the trainers as an ongoing activity to update their knowledge and ensure uniformity of approach.

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