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Module : Translation and Interpreting

Level : 3rd year



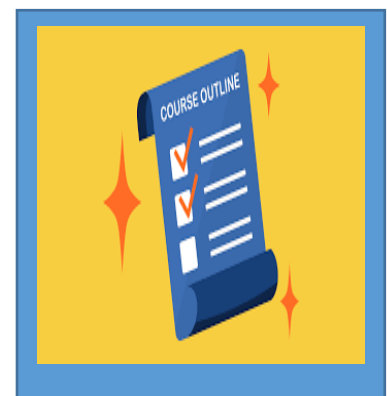
General Translation

Lesson overview :

In this lesson, the field of general translation is explored, focusing on the strategies and techniques required to effectively convey meaning from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL). The difficulties, challenges, and cultural considerations will be examined. By the end of this lesson, students will gain valuable insights into general translation and have deeper understanding of its process. Moreover, they will be better prepared to handle translation difficulties, navigating cultural nuances, and ensuring accurate and appropriate translation outcome.

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1. Introduction to general translation

General translation is the process of translating a message from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL). In this type of translation, translators should grasp the full meaning of texts, identify the intent of the author, and produce an accurate and appropriate translation.

1.1 Definition

General translation is defined as « a reproduction of a source language (SL) message into a target language (TL) message. The procedure carried out in the process must result in equivalent message written in natural TL grammar » (Sinungharjo et al.,

2023, p. 40). General translation involves a deep understanding of both SL and TL, as well as the cultural and contextual nuances and connotations.

1.2 Characteristics

General translation has several characteristics that distinguish it as a unique discipline. The process of translation is defined by the features of the text (Petrilli, 2003). These characteristics include :

- **Broad scope** : it encompasses a wide range of fields and subjects, as well as diverse content.
- **Cultural sensitivity** : it involves considering cultural nuances, connotations, and wordplay as well as adapting the content to be culturally appropriate to the target reader.
- **Contextual understanding** : it requires context understanding to grasp the intended meaning and intent of the original author. Translators may need to decipher the underlying message and tone to appropriately convey the meaning.
- **Linguistic considerations** : a high level of proficiency is required to render the original meaning. Grammar, syntax and vocabulary are of paramount importance.
- **Research** : in some cases, translators need to do extensive research to understand the source text and find the most appropriate equivalents. They must be proficient in using dictionaries, glossaries, translation memories, and online resources.
- **Writing skills** : translators must have good writing skills to produce translations that are coherent, natural, and acceptable. They should maintain consistency, clarity, cohesion, and readability.

- Editing : translators must always revise their translations and correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation mistakes to avoid ambiguity and non-sense and produce a high-quality translation.

1.3 Role of translators

The role of translators is crucial. Translators should undertake the following tasks : (Al Zidjlay, 2012)

- ✓ Facilitate communication and bridge the linguistic gaps ;
- ✓ Ensure accuracy and faithfulness and maintain the original intent of the author ;
- ✓ Act as cultural mediators and adapt translations to suit the cultural norms and values of the target readers ;
- ✓ Conduct research to ensure accurate and up-to-date translations and manage terminology ;
- ✓ Edit and proofread their translations to ensure the correctness and high quality of the final work ;
- ✓ Maintain confidentiality and adhere to ethics especially when handling sensitive information.

2. Understanding the importance of reading

Reading is a very important process that should be encouraged and enhanced.

2.1 Definition

Reading is one of the most important language skills that should be developed; it is defined as “the ability to extract and construct linguistically-based meaning from written text” (Hoove & Tunmer, 2020, p. 24) that is, the reader should have a deep knowledge and a good command of language to be able to identify and decipher the meanings of words.

Further, Cain states that “reading is much more than a single skill: it involves the coordination of a range of abilities, strategies, and knowledge” (Cain, 2010, p. 2)

2.2 Types

There are many types of reading that students may engage in such as: scanning or skimming reading, idea reading, exploratory reading, study reading, critical reading, and analytic reading (Koneru, 2008).

Brown (1994) suggests several reading types such as oral reading, silent reading which is divided into intensive and extensive readings. On the other hand, Rizvi (2006) considers “the techniques of prediction, skimming, and scanning as part of rapid reading which prepare for intensive reading if applied correctly and effectively” (243)

2.3 Importance

Reading is essential for :

- Knowledge acquisition
- Exploration of diverse subjects
- Cognitive and emotional development
- Vocabulary enhancement
- Critical thinking and analysis skills development
- Creativity enhancement
- Writing skills development

3. Exploring source text analysis

According to Nord (2005), the analysis of source text plays a crucial role in the translation process and it encompasses the following aspects :

3.1 Identifying key concepts and cultural nuances

Effective analysis of the source text will guide the translator in adapting the language, tone, and style of the translations that suit the target reader as well as overcoming cultural challenges.

3.2 Grasping the intended meaning

The analysis of the source text will help the translator understand the surface and underlying meanings, concepts, ideas, and references embedded in the text.

3.3 Considering the context

Context provides valuable information about the intended meaning of the source text. By considering the purpose, subject, audience, and references, translators can accurately convey the intended meaning and make the message understandable.

4. Translating idiomatic expression

Translating idiomatic expression can be a challenging task in the field of translation.

4.1 Definition

According to Cambridge Dictionary, idiomatic expression is « a group of words whose meaning is different from the meanings of the individual words » (n. d.)

Idiomatic expressions are phrases that have a figurative meaning which cannot be understood through literal interpretation of the individual words .

4.2 Types

There are many types of idioms such as « lexical idioms and phrase idioms » (Strassler, 1982, p. 30). Both lexical and phrase idioms have figurative meaning, for instance the expressions ; *kick the bucket*, *break a leg*, *piece of cake*. As for phrase idioms.

In terms of structure, idioms can be categorised into : verb-object idioms (*throw in the towel*), prepositional idioms (*in the heat of the moment*), adjective-noun idioms (cold shoulder), noun phrase idioms (butterflies in the stomach), and fixed sentence idioms (all's well that ends well).

4.3 Translation strategies

When translating idioms, several considerations come into play such as, cultural awareness considering the fact that idioms are closely tied to culture and language, contextual understanding to determine the appropriate equivalence, consistency and coherence, as well as target audience values.

In this regard, Mona Baker (1992) suggested four strategies to render idiomatic expressions : (a) literal translation, (b) reproduction of the same idioms (similar form and meaning), (c) reproduction of the idiom (similar meaning and dissimilar form), (d) translation by paraphrase, (e) translation by omission.

Peter Newmark (1988) suggested some techniques to translate idiomatic expressions among which, (a) literal translation, (b) substitution, (c) translation by a more general word, (d) translation by a similar image or metaphor, (e) cultural equivalent, (f) paraphrase, (g) omission.

5. Translating collocations

Translating collocations poses a unique challenge for translators.

5.1 Definition

According to Oxford English Dictionary, collocation is the « habitual juxtaposition of a particular word with another word or words with a frequency greater than chance » (n. d.)

Collocation is a linguistic phenomenon where certain words tend to co-occur regularly and form natural combinations.

5.2 Types

There are several types of collocations.

- Verb+noun collocation : Make a decision.
- Adjective+noun collocation : Heavy rain.
- Adverb+adjective collocation :highly skilled.
- Noun+noun collocation : traffic jam.
- Verb+adverb collocation : Speak fluently.
- Adjective+Preposition collocation : Afraid of.
- Verb+preposition collocation : Listen to.
- Verb+Adjective collocation : Keep something clean.
- Noun+preposition collocation : Arrival at.
- Adjective+Verb collocation : Good to see.

5.3 Translation strategies

- Formal and dynamic equivalence (Nida, 1969)
- Literal translation, substitution, paraphrase (Newmark, 1988)
- Calque, modulation, equivalence, adaptation (Vinay & Darbelenet, 1958).

6. Navigating culture-specific items

Culture-specific items are deeply rooted in a specific culture and may not have direct equivalents in the target language.

6.1 Definition

Culture-specific items, also known as cultural references, are cultural elements of a particular culture that may not have direct equivalents in another culture or language. (Ranzato, 2015)

6.2 Types

Culture-specific items encompass a wide range of elements that are unique to a specific culture such as : food, traditional dishes, ingredients, cooking techniques, clothing and fashion, festivals and holidays, customs and traditions, arts, architecture, language, proverbs, idioms, institutions, organisations, folklore, mythology, geographical locations and natural features.

6.3 Translation strategies

- Direct and indirect translation procedures (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958)
- Semantic and communicative translation. (Newmark, 1988)
- Domestication and foreignization (Venuti, 1995)

7. Proofreading

Revision is an essential stage in the translation process, it aims to increase translation quality.

7.1 Definition

Proofreading is defined as « the process of carefully going over a written report, story, or letter before the final copy is made » (Villalpando, 2007, p. 51)

Proofreading in translation is the process of reviewing and correcting a translated text to ensure its accuracy, clarity, consistency, appropriateness, and acceptability.

7.2 Steps

- Reading the TT without looking at the ST.
- Reading TT and comparing it to ST.
- Resolving translation problems.
- Doing more research. (Mossop, 1982)

8. Case studies and practical exercises

Translation of general texts

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