In The Name Of God

Subject

*How to be a good translator*

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INTRODUCTION

According to Shahvali (1997), theoretical knowledge and practical skills alone are not adequate to prepare students to face the developments in the field. There is a need for ability to adapt; therefore, it is necessary to focus on students' self-updating and to develop their relevant mental, communicative, and planning skills.

Training translators is an important task which should be given a high priority. The service that translators render to enhance cultures and nurture languages has been significant throughout history. Translators are the agents for transferring messages from one language to another, while preserving the underlying cultural and discoursal ideas and values (Azabdaftary, 1996).

The translator's task is to create conditions under which the source language author and the target language reader can interact with one another (Lotfipour, 1997). The translator uses the core meaning present in the source text to create a new whole, namely, the target text (Farahzad, 1998).

In addition to being a member of our country, we are members of the world community, and this gives us a global identity. Therefore, it is quite natural for us to think about world affairs and cooperate in solving the world's problems. To do so, the first and most important tool is "language," which is socially determined. Our beliefs and ideologies are always reflected in our way of talking, although the connections are hidden and only "critical language study" reveals these hidden connections in discourse.

The role of language in the developing world is materialized through "translating," and since critical language study is concerned with the processes of producing and interpreting texts and with the way these cognitive processes are socially shaped, it can be considered as an alternative approach to translation studies.

TIPS FOR TRANSLATORS’ ATTENTION

Specialization is incredibly important in translation and have at least a Bachelor's degree in either translation. Nobody can be an expert in everything, but as a translator, you are
expected to be an expert in translating each individual text you translate. If the texts are on related topics, you will have less vocabulary to learn each time. Your understanding of the field will also grow, improving your natural ability to perform a "logic check" on your translated text - i.e. you can tell whether a text works logically, not just linguistically. Put simply, specialist translators are better translators. It also revealed that some specializations pay better than others. A good translator chooses a specialization relevant to them - appropriate to their academic training, professional experience and/or hobbies and interests (obviously, all three is a brilliant combination!).

When choosing your specialization, think first about your interests - as that is what you will enjoy, but then also seriously consider whether you have academic, professional or other relevant experience to back that up.

A translator's job is to communicate, so you should be able to communicate accurately, appropriately and concisely. Therefore, you should have a broad, expressive vocabulary and excellent, in-depth knowledge of the grammatical nuances, quirks and rules of your target language.

A good level of education is another huge advantage, and for most agencies and many direct clients, a must. A Bachelor's degree in your specialist field, translation or your source language are particularly helpful.

A good translator is someone who has a comprehensive knowledge of both source and target languages. Students should read different genres in both source and target languages including modern literature, contemporary prose, newspapers, magazines, advertisements, announcements, instructions, etc. Being familiar with all these genres is important, since they implicitly transfer culture-specific aspects of a language. Specialized readings are also suggested: reading recently published articles and journals on theoretical and practical
aspects of translation. The articles will not only improve the students' reading skill in general, but also give them insights which will subconsciously be applied when actually translating.

Moreover, translation trainees should have a good ear for both source and target languages; i.e. they should be alert to pick up various expressions, idioms, and specific vocabulary and their uses, and store them in their minds to be used later.

A good translator should be familiar with the culture, customs, and social settings of the source and target language speakers. She/He should also be familiar with different registers, styles of speaking, and social stratification of both languages. This socio-cultural awareness, can improve the quality of the students' translations to a great extent. The social context in translating a text is probably a more important variable than its genre. The act of translating takes place in the socio-cultural context. Consequently, it is important to judge translating activity only within a social context.

Translation trainees also need to be familiar with the syntax of indirect speech and various figures of speech in the source language such as hyperbole, irony, meiosis, and implicite. Awareness of these figures of speech will reinforce students' creativity and change their passive knowledge into active skill. For Example:

"Horse-shoe" is a sort of common game in English, but the translator (Mr. Parviz Dariush) in the story "of mice and men" translated it as: ﺑﺎز ﺗﯽ

Another important point is that successful translators usually choose one specific kind of texts for translating and continue to work only in that area; for example a translator might translate only literary works, scientific books, or journalistic texts. Even while translating literary works, some translators might choose only to translate poetry, short stories, or novels. Even more specific than that, some translators choose a particular author and translate only
her or his works. The reason is that the more they translate the works of a particular author, the more they will become familiar with her or his mind, way of thinking, and style of writing. And the more familiar is the translator with the style of a writer, the better the translation will be.

"Writing" skills, i.e. the ability to write smoothly and correctly in both source and target languages, are also important. Writing is in fact the main job of a translator. Students should become familiar with different styles of writing and techniques and principles of editing and punctuation in both source and target languages. Editing and punctuation improve the quality and readability of the translation.

The translators should be able to understand the majority of texts without the aid of a dictionary, to the standard of an educated native-speaker.

A good translator also has access to the best resources to assist them in their work - so a stable, fast internet connection is vital, as well as general and specialist bilingual and monolingual dictionaries, style's guides, computer software and hardware.

Don’t trust your dictionary alone! One of the elementary errors students make is choosing the wrong translation from a dictionary entry. This typically happens when the translator doesn’t know the meaning of one of the words they are working with. To remedy this you may want to check a monolingual dictionary as they usually offer more complete definitions. Also, try looking up the likely translation to make sure that it “translates back” to the source language correctly. If you are still unsure, ask the organization or a native speaker.

Using dictionaries is a technical skill in itself. Not all students know how to use dictionaries appropriately. Words have different meanings in different contexts, and usually monolingual dictionaries are of utmost value in this regard. Students need a great deal of practice to find the intended meaning of words in a particular context, using monolingual dictionaries.
THE PRINCIPLES OF FINDING EQUIVALENT WORDS

The translator must find equivalent words from the target language in order to substitute them for the words in the source language. For example:

On the other hand

ترجمه نفت به لغت: روى دست دیگر

توجهی صحیح: از طرف دیگر

TRANSITION OR SHIFT

Sometimes in translating we have to eliminate or add some words in the sentences and we have to translate the active sentences to the passive or vice versa and also change the adjective to the noun and so on… For example:

The Iranian president returned from Isfahan yesterday morning.

ترجمه کلمه به کلمه: "رئیس جمهور ایرانی" دیروز صبح از اصفهان بازگشت.

ترجمه صحیح: رئیس جمهور ایران دیروز صبح از اصفهان بازگشت.

A flag is a symbol of independence.

ترجمه تحت اللفظی: یک پرچم یک نشان از استقلال است.

ترجمه صحیح: پرچم نشانه استقلال است.
THE IMPORTANCE OF PUNCTUATION

To the average writer, it is merely a form of style, but one should never underestimate these small dots and lines, for they represent the way we speak just as much as—if not more than—every letter of the alphabet. All proofreaders and any translator concerned about the quality of their productions should fully master the use of all punctuation signs used in their working languages. This is not meant as an exhaustive guide, but I will try to give you general tips and guidelines to keep in mind when writing in any language and for any purpose, based on what I have observed in some European languages.

UNIVERSAL SIGNS

Periods (.) and commas (,) and question mark (?) are the most common signs in Western languages. It is obvious that the period marks the end of a sentence, but also indicates abbreviations, provides structure in lists, etc. As for the comma, it is also well known, but often used in very questionable ways. Commas are generally used to insert rhythm in a sentence by isolating complements, structuring enumerations, enclosing parenthetical expressions and so on. I strongly recommend reading up on the comma to grasp all of its subtleties. If you are still unsure, read your sentence aloud and ask yourself: "would I mark a pause there when saying this?". And, of course, the question (?) and exclamation (!) marks are pretty self-explanatory; just make sure that you are aware of particularities such as the inverted question and exclamation marks of the Spanish language when you write in a foreign language—they may seem useless to you, but they are part of the language just as much as the words you translate.
For example:

*Why, no, I answered.*

You are in such a hurry to get back to the front?

*MORE RHYTHMS AND FUNCTIONS*

The semi-colon (;) is not very well understood by most. As far as rhythm is concerned, semi-colons are halfway between commas and full stops, much like colons (:). However, their use is totally different. Colons clearly *introduce* an enumeration, explanations or specific information mentioned moments earlier. Semi-colons, however, are used to replace *conjunctions* (and, but...) to introduce a new idea without cutting to a new sentence. Since the semi-colon is a very particular sign used in specific instances (sometimes, you really *should* start a new sentence or simply use "and"), you should try to avoid it when you are unsure of its relevance. A misplaced semi-colon will break the flow of the text in an awkward way, while you can easily replace it with a more common sign or different wording.

Parentheses are rather easy to use, as they simply introduce an idea of secondary importance in the flow of a sentence. A common mistake to avoid, seen especially when authors use
parentheses inside parentheses, is forgetting to close them; another is putting punctuation that should be outside of them inside and vice versa. But did you know that dashes do almost the same thing? Dashes—not hyphens (-), mind you—also indicate parenthetical expressions (secondary ideas that are not strictly related to the content of the sentence or that serve as a means to give additional information). Once again, I can not go into details in this article, so I recommend avoiding their use until you are sure that they are appropriate (especially since they can be replaced by parentheses quite easily). Another detail to pay attention to is that there are several dashes of varying lengths, and each serves a different purpose. To be honest, most people would not notice, but are you not supposed to strive for perfection?

**QUOTATION MARK**

One does not need to spend a lot of time describing quotation marks: used primarily in dialogs, quotations and to emphasize words or phrases, the only real difficulty to keep in mind is to use the right sign for each language and follow its rules. Many languages have different quotation marks than those used in English and sometimes have different rules regarding their place in the sentence or around words. Another detail is that some languages require different signs for quotations inside quotations for the sake of clarity ("'The captain said: 'Hello!'"). As a side note, if you are writing dialogs (especially long ones), consider using dashes—one of them exists specifically for this purpose.

**NITPIKING**

Even signs like spaces can have particular rules to follow in certain languages. Did you know that many French punctuation marks are preceded by a non-breaking space? Are you able to spot two spaces in a row? What about paragraphs, margins or indentation? Is there a
fundamental difference between bold and italics? There are also some details that may seem
trivial but that are more than "nitpicking". For example, apostrophes are mistreated very
often in English (you certainly have seen "your" and "you're" being misused, for instance),
while they have a strong influence on a sentence's meaning. Similarly, many languages have
accents and special characters that sometimes give totally different meanings to words: do not
neglect them!

Group work and cooperation with peers can always lead the translating process to better
results. Students who practice translation with their peers will be able to solve problems more
easily and will also more rapidly develop self-confidence and decision-making techniques. At
the result the translators must have paying attention to the deep meaning of sentences not the
surface meaning.

CONCLUSION

Finally in order to be a good translator, we have outlined altogether a list of points to serve as
a guide on how to provide the best possible translations you are expected to offer as a good
translator:

1. Always translate into your native language unless you are near native or bilingual in
the second language. Even then, bear in mind that most professionals translate only into their
native language.

2. If you do decide to translate into a non-native language, we strongly suggest finding a
native speaker to check your work over before you submit it.

3. If you are unsure of the meaning of a word or phrase, always either check the meaning
in a dictionary, with a native speaker, or with the organization that requested the translation.
4. Please don’t attempt to translate texts of a technical nature unless you are familiar with the material or willing to put in the (sometimes considerable) time necessary to research the topic.

5. Don’t trust your dictionary alone! One of the elementary errors students make is choosing the wrong translation from a dictionary entry. This typically happens when the translator doesn’t know the meaning of one of the words they are working with. To remedy this you may want to check a monolingual dictionary as they usually offer more complete definitions. Also, try looking up the likely translation to make sure that it “translates back” to the source language correctly. If you are still unsure, ask the organization or a native speaker.

6. A literal word for word rendering of the text is not really a translation. You should always strive not only to convey meaning as precisely as possible, but also tone, and to make sure the translation reads well. Don’t be afraid to rearrange or rebuild sentences – well-expressed ideas are far more important than consistent grammar. This is an art form, there is always room for improvement (and debate!).

7. Be aware of the importance of the texts you are translating. Medical documents, legal texts, and contracts are just some examples where the quality of your translation can be very significant and mistakes could be very damaging for the organization you are trying to help. Remember, these organizations are depending on you!

8. Deadlines are important. Be aware of the difference between time sensitive documents (publications, grant applications, etc.) and other materials, like archives and non-essential program materials, where deadlines may be more flexible. Be sure to check with the organization about this first.

9. Work together with the organization to assess the importance of accuracy in the translation before starting. What would be the cost of an error? If an error could be very damaging you may want to make sure a bilingual editor reviews the text, most professional translations agencies do this routinely. Perhaps the organization will have someone they can ask to edit. If not look for one locally or find an “editor” through the site.
10. Keeping in mind the three previous points, ask the organization about what the translation will be used for, when it is needed, and how important it is. These are things you need to know to do your job responsibly as a volunteer.

11. Remember perfection is laudable, but not always attainable. Do your best, and if you aren’t confident about a translation check your work, ask questions, or find an editor. For students (and often translators) translation is a learning experience. You’re not only developing skills, but often exposed to ideas and materials you would never come across otherwise. Enjoy!