A Comparison between the Jerome Translation Model and Horace Translation Model

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Abstract. With the development of translation theory and its history, the models of translation have also changed and developed according to the different requirements of people and the society. This paper mainly focuses on the two models of translation: the Jerome model and the Horace model. There exist some differences between these two models. The former, the Jerome model, emphasizes the equivalence and faithfulness for the translation; while the latter, the Horace model, pays much focus on translation and culture, and the negotiation. And the purpose of this article is, through analyzing the characteristics of the Jerome model and the Horace model, to make a comparison of the two models.

1. Introduction

Translation is the information transferring between two languages and the cultural communication between two language families; it is a rendering from one language into another; it is a science, an art, a bilingual art, a craft, a skill, an operation and communication. The American translation theorist Eugene A. Nida (1993) wrote in 1964: Translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalence of the source language, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style. Translating is also a complex and fascinating task. In fact, I.A. Richards (1953) has claimed that it is probably the most complex type of event in the history of the cosmos. Because of experience in learning a foreign language in school, most people assume that literalness in translating means faithfulness to the text, even though close literal renderings are often seriously misleading. In English, for example, the repetition of a word usually implies emphasis, but not in Bahasa Indonesia, where repetition only signals plurality.

The first step towards an examination of the process of translation must be to accept that although translation has a central core of linguistic activity, it belongs most properly to semiotics, the science that studies sign systems or structures, sign processes and sign functions. Translation involves the transfer of ‘meaning’ contained in one set of language signs into another set of language signs through competent use of the dictionary and grammar, the process involves a whole set of extra-linguistic criteria also.

With the development of translation theory and its history, the models of translation have also changed and developed according to the different requirements of people and the society. It is hard to say which model is much better than others or which one is the best one, as each model has its advantages and disadvantages. There are mainly three kinds of model of translation, the Jerome model, the Horace model, and the Schleiermacher model. In this paper, we will mainly discuss the first two types.

2. The Comparison between the Jerome Model and Horace Model

There exist some differences between these two models. In general, the characteristics of the Jerome Model are equivalence, faithfulness, and match of words; while the characteristics of the
Horace Model are negotiation/satisfaction, privileged language and culture capital (textual grid). In the following part, we will make a specific comparison of them.

2.1. Being Faithful to the Text vs. being Faithful to the Customers

In Jerome model, translations should be faithful to the original. Since what a translator really does is expressing other people’s idea in a different language, the content of his translation must strictly comply with that of the original. Though faithfulness has its different types with the development of the translation studies, the faithfulness in the Jerome model is connected with equivalence. That is, it requires the translations are as faithful as possible to the source texts, and in the respect of faithfulness, the Jerome model reduces to thinking about translation to the linguistic level.

In Horace model, ‘fidus interpres’ is faithful to his customers. [5] A ‘fidus’ translator/interpreter was one who could be trusted, who got the job done on time and to the satisfaction of both parties. To do so, translators should negotiate with the customers. In order to satisfy the need of the clients, translators could not translate the source texts just being faithful to the text, but making some adjustments or compromises. For example, if original is about a business transaction or an advertisement of certain products, translations which are faithful to the text may let a successful business collapse; while translations which are faithful to its customers are most likely make the business to be succeed. The similar examples are often seen in the business negotiation when the interpreters do the translations.

Faithfulness is an essential point in translation. As it has been discussed in the above passages, the Jerome model emphasizes that the translations should be faithful to the text, while the Horace model emphasizes that the translations should be faithful to the customers.

2.2. Word-for-word Translation vs. Sense-for-sense Translation

Because of the many discrepancies between meanings and structures of different languages, some persons have insisted that translating is impossible, and yet more and more translating is done and done well. Those who insist that translating is impossible are usually concerned with some of the more marginal features of figurative language and complex poetic structures. The use of figurative language is universal, but the precise figures of speech in one language rarely match those in another. In Jerome model, word-for-word translations are paid many attentions. In accordance with this model, translators should translate a sentence originally; keep the original message form, including construction of sentence, meaning of the original words, metaphor of the original and so on. Translation would be fluent and easy to comprehend by target language readers. To do so, to guarantee the equivalence and faithfulness of the translation, the interlinear translation is supposed, in which one word would match another and the translated word would be written under the word it was supposed to translate. However, equivalence in translation should not be approached as a search for sameness, since sameness cannot even exist between two TL versions of the same text, let alone between the SL and the TL version.

Translating is a skill which generally requires considerable practice, most people assume that it can be taught, and to an extent this is true. Some people imagine that the most difficult task for the translator is to find the right words and constructions in the receptor or target language. On the contrary, the most difficult task for the translator is to understand thoroughly the associative meanings of the text to be translated. This involves not only knowing the meanings of the words and the syntactic relations, but also being sensitive to all the nuances of the stylistic devices. One struggling translator ever summed up his problems, “If I really understood what the text means, I could easily translate it.” [2] Meanwhile, in order to do the translation, knowing two languages is not enough. It is also essential to be acquainted with the respective cultures.

So in Horace model, translations not just restrict in matching of words, but considering the meanings or sense which should be understood without difficulties in target language. According to Horace view, the
underlying principle of enriching the native language and literature through translation leads to a stress on the aesthetic criteria of the TL product rather than on more rigid notions of ‘fidelity’. Horace, in his Art of Poetry, warns against overcautious imitation of the source model:

A theme that is familiar can be made your own property so long as you do not waste your time on a hackneyed treatment; nor should you try to render your original word for word like a slavish translator, or in imitating another writer plunge yourself into difficulties from which shame, or the rules you have laid down for yourself, prevent you from extricating yourself.

So prevalent was the habit of borrowing or coining words, that Horace, whilst advising the would-be writer to avoid the pitfalls that beset ‘the slavish translator’, also advised the sparing use of new words. In doing so, sense-for-sense translation is ensured.

2.3. For Different Types of Texts: Almost the Same Translation Strategies vs. Different Translation Strategies

Another difference between Jerome model and Horace is the translation strategies. The Jerome model emphasizes the equivalence and faithfulness of translation, and in the translation strategies he proposed the word-for-word translation. Even for different types of source texts, the strategy of translation is monotonous. A comparison of original and translation will not only reveal the constrains under which translators have to work at a certain time and in a certain place, but also the strategies they develop to overcome, or at least work around those constraints.

On the contrary, we have recognized that different types of texts require different translation strategies according the Horace model. Some texts are primarily designed to convey information; some are designed to persuade; and some are designed to entertain, etc. If the text is designed to convey information, translations of such texts should try to convey that information as well as possible. Because the initiators not only want the text translated, but also want it to function in the receiving culture in a meaning way. How they do so in practice will be the result of assumed or explicit negotiation among the translator who actually translates it, the culture to which the text belongs, the culture the translation is aimed at, and the function the text is supposed to fulfill in the culture the translation is aimed at.

2.4. Not Considering Culture vs. Considering Culture

It stands to reason that language does not develop in empty space. Language is a part of culture. To some extent, translation means intercultural communication by means of which one culture can be transmitted into another, so the cultural special characteristics unavoidably influence translation. In Jerome model, the equivalence limit of the translation between the original language and the target language is almost caused by the differences between the two cultures and how to convey the cultural meaning is often the difficulty of a translation. This limit is not only manifested in the meaning of words, grammatical features, but also manifested in cultural differences more seriously. But in Horace model, the close relationship between translation and culture is emphasized. Because different languages are bound to adopt different meaningful devices to show their cultures in order to reflect their national consciousness and cultural tradition. In the 1970s, translation was seen as ‘vital to the interaction between cultures. Susan Bassnett (1980) stated that, “translation provides researchers with one of the most obvious, comprehensive, and easy to study ‘laboratory situations’ for the study of cultural interaction.” [4] In general, The differences in culture give rise to more important adjustments than the differences in language.
3. Conclusion

After contrasting the Jerome model and the Horace model, it is not difficult to find out their disparities. The former is faithful to the text, but the latter is faithful to the customers; The former follow the principle of word-for-word translation instead of sense-for-sense translation as the latter does; the third difference is that the Jerome model encourages to use a monotonous strategy of translation while the Horace model support to adopt different translation strategies for different types of texts; finally, Jerome does not realize the importance of culture in translation as Horace does.

So within the Jerome model students can be held to a more strict discipline. They can be shown where their strengths and weaknesses lie, and they can be helped to cultivate the former and overcome the latter. While the Horace model needs to supplement the Jerome model in translating, to heighten students’ awareness of the textual and conceptual grid. Facing all kinds of different translation models or theories, it is necessary for the translators to keep an unusual sensitivity to the resources of language, the importance of culture, and the art of translating.

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