AL-FARABI KAZAKH NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Department of International Relations

Chair of Diplomatic Translation

**Translation business in the field of international and legal relations**

**“Linguistic and cultural aspects of translation”**

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Lecture 10

Module 3 Linguistic and cultural aspects of translation transformations

Lecture 10 Translation transformations

\*\*Translation transformations\*\* are techniques and methods used by translators to adapt and transfer meaning from a source language to a target language. These transformations ensure that the translated text remains faithful to the original message while fitting the grammatical, cultural, and stylistic norms of the target language. Translation is not always a one-to-one process due to differences in structure, idiomatic expressions, and cultural references between languages.

Here are the most common types of translation transformations:

1. \*\*Transposition\*\*

Transposition involves \*\*changing the grammatical structure\*\* of a sentence while maintaining the meaning. This can include shifting the parts of speech (e.g., converting a noun to a verb) or changing the word order due to differences in how languages organize ideas.

- \*\*Example\*\*:

- Source: "He finally succeeded."

- Translated (into French): "Il a enfin réussi."

In this case, the adverb "finally" changes its position after the verb in French, which is a common word order change.

2. \*\*Modulation\*\*

Modulation refers to a \*\*change in the point of view or perspective\*\* in the translation to make it sound more natural in the target language. This transformation often involves rewording an idea, as literal translation may sound awkward or illogical.

- \*\*Example\*\*:

- Source: "It is not difficult to understand."

- Translated (into Spanish): "Es fácil de entender." (Literally: "It is easy to understand.")

The perspective is shifted from negative to positive to create a more natural expression in the target language.

3. \*\*Equivalence\*\*

Equivalence is used when translating \*\*idiomatic expressions, proverbs, or set phrases\*\*. Since these phrases often don’t have a direct counterpart in other languages, the translator finds an equivalent expression in the target language that conveys the same meaning.

- \*\*Example\*\*:

- Source: "Break a leg!" (an English idiom to wish someone good luck)

- Translated (into French): "Merde!" (An idiomatic French expression used in the same context, literally meaning "shit!")

4. \*\*Adaptation\*\*

Adaptation involves \*\*replacing a cultural element\*\* in the source text with something more familiar to the target audience. This is common when a direct translation would not make sense or be understood by the reader.

Example\*\*:

- Source: "He had porridge for breakfast."

- Translated (into a culture where porridge is uncommon): "He had rice for breakfast."

The food item is adapted to something culturally familiar to the audience.

5. \*\*Calque\*\*

A \*\*calque\*\* is a literal translation of a phrase or word from the source language, often translating idiomatic expressions word-for-word. This is also known as a "loan translation."

- \*\*Example\*\*:

- Source: "Skyscraper" (English)

- Translated (into Spanish): "Rascacielos" (literally, "scrape-sky")

The expression is directly translated while keeping its metaphorical meaning.

6. \*\*Literal Translation\*\*

Literal translation, also called \*\*word-for-word translation\*\*, involves translating each word exactly as it appears in the source language. This method is often avoided when translating idiomatic or cultural phrases, but it works well with technical, legal, or scientific texts where precision is key.

- \*\*Example\*\*:

- Source: "The sun rises in the east."

- Translated: (in many languages, including French and Spanish) word-for-word because it carries the same meaning directly.

7. \*\*Explicitation\*\*

Explicitation is the process of making \*\*implicit information explicit\*\* in the translation. This transformation is used when the source text leaves out certain details that are clear to the original audience but may not be understood by the target audience.

- \*\*Example\*\*:

- Source: "The Festival will begin on Monday."

- Translated: "The Music Festival will begin on Monday."

If the type of festival was not obvious in the source text, the translator clarifies the meaning for the target audience.8. \*\*Reduction and Expansion\*\*

These transformations involve \*\*condensing or expanding\*\* the original text. Reduction occurs when redundant information is cut out, while expansion adds necessary explanations or details to clarify the meaning.

- \*\*Reduction Example\*\*:

- Source: "She gave him a very beautiful, shiny, red apple."

- Translated: "Elle lui a donné une belle pomme rouge." (reducing unnecessary adjectives)

- \*\*Expansion Example\*\*:

- Source: "He walked to work."

- Translated (into Japanese): "彼は仕事に歩いて行きました" (adding necessary linguistic markers to make the sentence grammatically correct in Japanese)

9. \*\*Compensation\*\*

Compensation is used when a particular nuance, meaning, or wordplay cannot be translated directly, so the translator compensates by adding it elsewhere in the text to maintain the overall tone or style.

- \*\*Example\*\*:

- Source: A pun that doesn’t translate well might be lost, but a different wordplay or pun is added in another part of the text to make up for it.

Conclusion:

Translation transformations allow translators to navigate the complex differences between languages while preserving meaning, style, and cultural nuance. By using these strategies, translators balance fidelity to the original text with the need for readability and cultural relevance in the target language. Each transformation serves a purpose, ensuring that the translation is accurate, natural, and meaningful to its intended audience.

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