



Translation Processes in the Translation Training Programme of the DRC

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Abstract: More studies are being conducted in the didactics of translation to find out what it can consist of and how it can be achieved. This paper evaluates the translation training programme of the DRC in order to point out the conceptualisation of the translation processes, in particular the controlled ones of comprehension and re-expression. It is basically a library research. The results tend to indicate that more weight is given to re-expression than to comprehension. Given that production is dependent on comprehension, I suggest that attention of equal par should be given to both these phases of translation.

Keywords : translation processes, didactics of translation, translation programme evaluation, conceptualisation.

Résumé : De plus en plus d'études sont menées en didactique de traduction pour essayer de dégager ce en quoi elle consiste et comment elle peut être implémentée. Cet article évalue le programme d'études de traduction de la RDC en vue de dégager la conceptualisation des processus de traduction surtout les processus contrôlés de compréhension et de réexpression. Cette étude est fondamentalement une recherche documentaire. Les résultats tendent à montrer que beaucoup plus d'heures, donc d'attention, sont consacrées à la phase de réexpression qu'à celle de la compréhension. Etant donné que la réexpression est tributaire de la compréhension, je suggère qu'une attention de part égale soit accordée à toutes les deux phases.

Mots-clés : processus de traduction, didactique de traduction, évaluation du programme de traduction, conceptualisation.

Introduction

In the literature, translation processes have been studied from two stand points: 1) the textual analysis of the product and 2) the analysis of the procedures leading to the production of the product (Dam-Jensen and Heine 2009; Lumbala 2016b). The best known example of the former is in Vinay and Darbelnet (1995/2004) as detailed in Munday (2016). As for the latter, Lumbala (2016a) can be considered as an illustration of the point. However today, more studies are carried out in the didactics of translation with a goal of finding out what it can consist of and how it can be achieved (Durieux 2005; Pym 2003 and 2012; Gile 2005, Tatillon 2007 to mention but these). Known for the emphasis it places on the contents of the discipline, the didactics of translation is reported in Kambaja (2009:4) as bearing on two essential steps of the process, notably comprehension or reception and production or re-expression. In line with this, the present paper is intended to unravel the conceptualisation of these two steps in the programme designed for the training of translators (and interpreters) in the DRC. And on the strength of the insights that will be gained, the implications for the didactics of translation will be drawn.

The choice of this study is grounded on the competence-oriented research of translation (CORT)¹ paradigm as it focuses on the study of the human mind in its application to human translation competence. Human cognition takes place in the mind and in line with CORT that is where the focus is located.

The object domain of competence-oriented translation research is, therefore, very different from that of input-output hypothesis oriented research; since communicative competence is most likely located in the human mind, that is where the focus of the research lies (Gutt, 2010, p.205)

As can be noticed, the human mind is presented as “the back-and /or playground of the competence” (Lumbala 2020) or as “the solid foundation for knowledge to be built on” (Hedwig te Molder and Jonathan Potter 2005, p.7). As to the interest, the paper is intended to bring to the open the conceptualisation of the translation processes by the designers of the programme. By so doing there is a way to round up the views as to how the two steps of the didactics of translation should be developed on the part of the learners by improving the conception of the translation training programme.

1. Conceptual Considerations on the Translation Processes

It is appropriate at this juncture to define what is meant by **process** as opposed to product which dominated translation thinking in its beginning and to specify the perspectives taken into consideration in this work. To begin with, Halverson (2009, p.1) tells us that

Research that is identified as being inspired by the disciplines of cognitive psychology or psycholinguistics is also often identified as 'process-oriented'. This term is often used in contrast to 'product-oriented' research, which is then assumed to represent a concern with translations as linguistic artifacts.

Process research brings to the open two perspectives which can be used to define process from. One is mental and the other one is physical (Dam-Jensen and Heine 2009). Process studies on translation began in the 1980's to highlight the cognitive complexities of translating in sharp contrast with the then dominant linguistic approaches which insisted on the knowledge of languages only (Jääskeläinen 2012). In their book **Methods and Strategies of Process Research**, Alvstad et al. (2011, p.1) take the point not only in specifying the aim of process research but also by dividing the process of translation/interpreting into three main phases. In their own words

The central aim of process research is to "understand the nature of the cognitive processes involved in translating, with a focus on the individual translator" (Englund Dimitrova 2010a: 406). The process in translation and interpreting is generally divided into three phases : comprehension, transfer or shift between the two languages involved, and production (Englund Dimitrova 2010a). Naturally, none of the phases is directly observable, and researchers have therefore employed various methods for learning more about what goes on in translators' and interpreters' minds when they translate.

In research domain, process means steps or stages a researcher goes through from topic selection to the publication of the final product (Kothari 2004 ; Buhendwa 2012 ; Mulamba 1999). In cognitive psychology however, it is not easy to specify the meaning of process (Halverson 2009). In Translation Studies domain, some authors have endeavoured to provide the definition of process. Séguinot (1989, p.iii) cited in Valentine (1996, p.78) mentions two acceptations to the term process. The first refers to "the progressive, physical production of a translated text" and the second, to "the constraints of particular institutional or personal philosophies of translation". As it can be seen, the first acceptance relates to the production phase of the translation as a textual unit. As it can be noticed, this is not comprehensive of all that is involved in a translation. The second by contrast has something to do with the translator's attitude and working conditions.

Jääskeläinen (2009) on her part sees processes as referring to 1) neural activities and 2) information processing. Concerning the first, it can be remembered that neurosciences study the cells of the brain, technically called neurons. These sciences also hold that the neurons are interconnected and interact and by so doing they produce cognitive states of different types. So, it is the activities or the workings of the neurons which here stand for the first meaning of the mental processes. Supportive of this, Paradis (2003) writes that "Mind is neurological activity". At least this view reflects the position of the

advocates of the internal cognition, though so far it is imperative to unravel the direct link between neurons and thoughts (Dortier 1998). In this way, processes are inaccessible via any method of verbal reporting. But interested readers are referred to read electroencephalography (EEG) (Kurz 1993) and neuroimaging (fMRI) (Buckweitz 2006) cited in Hurtado Albir and Alves (2009).

The second meaning of mental processes is according to Ericson and Simon (1984) cited in Jääskeläinen (2009 and 2012) "information processing". "According to their theory of verbalization, the part of information processing which takes place in working memory, i.e., which is at the focus of conscious attention is accessible to verbalization" (idem 2009, p2). At present, there seems to be a consensus on the fact that information processing is stepwise. In this vein, by translation process is meant the phases (mental and physical or otherwise) the translator goes through while translating. Put otherwise, the translation process refers to the activity leading to the production of the translation. In this matter, translation process researchers generally identify three main phases of the translation process, namely : 1) comprehension, 2) transfer or shift between the two languages involved, and production (Englund Dimitrova 2010a cited in Alvstad et al. 2011).

1.1 Focus on Comprehension and production phases of Translation

Here the focus of attention is on comprehension and re-expression phases as these are at both ends of the process and are classified as controlled operations by cognitivists in their distinction between automatic and non-automatic operations, controlled and uncontrolled operations. In other terms, controlled processing is that which requires conscious efforts (Bernardini 2002) and is susceptible to change due to some pedagogical action.

- Cognitive Processing in Comprehension

As already said, the focus of the CORT paradigm is placed in the study of the mind. In this section in particular, the focus is on how the mind processes the text with a view to constructing the meaning to translate. In other words, each translation is the verbalization of the translator's comprehension of the text. Therefore, what is comprehension and how does it come about? There is no definite answer but a common ground seems to have been reached among cognitivists to consider comprehension as

Activité de construction de représentations mentales dans une interaction entre un « texte composé d'informations explicites agencées selon les règles inhérentes à une langue donnée » et un lecteur disposant d'une base de connaissances sur laquelle interviennent un certain nombre de mécanismes (procédures), et cela sous la contrainte d'une capacité limitée de traitement (Fayol, 1992b, p.79 cited in Plassard 2007, p.113).

It is worth noting that this activity (of comprehension) is stepwise in that the information registered in the sensory memory (by way of sight or hearing) is transferred to the short-term memory known for the purpose as working memory. The latter draws on linguistic as well as extra linguistic knowledge and skills from the long-term memory to process/interpret the signals received (Gile 2005). In other terms, comprehension of the text to translate results from the interaction between top down and bottom up processes (Padilla et al. n.d.). In clear terms, the success of this step is mainly linked to the preexistence in the translator's mind of the linguistic as well as extra-linguistic knowledge or the search for it. This is why the two sub-competences are referred to as pre-translation sub-competences in the PACTE group model (2011).

Once this processing is over, the result of it is sent to the long-term memory and the process restarts. In other terms, the process of text understanding relies on linguistic as well as extra linguistic knowledge and skills (Kambaja 2009). In addition to this, "Psycholinguistic factors such as frequency, preference, memory load, and so on have been found to play a crucial role as well" (Hatzidaki 2007, p.8).

Gile (2005) corroborates Kambaja mentioned here above and goes further as to mention two other steps. Put otherwise, for Gile (2005) there are four elements which intervene in the phase of understanding : 1) Passive knowledge of the source language, 2) Non-linguistic knowledge, 3) Complementarity between linguistic knowledge and non-linguistic knowledge and 4) analysis.

Passive Knowledge of the Source Language

By **passive knowledge** is meant the ability to extract meaning from a written text or what the author (Gile 2005) calls minimal knowledge of the source language (lexical knowledge, syntactical knowledge of rules, etc.) This type of knowledge is required in comprehension rather than in production where active knowledge of the mother tongue (target language) is required.

Extra-linguistic Knowledge

Some cognitivists have shown us how meaning results from the interaction between our knowledge of the world stored in our memory and the linguistic elements of the text or discourse for both of which they have used different terminologies. It is the knowledge of the world which is here referred to as non-linguistic or even extra-linguistic knowledge. This type of knowledge is said to be as important as the linguistic one and seems to be intertwined with it that at times it can seem difficult to keep them separate. In this matter, Gile (2005, p.109) writes that

Il est ... difficile d'imaginer des connaissances linguistiques complètement détachées des connaissances extralinguistiques : en principes les signes linguistiques et leurs combinaisons nomment des entités extralinguistiques (...) et la connaissance des rapports entre ces signes et ce qu'ils désignent fait essentiellement partie des connaissances linguistiques.

As it can be seen, this citation spells out the interrelation between linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge though it would be interesting to cross-refer to the denotational theory of meaning.

Complementarity between Linguistic and Extra-linguistic Knowledge

In Fillmore's scenes-and-frames semantics, scenes refer to what Lederer (1984) calls encyclopedic knowledge, that is, our knowledge of the world which is stored in our memory and triggered by frames or the linguistic elements of the text. Talking about the importance of extra-linguistic knowledge in translation, Gile (2005, pp.109-110) notes that our understanding of the utterance is based on this and the interpretation of the clues provided by frames or linguistic elements. The question as to how this is translated into act is emptied by understanding that it is through analysis of the translation text.

Analysis of the Source Text

In his book **A Short Guide to Writing about Literature**, Barnet (1971,p10) defines **analysis** as "A breaking of the work into parts, or the study of one or more parts". Likewise, Hornby (2010) notes that analysis is 1) 'The detailed study or examination of something in order to understand more about it; the result of the study', 2) 'a careful examination of substance in order to find out what it consists of'. In the understanding phase, analysis of the source language text is of paramount importance in the construction of the sense to translate. It is the way through which the translator accedes the meaning. Gile (2005,p111) supports this view when he writes that

Les connaissances linguistiques et extralinguistiques ne conduisent à la compréhension que par le biais d'une analyse. Comme l'ont montré les psycholinguistes, cette analyse est omniprésente dans la compréhension du discours, car les signes graphiques...doivent être identifiés comme unités linguistiques, et qui sont à leur tour interprétées en tant que vecteurs d'un sens précis...Le traducteur y ajoute...une analyse consciente, délibérée et systématique, afin d'exploiter au mieux les informations dont il dispose au départ ainsi que les informations que lui fournit le texte de départ...

As it can be seen, the analysis of the text before translating it seems essential for the construction of the sense. Put differently, it is intended to reach

the deverbalisation, one's interpretation of the sense to translate (Lederer 1984). For the translator, the analysis is not only a conscious, but also a deliberate and a systematic endeavour, a prerequisite to the production of the translation.

- Cognitive Processing in Production

Like in the comprehension processing, the working memory draws the linguistic and extra-linguistic knowledge necessary for the production of the translation on the long-term memory. But the linguistic knowledge that is required in the reformulation/production is, unlike in understanding, active knowledge of the target language. That is, a translator must possess all the writing skills necessary for the production of an acceptable text in the target language. In other words, a good translator is first of all a good writer (Gile 2005). And in line with Mulamba (1999) a good writer is first of all a good reader. Therefore, a good translator is first of all a good reader.

In addition to the above, producing good translations calls for the knowledge of contrastive rhetoric of the working languages involved so as to avoid calquing the target text on the original one. It follows that the translator must be able to produce a text which respects the genius of the target language rhetoric. This calls for 'linguistic perfectness', a notion developed by Gile (2005) to show how important to the translator is the knowledge of the working languages and the need to update them continually.

1.2 Approaches in the translation processes

There are two approaches taken by translators in the production phase which actually is the materialization of the comprehension one, 1) vertical approach and 2) horizontal approach. In this matter, Padilla et al. (n.d.) note that

Advocates of vertical translation, [...], maintain that in the phase of reformulation the processes of linguistic recoding are minimal. The comprehension of the text or discourse in L1 implies the construction of a meaning and the loss of the specific linguistic form in which it was produced. Therefore once comprehension has taken place, the mediator's task is to produce the message in the second language. Thus the translation/reformulation implies the implementation of the comprehension processes of the message in L1 and the production of it in L2. On the other hand, horizontal translation implies direct processes of change from one linguistic code to another, in other words, from the lexical representation in L1 to the lexical representation in L2. (Padilla et al. n.d:66)

In the translatorial literature, the two modes have been mentioned as pathways taken by translators, nonprofessional and professional altogether. In line with Christoffels and de Groot (2005, p.459) cited in Halverson (2009), these are meaning-based and form-based processing (or transcoding) one.

These two modes of processing imply different roles for the linguistic form itself. In an extreme 'meaning based' translation process, the linguistic form would serve only as a means of accessing the conceptual level, and selection of a target structure would take place on the basis of meaning comprehension. In 'transcoding', on the other hand, links between linguistic forms in a bilingual's two languages may allow a short cut from one language to another. In other words, less meaning is activated, and the forms do more of the work in moving from one language to another.

The question as to whether which group of translators relies on which mode, Christoffels and de Groot (2005, p471) cited above have noted that "both forms of processing are likely to occur in translation". Put differently, each translator is likely to resort to transcoding as well as to meaning-based processing depending on the task under way. But professional translators have been found to rely extensively on the meaning-based processing and nonprofessional on the form-based one.

2. Methodological considerations

This section revolves around methodological considerations on data collection and analysis. The data on which this paper is based are drawn from Lumbala's (2020) PhD dissertation which attempts to show that translation is a cognitive activity which involves more than just the linguistic competence and that it (translation) is a constructed, learnable skill on the one hand. On the other hand, it evaluates the programme designed for the training of translators (and interpreters) in the DRC with a view to pointing out the conceptualisation of the TC. The evaluative endeavour has been carried out in the light of competence-based approach to translation programme evaluation (henceforth CBATPE) which is but a variant of the CORT paradigm advocated by Gutt (2010).

Competence-based approach to translation programme evaluation is a pedagogical framework which views translator education as nothing other than training an expert professional that will carry out translating activity efficiently on the basis of the skills gained. In other words, this framework focuses the lenses on the training of the "learner" as a "thinker and problem-solver" (Dam-Jensen and Heine 2009) or on what the learner will be able to do in the professional setting at the end of his/her studies. Stated differently, in this approach, the learner is expected to develop mental aptitudes which will allow him/her to generate adapted solutions to changing and diverse situations given that translation is an activity which is never the same in the sense of ready-made recipes for any problem (Chauvigné and Coulet 2010, p16 paraphrased in Kambaja forthcoming). Therefore, the CBATPE is a framework for making value judgements on the conceptualisation of translation as a cognitive activity.

It is worth noting that the aptitudes or competences that are expected of the translation learners have already been studied, modeled and validated by empirical research carried out by the PACTE group in Spain (2011). Following CORT paradigm advocated by Gutt (2010), I have found CBAT suitable for programme evaluation in this work. To the best of my knowledge, it is the first time that this variant of the CORT has been applied to programme evaluation in line with the PACTE group model of the translation competence.

In fact, CBATPE seems to be more advantageous than other models of programme evaluation (the experimental/quasi-experimental models, Kirkpatrick's four-level evaluation model, the outcome-based evaluation model, the Logic model, the CIPP model, etc.) for its end target is the conceptualisation of the translation competence as a whole. In this work it is intended to point out the DRC training philosophy as far as translation processes are concerned, that is, her conceptualisation of the competence to develop on the part of the learners via the evaluation of the programme designed to that end. It focuses the lenses on the axiom "Garbage in garbage out" or on "Beginning rightly is ending rightly".

3. Evaluation of the Translation Processes in the DRC Programme

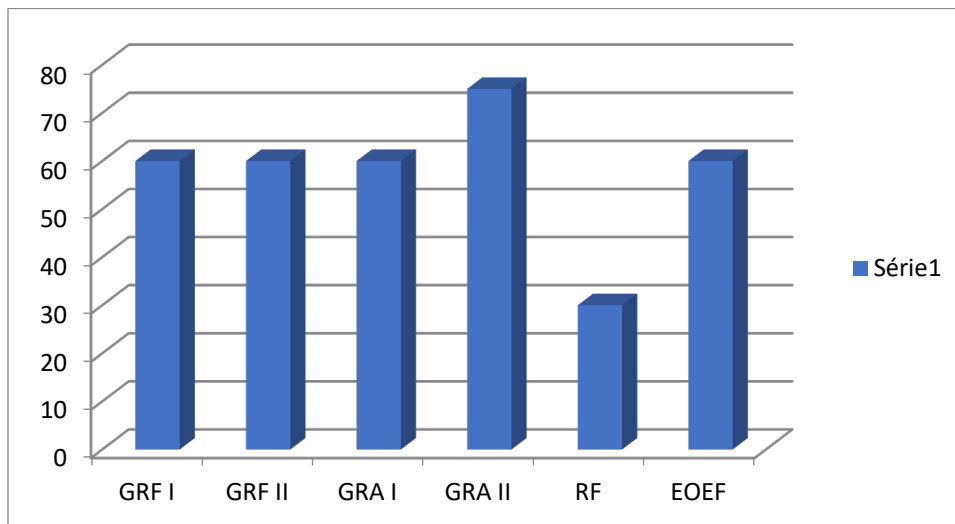
It is worth noting that the translation competence has been found to be the summation of five sub-competences : the bilingual, the extra-linguistic, the instrumental, the knowledge about translation ; and the strategic. These five rest on the psycho-physiological components which support their acquisition and use (PACTE group 2011). The five sub-competences of the TC model as listed above are a mixture of two types of competence, i.e., 1) the general type of sub-competences (GENTY) and 2) the translation specific type of sub-competences (SPECTY). The former sub-competences are the bilingual and the extra-linguistic. These can be secured by anyone irrespective of their domain of specialization ; they are not a special preserve of expertise in translation.

The specific sub-competences by contrast make up the indicators of expertise in translating. These are the knowledge about translation, the instrumental and the strategic ; the strategic sub-competence being the most important due to its role of guaranteeing the efficiency of the process (PACTE group 2005/2011, Hurtado Albir and Alves 2009 ; Kambaja forthcoming).

Because insights into the two sub-types can be obtained in studying the controlled processes of comprehension and production, it is time to look at what in the national programme is scheduled for the development and/or reinforcement of the two phases. Actually, it must be pointed out that the demarcation lines between the two are not clear-cut because they both are

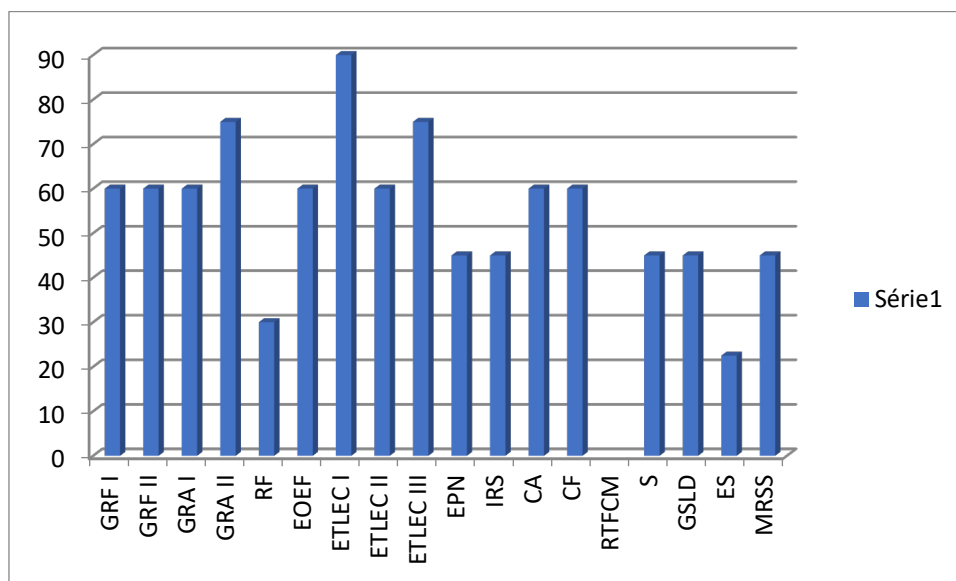
psycholinguistic activities. Nevertheless, below an effort is made to skim and single out subjects which lend themselves to one or the other of these activities.

1) **Comprehension Phase** is a phase during which the translator strives to come up with the meaning to re-express. It is a phase which culminates in the interaction of top-down and bottom-up processes for the construction of the meaning thanks to the analysis. It includes reading and listening, two skills known as receptive skills. But given that this paper deals only with the written form of translation, only courses which lend themselves to that are listed and commented upon later on. They are as follows for the entire programme:



Graphic 1: Some subjects designed for the comprehension phase

2) **Production phase** is the phase of 'putting out' the translator's comprehension of the text. It requires of the translator the mastery of the writing skills to produce translation texts which respect the conventions of their domain. This phase includes oral as well as written re-expression. As with the comprehension phase, only courses designed for developing and/or reinforcing the writing skills of the trainee translators will be skimmed in the table below:



Graphic 2: subjects designed for writing skills

4. Discussion

Regarding the two phases of comprehension and re-expression, it can be noticed that much more hours are devoted to the development of re-expression than to that of comprehension. This may be due to the general belief that comprehension is easier than re-expression. When asked to say which of the two is easier, EFL test persons in Lumbala (2016a) reported that it is comprehension. But their observation during a TAP experiment seemed to indicate the opposite of what they had reported. The difficulty may stem from the fact that comprehension as such can only be demonstrated thanks to the quality of production given the fact that it is a receptive skill. Yet as detailed below certain items or phrases are processed automatically, i.e., their translation springs as soon as they are read whereas others take less mental effort when others require a considerable amount of mental effort. Gile (2005) seems to lend support to this when he writes that in comprehension, it is the passive knowledge of the source language which is required and that the active knowledge is required in production. In cognitive Translation Studies, if production is dependent on comprehension, I do not see why attention of equal par should not be given to both these phases of translation.

As it can be seen, the discussion focuses only on the cognitive processes in line with the approach taken in the work. In this approach, translation is the re-expression of the translator's understanding of the source language text. That is, the quality of translation, low or high, points to the amount of understanding on the part of the translator. And this is shown below in a simplified cognitive model of the act of translating provided in Claude Tatilon (2007):

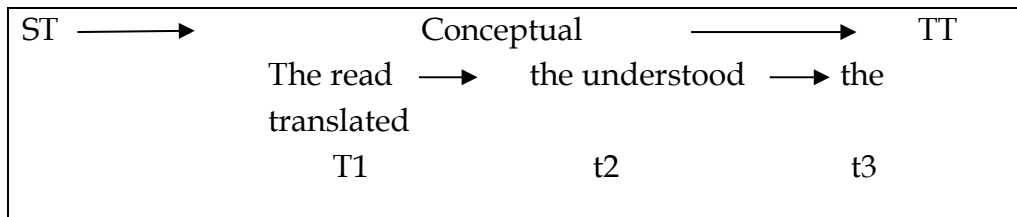


Figure 1: Tatilon's simplified model of translation (translation my own)

It follows that the act of translating reflects what the translator has understood from his/her reading of a source text. The process goes from the reading to the understanding and then from the understanding to the translation. In this line of thought, training translators refers to the process of developing translation competence on the part of the learners. That is, it consists in enabling the learners to use their thinking to solve translation problems as they move from a source text to the target one.

This can be achieved thanks to process-oriented approach to training coupled with connectionist approaches to meaning construction. In process-oriented approach, the pedagogy will consist in deconstructing and demystifying the different, but interrelated steps: 1) comprehension of the text, 2) transfer or shift between the two languages involved, and 3) production (Englund Dimitrova 2010a cited in Alvstad et al. 2011). Each phase can make up a subject of a detailed study to point out what is involved.

In connectionist approaches, the pedagogy will turn around meaning construction and transfer, in particular how learners should depart from the obsession with the lexical meaning which is just a part of the linguistic meaning (frame) which in turn helps to visualize the scene described by the source language text. After the visualization of the scene, the meaning must be deverbaised from the frames of the source text and re-expressed in line with the stylistic rhetoric of the target language.

In line with Kambaja (2009, p4), the didactics of translation emphasizes comprehension by the translator of the message conveyed in the source text and its re-expression in the target language text for facilitating communication. That is, the focus should be on how people read in the scope of translation and on the elements which combine in the construction of the meaning to re-express.

Conclusion

It is worth mentioning, at this landing point, the following four operations which have been observed as taking place during the act of translating (Tatilon 2007) so as to capture the four different requirements of mental effort, the focus of the CORT paradigm :

- 1) Some chunks of the source text seem to require no mental effort at all. Their translation springs in the mind as soon as they are understood. In this category can be grouped some familiar lexical items and some frozen phrases of which the translation is memorized:
 - Words common to two languages: address, Paris, tennis, etc.
 - Current names of objects: knife, glass, etc.
 - Terms pertaining to the familiar domains: phonemes, stress, phrase, sentence, etc.
 - Stereotyped patterns: Nice to meet you. See you soon.
 - The following pairs of prepositions: from (expéditeur). To (destinataire).

The strategy or the pathway taken here is known as transcoding as it relies on the form only.

- 2) The second case is referred to as «calque translation» in which the mental effort is not considerable, thus leads to a word by word translation. For example: The sky is blue. I will do it tomorrow.
- 3) The third case refers to long chunks of the source text which require a certain considerable cognitive effort. Here even if the deverbalization was perfect, nevertheless, it takes some effort to forget about the linguistic rhetoric of the source text: It takes some reasoning or rethinking to see the satisfying solution happening in the consciousness. The translation of «I look forward to seeing you» and «Sincerely yours» requires a sort of pragmatic as well as cultural rethinking.
- 4) Finally the fourth case is that of chunks which seem to have no easy translation. It can take days to see an opening in the consciousness. So such chunks require not only thinking but also linguistic analysis which can culminate in the verbal invention.

As it can be seen, the four operations can be grouped into automatic and non-automatic or controlled processing. It follows that the didactics of translation must bear on the controlled steps of comprehension and re-expression as these are susceptible to change due to some pedagogical action.

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