



Why Should Translators Have an Interdisciplinary Knowledge?

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Abstract

Translation is a very complex activity that requires highly qualified translators to perform their tasks. Efficiency of translation includes interdisciplinary knowledge experience in a number of areas. Hence, getting to know various fields of study can help translators make decisions about producing targeted texts, just as it is with the dilemmas of knowing the other specialties that the translators Khaldawiyah, Hussein Dabbagh, Mohammed Annani, Safa' Khalusi, Abdul Cadir Al-Kud and Mohammad Awad faced with the words *assad*, which is *lion*, *summer*, and *May* successively. This study is based on Tania Osburg's (2006) assumption that other fields of study cannot be

separated from translation: they are so integrated that they need appropriate attention. The results showed that the issue of knowing another language is not the only requirement to be a translator. It is recommended that students of translation at educational levels be trained on how to develop their knowledge of different fields of study, i.e. interdisciplinary knowledge before starting to work as a translator.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, the issue of knowing another language is not the only prerequisite for being a translator. In this fast moving world, translators should be primarily interdisciplinary experts. Sometimes the two languages at the hands of the translator belong to totally different areas such as sociology, anthropology,



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psychology, economics, etc.

Thus, the responsibility of the translator in this case increases.

(1,2014,pp.8-16)

Many translators make a big and frequent mistake, as they focus their full attention on the linguistic side in the translation process, while neglecting the interest in the other fields of study

(interdisciplinary knowledge)

which is the second and main pillar of the translation process.

Translation is like a person who is walking on two legs, and without one foot he cannot complete the path, the first foot is the axis of the language with both sides the source and the target, and the other foot is the interdisciplinary knowledge (the axis of experience in a number of fields). They are not separated from each other, because their separation will lead to produce translations that may be a good material for ridicule.(2,2014:www)

Interdisciplinary studies that include multiple disciplines, which combine two or more academic disciplines, in a single activity, derive knowledge from many other fields. It is related to creating something by thinking across borders. It transcends the traditional boundaries between traditional academic disciplines or schools of thought as an organizational unit, and with the emergence of new needs and professions, they are related to an interdisciplinary field.(3,2018:www)

To describe studies that use the methods and insights of many established disciplines or traditional areas of study, an interdisciplinary term is applied within a translation training education. Besides their specific perspectives, in the pursuit of a common mission, inter-disciplines include researchers, students, teachers, and translators in the goals of connecting and integrating many academic



schools of thought, professions, or technologies. Translation requires an understanding of the various disciplines to solve complex problems. Interdisciplinary can be applied where the subject is felt to have been neglected or even corrupted in the traditional disciplinary structure of research institutions, for example, translation studies.

Interdisciplinarity can be applied to complex topics, including translation ones, that can only be understood by combining the views of two or more fields. (4,2005:www)

When researchers from two or more disciplines adjust their curricula to be more relevant to the problem at hand, the multidisciplinary feature is often used in educational circles, including the case of a team-taught course in which students are required to understand a particular subject in terms of multiple traditional disciplines. For example, the topic of translation

may appear differently when studied in different disciplines, such as comparative literature, computer science, history, linguistics, philosophy, semiotics, and terminology. (5,2013:www) This study examines the following question: Does interdisciplinary knowledge affect translators' performance?

2.Literature Review

An interdisciplinary concept has historical precedents, most notably Greek philosophy, although it is often seen as a term from the twentieth century. Klein testifies that “the roots of the concept lie in a number of ideas that resonate through modern discourse – the ideas of unified science, general knowledge, synthesis and the fusion of knowledge” (6,1990:www), while Gunn says that Greek historians and playwright took elements from other worlds of knowledge (such as medicine or philosophy) for



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further understanding their own subjects. (7,1992:www)

Interdisciplinary programs sometimes come into the same content that traditional disciplines cannot tackle an important problem. Much information is returned to the different disciplines included, when interdisciplinary collaboration results or the search for new solutions to problems. Therefore, both disciplinarians and interdisciplinarians are seen in an integral relationship with each other.(8,2013,p.153)

Participants should learn to appreciate the difference in perspectives and methods, since most sharers in interdisciplinary fields have been drilled in traditional disciplines. If members of an interdisciplinary program remain stuck in their majors, the program may not succeed. Those who have little experience in interdisciplinary cooperation may not fully evaluate the intellectual assistance of colleagues from

those disciplines.(9,1992,pp.239–240)

Interdisciplinary activities practically face complex obstacles, challenges and criticism, although they are the focus of attention of institutions that promote translation, learning and education. The professional, organizational and cultural obstacles are among the most important obstacles and challenges faced by interdisciplinary activities.(10,2010,P:52–56)

As an interdisciplinary study, translation has been affected by the recent developments of other fields of study. It has been changed from a concern with linguistic knowledge only to knowledge in a number of fields. It borrows many different areas of study that help it. It includes comparative literature, computer science, history, linguistics, language philosophy, philosophy, semiotics and terminology. Since translation then refers to an



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activity studied from more than one perspective, translators must have knowledge of various concepts and controversial theories that they collect or intersect with. (11,1990:www)

The knowledge of two or more components of the specialty is called interdisciplinary knowledge. The interdisciplinary study combines constituents of two or more disciplines in research or making new technical knowledge, processes or expressions. It combines the constituents of two or more specializations into one educational program. It takes interdisciplinary knowledge as the main study goals.(12,1986,pp.119-126)

Interdisciplinary knowledge is important because:

1. "Creativity often requires interdisciplinary knowledge.
2. Immigrants often make important contributions to their new field.
3. Disciplinarians often commit errors which can be best detected by people familiar with two or more disciplines.
4. Some worthwhile topics of research fall in the interstices among the traditional disciplines.
5. Many intellectual, social, and practical problems require interdisciplinary approaches.
6. Interdisciplinary knowledge serves to remind us of the unity-of-knowledge ideal.
7. Interdisciplinarians enjoy greater flexibility in their research.
8. More so than narrow disciplinarians, interdisciplinarians often treat themselves to the intellectual equivalent of traveling in new lands.
9. Interdisciplinarians may help breach communication gaps in the modern academy, thereby helping to mobilize its enormous intellectual resources in the cause of greater social rationality and justice.



10. By bridging fragmented disciplines, interdisciplinarians might play a role in the defense of academic freedom."(13,1995,pp.121-128)

Translation, then, is one of the oldest human works. It is a process that is not limited to the linguistic transmission of sentences, phrases and meanings of words, but extends to interdisciplinary knowledge as well. The translator is a writer who works on crafting ideas with words addressed to the reader. The difference between him and the real writer is that the ideas he formulates are not his thoughts, but the thoughts of others. So the translator must start before translating a particular text. He is not only concerned with the process of abstract linguistic transmission, but also concerned with the interdisciplinary knowledge in which this text was born, the nature of the recipient who will read this text. There will

be many things that are praised or normal in a society, and it may be a taboo in another society, thus interdisciplinary knowledge is necessary for the translator. (14,2013,p.153)

3. Methodology

The data used in this study includes getting to know various fields of study can help translators make decisions about producing targeted texts, just as the case with the translators Khaldawiyah, Hussein Dabbagh, Mohammed Annani, Safa' Khalusi, Abdul Cadir Al-Kud and Mohammad Awad faced dilemmas with the translation of the Arabic words *assad*, which is *lion*, *summer* in Shakespeare's poem *Shall I compare thee to a summer's day*, and *May* in Shakespeare's play *Hamlet* successively.

This research is based on Tanya Ausburg's assumption (2006) that the translator must take into account the interdisciplinary



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knowledge in which this text was born. To address it not only in his language, but also with the interdisciplinary knowledge, which may resemble the translator's, and may differ completely from it. That is why translation scholars believe that the translator should have the interdisciplinary knowledge as well as the source and the target language knowledge.

3.Data Analysis

The data used in this study includes many examples of this interdisciplinary knowledge, and perhaps the most prominent example is what was mentioned by the prominent linguist "Ibn Khaldawiyah" that in the Arabic language, "assad" has about five hundred names, while he translates in English with one name, which is "lion".(15,2017:www)

Among the dilemmas of the knowledge of other disciplines

that faced the translators who conveyed to us one of Shakespeare's poems, begins with the following line:

Shall I compare thee to a
summer's day

The poet here searched in his knowledge of other disciplines stock for a metaphor taken from *the beauty of the weather*, and he did not find any better than one of the summer days to compare or rather to liken his sweetheart, while we see in our Arab knowledge of other disciplines that summer is connected in our minds with intense heat, sun, and sweat.(16,2019:www)

Here, the translators fell into dilemma, and they were divided into two parts: the first one sees that the image should be transferred as it is, because it reflects the knowledge of other disciplines that differs from ours, and the other saw that it is necessary to strive to find a



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metaphorical image that carries the same connotations and revelations in our Arab knowledge of other disciplines, not the original image terms . Let us read together the following translations, which express the diligence of the translators of this poetic line:

- هل أقول بأن فتونك أشبه بصيف جميل (المترجم: حسين دباغ)
- ألا تشبهين صفاء الصيف (المترجم: د/ محمد عناني)
- من ذا يقارن حسنك المغربي بصيف قد تجلى (المترجم: صفاء خلوصي)

Rather, some translators may strive to replace the word *summer* with *spring*, given that the spring in the Arab knowledge of other discipline is a season of beauty, fun, and springboard, and others may retain the word *summer*, but enter the word *breath*, so that the beloved becomes more like *the cool summer breeze*.

The same thing was repeated with the translators who translated

the play *Hamlet* into Arabic, and we cite an example:

Hamlet: *With all his crimes blown, as flush as May.*

Hamlet wants to say here that the crimes and sins committed by his father are thriving, as are the flowers in *May* (i.e. in the spring).

Let's read the different translations of this image for three of the translators, then compare:

- مثل ربيع يحفل بالأزهار (ترجمة: محمد عناني)
- مزهو كأزهار الربيع (ترجمة: عبد القادر القط)
- كأنها الشجر في شهر آيار (ترجمة: محمد عوض محمد)

Here we note that both Dr. Anani and Dr. Abdul Cadir realized the difficulty of the knowledge of other disciplines in this rhetorical picture, and by this they do not mean to translate the word *May* as it is, because they realize that *May* is the spring summit in England, where Shakespeare was born, lived and died. This was



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what Hamlet meant. Then they replaced the word *May*, which the reader may not be aware of is the spring.

This is what Dr. Mohamed Awad does not pay attention to, so he translated the month as it is, and even translated it in the counterpart for the month of *May* which is *May*.

It has become clear now that translation process is not limited to the good knowledge of the mother language and the good knowledge of the language from which it is translated into. As it is a science, it is also an art, a talent and a skill as well. If the translator addressed the text entrusted with his translation as a set of words, sentences, and synonyms assigned to produce another set of sentences and expressions equivalent to them, he would have spent a lot of time searching for those meanings between different dictionaries and

glossaries, causing an inconsistent text.

4. Conclusion

It can be concluded that students of translation should have a comprehensive linguistic knowledge and an interdisciplinary knowledge, i.e. every knowledge complement the other, having the knowledge in one aspect only is a bad matter; therefore it is preferable to have knowledge in a number of areas.

The problems resulting from the difference of the translator's interdisciplinary knowledge, then, are more complicated than the linguistic one. Because it deals with the essential and passionate meanings. These problems are usually submerged, and only professional translators can reveal them. So, the translator should be familiar not only with the linguistic aspect of the texts but also with the interdisciplinary one. He must be accustomed to the knowledge of other fields of study so that he



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can subdue the texts, which he renders, to be suitable and comprehended without being affected by the culture he belongs to. He does so to avoid misconception or any other passive creations that may be caused as a result of this kind of translation.

5. Recommendations

The study has come up with the following recommendations:

1. The attention to an interdisciplinary knowledge is necessary for the students of translation. One of the most important qualities of a successful translator is to have a lot of knowledge of the various disciplines, especially those that are far from his specialty, so that his awareness expands, and his horizons open to know new things. So, we recommend the student to set himself an hour in his agenda for daily reading

so that he develops his information wealth, as we are in the era of huge information wealth, in which many new words and terms appear every day. If he had read a book written a hundred years ago in chemistry for example, he would have found a clear difference in the structure of the vocabulary used in this book and other modern books.

2. It is true that there is an interdisciplinary knowledge weakness that strikes the roots of society in our current age, due to the proliferation of luxury and entertainment and the waste of time and distraction of people from useful and beneficial things, due to the poor use of new technology and the internet, but a successful translator can use all of these modern means to expand its horizons and increase his knowledge and information wealth through reading, viewing, watching



documents and seeking according to an organized scientific method to obtain more science and knowledge.

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