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Apropos translator training aggro:
A case study of the Centre for Continuing Education
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ABSTRACT

Translator Training (TT) is considered a crucial part of translation activity in many translator-training institutions. In the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OTPs), however, TT has been a neglected area until quite recently. As a result of recent developments in the field of translation, and in technology, TT has gained a place all over the world; the OTPs are no exception, but unfortunately here TT remains scarcely adequate. This paper aims to explore the status of professionally-oriented translation versus the academisation of translation; it will examine laying the groundwork for TT in the OTPs, based on a case study of the Centre for Continuing Education's (CCE's) Welfare Online Translation Project (WOT). The paper argues that TT in the OTPs still lags behind most countries, although there have been some attempts to initiate TT.

KEYWORDS

Pedagogical translation; professionally-oriented translation; vocational translation; translation technology; translator training; WOT project.

Introduction

Although a relatively new phenomenon, Translator Training (henceforth TT) has become an integral part of Translation Studies, and has aroused the interest of translation theorists, as shown in the seminal work of Kiraly (2000a), among many others. Holmes (1988/2000: 78) places TT within applied translation studies, hence the rising number of translator-training institutions worldwide (Caminade and Pym 1997). It is therefore true that translator training is seen as important all over the world.

There has been a myth that the mastery of two languages is all the translator needs. Consequently, too much emphasis has been placed on linguistic approaches to translation at the expense of more specialised translator-training dealing with professionally-oriented translation. Venuti (1998: 1) claims that "translator training [has] been impeded by the prevalence of linguistics-oriented approaches that offer a truncated view of the empirical data they collect." This myth has already been debunked to some extent. TT has shifted somewhat towards lifelong training on account of the rapid expansion in market demand for qualified translators. That is to say, translators must now be trained in discourse analysis, they must be culture omniscient, subject specialists, information scientists and technology experts as only then can the task of translation be best fulfilled. Toury (1995: 256) states that ''the pedagogically most appropriate key concepts are those associated with experiencing, exploration and discovery.''

According to Stewart (2008), professionally-oriented translation is derived from vocational translation whereby trainee translators are prepared for the translation market. It follows that without further training, the translator may be expected to face significant challenges, especially in a world of rapid technological change. In most countries, the introduction of pedagogical translation into university teaching aims to prepare established translators for their prototypical profession, and to train non-fully fledged translators to be as competent as possible in translating a particular text from a SL into a TL.

Many translator-training institutions have been established throughout the world. In the OTPs[1], translation has been given due attention either formally, as is the case in the creation of translator-training programmes in some Palestinian universities, or informally, as with the Palestinian labour force where translation functions as a medium of communication between Palestinian workers and their Israeli employers.

In terms of the academisation of translation, established university departments of language and literature offer translation training both at undergraduate and postgraduate level. For instance, in Birzeit University and Bethlehem University, English majors (or occasionally Arabic majors) can minor in Translation, with a total of 18-24 credit hours (see Birzeit and Bethlehem university websites in references). Two Master's degrees in Translation have been established at An-Najjah University and Al-Quds University. Compared with the only sister Master programme in Translation at An-Najjah University, Al-Quds University offers information technology-based courses (e.g., Audiovisual Translation, Translation Technology and Term Management etc.); and Al-Quds University introduces new concepts in the translation market in Palestine such as Déjà vu, Wordfast, Trados, subtitling, dubbing etc., so far untouched in academic circles at any of the Palestinian universities, either at undergraduate or at postgraduate level.

Attempts to introduce (non-)academic training courses have also occasionally been made. However, it should be mentioned that such attempts are unfortunately clumsy and ill-starred. One recent training course was Simultaneous Translation, which took place on the fringes of Bethlehem University, namely in the Institute for Community Partnership (ICP, see their website listed in references for information). The name of the course speaks for itself—showing as it does the status quo of translator training in the OPTs. A one-of-a-kind attempt by the Centre For Continuing Education (CCE), affiliated with Birzeit University, was a project entitled Welfare Online Translation (WOT), which has given translator training a jump-start.

Rationale Behind the WOT Project

Knowledge-Based Industries (KBI) has resonance with the WOT project[2]. KBI says that three elements are necessary for any economic, political, social and educational development, as shown in Fig 1 below.

Human Resources

leaders   Job Market

Figure 1. KBI

As far as translator training is concerned, the WOT project argues that human resources (e.g. translators, interpreters, subtitlers etc.) should be included in the estimation of an entrepreneur's worth. Thus translators should be involved in training courses to become leaders; equipped with sufficient training savvy, they are then able to enter the job market. Based on KBI, the CCE has co-operated with Ta'beer, a translation company in the UAE, on the project to pool ideas and knowledge and to enlist Palestinian freelancers to work in the Gulf States. Ta'beer provides the job market in the Gulf States with freelancers and translators.

The objectives of the WOT project are threefold: academic, economic and political. Academically, it aims to qualify Palestinian translators as freelancers to compete with peer translators in the Arab world. Economically, it aims to help translators who are university teachers or high-position employers in public and private sectors in the OTPs, to enhance their salaries through part-time jobs. Politically, the trend of Palestinian migration started in the aftermath of the Israeli occupation of Palestine whereby Palestinians were dispossessed of their land—many have become émigrés all over the world. In view of this, WOT encourages Palestinian translators to do in-house translations from their homeland,[3] so the migration of Palestinians to different countries might be reduced to a minimum. This political agenda more or less pervades Palestinian social *milieux*.

Methodology

The WOT project is phased over a year, and provides both training and consultancy. In the first phase, more than 300 translators sat a translation exam with a view to evaluating the examinees' competence to translate

given texts. The directionality of translation was from English into Arabic, reflecting market demand for Arabic translation in the Gulf States. Translation professionals then rated the translations, reducing the number to 40.

In the second phase, Ta'beer sent the participants six English passages— 400 words on average. Two local translation professionals, who are affiliated to Al-Quds University and are currently teaching MA translation courses, evaluated the translations in tandem with other professionals working for Ta'beer— there is safety in numbers. Thus it became possible to sort out the trainees. The trainees were then divided into two groups: Group A and Group B. Group A had shown a sufficient level of competence. The translations were up to standard, hence minor consultancy was given to the trainees. However, Group B had not shown a sufficient level of competence. The quality of the translations was very poor. Consequently, the latter group was given intensive training for about two months (see Appendix 1 on the topics tackled during the training sessions).

In the last phase, all the trainee translators (in the two groups) were given another six passages, and were evaluated again by the professionals working for Ta'beer and Al-Quds University to further select the good translators. Then the time had come to sign contracts with companies in the Gulf States. There was a roundup session followed by individual sessions with the trainee translators.

Training Sessions

The principal aim of the WOT project is to ensure translation quality. To improve the translation quality of the trainee translators, ten sessions[4] (see Appendix I) were set up to meet the trainees' needs by further honing their skills. (Figure 2 below shows the trainee translators at CCE).

Fig 2. Trainee translators at CCE

The topics of the sessions were selected during the evaluation process to cover the areas where the trainees had training needs. Analysis of trainee translator needs showed that most had employed translation strategies wrongly when translating.   It was therefore decided that a session addressing types of translation strategies was essential. As Appendix I would suggest, the session deals with a literature review *vis-à-vis* translation strategies, evaluating authentic translations and employing appropriate strategies in translating different texts.

The trainers also decided that a session on discourse analysis was necessary. Consider Text 1 below, analysed by one of the trainee translator's translations:

> **Text 1**
> This market is a little too commodity like for David Booth, the chief executive of Dimensional Financial Advisors in Santa   Monica, Calif. Booth has long believed—"<u>right down to my tippy toes</u>"—hat he can beat the standard S&P fund.
> Translation
> يشكل هذا السوق سوق بضاعة عادية بالنسبة لديفيد بوث، المدير التنفيذي لشركة دايمنشينال فاينانشال أدفايزورز، ومقرها سانتا مونيكا، كاليف. كان بوث على قناعة منذ زمن بعيد – "<u>حتى أخمص قدمي</u>" – بأنه يستطيع التغلب على صناديق مؤشر ستاندارد اند بورز

It is noteworthy that the switch from formal to vernacular in Text 2, i.e., ''right down to my tippy toes'' was given no attention at all in the translation. The Arabic translation, i.e. "حتى أخمص قدمي" shows no shift at all from formal to vernacular. Hence the importance of introducing discourse analysis as a topic in the training sessions.

In another session the trainees were encouraged to read between the lines, i.e., to be discourse analysts. Atari (1994) points out that

comprehension is identified as a problematic area in English-Arabic translator training programmes. In all sessions, follow-up assignments via e-mail were given. On-line sessions were occasionally used.

Stumbling-Blocks to TT

It would be safe to assume that the major stumbling-block to translator training in the OTPs is the lack of technology-based modules and undue attention given to linguistics-based approaches. In most training courses, technology has been a neglected area despite its importance. Munday (2001: 183) stresses the importance of information technology:

> Specialised translation courses should have an element of instruction in the disciplines in which the trainees are planning to translate—such as law, politics, medicine and finance—as well as some input from information   technology   to cover issues in machine-assisted translation.

Gaining access to terminology-based sources and using online resources are useful for translators. Some trainees were unable to use electronic dictionaries, which usually enable the translator to access a wide range of lexicons in a split-second. For example, most trainee translators were unable to translate into Arabic 'resilient' in Text 2 below:

Text 2
The Saudi regime continues to prove itself highly resilient.

It seems that reliance on bilingual dictionaries rather than monolingual dictionaries is not effective. For example, Al-Mawrid (1995) gives the following meanings for 'resilient': 'رجوع أو مرن' which do not fit for the example above. As shown in Fig 3 below, it seems possible to assume that using an electronic dictionary may help translators translate more accurately.
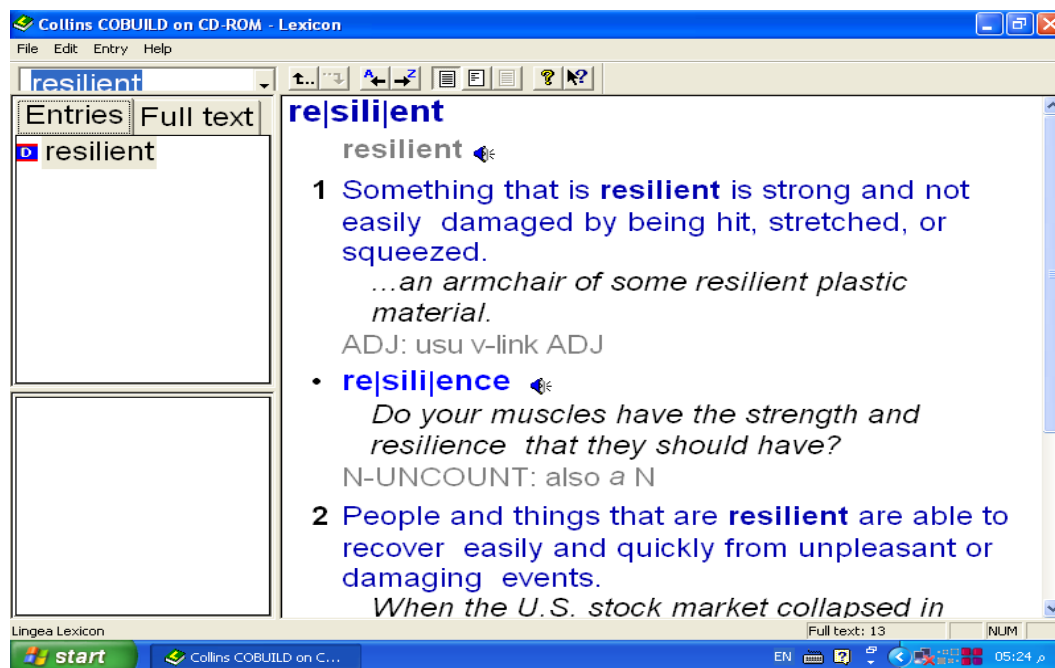
Fig 3. Collins Electronic Dictionary

In the Translation Rating System[5] employed in the WOT project, the time dimension is given 10 points out of 50. The time dimension then requires that training should include as many computer tools and electronic resources as possible in the interests of speed and translation precision.

Very important to translator training is how to instruct trainee translators to use "word processors, spreadsheets, terminology databases, translation memory tools, desktop publishing software, access to the Internet and a variety of on- and off-line electronic resources" (Kiraly 2000b: 123). Likewise, Mackenzie and Vienne (2000: 127) stress the importance of technology: "The ability to acquire, manage and utilise resources is part of the translator's competence and should be taught and practised systematically during training." As far as WOT is concerned, one of the shortcomings is the lack of training in the use of technology. In fact, most of the trainee translators, if not all, are not *au fait* with the use of state-of-the-art translation memory tools. It is also unfortunate that the trainee translators are not familiar with subtitling or interpreting software. Such shortcomings also exist in other training courses such as the one at ICP. For instance, Audacity, a free program which can help interpreters practise interpreting on their own, had not been heard of by the trainees.

The Israeli occupation strikes a pessimistic note. The Palestinians, renowned for their indomitable spirit, have for decades fought a long rearguard action to stay at home. All aspects of their lives have been profoundly affected by the political upheaval brought by the Israeli occupation of Palestine in 1948. Owing to the many Israeli checkpoints at the main entrances to Palestinian cities, travelling has become undeniably

tiring. Like many Palestinian university students, the translation trainees had to travel hundreds of miles to the training course. There is no doubt that the deteriorating political and economic situation has had an impact on translator-training.

Needless to say, theory goes together with practice. Translators also need a knowledge of translation theory. Pym (2005: 3-6), however, argues that "Translation theories are abstruse and useless; only professionals know the realities of translation; trainees thus need the professional skills, not the academic theories." Nevertheless, Pym (*ibid*) further adds that:

> A lot of theorizing is just there to protect academic fiefdoms. It helps gain institutional power. Every professional guru soon develops specific terms and catchphrases. That kind of power is not a bad thing. With it, changes in the profession can eventually lead to changes in institutional training programme. Without it, we would be back to medieval apprenticeships.

It is true that most trainees have no theoretical background in translation. It seems appropriate that a substantial theoretical framework should be included in the WOT project. A close look at Appendix I shows that theory goes together with practice.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Thus far in our analysis we have noted that TT has received considerable attention worldwide. TT in the OTPs is however still fraught with difficulties and challenges, and it remains at a very early stage. In terms of professionally-oriented translation, the WOT project, which took place on the fringes of Birzeit University, is an attempt to give translator training a jump-start, but with minimal use of technology. It is unfortunate that in most training courses, a lack of new technologies has been a fact of life for TT in the OTPs with the exception of Al-Quds University, which offers a number of information technology-based courses. In order to ensure a translator-training programme of good quality and quantity, those who are responsible for initiating and coordinating such programmes should:

1. Make training available to translation students, trainee translators and professional translators;

2. Provide more training courses on the theory and practice of translation, with special focus on lesser known languages and cultures;

3. Prepare translation students, trainee translators and professional translators to adapt to rapid technological progress and make them aware that translation technology can solve an array of translation difficulties; and

4. Hold tailor-made training on translation memory tools such as Trados, Déjà vu and Wordfast for the role they play in the modern translation world.

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Bibliographical Notes

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Appendix I

	Sharpening Translation Skills Trainers: X and Y

Outline: Sharpening Translation Skills
SESSION 1

Time	Objective	Methodology	Supportive Reading
9:00-10:45	Define translation. Identify Translation types. Identify schools of translation.	Discussion with participants. PowerPoint Presentation. Handouts. Worksheet 1.1 Worksheet 1.2	Shuttleworth and Cowie, *Dictionary of Translation Studies* (1997). Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation* (1998).
10:45-11:00	Break		
11:00-12:45	Recognise translation types. Recognise different styles in translation. Recognise the concept of translation equivalence.	Variety of texts to be distributed. Participants grouped to produce different translations of short passages. Interactive PowerPoint. Handout.	
12:45-1:30	Lunch		
1:30-3:00	Translate concise texts.	In-class practice through translating concise text (unseen texts)	
Home-work	Homework 1.1	Submitted by e-mail. Feedback summary to all by e-mail.	

SESSION 2

9:00-10:45	Explain translation (theories of translation).	PowerPoint Presentation Worksheet 2.1	Handout: Map of TS. Newmark, *Approaches to Translation* (1981). Nida, *Towards the Science of Translation* (1964).
10:45-11:00	Break		
11:00-12:45	Explain the importance of text linguistics in translation Show awareness of	Text distributed to be analyzed. Discussion. Interactive PowerPoint	Beaugrande and Dressler, *Introduction to Text Linguistics* (1981). Hatim, *The*

	coherence and cohesion Show awareness of Intentionality and Acceptability. Show awareness of Intertextuality.		*Translator as Communicator* (1997).
12:45-1:30	Lunch		
1:30-3:00	Translate concise texts	Worksheet 2.2	
Home-work	Homework 2.1	Submitted by e-mail, Feedback summary to all by e-mail	

SESSION 3

9:00-10:45	Recognise text types.	Handout: Matching PowerPoint Presentation Worksheet 3.1 Worksheet 3.2	Hatim and Mason *Discourse and the Translator* (1990). Hatim, *Communication across Cultures: Translation Theory and Contrastive Text Linguistics* (1997).
10:45-11:00	Break		
11:00-12:45	Explain Grice's Conversational Maxims.	PowerPoint ion Presentation Handout: The Translator's Dilemma - Implicatures and the role of the translator	Baker, *In Other Words: A Course Book on Translation* (1992).
12:45-1:30	Lunch		
1:30-3:00	Apply Grice's Conversational Maxims in translation.	In-class practice through translating concise text (unseen texts)	Grice, *Logic and Conversation* (1975).
Home-work	Homework 3.1	Submitted by e-mail, Feedback summary to all by e-mail	

SESSION 4

9:00-10:45	Recognise the notion of Register and Genre.	PowerPoint Presentation	
10:45-11:00	Break		
11:00-12:45	Recognise the role the translator as Discourse Analyst.	Worksheet 4.1 Worksheet 4.2 Worksheet 4.3	
12:45-	Lunch		

1:30			
1:30-3:00	In-class practice through translating concise text (unseen texts)		
Home-work	Homework 4.1	Submitted by e-mail, Feedback summary to all by e-mail	

SESSION 5

3:30-4:45	Show awareness of Legalese.	Presentations by participants	Hatim and Shunnaq, *Legal Translation* (1995).
4:45-5:00	Break		
5:00-7:00	Recognise the legal format. Recognise preamble in international legal document. Translate legal documents.	PowerPoint Presentation together with discussion Worksheet 5.1 Worksheet 5.2	
Home-work	Homework 5.1	Submitted by e-mail, Feedback summary to all by e-mail	

SESSION 6

Time	Objective	Methodology	Reading Materials
9:00-10:45	Identify the importance of translator's position	Interactive PowerPoint Presentation	Hatim, *The Translator as Communicator*
10:45-11:00	Break		
11:00-12:45	Practice translating from perspective of Monitoring	Worksheet 6.1 PowerPoint Presentation	Hatim, *A Practical Guide for Translators* (1998)
12:45-1:45	Lunch		
12:45-1:30	Practice translating from perspective of Managing	Worksheet 6.2 Worksheet 6.3	
Home-work	Homework 6.1	Submitted by e-mail, Feedback summary to all by e-mail	

SESSION 7

3:30-4:45	Categorise different translation strategies	PowerPoint Presentation	
4:45-5:00	Break		
5:00-	Employ	PowerPoint	

7:00	Naturalisation and Arabicisation. Employ Cultural-Approximation. Employ Descriptive Translation. Employ Lexical Creation.	Presentation Worksheet 7.1 Worksheet 7.2	
	In-class practice through translating concise text (unseen texts)	Worksheet 7.3	
Home-work	Homework 7.1	Submitted by e-mail, Feedback summary to all by e-mail	

ELECTRONIC SESSION 8

00:00-00:00	Explore the role of Culture in Translation. Explore the role of Ideology & Hidden Agenda in Translation.	Prepare examples: Religious culture, social habits, bodily gestures, political ideology and hidden agenda. Participants to prepare 5-minute-presentations about previous experiences.	

ELECTRONIC SESSION 9

00:00-00:00	Identify the issue of Politeness in Translation	Prepare 5-minute-presentation about the issue of Politeness in Translation	

SESSION 10

9:00-10:45	Explore the role of Culture in Translation Explore the role of Ideology & Hidden Agenda in Translation.	Presentations	
10:45-11:00	Break		

11:00-12:45	Identify the issue of Politeness in Translation	Presentations	
12:45-1:45	Lunch		
1:45-3:00	Practice translating from Cultural perspective	Worksheet 10.1 Worksheet 10.2 Worksheet 10.3	
Home-work	Homework 10.1	Submitted by e-mail, Feedback summary to all by e-mail	

[1] It refers to the lands occupied by Israel in 1948 which ensues the establishment of Israel; the age-old struggle between Palestinians and Israel has continued despite the establishment of Palestinian National Authority in the 1990s, whose control over some areas does not exceed the Civil Service; military and legal affairs are the job of Israel.

[2] KBI is credited to CCE manager, Osama el-Mimi.

[3] This aim was stated clearly by the manager of the CCE as well as by Sultan Yaseen.

[4] Setting objectives is credited to CCE innovative member team, Abla Abu Nab3a.

[5] Understanding the source text is given 20 points; terminology and consistency of target text is given 12.5 points; deadline or time dimension is given 10 points; grammar and punctuation is given 7.5 points; hence, the total is 50 points[5] It refers to the lands occupied by Israel in 1948 which ensues the establishment of Israel; the age-old struggle between Palestinians and Israel has continued despite the establishment of Palestinian National Authority in the 1990s, whose control over some areas does not exceed the Civil Service; military and legal affairs are the job of Israel.