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Translation Model, Translation Analysis, Translation Strategy: an Integrated Methodology

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Abstract

The paper revisits the concepts of translation model, translation analysis, and translation strategy from an integrated perspective. Translation modeling is reconsidered in terms of a paradigm shift and a distinction between a process-oriented (descriptive) model and an action-oriented (prescriptive) model. Following the discourse and communication translation model, we put forward a "model – analysis – strategy" concept and a "features – difficulties – solutions" concept to reformulate a translation strategy as a flexible, variable and, to a certain extent, individual (but not unique) algorithm. We also introduce the notion of a discursive profile framed on existing discourse-related data in translation.

1. Introduction

Linguistically oriented translation models attempt to describe the translation process that ultimately aims to achieve equivalence between the source text and the target text. However, Christiane Nord postulates that "functional equivalence between source and target text is not the 'normal' skopos of a translation, but an exceptional case in which the factor 'change of functions' is assigned zero" (Nord, 2005). Translation process is largely viewed as "communication of translation" (Basylev, 2008). Some of the key translation model components are grouped around a "translation mechanism," "translation process stages," "nonlinear intellectual operations," "selection process," "creativity", and "assessment" (Nelyubin, 2003). This is in line with a paradigm shift (Alekseeva, 2010)

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focused on the "nature of translation," a "communicative approach," "integration," "strategy," and "discourse," "cognitive processes," "polyparadigmatism," and "interpretation."

We may therefore emphasize two important trends in contemporary translation modeling. First, following the basic distinction between a model that describes the translation process and a model that describes the translator's actions, as discussed elsewhere (Volkova, 2012), we would differentiate between a descriptive (static) translation model and a prescriptive (dynamic) translation model, and hence a model that either explains an "operating principle" or functions as an "operation manual." Second, a translation model may productively function as an applied framework for working out a translation strategy (Gile, 2009) and hence as a tool for the translation (source text oriented) analysis.

2. Methodology

Our *discourse and communication translation model* (Fig. 1) is the type one model – descriptive and explanatory in character – that gives a variety of features (translation-relevant communicative discourse parameters) for working out a translation strategy. The concept is focused on how to build a translation strategy and therefore does not either provide any set strategies or seek to give universal guidelines.
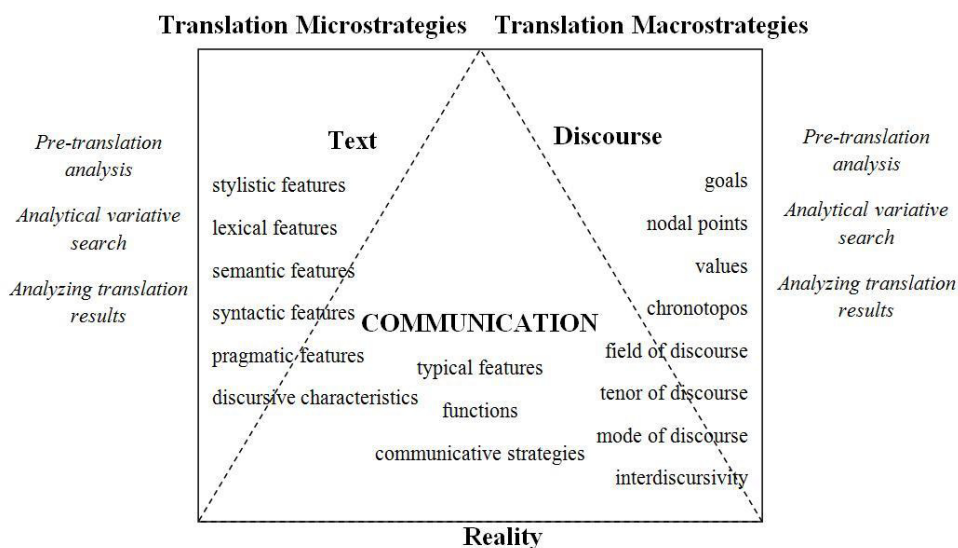

Fig. 1. Discourse and communication translation model.

The discourse and communication translation model (for a more detailed description and references see Volkova, 2012) is based on a set of interrelated levels: a textual level, a discursive level, and a communicative level. Within this framework, the process of translation is cyclic: decisions are made at each level, and as the translation process unfolds, the cycle may be repeated.

A translator analyzes for the source text properties and features: linguistic (lexical and semantic, syntactic, stylistic, and pragmatic) source text parameters, its discursive characteristics (text authorship, addressness, and narrative), discourse nodal points, discourse constitutive features (goals, values, chronotopos, topic and participants of discourse, and interdiscursivity), and communication-related functions, typical features and strategies define decisions made by a translator and build up translation microstrategies on the textual level and translation macrostrategies on discursive and communicative levels.