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Lecture 02

1. LINGUISTIC THEORY

Among all the disciplines with which Translation Studies maintains epistemological relationships, linguistics is the one that has shown the most interest in translation. In general, linguistics regards translation as an activity based on language. This is the viewpoint of Mathieu Guidère (2016: 43): "The linguistic approach is characterized by the fact that it primarily considers translation as an operation of verbal essence."

Linguistic theory of translation views translation as a comparison of two linguistic systems. It has thus been referred to as the "model of comparative stylistics." This term refers to the book that brought the linguistic theory of translation to light. This theory represents the first attempt at a scientific explanation of the practice of translation. The "comparative stylistics" model is the work of Canadian authors through their book "Comparative Stylistics of French and English" (1958), by Jean-Paul Vinay (1910-1999) and Jean Darbelnet (1904-1990), where they "declared themselves convinced that a comparison of the two stylistics (French and English) would allow the distinguishing of general lines and in some cases even precise lines whose application could lead to partial automation of translation" (Raková, 2014: 89). Larose (1989: 11) cited by Guidère (2016: 45) states that this theory is documented in one of the works that "has most influenced translation studies."

1.1.1. LINGUISTIC THEORY AND TYPES OF TRANSLATION

Vinay and Darbelnet distinguish between two types of translation: direct or literal translation and oblique translation. The "comparative stylistics" model considers a translation to be direct or literal when "the message in the source language can be perfectly transposed [...] into the target language because it is based either on parallel categories (structural parallelism) or on parallel concepts (metalinguistic parallelism)" (Raková, 2014: 89). On the other hand, a translation is deemed oblique when the translator encounters difficulties inherent in the structure of the languages involved in the translation process, which they must address through linguistic expressions. These two types of translation give rise to seven translation techniques, depending on the type of translation.

1.1.2. LINGUISTIC THEORY AND TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES

Vinay and Darbelnet define translation techniques as outlined below by Mathieu Guidère (2016: 45): "The application of criteria allows them to distinguish seven technical translation processes: three direct processes (borrowing, loan translation, literal translation) and four oblique processes (transposition, modulation, equivalence, adaptation)."

According to Raková (2014: 95), borrowing "is the simplest of the processes." It involves the translator using terms (foreign ones) from the source language in their translation and adapting them to the target

language. Loan translation, on the other hand, involves borrowing (without adaptation) from the source language a syntactic structure whose various elements are translated into the target language. Raková (ibid) states that the use of loan translation can lead to two situations: "either to a loan translation of expression, which respects the syntactic structures of the target language by introducing a new expressive mode, or to a loan translation of structure, which introduces a new construction into the target language."

Literal translation, also known as word-for-word translation, refers to the passage from the source language to the target language while scrupulously respecting the syntactic and syntagmatic structure; it results in a text that is both correct and idiomatic (Raková, ibid: 96).

Transposition is a process that involves reformulating a part of the source text differently without altering the meaning of said part in the source text. Raková (ibid: 98) illustrates this definition with the following example: "He announced that he would return" becomes, through transposition of the subordinate verb into a noun, "He announced his return." This second construction is called a transposed construction, as opposed to the first, which is the base construction.

As for modulation, it is achieved by changing the viewpoint in the translation of the source text to avoid using a word or expression that would be inappropriate in the target language. According to Raková (ibid: 99), "it is justified when it is realized that literal or even transposed translation results in a grammatically correct statement, but clashes with the genius of the target language." In other words, it leads the translator to change the grammatical category of a word or group of words without changing the message's meaning.

Regarding equivalence, the translator must understand the situation in the source language and find the appropriate equivalent expression that is used in the same situation in the target language. Therefore, the translator proceeds to entirely rewrite the message from one language to another. The equivalence process is more commonly used for exclamations, fixed expressions, or idiomatic expressions.

Adaptation is an "extreme situation of translation" (Raková, ibid: 100). It is used when a cultural concept or fact is present in the source text but does not have a direct cultural correspondence in the target language. In this case, the translator must render the context through "an equivalence of situations" (Raková, ibid: 101).

In summary, linguistic theory conceives translation as essentially a linguistic operation. It also aims to be a translation method. Therefore, it is defined through pragmatic concepts regarding translation practice.

This theory has sparked several criticisms. The main criticism against it is its focus solely on the linguistic aspect of translation. The dynamic equivalence theory, in this regard, presents a challenge to linguistic translation theory.

Translate the following passage into Arabic

The old oak tree

The old oak tree stood tall and proud in the center of the meadow, its branches reaching out like ancient fingers towards the sky. Beneath its shade, wildflowers danced in the gentle breeze, their vibrant colors a stark contrast to the deep green of the grass. The air was filled with the sweet fragrance of nature, a symphony of scents that whispered of life and renewal".

Translation:

شجر البلوط القديم

"وقف شجر البلوط القديم متساميًا وفخورًا في وسط المروج، كانت فروعه تمتد كأصابع قديمة نحو السماء. تحت ظله، كانت الزهور البرية ترقص في نسيم خفيف، ألوانها الزاهية تشكل تباينًا واضحًا مع الأخضر العميق للعشب. كان الهواء مملوءًا برائحة الطبيعة الحلوة، سمفونية من الروائح تهمس بالحياة والتجديد.