

General Concepts or Laws in Translation¹

Sir Alexander Fraser Tytler made the following opening remarks before the Royal Society of London when he read his *Essay on the Principles of Translation* in 1790:

There is no department of literature which has been less the object of cultivation than the *Art of Translation*. Even among the ancients who seem to have had a very just idea of its importance and who accordingly ranked it among the most useful branches of literary education. we meet with no attempt to unfold the principles of this art, or to reduce it to rules. In the words of Quintilian, of Cicero, and of the Younger Pliny, we find many passages which prove that these authors had made translation their peculiar study; and conscious themselves of its utility, they have strongly recommended the practice of it, as essential towards the formation both of good writer and accomplished orator. But it is to be regretted, that they who were so eminently so well qualified to furnish instruction in the art itself have contributed little more to its advancement than by some general recommendations of its importance. If indeed time had spared to us any complete or finished specimens of translation from the hand of those great masters, it had been some compensation for the want of actual precepts, to have been able to have deducted them ourselves from those exquisite models. But of ancient translations the fragments that remain are so inconsiderable, and so much mutilated that we can scarcely derive from them any advantage.²

Tytler's words could be validly repeated today with respect to modern and contemporary writers who have engaged in translation side by side with their creative works. Most contemporary translators take their art for granted and seem to disregard the laying down of specific rules or explaining the techniques followed by them in their work. There is still the same need, as Pointed out by Tytler, for the unfolding of the laws and principles of translation. Today such a need is accentuated by the increased importance of translation as a result of modern highly developed means for mass communication and closer international relations Plus faster ways of transportation. Working as a professional translator in industry and the federal government for a period of over ten years helped to develop a theory of translation which we have called "eclectic" because it is a blending of three main theories discovered in the research of the field. Briefly stated these three main theories are:

¹ Based on my thesis entitled "Principles of Language Translation, with Special Reference to English and Spanish," accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education of the George Washington University, Washington, D. C., in partial satisfaction for the degree of Master of Arts in Education.

² Alexander Fraser Tytler, *Essay on the Principles of Translation* (London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1790), pp. 1-2.

GENERAL CONCEPTS OR LAWS IN TRANSLATION

- (1) Literal translation, in which the rendition follows the same language patterns of the original and the sense is subordinate to the letter.
- (2) Idiomatic translation, in which the rendition is expressed according to the idiom peculiar to the language into which the translation is made.
- (3) Paraphrasical translation, in which the sense is restated by the translator in his own thoughts and words.

On the basis of the eclectic theory a set of thirty-three principles of translation was established and tested by using one of the usual research methods. The principles established are divided into four main groups, as follows:

I. General Concepts or Laws

1. The Principle of Accuracy
2. The Principle of Adaptation
3. The Principle of Completeness
4. The Principle of Grammatical Variation
5. The Principle of Idiomatic Quality
6. The Principle of Style

II. Stylistic Principles

7. The Principle of Adding and Retrenching
8. The Principle of Rendering Colloquial Language and Slang
9. The Principle of Rendering Figures of Speech
10. The Principle of Rendering New Terms or Neologisms
11. The Principle of Rendering Parenthetical Expressions
12. The Principle of Rendering Stylistically Misused Words
13. The Principle of Preserving Syntactical Structure
14. The Principle of Rendering Unconventional Terms
15. The Principle of Word Choice and Cognates

III. Idiomatic Principles

16. The Principle of Rendering Conjunctions
17. The Principle of Rendering Certain Terms by Derivatives
18. The Principle of Rendering Geographical Names
19. The Principle of Rendering Idiomatic Expressions
20. The Principle of Observing the Idiomatic Use of "Haber"
21. The Principle of Rendering the Indefinite Article
22. The Principle of Converting Measurements
23. The Principle of Rendering Number in Nouns

GENERAL CONCEPTS OR LAWS IN TRANSLATION

24. The Principle of Rendering the Possessive Adjective
25. The Principle of Rendering the Passive and Active Voices
26. The Principle of Punctuation
27. The Principle of Rendering Titles

IV. Grammatical Principles

28. The Principle of Rendering One Part of Speech by Another
29. The Principle of Rendering Prepositions
30. The Principle of Changing the Nature of Sentences and Phrases
31. The Principle of Expressing or Omitting the Subject of a Sentence
32. The Principle of Rendering Verb Tenses
33. The Principle of Changing Grammatical Structure

In this article we are only concerned, for lack of space, with the development of the six general concepts or laws, which form the first group of principles and which are fundamental in all translation work, whether literary or scientific material is involved.

The Principle of Accuracy

A translation should give an accurate transcript of the substance of the original.

In mathematics "accuracy" means the exactness of a computation, but in language arts it means something different. In translation, "accuracy" is not to be interpreted as a synonym of literalness. In mathematics, no figures may be used interchangeably. In literature, however, words having certain qualities may be so employed. Caution must be exercised in the employment of synonyms; and cognates must be examined before accepted.

Faithfulness, fidelity, exactness and accuracy are the terms usually employed to describe complete lexicographical and substantial correspondence between the original and its rendition. These terms, however, have needed clarification since early translators made renditions of Homer, Cicero, Virgil and other classical writers. Flora Ross Amos summarized her findings on faithfulness in early translators as follows:

Critics have been hesitant in defining the all-important term "faithfulness," To one writer fidelity may imply a reproduction of his original as nearly as possible word by word and line for line; to another it may mean an attempt to carry over into English the spirit of the original, at the sacrifice, where necessary not only of the exact words, but of the exact substance of his source. The one extreme is likely to result in an awkward more or less unintelligible version; the other, as illustrated, for example, by Pope's Homer, may give us a work so modified by the personality of the translator or by the prevailing taste of his time as to be

GENERAL CONCEPTS OR LAWS IN TRANSLATION

almost a new creation. But while it is easy to point out the defects of the two methods, few critics have had the courage to give fair consideration to both possibilities; to treat the two aims, not as mutually exclusive, but as complementary; to realize that the spirit and the letter may be not two but one.³

In practice the best test of accuracy has proved to be translating back from the foreign version into the language of the original. But in doing this, it must not be expected to get back the exact words of the original but its substance with all nuances of meaning. In some cases such procedure has caused the original to be corrected so as to make it clearer and more intelligible to the reader.

Early translators used to work with the equivalents of words and some translators nowadays seem to follow the same principle. These are the translators who practice literalness. But at this state of the art, translators should no longer work with the equivalents of words but the equivalents of thoughts, concepts, phrases and even sentences. Accuracy calls for a new concept—the reproduction of meaning and not the reproduction of mere words. Those who confuse accuracy and literalness are led to produce awkward renditions which result unpalatable to the mind of the foreign language reader or listener.

Belloc advised the translator to

Transmute boldly; render the sense by the corresponding sense without troubling over the verbal difficulty in your way. Where such rendering of sense by corresponding sense involves considerable amplification, do not hesitate to amplify for fear of being verbose.⁴

Let us examine accuracy in the rendition of some of the following Spanish proverbs.

Spanish

1. A palabras locas orejas sordas
2. A pobreza no hay vergüenza
3. Cobra fama y échate a dormir
4. Compuesta no hay mujer fea
5. Dar en el clavo

English

1. To mad words deaf ears
2. Poverty is no sin
3. Get a good name and go to sleep

³ Flora Ross Amos, *Early Theories of Translation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1920), p. xii.

⁴ Hilaire Belloc, *On Translation* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1931), p. 34.

GENERAL CONCEPTS OR LAWS IN TRANSLATION

4. No woman is ugly when she is dressed-up
5. To hit the nail on the head

Proverb No. 1 offers no difficulty, apparently. The number of words in both languages is the same, five. Any person versed in translation techniques would say that the rendition into English is literal but accurate. Is it meaningful? We believe it is. However, in order to ascertain its meaningfulness we believe it should be tested by having the rendition submitted to a number of average native English-speaking persons and asking them what they think the proverb means and comparing their answers with its Spanish construction. It is out of the scope of the present study to undertake such phase of research. Therefore, when we say that the rendition is accurate we are referring to the conventional meaning of the word. Accuracy in this particular instance has been attained through literalness, without resorting to additions or retrenchments.

In other instances, however, literalness will only lead not to accuracy but to awkwardness as we shall see from the analysis of proverb No. 2. Here we have five words in Spanish but only four in English. The Spanish word *A* is not rendered into English. The Spanish verb *hay* (a form of the infinite *haber*) is rendered by *is* (a form of *to be*) which is entirely different. The Spanish noun *vergüenza*, which literally means *shame* is rendered by *sin*, which means *pecado*. The Spanish adverb *no* is rendered by making it an adjective modifying *sin*. In spite of all these idiomatic changes the rendition may be said to be *accurate*, though not *literal*. A literal rendition would have made it meaningless to any English-speaking person.

The Principle of Adaptation

A translation made readily impossible by the nature of the language or the subject should be accomplished by the process of adaptation.

Adaptation is a general concept or law which has been used or applied time and again by translators but seldom, if at all, explained and defined. To adapt is to adjust the situation and environment, to make suitable, to conform, to remodel.

The differences in symbolic values among different cultures, the distinct language patterns developed by various language communities of the world, with their peculiar idioms and vocabularies, and even the characteristic idiom of a writer or speaker call for the application of the principle of adaptation, in a more or less degree, when rendering what has been said or written in one language into another medium of human expression. Translation is so difficult that Croce, the great Italian philosopher and linguist, once said that a work of literary art can never be translated. Of course, we disagree with him. Any work of literary art may be translated, we say, but there are qualifications and principles which must be met in attempting such a task.

The principle of adaptation is invoked when a novel such as *Manon Lescaut* is turned into an opera or when a novel such as *Tobacco Road* is made into a play. Adaptation is also resorted to when Horner and Shakespeare are translated into prose.

What makes the process of adaptation indispensable in translation work is the semantic value of words and idiomatic expressions. Through centuries of use and evolution of culture the meaning

GENERAL CONCEPTS OR LAWS IN TRANSLATION

attached to many words becomes intuitive in the thinking process and linked to the customs and traditions of a people so strongly that their semantic value may become different in two countries belonging to the same language community, such as England and the United States or Spain and any South American country. Sometimes the cultures of two people are so divergent that one of them has words which the other lacks or words with the same morphology mean entirely different things. There is also the problem of the psychological aspect of language causing even the same idiomatic expression to have a distinct connotation among nations speaking the same language. In all these cases no translation is possible unless we seek aid in the principle of adaptation.

A very adequate illustration of this principle is offered by the translation of George McManus' comic strip "Bringing Up Father" into many languages of different structure and diverse cultural background. Jiggs, the McManus' hero in the comic strip, shows a passionate preference for corned beef and cabbage. McManus tells us⁵ that he decided to use that dish because when he was a boy in St. Louis, the poor Irish families always had it for Sunday dinner. It was cheap in those days but it was filling. However, when it came to translating the strip, corned beef and cabbage became a stumbling block for the translators which defied the semantics of the different peoples for whom the strip was destined. McManus writes:

This business of translating, or adapting, corned beef and cabbage into the culinary vernacular of other countries has been something of a problem. When Jiggs goes abroad, the basic situation of the strip remains the same, but there is no such a thing as a literal translation. Jiggs is too much in the American idiom. So the strip is "adapted" rather than translated.⁶

Due to the process of adaptation McManus' corned beef and cabbage became tripe and onions in England; *boeuf miroton*, a kind of beef stew, in France; rice and fish in China. It is also beef stew in Argentina, where it is called *puchera*. In Turkey it is *bifiek kapus-ka*, or cabbage stuffed with beefsteak, and in Italy it is something called *baccalà*, which is stewed codfish.

The process of adaptation is the only one at hand for translators who may engage themselves in rendering most of the Oriental and African languages into the idioms of the Western Hemisphere.

The Principle of Completeness

A translation should be a complete transcription of the substance of the original.

Tyler seems to be the only writer who has treated completeness in translation at some length.

⁵ George McManus, "Jiggs and I," *Colliers* January, 1952), p. 66.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

GENERAL CONCEPTS OR LAWS IN TRANSLATION

According to him a translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work.⁷ However, most of his ideas under this topic belong to the subject of style and will be taken up later.

Postgate, who establishes a difference between fidelity to substance and fidelity to form, has a passing remark on completeness. "If form is neglected," he asserts, "as in Scientific and Technical writing, an absolute fidelity, that is a complete transference of the original, is possible."⁸

It should be noted that while Tytler considers completeness a *sine qua non* quality of translation, Postgate merely thinks that "it is possible."

Again when we think of completeness we are referring to fulness in the transference of concepts or thoughts and not words. In the illustrations given and discussed under the general concept of accuracy, omissions of words were noted and grammatical changes were indispensable for attaining idiomatic quality in the rendition, yet a close analysis of both the Spanish and the English texts will reveal that the ideas are complete and that the meaning has not been lost by any omissions of unnecessary words or changes in sentence structure. In some other instances words may be added and the substantive meaning still kept. Perhaps the scope of the general principle of completeness may be better explained and understood by examining the Spanish rendition of a short poem by Whitman.

To a Historian

You who celebrate by-gones,
Who have explored the outward, the surface of the races,
the life that has exhibited itself,
Who have treated of man as the creature of politics, aggregates,
rulers and priests,
I, habitant of the Alleghenies, treating of him as he is in
himself in his own rights,
Pressing the pulse of the life that has seldom exhibited itself
(the great pride of man in himself),
Chanter of Personality, outlining what is yet to be,
I project the history of the future.⁹

A Los Historiadores

Vosotros celebráis las cosas de otros tiempos,

⁷ Alexander Fraser Tytler, *Essay on the Principles of Translation* (London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1790), p. 10.

⁸ John Percival Postgate, *Translation and Translations* (London: G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., 1922), p. 31.

⁹ Walt Whitman, *Poems* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1921), p. 3.

GENERAL CONCEPTS OR LAWS IN TRANSLATION

Vosotros habéis explorado lo externo, la superficie de
las razas, la vida que se muestra por sí misma,
habéis considerado al hombre como criatura de la política
de las sociedades, de los legisladores y sacerdotes.
Yo, habitante de los Alleghanis, considerando al hombre
tal como es en sí mismo, en sus propios derechos,
Tomando el pulso de la vida que raramente se ha mostrado
(el gran orgullo del hombre en sí propio)*
cantor de la Personalidad, esbozando lo que está aún por
nacer
proyecto la historia del porvenir.¹⁰ *

*As corrected.

The following points are worth noting:

1. The title, which is singular in the original, has been made plural in the translation.
2. The first verse (line), which contains only four words in English has been expanded to seven in Spanish. In this line and the next two the poet made use of the relative *who* but the translator, resorting to a grammatical change, has avoided the use of the relative pronoun and has made the lines direct statements in the indicative.
3. The comma at the end of the third verse (line) was changed to a period in the translation. In spite of these changes, obviously made for elegance and energy, as required by the Spanish idiom, the fulness or completeness of the thoughts has not suffered, as may be ascertained by studying closely the whole rendition.

The Principle of Grammatical Variation

Translation necessarily requires grammatical 'variations involving parts of speech and syntactical structure, from the forms peculiar to the original to other forms typical to the language of the rendition.

Grammatical variations in the art of translation were early recognized by Antonio de M. Capmany (1766) and later by Ronald Macandrew (1936).

Antonio de Capmany has set down four rules or techniques for translating French into Spanish, which are good examples of what we call grammatical variation. To illustrate his four rules he presents the following renditions¹¹:

¹⁰ Concha Zardoya, *Obras Escogidas de Walt Whitman*, trans. (Madrid: M. Aguilar, Editor, 1946), p. 190.

¹¹ Antonio de Capmany, *El Arte de Traducir el Idioma Francés al Castdiano* (Madrid: Imprenta de D. Antonio de Sandra, 1766), pp. 48-49.

GENERAL CONCEPTS OR LAWS IN TRANSLATION

1. Completion of elliptical construction:

French - Vaisseau venu *de la Chine*

Spanish - Navio *que viene de la China*

2. Rendering singular by plural:

French - Voir d'un *oeil sec*

Spanish - Ver con *los ivos enjutos*

3. Rendering one part of speech by another:

French - Il serait *cruel* de lui ôter la vie

Spanish - Fuera *crueidad* quitarle la vida

4. Rendering one tense of a verb by another:

French - C'est le premier qui l' *ait permit*

Spanish - Es el primero que lo *predijo*

Macandrew offers some examples of renditions from Spanish into English which may also serve to illustrate the concept of grammatical variation¹²:

1. Rendering a Spanish verb by an English noun or vice versa:

Spanish - Partimos cuando *nacemos*¹³
andamos cuando *virimos*

English - Our cradle is the starting place
Life is the running of the race.

2. Rendering a Spanish adjective by an English adverb:

Spanish - Su padre y la nodriza le siguieron *silenciosos*.

English - His father and nurse silently followed him.

The Principle of Idiomatic Quality

A translation should follow the idiomatic patterns and genius of the language into which the rendition is made.

In the field of linguistics, there are two main opposing theories on the nature of language which, to be sure, are applicable to translation or at least affect translation directly because in final analysis it

¹² Ronald Macandrew, *Translation from Spanish* (London: A. & C. Black Ltd., 1936), pp. 75-76.

¹³ Jorge Manrique, (Coplas, Longfellow's Translation).

GENERAL CONCEPTS OR LAWS IN TRANSLATION

is nothing else than one of the many forms of the arts of language the theory which considers language a purely mechanical invention of man, and the diametrically opposed view that states it to be a creation of the soul. In evolving or formulating any general concepts and specific principles of translation we must not forget these two contradicting philosophies lest we want to standardize language (and translation) to the point of eliminating all flexibility in the capability of man to express his thoughts and all forms of style and originality in written language. Such standardization, if theoretically possible, is not practically attainable as long as the brain processes of man are beyond his control and as long as there are individual differences in the physical, emotional, intellectual and biological structure of human beings. These barriers make it highly improbable that mechanical translations be ever attained.

It is because language is flexible, and thought free, and style and originality real, that general concepts and specific principles and techniques of translation are necessary. They constitute elements of stability for the transfer of ideas from one language into another. If language were inflexible, and style and originality nonexistent, no differences could be found between writers using the same language for expression and the same subject as a theme. Literature and science would have never passed the lowest state of intellectual activity. The fact that basic vocabularies may suffice for the average capacity of expression in any given language must never be interpreted to limit thinking to average intellectual capacity. With average and simple words Abraham Lincoln produced the most profound and transcendent oration of modern times when dedicating the national cemetery at Gettysburg. Could any form of stereotyped or standardized language be expected to produce such depth of thought and transcendence of feeling? Or were they due to the Emancipator's ability to convert into language the originality and power of his thoughts through the quality of his idiom?

There are two aspects of idiomatic quality which the translator must have in mind during the process of rendition from one language into another: first, the idiom of the language, secondly, the idiom of the author. It is interesting to note the definition of idiom in Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary and the distinctions made therein:

1. A use of words peculiar to a particular language, especially if it be an irregularity; a form of speech characteristic of a writer or a tongue. *Idiom or idiomatic phrase is a phrase the meaning of which cannot be deduced from its component parts: as, to bring about (accomplish); to put up with (tolerate, endure), etc. Idiomatic phrases should be carefully distinguished from figurative phrases, or phrases in which the words have their ordinary connections and relations but are used figuratively; as to break the ice; to carry coals to Newcastle; to ring the changes on; to set a trap for; to stand in one's own light.*
2. A peculiar speech or jargon; a language or dialect used by a special class; as, the Gipsy idiom.
3. The peculiar genius or spirit of a language.

If the above distinctions are accepted as accurate and correct, the *idiom* of a language embraces all the patterns of linguistic expression that are peculiar to the language community by which it is

GENERAL CONCEPTS OR LAWS IN TRANSLATION

spoken, and the idiom of a writer includes not only his peculiar use of speech but his individual style. The idiom and genius of a language are in our opinion inseparable qualities that cannot be disregarded by the writer or the translator lest he wants to make himself unintelligible to his readers. Huysman in France and the poet McLeish in the United States are typical of writers who by deviating from the usual patterns of speech have placed themselves in a unique category of writers whose works are out of reach for the general public. Idiomatic quality, which is the expression we employ to sum up the language characteristics already mentioned may be best illustrated by the proverbs common in any language or by its colloquial idiom. From Cervantes' *Don Quixote* is the following illustration:

... Pero dime, Sancho, traes bien guardado el yelmo de Mambrino, que ya ví que te alzaste del suelo cuando aquel desagradecido le quiso hacer pedazos. Pero no pudo; donde se puede echar de ver la fineza de su temple.

A lo cual respondió Sancho:

, Vive Dios, señor Caballero de la Triste Figura, que no puedo sufrir ni llevar en paciencia algunas cosas que vuestra merced dice, y que por ellas vengo a imaginar que todo cuanto me dice de caballarías, y alcanzar reinos e imperios, de dar ínsulas, y de hacer otras mercedes y grandezas, como es uso de caballeros andantes, que todo debe ser cosa de viento y mentira, y todo pastraña, o patraña, o como lo llamaremos. Porque quien oyere decir a vuestra merced que una bacía de barbero es el yelmo de Mambrino, y que no salga de este error en más de cuatro días, que ha de pensar sino que quien tal dice y afirma debe de tener güero el juicio? La bacía yo la llevo en el costal, toda abollada, y llévola pam aderezarla en mi casa y hacerme la barba en ella, si Dios me diere tanta gracia, que algún dia me vea con mi mujer y mis hijos.¹⁴

... But in the meantime, Sancho, tell me, has thou carefully preserved Mambrino's Helmet? I saw thee take it up the other Day, after that Monster of Ingratitude had spent his rage in vain Endeavors to break it; which by the way argues the most excellent Temper of the Metal.

- Body of me, quoth Sancho, Sir Knight of the *Woeful Figure*, I can no longer bear to hear you run on at this rate; Why, this were enough to make any man believe that all your bragging and bounding of your Knight-Errantry, your winning of Kingdoms, and bestowing of Islands, and Heaven knows what, upon your Squire are mere flim-flam Stories, and nothing but Shams and Lies: For who the Devil can hear a Man call a Barber's Bason a Helmet, nay, and stand to't, and vouch it four Days together, and not think him that says it, to be stark mad, or without Brains? I have the Bason safe

¹⁴ Miguel de Cervantes, *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha* (Madrid: M. Aguilar, Editor, 1942), p. 229.

GENERAL CONCEPTS OR LAWS IN TRANSLATION

enough here in my Pouch, and I'll get it mended for my own use, if ever I have the Luck to get home to my Wife and my Children.¹⁵

That the above translation is faithful to the idiom and the genius of both languages involved was declared in 1790 by Alexander Tytler and confirmed by Henry Grattan Doyle one hundred and sixty years thereafter, in 1950. Aside from what they, authorities in this matter, have already said, we shall only add that the attacks to which this translation has been subjected on the basis of accuracy must be reconsidered in a new light coming from the definition of literary accuracy and the sciences of semantics and stylistics.

The Principle of Style

A translation should reproduce the style of the original as closely as permitted by the idiom of the language of the rendition.

Mathematically expressed, style is to a writer's works as idiomatic quality is to the language. In other words, style is the idiom of the writer. Much has been written on style, which is a term akin to originality, and no complete agreement has ever been reached as to what style means. For the purpose of this discussion, however, we shall accept the definition of style given in the Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary: "Mode of expressing thought in writing or orally."

In translation work we must consider not only the style of the author of the original text but the style of the translator. Both are limited by such factors as cultural background, vocabulary, personal characteristics, and the nature of the topic. Let us examine what other writers have advised as to style in translations.

Vossler, the noted German linguist and critic, thinks that style is the individual idiom as distinguished from the general or common idiom. Language is in substance the sum of all individual styles. The use of language as a convention, i.e., according to rules, belongs in the realm of syntax; but the use of language as individual creation belongs in the realm of stylistics. The inductive methods evolve from the individual to the general, from particular cases to convention. Therefore, stylistics appeared first, then syntax. Every means of expression was characterized by individual and stylistic qualities long before it became conventional and subject to syntax.¹⁶

It is simply a question of chronological development. Before any rules of language were invented writing was subject only to individual norms. Some languages still have remnants of the early assertion of individuality. For example, in Spanish we still find the *laístas*, *loístas*, and *leístas*, so classed according to their preference for one of the three forms of the article *la*, *lo*, *le* in the

¹⁵ Peter Motteu and John Ozell, *Tize Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote de la Mancha*, trans. Miguel De Cervantes (New York: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 187.

¹⁶ Karl Vossler, *Positivism, Idealism, en la Lingüística* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1940), p. 23.

GENERAL CONCEPTS OR LAWS IN TRANSLATION

accusative case. It was only recently that this old controversy was settled by rules set down by the Spanish Royal Academy of Language.

Charles Bally, the founder of French stylistics, went a little further than Vossler and wrote about three varieties of stylistics: general, particular, and individual. We may conceive a discipline applied to uncover the relationships between the universal tendencies of the human soul and the various forms which they assumed in the different known languages. This would be the function of the *stylistics of language* in general stylistics. It would also be possible to limit our research to a given linguistic community to find out how its mentality, adjusted to secular tradition, and, therefore, homogeneous, is reflected in the speech of a country; and this would take us into the field of *particular stylistics or stylistics of a given idiom or form of speech*. And by restricting further our research we would arrive at the *individual stylistics* whose function is to evaluate the ideological and temperamental characteristics which distinguish the manner of expression of an individual writer or speaker from that of all other persons in his linguistic community.¹⁷ According to Vossler, stylistics is the foundation of grammar and not grammar the foundation of *stylistics*.

Most theorists agree in that the style of the original must be preserved. Among Tytler's three general rules, preservation of the "style and manner of writing" is the second. "A good translator," he writes, "must be able to discover at once the true character of his author's style. He must ascertain with precision to what class it belongs; whether to that of the grave, the elevated, the easy, the lively, the florid and ornamented, or the simple or unaffected; and these characteristics must he have the capacity of rendering equally conspicuous in the translation as in the original."

Strict adherence to this principle by Motteu and Ozell, translator and reviewer, respectively, of *Don Quixote* made their translation famous and very popular. That Cervantes' idiom and style was successfully rendered by them may be ascertained by a close examination of the following excerpts:

CARTA DE DON QUIJOTE A DULCINEA DEL TOBOSO¹⁸

Soberana y alta señora:

El ferido de punta de ausencia y el llagado de las telas de corazón, dulcísima Dulcinea del Togoso, te envia la salud que él no tiene. Si tu fermosura me desprecia, si tu valor no es mi pro, si tus desdenes son en mi afincamiento, maguer que yo sea asaz de sufrido, mal podré sostenerme en esta cuita, que, además de ser fuerte, es muy duradera. Mi buen escudero Sancho te dará entera relación. ¡Oh bella ingrata, amada enemiga mía!, del modo que por tu causa quedo: si gustares de socorrerme, tuyo soy; Y si no, haz lo que te viniere en gusto; que con acabar mi vida habré satisfecho a tu crueldad y a mi deseo.

Tuyo hasta la muerte,

El Caballero de la Triste Figura.

¹⁷ JuEo Casares, *Introducción a la Lexicografía Modertta* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1950), p. 103.

¹⁸ Cervantes, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

GENERAL CONCEPTS OR LAWS IN TRANSLATION

DON QUIJOTE DE LA MANCHA TO DULCINEA DEL TOBOSO¹⁹

He that is stabb'd to the Quick with the Poinard of Absence, and wounded to the Heart with Love's most piercing Darts sends you that Health which he wants himself, sweetest Dulcinea del Toboso. If your Beauty reject me, if your Virtue refuse to raise my fainting Hopes, if your Disdain exclude me from Relief, I must at last sink under the Pressure of my Woes, tho' much inur'd to Sufferings for my Pains are not only too violent but too lasting. My trusty Squire Sancho will give you an exact Account of the Condition to which Love and you have reduc'd me, too beautiful Ingrate! If you relent at last, and pity my Distress, then I may say I live, and you preserve what's yours. But if you abandon me to Despair, I must patiently submit, and by ceasing to breathe, satisfy Your Cruelty and my Passion.

Yours till Death,

The Knight of the Woeful Figure.

Macandrew thinks that the translator should never use stylistic effects of his own but “reproduce all the ideas in the exact degree of dress or undress in which they appear in the original.”²⁰

Applicability of the Principles

The six principles discussed above, together with the other 27 principles not included here for the reason already stated, have been tested to find out their range of use among professional translators and their actual applicability in translation work. The testing of their applicability was done through a questionnaire which was sent out to some sixty (60) translators performing professional work for the federal government. The questionnaire was designed to test the validity and adequacy of the theory of translation referred to before and the factual applicability of the set of principles based on the theory.

Forty-four translators returned their questionnaires with statistically useful answers. Fourteen native languages and 21 working languages were involved in the study. The average experience of the professional translators participating in the study was 11 years.

Analysis of the data collected showed that the eclectic method of translation, as described and advocated by the author, seems to be the most favored and the most commonly practiced by the professional translators who participated in the study.

It also showed that out of the 33 principles developed, the 23 following showed complete agreement by 100-71 percent of the translators participating in the study, within the four main areas into which the principles were divided.

General Concepts: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6

¹⁹ Motteu and Ozell, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

²⁰ Macandrew, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

GENERAL CONCEPTS OR LAWS IN TRANSLATION

Stylistic: 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15

Idiomatic: 16, 18, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27

Grammatical: 28, 29, 30, 32, 33

The remaining 10 principles showed complete agreement by 50-21 percent of the participating translators, as follows:

General Concepts: 4

Stylistic: 8, 12, 14

Idiomatic: 17, 19, 20, 22, 25

Grammatical: 31

The 33 principles tested are seemingly applicable to the rendition of Danish, Dutch, English, German, Norwegian, Swedish, French, Italian, Portuguese, Rumanian, Spanish, Czech, Polish, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovakian, Greek, Finnish, Hungarian, Arabic, and Japanese, which are the working languages of the professional translators who participated in this study.

Cet article est paru dans *The Modern Language Journal*, vol. 40, n° 1, janvier 1956, p. 13-21.