Translation and Interpretation Background

Translation (general definition): "general term referring to the transfer of thoughts and ideas from one language (source) to another (target), whether the languages are in written or oral form; whether the languages have established orthographies or do not have such standardization or whether one or both languages is based on signs, as with sign languages of the deaf."

Interpretation (general definition): "one type of translation, and it refers to oral communication situations in which one person speaks in the source language, an interpreter processes this input and produces output in a second language, and a third person listens to the source language version."

For our class: translation = dealing with language in written form, interpretation = dealing with language in spoken form

A few differences between interpretation and translation
1) translating: you have more time. Interpreting: you are fighting time.
2) translating: you express via written word. Interpreting: by spoken word
3) for interpreting: you need the added skill of listening and interpreting simultaneously.

3 things needed for interpreting
1) speed
2) accuracy
3) ability to make oneself clearly understood

Speed: comes with practice.
Accuracy: comes with knowing both languages well, what is needed, and the ability to remember what was said.
Ability to make oneself clearly understood: should be practiced early, at the beginning, to give a good base. This involves pronunciation practice and knowing things like how to say large numbers.

Knowledge
You need knowledge (知識). Even a bilingual who understands everything said won't be able to fully translate without knowing the background. Thus, it is a good idea to (a) specialize in certain areas and (b) constantly get data on that area.

The 3 kinds of 知識 an interpreter needs:
1. 状況知識　　　　（直接的推論）
2. 共有知識　　　　（間接的推論）
3. 百科事典的知識　（間接的推論）

To be an interpreter, you need 4 things:
  1. Autonomy (自立性): 自分の方向を決定し、独自で決断し、自信を誇示できる能力
  2. Flexibility (柔軟性): 曖昧さに耐え、新しい経験に対応し、人間の相違点を受け入れる能力
  3. Resilience (弾力性): 落胆を受容し、欲求不満を解消し、ストレスからも回復できる能力
  4. Sensitivity (感受性): 他人に共感し、周辺の事柄に気付いて、人への反対を避ける能力

Conversation rules: the Cooperative Principle (see Grice, 1975)
The maxim of quantity: 量のルール：過不足ない情報を与える。
    Example:
        Speaker A: "Do you know if Katie did well on her exam?"
        Speaker B: "Yes, I do. She did well and got a score of 100!"
    Import: Speaker B could have ended the reply after "Yes, I do." However, they shared all the information they knew and no more.

The maxim of quality: 質のルール：根拠のある真実を言う。
    Example: "The capital of Japan is Tokyo."
    Import: The speaker believes that they are telling the truth to the best of their knowledge.

The maxim of relevance: 関係のルール：関連した事柄を話す。

Example:

Speaker A: "Do you think Henry is dating someone new?"
Speaker B: "Well, he goes to Shizuoka most weekends."

Import: We infer that there is a link between Henry dating someone and his going to Shizuoka and that Speaker B is not just randomly telling us about Henry's trips to Shizuoka.

The maxim of manner: 様態のルール：曖昧さを避け、簡潔に順序だてる。

Example:

"I'm writing an essay on metonymy. It's a type of figure of speech."

Import: Here the speaker knew it is possible the listener doesn't know the term "metonymy" and decided to give a quick explanation.

OTHER NOTES

Word-for-word translations give very imprecise results:

-- precise translation leads to spiritless works
-- words in one language do not correspond exactly with words in another
-- if every word of a text is preserved, but poetic quality is lost: there is no precision!
-- it is not necessary to translate the words or even the sense, but it is essential to translate the impression, i.e., the reader must receive the same emotion or feeling from the text.

About vocabulary:
1. translators must be given a daily dose of synonyms to prevent "word anemia."
   * Horse = steed, stallion, mount, jumper, trotter
   * Don't need archaic terms, just everyday terms and slang
2. don't translate just the word, but the style and sense of it.
3. depart as far from the text as possible to be accurate with it
   * ignore the superficial and translate the essence: meaning, style, pathos
   * chair also means chairman, China is also dishware

Style:
Words in translation must match the style of the words in the original.

Solemn	**neutral**	**informal**	**vulgar**
countenance	face	mug	kisser
partake	eat	feed	gobble
abode / domicile	house	pad / place	hovel

DO NOT MIX STYLES!!!

Translators are required to use native language, own poetic speech to recreate the distinctive style of the original and its inherent national-cultural coloration.

4 ends of translation:
1. pragmatic translation: "translation of a message with and interest in accuracy of the information that was meant to be conveyed in the source form"; not aesthetics. TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS
2. aesthetic-poetic translation: "the translator takes into account the affect, emotion, and feelings of an original language version"; aesthetic: POETRY
3. ethnographic translation: "explicate the cultural context of the source and second language versions" TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE
4. linguistic: "concerned with equivalent meanings of the constituent morphemes of the second language and with grammatical form". MACHINE TRANSLATION

TESTING TRANSLATORS/TRANSLATIONS FOR QUALITY
1. back-translation
2. knowledge testing: people read a translation / answer questions about it
3. performance testing: do a task from the translation
4. informal, subjective opinion: show an expert, ask an opinion (but this can be inaccurate and misleading sometimes)

TESTING TRANSLATIONS AS RESEARCH TOOL
1. back-translation
2. bilingual technique: bilinguals take the same test or different halves of a test in 2 languages they know
3. committee approach: group of bilinguals translates from source to target language
4. pretest procedures: field testing of translation

Guidelines for writing translatable English (for use by beginners)
    1) short simple sentences, less than 16 words
    2) use active words
    3) repeat nouns, avoid too many pronouns
    4) avoid metaphors and colloquialisms
    5) add sentences to provide context, redundancy
    6) avoid adverbs and prepositions if they are not really needed
    7) use specific terms (cows, pigs, chickens, NOT livestock)
    8) avoid words of vagueness
    9) use familiar wording
    10) avoid two different verbs in a sentence, if verbs suggest two different actions

---

Two roles of the interpreter:
1. speech
2. understanding

These are performed simultaneously.

Interpreter must have
    1) knowledge of the original language
    2) the relevant knowledge he possesses of the subject under discussion

Interpretation process: speech → perception → stored by interpreter in formal and semantic memory → rendition

During perception and storing: words are processed for content, transformed into mental representation, and stored in semantic memory. Translatable words (places, proper names, definite objects, etc.) are stored for proper reproduction.

Most effort is in retrieving from the formal memory (places, names), but many mistakes are made here.

Translation involves 2 distinct factors: a "meaning" or *reference* to some slice of reality, and the *difference between two languages* in referring to that reality.   NO TRANSLATION CAN BE PERFECT.   It is the ideas that are being translated rather than their symbols.

Requirements for a legitimate translation:
      1) know the source and target languages
      2) be familiar with the subject matter
      3) have expressive capabilities in the target language

Word order and emphasis:
Use after shaking well.   Shake well before using.
The doormat is over the key.   The key is under the doormat.
I'd like the manager to speak to me. I'd like to speak to the manager.

→ When customary patterns of word order (and therefore of thought) are broken, the reader is jolted.

Role of translator:
    A. appreciation for content of text (what is there)
    B. appreciation for formal features of work to be translated (how what is there is presented)
    C. willing to express one's own creativity through someone else's creation (your own presentation of the text)
       1. key is to balance these three without disproportionately treating one more than the other
       2. special warning for those who want to reveal mastery to please receptors who also know the source language, but do no good to receptors who don't know source

IS TRANSLATION POSSIBLE?
1. consider the relative equivalence rather than absolute perfection
2. consider that no communication occurs without some loss of information
3. MT fails because non-linguistic world provides much meaning

WHAT IS THE BEST TRANSLATION? = BEST FOR WHOM?
1. success should only be measured in amount it fulfills intended purpose
2. ultimate validation not a linguistic undertaking; it's in the communication domain

TRANSLATION: AN ART, SKILL, OR SCIENCE?
1. an art because translating piece of art requires art from translator
2. a skill because can be taught and improved
3. a science because activity involved involves scientific inquiry: analysis, description, and explanation.

Requirements of a good translator:
1. non-literary translation: background knowledge, ability to reason, familiarity with the source language and target language. Literary translation: the translator must understand perfectly the intention and the subject of the author whose text he translates
2. talent
3. sensitivity
4. honesty