

Translation



Translation Process Paper The process of translation is a detailed and time consuming practice. Some argue it should be rooted in both the language and the culture of the original language, and in the targeted language. Many translators engulf themselves in the culture of a source language in order to truly understand and translate a piece. This was the advice of poet and translator Ammiel Alcalay who read here at Queens College the semester. It isn't a process that's just a word to word method but an image to image, tone to tone, and sense to sense translation. While working on my translation project I realized that there's a huge benefit of knowing the language and culture even though I didn't have a strong hold on my targeted language. But I also found strength in some of the online translation programs that helped me to make major breakthroughs in understanding translation better.

Being that most of my translated pieces in my project were written by me, I of course knew my intent on every word and image. However, there were many tricky words that slowed me down severely and forced me to think of what word would fit best in order to keep the tone I wanted. I can now understand and fully appreciate what a translator goes through in order to produce the best possible work. Finding a word to fit a tone or an image can change the meaning of the piece therefore translation should be approach with an artful precision. I started out my project by first defining translation because there are so many different forms of translation.

This includes word to word and sign language; body language also goes hand in hand with sign language. I targeted my project on translating images from my childhood into poems. Also, I included a small section of translating body

language and reading in between the lines. As I moved into my project and placed my focus on body language I found an interview online by a woman who had helped her boyfriend kill her son. This piece was a type of translation that dealt with reading in between the line of what someone was saying. I of course read it one way while someone else would have read it another. I also translated my translated segment into 15 different languages to show that lying and reading in between the lines are found in all languages. Furthermore, they can also be detected in body language, the pitch in our voices, and the way we breathe.

This was also the case in the infamous baby killer Susan Smith. Police started doubting her story due in part to her body language; however, this isn't an exact science. Researchers do believe people who constantly smile while they are speaking tend to be hiding something. Also, a person who constantly looks around and refuses to make eye contact appears to be dishonest.

Moreover, crossing the arms is a symbolic barrier especially when one feels defensive. All these things translate into some form of guilt or deception which can be read. The next part of my project contained a drawing by an abused child made during a therapy session. The child was asked to explain or translate what the picture meant.

The child said it was his father hitting and laughing at him. Pictures and paintings are excellent ways to translate a feeling, thought or idea. This practice dates back to the cavemen era; they drew on the walls things they did or saw during their time on earth. A picture is worth a thousand

words??? is more than a statement it??™ s a promise. People who draw can accidentally tap into their subconscious minds and translate thoughts and feelings that they themselves are not aware of. This is an incredible form of unconscious translation.

In the next section of my project I translated the famous quote by William Makepeace Thackeray which reads, ??? Mother is the word for God on the hearts and lips of all little children???. I first only translated this into Spanish which wasn??™ t a big problem for me so then I decided to translate it into 21 different languages just to see the difficulty in doing so. Yes, they were complicated however, the Japanese and Chinese stood out the most to me because they were symbols not letters. From all the translation blogs I read on these languages mostly all of the translators who were native to the language stated the same thing, ??? the worst part of learning this language was drawing out/spelling of words???. The most I could figure out was that there are two basic writing styles in Japanese the desu/masu (???????)” and the “ da/dearu (???????)”. The problem with the desu/masu is that the language requires a longer structure sentence to achieve what you are trying to convey from a shorter sentence.

But on the other hand, according to some translators this style has more of a modest and polite sound to it which gives a friendlier impression and sense of security. Da/dearu on the other hand sounds professional and persuasive but can also sound assertive, arrogant, and can be perceived by listeners as judgmental. Depending on what you are translating each style has its own benefits and its own downside. Russian was also a complex language because of the phrasal verbs.

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In an article by Igor Yatskovich the author says, "It is common knowledge that in order to provide an adequate translation, the translator must be able to sense nuances in the semantics of both the source-language and target-language texts. English phrasal verbs (e. g. give up, break in, fall out) are of great interest to me in this respect because they possess quite a number of semantic, grammatical and stylistic peculiarities, sometimes making their accurate translation into Russian difficult. Difficult in deed but I managed to translate one piece into Russian from Spanish.

The difficulties here were I couldn't keep track of what the letter meant and I stumbled around a lot with that. Next I wrote out the images of my time with the object/muse of my poems. I started with a poem called, "The Message". There weren't too many difficulties here. Even though I am a native speaker I do not write it or spell it very well. The thing I had to keep in mind is that in English when something is written out straight that same sentence in Spanish will take the first or middle part of a sentence and make it come last. For example, "others I took from my grandmother's purse".

In Spanish translation, "otros que tomo del monedero de mi abuela". A direct translation of that would be, "others I took of purse of my grandmother". Also, in some lines he/she wasn't needed because words in Spanish are feminine or masculine. In the poem, "Still I See You" I abbreviated peanut butter and jelly to PB&J. In my translation I left it as PB&J even though I believe culturally Spanish speaker probably won't understand what that is. In Spanish PB&J would be spelled out/said out completely. If I've spelled it out in Spanish I've spelled it out?

I've lost the shortness and simple sound of PB&J. My only hope is the reader who doesn't know what PB&J means would just look it up than realize it was originally written in English.

In the poem, "Only God Knows" I wanted it with short lines making for tightness. But when I translated it into Spanish the line became longer throwing off the tightness but it didn't affect the tone. I've could used Spanish words that were a letter or two shorter but then the tone would've changed. I opted for tone over tightness in this piece. As a super challenge for myself I translated the poem, "You Said Fly Away, Far Away" from Spanish into Russian.

I had nothing but problems with this translation. The words in Spanish *lo* and *yo* registered on the translation program as the same thing which they are not. After reading through different blogs I came to the understanding that the program just didn't recognize it. I also translated, "You Said Fly Away, Far Away" from English into Spanish then from Spanish into Russian then from Russian back into English and found that there wasn't much difference aside from a few words. I was amazed at that because Spanish and Russian are nothing alike. I wish I had more time to thoroughly look into Russian because the writing/spelling of the words look beautiful. In conclusion I found the Spanish translation portion of my project not so difficult. The difficult sections were of course the other languages because I felt lost in a sea of symbols unfamiliar to me.

I do hope that while I'm coming out of this confusion in the next few weeks that I find this course more useful to me. Come to think about it, I do see a little light at the end of this tunnel.