How non english native speaker translate slang texting into regular english

Linguistics, Language

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

The subject of this study is slang and how the use of slang can be transferred from a source text in one language to a target text in another language. I have chosen this subject because slang is something in a conversation or similar communicative situation that most people easily recognize as soon as it is uttered, but explaining and defining what slang is and how it functions is an entirely different matter.

Consequently, it is interesting to research the use of slang in order to determine if there are any difficulties in transferring slang from one language to another. Slang seems to have suffered social stigma among linguists and lexicographers because it has frequently been associated with overtly impertinent behavior (Adams 2009: 32). However, as it turns out, little research has been conducted into the actual use of slang. In fact, finding sources to explain the function of slang is very difficult.

Researching terminology that is attributed to being slang, showed me that slang is more than just words to show impertinent behavior and that there are many social aspects embedded in slang, which in this thesis will be referred to as the use of slang. This study seeks to find out what slang is, how it is used, who uses it and why it is used. The embedded social effect and function of using slang will be researched and discussed in order to show why slang deviates from standard language and why it is used.

I have chosen to look at how slang works within a givenculture(the USA) because in Denmark, due to an excessive exposure to American television, films andmusic, we are heavily subjected to American- English language

media which may give us a greater consciousness of the English language. From a translation studies' point of view, slang is interesting because of its connotations in its source culture.

Slang seems to be connected to the culture in which it is created, so how are slang words and expressions transferred into another language and culture and does the transfer affect the possibility to maintain the use of slang in the translation? In the world of translation studies, research into the translation of slang seems somewhat limited. The reason may be that slang is largely considered a colloquial phenomenon which reduces the genres ofcommunicationin which it can appear. More specifically, slang is most likely to be translated in connection with slang style of teenagers, in the form of texting.

CHAPTER II. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

A. Theory of Translation

The acknowledgement of translation theory as a scientific discipline is usually attributed to J. S. Holmes. In his statement on the Symposium of Applied Linguistics (Copenhagen, 1972), he insisted on the establishment of translation theory as an independent field of research. The framework of this new scientific discipline was hard to determine because of its complex requirements and because it uses materials and results from many other linguistic disciplines.

So, whoever wants to deal with the theory and poetics of translation should pay attention to the special requirements of similar disciplines and should be

able to include their work in this new discipline. Because of all this, translation theory was considered an activity of secondary importance that relies on other people's thoughts and knowledge. The result of this was a diminishment of the value of research in this area.

However, after years of undeserved treatment, the study of translation theory is gaining the place it should have had from the start. As an object of scientific research, the translation process attracts the attention of many scientific disciplines and methods, especially contrastive analysis. This kind of analysis can be successfully applied in monitoring structures and idioms of one language and comparing them to their semantic counterparts in another language.

In this process we can also determine whether one particular phrase exists in only one language, or it is a common expression in several languages. In the final results of this study we can determine most important general and specific language differences. As a systematic scientific approach, with specific methods andgoals, contrastive analysis was conceived in the United States in 1930's, but it gained an important place in languagescience40 years later. Of course, general linguistics with its theory and methodology supported this action.

It is reasonable to assume that those who deal with translation as a science want linguistics to provide a practical contribution to translation, and to offer an improvement of practical use for those who learn foreign languages. Internal connections between linguistics and translation are quite obvious and convincingly confirmed by the generated models presented by

generative grammar. However, although contrastive analysis has left important traces in the study of language, so far it hasn't shown many important results in social and cultural fields or practical solutions for the benefit of communication.

According to contrastive analysis, the written text has a permanent structure, it requires focusing only from the standpoint of etymology and semantics, so it does not allowobservationof life situations or events that occur in the language under the influence of the social and culturalenvironment. If we accept the terms mentioned above according to their original etymological meaning, it is clear that they define translation as the decision to say something to someone somewhere " over", where people speak a different language and the message can not be understood without translation, transmission or inversion.

To make it simple, translation represents transferring messages from one language to another. Translators often try to highlight the direct connection between translation and language. Professional translators usually insist on translating the semantic components of the text, but sometimes there's a need for literal translation. Some often criticize the language structures that can be found in under-educated translators' work. Although professional translators insist on the connection between translation and various fields of modern science, their theories can not offer enough evidence on the true importance of translation.

Traditional scientific practice gives the activity of translation a secondary role and leaves it in the shadow of the importance of scientific research.

When it comes to the translation process, we can say that a translator transfers information between the two languages. In fact, a translator transfers the contents of the text written in one language – also known as source language – into the expressions in the second language – also called the target language. This type of translation is called inter-language.

Given the relationship between source language and target language, there can be also intra-language and inter-semiotic translation. Inter-language translation is a process in which the linguistic material from one language is transferred using material from some other language. Intra-language translation is the name for replacing one form of language material with another form of that same language. Inter-semiotic translation can be defined as the conversion of characters from the language system structure to another system of signs (for example, converting traffic regulations to traffic symbols).

In this case, Translation's status as a mental activity of secondary importance is caused by the thought that in the transfer between two languages, translators are trying to shape other people's thoughts, not their own. As a form of mental activity, translation represents the transformation of thoughts, feelings or desires, originally designed in one language, into the same kind of thought, feeling or desire in another language.

B. Theory of Communication

The network is expected to process messages regardless of their contents. The perspective of the communication network therefore is different from that of the communicators. Only by operating at a next, that is, receiving

interface, can the substance of the message be reconstructed and further processed. This next interface may be a (human) receiver or another differentiation of the network. As the differentiation changes, the message is expected to have another situational meaning (Granovetter 1985).

The substance of communication can only be reconstructed if the communication systems are sufficiently complex for packaging the original signal. The original substance of the message, however, remains an assumption at the receiving end and decoding is based on theoretical assumptions. Although this may in practice be taken for granted, all sense of an original communality is recognizable as based on a specific coding, for example, in terms of basic affections. At the level of the social system, the communication of information not only transmits, but also translates and potentially transforms the expected information content.

The full formalization of the substance of communication in terms of messages expected to contain information was accomplished by Shannon's (1948) mathematical theory of communication. From this perspective, information is content-free and equated with uncertainty; it is formalized in terms of binary digits or bits. When the uncertainty is complete, the system is assumed to be " dead" in a formal sense. A system can only process information, that is, communicate, as long as the expected information is not complete but contained within a communication. A communication system communicates with other communication systems.

The latter provide contexts insofar as they communicate, that is, insofar as these systems are neither completely certain (" fixed") nor completely

uncertain (" dead"). Thus, a model of co-variation and remaining variation in otherwise orthogonal dimensions can be formalized (Leydesdorff 1994). By differentiating the systems suppress the co-variation and tend to become nearly decomposable (Simon 1973). Whereas the covariation between two systems (A and B) is mutually determined, the remaining variation provides a structure over time in the one system (A) that is a latent condition for the coevolving system (B).

From the perspective of the latter system (B), the structure (in A) can also be considered as redundancy or failing information. Therefore, structure is latent from this perspective. The covariations provide windows at which the systems share information mutually. The remaining variations are based on the recursive code of the communication over time and remain internal to each of the co-evolving systems. In the case of a dually layered communication medium like human language (see above), the same communication can be nearly decomposable in one dimension while firmly related in another.

For example, we may agree despite a deep misunderstanding in terms of the information exchange, while one is also able to disagree about a given meaning when one fully agrees about the underlying exchange. Thus, a two-dimensional communication medium allows for differentiation and integration at the same time. The operation has become complex in itself. With increasing differentiation the system has to improve on its internal operation of integration because of the risk of otherwise falling apart from an excess of differentiation.

Keeping this balance under the pressure of increasing uncertainty can be considered as the driving force for developing communicative competences in a communication system. The communicative competences are expected to be differentiated in the case of inter-human communication. Whereas the substance of social communication (i) is packaged, the communicative competencies tend also to become formalized. The social network system, however, remains structurally coupled to human agency in the substantive dimension.

As long as one maintains Luhmann's assumption that human agency has to be the substantive carrier of the reflexive translation at the node, the social system cannot be completely virtual. One has to abandon the complete idealization in the historical case since observable reproduction has to be realized as one of the subdynamics of otherwise virtual networks. In thisrespect, sociologyis different from the study of artificial systems. The historical instantiations contain the fingerprints of the social system's reproduction.

Institutional dynamics exhibit codifications of communication that have been useful hitherto to the extent that they have been institutionalized. These " real life" phenomena are part of the social system as are we ourselves, that is, as subdynamics which can be invoked. In other words: human agency is structurally coupled to the social system, but only along one of the two dimensions of inter-human communication at each time. The other dimension is the way our communication is processed as a message. Along

this dimension, the expectation is that we are only operationally coupled, since operational coupling allows for differentiation.

The social system operates in terms of expectations (that is, uncertainties) and expectations concerning expectations (that is, meaningful selections). This differentiation in the communication provides parallel channels in the medium that the network system has available for propelling the communication. Language supports this dual-layeredness in the communication by providing a means of codification of the relation between the message and the information. The interactions among the two layers provide the system with variation that can recursively be selected as meaningful.

For example, one is able to play with the meanings and the functions of communications. Furthermoe, one is sometimes able to control some of the selections by improving one's own communicative competences. Although each of us is able to select individually by providing meaning to some information and not to other, the reflections are socially distributed and hence they contain also an update value for the network behind the backs of the participants involved. In each communication, one degree of freedom may be hidden hyperreflexively or it can be made available to the communication, that is, infrareflexively.

When the socially distributed reflections can be communicated, they are provided with situational meaning. The latter interaction is expected to interact with the not-yet communicated layer of reflections, and by generating this new variation the system propels itself. On the side of the

human agency involved, this configuration provides us with opportunities for building niches within the system or, in Habermas' terminology, with options for improving the quality of life, for example, by fine-tuning communicative competencies to the exigencies of the communicated culture.

C. Theory of Slang Language

The definition of slang can be found in literature researching slang. Unlike dictionaries, whose main focus is to provide the general outline of a lexical item, but cannot elaborate on too many aspects due to a restriction on the space available, the specialized literature presented in this paragraph presents more in-depth research on slang and has a different approach to how to define slang.

In her book Slang & Sociability in which she researches the use of slang among college students in the USA, English professor Connie Eble presents her own definition of slang: " Slang is an ever changing set of colloquial words and phrases that speakers use to establish or reinforce social identity or cohesiveness in society at large" (Eble 1996: 11). Eble's definition differs significantly from the definitions presented in the dictionaries. While she agrees that slang is colloquial, Eble's definition highlights the social aspects of slang which the dictionaries either ignore or do not find relevant to explain.

According to Eble, slang thus seems to serve a purpose which is the establishment of social identity for the speaker and the people with whom they are interacting. Michael Adams agrees and says that slang serves to fill the following purposes: to identify members of a group, to change the level

of discourse in the direction of informality, and to oppose established authority (Adams 2009: 16). Adams' and Eble definitions show that slang is not just a set of words/phrases used by particular groups, but that it is something that are used by people to establish groups.

The difference between these two notions is that slang can be used by anyone with the aim of wanting to establish group identity and to oppose established authority. Eble mentions Dumas and Lighter who proposes four identifying criteria for slang (Dumas & Lighter 1978 14-16 in Eble 1996: 11-12): 1. Its presence will markedly lower, at least for the moment, the dignity of formal or serious speech or writing. 2. Its use implies the user's familiarity either with the referent or with that less statusful or less responsible class of people who have such familiarity and use the term.

3. It is a tabooed term in ordinary discourse with persons of higher social status or greaterresponsibility. 4. It is used in place of the well-known conventional synonym, especially in order (a) to protect the user from the discomfort caused by the conventional item or (b) to protect the user from the discomfort or annoyance of further elaboration. Dumas & Lighter say that when something fits at least two of the criteria, a linguistically sensitive audience will react to it in a certain way.

This way, which cannot be measured, is the ultimate identifying characteristic of true slang. This shows that the use of slang is a negotiation between the speaker and the listener, because the speaker wants to convey something with the use of slang which the listener must acknowledge. Adams acknowledges this and says that it is not a word itself that makes

something slang, but rather the extrinsic feature of its use adapted by speakers to very precise human social and aesthetic needs and aspirations (Adams 2009: 48).

Thus, the four criteria show that slang goes far beyond just being a lexical item. Moreover, all four criteria seem to focus on the social implications of using slang and the consciousness of shared knowledge between speaker and other participants. Dumas & Lighter imply that slang is used to change the level of formality from formal and serious speech towards informality, which also was what was suggested in the dictionary definitions and by Adams and Eble The objective of using sets of slang words and expressions is to achieve something on a social level.

The speaker uses slang in order to achieve social dynamics with the people to whom he/she is speaking and slang outlines social space, and attitudes towards slang helps identify and construct social groups and identity. (Adams 2009: 57). This means that when you use slang, you expose yourself, your ideas and your attitude as to how you want to perceive the people with whom you are interacting, and how you want these people to perceive you, while you rely on the people with whom you are speaking to be able to infer what you mean.

From this follows that slang is not a language as such as implied in some of the dictionary definitions mentioned in the previous paragraph, but rather a set of words and expressions in a given language used to create group dynamics, because slang is used within a given language to establish a difference between standard language and slang. The difference is not so

much in the words themselves, but in the intended effect of using the words. The switch from standard language to slang implies informal settings and helps determining group dynamics. In the words of Eble, people use slang " when they want to be creative, clear 2 A form of e. g. English which does not include evident non-standard usage of the language" (Hamaida 2007: 3).

Translating the use of slang - A study of microstrategies in subtitling with a view to researching the transfer of the use of slang from source text to target text with I Love You, Man as empirical example, including a study of the function of slang and acceptable to a select group" (Eble 1998: 19). In addition, slang is ephemeral. Slang changes constantly and it is the constant notion of what to use and what not to use that creates group identity. Eble says that " sharing and maintaining a constantly changing in-group vocabulary aids group solidarity and serves to include and exclude members" (Eble 1998: 119).

The members are those who understand not only the word said by a slang user, but also know what the intention of using the word is. In this way, slang operates like fashion: You always need to keep up with the latest trends and if you do not, you are not as fashionable as other slang users are, and you must know how to respond to slang and to show whether you are ' in-crowd' or ' out-crowd' (Ibid: 121). What still needs to be explained is what makes a given word appear slang to listeners.

As we saw above, Lighter and Dumas suggested that a slang term is taboo when used around people that do not belong to your group and that slang is a synonym to a conventional word in the standard language used to avoid

having to protect the user of the word from discomfort from having to elaborate on the word or to use the real word. This tells us that slang has an effect on both speaker and listener, and that slang is not applicable in all settings. Adams mentions that slang is " casual, racy, vivid, irreverent, and playful elements [that] rebels against the standard (whether mildy, wildly or in between)" (Adams 2009: 9).

The attributes suggested by Adams proposes that slang can be mild and casual in its appearance just as it can be racy and irreverent. Essentially, Adams believes that slang is used to rebel against standard language, but that the reasons for doing so does not have to be to show bad behaviour or obvious irreverence. As we saw in the dictionary definitions above, slang seems to be listed as being not polite and offensive, but Adams believes that slang can just as well be playful and a joking way of rebelling against standard language to mark the difference between e. g. parents and children (in-crowd versus out-crowd), but the children do not necessarily have wicked intentions with the use of slang.

Rather, slang is used to create a social line between children and parents/adults (Ibid: 32). Of course, context comes into play when we think of slang. Adams mentions that slang is not slang until someone recognises it to be slang (Adams 2009: 62). This means that listeners must be able to recognise the speaker's intent to break with established linguistic convention and to determine that what they are hearing is slang.

CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION

The term of using slang texting commonly can be learning trough chat with someone aboard. From the research result, we could see that student A who is often having chat with someone abroad can translate the text source appropriately. While student B is unfamiliar with slang texting, it is because student B rarely having chat with someone abroad. Knowing slang language is good for people who want to be an active English speaker. By mastering slang language, so we can take easily to communicate with the English native speaker.