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SIGHT TRANSLATION IN CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

The paper presents the findings of the critical overview of Sight Translation Algorithm in training graduates (interpreters) of Applied Linguistics, Cross-Cultural Communication, and Translation. To make teaching Sight Translation to graduates more felicitous a Pre-Sight Translation strategy is suggested.

Key words: *sight translation, interpretation, strategy, fast-reading, cross-cultural communication.*

Preamble. An awareness that specific cultural, social, linguistic, economic, historical, and gender-based differences matter in cross-cultural interaction, they can be reflected explicitly or implicitly shaping one's discourse with individuals of different backgrounds from one's own. The key to effective cross-cultural communication is knowledge of a common language for the multinational personnel of an institution or a global language for international coexistence. To make the both felicitous we can mention tips, in the first case: to be open to the perception of the opposite; to have some essential knowledge of people's cultural backgrounds; to practice active listening; to watch nonverbal communication; to maintain a personal touch; and the UN Charter with its official languages (Arabic – Modern Standard, English – British English with Oxford spelling, French, Mandarin – Simplified Chinese characters, Russian, and Spanish) is an ideal guide for the peaceful coexistence of the countries. To make cooperation mutually beneficial there must be one more condition – Translation/Interpretation while the development of a global language is a long-term perspective so far. Despite a number of various computerized translating programmes the human translator/interpreter is Mediator Number One so far and s/he is a language as well as culture mediator. A. Pym says that “the adoption of translation or adaptation strategies is usually beneficial when the communication act is of reduced dimensions or relatively short term” [26, p. 1–3].

Our paper is not focused on translation in language learning within the framework of various methodologies. But it presents the findings of

the use of a Sight Translation Algorithm in training graduates (future interpreters) of Applied Linguistics, Cross-Cultural Communication and Translation/Interpretation. The fact is that Sight translation as a constituent of interpreter/translator education is cursory dwelt upon in the introduction into the subject but rarely practiced in the class. Indubitably, there has been a dearth of studies on sight translation strategies as essential parts of an interpreter's professional competence [25]. Translation used to be a significant part of ELT for a long time, see the benefits of creative translation for the EFL learners [21, p. 12; 13, p. 73–75] till the advent of total dominance of communicative methodologies, translation was quickly refuted to the past, along with other ‘traditional’ tools such as dictation, reading aloud and drills. R.D. González, who does not agree with the thesis that translation is the best method of teaching EFL, says: “The ‘read and translate’ directive to teach translation is probably as obsolete and unproductive as the Grammar-Translation Method is to teach a foreign language” [14, p. 3]. A. Duff adds that teachers and students now use translation to learn, rather than learning translation [10].

Translation is still integrated into the language learning practice along with generally used learning activities, such as speaking, reading, listening, and writing. J. Eadie admits that “in recent times EFL teachers have slowly been reviving the use of translation to present vocabulary and concept checks and whole text translation at advanced levels” [11, p. 2]. There is an opinion that any speaker of English of L2 can manage translation as well, i.e. it implies that no training is needed to become a translator.

On the contrary, P. Newmark considers translation to be “the super ordinate term for converting the meaning of any utterance of any source language to the target language” [23, p. 32]. And D. Crystal refers translatology to a branch of applied linguistics, the study of translation, subsuming both interpretation of oral discourse and translation (in a narrow sense) of written discourse. And transferring an oral message from the SL to the TL at the moment of utterance is known either as simultaneous interpretation or as simultaneous translation. The oral transference or rendition of a written message from one language to another is sight translation [8; see also: 22, p. 234, 479]. F. Pochhacker underlines the double nature of ST which is represented by a written text (see: written translation), while the TT is an oral text (see: oral interpretation). Further on the author specifies that ST may be used in various settings [25, p. 20]. The interpreter may sight-translate while listening to the speaker’s live speech. Accordingly, it is a special mode of simultaneous interpreting which is termed “simultaneous interpreting with text” [25, p. 19]. It is the most commonly used form in various professional environments – either courtrooms, in cases such as the reading of a witness’s statement either a court ruling, or hospital expecting the exact details of the patient’s treatment or diagnosis, or translating the draft copy of the communiqué, etc.

Indubitably, translation is a complex mental: the input is usually visual (written word), occasionally it is oral (spoken word) with the written text support and the interpreter has to process a thought in the source language and generate the target language version of that thought while simultaneously s/he is processing the next art of the source language thought and so on. Here we can point out an interpreter’s possible difficulty is the focusing on meaning rather than forms.

A corollary of the given is that, in order to complete the task, learners need to focus primarily on meaning rather than on form. Thus, reading comprehension is the initial stage of ST which needs the translator’s maintaining reading proficiency [3, p. 27–28].

The objective of our research is twofold: to outline intensive or fast-reading strategy as pre-sight translation and training the very sight translation of a variety of professional discourse (economy, politics, governance, agriculture, transport, medicine, geography, etc.). According to W. Lorsch, translation strategy is “a potentially conscious procedure for the solution of a problem which an individ-

ual is faced with when translating a text segment from one language to another” [18, p. 76].

The findings of the Sight Translation Teaching Methodology have been empirically verified in the Translation Class for the graduates specializing in Applied Linguistics (Translation included), Uzhgorod National University, Uzhgorod, Ukraine.

State of the art. Most of discussions around translation studies have focused on quality in theoretical terms. Sight translation (henceforth, ST), involves the transposition of a message written in one language into a message delivered orally in another language. Since both oral and visual forms of information processing are involved, sight translation can be defined as a specific type of written translation as well as a variant of oral interpretation [16, p. 298; 14, p. 893]. Let’s compare the following definition: sight translation means the oral translation of a written document, a hybrid of translation and interpretation, often known as “sight interpretation” [15, p. 148]. We can point out the lack of agreement on what to call this form of translation and how it should be defined. Sight interpretation is also known as ‘simultaneous interpretation with text’ as one facet of simultaneous interpretation and now it is a part of the interpreter-training programme, for instance, at the University of Ottawa [see: 16]. The interpreter may sight-translate while listening to the speaker’s live speech perusing ahead the typed text. Evidentially, it is a special mode of simultaneous interpreting (henceforth, SI), which is termed “simultaneous interpreting with text” [25, p. 19]. The use of sight interpretation as a selection device for admission into the interpretation program is somewhat controversial though it is a must of the graduation examination. It is important to define what type of sight translation is involved and distinguish sight translation from sight interpretation. To mark a clear distinction from the two other ‘visual’ conditions, simultaneous or conference interpretation is a straightforward interpretation, presented only through headphones, with no visual input of any kind (i.e., no written speech and no videotape). Sight translation, for instance, can be rendered more or less challenging: (1) in an unstressful form of sight translation when the candidate is allowed approximately ten minutes to read a 300-word passage and prepare the vocabulary; and (2) in a more stressful variation of sight translation when the trainee is asked to begin translating immediately.

Some academics feel that sight interpretation, as opposed to sight translation, requires months

to master properly. Others think that if (1) the subject matter is not overly difficult, (2) the pace of speech presented aurally is slow, then they may have the chance to read the text, then they still have the option either to read from the written text when interpreting (especially, undergraduates), or to simply ignore the written material altogether (especially, graduates) [see also: 28, p. 54–60].

ST has a number of different applications outside the judicial sphere – as a strategy for problem-solving, dictating drafts, assisting clients in determining whether a text is to be translated partially or in its entirety, and even for providing an audio version of a text to a client [14, p. 893; see also: 15]. Conference interpreters sight translate documents as they are preparing for assignments in order to assimilate technical terms and rehearse phrases that are difficult to pronounce [29]. During conferences, they provide sight translations of reports, slides, and other visual aids presented to the audience, proposals or draft texts that are being negotiated, as well as agreements and press releases issued at the conclusion of meetings or summits. The technique is also employed by interpreters who are given the text of a speech shortly before it is to be delivered, so that they can supplement what they hear in the booth with a written script [12; 29]. As Marjorie Agrifoglio notes, “The two main differences between the input in ST and in interpreting from an oral source are related to the opposition between oral and written language, and between the reading and listening processes” [1, p. 47].

After reviewing a number of definitions proposed by scholars over the years, we can come to the conclusion that Sight translation is a two step process which occurs simultaneously: (1) scanning the Source text to grasp the conceptual system which helps the translator to keep to the specificity of the professional discourse and (2) an oral “reformulation” of the Source text into the Target language. An experienced translator can manage the oral “reformation” keeping an eye on the following paragraph to decode the covert meaning of the words in their context, because the post-editing is impossible. Therefore sight translators work on two channels at once (simultaneously processing the source language while speaking in the target language).

In the next part we shall consider some algorithms of teaching sight translation to the grads elaborated by different academics and schools to propose one of our own which has been verified and proved to be efficient. Here we must remind

that the smooth flow of translation is possible when the cross-cultural features are specified before the translation, for example, common and differentiating points in judicial systems, economic systems, new technologies, etc.

Experimental strategies. First, we shall start with the Pre-Sight Translation [17, p. 694–695; 14, p. 895] to develop trainees’ Reading Comprehension. In order to perform the task of ST proficiently, interpreters must be adept at grasping the meaning of written texts, even those that are drafted in turgid, formal, poetical or sophisticated styles. Jimenez Ivars [15] emphasizes the differences between comprehension of oral language and that of written language in her study of the unique features of ST. To develop the ability of understanding written texts quickly and effectively, interpreters must read widely and voraciously. At first, trainees tend correlate the word or phrase with their dictionary entries and may fail to understand the meaning when reading the text in the linear mode from left to right, but employing a non-linear mode would help them to comprehend the vertical semantic relationship of words [see: 20].

The adult’s average reading speed in the US is 200–300 wpm (word per minute) (1/2 to 1 page per minute), with the top 1% of the population reading over 400 wpm. The latest technology “Spritz”, according to a start-up from Boston, US, guarantees 600 wpm and more when reading from mobile screens one can retain the content of the text. By comparison, the adult’s average reading speed in Russian is 120–180 wpm; and the adult’s fast-reading rate in Ukraine is 150–200 wpm. These figures are due to the custom of silent reading. Fast-reading technique can help students avoid pronouncing words under breath and raising the volume of the text under interpreting. We must admit that the average fast-speed reading is the starting point for our Pre-Sight Translation or Pre-Sight Interpretation with a text [see also: 3, p. 27–28]. The results indicate that, primarily, trainees need to develop their extensive and intensive fast-reading skills in the Source Text and the Target Text to accurately understand the Source Text and distinguish key ideas from ancillary ideas.

We piloted the following technology:

(1) Reading-Aloud – (a) use a pencil as a guide; (b) run the pencil along a page of the text underneath the words, first, from left to right; (c) follow the word combinations above the pencil point with your eyes; (d) run the pencil in the midline from

top to bottom and follow the pencil point (e) catch the both parts of the line;

(2) Silent reading – (f) catch the both parts of the paragraph; (g) follow the pencil point from top to bottom to comprehend the meaning of key words and their semantic relationships on a page; (h) follow the cursor from top to bottom of the text on the mobile screen comprehending semantic relationships of key words.

A corollary of the above is that, in order to complete the task, learners need to focus primarily on meaning rather than on form. It was tested with graduates speaking Ukrainian as a native language and English as a foreign language who are asked to read English and Ukrainian professional text (non-fiction, i.e. political, agricultural, economic, IT, transport, medicine, and governance) in turn following the referred algorithm. No doubt the main difficulties of reading a professional English text are (1) the difference of students' reading pace in Ukrainian and English and terminology and idiomacity. Roseann D. Gonzales admits that court interpreters, for instance, encounter a wide range of subject matters and registers in the documents they are called upon to sight translate. They must therefore have a full command of both the SL and TL at all levels of usage and cultural spheres so they are able to render every aspect of meaning accurately [7, p. 47; 14; 19, p. 393].

The technology suggested gives trainees an opportunity to stop reading every word and start scanning across pages [cf.: 5, p. 189–190]. The theory goes that the eye reacts more quickly to motion and trainees must translate that reaction time to the act of reading, and they will find that their brain can also cope with reading a lot faster than they always do.

As our teaching experience proves the basis of speed-reading is eliminating old reading habits, and learning to read anew. During the ST procedure the trainees' mind has to work on "two channels" at once, while they are uttering the TL version of one segment of the SL document, they are also reading ahead in the document, analyzing the contents and preparing what they will say next [15; see also: 29].

For self-training or working with a partner we can propose another strategy: using sport terminology we can say "On MARK": (1) get ready for public speaking and stand in front of a mirror; (2) Videotape your activities "READY": (3) read aloud passages from various registers of the professional discourse; (4) read a text aloud at different speed (5) while reading aloud alter the register; (6) chunk a text

into the units of meaning in it; (7) while reading specify the concepts represented in the text fragments (8) rephrase the text as far as the meaning is retained; "GO": (9) sight-translate the document into the TL; (10) maintain the speed of delivery from 60 to 110 wpm minute; "AFTER FINISH" (11) videotape yourself and analyze the outcome critically [cf.: 20, p. 159–160; 4, p. 141–143].

Translator's competence, says Fabio Alves, is "a particular cognitive configuration that allows translators to establish a balance between the periphery and the central layers of cognitive systems and, from a situated perspective, enables them to attain an inferentially driven interpretive resemblance between source and target texts" [2, p. 41–45; see also: 24, p. 44].

The data analysis also reveals that student interpreters/translators need to make conscious efforts to distance themselves from the Source Language form and develop translation skills to avoid literal translations and then deliver the Source Text content into the Target Text following the verbal and non-verbal standards of the Target Discourse. These findings have significant pedagogical implications for Sight Translation training.

Conclusion and perspectives. Translation activities comprising innovative techniques such as brainstorming, problem solving, group discussion, think-aloud protocol, and group assignments help trainees move from lower order thinking to higher order thinking. Contrary to simultaneous interpretation, sight translation operates on distinct (input) and oral (output) channels and that the two are separate enough to prevent interference and post-editing is hardly possible.

Sight interpretation could be effectively used as an intermediate step, as if it involved 'training wheels' [9, p. 616–621], before weaning students off the visual support and letting them try simultaneous interpretation without text. It must be concluded with some observations on making translation tasks successful with an advisable discussion of the teacher's strategy and the trainees' choice of algorithm and its performance. These steps may finalize an effective method of enhancing delivery and target language qualities. According Ian Tudor, little has been done in this field, however, nevertheless we have attempted to assess the possible contribution of translation into English and Ukrainian languages for Specific Purposes or Professional Discourse translation [27, p. 268]. Finally, this paper calls for a further study of this under-researched component in the interpreting curriculum.

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Михайленко В. В. Переклад з листа в міжкультурній комунікації

У роботі подано результати критичного аналізу статусу перекладу з листа в Міжкультурній комунікації в межах Навчальної програми «Переклад» для підготовки випускників (перекладачів) кафедр прикладної лінгвістики, міжкультурної комунікації та перекладу. Щоб зробити викладання більш успішним, запропоновано ефективну стратегію «Пред-Переклад з листа».

Ключові слова: переклад (письмовий, усний), переклад з листа, стратегія, швидкісне читання, міжкультурна комунікація.

Михайленко В. В. Перевод с листа в межкультурной коммуникации

В работе представлены результаты критического анализа статуса перевода с листа в межкультурной коммуникации в рамках учебной программы «Перевод» для подготовки выпускников (переводчиков) кафедр прикладной лингвистики, межкультурной коммуникации и перевода. Чтобы сделать преподавание более успешным, предложено эффективную стратегию «Пред-Перевод с листа».

Ключевые слова: перевод (письменный, устный), перевод с листа, стратегия, скоростное чтение, межкультурная коммуникация.