"Teaching Translation Theory outside Europe: Historical Specificity Versus Universal Applicability"

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Abstract

While teaching first in Singapore and now in Manchester, it has come to my attention that there are certain difficulties in teaching translation theory either outside of Europe or, in Europe, to students from outside of Europe who come here to study. This paper concentrates on the role of examples in theoretical works, the problems they pose in teaching theory and the implications for universalism in translation studies. I draw on Edward Said's discussion of travelling theory, post-colonial critiques of the hegemonic role of English, and skopos theory to propose two courses of action to help overcome the problem: first, the incorporation of the translation of theoretical material both from and into European languages as part of practical postgraduate training; and second, the use of a radical substitution policy for examples, with new examples centred around the target language, rather than preservation of the original examples, which are centred around the source-language. Using the example of China, I will demonstrate how these two strategies push us to reconsider how we approach teaching theory. Firstly, the translation of Chinese theoretical texts into English will allow for a deeper appreciation of writings in Chinese and their wider dissemination. Secondly, the search for examples which involve the target language should lead to an engagement between the target culture and the theory. Translating Vinay and Darbelnet's path breaking essay on translation processes, for example, immediately raises the question of what exactly is meant by 'borrowing' in the Chinese context, and for the need to distinguish between retaining the use of the roman alphabet and transliteration using Chinese characters, a distinction that would never arise between French, English and German.

Keywords: translation theory, examples, Chinese

Introduction

Although not a specialist in foreign language acquisition or in teaching English as a foreign language, I have long been concerned with the teaching of theoretical texts in

translation studies to non-native speakers of English. These theoretical texts include translations from other languages (mainly German and French) into English, as well as translations from English into Chinese (which is my main foreign language, and the one most commonly shared by my students).

Teaching such theoretical texts raises a variety of issues, in particular the question of examples and the problem of historical specificity versus universal applicability. For over a century, we have seen the imposition of Western European theoretical 'universals' on the 'East', the 'South' or 'the Rest' (depending on which term you prefer). Tackling the challenge of development of universals today involves making models that come out of a wider range of experience across the humanities and social sciences. In translation studies in particular, there is a need to go beyond the triumvirate of English, French and German studies, and to go beyond East and West.

In a postmodern vein, I begin this paper with a story of a young American who went to Asia to teach translation and how that experience changed his perception of his chosen field of study. You should detect in this preamble a very heavy whiff of postcolonialism.

After that preamble, I discuss briefly some of the arguments for and against universalism in the humanities and social sciences in general. Then I lay out some of the more recent arguments in favour of universalism, especially in computational linguistics and their application to translation studies. The final section of the paper will be a discussion of how and why we might or might not want to continue looking for universals in translation studies, and how historical specificity might engage with it, taking into account various factors, including: the (non) translation of translation theory East-West; the importance of examples and case studies in translation theory; the importance of religion as a grounding for Universalism; and a modified view of what 'universal' means in the field today.

Anecdote

In 1999 I was hired by the department of Chinese Studies at the National University of Singapore to teach all levels of translation. Since primary and secondary education in Singapore is now in English, with ethnic Chinese students taking Mandarin Chinese as their required 'Mother Tongue' subject, there is a large bilingual English-Chinese population there. Students in the Chinese department thus generally having fairly good skills in both languages, and Singaporean undergraduates are eminently suited for a translation programme.

For the advanced module, I assigned three essays from Venuti's *Translation Studies Reader* (2000) that I considered to be, if not easy, at least clearly written and engaged

with specific strategies of translation: Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet, "A Methodology for Translation" (1958/2000), Katharina Reiss "Type, Kind and Individuality of Text: Decision making in translation" (1971/2000) and Hans Vermeer "Skopos and Commission in Translational Action" (1989/2000).

To my surprise, the students claimed that the essays were extremely difficult, if not incomprehensible, and my plans for in-class discussion went nowhere. When I pressed them as to what exactly they had trouble following, it turned out that the main problem was the examples that the authors used to illustrate their points.

All three essays had been translated: Vinay and Darbelnet from French, the articles by Reiss and by Vermeer from German. More importantly, all three essays contained concrete examples, which I had thought would make the theoretical model easier to understand. However, the translators of all three articles had left these examples in their original form, ie, a combination of French, German, Spanish, and English. Reiss's article was possibly the most difficult, because most of her examples were of translation between French and German, or German by itself, with no translation into English. Perhaps because I have a reading knowledge of these languages, I had not noticed the oddity of presenting an essay in English where the examples, which were supposed to illustrate the theoretical premises, were all between two foreign languages. The article by Vinay and Darbelnet was slightly better, because all the examples were English-French, so the students could at least understand one half of each example, and the article by Vermeer did not contain as many examples.
Subsequently, we worked through each section of the essays, coming up with English-Chinese examples to supplement the texts, which then resulted in the students understanding them much better, but also led to the result (surprising to me at the time) that not all of the points that the theorists had to make were relevant to Chinese-English translation. Yet all of these models were couched in the language of universal applicability.

Vinet and Darbelnet are typical in this respect, beginning their article by stating: "At first the different methods or procedures seem to be countless, but they can be condensed to just seven, each one corresponding to a higher degree of complexity." (1958/2000: 84) The remainder of the article consists of discussing each of the seven types, with examples of how these seven techniques can solve (presumably) any and all difficulties a translator might encounter. There is no indication that there might be exceptions, either in the sense of a text posing a problem that one or more of these seven techniques cannot solve, or in the sense of there being alternative techniques which might produce different but equally valid translations. They end their paper with a table that sets out the seven techniques by 'level of difficulty", but which also enumerates how on "the three planes of expression" (ie lexis, structures, and message) these techniques are valid (1958/2000: 92). Here again the use of the

definite article 'the" suggests that there are only these three planes, thereby strengthening the universalist claims of their seven techniques to solve all possible problems.

Reiss, in turn, says that text-type is a phenomenon going beyond a single linguistic or cultural context, because the following essentially different forms of written communication may be regarded as being present in *every* speech community with a culture based on the written word and also because *every* author of a text ought to decide in principle on one of the three forms before beginning to formulate his text. (1971/2000: 163, my italics)

Clearly the repetition of 'every' suggests that Reiss believes she is describing a universal phenomenon, and she goes on to list exactly three of them. Vermeer, similarly, opens his article with sentences that contain phrases such as "*any* form of translational action", "*[a]ny* action has an aim", and "[t]he aim of *any* translational action". (1989/2000: 221, my italics), all of which demonstrate his belief that skopos theory is valid for all translational activity. Furthermore, the article contains an explicit defense of its universal applicability. Having been criticized (Vermeer does not specify who the critics were), he mounts a two-pronged defense, insisting both that all actions have an aim (1989/2000: 224-5) and that all translations, even of literature, have an intention (1989/2000: 226-7). All three articles make these strong universal claims with the help of examples from just four modern European languages.
It was the difficulty I experienced teaching this material in Singapore that first aroused my interest in the relation between the particular and the universal in translation theory. Currently in Manchester, I have noticed again that the non-native speakers of English from non Western-European countries often have similar problems in a module I teach, Translation and Interpreting Studies II. As a result, I now teach a module entitled "Practicum: Translating Theory" in which we address this specific problem.

I will return to look at some passages from these texts in more detail later in this paper; in particular, I have a few suggestions as to what might be done about those translations. First, however, I need to make a detour to discuss universalism as a general phenomenon in the human sciences.

The urge to universalism

Almost all theoretical models aspire to universalism, because all theoretical models are an attempt to generalize from the specific. The more widely applicable a theory is, the more powerful it is. There are many possible examples, but to choose just one,

we might examine post-colonial theory. Post-colonialism began as a movement among intellectuals living in, originally from, or studying the history of the Indian Subcontinent; an earlier term used to describe it was subaltern studies. That name derives from their attempt to theorize the development of Indian history under colonial rule, when the Indians were subalterns to the British, using Gramsci's theoretical framework as a basis of their critique (see Guha 1982a, 1982b, and Guha 1983). The term 'subaltern studies', which was fairly specific to that historical time and place, was gradually replaced by the more general term post-colonial studies. At the same time, the scope of 'post' in post-colonial was expanded (or generalized) in three ways. First, from what was originally conceived rather narrowly as countries which *had been* colonized by European powers but were now independent, the term came to refer to the entire history of colonial and post-colonial rule in such countries; in this sense 'post' meant 'after the beginning of colonialism' not 'after the end of colonialism'. (Robinson 1997: 13) Second, from the originally specific European colonialism, post-colonialism was also used to refer to, and theorize about, the colonial relation in any time period and by any country, not just European. (ibid: 13-14) Third, the term was metaphorized so that it could refer to situations where, although there was not strictly speaking a colonial situation (one country controlling another, including sending significant numbers of people to live for a period of time, if not permanently) to many types of unequal power relations (ibid: 14). So for example we can now talk about one culture having a post-colonial relation with another; we can also use the term post-colonial to refer to situations such as Russia's relation to the Eastern Block during the Cold War. Paulina Gasior's paper at a recent conference in Prague (2009), which proposes that the relationship between Eastern and Western Europe today can be characterized as post-colonial, and that therefore a post-colonial framework can be used to examine translations between Polish and English or French, illustrates how post-colonialism can be used in such a metaphorical sense. At present, then, post-colonial has developed from what was originally a very narrow historical and temporal period (trying to understand modern India in terms of the after-effects of British colonial rule) to a set of theoretical assumptions and methodological tools that aspires to be universally applicable to an extremely wide array of historical phenomena.

In effect, everyone theorist dreams of coming up with something like Newton's laws of gravity, which are seen as being universally applicable to all physical objects in the universe. Certainly we can say that, in its weaker form (ie, generalization) universalism is a necessary tendency in human thought. It is unimaginable that we could make sense of the world if we could not group things together and say that, for all intents and purposes, these things are identical in respect to certain properties, and therefore can be treated as identical. The problem occurs when that urge to universalize erases important differences, or when a theoretical model can not in fact adequately describe dissimilar phenomena as similar.

The attack on universalism

As my reference to Newton indicates, the 'gold standard' for universalism has been the sciences since at least the nineteenth century, if not earlier. The apogee of this valuation of science as providing universal knowledge came perhaps in the first half of the twentieth century with the emergence of logical positivism, or logical empiricism, which tried to exclude all non-scientific knowledge from having any truth value (Uebel 2008). This did not, however, prevent theorists in the humanities from pursuing universal theories; rather, the link between science and truth in logical positivism inspired a decidedly scientific turn in certain fields of the humanities, including linguistics and therefore the emergent field of translation studies, and perhaps an even more ambitious desire to map out universals in those fields. Quine's work on the philosophy of language, and its influence in translation studies, is but one example.[1]
However, even as universalism in both the sciences and the humanities tried to make ever more ambitious claims, it came under attack in the twentieth century from a variety of angles.

In the sciences, twentieth-century advances in both physics and mathematics were interpreted, paradoxically, as undermining truth claims. In physics, Einstein's theory of relativity proved that Copernicus's laws of motion were only special cases under 'ordinary' conditions, and that in other situations they did not necessarily hold. The theory of relativity itself claims to be universally valid; however, it was and continues to be interpreted popularly as proving that everything is relative and that therefore there is no absolute truth. In addition, Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, which states that it is impossible to know both the position and the momentum of a particle (Hilgevoord 2008), was similarly interpreted as meaning that scientific knowledge could not be absolute and therefore could not make universal claims. Yet Hilgevoord states at the beginning of his article on the uncertainty principle that "Quantum mechanics is generally regarded as the physical theory that is our best candidate for a fundamental and universal description of the physical world." (2008) Thus quantum mechanics itself (for which Heisenberg's uncertainty principle is one of the foundational elements) makes strong claims to universal truth.

Turning to mathematics, it was mainly the work of Gödel and Tarski in the 1920s and 1930s that raised problems. Gödel's two incompleteness theorems and Tarski's theorem of the indefinability of truth (which builds partly on Gödel's work; see Gómez-Torrente 2008) led to a radical, if limited, undermining of the definability of

[1] Quine 1960; see Uebel 2008 for the way in which Quine was influenced by, but critical of, the Vienna Circle and some of their tenets of logical positivism.

truth in arithmetic (Kennedy 2008). The ways in which Gödel and Tarski's work limits truth functions and universal claims in mathematics is limited to axiomatic systems (Shalizi 2009). However, as Shalizi also points out, it has been used fallaciously to argue that there is "some profound limitation on knowledge, science, mathematics" imposed by the theorems (Shalizi 2009). Sokal and Bricmont (1999: 176-81) provide an example of such a use of Gödel's theorems in the social sciences.

Although scholars in the humanities may or may not understand quantum physics and theoretical mathematics, these theories, and the layman's interpretation of them, have been used to caution against scientific 'truth' as absolute or universal. This view of scientific truth as 'relative' has been reinforced by the work of historians, sociologists and anthropologists of science.

In the history of science, Philip Kuhn, in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), proposed the notion of paradigm shift. According to Kuhn, scientists shift from one paradigm to another, with different paradigms capable of explaining phenomena in different ways in varying degrees of usefulness.[2] There is thus a strong suggestion that all paradigms are approximations of reality as we observe it, not Truth with a capital 'T'. More recently, the work of Helen Longino (1990), Bruno Latour and Steven Woolgar (1986), and others have insisted upon the inescapable social element to scientific knowledge, challenging its claims to absolute, universal truth (for an overview see Longino 2008).

These developments in history and sociology of science were linked to a more general post-structural trend in the social sciences. In particular, a distrust of 'master narratives' emerged. In history, for example, Hayden White (1973) attacked the idea that the historian was an objective collector of facts that were already out there as a myth. Instead, he saw all history as story-telling, often based on archetypal stories or myths. The subjectivity of the historian thus precluded any hope of reaching a description of what 'really happened', or an objective Truth.

White's work is only one example of the 'post' movement: post-modernism, post-structuralism, post-colonialism, and deconstruction. Key to post-colonialism was the resistance to hegemony and received notions of truth. Post-structuralism sought to challenge the universal theoretical assumptions of structuralism. Post-modernism argued for the disappearance of "Truth" to be replaced by 'truths'; and Derrida and

[2] For example, although scientists may believe that Einstein's model of the universe is more accurate than Copernicus's, the vast majority of people, including physicists, live out their daily lives as if in a Copernican universe; moreover, a modern-day physicist sailing in a boat at night out of sight of land, using stars to navigate, is basing her decisions of how to steer on a Ptolemaic universe, wherein the stars are fixed points in the heavens and can thus be used to guide a traveler. Thanks to Douglas Allchin, personal communication, for this example.

others sought to dismantle the entire Western philosophical tradition, upon which claims for scientific and universal truths had been built. Finally, more recently, the New Historicism and Cultural Materialism have again insisted upon the historical situatedness of knowledge.

The essay by J. Hillis Miller, "Border Crossings, Translating Theory: Ruth" (1996) is a good example of these trends, demonstrating both the power and the problems of post-structuralist arguments, like the worm Ouroboros. Miller argues that all literary theory is grounded in the interpretation of particular texts, and that therefore literary theory is untranslatable. Miller gives the examples of Derrida's notion of dissemination as having been developed as a response to the poetry of Mallarmé, and Paul de Man's "Resistance to Theory" as being rooted in his reading of the word 'fall' in Keats's *The Fall of Hyperion* (1996: 213). For Miller, there is thus always a tension between the universal pretensions of theory and its origins in specific historical and cultural knowledge. This means that, like any linguistic utterance, a theoretical model is always liable to distortion in the process of transmission from one culture to the next; there is not some meta-language of theory, as there is of mathematics. Yet Miller's essay itself could be seen as falling prey to the same problem: he claims universal validity for his thesis that all theoretical models are inseparable from their roots. However, that thesis in turn emerges from the reading of a specific text: the story of Ruth in the Bible.

Miller's argument about the impossibility of translating theory is situated at the beginning of an article on traveling theory. While discussing the impossibility of translating theory, Miller also notes that, of course, theory continues to be translated all the time despite the problematic relation between universal and particular in theoretical discourse. This leads him to a discussion of the dangers of doing so, mainly in terms of cultural contamination or cultural colonialism. However, for Miller, there is another danger: that the theorist will lose control of his theory. I use the pronoun 'he' advisedly, because Miller is obviously talking about himself; he makes specific mention, more than once, of the fact that his own work has been translated into languages he does not read, like Chinese, and that he does not know what has happened to his theory in this process. There is, then, a contested power relation involved between author and translator, with Miller exhibiting a deep unease at the idea that 'his' work is circulating in forms that he cannot control.

All in all, developments in mathematics, physics, history and sociology of science, and the 'post-' movement in the humanities led to universalism taking quite a beating in the second half of the twentieth century.

The emergence of a new universalism

Developing in parallel to some of the events mentioned above, there has been continued interest in universalism, in some cases coming from a new direction: quantitative methods.

The modern science of statistics and probability is a relatively young discipline, gradually evolving from several different areas between the seventeenth and early twentieth centuries. Stigler (1986) charts how at least three different impetuses (a flurry of interest in games of chance; the need to record exact measurements in the sciences, especially astronomy; the demands by emergent nation states to understand and control large populations through the collection and interpretation of census data) led to the development of sophisticated mathematical techniques for dealing with information in this new form.

Statistics depends on the ability to count large numbers of things, breaking down information into simple, discrete categories that can be quantified. A typical example, and one of the earliest broad uses of these methods as applied to human activity, is the census. In a census, people are not treated as individuals having a history; they are treated as a collection of discrete bits of information (sex, race, age, profession, marital status, number of dependents, etc). Breaking someone down into these categories and quantifying them allows for easy manipulation of information and the generation of statistical knowledge (X% of the population is male; P% are under the age of 20; Q% are married; the average number of offspring is W). Such information could be enormously useful for many reasons. In London, the beginnings of the census were the Bills of Mortality, statistics regarding deaths that were collected to predict new outbreaks of the plague. It quickly came to be used in a variety of hard sciences, and was responsible for the emergence of most of the social sciences, which developed various tools, including mean and standard deviation, the rule of least squares, and regression analysis to help evaluate probability and reliability of data, to name but a few of the most common techniques (Stigler 1986).

However, it was expensive and time-consuming to collect and then to process such data. Stigler (1986) mentions two early cases in the nineteenth century which give us an idea of the labour involved: the Incomplete Beta Function of Baye's equation can be extremely difficult to calculate when certain variables are large numbers; he says that

> The first extensive tables of this function were not compiled until this century, when the students in Karl Pearson's laboratory were pressed into reluctant service as 'computers.' A story, possibly apocryphal, still circulates in University College London of a student who resigned in disgust after a week, telling Pearson of his plans for a different career and announcing, 'As far as I am

concerned, the Table of the Incomplete Beta Function may *stay* incomplete.' (Stigler 1986: 130)

The second involves the Ordnance Survey of England for 1858: The 1858 Ordnance Survey of the British Isles required the reduction of an immense mass of data through the use of least squares. The main triangulation was cast as a system of 1554 equations involving 920 unknowns. Even though they broke the system into 21 pieces of no more than 77 unknowns each before attempting a solution, the calculations took two teams of human 'computers,' working independently and in duplicate, two and a half years to complete (Stigler 1986: 158)

Therefore it was not until the advent of computers that such techniques really came into their own, as the labour was prohibitively expensive for most researchers. Computers are ideally suited to do the 'grunt' work of statistical analysis, since of course computers are digital technology and therefore are most easily used to manipulate figures, performing in nanoseconds complex operations on huge amounts of data that might take a human being weeks.

Along with the growing importance of computing to manipulate ever-larger datasets, sophisticated means of sampling to establish representativeness were established.

Since the 1970s in linguistics, corpus studies deal with databases that contain millions of words. These corpora are then manipulated, drawing on the statistical techniques developed in the social sciences and mathematics to draw conclusions about language use. In the mid-1990s, researchers such as Mona Baker, Dorothy Kenny, and Sarah Laviosa began to apply corpus linguistics to translation studies by compiling parallel and comparable corpora. They proposed that lexical simplification, explicitation, and standardization were universals in translation. (Baker 1995; Kenny 2001; Laviosa 1998)

On a more theoretical level in linguistics, the proposal by Noam Chomsky that the ability to use language was hard-wired into our brains, and that therefore there must be a limited set of universal, deep structures that generate all the permutations of known languages, also fueled the search for universals in both linguistics and in translation (Chomsky 1965 and 1981). This can probably most clearly be seen in the continued belief that machine translation was perfectible if linguistic structures could be properly understood and transformed into what was variously called a universal deep structure or an intermediary machine language, to and from which all human languages could be translated.[3]

[3] For representative statements, see Andreev 1967; Zelinsky-Wibbelt 1988; and Hutchins and Somers 1992, especially chapters 5, 6 and 13.

Universalism in Translation Studies today?

I would now like to explore a bit more in detail how universalism and historical particularism intersect, not just in general in the humanities and sciences, but specifically in translation studies.
First, I think one quite interesting phenomenon is the relative dearth of translation of translation theory. Given that translation studies should, of all disciplines, be open to translation, this is a rather paradoxical state of affairs. To take just one example, China, very little theoretical material is being translated either to or from Chinese and French, English, or German. From English into Chinese, two alternative strategies are employed: summaries and descriptions written by Chinese scholars, or the republication of theoretical texts in China in English. In the other direction, very little has been done on any level, the exceptions being the historical presentation of debates regarding translation in Cheung (2006) and Chan (2004). A similar situation holds for Russian; Russia had and has a large field of translation studies, but almost none of it is being made available in Western European languages.[4] I am sure that this is true of other languages; to this day, Jiří Levý's work is known in Western Europe basically from one paper only (Levý 2000).[5] This means that theoretical models in the field of translation studies are being developed with very little input from one of the world's major languages and cultures outside of Europe and North America.

This in turn poses a danger in translation studies. We risk our theoretical models not being well understood, or rigorously tested against, the local situation in different parts of the globe and with different linguistic structures. How, then, can we be confident about the universal applicability of those theories?

The role of examples and case studies in translation theory

This last point brings me back to the role of examples and case studies in translation theory. I want to return now to the English translation of Katharina Reiss's article, which I mentioned was the impetus for me to start thinking about these matters. Below are two excerpts from her work:

Unintentional changes may arise from the different language structures as well as from differences in translating competence

[4] Private communication, Sergey Tyulenev.
[5] I would like to thank Zuzana Jettmarová (2009) for drawing my attention to some of Levý's other work. See Gile (2009) on this issue in relation to Japanese.

> Ex. 1: Je suis allée à la gare (French: information about a female person; no information about the means of travel)
> Ich bin zum Bahnhof gegangen (German: no information about the person; information about the means of travel)
> = Linguistically conditioned communicative difference.
> Ex. 2: La France est veuve. (Pompidou at the death of de Gaulle)
> Frankreich ist Witwe — Frankreich is Witwe geworden — Frankreich is verwitwet — Frankreich is verwaist [orphaned]
> Linguistically conditioned: La France — Witwe [Widow]
> "Frankreich" is neuter in German. The image of "widow" is odd to a person ignorant of French. "Waise" [orphan] is also neuter; the image of an emotional attachment programmed differently.
> (pp. 160-61)

and further down:

> Written texts may have single or plural intentions. Plural intentions may be of the same rank and order. Mostly, however, one intention (and, with it, the text function) is dominant:
>
> Ex. 3: C vor o und u und a spricht man immer wie ein k; soll es wie ein c erklingen, lässt man die Cedille springen.
> (mnemo-technical rhyme:
> Intention 1 — to convey a rule
> Intention 2 — to facilitate remembering by giving the text an artistic form
> Intention 3 — to "sweeten" the learning process by giving the text a pleasing form)
> (p. 161-62)

Here in the first example the source language is French and the target language is German, while in the second example, the example is only in German. In neither case did the translator provide an English translation.

The vast majority of students in East Asia know neither of these languages (although a small minority will have learned some of one or the other). Moreover, the point on which the first example turns, the problem of mismatched gender of nouns in the two languages, is completely foreign to such students, who may know three or four languages, none of which feature gendered nouns, and will therefore be completely at sea. Such students, if they know English, might know mnemo-technical rhymes, such as "i before e except after c", but of course cannot make any sense of the German. Instead of helping the students to understand the points Reiss is trying to make, the

examples thus serve only to frustrate the student, making the theory seem alien, incomprehensible and irrelevant because the example is opaque to her or him.

Another, perhaps more ironic example, is the article by Vermeer concerning skopos theory. Skopos theory argues that the skopos, or purpose, of the translation is vital in determining the form that the finished translation should take. The skopos may derive from a variety of factors, including the commissioner, the translator, and the audience. Depending upon the skopos, different translations of even the same text into the same language by the same translator might look radically different from each other, and possibly also depart sharply from the source text. Yet the translation into English of Vermeer's explanation of this theoretical approach to translation is itself full of examples between German, French, and Spanish, with seemingly no thought given to how the skopos of translating an article about skopos in translation might affect the examples used. In other words, if the skopos of the translation is to make Vermeer's theoretical model understood by an English reader, how does leaving the examples in the original languages with no explanation help to fulfill the skopos of the translation?

What exactly are examples used for anyway in these articles? Reiss, Vermeer, and other theorists use concrete examples for at least three different purposes. First, to demonstrate how their theoretical models function in relation to translation of actual texts. Second, to make the theory more accessible to the readers. Finally, to prove that the theoretical model is in fact valid by demonstrating that it can be applied to a real translation. However, when a student either does not know the source or the target language, then these goals are not being met.

When teaching Reiss's article in Singapore, I eventually came up with my own examples for the first example above that made sense to an audience bilingual in Chinese and English:

She went to buy eggs with her brother.

她跟她的弟弟一起去买鸡蛋。

additional information concerning respective age of siblings
less information about time and number.

请您把书放在桌子。

Please put the books on the desk.

Additional information about number (plural) and object (desk is more specific than the Chinese term, which could also refer to a table)

Less information about formality of the situation (The Chinese pronoun is the polite form, similar to the way in which French has *vous* and *tu*)

For the second example, I substituted the English mnemo-technical rhyme "i before e except after c".[6]

When explaining this article to students in class and using these as additional examples, no one had a problem with it. However, when I later suggested to students that it would make more sense to *substitute* these examples for the original ones if the article were to be translated into Chinese, I encountered strong resistance. To the students, such substitution was a betrayal of the original.

Taking examples outside of Europe

Vinay and Darbelnet list seven techniques which translators can adopt, ranging from word-for-word translation to very extreme forms of adaptation. These seven techniques are illustrated with examples of translation between English and French for obvious reasons: Vinay and Darbelnet are Canadian, and these are the two official languages of that country. These techniques, which are developed in relation to two specific languages with a long history of interaction, are presented as *the* seven techniques of translation. In other words, they are presented as a complete and universal toolkit for any translator, working with any combination of languages.

However, of the seven techniques they list, at least one is not directly applicable to Chinese. Procedure one, "direct borrowing", is presented as being a 'direct' manner of using a word from French in English, as the historic theatre (from *théâtre*) or more recent borrowings such as *déjà vu*. This technique, however, actually does not make much sense in the case of English-Chinese translation because they use different writing systems. Instead, we need to distinguish between at least two different techniques.

The first technique is **Borrowing** while retaining the use of roman alphabet, which results in a string of roman letters in the middle of a sentence otherwise composed of Chinese characters: 我不要买Persil, 我要买的是Daz [I don't want to buy Persil, I want to buy Daz.] Although this technique was seldom used before the twentieth century, since at least the Republican Revolution of 1911 there have been periods when it has been widely practiced, especially by certain authors of the May Fourth

[6] Reiss's second example is the *kind* of rule (phonetic) she would like to see for her own work - in other words, a rule that is simple, hierarchic, and logical.

Movement in the 1920s and 1930s, and writers such as Yu Dafu (Levan 2007). The technique continues to be widely used, especially among bilingual speakers, although it is not in fact simply "direct borrowing", but rather the creative re-use of English or other European languages in Chinese. Consider, for example the sentence "你 un-不understand?" [do you or do you not understand?] Here a native speaker of Chinese has used a typical Chinese grammatical pattern of using the first part of a multisyllabic verb, followed by a marker of negation, and then full verb, to ask a question. In the process, however, the English word is used in a fashion that would be incomprehensible to an English speaker.

Transliteration, on the other hand, which Vinay and Darbelnet do not mention, is the more commonly employed method of 'borrowing' a foreign loan word in Chinese, and involves finding roughly one Chinese character per syllable for a foreign word. Since the characters are chosen for their sound instead of their meaning, this results in a string of nonsense words, a bit like the famous transliteration of Mother Goose Rhymes into French by Luis d'Antin van Rooten as *Mots d'Heures: Gousses, Rames* (1980). When transliterating foreign words into Chinese, there are certain considerations to be kept in mind, especially regarding the appropriateness of the characters, either in isolation or in combination. For example, certain characters are avoided; you would not normally use the character "死" [*si*, to die], although one notable exception was an early transliteration of AIDS was "爱死病" [*ai-si bing*, love-to-death disease]. Also, certain combinations sometimes may result in unfortunate connotations, so that a company may choose a string of syllables that does not actually sound very close to the original term rather than get something such as "口渴口辣" [*kouke koula*, (makes you) thirsty and your mouth burn] for Coca Cola, which is instead rendered as "可口可乐" [*kekou kele*, tasty and pleasing].[7] both of these techniques are also used in various hybrid forms, such as the commonly used T-血. (T-shirt), where the letter "T" is actually used as the first half of the word, with a transliteration of 'shirt' with the Chinese character "血" which is pronounced 'xue'. The example of AIDS given above is similar, with the first two characters, *ai-si*, used for the sound of "AIDS", and the final character, *bing*, which means disease, supplied for its meaning. One of the most famous stories of the May Fourth movement, mentioned above is entitled "阿Q正传" [The Story of Ah Q], where Chinese character Ah (阿) and the Roman letter "Q" were used together in the title and throughout the story to refer to the main character, Ah Q.

There are in fact several other hybrid forms possible involving some of the other techniques Vinay and Darbelnet discuss. Two of the most common are borrowing and coining, and transliteration and coining. Thus once we begin to consider languages other than the ones originally used to develop Vinay and Darbelnet's list,

[7] : For more detailed discussions of transliteration, see Ching 1966 and Li 2007.

it becomes apparent that their list is neither exhaustive nor universal. The fact that English and French use the same writing system disguises a problem which emerges when we consider Chinese, Russian, Greek, or any other language that does not use the Roman alphabet. It is only when we look at how their techniques might be applied in a wide variety of cases that we can test their work's claim to universalism.

Moreover, once we have considered the Chinese case, and seen how transliteration results in words that do not actually sound exactly like the original English, we might wish to return to the examples of French and English, and ponder over why in some cases the accent marks have been preserved (déjà vu) or erased (theatre). If the accent marks are erased, is it really direct borrowing? Or what are we to make of their example of 'direct borrowing' into French of *redingote*, from the English "riding coat", where the spelling has been modified? (1958/2000: 85) Even when the spelling is identical, the pronunciation is often changed; my favourite example is Goethe Street in Chicago, which is pronounced "go-eethy" by locals.

Another possibility Vinay and Darbelnet do not mention is summary. This may perhaps be due to their adopting a fairly restricted definition of translation; however, in the world of professional language manipulation, this technique is widely practiced. Again to give a Chinese example, I mentioned that it is not common for European translation theory to be translated into Chinese; however, it is quite common for such theories to be 'rewritten', either in summary or adapted form, such as Liu Miqing's 当代翻译理论 [Contemporary Translation Theory (1993)].

Eugene Nida, although in many ways a very 'old-fashioned' theoretician, is actually much better regarding examples than many of his contemporaries, or indeed most recent theorists. His short essay "Principles of Translation as Exemplified in Bible Translating" (1959) uses many diverse examples from little-known languages, to make his case for dynamic equivalence. Moreover, since he cannot assume that his readers will be conversant with all the languages he cites, he carefully explains the linguistic context for each. In teaching Nida, I ask students to come up with examples of the types of things he is discussing in relation to their own language combination. This often reveals that they have not understood the reading, because they either cannot come up with an example, or their example is in fact incorrect. After I have given them several examples, the ideas seem to sink in better. So working through examples can be effective way of learning theory.

Conclusion

Although universalism has come under attack from various quarters, we should not lose sight of the fact that, without generalization, we are left with atomistic facts that

do not add up to anything. Newton's law of gravity is still the 'gold standard' against which most theories are measured. The attack by the 'post' movements (postmodernism, postcolonialism, poststructuralism) has been fairly effective in denying hope that we can achieve that sort of certainty in the human sciences. Instead, the emergence of computer-based number crunching has seen the emergence of statistical probability disguised as universalism.

The challenge now is to build inclusive models that take into account the great range and variety of human linguistic expression and translation practice. Indeed, it would seem to be antithetical for a theoretical model based on statistics, which depends upon the concept of representativeness, *not* to be constructed on the basis of as wide a range of sample languages as possible.

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