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Political and Journalistic Translation Courses and the Market Demand in Iran

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
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Abstract

Regarding the fact that translated news accounts for a large part of the news in media including news agencies and newspapers, it seems necessary to investigate the requirements for competent news translators. On the other hand, in order to prepare competent translators qualified for market demands, the needs of the related markets should be considered in translator training syllabus so that there is consistency between demands of the market and courses related to translator training.

The Hypothesis of the present research was: Courses related to translating political and journalistic texts in translator training program at higher education in Iran are not consistent with media market demands.

In order to investigate consistency between courses related to translating political and journalistic texts in the translator training program at higher education in Iran and media market demands, one questionnaire was developed and distributed among news translators and editors in a sample of news agencies and newspapers. Findings of this research suggest that there is no consistency between translator training courses in journalistic and political translation, and some additional items should be added to the respective syllabus.

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Table of Contents

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| CHAPTER ONE | 1 |
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1. Introduction | 2 |
| 1.2. Statement of the Problem | 2 |
| 1.3. Purpose of the Study..... | 3 |
| 1.4. Significance of the Study..... | 4 |
| 1.5. Research Question | 5 |
| 1.6. Hypothesis..... | 5 |
| 1.7. Theoretical Framework..... | 5 |
| 1.8. Definition of Key Terms..... | 6 |
| 1.9. Scope and Limitation of the Study | 8 |
| CHAPTER TWO..... | 9 |
| REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE | 9 |
| 2.1. Journalism and Translation | 10 |
| 2.2. Translation of Political Texts | 15 |
| 2.3. Translator Training | 17 |
| 2.4. B.A. English Translator Training Program in Iran | 44 |
| CHAPTER THREE | 48 |
| METHODOLOGY | 48 |
| 3.1. Type of Research..... | 49 |
| 3.2. Research Design | 49 |
| 3.3. Subjects | 49 |
| 3.4. Instrumentation | 51 |
| 3.5. Data Analysis Procedure | 53 |
| CHAPTER FOUR | 54 |
| RESULTS AND DISCUSSION..... | 54 |
| 4.1. Overview | 55 |
| 4.2. Data Analysis..... | 55 |
| 4.3. Discussion..... | 90 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| .ξ.ξ Analysis of the Hypothesis | 102 |
| CHAPTER FIVE..... | 105 |
| CONCLUSIONS | 105 |
| 5.1. Overview | 106 |
| 5.2. Conclusion | 106 |
| 5.3. Pedagogical Implications..... | 110 |
| 5.4. Suggestions for Further Research | 111 |
| REFERENCES | 113 |
| Appendix | 120 |

List of Tables

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 4.1. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q1: translation focus in the respective institute | 56 |
| Table 4.2. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q2: priority of text types translation | 56 |
| Table 4.3. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q3: Translator training curriculum of university equips students with skills required in recruitment as journalistic translator | 57 |
| Table 4.4. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q4: translator training curriculum should be changed so that skills required by journalistic translation are taught better | 59 |
| Table 4.5. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q5: Experts acting in journalism area should be utilized in order to optimize journalistic text translation course | 59 |
| Table 4.6. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q6: Agreement upon cooperation with university as journalism expert | 60 |
| Table 4.7. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q7: Priorities of English language skills for journalistic texts translator (from Persian to English) | 61 |
| Table 4.8. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q8: Priorities of Persian language skills for journalistic texts translator (from English to Persian) | 62 |
| Table 4.9. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q9: Priorities in focus on Persian language skills in university courses (in translating from English to Persian) | 63 |
| Table 4.10. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q10: Priorities in focus on English language skills in university courses (in translating from Persian to English) | 64 |
| Table 4.11. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q11: Priorities given to suggestions for gaining readiness in order to be recruited by news agencies as translator | 65 |
| Table 4.12. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q13: Necessity of familiarity with PC related skills, especially word typing for translators | 66 |
| Table 4.13. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q14: Necessity of using translation aid software to help translators | 67 |
| Table 4.14. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q15: Priorities of software familiarization for translators | 68 |
| Table 4.15. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q17: Familiarity with the political situation in the world is important in recruitment of translators | 69 |
| Table 4.16. . Frequency and percentage of answers to Q18: Content and structural adjustment is task of editors, not translators | 70 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Table 4.17. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q19: Just using print media as sources of foreign news | 71 |
| Table 4.18. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q20: Using audio-visual media as sources of foreign news | 72 |
| Table 4.19. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q21: Willingness to accept apprentice without pay | 73 |
| Table 4.20. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q22: Lack of sufficient familiarity with Persian language as the main problem of news translators | 74 |
| Table 4.21. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q23: Readiness of translator training major graduates for journalism translation from the outset | 75 |
| Table 4.22. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q24: Translator training graduates as the most frequent applicants of the journalistic text translation | 76 |
| Table 4.23. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q28: Importance of having university degree for translator | 77 |
| Table 4.24. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q29: Importance of having university degree at translation studies for translator | 79 |
| Table 4.25. Frequency and percentage of answers to Q30: University degree of translator | 80 |
| Table 4.26. One Sample Statistics | 103 |
| Table 4.27. One Sample Test | 103 |

List of Figures

| | |
|------------|----|
| Figure 4.1 | 58 |
| Figure 4.2 | 61 |
| Figure 4.3 | 76 |
| Figure 4.4 | 78 |
| Figure 4.5 | 80 |
| Figure 4.6 | 81 |

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Today world is the world of information exchange in a rapid manner. Keeping pace with such rapid world requires being informed of information. In addition, people need to be aware of international news. This is the task of translators to provide the countries with the latest news and information. Therefore, translation industry demands more attention in such environment. Its requirements are not satisfied just by experience; rather transjournalists should be equipped with translating knowledge and science so that they can meet demands of the market. Technical writing, editing, knowledge of information technology, writing summary and text analysis are among skills that now translators are suggested to be equipped with, especially in translating political and journalistic texts. Translator training programs at higher education should be in consistency with media market demands; as a result, such transjournalists would be trained in such a way that can survive in the market successfully.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

There has been an increase in the number of translation works and departments of Translation Studies as well as Translator Training

schools. The reason for this was that today's world is globalizing world which demands translating more and more so that communication was possible. Additionally, people need to be aware of the news around the world. Thus there should be interaction between market and academia. It seems that on the one hand, in Iranian academia translation is mostly trained theoretically; that is translator training courses are mainly theory-oriented. On the other hand, due to speed of information technology the market demands that translators be well equipped with translating competence so that they can meet needs of market practically. So translators-to-be should be qualified in practical translation. It seems necessary to investigate consistency between media market demand and translator training programs at higher education in related courses, thus qualified and professional translators will be trained for the future.

With the establishment of media outlets in the country and due to the fact that translated news includes a major part in media, it is believed that translating political and journalistic texts need a stronger attention.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The aim of this research was to investigate consistency between media market demand and courses related to translating political and

journalistic texts in translator training programs at higher education level in Iran.

By investigation of market demands and comparison of them with educational goals stated in related lesson plans for translator training classes it can be realized that whether there is consistency between what is needed by market and what is trained in reality in universities to translation students.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The researcher believes that findings of this study may have practical implications for designers of syllabuses for translator training course in Iran, since it investigated most important and dominant needs in the target market, newspapers and TV and web-based news agencies stations, in which translation service may appear to be demanding. Hence, designers can restructure the syllabus, if necessary, in such a way that it includes more demanding skills for future journalistic/political texts' translators and accordingly the interaction between market and academia in Translation Studies and Translator Training is expected to be increased. As Robinson (1997) argues in order to have successful translation and interpretation programs it is necessary to incorporate real

world experience into the curricula in the forms such as internships, apprenticeships, and independent projects. When translator training curriculum is relevant to real world, the market, it will be obviously more successful.

1.5. Research Question

Are courses related to translating political and journalistic texts in translator training program at higher education in Iran consistent with media market demands?

1.6. Hypothesis

Courses related to translating political and journalistic texts in translator training program at higher education in Iran are not *consistent with media market demands*.

1.7. Theoretical Framework

As stated by Biel (2010) emphasis in recent literature is mostly on what he calls “professional realism of training” in the field of translator training at university level.

Requirements needed for achieving professional realism of training suggested by Kelly are employed as theoretical framework for this

research. According to Kelly (2005) the professionalization of training is achieved by simulating professional practice for students, which is possible through following activities: linking teaching to professional environments, role-playing (such as client, terminologist, reviser, and translator), practicing technical aspects of the profession, visits to translation agencies and work placements, real-life projects.

1.8. Definition of Key Terms

Political Texts: According to Schäffner (2004:118): “It is generally acknowledged that the mass media play an important role in disseminating politics and in mediating between politicians and the public, also in a critical sense.” Thus, in the present research by political texts it is meant “the topics which quality newspapers discuss in texts on their front pages, in editorials and comments should therefore be good examples of political texts” (Schäffner 2004:118).

Transjournalist: according to Shamsali (2007:13) transjournalism “means those areas of translation which deal with journalism and vice versa. Therefore, the translators who work at media and translate news, editorials etc., are called transjournalists.”

Transediting: this is a term coined by Stetting (as cited in Hautanen, 2006). According to Stetting (as cited in Hautanen, 2006) it involves a combination of translation and editing task, since translation includes some editing when the translator has to consider such problems as whether to change, add or remove information. As he puts it, transediting can be considered as an extreme type of free translation.

News Translator: according to Chen (2011):

News translators may refer either to (1) journalists transediting news texts or to (2) translators who work with journalists and generally have the title of transeditor. The former usually possess relevant journalistic knowledge as well as substantial work experience in the media but do not receive any translation training. They rarely regard themselves as translators, who, in their view, seem to play a more passive and low-ranking role. The latter, on the contrary, are not usually trained journalists but do have a background in translation or other academic disciplines. No doubt they gradually develop effective journalistic skills and a better news sense through the process of being transeditors (p. 120).

1.9. Scope and Limitation of the Study

There were a number of factors which constrained the process of research to a significant extent:

One of the main problems was finding the qualified participants who were willing to devote their time and cooperate. Most of the participants were reluctant to fill the questionnaire or they filled it incompletely. It was mostly due to the fact that workload in such professions is heavy and they didn't have much time to spend on extra works. Time pressure was especially evident in newspapers.

Another problem with this questionnaire-based research was that it was attempted to distribute questionnaires via mail so that a larger number of respondents are achieved. However, a few of the emailed questionnaires were returned and the researcher was forced to visit them in their offices so that they fill the questionnaires.

The other significant problem in this work was lack of similar research works on translator training courses in Iranian universities.

CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF THE RELATED
LITERATURE

2.1. Journalism and Translation

Bani (2006) argues that though nowadays media is becoming a key area of interest due to globalization, press translation has received little attention. Translated news has very large number of readers. Due to the facts that press translation contributes to shaping readers' opinions and influences on the way of their perception of the world around them, she believes that it is necessary to study standard practices and translation strategies characterizing press translation.

She further says translation is used in different parts in press. As she states (*ibid*):

Press translation includes daily, weekly or monthly newspapers and magazines. Newspapers that use translation are also different in their structure. There are newspapers made up of articles both translated and not translated. In these cases the percentage of translations is generally much lower than the number of articles directly written in the target readers' language. Some newspapers consist (almost) exclusively of translations taken from the same source (in Italy this is the case for the translated version of *Le Monde Diplomatique* or *The National Geographic*). One more way is represented by newspapers made up almost exclusively of translations of articles taken from different sources (p. 36).

As Gutiérrez (2006) puts it journalistic translation faces different challenges which are recurring. It involves such challenges as political correctness; deciding on the correct gender-specific pronouns when it is not apparent from names in the original language; transforming short-sentenced, to-the-point grammar constructions into more periphrasical structures, and going from a culture where imprecision is considered elegant to a more fastidious language.

He believes that without translation, language comprises a barrier to international community of debate and opinion. Therefore translation plays a key role in achieving international impact. As he puts, some translators are also journalist, since they are needed to add context to news stories for audiences so that there is balance between what is local and what is global. It is done so as to foreigner readers are able to understand the stories (ibid).

As stated by Schäffner and Bassnett (2010), Bielsa and Bassnett initiated a study on news translation in 2003. They investigated on how translation functions in news transferring across cultures and boundaries. In examining ways of employing translation by news agencies they found that there are no clear parameters for training of translators and evaluating translation competence. They realized there is great ambiguity

regarding translation in the world of news and news reporting. This ambiguity is evident mainly in two respects. Firstly, it can be seen in avoiding the word “translation”. In other words, they believe that journalists/translators refer to themselves just as journalist, and not translator. The second one is lack of translator training for new media.

2.1.1. Characteristics of Journalistic Texts’ Translation

One of the main characteristic of press translation, as stated by Bani (2006) is imperative of quickness. By quickness she means two things:

- I. Speed in translating. Translations must be completed within a short time; as far as dailies are concerned it is usually a matter of a few hours, but deadlines are tight also for weekly and monthly publications.
- II. Speed in translation exploitation. Reading newspapers is, in most cases, a quick and light activity, as opposed to the reading of other genres. (p. 37)

The issue of translation is one which troubles any translator in the real world. This is more prominent in the case of press translation. Since newspaper readers need to read it quickly getting a sense of what is said by article. Thus she contends that the majority of translation strategies applied in journalistic texts’ translation are those bringing the text towards the reader, as it is the very nature of journalistic medium that