

Power relationships between major and minor languages and the translation of LSP texts

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1. Major and Minor Languages

‘Major’: ‘language of unlimited diffusion’ (‘LUD’),
‘Minor’: ‘language of limited diffusion’ (‘LLD’)
(Radó 1987 in Song 1991: 63).

The difference of diffusion lies in their unequal political, economic and cultural status (Cronin 2003: 145/146).

Since this situation is never stable, but rather dynamic, the position of a major and minor language can change with time.

1. Major and Minor Languages

- *target-language intensive* translation flow:
1(+) major language(s): many minor languages),
- *source-language intensive* translation flow:
many minor languages: 1(+) major language(s)
(Cronin 2003: 145/6).

2. English as LSP and its impact on other languages

- *homogeny position* of English (Pennycook 2003: 7):

linguistic imperialism prevails if we look at English as the means to the 'homogenisation of world culture' and to 'an understanding of globalization as an economic, social, cultural and political process'.

2. English as LSP and its impact on other languages

- *heterogeny position* of English (Pennycook 2003: 8):

world Englishes, with the ‘implications of pluricentricity, the new and emerging norms of performance, and the bilingual’s creativity as a manifestation of the contextual and formal hybridity of Englishes’ (Kachru 1997: 66).
- *neutrality of English* interests most people involved in LSP.

Examples: English as LSP is gradually replacing the major national languages, in our case German, French and, in addition, the impact on Greek as a minor language.

- English term: *compliance*

German: *Compliance*, not *Bereitschaft/Einwilligung (des Patienten)*,

Greek: *To compliance και η διαχείριση κινδύνου...*
[*Compliance and risk management...*], not *συμμόρφωση [compliance]*,

French: ... *sur la compliance et l'évolution de la maladie*, much less translated by *observance/adhésion thérapeutique*.

- **English term:** *compassionate use*

German: "*Compassionate Use*"-Basis (or *Compassionate-Use-Basis*), *Compassionate-Use-Programm*, *Compassionate-use-Studie*, not *Anwendung aus Mitgefühl*,

Greek: *compassionate use*, not *Χρήση από συμπόνια* [*compassionate use*],

French: either *accès compassionnel à un médicament* or a combination of the French/English version *le régime de l'accès compassionnel aux médicaments* (*compassionate use*).

- *Double/multiple terminology*

1) -«*Το Σύνδρομο Ανήσυχων Ποδιών (RLS-Restless Legs Syndrome, Σ.Α.Π.) στην Πρωτοβάθμια Περίθαλψη*»,

[*The Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS-Restless Legs Syndrome, Σ.Α.Π. [=RLS] in primary healthcare*],

2) -“*Le syndrome des jambes sans repos (SJSR), restless legs syndrome en anglais, ou syndrome d'Ekborn, est une pathologie courante mais méconnue en soins primaires*”,

3) Αυτή είναι η λειτουργία της ολοδυναμίας (*totipotency*),

[This function is called *totipotency* [in Greek] (*totipotency*) [in English]],

- βλαστοκύλη (*blastocoele*), - βλαστοκύστης (*blastocyst*), - τροφοβλάστη (*trophoblast*), - εσωτερική κυτταρική μάζα (*inner cell mass*), - πολυδύναμα βλαστοκύτταρα (*pluripotent stem cells*), - αρχέγονα γεννητικά κύτταρα (*primordial germ cells*),

4) Κλωνοποίηση και διαγονιδιακοί ή τρανσγενετικοί (*transgenetic*) οργανισμοί

[Cloning and *transgenetic* [Greek form] or *transgenetic* [English form] organisms].

- *Explicitation*

3) Η πρώτη σημαντική προσπάθεια εξήγησης της κυτταρικής διαφοροποίησης έγινε από τον βιολόγο August Weismann (1834-1914), ο οποίος το 1891 πρότεινε ότι ο ζυγώτης δίνει ζωή σε θυγατρικά κύτταρα όλων των τύπων (*totipotency*),

[The first important effort to explain the cellular differentiation was carried out by the biologist August Weismann (1834-1914) who suggested that *the zygote gives life to sister cells of all types (totipotency)*].

- *Lexical impact*

6) -οπορτουνιστικές λοιμώξεις for *opportunistic infections* instead of *ευκαιριακές λοιμώξεις* [*occasional infections*].

- *Syntactical impact*

7) -HIV+άτομο [*HIV+ person*].

3. Language attitudes and the translator

Sociology and attitude studies → shed light on the relationship between language and power (Kachru 1986).

Attitude = ‘a general and enduring positive or negative feeling about some person, object, or issue’ (Petty/Cacioppo 1981: 6).

Lambert’s (1967) three-component attitudes:

cognitive (individual’s belief system, knowledge and perceptions),

affective (emotional reactions and feelings), and

conative (behavioural intentions and interest).

Translators are affected in many ways by all of the above-mentioned components of attitudes: by their own ideology, by their feelings of superiority or inferiority towards the language in which they are writing the text being translated, by the very language in which the texts they are translating is written, by what the dominant institutions and ideology expect of them and by the public for whom the translation is intended (Álvarez/Vidal 1996: 6).

4. The Sociology of Translation

According to Chesterman (2006: 12), sociology of translation is trying to answer some of the questions which deal with the sociology of translation as product, the sociology of translators, the sociology of translating, i.e. the translation process, etc.

For Pym (2006: 2), 'little was said about any sociology of translators'. He refers to the contribution of the functionalist approaches to the sociology of translation. It is important to know more about who is doing the mediating, for whom, within what networks, with what social effects (Pym 2006: 4).

Attitude and sociology combined give a better idea about

3. internal values (cognitive, affective, behavioural) and

2. practical, external factors, such as actions which lead to translation and help achieve a better understanding of the translation/translator.

5. The Major-Minor Language Pair in the Functional Approach

Toury (in Pym 2006: 5) mentions that 'translators work differently when great prestige is attributed to the source culture'.

What does this mean for LSP translation? That in case of a more prestigious ST, the translator is more ST-oriented or that he will be more ST-inclined with lexical, syntactic, cultural and other details regarding terminology?

The language rights of minor languages can be strengthened only if an open constructive dialogue between grassroots constituencies, policy-makers and experts on language matters would take place (Phillipson 2006: 65).

After all, languages are national,
while English LSP belongs to all
languages.