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Translation Theory as an Interface of Linguistic and Stylistic Analysis and Its Implementation in the Teaching of Literary Translation

I. Introduction

In this paper I would like to share my own experience teaching translation (both from a theoretical and applied point of view) within an interdisciplinary university department of foreign or comparative literatures (primarily English and French) and linguistics.¹ The specific approach I will be describing, or advocating, is the direct result of the unique symbiotic interaction between the particular kind of students within our program and their self-defined and proclaimed needs and interests on the one hand, and my own ideological linguistic outlook and personal experience in literary translation on the other.²

I am not attempting to present this approach as «the only» or «the best» way to teach literary translation, nor do I feel that I have «cornered the market» on translation theory and/or pedagogy by prescribing or utilizing «the ultimate» or «the complete» theory of translation. In my view, we all have a long way to go in all the fields related to literary translation, i.e., linguistics, stylistics, literary criticism, translation theory, etc., wherein each of these related disciplines or sub-disciplines there is an unfortunate, but pronounced tendency for both excessive categorical polemic as well as active partisan missionizing. Many of the terms I will be using can, of course, be immediately connected to or associated with specific theoretical points of view and ideologies to which respective advocates or detractors will undoubtedly respond in a typical academic Pavlovian fashion; i.e., by reacting immediately, habitually and subjectively in an *a priori* automatic manner in either their acceptance or rejection of the approach. Be that as it may, my goal here is to share my

1 The Department of Foreign Literatures and Linguistics of the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev offers a B.A. degree in English Language and Literature, French Language and Literature, and Linguistics. There are also courses given in Russian Language and Literature, German Language and Literature, The Classical Languages and Literatures, and Italian Language and Literature. Graduate courses are also offered in English and French Literature and Linguistics. Part of the graduate program includes courses in stylistics and translation theory. The undergraduate courses will be discussed in Part III of this paper.

2 The author's published views on theoretical linguistics and stylistics and translation can be found in TOBIN (1981 a–c, 1982, 1982 a, b, forthcoming a, b) as well as in APHEK and TOBIN (1981 a, b, 1983 a, b, forthcoming, ms.) in the bibliography.

experience and present an approach which I have personally found suitable for a particular learning environment.

The approach is a communicative, basically reader-(student)-oriented one, which views the text as a methodological field, i.e., a discourse which is inseparable from its language. That is, we view the text as a single, undivided, integral entity. Like BARTHES (1979:76), and others, we share the notion that a text is «multiple» and «irreducible», although it emerges from substances and levels that are heterogenous and disconnected. We feel, however, that a literary text must still be viewed as an irreducible whole. A text represents a plurality which is not composed of more than one meaning, but a «plurality of meanings», an irreducible plurality which forms part of a multi-layered and irreducible whole, i.e., a tight complex system.³ In short, we contend that a text should be studied as an intricate network whose combinatorial factors and elements and their varying contributions to the formation of a whole requires the active collaboration of the reader and the writer.

We view the linguistic-stylistic analysis of a text as a first and necessary step to a successful reading and interpretation – a translation – of a text. The goal of the linguistic-stylistic analysis and subsequent translation is to uncover, understand, interpret, reconstruct and recreate the junction, or the convergence of the message of the text with the systematic use of the language of the text used to create that message. In short, we view the notion of literary translation as the direct result of the interface of a textually-oriented linguistic and stylistic analysis of a text. This is then the first step in an attempt to develop a student's sensibility and theoretical ability to analyze the specific linguistic phenomena found in a text, relate these phenomena to the message of the text, and then apply these analyses and interpretations to a translation of a text both as a process and a means to evaluate a literary translation.

We would like to add, however, that the great difficulty of the task is further undermined by the fact that we view as a given that every language is a unique sign-oriented communicative system used by human beings to create language-specific messages which are ultimately untranslatable in their entirety from one language system to another.⁴

3 Examples of language specific systems in Modern Hebrew have been discussed in TOBIN (1982), of word systems in Agnonian texts and their difficulties in translation in APHEK and TOBIN (1981a, b, 1983a, b, ms.), while difficulties of Modern Hebrew to English translation have been discussed in TOBIN (1981a–c, forthcoming a–c).

4 Specific examples of language specific systems in Modern Hebrew and their untranslatability have been discussed in APHEK and TOBIN (1981a, b, 1983a, b, ms.) and TOBIN (1981a–c, forthcoming a–c).

Thus, our ultimate message to our students is: the understanding of a text entails:

(1) a linguistic analysis of (at least part) of the systematic language-specific phenomena found in that text;

(2) a stylistic analysis of that text, i.e., an understanding and interpretation of how these systematic and language-specific phenomena contribute to the particular message of the text on the part of the reader (and, hopefully) the writer.

Once (1) and (2) are established and achieved, then the process of literary translation may subsequently be viewed as:

(3) a recreation of the text and its message by employing the language-specific system of the language of translation to create a new text with as similar as possible message of the original text within the unique language-specific system of the language of translation.

In short, a successful literary translation is, fundamentally, an attempt to create the text that would have been written by the original author had he been a native-speaker of the language of translation. It must also be remembered, however, that any literary text is part and parcel of a specific national, cultural, linguistic and literary tradition, which in itself and including translations, is part of a larger network or polysystem (EVEN-ZOHAR, 1978), which also may be significant and relevant to the translation process.⁵

II. An Example of the Approach: An Analysis of a Specific Text

We would like very briefly to apply the principles related to our approach to a specific linguistic-stylistic phenomenon to a particular text we have translated (LUBETKIN, 1981), a Holocaust memoir.

In addition to Holocaust fiction there is a new genre of Holocaust non-fiction in the form of first person accounts of life in the ghetto, the concentration camps, the underground partisan movements and the DP camps. This new prose genre, in Modern Hebrew at least, may be ex-

⁵ This is a particularly interesting issue in Modern Hebrew literature since many of the translations of world classics were performed by leading authors of Modern Hebrew prose and formed part of the revival of the Modern Hebrew literary language. Thus, translated literature has played a vital and symbiotic role in Modern Hebrew prose norms and standards.

emplified by the book *In Days of Destruction and Revolt* by Zivia LUBETKIN, a leader of the Dror Zionist Pioneering Youth Movement in the Warsaw Ghetto and one of the commanders of the Jewish Fighting Organization during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1943.

Elsewhere we have explored selected linguistic and stylistic devices employed by the author (e.g., the use of the historical present tense, emotional versus non-emotional adjectives, and the skewing of deictics, personal and relative pronouns indicating proximity and distance) which have been used to create the literary and dramatic effect of making the text more vivid to the reader (TOBIN, 1981, forthcoming a,b). In particular, we have pointed out how the use of these specific linguistic-stylistic devices has created a semantic and emotional hierarchy connected to both the characters and events throughout the text revolving around the Zionist youth movement, the Jews of the ghetto, the German enemy and the civilian Polish population. *In Days of Destruction and Revolt* is a unique book. It is a combination of an historical document, a general record of the events which led up to the establishment and destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto, a diary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, an homage to the Zionist pioneering youth movements emphasizing the importance of their contribution to these events, and the personal testimony of Zivia LUBETKIN, one of the few surviving commanders of the Uprising upon her arrival to Israel in 1946. There are, therefore, many dimensions to this single book.

One would expect to find such a text filled with many highly emotionally charged words and passages, yet Zivia's style is remarkably low-key and subtle.⁶ There is a distinct hierarchy of emotion in her prose. She is most subdued and restrained when discussing the Nazi invaders and oppressors. The later to be coined term «Holocaust» is, of course, non-existent in the text. She always refers to the German authorities and army as «the murderers» or «the enemy». On very rare occasions does she rely on literary metaphor to liken them to «predators swooping down to devour their prey». Most often she discusses their precision and

6 It was the author's privilege to meet Zivia LUBETKIN one evening in the spring of 1966. At the time I was a fairly recent graduate of Dror, the same youth movement of which Zivia speaks with such fervor in her memoir. She displayed a great personal interest about the youth movement in America and asked several relevant questions. I initially balked in my response, comparing my youth movement experience with that of a woman who had become a heroine, a symbol, a pioneer, and, perhaps, even a legend. (German archives later showed that the code name for the Warsaw Ghetto and Poland had been «Zivia».) Twelve years later when I was asked to translate her personal testimony, I immediately agreed. I was hardly surprised by her direct, dignified, simple, and above all, sincere style.

cunning order without a surfeit of emotion. The word Nazi is barely used in the original Hebrew. Zivia's appraisal is almost cold and military in tone, particularly during the battle scenes.

The language chosen by Zivia to describe the Jewish population, on the other hand, is more emotional and passionate. Her identity with the suffering masses of humanity sears through with profound feeling. Zivia lives the intense suffering of her brothers and the passages describing their wretched plight are painfully pathetic. Yet, Zivia is giving an historical account of the Jews' situation and is remarkably unemotional in the carefully selected expressions she uses in order to remain as accurate as possible. It is as if she realizes the historical mission she has taken upon herself and is consciously and consistently attempting to prove herself worthy of its profound implications.

The passages describing the youth movement, its members, her comrades-in-arms, their campaign against the German enemy, their total and absolute dedication to each other and to the movement framework and cause are the most highly emotional and passionate in the book. Zivia succeeds in creating a special aura, an atmosphere of awe, respect and love in her discussions of these points. It is in these passages, the personal accounts of the trials and tribulations of the movement in the underground, the resistance, the search for arms, the illegal and highly dangerous missions in the Aryan sector, the Uprising and its bloody aftermath, the suppression of the revolt and the destruction of the ghetto, where Zivia's talents as a writer, and not a mere documenter of facts, come through. Some of these scenes are written in a language more exciting and real than the literature and fiction created about the Holocaust and the Uprising. The reader is astounded by the commitment and courage Zivia attributes to others in the movement. The detail, the warmth, the understanding, the affection and love are composed in a unique prose style. All of this is interlaced, however, with her less emotional and almost objective accounts of the horror and terror of life in the ghetto. Many of the passages describing the various forces at work in the ghetto and the details of certain people and events are almost dull in comparison. As can be expected, life and death are recurrent themes throughout this text. Zivia often refrains from becoming morbid, and on several occasions relies on euphemisms and circumlocutions to discuss the extermination and destruction of the Jews. Phrases such as «the cup being passed», or «the reaper taking his toll», appear rather wistfully and stoically in the text. The entire text is characterized by Zivia's recognition of the need to tell the entire story, sometimes in almost painful detail.

The concept of the hierarchical interface of language and emotion in this holocaust memoir which we have briefly outlined is related to our view of the notion of text previously discussed. The most casual reader of the Hebrew text will be impressed by the painstaking care taken by the author in her choice of words which may have indeed affected the syntax of the original. The prose style is composed of many long and repetitious sentences. There are many objective reasons for this particular style adopted by the author. The first is probably the great effort and care she has taken to describe every person and event as fully, accurately and objectively as possible. Hardly a person or event is mentioned, even in the most casual way, without an explanation, anecdote, or definition. Zivia readily and carefully places every detail in its proper historical perspective the first time it is mentioned and very often when it reappears as well.

The fact that a large portion of this text was originally presented orally also affected the style; this is particularly true in the minor discrepancies found within the text in the chronology of the events and the presentation of certain facts. When a person is mentioned in a specific context, very often his entire story is immediately told, abruptly transporting the reader from one historical event to another. In this way, we learn about the existence of three separate ghettos within the Warsaw Ghetto, before they are actually described and explained. These «tangents» do not prove to be terribly confusing to the reader, however, and they add to the conversational, personal and almost colloquial tone which spices the text at times.

One of the most interesting grammatical aspects of the Hebrew original is the use of verb tenses. The majority of the text, as can be expected, is written in the past or related forms. Many episodes, however, particularly those on the highest level of the emotional hierarchy, are written in the present tense. This includes the various discussions of the movement, the dangerous missions undertaken by its members within and outside of the ghetto, the Uprising and its suppression, the destruction of the ghetto and the subsequent escape through the sewer canals. By switching to the present tense, and oftentimes quite abruptly in the middle of a sentence or a paragraph, Zivia succeeds in drawing the reader's attention. This grammatical switch of tenses makes a particular event or experience more prominent or real, i.e., «closer to the reader at the time of his reading», evoking a strong reaction in the reader.

The use of the historical present (i.e., the switch in mid-sentence or paragraph from a past to a present form in order to achieve certain dramatic effects) has traditionally been assigned the literary or narrative

function of making a text more dramatic or vivid. It can be found in both oral as well as written texts of different genres comprising different registers including novels, plays, memoirs, criticism, tourist guides, the description of events of all kinds including sports broadcasts, jokes and everyday conversation.⁷ Linguists who have studied this phenomenon in English, (PALMER, 1968; LEECH, 1971; JOOS, 1964; JESPERSEN, 1927; DIVER, 1963 and others), have primarily discussed its function as a means to bring the reader (or listener) closer to the writer (or speaker) as well as a grammatical means to express or emphasize the latter's view, opinion or attitude towards a particular event. A further explanation for the use of the historical present is that it allows the author to relive the events of the past and therefore forces his reader to (re)live or experience them as if they were actually taking place at the moment of narration or reading.

The use of the historical present is thought to be a «language universal» and is not considered to be connected to what is usually referred to as the «system of verbal tense» (WOLFSON, 1979:168). There are two basic approaches to describe the use of the historical present: the syntactic approach (KIPARSKY, 1968:33) and the «dramatic» approach which has been accepted by most linguists and literary scholars to such an extent that it may be referred to as the «traditional» approach. According to this view the use of the historical present makes a text more «animate», more «vivid» and more «lively». The logic behind this assumption is rather simply that the use of the historical present distinguishes between the event itself and the speech act describing it, or as JAKOBSON (1957) defined them: *le procès de l'énoncé* and *le procès de l'énonciation*, thus drawing the reader (or listener) closer to the author (or speaker) on the one hand, and/or focus his attention on the event itself on the other. This approach allows us to look at the use of the «verbal tense system» of the language from two different points of view: the first, that of the event itself, and the second, that of the reception (the reading) or the production (the recounting) of the event. GOFFMAN (1975) and WOLFSON (1978) have discussed the sociolinguistic implications of the use of the historical present and its function as a means by which the narrator transmits his world view to the audience. This sociolinguistic approach is most suitable to explain the use of the historical

7 We will not distinguish here between the use of the historical present (HP) and the Conversational Historical Present (CHP) as they are distinctly defined in WOLFSON (1978, 1979, 1981). For the purpose of this paper we relate the use of the historical present as a generalized concept without distinguishing between its use in oral as opposed to written texts since both these forms appear in the text under discussion.

present in Zivia LUBETKINS memoir. WOLFSON further categorizes the use of the historical present in the realm of discourse to (a) dialogue, (b) asides and (c) repetition.

In Modern Hebrew this stylistic and syntactic phenomenon may be further strengthened by the fact that the so-called «present tense» appears morphologically as a nominal or adjectival form; (i.e., is only marked for gender and number (and not person!) like nouns and adjectives), and in this way differs from the historical (i.e., Biblical) Hebrew so-called «perfective» and «imperfective» verbal forms. In Modern Hebrew these forms have evolved to the so-called «past» and «future» tenses which are marked morphologically for number, gender and person. The fact that the «present tense» is morphologically identical with the adjectival and nominal forms may allow for its more frequent and effective use on the part of the individual authors (or speakers) who may choose to exploit this linguistic phenomenon.

As previously mentioned *In Days of Destruction and Revolt* represents a first hand account of the entire Holocaust period from the events preceding the Nazi invasion of Poland, the invasion itself, the mistreatment of the Jews, the erection of the Warsaw Ghetto, the *Aktionen* and the atrocities committed against the Jews, the establishment of the Jewish Fighting Organization, the beginning of the armed resistance, the internal political divisions between the adult ghetto leadership and the leaders of the youth movements, the Uprising, the suppression of the Uprising, the burning of the ghetto, the escape to the Aryan side via the sewer canals, the collaboration with the Polish underground, the Polish uprising, the Liberation and Zivia's arrival in *Eretz Israel*. Throughout all the events presented in the text there is a single motif or message which connects and unifies all their diverse aspects and symbolizes the world view of the author – the Zionist pioneering youth movement. In the end, Zivia maintains that it was the youth movement and its values which kept her and the rest of the ghetto fighters alive:

«What gave us the moral strength? We were able to endure the life in the ghetto because we knew that we were a *collective*, a movement. Each of us knew that he wasn't alone. Every other Jew faced his fate alone, one man before the overpowering invincible enemy. From the very first moment until the bitter end, we stood together, as a collective, as a movement. The feeling that there was a movement, a community of people who cared about each other, who shared ideas and values in common, made it possible for each of us to do what he did.» (LUBETKIN, 1981:277)

This is the essential message of this book and one can definitely summarize Zivia's world view as being thoroughly based on the values of the Zionist pioneering youth movement.

A preliminary examination reveals that the use of the historical present is prevalent throughout the text, particularly in those passages related to the youth movement. A further examination reveals that the historical present appears in passages describing: (a) the movement, (b) the Jews living in the ghetto, (c) the German enemy and (d) the Polish civilian population. Furthermore, the use of the historical present can also be directly connected with both the events and the characters of the story on the one hand, and the use of adjectives and proximal versus distal deictics on the other. Through the use of all of these linguistic and stylistic devices the author has created a semantic and emotional hierarchy which runs throughout the entire text:

- (a) In those passages dealing with the movement and its role in the ghetto and the Uprising there are 108 instances of the historical present, 16 in dialogues and 92 in asides.
- (b) In those passages dealing with the Jews in occupied Poland and in the ghetto there are 39 instances of the historical present, 6 in dialogues and 33 in asides.
- (c) In those passages dealing with the German enemy there are 18 instances of the historical present, 2 in dialogues and 16 in asides.
- (d) In those passages dealing with the Polish civilian population during the occupation there are 13 instances of the historical present, 4 in dialogues and 9 in asides.

It is also worthy to note that the use of the historical present is the most frequent and the most concentrated in those passages dealing with the Uprising, its suppression, the burning of the ghetto and the concluding chapter describing the «secret of the movement's strength».⁸

8 In the collection of our data we have tried to limit the present tense forms we have used to clear-cut examples of the so-called «present tense» or *benoni* forms in Modern Hebrew. We have attempted to focus our attention on those passages where the transition between the «past tense» forms to «present tense» forms was the most obvious and where a rewriting of the sentences in question with only «past tense» forms would result in both «grammatical» and «acceptable» sentences. We attempted to observe these principles in our translation of the text in entire episodes where the «present tense» appeared most frequently and in a most concentrated form as well. The reader knowledgeable in Hebrew will note that in ambiguous cases where the same Hebrew form may be interpreted as either «present» or «past» (e.g., *ba* ('comes/came'), *rats* ('runs/ran'), *nexlaš* ('is/was weakened')), I relied on redundant contextual information to make my choice of tense selection. Other readers might be inclined to interpret specific instances differently in those cases where no overt time adverbials or other contextual clues clearly disambiguate the so-called time or tense. The examples in this paper are taken from the author's original manuscript of the translation.

The following passages containing the historical present should serve to illustrate the use of the historical present in the text:

1. «... With the pale light of dawn we arrived in Warsaw. *The streets are full of people, most of them Poles. A few Jews can be seen, the «badge of shame», a white arm band with a blue Star of David emblazoned upon it, on their arms. The Jews move in haste, looking about on all sides to see if they're being pursued.* I was so shocked by the sight that I froze for a moment . . . I expected to find the city a heap of ruins. To my astonishment, it was almost intact save for a few destroyed buildings here and there. *The main streets are bustling with Poles and the shops are open and doing a brisk business as usual. There is a pleasant feeling in the air as if nothing had happened. Only a few months had passed since the devastating defeat.*»
2. «... Our suppositions turned out to be completely mistaken. All of Poland fell in a matter of weeks. *Now here I am back in Warsaw finding myself standing at the entrance of that very same building and there was nothing left but a heap of rubble. All of our plans had been for nothing. So few, so few are the Jews walking the streets! All of a sudden a Jewish face peers cautiously from behind the entrance-way; looking in both directions to see if there are any Germans in the area. After deciding that the coast is clear, he darts off to the next entrance, frightened and pale, his arm band waving in the air . . .* A sharp pain pierced my heart! *Woe to me that Jews have come to this.* I rushed to Dzielna Street. I was confident that I would find a warm home there. I would meet my friends, Jews of a different mettle. I arrived at 34 Dzielna, the Movement headquarters, the same doorway, the same steps. *My heart pounding, I run up and knock on the door, Zvi Kutzer opened it.*»
3. «The Germans adopted a sophisticated series of actions whose primary aim was the degradation and humiliation of Jews . . . I can still picture it in my mind: *A crowd of people is walking down the sidewalk and a German car suddenly appears firing indiscriminately in all directions arbitrarily killing passing pedestrians. The Jews flee in fear, but many are caught and abused by the Germans.* Another picture: the Movement house on 34 Dzielna Street right next to the infamous Pawiak prison. Any Jew passing there would look cautiously on all sides for fear of seeing a German and would never dare cross the street without assuring himself that *the coast is clear.* Nevertheless, there were those who were caught. Once from the window at Dzielna we saw how *a German catches a religious Jew, pulls him by the sidelocks and beard, stands him against the wall, and commands him to close his eyes and put his hands up. He has no choice but to obey.* The German fired his gun into the air and not at the Jew. He fired several times and the Jew was convinced each time that he had taken his last breath . . . One of the systematic methods of humiliation used by the Germans against the Jews was the Labor camps. The very announcement of the establishment of these labor camps filled the Jews with terror. *Innocent people walking down the streets are suddenly snatched and taken to the camps.* There was widespread panic. Everyone feared the German abductors. It was quite clear that *it isn't a labor camp awaiting the victims, but death.* This went on month after month. *You stare in the face of death each and every day. Death is always about you, death from starvation, death from beating, death from no longer being able to bear the degradation.*»

4. «When we realized clearly that the fatal destiny of the Jews had been irrevocably decided, the first question that came to our minds was, did the Jews simply surrender? Did they just go off to the slaughter without any resistance? The man who brought the news explained almost apologetically: *'But the Jews don't believe that they are going to their deaths. In any case they have nothing to defend themselves with . . . !'* It was then that we made our decision: *We must resist!* The question that we immediately asked ourselves: *'How, and with what?'* . . . There were those even in our midst who were hesitant and claimed: *«Do we indeed have the right to tell the Jews the whole truth? Should we destroy this last illusion of the downtrodden and beaten and tell them outright; 'Tomorrow you shall die?' We may be wrong and merely acting out of desperation?* The majority of us, however, were steadfast in our decision: we had not the slightest doubt where events were leading.»
5. «The shocking events of the day kept me awake, despite my weariness. I should have been with my comrades in Mila 18. I should have drunk from the same bitter cup. I was only separated from them by some fate which sentenced them, our finest, to their destruction. *My troubled sleep is plagued by terrible nightmares. I suddenly sense that someone is standing beside me. I open my eyes to see the two men* who had returned to guide our comrades through the sewers. I was surprised to see them at first. I couldn't understand what they were doing here . . . »

Although the language specific systems of Modern Hebrew and English differ with regard to the specific linguistic phenomena we have discussed, similar messages in each language can be derived in both the original and the translated texts by employing similar stylistic strategies. We can thus summarize the interface of language and emotion in this particular Holocaust memoir in the following way: The stylistic use of the historical present and its connection both to the events and the characters of the story on the one hand, and the use of highly emotional adjectives and proximal versus distal deictics on the other, have created a semantic and emotional hierarchy which runs throughout the entire text.

The most frequent use of the historical present as well as the largest number of highly emotional adjectives and «proximal deictics» ('this, these') appeared in those passages which described the Zionist pioneering youth movement functioning in the ghetto and in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. The least frequent use of the historical present as well as of adjectives (many of which were almost neutral or military-like) were used to describe either the German enemy or the civilian Polish population. Between these two extremes those passages describing the general plight of the Jews in occupied Poland and within the ghetto fall into a middle category within this semantic-emotional hierarchy as evidenced by the intermediate frequency and use of the historical present as well as less emotional adjectives.

The use of «distal deictics» ('that, those') is most frequent in the passages related to the Poles and the Germans, as might be expected, but also appear quite frequently even in those passages dealing with the Jewish plight in general. Most importantly, however, they almost never appear in the discussions dealing directly with the youth movement and its related enterprises. This, supported by the frequency of the use of the historical present and of highly emotionally charged versus less emotional adjectives seem to point out a further dichotomy that actually existed between the members of the youth movement who wanted to actively resist the Nazis and the rest of the Jews living in the ghetto. Thus, we can see the relationship, the interface, between the actual language used in a text with the action, emotion and themes of the message the author is trying to convey to the reader both in the original and the translated texts.

III. A Summary of the Pedagogical Implications of the Linguistics-Stylistics and Translation Theory Seminar and Workshop

The Department of English Language and Literature of the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev first offered a translation workshop in 1975. Since that time the original English department has been combined with the Department of French Language and Literature under the new rubric of the Department of Foreign Literatures and Linguistics. In this new frameworks for other national languages and literatures (e.g., Classics, German, Russian, Italian, Spanish, etc.) as well as comparative literature are being developed. Just as the department has been expanded, so has the original translation workshop developed into a series of pre- or co-requisites courses consisting of a year long translation workshop and integrative academic courses consisting of a stylistics seminar in the first semester and a translation seminar in the second offered during the student's final year of B.A. studies.⁹ These courses are offered to students who are either English or French or «mixed» majors, who have all had at least a minimal background in linguistics if they are literature majors (usually consisting of an introduction, and a series of courses on the structure of the language(s) of specialization including phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics) as well as at least two full

⁹ We will not discuss our graduate program here. The specific courses given in this program in the fields of stylistics and translation are given in the framework of individual reading courses and tutorials after the students have completed their required courses in linguistics and/or literary criticism.

years of language proficiency and literature courses. A large number of the students have been enrolled as linguistics majors or as part of a teacher-training track with a linguistics minor which means that in addition to the minimum linguistics background outlined above, they have also studied psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, historical linguistics, applied linguistics and advanced seminars in the major fields of theoretical linguistics. Entry to the translation courses, however, is contingent on the successful completion of all the students language and linguistics courses as well as a certain grade index.

The original course was offered as a result of student interest and demand, particularly on the part of those students who viewed translation, either journalistic or literary, as a future career (as opposed to language teaching). Such students were particularly interested in having the opportunity to study translation and actively participate in a translation workshop in the framework of their undergraduate studies. The aim of the sequence of courses is to give the students a taste of translating a literary or journalistic text, presenting him with the tools to analyze source and target language texts, bringing him to a basic understanding of the theoretical and practical problems of translation while applying them in an actual translation of a text.

In the original framework, during the fall semester (of approximately 15 weeks) the students met in a translation workshop and a seminar in stylistics. In the translation workshop two or three articles (from journals such as *Time* or *Newsweek*) are translated together with the instructor. Each student prepares an individual translation and the various translations are discussed and compared in light of the problems involved in the translation. The various alternatives and options available are discussed and the class debates the relative merits of one way of translating the text over another. Relevant linguistic and stylistic issues revolving around phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic issues in a text (in addition to individual words or sentences) become real pragmatic and communicative issues in the discussion of the fundamental goals of achieving accuracy and equivalency in the translation, while maintaining target language fluency of style.

At the same time that the students are translating a shared text in the translation workshop, they are also enrolled in a stylistics seminar where they are analyzing a literary text of their choosing. In this course some of the various approaches to stylistic analysis are presented to the students: They are exposed to Saussurian approaches to sign theory and language (Prague, Jakobsonian, Guillaumeau, Form-Content Analysis), the notion of linguistic description as a basis for stylistic analysis from

various structuralist, functionalist, statistical, generative, discourse and semiotic approaches.

The students read classic stylistic articles and are lectured to about the various approaches of analyzing a text. The final course requirement is to choose a school or approach or a combination of approaches and perform a stylistic analysis of a specific literary text. They will either be evaluating a published translation of the same text and/or translating parts of or the entire text during the translation seminar given in the spring semester. Both in the translation workshop and in the translation seminar the students will keep a journal of the specific problems of translation they have while translating which will become the basis, i.e., the data corpus, for the seminar on translation. By this time in their academic development theoretical concepts such as lexical sets, semantic fields, collocation, register, cohesion, style markers, context, semantic widening and narrowing, etc., have become part and parcel of their active working vocabulary in the translation workshop and stylistic seminar as opposed to theoretical concepts memorized in the framework of ordinary courses and examinations.

The seminar in translation or problems in the theory of translation deals with various schools and approaches to translation, e.g., communicative, formalist, structuralist, generative, translation as problem solving, steps in the process of translation, evaluation techniques, problems in the translation of different genres, translation as interpretation or recreation, problems in technique, semantic voids, registers, lexical, syntactic, shifts, the development of a comparative stylistics of English, French and/or Hebrew, and other theoretical and methodological issues. Based on their exposure to and synthesis of diverse approaches and methodologies the students are required to describe and analyze the problems of translating their chosen text based on their own stylistic analysis of that text and their work on translation. Thus, we have tried to develop a brief sequence of courses which relates to both theoretical and actual applications of linguistic, stylistic and translation theory.

In short, the motivation and justification for this particular advanced undergraduate course sequence is that neither translation, linguistics, stylistics, literature nor literary criticism should be taught in a vacuum. The practical result of this point of view is to provide the student with the opportunity to apply what he has previously learned in language, linguistics and literature courses to actual texts and try his hand at active textual analysis and translation.

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