RESSENYES

HATIM, Basil; MASON, Ian
The Translator as Communicator
London and New York: Routledge, 1997

Those familiar with Hatim and Mason's first joint book *Discourse and the Translator* (1990) will welcome the opportunity to follow the authors' continued explorations in translational phenomena. In *The Translator as Communicator* the focus has been inverted. Whereas the first book was structured around the elements of discourse analysis that can be used to study translation, with examples from a variety of texts, the second book is organized to cover different fields and modes of translating. On the one hand it emphasizes unity in diversity, the core of common concern that is present in any translation, and on the other hand, it shows how in different fields and modes of translation one aspect of text in context may be more significant than others.

Both books share the same strengths and weaknesses. They are extraordinarily fertile books, in the sense that they open up a great many paths from which to study translation. Hatim and Mason are exceptional in the field of translation studies because they bridge the gap between the linguistic approach and literary, rhetorical and ideological approaches. They do full justice to the complexity of the relation between text and context. The first book has already been very influential and *The Translator as Communicator* is as stimulating. Hatim and Mason provide theory as I understand it «an intellectual framework meant to clarify, make sense of and illuminate objects, events, phenomena, attitudes which otherwise seem inchoate». They also provide us with the disciplines, «or particular trained approaches to that material itself, sets of tools with which to analyze, measure and evaluate the material»[1].

However, both books are complicated, as is inevitable in any book that tries to take into account all the elements involved in an activity as complex as translating. The kinds of analyses described in *The Translator as Communicator* are drawn from different disciplines and the reader needs some background in these disciplines in order to make the most of the book. Each chapter opens up many

1. The definitions of 'theory' and 'discipline' are from Richard Hoggart's *The Way We Live Now* (1995: 173).

opportunities for empirical research. The authors are perfectly aware of the restrictions they are working with, «It would of course be desirable to proceed by observation based solely on sound empirical evidence. But text being what they are —an imperfect record of communicative events— we sometimes find it necessary to settle for what may be described as heuristic procedures» (Hatim and Mason, 1997: 14).

Chapter 1 establishes what all translations have in common, despite the dichotomies that are often set up by professionals and theoreticians. *Translation* is defined as «an act of communication which attempts to relay across cultural and linguistic boundaries, another act of communication (which may have been intended for different purposes and different readers/hearers)» (2). Even a poem, seen as an act of self expression, not as a communicative act, if it is to be translated it has to be read and the act of reading is a part of communication.

Chapter 2 lays out the foundations for a model of analysing texts. On a first reading this is a difficult chapter and it should be returned to in the light of the following chapters (3-9) that provide case studies of different kinds of translations. The model used in *Discourse and the Translator* is expanded to include Halliday's ideational, interpersonal and textual categories as used in Critical Discourse Analysis and the static (expectation-fulfilling, norm-confirming)/dynamic (expectation defying, norm-flouting) continuum, developed by the authors.

Chapters 3 and 4 are about modes of interpreting and different priorities are suggested for the different modes. In simultaneous interpreting the restrictions of the mode oblige the interpreter to rely heavily on texture to negotiate meaning, in consecutive interpreting the emphasis is on structure and in liason interpreting on context. Chapter 5 discusses politeness in screen translating in terms of Face

Threatening Acts and Audience Design and suggests that interpersonal meaning is the aspect of meaning most likely to suffer from the restrictions of subtitling. Chapter 6 is about register membership in literary translating and concentrates on user related aspects of the message, in particular, idiolect and tenor. The case study in this chapter is based on Arabic translations of Eliza Dolittle's use of tagging in Shaw's Pygmaleon, «I'm a good girl, I am». Chapter 7 analyses form and function in the translation of sacred and sensitive texts. Here, the translations are from the Qur'an and the Bible and the analysis draws on foregrounding and defamiliarization devices used in classical rhetoric, pronominal reference switches and their illocutionary force due to the flouting of cooperation maxims. Register features are recognised as intended signs in genre structures, discourse attitudinal meanings and text rhetorical purposes. Chapter 8 looks at argumentation strategies in cross-cultural communication.

Chapter 9, «Translation and Ideology», makes a distinction between the ideology of translation and translating ideology, although the two obviously interact. The authors discuss Venuti's domestication or foreignization strategies (ideology of translation) from the viewpoint of translating into a minority language, «Thus, it is not domestication or foreignization *as such* which is "culturally imperialistic", but the strategy chosen in a particular socio-cultural situation is likely to have ideological implications» (146). Having made this point, three translations are studied to see what happens to ideologies when they are translated by a domesticating or foreignizing method. The translations from Arabic, Spanish and French are examples of minimal, maximal and partial mediation.

The last three chapters raise some interesting questions about the implications of what has gone before for translator training. Chapter 10 suggests criteria drawn from register membership, pragmatics and

semiotics for defining text level errors due to mishandling text in context. Chapter 11 proposes curriculum design for advanced translator trainees based on a continuum of static/dynamic texts. The course would begin with 'static', non-evaluative texts that belong clearly to one genre and are fully coherent and cohesive. Increasingly 'dynamic', evaluative, hybrid texts would be introduced during the programme. Chapter 12 is about assessing translation performance, as distinct from the quality of translations, translation criticism and translation quality control. In the authors' opinion, what is wrong now is: the lack of criteria used for selecting texts, setting exams (skopos), defining errors and objective marking. What is needed is clear criteria to distinguish between: formative and summative testing,

proficiency and achievement testing, norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assesment. Hatim and Mason suggest descriptive profiles for assessing students, based on a check list of translator abilities (205).

The chapters on text level errors, curriculum design and assessing performance show the authors' wide experience as translation trainers and, like the rest of the book, open up many avenues for further research. In my opinion, one of the most important areas for translation scholars in Catalonia and Spain is the development of Catalan and Spanish text grammars within a science of texts.

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REISS, Katharina; VERMEER, Hans
Fundamentos para una teoría funcional de la traducción
Traducción de Sandra García Reina y Celia Martín de León
Coordinación de Heidrum Witte.
Madrid: Akal, 1996, 206 p.

Los nombres de Katharina Reiss y Hans J. Vermeer —o la «escuela de Heidelberg»— están indisolublemente unidos a las teorías funcionales y finalistas de la traducción, y sus aportaciones a la traductología moderna siguen siendo indiscutibles. Me arriesgo a afirmar que todos los profesores de traducción —por lo menos en nuestro ámbito cultural— han recurrido en algún momento a estos conceptos cuando se trataba de esclarecer, explicar y proponer soluciones a determinados problemas translatorios. Paradójicamente, las publicaciones en lengua española en torno a este planteamiento teórico son casi inexistentes, como bien podemos observar en la bibliografía adjunta al libro que nos interesa, aunque se conocen, por ejemplo, aportaciones, artículos o ponencias de Pilar Elena, Marisa Presas, Celia Martín de

León y Sandra García Reina, las dos últimas traductoras de la presente obra, bajo la supervisión de Heidrun Witte, antigua discípula de Vermeer en Heidelberg. Aunque solamente sea por la falta de publicaciones sobre esta vertiente de la traductología, es de saludar el poder tener acceso a la versión española de *Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie*, pese a que llega con cierto retraso, ya que el original fue publicado en 1984.

Fieles a su teoría, los autores —catedráticos de traductología específica alemán-español (K. Reiss) y alemán-portugués (H.J. Vermeer), los cuales por afinidad lingüística han podido trabajar en estrecha colaboración con las traductoras— subrayan que «se han tenido en cuenta las condiciones específicas de la cultura y la lengua españolas, sobre todo en lo relativo a la ter-