

TYOLOGY OF TRANSLATION IN THE CLASSROOM

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When asked to distinguish translation in the classroom from other types of translation, one is tempted to cite the by now well-known comment by HÖNIG and KUSSMAUL :

The students translate a text which they do not understand for an addressee whom they do not know. And the product of their labours is not infrequently assessed by a university lecturer who has neither practical experience as a translator nor theoretical knowledge of translation science¹.

To which one could add in the case of translating into the foreign language : "[the students translate] into a language they have not as yet mastered". In fact there are two kinds of translation in two kinds of classrooms :

- a) translations by students participating in courses specifically directed towards learning how to translate who already have a high standard of proficiency in target and source language (in institutes like ESIT in Paris and the "Institut für Uebersetzer- und Dolmetscherausbildung" in Vienna)
- b) translations by students as an exercise during second-language acquisition classes. These students usually are not very proficient in the foreign language and sometimes not in their mother tongue either.

In this article we will concern ourselves only with the products of the *second* type of translation and more specifically with the translations from L1 into L2, *i.e.* from the mother tongue into a foreign language.

We will try to define the lexical and syntactical characteristics of these translations, without paying any attention to possible errors, in order to show that the characteristics of these translations differ considerably from the characteristics of translations (of the same kind of texts) made by professional translators.

Although our research was done on translations made by a relatively small group of Dutch students learning French, we have reason to believe that the research may be valid for other languages as well², and may thus serve to establish a typology of translation in the classroom.

1. THE RESEARCH

The students were third-year students in the department of Romance languages at the State University of Utrecht who had never actually translated before, except for the odd isolated sentence during vocabulary, grammar and writing classes. The group consisted of 17 students. On the basis of the marks they had been allotted at the end of the second year for grammar and vocabulary proficiency, they were divided into 3 groups :

- (a) students who passed the tests with marks averaging 8 out of 10 (8 students)
- (b) students who averaged 7 out of 10 (5 students)