
Anna Mauranen and Pekka Kujamäki (eds). *Translation Universals: Do they exist?* Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004, 214 pp.

Translation Universals: Do they exist? is a compilation of works by twelve authors. The editors divide the book into four sections: “Conceptualising universals”, “Large-scale tendencies in translated language”, “Testing the basics”, and “Universals in the translation class”. Each part discusses the use of universals in the study

of translation, which, according to the editors, is an area of study that has received much attention since Mona Baker's 1993 breakout article. "Corpus Linguistics and Translation Studies: Implications and Applications", in which the author points out general issues (universals) seen in many translations such as "explicitation, disambiguation and simplification, growing grammatical conventionality and a tendency to overrepresent typical features of the target language as well as the feature of cleaning away repetitions from translations". For Kujamäki and Mauranen, Baker's article is a catalyst of deep investigation into translation studies and provides a theoretical framework for their own work.

The study of universals in translation studies is a controversial issue because, while some translators believe that an essential aspect of translation is the individuality of each piece, they feel that there are "universals", best described as laws or regularities of translation. Proponents of "universals" base their position on scientific research, which supports the idea that common linguistic properties are used in translated texts. On the continuum of "universals" advocacy, Gideon Toury

is an example of a translator who falls on the far end and does not choose to define common properties as "universals".

Toury's "Probabilistic explanations in translation studies: Welcome as they are, would they qualify as universals?" opens the first section of the book. Toury answers his own question and decides that probabilistic explanations do not qualify as universals. He prefers to use the term "laws" to describe the regularities in translations because this term allows exceptions. In addition, like other translators, he is an advocate for the recognition of translation studies as scientific and argues that the methodological procedures such as observational and experimental research are the same as other sciences.

Editor Anna Mauranen is one of the contributing authors of the second section, "Large-scale tendencies in translated language". She proposes that interference is an essential part of translation but that it cannot account for all differences between the original and target languages. Therefore, it can be classified as an abstract universal. Interference, as defined by Uriel Weinreich, can be understood as "those instances of de-

violation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of the familiarity with more than one language". In defending interference as a universal, Mauranen states, "It has been fairly well established that languages in contact generally influence each other. For example, Ellis (1996) points out that cross-linguistic influence appears to be present even at high levels of bilingual ability, and Grossjean and Soares (1987) have argued that when bilinguals speak one of their languages, the other language is rarely totally deactivated, even in completely monolingual situations. It is thus reasonable to assume, even without conclusive evidence, that transfer occurs in translation because translation involves a contact between two languages and is a form of bilingual processing". Bilinguals, for Mauranen, can never be free of influences from either language and interference is evident.

In the third section, "Testing the basics", Tiina Puurtinen discusses what she calls, "explicitation" with a specific concentration on children's literature in her "Explicitation of clausal relations: A corpus-based analysis of clause connectives in

translated and non-translated Finnish children's literature". Puurtinen references her earlier research, which shows that non-finite constructions make children's literature more difficult to read and understand, even if they have a large presence in translated texts. She gives examples of non-finite constructions and compares them with her own substitutions of relative clauses and conjunctions to support her argument against explicitation as a universal. The evidence is clear: the translated versions with non-finite constructions do not read smoothly. She concludes that this information contradicts the hypothesis that explicitation is a universal of translation in that the translated literature is less explicit than the original work.

In the final section of the volume, "Universals in the translation class", author Riitta Jääkeläinen writes about repetition in translated works. Her contribution draws on an experiment she conducted in which she used her students as subjects. After noticing that many translation students tend to omit repetitions of the original text, she divided the class into two groups. Part of the class was given "sensitivity training" in

that they were made aware that they had a tendency to leave out repetitions. The other students made up the control group. Jääkeläinen observed how the translation strategies of the students differed in each group, and concludes in her article that, “the isolated examples of ST repetition and the students’ reactions to it discussed in this article give a somewhat incoherent picture.” She continues to explain that one issue is that many novice translators are committed in their techniques to translate faithfully. Therefore, those who received sensitivity training were not at as great of an advantage as Jääkeläinen had originally hoped.

Because the vocabulary is extensive and the concepts are complex, this compilation of writing is best suited for readers educated

about translation. Each of the twelve authors presents different perspectives on translation universals. Some, based on their methodological approaches to translation studies, accept universals. Others shy away from using the term “universals”, but agree on the general concept. Puurtinen’s research for example, rejects the hypothesis of explicitation. Some, such as Gideon Toury, prefer to use other terms such as “laws” to describe these linguistic phenomena related to translation. Given the importance of these regularities and commonalities in translation studies, even those who reject the idea of universals should be aware of them, if only to maintain the “uniqueness” and individuality in their translated works.

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