
<http://dx.doi.org/10.5007/2175-7968.2013v1n31p246>

Paul, Gill, ed. *Translation in Practice: A Symposium*. Champaign: Dalkey Archive Press, 2009. 68 p.

Translation in Practice: A Symposium was created from ideas discussed at the British Council offices in London in March 2008, as proclaimed in the Preface: "The conference, funded by Arts Council, London, administered by the Society of Authors, devised by literary translator Ros Schwartz, and inspired by a handbook produced by the Norwegian Translators' Association, the forum and this publication, from which it derives, are the fruit of the collective effort of the above parties" about how to translate through practice without being a seasoned professional. The book, edited by Gill Paul, is a product of this debate, and raises issues about translation that include, the goal of a good translation, choos-

ing translators and creating contracts, boundaries, problems and solutions in translation, and the actual editing process.

The book is divided into six chapters with a preface, introduction and conclusion. The study opens with "The Aim of a Good Translation," which outlines factors that contribute to the successful movement from one language to another. According to Gill, the relationship between editor and translator is one of the key elements to this practical guide. A "good" relationship is the result of advice and adaptations. Details regarding the difficult process the translation of another culture's literature into English for the US and UK markets are also addressed in this book. There are many collaborators in the translation of a book, and their joint effort is important for a positive outcome, according to the approximate 100 participants in the symposium.

Chapter one addresses how an editor finds a translator appropriate for the literary work at hand. Renowned poet Mahmoud Dar-

wish cites how the translator provides meaning to a work by putting it into another language. If not translated, speakers of other languages would not understand the work. The world of translation is small and there are well known translators, though they do not always have similar tastes. Outside readers are another element that can provide additional support by reading and writing reports on the manuscript when the editor does not speak the original language. In addition to the obvious need for the culture of the original language to be understood, sample translations are essential to finding the appropriate translator. If this goal is not met, the author can become involved or two translators can be used, as Martin Riker, the associate director at Dalkey Archive Press, elaborates: “Many translators speak of [...] feeling dissatisfaction with particular passages for which they don’t believe they’ve captured the author’s intentions. For this reason, many translators actively enjoy the process of working in tandem.” This discussion of the

work being translated improves the translation’s quality.

“Translation Contracts”, chapter two, attends to the necessary publishing agreements made prior to the translation process. Paul’s study delineates certain formalities that should be taken in order to have all the necessary credit, payment, and approval needed to achieve the final product. US and UK publishers are mentioned here as well as the differences in their approaches to a translation through word choice that could show variations in the finished piece. In terms of publishing, timing is vital to the success of a translated work. If the translation is delayed while the book in the original language is successful in its country, it could prove to be less prominent after the translated version is released in another country. To this end, publicity is essential, and translators are often asked to promote their work.

According to chapter three, “Establishing Boundaries,” the author of the soon to be translated book should indeed be involved

in this process. One example is that of Robert Chandler, the translator of *The Railway* written by Hamid Ismailov: translator and author held meetings which helped improve the translation. Some contributors to the study addressed the issue of not being able to work with an author. In this case, family members and diaries can assist with detecting the style and intentions of the author.

Gill's book outlines the major challenges of the profession and gives suggestions as to how they can be resolved. For example, dialect and humor pose challenges to translation, both of which may require research and perhaps a visit to the author's country of origin. Additionally, the chapter presents the issues regarding a time limit for a translation. If translators need to research and edit their work, they must assume multiple roles in order to accomplish the task. Euan Cameron says that translators should be even more involved in the world of publishing so that they will have a better idea of how their work will be edited in

keeping with the style of the publishing house. Collaboration on behalf of all parties is the element stressed throughout this guide.

Chapter four deals directly with "Translation Problems and Solutions". Participants at the symposium claim that it is difficult for a translation to resonate the way the original work does. According to Gill, "Martin Riker believes that making a book that evokes the spirit and particular energy of the original has to take precedence over making a book faithful to the original". Titles often cause concern for translators. For example, Sandra Smith, the translator of *Suite Française*, decided to leave the French title, despite her worries that it would affect the marketing of the book in America. Sometimes titles need to be adapted to fit the prospective market, occasionally leading to conflict among editor, author, translator, and publishing house. In this chapter, solutions are proposed to the following common problems: style, humor, slang, expletives, quotes, and differences between US and UK

usage of English. The availability of English translators is greater than other languages and norms of a language based on culture could make it impossible to come to a meaning that is equivalent in another language, yet, a book should not be “Anglicised”. With respect to the outcome of a translation, Gill maintains that “a good translation allows a reader to experience firsthand a different world...” Some cultural references need to be kept in the original language and explained to the reader through a footnote or glossary, even though this material might create additional problems. The conference participants conclude with a summary of the translator’s roles in being creative, keeping notes on their changes, and analyzing any specific problems they encounter.

“The Editing Process,” chapter five, discusses the importance of the book and not merely the translation. Christina Thomas, a copyeditor from The Society for Editors and Proofreaders, presents common elements that she deals with when proofing any

book. For her, editors do not need to know the source language but do need to be excellent readers in the book’s new language. At the symposium, Ros Schwartz “feels that the most important quality is empathy” in an editor. If difficulties ultimately cannot be resolved, the translator might not want to be mentioned in the final product. In this case, a book may not be “saved” if it loses its spark during the translation process. Furthermore, it is not an editor’s job to re-translate.

The relationship between the key players of a translation can prevent conflicts. If it is a good one, the conference discussion concluded, it will be long lasting. Chapter six, “Ongoing Relationships” speaks about the translator’s level of involvement in the book as well as the professional networks that are created, such as the Translators’ Association.

Translation In Practice: A Symposium edited by Gill Paul demonstrates that translators and editors can have similar expectations for a book that do not undermine the original and help as-

sure success in a new language and society. This study lists specific guidelines regarding interactive relationships, editing, and the final translated product that are appropriate for an audience of translators, editors, and anyone involved in the translating process. The book's divisions into concise

paragraphs make it a "practical guide" to translation based on a convergence of ideas expressed by prominent editors, authors, and translators in the field.

Elizabeth Gronlund
St. Lawrence University
