

# **AN ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSLATION OF A STUDY ABOUT THE TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY IN LATIN AMERICA**

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## **Introduction**

TRANSLATION IS NOT JUST A MATTER of decoding certain linguistic forms into meaning and encoding this into new forms. Translation goes beyond that. It is a complex mental process and involves a wide spectrum of decisions the translator has to make in order to achieve the target audience. Coulthard (1992) claims that translation involves re-textualization of the original for an "ideal reader". The translator's decisions involve vocabulary choice, syntactic forms, degree of formality, style, and readership. However, it is not an easy task. Each language has its own particular characteristics , linguistic system and culture, which are often difficult to translate into a mother tongue. Regarding this idea, it may be said that there is no complete equivalence in languages ( Bassnett,1980), since each language is a unique expression of a particular meaning system and culture. According to Garcia (1992), fidelity and freedom are inextricably intertwined for the translator. On the one hand, there is the fidelity of transmitting the meaningful ideas, information, and the message of the text in a way that adheres as closely as possible to the original text. On the other hand, there is the translator's freedom to change it. In this way, the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) are independent if one holds to the idea that the

translation will produce a new text. Even so, the message conveyed by the ST will tend to be the same in the TT. Because translators are often faced with the problem of equivalence, they have to deal with attempts to perceive the exact meaning of words and utterances in order to reproduce them in another language. For this reason, I believe that the “solution” for the problem of non-equivalence is not self-evident, which means that it entails a conscious process on the translator’s part.

For Gutt (1991), as well as for Baker (1993), the contemporary concept in translation regarding the quality of a translated text deals with the attempt to achieve equivalence as often as possible. That is to say that translation is influenced by a variety of linguistic and cultural factors, and is mostly relative. Therefore, by giving my own view of the process as “the art of translation”, it may be said that in the process of translation there are always gains and losses. As Baker (1993) claims, “every translation has points of strength and points of weakness and every translation is open to improvement (p.7).” When referring to equivalence, it is extremely relevant to take into consideration which aspects of the texts are to be compared and under what conditions equivalence is thought to be applied.

### **Purpose of this paper**

This paper aims at analyzing some aspects of equivalence in the word, grammatical and textual level of a study present in the issue “Jobs for the Millenium”, published in Florida in 1996.

### **Source Text and Target Text**

The study was translated into Spanish and Portuguese, nevertheless I have chosen to analyse only the English-Portuguese version. The paper itself is an executive summary which deals with education and training for careers in Latin America’s Travel and Tourism

industry. 'Jobs for the Millenium' is the third in a series of Travel and Tourism industry human resources studies sponsored by the American Express foundation in collaboration with the World Travel and Tourism Council. The other two studies focused on Europe and Asia-Pacific, while the present study focuses on Latin America. This kind of report highlights the key issues of concern to business, governments and educators regarding the future of Travel and Tourism human resources in Latin America.

### Analysis of the equivalence at word level

In this text, it may be perceived that the translator opts for re-ordering some structures. As Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) put it "utterances and messages consist of lexical elements placed in a particular sequence (p.211)", and that this sequence is prescribed by the linguistic system of word order rules of each language. By analyzing the re-ordering of words in the TT, it is clear that in English, when there are two nouns together, as in *employee training*, the second noun refers to an activity, and in Portuguese it is inverted as *treinamento de empregados*.

When reading carefully both the ST and the TT, the reader realizes that the same words are translated in different ways throughout the TT. Some examples are:

1. a) ...three *employees*...três *funcionários*.....  
 b) *Employee training*...O *treinamento de empregados*...
2. a) *Survey Results*Resultados do *Estudo*  
 b) ...in the *Latin America survey* na *pesquisa da America Latina*...
3. a) *Quality of External and In-house Training Programs*  
 Qualidade dos Programas de *Treinamento Dentro e Fora*  
 das *Empresas*.

b) *In-house* training Programs...

Os programas *internos* de treinamento...

c) The practical element in *external* Travel and Tourism training and educational programs...

O elemento prático no treinamento *externo* de Viagens e Turismo e programas educacionais.

4. a) NTO representatives *rated* the level of service skills (...), while employers *rated* these skills...

Os representantes das ONT *classificam* (...) o nível de habilidade no serviço (...), enquanto empregados *consideram* essas habilidades...

For me, the lexical choice made by the translator in example number 1 a and b, in varying the term *employees* into different ones in Portuguese seems to be linked to the fact that in the TT, there are times when the terms *empregadores* and *empregados* appear, which may confuse the reader. Hence, choosing another lexicon may slightly facilitate the flow of the reading.

In addition to this, in example 3 a, the lexical terms used were far from successful. It does not seem adequate to use the terms *dentro* and *fora* in that context. Therefore, the best choice, in my opinion was *interno* and *externo*, as seen in example 3 b and c above. The translation of the following example 4 a, for me, seems to be adequate, because according to Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture, "to rate" means 'to have the stated opinion about', and that is what the translator tries to convey in the TT.

In some parts of the text, we may notice the omission of information as well as some assertions. Some of them lead to an improvement of the text, others cause losses in the TT.

Omission in the TT is cited in the examples below

1. ...and a *training* budget...e um orçamento...

In this example, I agree that the translator succeeds in omitting the word *training*, because it had already been mentioned in the beginning of the sentence. Thus, the reader knew what kind of *orçamento* was discussed. Maybe adding *treinamento* to the TT would result in the text becoming repetitive.

2. ...these *skills* deficiencies by *sponsoring* various forms of training...

...essas deficiências através de formas de treinamento e programas educacionais diversos.

To my mind, the translator could not have omitted the terms underlined in the ST, causing a loss in the TT, because although it had been mentioned before what the skills were, I believe the explanation of these two terms *skills* and *sponsoring* in the TT to be important.

3. ...A majority of the employers and NTO representatives rated external *Travel and Tourism* training and educational programs *as mostly* ineffective...

A maioria dos empregadores e representantes das ONT considera os programas de educação e treinamento fora das empresas ineficazes.

With regard to the omission of the term *Travel and Tourism*, we may consider that the translator should have kept it in the TT, since it is an important referent for *programas*. Moreover, the omission of *as mostly* results in the loss of information since in the ST, this term gives some emphasis to the adjective *ineffective*, which does not appear in the TT.

Besides this, there is an instance in the ST where a verb is repeated, and in the TT one of them is omitted, as can be seen in:

... The expansion of in-house training programs was also favored by employers and even more strongly *favored* by NTO representatives.

... A expansão de programas de treinamento oferecidos internamente pelas empresas também é *apoiada* pelos empregadores e ainda mais fortemente pelos representantes das ONT.

To my view , if the translator had chosen to repeat the verb *apoiada*, it would become redundant. There is no need to repeat the same terms, since the idea is implicit in the verb. Hence, in this case, the appearance of the verb *apoiada* just once, seem to be enough to explain the meaning of the sentence.

Assertion in the TT is cited in the examples below

1. Foreign languages, computers, and marketing were the skills...

As habilidades em línguas estrangeiras, uso de computadores, e *técnicas* de marketing foram...

In my point of view, the assertion of *uso* and *técnicas* in the TT was very positive because without these words in the text the sentence would not make much sense.

2. Expansion of Travel and Tourism Education and Training  
Expansão de Educação e treinamento *no setor* de Viagens e Turismo

3. Lastly, employers in the Latin American survey...

Por último, os empregados *entrevistados* na pesquisa da América Latina...

Both examples of assertion presented above (2 and 3) seem to bring to the TT a meaning that was embedded in the lexicon of the ST.

Still in relation to example 2, it seems convenient to comment on the way the term *Education* is translated ,that is Educação. It would be better if the Portuguese version used formação. The word Educação can be called a false cognate, since it has very similar

forms in English and Portuguese, but convey different meanings.

To some extent, sometimes the translator opts for substituting one item for another, trying to smooth the idea conveyed by the ST, but the result does not always succeed, since there is a change in the lexical meaning:

...the *material* taught in these programs was *mostly irrelevant* to the work.

...o *conteúdo* ensinado nesses programas é *muito pouco relevante* para o trabalho.

According to *Cambridge Dictionary of English*, the word *irrelevant* means something that is "not related to what is being discussed and therefore of no importance. (p.753)" Hence, when the translator uses *pouco relevante*, she may be trying to convey that there is some importance, although little.

Moreover, still in regard to the equivalence at word level, other example resembles to deceive what the ST meant to convey. Thus, *experienced difficulties*, in the ST becomes *experimentaram dificuldades* in the TT. For me, the translation failed in choosing this term. It would be more adequate to use *tiveram dificuldades*, because it sounds more natural.

In addition, in the ST, *...by both employers and NTO representatives* is translated in the TT as *...tanto por empregados quanto pelos representante das ONT*. In effect, I suppose this is the best equivalent in Portuguese.

Taking into consideration that in every language there are some borrowings that enter and become part of the lexicon of that language, in the TT we have the well-established borrowing *status*, that is now part of the TL lexicon.

### **Analysis of equivalence at grammatical level**

In relation to the fixed rules of grammatical word order in terms of

thematic structure, we may notice that the placing of the qualifying adjective in English and Portuguese is different:

skilled and semi-skilled employees

### Goal Theme

Concerning the grammatical equivalence, it may be said that in the ST, most verbs are in past tense form, while in the TT the same verbs are in the present tense form.

1. ...*had* difficulties... ...*têm tido* dificuldades...
2. ...employers *wanted*.....empregados *querem*...
3. ...they *were supportive*.....eles *apóiam*...
4. ...*did not support*.....*não apóiam*...
5. ...that the industry *was receiving*...que a indústria *recebe*...

In some instances, the use of present tense seems inappropriate, but in others it seems adequate, since the text refers to results of a study in which they talk about actions and situations which happen repeatedly. Also, by applying the present tense in the TT, the translator is trying to bring the reader closer to the content. Thus, we may be talking about an imaginary present time, in which the use of a fictional present appears to put the reader in the place of someone actually attending the events. For instance, in example 5, in the ST, we may perceive that the marked term is the continuous, referring to the progress of the event. However, in the TT, the simple form is neutral. In relation to the progressive aspect *was receiving*, one could add that it lacks certainty with regard to the completeness of the event.



### Analysis of equivalence at textual level

Throughout the texts, the achievement of textual cohesion through lexical and grammatical relations may be perceived. Thus, one of the cohesive elements used by the translator is co-reference, which Baker (1993) claims can be set somewhere around the repetition/synonym level of the continuum. For instance, the term *employees* has a co-referential item *people*. However, the word *people* is often used as a superordinate as a relationship between two words, in which the meaning of one of the words includes the meaning of the other word. Hence, in this case, *people* is a general term that includes funcionários. For instance:

that prepare *people* to work in the Travel and Tourism industry.

que prepare os *funcionários* para trabalhar na indústria de Viagens e Turismo.

The use of the connector *e* in the TT seems to be inappropriate, since the following ideas are contrasting, and not complementing one another. For instance:

In-house training programs were evaluated as mostly effective by employers, *but* mostly ineffective by NTO representatives.

Os programas de treinamento internos (...) foram avaliados como modestamente eficazes pelos empregadores *e* praticamente ineficazes pelos representantes das ONT.

### Concluding Remarks

By browsing the whole executive summary, it is clear that in most sections of the study, the Portuguese text was longer than the English text. This led me to wonder if this is because Portuguese words are

longer or because, in Portuguese, we tend to use more words to explain one thing.

All in all, after analyzing the TT, I realized that the translator tried to follow as much as possible the ST, in form and content. It is important to find the closest equivalence, in order to transmit correct and complete information. So as to speak, it did not seem to interfere in the reader's comprehension of the text, maybe because the target audience does not care much about the natural flow of information. The new text should be read naturally, as if it were the original version, with no influence of the ST. Nevertheless, in the TT, there are parts in which we lose information, whereas in others we gain information.

As a whole, translation is an art that requires a great deal of effort on the translator's part in trying to adapt the source text to the culture and linguistic aspects of the TT being produced. And, even after having "finished" the translation, it is always open to improvement.



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