Case Study Overview and Requirements

Table of Contents

Overview

The Case Study provides you with the opportunity to practice and reflect on all the skills (translation, terminological, and research and writing skills) you have acquired in the M.A. in Translation Program. It consists of a 4000-word translation, a critical analysis, and a term base. You will present and defend your Case Study to your committee and incorporate their feedback into your revised Case Study.

Requirements

Planning

The Case Study in Translation is a graduation requirement for all students enrolled in the M.A. in Translation (Arabic, French, German, Japanese, Russian and Spanish). The Case Study is a test of translation, terminological, and research skills as well as a measure of your analytical and writing skills.

Text Selection

In consultation with your Case Study director, you will select a text for translation. The text selected should be equivalent to a minimum of 4,000 words. Alternatively, a group of related texts equaling 4,000 words may be selected.

You should select a text that represents a pertinent area of translation activity, for instance, a scholarly, commercial, legal, scientific, technical, or literary work. The text should be the kind of text that a professional translator (including literary translators) would actually translate for publication.

A prospectus describing the text must be completed, approved and signed by the Case Study director no later than the end of the first week of the semester. The prospectus should be accompanied by a copy of the document to be translated. The Case Study director will retain a copy of the prospectus and file a second copy with the online M.A. in Translation program coordinator.

Committee and Defense

The Case Study committee has three (3) official members:
1. The Case Study director
2. A member who specializes in the language of the source text
3. A member who is a native speaker of the target language and who has expertise in the subject matter

The members of the committee are selected by the Case Study director in consultation with you. You will be informed once the committee has been officially formed.

The Defense will consist of the following components:
- Submission of a scripted presentation where you introduce the main facets of your Case Study
- Reception of questions and comments from the committee, along with annotations in the case study
- Response to the committee's questions and comments
- Submission of revised case study

Format of the Case Study Document

Paragraphs in both the source and the target text **must be numbered** in parallel so that it is easy to refer back and forth between the two. Cite these paragraph numbers when discussing specific parts of the document in the analysis. *[Note: It is ok to change paragraph boundaries but ensure that you maintain parallel numbers for parallel segments.]* If you need instructions for numbering paragraphs, please consult the Numbering Paragraphs in Word Handout found in Module 1.

The Case Study document must have the following parts, assembled in the specified order (variations from this order must be pre-approved by the Case Study director).
1. **Title Page**
2. **Table of Contents**
3. **Acknowledgments** (identify committee members and all consultants by name)

4. **Translation** (number the paragraphs in the translation to mirror the numbered paragraphs in the source)
5. **Source Text** (number the paragraphs in the source text to mirror the numbered paragraphs in the translation)
6. **Translation Analysis** (approximately 4,000 words or 15 pages)
7. **Bibliography** (cite parallel and background texts; use MLA style or any other accepted style approved by the Case Study director, as appropriate)
8. **Terminology** (use standard format; see below)

The Log

The Log is a record of the translation process and forms the foundation upon which you will build your analysis. You should maintain the record while preparing the translation so that you can draw upon it later when you write your analysis. The Log is not a report or an analysis in itself. It is a simple running commentary in which you record decisions made, problems encountered, strategies tried, and solutions discovered during the act of translation. The comments made by the Case Study director and by other readers will also provide important material for the Log. The more complete your Log is, the easier it will be to write your analysis. It is not, however, submitted with the Case Study document.

The Translation Analysis

Resources

When documenting the translation process and writing your analysis, you will want to be sure to use appropriate terminology for translation approaches, procedures, and strategies and to be aware of work that has been done in the past with respect to the theory and practice of translation.

You will be expected to consult **primary resources** in Translation Studies that are pertinent to your individual Case Study. Discuss with your Case Study director which current thinkers in the field are likely to be most useful to you.

For a systematic treatment of the terminology used in translator training, see Jean Delisle, Hannelore Lee Jahnke, and Monique Cormier, *Translation Terminology*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1999, as well as the standard Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet, *Comparative Stylistics of French and English: a Methodology for Translation*, translated and edited by Juan C. Sager and M.-J. Hamel. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1995. You may use tertiary resources to guide you in finding relevant resources, but you are expected to cite primary sources.

Initial Source Text Analysis

Text type: What kind of text is it? What are the stylistic features that characterize this type of text and what are the features that make it different from other texts? For specialized texts, what are the characteristics of this text type (intentional aim, important information, semantic structure, coherence)?

Audience: Who was the intended or likely audience?

Initial Target Text Analysis

Text type: What is the text type of the target text? Are you translating into the same or a different text type? What are the cultural differences in reader expectations for this text type? Is cross-cultural adaptation or localization necessary? Why? For a literary text, what authors in the target language exhibit similar stylistic features or themes? Can they be used as parallel texts? For specialized texts, you can also consider standards of textuality or other theoretical features such as those discussed in Neubert and Shreve (*Translation as Text*) or in other standard theoretical works. If you do use such criteria, be sure to cite the sources of the concepts you used when you write your analysis later.

The Translation Process - Initial Text Production

Terminology

The terminology collection should follow the minimum standard terminology format used in the Institute for Applied Linguistics as evidenced in the models introduced in your T*erminology and Computer Applications for Translators* course.

You should use the SDL-MultiTerm for Windows terminology management system or some other comparable TMS. The terminology pertaining to the Case Study is a translation-oriented resource constructed by the translator for his or her own use. Terms included in the termbase should be those for which the translator had to do research and/or for which the translator wishes to supply documentation. Terminology work should be initiated as soon as work on the Case Study begins, **preferably before beginning to translate the actual text**. The termbase should be constructed as terms are encountered, researched, and resolved. The definition in your entries refers to the whole entry and not necessarily to any one term, so it appears before any of the terms in a given language and not after the term, unlike in lexicographical resources.

The selection of terms to include in the Case Study involves several considerations:
- Document those terms or terminological units that are central to your Case Study.

- Do not include items of common knowledge (e.g.,copper=Kupfer=cuivre=cobre). You may include such items for your own use but filter them out when you prepare the terminology section of the Case Study document. Some texts result in huge terminology collections. You may want to reduce the published version to about 30 to 50 terminological entries. By the same token, some texts only generate shorter termbases. Consult with your Case Study director if you suspect that your termbase is likely to differ from more common configurations.

- Literary translations may provide a limited number of strictly terminological problems. Discuss with your Case Study director whether your text lends itself to a study of the author's unique personal lexicon. Sometimes it is useful to document dialectal or period-specific use of words and terms.

- The final version of the termbase should be prepared using the MultiTerm RTF dictionary export feature to produce a Source-Language –Target-Language version of the glossary. You

should follow this file with an HTML table output from MultiTerm for the Target-Language – Source-Language direction so that your readers can cross-reference terms. Please consult the Termbase Conversion & Export Refresher presentation for a reminder on how to set up your termbase.

Translation Approach

When writing your analysis, it is important to distinguish between the overall approach you will take, the strategies you will use, and the processes involved.

You must decide which approach is appropriate for your text and for the general text type. Is one approach appropriate for part of your text and another appropriate elsewhere? Some of the major theorists you have read may be useful in making this decision.

Translation Strategies

This section will describe the most important strategies you used accompanied by examples. As you worked through the translation of your text, you used various strategies to solve specific translation problems. Take care to define for yourself the strategies that you chose to use and document how you used them. Did some of your choices fail? If so, why, and which strategies did you use to replace them? Don't simply list strategies; rather discuss those that you used most often and that were most important.

Translation and Terminology Research

Make sure you consult parallel texts and other resources to support the translation process. Your first source of information may be from the Internet, but also examine available print media when needed. Ideally, you should cross-validate terminological choices and even the content of the text against your support materials.

The Translation Process - Final Text Production

The Editing Phase

Revision for thematic and structural reorganization (i.e., for specialized texts): Do you have to rearrange the order in which ideas are presented in the text? If so, why? Do you have to change the actual format or linguistic organization of the textual segments –for instance, delete a "conclusion" and turn it into a "prologue", move an abstract, etc.?

Revision for style: Do you want to make changes in the translated text purely for stylistic reasons, for readability, or for idiomatic fluency? Can you classify your revisions? These kinds of changes occur in all translations but are very important for literary translation.

Revision for cohesion: Do you feel the need to make changes to lexical items and phrases in order to introduce greater cohesion into the text? Do you see the need to abandon cohesive devices present in the source text and to use different ones in the target text?

Revision for register: Is it necessary to accommodate different levels of language between the source and the target text? These questions will vary according to the kind of text you are translating, the quality of the original, and the cultural distance between the source and target audiences. Not all the items cited here will apply for every Case Study, so when you write your analysis, you should discuss only those elements that are relevant to your text and your working decisions.

Writing the Translation Analysis

The analysis should be a coherent discussion of the translation process. It is an expository essay and you should follow the guidelines provided in the *Graduate Research and Writing* course. Remember that as an essay, the analysis is about your translation, the translation process itself, and the special factors affecting the translation of this particular text. With a few exceptions, it should not be a diary-like narrative told in the first person detailing the individual steps in your process.

Essential elements of the essay include:

- **Introduction and general approach to the translation**: Present your Case Study briefly, describing your general approach and indicate the outline you will follow in your paper, as is proper for standard essay writing in English. In getting started, you may use the first person where it is natural to explain why you chose the text, but after the Introduction, it is inappropriate to continue with an extended first-person narrative.

- **Discussion of the source text**: Describe the source text briefly. Did you encounter any special problems at this stage in the process?

- **Preparing the target text**: What kinds of issues were most relevant to the preparation of the target text? How did text type and stylistic issues affect the decisions you made while translating? What kind of research was necessary? What kinds of parallel texts did you choose? How did you verify and validate the information you found? Did you use a consultant, and if so, who, when and how?

- **General translation process**: Reflect on how you approached the actual processing of the target text. Did you proceed sentence-by-sentence through the source and then revise afterwards? Did you do a paragraph at a time? Did you read the source text completely through and then translate? Or did you read a paragraph or section at a time and then translate in sections? If you used a translation tool, did you find yourself working along a sentence at a time? If so, how did this affect the overall cohesion of the text? Integrate your answers to these questions into the broader structure of your analysis.

- **Specific translation process**: *This should be a major part of your essay*. Present your discussion in some kind of logical order, which should ideally be dictated by the critical features of your text. Within the framework of your overall discussion, you will want to consider the strategies you employed and the solutions you reached using these strategies, but this information should be folded into the flow of your main discussion. Do not catalog strategies as the primary focus of your analysis. If you used special tools to produce the text, such as a translation memory or

localization program, reflect on the effect that the tool has had on the production phase. What are its good and its bad aspects?

- **Terminological discussion**: Discuss any specific problems that you encountered with terminology. Were there distinct patterns that evolved with respect to terminology? In the case of some specialized texts, terminological issues become the main focus of the analysis.

- **Conclusion**: Summarize the analysis and indicate how successful you think the translation was. Are there problems still remaining? What are they? Are there things you could have done differently? For specialized texts, you might want to appraise the result in terms of readability and fluency. For literary texts, you might indicate what you tried to accomplish and whether it was possible. Are there significant conceptual differences between the source and the target language communities that affect term formation or knowledge organization? Link your observations to theorists whose writing has informed your decisions and your analysis.

These are suggestions of issues that are likely to be pertinent to your texts, but they should be adapted for each particular case. Your outline will be determined by the kind of text you chose, and the kind of approach selected. A highly specialized text with a rigid text type will require a more substantial discussion of terminology, while a literary text will entail a significant discussion of stylistic features.

Reminders: Organization and General Layout for the Case Study

1. **Number the paragraphs** in the original text and in the translation so that it is easy for readers to move back and forth between them. In your analysis, whenever you refer to individual points in the text, include the relevant paragraph numbers so that your readers can orient themselves.

2. **Translation Management Criteria:** If you make a decision on a particular terminological item or a turn of phrase that recurs elsewhere in the text, be sure to track it throughout the text and bring all instances of this problem into compliance with your new strategy. If there are stylistic or semantic differences that dictate that you not do this, it's a good idea to discuss the issue in your analysis so that your readers know why you chose different solutions in different contexts.