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**Connecta**

**LEARNING PACK 9 | TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES**



**Contents**

1. Translation 1
2. Method vs Techniques 1
3. Translation Methods 1
   1. Foreignisation 1-2
   2. Domestication 2-3
   3. Neutralisation 3
   4. Exercise 1 4
4. Translation Techniques 5
   1. Borrowing 5
      1. Exercise 2 5
   2. Calque 5-6
      1. Exercise 3 6
   3. Literal translation 7
      1. Exercise 4 7-8
   4. Transposition 8
      1. Exercise 5 8
   5. Modulation 9
      1. Exercise 6 9
   6. Equivalence or Reformulation 10
      1. Exercise 7 10
5. Glossary 11-12
6. Self-assessment 12-13
7. References 13

**1. Translation**

**What is translation?**

Translation is the process in which we replace an original written or spoken text in one language with its equivalent in another language. This original text is commonly known as the Source Text (ST), whereas its equivalent in another language is referred to as the Target Text (TT).  
The purpose of translating is making these source texts available to as many people as possible. However, the disparity that exists amongst the different languages and cultures makes translation a complex process. For this reason, translators must be not only bilingual or multilingual but also have bicultural and multicultural awareness. Some of the most challenging factors while translating are maintaining the same meaning and style, as well as finding equivalence for proverbs and idioms, for instance. It is always recommended to be familiarised with different approaches that can make the translation process easier.

**2. Method vs Techniques**

There are overall approaches that can be applied to the whole text; these can be defined as methods, approaches or strategies. It is essential not to confuse these methods with translation techniques. While methods are applied to the whole text, techniques may vary from sentence to sentence, depending on the difficulties or challenges that we encounter.

**3. Translation Methods**

**3.1 Foreignisation**

Foreignisation could be defined asbeing as close to the source text as possible in terms ofmaintaining the culture-specific items of the source text, e.g. personal names, streets, national cuisine, etc. Below you have an example of a sentence that has been translated with a foreignisation approach:

Source text (English): When he was a child, he loved the Christmas decorations and the surprises hidden in Christmas Crackers.

Target text (Spanish): Cuando era niño le encantaban los adornos de Navidad y las sorpresas que escondían los *Christmas Crackers*.

Target text (French): Quand il était enfant, il aimait les décorations de Noël et les surprises cachées dans les *Christmas Crackers*.

Target text (German): Als er ein Kind war, liebte er die Weihnachtsdekorationen und die Überraschungen, die in den „Christmas Crackers“ versteckt waren.

Advantages of foreignisation:

* It emphasises the diversity that exists between different cultures and languages and exposes the target audience to other cultures.
* It preserves the style and cultural references of the source text.

Disadvantages of foreignisation:

* Some readers might not be familiar with foreign terms and references and may feel that the text is too obscure.

**3.2 Domestication**

Domestication, on the other hand, aims at eliminating or replacing any cultural or linguistic reference that may prevent the target audience from understanding the target text completely. A domestication approach is normally used when translating content related to comedy programmes or content for children. Taking the example above:

Source text (English): When he was a child, he loved the Christmas decorations and the surprises hidden in Christmas Crackers.

Target text (Spanish): Cuando era niño le encantaban los adornos de Navidad y los turrones.

Target text (French): Quand il était enfant, il aimait les décorations de Noël et la bouche de Noël.

Target text (German): Als er ein Kind war, liebte er die Weihnachtsdekorationen und die Weihnachtskekse.

Advantages of domestication:

* It emphasises the similarity that exists between languages.
* It creates a fluid and natural text that is easy to understand.

Disadvantages of domestication:

* It may disregard the culture of origin and the identity of the author.

**3.3 Neutralisation**

The midway approach is known as neutralisation. With this method, you include a generalised term or description to explain a cultural reference. The aim is to transfer the cultural message from the source text to the target text while making sure that the target text is idiomatic and natural. If foreignisation and domestication are considered opposites of one another, neutralisation is a midpoint. For instance:

Source text (English): When he was a child, he loved the Christmas decorations and the surprises hidden in Christmas Crackers.

Target text (Spanish): Cuando era niño le encantaban los adornos de Navidad y las costumbres navideñas británicas.

Target text (French): Quand il était enfant, il aimait les décorations de Noël et les coutumes de Noël britanniques.

Target text (German)**:** Als er ein Kind war, liebte er die Weihnachtsdekorationen und die englischen Weihnachtsbräuche.

Advantages of neutralisation :

* It creates an idiomatic text that is easy to understand.
* It does not completely disregard the source culture.

Disadvantages of neutralisation :

* It partly eliminates the cultural elements of the source text.

**3.4 Exercise 1**

E1, Q1: Does your screenplay have any cultural references (e.g. names, places, references to celebrities, TV programmes, etc.)? If so, which method will you use to translate them and why? (Tip: if you don’t have any cultural references in your screenplay, you might want to use this exercise to add some).

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E1, Q2: Using the space below, note down and translate at least three sentences of your screenplay that contain cultural references, try to do this using always the method you have chosen.

Sentence 1:

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Sentence 2: **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Sentence 3:

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**4. Translation Techniques**

As mentioned above, translation techniques are a series of different strategies that you might apply throughout your translation depending on the difficulties that you encounter. Below you have six translation techniques that can help you to translate your screenplay.

**4.1 Borrowing**

Borrowing is taking words directly from one language into another without translating them. Many English words are "borrowed" into other languages, e.g. selfie or software. However, English also borrows words from other languages, e.g. café (from French), tortilla (Mexican Spanish) and kindergarten (German).

**4.1.1 Exercise 2**

E2,Q1: Can you think of other borrowed words from other languages we use on a daily basis?

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E2, Q2: Have you used any borrowed words in your screenplay? If so, use the space below to refine your translations for these sentences.

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**4.2 Calque**

A calque is a phrase borrowed from another language and translated literally word-for-word. An example of words that have been adopted into English as calques are: blue-blood (*sangre azul,* Spanish), killer whale (*ballena asesina,* Spanish), antibody (*antikörper*, German), standpoint (*standpunkt*, German), point of view (*point de vue*, French), Adam's apple (*pomme d'Adam*, French).

An example of words that have been adopted into foreign languages from English: disque dur (hard disk), rascacielos (skyscraper) and Fußball (football). While using calques, you must be aware of “false friends”, which are words in two languages that look similar, or sound similar, but have different meanings from one another. For example:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **English** | **Spanish** |
| Carpet | Carpeta (folder) |
| Embarrassed | Embarazada (pregnant) |
| Large | Largo (long) |
| **English** | **French** |
| Money | Monnaie |
| Blessed | Blessé |
| Bras | Bras |
| **English** | **German** |
| Rat | Der Rat |
| Smoking | Der smoking |
| To wink | Winken |

**4.2.1 Exercice 3**

E3, Q1: Can you think of other calques we use on a daily basis?

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

E3, Q2: Can you think of other “false friends” to avoid during your translation?

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**4.3 Literal translation**

A literal translation is a word-for-word translation. However, this technique can be only used in certain languages or sentences, where the original meaning will not be altered and the translation will still sound idiomatic. Literal translations usually work best for simple sentences, for instance:

* English-French : My mum works/Ma mère travaille.
* English-Spanish: My mum works/Mi mamá trabaja.
* English-German: My mum works/Meine Mutter arbeitet.

However, many simple sentences cannot be translated word for word:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **English** | **Literal Translation** | **Correct Translation** |
| French | I am 16. | ~~Je suis 16.~~ | J'ai 16 ans |
| Spanish | I am 16. | ~~Soy 16.~~ | Tengo 16 años. |
| German | I am going. | ~~Ich bin gehen/gehend.~~ | Ich gehe im Moment. |

When it comes to complex and longer sentences it is normally best to use other techniques.

**4.3.1 Exercise 4**

E4, Q1: Select three short and simple sentences from your screenplay and translate them using a literal translation approach. Does it work well or perhaps you need to make changes?

Sentence 1:

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Sentence 2: **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Sentence 3:

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**4.4 Transposition**

Transposition involves changing words from one grammatical category to another without altering the meaning of the text. In other words, this translation technique introduces a change in grammatical structure. Transposition is usually applied to sentences that would not sound idiomatic if they were to be translated literally. For example:

* English-French: I called you early this week/Je t’a appelé au début de cette semaine.
* English-Spanish: He likes swimming / Le gusta la natación. Here, *swimming* is a **verb** but *natación* is a **noun**.
* English-German: He likes swimming /Er schwimmt gern.

**4.4.1 Exercise 5**

E5, Q1: Select two sentences from your screenplay and translate them using a transposition approach.

Sentence 1:

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Sentence 2: **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**4.5 Modulation**

Modulationconsists of using a different phrase in the source and target languages to convey the same idea. Through modulation, the translator generates a change in viewpoint of the message without altering meaning and without creating a sense of awkwardness for the reader of the target text:

* English-French: It’s easy to understand/ C’est pas difficile à comprendre.
* English-Spanish: It’s easy to understand/ No es difícil de comprender.
* You could translate this literally: *Es fácil de entender* (It’s easy to understand), but depending on the context (perhaps somebody is talking to a child and does not want to sound harsh) you might prefer to change the message slightly (It is not difficult to understand).
* English-German: It’s easy to understand/ *Es ist leicht zu verstehen*.

**4.5.1 Exercise 6**

E6,Q1: Select three sentences from your screenplay and translate them using a modulation approach.

Sentence 1:

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Sentence 2: **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Sentence 3:

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**4.6 Equivalence or reformulation**

Equivalence or reformulationuses a completely different expression to transmit the same meaning. It is normally used to translate idioms and content related to culture. For instance:

* English-French: A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush/ Un chien vivant vaut mieux qu'un lion mort.
* English-Spanish: Fresh as a cucumber / Fresco como una lechuga.
* English – Spanish: A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush/ Más vale pájaro en mano que ciento volando.
* English-German: A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush/ Besser ein Spatz (a sparrow) in der Hand als eine Taube (a dove) auf dem Dach.

**4.6.1 Exercise 7**

E7, Q1: Select two sentences from your screenplay and translate them using equivalence or reformulation. (Tip: if you don’t have any sentences in your screenplay that can be translated using a reformulation approach, you might want to use this exercise to add some).

Sentence 1:

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Sentence 2: **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**5. Glossary**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **English** | **Español** | **Français** | **Deutsch** |
| Borrowing | Enfoque | Emprunter | die Direktentlehnung  to borrow = leihen |
| Calque | Préstamo | Calque | die Lehnübersetzung |
| Domestication | Calco | Naturalisation | die Domestizierung |
| Equivalence | Domesticación | Equivalence | die Äquivalenz |
| Foreignisation | Equivalencia | Exotisation | die Verfremdung |
| Literal Translation | Extranjerización | Traduction littérale | die wortgetreue Übersetzung |
| Approach | Traducción literal | Approche | der Ansatz |
| Method | Método | Méthode | die Methode |
| Modulation | Modulación | Modulation | die Modulation  (die Perspektivenverschiebung) |
| Reformulation | Reformulación | Reformulation | die Umformulierung |
| Source Text | Texto de origen | Texte Source | der Ausgangstext |
| Strategy | Estrategia | Stratégie | die Strategie |
| Target Text | Texto meta | Texte cible | der Zieltext |
| Technique | Técnica | Technique | die Technik |
| Translation | Traducción | Traduction | die Übersetzung |
| Transposition | Transposición | Transposition | die Transposition  (der Wortartwechsel) |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**6. Self-assessment**

After completing the exercises, tick the column that best represents how you feel about the following statements:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Not at all confident** | **Nearly there** | **Very confident** |
| 1 I understand what translation is and its purpose. |  |  |  |
| 2 I am aware of the difference between translation techniques for single sentences and translation methods applied to the whole text. |  |  |  |
| 3 I know how to apply the different translation methods to my texts. |  |  |  |
| 4 I have an idea of the advantages and disadvantages of each translation method. |  |  |  |
| 5 I can name at least four translation techniques. |  |  |  |
| 6 I know how to apply the different translation techniques to my texts. |  |  |  |

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