Towards a Text-World Approach to Translation and Its Pedagogical Implications

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ABSTRACT

Although it is widely acknowledged that translation is a cognitive process, there is scarcely any study establishing connections between the text and mental representations and giving a systematic and comprehensive explanation for this pivotal yet magical mechanism. Illuminated by Text World Theory, this study proposes a text-world approach to translation studies and addresses its implications for translator training. Translation is regarded as a cognitive communicative process of reproducing texts as worlds. The (in)coherence among text worlds as they are represented in translation provides a legitimate criterion for the evaluation of translation competence. To view translation as a cognitive-linguistic process of text-world construction and presentation may promise a more proactive approach to translator training by encouraging translator trainees to pay special attention to the expansion of their knowledge structures.

INTRODUCTION

Since concepts from cognitive studies were brought into the study of translation, the process of translation has become a heated topic for discussion (see Dank et al., 1997; Shreve & Angelone, 2010). Although a "reformulation stage" (Delisle, 1988, p. 69) has been widely acknowledged when the source text is comprehended and then re-verbalized in the target text, there has not been a comprehensive and systematic theoretical explanation for this pivotal-yet-magical process.

Characterized by its comprehensive application of cognitivist principles in analytical practice, Text World Theory is a cognitive-linguistic model for discourse analysis. Text-world theorists believe that it is text worlds, i.e. our mental representations of discourse, that play an essential role in our understanding of utterances and expressions of ideas (Werth, 1999, p. 7). As such, when relating to translation, we may assume that it is text worlds that function as the media linking translators' comprehension of the source text and their production of the target text.

Illuminated by a text-world model on translation studies, this paper will discuss translation at the interface of language and cognition, probing into the matching of linguistic expressions and mental representations in translation. To this end, Text World Theory not only provides a theoretical basis for our understanding of the cognitive process of translation but also has pedagogical implications for translator training.

AN OVERVIEW OF TEXT WORLD THEORY

Text World Theory is, in general, a cognitive-linguistic model that brings cognitive psychology into discourse analysis. The notion of text worlds was developed by Paul Werth in the 1990s with an aim to reveal the cognitive processes of human minds in language processing. It was further developed into a theory and elaborated by Joanna Gavins (2007) in her monograph *Text World Theory: An Introduction*.

According to Text World Theory, when people have verbal communication, either in the written or spoken form, the receiver, aided by knowledge-frames previously accumulated, constructs mental representations, i.e. text worlds, for comprehension and knowledge incrementation[1]. In this light, text worlds in this study are regarded as the key to the cognitive communicative process of translation, during which texts are comprehended and reproduced as worlds. "World" is an essential concept in Text World Theory. It is a "conceptual domain representing a state of affairs" (Werth, 1999, p. 206). There are three world levels that are of special interest to a text world theorist— the discourse world, the text world, and the sub-world.

The discourse world is the situational context when people communicate with one another. This notion is similar to situationality, one of the seven features consisting textuality[2] of any given text as proposed by Neubert & Shreve (1992, pp. 84-88). Their difference is that situationality focuses on the sociocultural context in which a text is located, whereas the discourse world emphasizes the "states-of-affairs conceived of by participants" (Werth, 1999, p. 84). Discourse world might be more easily defined in interpreting given the face-to-face nature of the interaction. The identities of the speaker and listener as well as their relationships and the surrounding context are usually clear and certain. In addition, the body language, facial expressions and tones of the speaker will also aid interpreters in understanding the discourse so they can translate appropriately. In the translation of written texts, however, due to the separation of discourse world participants (including the writer, the translator, and both the source text reader and the target text reader) in most cases, the source text is in many cases the main source of discourse information.

The "precise structure and cognitive effects of individual mental representations" (Werth, 1999, p. 10) are examined through "text worlds", which is the main focus of our discussion. Subordinate to the text world it springs from, a sub-world[3] has similar componential elements to those of a text world. Attitudinal sub-worlds reflect the attitudes of participants in the text world, such as their desires, beliefs and purposes. Modal sub-worlds are related to participants' assessment of factors such as truth, probability and reliability. It is worth noting that relevant topics on attitude and modality are also covered in Systemic Functional Linguistics under the discussions of "process" and "mood" (see Halliday, 2004; Eggins, 2004). While Systemic Functional Linguistics focuses on the metafunctions of language, Text World Theory, by viewing the relevant expressions as triggers to world creation, is more helpful in disclosing the language processing mechanism in human mind. A clearer delineation of the world layers could facilitate our comprehension and production of texts.

Given its strong explanatory power and practical feasibility, Text World Theory has been applied to the analysis of a variety of discourse genres including both literary texts and practical writings (e.g. Ma, 2008; Marley, 2008; Semino, 2009; Cruickshank & Lahey, 2010; Whiteley, 2011; Jia & Zhang, 2013; Lei, 2014; Long & Han, 2014). It has also been applied to foreign language teaching (e.g. Obregon et al., 2009; Giovanelli, 2010; Mohammadzadeh, 2017). Nevertheless, the application of the theory to translation studies is still limited.

A TEXT-WORLD APPROACH TO TRANSLATION

In Text World Theory, a discourse is taken as a dynamic cognitive process when the content of the discourse, i.e. the text, is comprehended as mental representations, or text worlds. In this connection, translation can be regarded as a cognitive communicative process of reproducing texts as worlds in

the target language. The following discussions provide the theoretical framework for a text-world approach to translation.

Discourse World Identification

Identification of participants and their relationships in the discourse world of the source text helps translators with the construction of the text worlds, i.e. their comprehension of the source text. In many cases, it might be easy to identify who the writer of a text is, but difficult to have a clear idea as who the target reader might be. Text World theorists believe that when people communicate, the writer or speaker has assumptions of their shared knowledge with the reader or listener, taking some information as knowledge already known to the receiver and believing some information needs further explanation. As far as translation is concerned, given the possibility that the target text readers do not have as adequate shared knowledge with the writer as the source text readers, translators may intentionally provide additional background information in order to facilitate target text readers' comprehension. This accounts for explicitation in translation, one of the first translation universals proposed by Blum-Kulka (1986).[4] As to what to be made explicit and how to present it in the target text, it largely depends on the translators' conceptualization of the source text and their assumptions in regard to the target readers' knowledge structure.

On the other hand, translators are always confronted with the problem of positioning themselves in the discourse world of the target text. According to House (1997), in the case of covert translation where the source text is "not specifically addressed to a particular source culture audience" (p. 69) such as the translation of scientific texts, tourist booklets, and economic texts, translators may choose to make their presence invisible by filtering out all the elements conveying cultural differences[5]. In other cases, translators may choose to retain those cultural differences or simply add their names and translators' notes to the target text so that their presence becomes visible. Text world theorists believe that it does make a difference to the reader whether it is an original text or a translated one that they assume they are reading. People tend to be more doubtful about the content of a translated text for fear that there might be something improperly if not wrongly rendered. They are inclined to consider those texts translated by reputable translators more reliable. Beliefs as such will consequently influence their involvement in the discourse of the target text.

Text World Presentation

The main cognitive mechanism of a translator is to re-present the text worlds built up from the source text in the target language. Details of the build-up of a text world and its implications for translation are discussed in this section.

World-Building Elements

The construction of text worlds is based on our understanding and conceptualization of the physical world. Consequently, the first step in building up a text world is to define its world-building elements. Location, time, enactors and objects are the four basic world-building elements, although in some text worlds not all the elements are clearly stated. World-building elements "constitute the background against which the foreground events of the text will take place" (Stockwell, 2002, p. 137).

Location and Time

Text World Theory regards the notion of location in space as central to the conceptual basis of language and time as the second most important parameter. The two elements form the basic background of a text world.

A wide range of linguistic devices could help set the spatial boundaries and temporal orientations of a text world. It is worth noting that different languages may not have the same linguistic devices to indicate the same spatial or temporal notions. In Chinese, for instance, tense and aspect are not embodied in the inflexion of verbs as there is no word inflexion in Chinese. Instead, tense and aspect

are typically conveyed by a couple of auxiliary words. An example of Chinese auxiliary words is *zhe* (着) which is used after verbs to indicate the continuous aspect. Another two examples are *le* (了) and *guo* (⬚), both indicating past tense with the latter emphasizing past experiences.

To understand and describe the physical world we live in, people usually make reference to an origo, i.e. a deictic zero-point, to define relationships between and among elements (Gavins, 2007, p. 36). This is also true with our construction of text worlds. As a key concept in Text World Theory, origo reflects the viewpoint of narration, description, exposition, or argumentation. Locating the origo is thus an essential factor in translation. Alteration of origo will lead to text worlds built up from different perspectives. Take the translation of the first sentence in the lyrics of the classic song *Lemmon Tree* as an example.

I'm sitting **here** in the boring room.[6]

The use of the present continuous tense in the sentence indicates that the speech time, reference time and event time coincide with each other. The location of the text world is explicitly disclosed by the locative prepositional phrase *in the boring room*. The adoption of the deictic *here* and the use of the present continuous tense suggest that the speaker is present in the text world while speaking, thus creating a strong sense of immediacy. Two Chinese translations of this sentence found online are:

1.　我坐在⬚了无生趣的房间里

Wo zuo zai **zhe** *liao wu shengqu de fangjian li.*
I sit in **this** *not at all interesting room.*

2.　我坐在屋里,百无聊⬚

Wo zuo zai wu li, bai wu liaolai.
I sit in the room, feeling bored.

Following the source text, both Chinese versions set the location of the text world in the room. Different from the adverbial *here* in the source text which directly suggests the position of the speaker and shows that the location of the text world is the same as that of the discourse world, the pronoun *zhe* (⬚, 'this') in Sentence (a) modifies thus further defines the *fangjian* (房间, 'room') in question. As the context varies, it may suggest that the speaker is in the room at the time of speaking, i.e. the same situation as is conveyed by the source text. There is also another possibility that the speaker is just recalling a happening in the past, for example, by pointing at a picture of the room. In this case, the location of the discourse world differs from that of the text world. Sentence (b) does not employ deictic expressions, so there is greater freedom in defining the spatial-temporal relationship between the text world and the discourse world. It is possible that the narrator is at a place other than the room recalling something happened in the past. In this case, there is hardly any sense of immediacy or closeness as is indicated in the source text.

Enactors and Objects

Enactors[7] and objects are respectively the sentient and insentient entities in a text world providing the referential information (Werth, 1999, p. 52). Some enactors contribute actively to the development of the text world, while some others are merely present and act as bystanders.

In most of the cases, the introduction of an entity to a text world could be distinguished from later references to it by the use of different linguistic devices. For instance, when an entity is mentioned

for the first time, an indefinite article is usually adopted in English. When it is referred to at a later time, the definite article *the* or pronouns are usually employed. These grammatical conventions are considered important cohesive devices in text analysis (see Halliday & Hason, 1976). From a text-world point of view, recurrence of enactors and objects contributes to the cognitive coherence within and between text worlds. There are also cases when the definite article is used even if it is the first time that an entity is mentioned in the text. From a text-world perspective, the effect of such usage is that the new information is introduced "without fanfare" and will be understood "as part of the background" (Werth, 1999, p. 56).

When expounding on the objects in a text world, Gavins (2007) argued that the order in which objects are introduced into a discourse has "a significant effect" on the structure of the text world (p. 44). This is also true to the introduction of enactors. As a text world is built, enactors and objects, according to how they are presented in the text, are placed in their respective positions in the conceptual space (either close to the deictic center or far from it). In addition, an entity's appearance in a text world also depends on the way it is modified in the text. An entity tends to be more prominent if there are detailed depictions about its properties or interrelationships with others. Moreover, the number of modifiers and their order of presentation will influence how the entity appears in the text world. Elaborations on this can be found in Zhu (1996) with a detailed discussion on the issue of modification in translation.

In summary, the enactors and objects have their respective positions in a text world with reference to an origo, and their prominence is determined by the way they are presented in the text. To present entities in translation, all these factors have to be cautiously deployed via the use of the linguistic devices of the target language thus ensuring the accountability of their proper presence in the text world potentially built up from the target text.

Frames

With its variety of names, "frames" or "schema" is a key concept in psychology and cognitive science referring to conceptual structures established upon previous experiences and accumulated knowledge (Neubert & Shreve, 1992, pp. 65-66). When people encounter a new situation, they will resort to relevant frames in memory to facilitate their understanding of the discourse. As such, when people encounter a text, the world-building elements particularly the entities of the text world will activate relevant frames in their mind following the principle of "text-drivenness" that only those relevant to the content of the text will be activated (Gavins, 2007, p. 29).[8] These frames, as external elements of a text world, will facilitate readers' understanding of the text, or in some cases hinder comprehension if there are conflicts between the information newly obtained from the discourse and frames already stored in their mind.

As frames represent "the distilled experiences of the individual and the speech community, centering on specific linguistic expressions" (Werth, 1999, p. 43), dictionary equivalent words in different languages do not necessarily evoke the same frame. Therefore, in translation the frame that a certain expression may evoke should be noted. When the knowledge brought forth by the source text is not guaranteed in the context of the target text, additional background information, explanation and clarification might be needed, which again accounts for the phenomenon of "explicitation" in translation as mentioned in "Discourse World Identification".

In fact, frame is not new to translation studies. Neubert & Shreve (1992) brought the concept into their discussions about translation and pointed out that translators "must be aware of framing differences and understand how linguistic and textual processes attach to frame-based knowledge" (p. 65). Since the formulation of a frame is based on the experiences of each individual, the exact content of the frame is person-specific. Consequently, it is almost impossible for different people to have identical mental representations of the same expression, let alone translated works. During the process of translation, translators' comprehension of the source text and their production of the target text are affected—either facilitated or hindered—by the relevant knowledge-frames that are

activated. Acknowledging the fact that "every individual will build up a slightly different text world from the same discourse input", Werth (1999) pointed out that "there are strong restrictions on this so that individual differences remain within accepted boundaries" (p. 20). Such restrictions include our similar experiences as human beings in the physical world and our shared knowledge about the world and language. This also establishes the theoretical feasibility for our discussions of translation.

Function-Advancing Propositions

Function-advancing propositions specify what is going on with the entities and what is happening in the text world. They "propel the story forward and facilitate the development of the argument" (Norgaard et al., 2010, p. 160). While the world-building elements provide the setting for a text world, function-advancing propositions are the foregrounded representations of situations. There are generally two types of function-advancing propositions: modifications and paths.

Modifications

Modifications, as a type of function-advancing propositions in Text World Theory, are different from their conventional meaning (cf. Givón, 1993, pp. 247-270). Werth made a distinction between modifications for world building and modifications for function advancing. Taking description-advancement as an example, Werth explained the two types of modifications as follows:

For description-advancement […], the distinction between world-building and description-advancing is sometimes difficult to draw. Nevertheless, it is possible to distinguish descriptive elements which belong to the world-building phase from those which advance the descriptive function. The former consist of elements which establish the presence in the text world of certain entities, including any descriptive material necessary to identify them (such as restrictive relatives); the latter provide further modification on elements already nominated as present in the text world. (Werth, 1999, p. 198, italics original)

Below is an example that elaborates on the above statement:

In the town of Kuknur in North Karnataka exists an ancient temple, built around the 8-9th century A.D., which has a history of human sacrifices. (Schliesinger, 2014)

In this short excerpt, the pre-nominal modifier "an ancient" helps establish the presence of the "temple", functioning as part of the world-building elements. The post nominal modifier "which has a history of human sacrifices" provides further information about the temple but functions as description–advancement. Thus it is put in the foreground of the text world. To present entities as such in translation, different roles of modifications are to be noted and valued.

Paths

Different from modifications that usually denote steady states, paths concern the change of state—either perceivable or fictive. In the example cited above, "built around the 8-9th century AD" is a path-expression depicting a sub-world set around the 8-9th century AD when some unspecified people built the temple. As the foreground of mental representations, such factors as the nature of the motion, its manner and degree will make a difference in the text world, thus deserving the attention of translators.

As the text type varies, the dominant function-advancing proposition, the corresponding predicate type and the speech act change accordingly. Werth summarized their corresponding relationships in Table 1.

As Table 1 shows, the function-advancing proposition corresponds to the speech act. Therefore, if a translated text is to achieve the same speech act as its source text, the predicates in the target

Table 1. Text types and function-advancing propositions

Text Type	Predicate Type	Function	Speech Act
Narrative	Action, event	Plot-advancing	Report, recount
Descriptive: scene	State	Scene-advancing	Describe scene
person	State, property	Person-advancing	Describe character
routine	Habitual	Routine-advancing	Describe routine
Discursive	Relational	Argument-advancing	Postulate, conclude…
Instructive	Imperative	Goal-advancing	Request, command…

Source: (Werth, 1999, p. 191)

text have to perform corresponding function. In actual practice, however, text hybridization—the phenomenon that "texts are essentially multi-functional"—is so common that it is even considered "the norm rather than the exception" (Hatim & Munday, 2004, p. 73). Therefore, it is not unusual to find more than one type of function-advancing proposition in the text world built up from a single text. In fact, predicates performing functions other than the predominant one turns out to be distinct features of a text. For this reason, not only are the conventional function-advancing propositions featuring a certain text type to be preserved in translation, those outstanding ones that are unique to the text world also need to be valued in view of their functions in propelling the development of the text world.

World-Switch

Although there are cases when a text triggers only one single text world, it is more common to find a series of text worlds to be built up from a text. As the discourse goes on, new text worlds will be constructed. Development of text worlds as such is called "world-switch" (Gavins, 2007). Complex as it could be, "the participants in a discourse-world have the ability to create multitudinous text-world networks in an instant and without significant cognitive effort" (ibid., p. 49), which is achieved by the coherence of these mental representations.

Alteration in space or time may indicate world-switch that also functions as a means of coherence. Translation, as a type of writing, is expected to produce a coherent text with reference to the connections and relations of the text worlds built up from the source text. Reference maintenance is one of the main factors ensuring the coherence of text worlds, and it can be realized by various linguistic devices such as pronouns, anaphora, repetitions, epithets, synonyms, and metonyms (Werth, 1999, p. 290). In translation, to maintain coherence of text worlds, similar linguistic devices in the target language might be employed, but necessary alterations are needed in order to comply with the practice of the target language and culture.

Sub-World Presentation

A special type of world-switch is a temporary deviation from the text world in focus. In this case, the text world in focus is considered the originating text world, whereas the one subordinate to it a sub-world. A sub-world has the same constituent structure as a text world, comprising its own world-building elements and function-advancing propositions. Nevertheless, due to its subordinate nature, a sub-world might be quite simple with only one or two elements and propositions. However simple it might be, "sub-worlds" is an essential component in the hierarchical world system. A sub-world situates a certain distance from the origo. In translating texts with multi-level text worlds, sub-worlds as a world level of mental representations require attention to their presence and prominence in the world-series, in particular to their connections with their respective originating text world. Werth (1999) categorized sub-worlds into three types — deictic, attitudinal and epistemic sub-worlds.

Deictic sub-worlds are the kind of sub-worlds brought up by deictic alterations such as the change of time and/or location. Entity displacement is often accompanied by spatial alteration when the main attention remains on the entities in the originating text world. In translation, it is worth noting that the reader's attention should not be unjustifiably distracted by improperly embellished text worlds. Attitudinal sub-worlds depict situations from the viewpoints of participants in the discourse world or enactors in text worlds presenting their desires, beliefs, purposes, etc. In English, a number of modal lexical verbs, adverbs and syntactic structures could function as triggers leading attitudinal sub-worlds of different types. In addition, the firmness of attitude could vary in degree. In English, for example, "long for something" expresses a desire stronger than simply "want" it, and "believe" is a stronger word than "think". Therefore, the linguistic expressions of attitude not only determine the specific functions of the attitudinal sub-worlds but also reflect the degree of firmness. Epistemic sub-worlds concern probability, which "covers both the notion of hypotheticality and the scale of certainty-impossibility" (Werth, 1999, p. 239). An epistemic sub-world usually reflects "a situation which may be unrealized at the time and place from which its description originates" (Gavins, 2007, p. 110). Similar to our perception of time, we conceptualize certainty-impossibility in a spatial model as well. A key point in presenting epistemic sub-worlds in translation is to reflect the conceptual distance between the sub-world and its originating text world in an accountable manner.

DISCUSSION

Given the cognitive nature of translation, it is justifiable and necessary to discuss translation from a cognitive point of view. As a cognitive-linguistic model of discourse analysis, Text World Theory provides a new perspective on translation by focusing on mental representations. If translation is to achieve certain equivalence, such equivalence can be analyzed and evaluated on the potential of the target text for creating text worlds close to the ones built up from the source text in terms of world building, function advancing and world-switch, each of which could be further examined according to its specific components.

However, due to linguistic and cultural differences, translation equivalence is never an absolute but a relative concept. From a text-world perspective, the relativity of translation equivalence is partially attributed to human factors. Restricted by the knowledge structures of each individual, the exact text world built up from a given text varies from person to person. Translators are to present in the target language their mental representations of the source text endeavouring to ensure certain equivalence between the text world built up from the source text and that from the target text.

Despite possible discrepancies, the text worlds built up by different people should bear close similarity because the construction of text worlds is mainly based on the information given by the text along with relevant cultural and common knowledge shared by a socio-cultural community. In other words, although it is almost impossible to seek for a unanimous translation version, there is, as Neubert and Shreve (1992, pp. 130-135) suggested, a "prototype" of its various possible translation versions. Each translation is embedded with the unique perception and cognition of the translator, but it is within accepted boundaries. It is the potential of the target text for creating a text world close to the one built up from the source text that is worth noting in translation.

Like translation equivalence, translatability is also taken as a relative notion. Discussions of translatability are twofold. The first is concerned with meaning. From a text-world perspective, meaning lies in one's mental representations of the discourse, i.e. the text world built up by individuals. The second concerns degree. As many scholars have agreed, to a certain extent everything is translatable (see Pym and Turk, 2001). Deviation is reflected in the world-building elements, function-advancing propositions, and world-switches of text worlds potentially to be built up from different translated texts.

As human beings, we have the same biological and cognitive mechanisms to perceive the world and thus share all kinds of emotions and various physiological and social needs. Despite differences in the phonological and symbolic form of different languages, our shared experience and cognition

of the physical world provide common ground for the meaning conveyed in language. Theoretically, there is a strong possibility that the text worlds of a given text can be re-presented in other languages. However, given the fact that some world-building elements and function-advancing propositions of a certain text world are culture-specific, hermeneutic methods might be adopted to describe them to the target readers. A problem with this is that extra depiction may make an element more prominent than it is in the original text world. To deal with the paradox of information deficiency and unjustifiable foregrounding, translators have to decide how much information to provide as well as how to present the text world in the target text.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Translator Training

According to Text World Theory, we rely on our existing knowledge structures—linguistic, experiential, perceptual and cultural knowledge—to build up the text worlds of a discourse and make communication possible. In this light, translation is a cognitive communicative process when translators as source text readers activate relevant frames in their minds and rely on their knowledge structures to comprehend the text by building up text worlds. They then make use of their relevant knowledge of and experience with the target language and culture to re-present the text worlds in the target language.

Following such a text-world approach to translation, we find that its implications for translator training are generally twofold. First, translator trainees' awareness of mental representations and their sensitivity to the construction and development of text worlds will facilitate their translations with an operable framework to follow. In this regard, translator training is to cultivate awareness of text world presentation in translation and to guide production of accountable translated texts. Second, as knowledge structures play a major role in deciding appropriate construction of text worlds, the importance of knowledge acquisition of translator trainees on both languages and cultures can never be overemphasized. Translator trainees are also encouraged to have more contact with people from the target culture and have more involvement in the field you will serve in order to increase their experiential knowledge. Perceptual knowledge, which refers to the knowledge about the immediate situation gained from one's senses, may function more in interpreting than in the translation of written texts because in the latter, the author of the source text, the translator, and the target reader are in most cases in split discourse worlds.

Translation Competence

Translation competence has long been a research focus in translation studies especially in translator training. Based on different theoretical frameworks and from different perspectives, the development of studies on translation competence can be roughly divided into four phases—natural translation view, componential view, minimalist view, and cognitive view (Li, 2011). A growing number of researchers and translator trainers have acknowledged that translators, apart from possessing receptive and productive competencies in both languages, have the ability to remap "linguistic forms and their semantic potentials on to the specific meanings and communicative intentions" (Shreve, 1997, p. 129) although the meanings and intentions might be equivalent to those of the source text or otherwise due to different situations. Such an ability to "remap" can be found traces in Wilss's (1976) "supercompetence", Neubert's (1994; 2000) "transfer competence" and PACTE's (2003) "strategic sub-competence"[9]. Nevertheless, scarcely have any studies given a systematic and comprehensive elaboration on the working mechanism of such remapping in relation to the translation of a whole text. One reason for this inadequacy might be the intangibility and complexity of the "black box" of human mind.

As the process of translation involves a series of cognitive activities, it is more scientific and justifiable to observe translation competence at the interface of language and cognition and discuss the matching of linguistic expressions and mental representations. In light of a text-world perspective on translation, translation competence relates to the ability to build up and present text worlds. Translators, who are responsible for an accountable presentation of text worlds in the target language, should be trained to raise their awareness of the cognitive mechanism in translation and learn to be more sensitive to the nuance of language use. Translation competence is thus an integrated competence in conceptualizing texts as worlds and re-presenting the world-series in a coherent and justifiable manner in the target language. The (in)coherence of text worlds as they are re-presented in translation provides a legitimate criterion for the evaluation of translation competence. Specifically, the text-world enlightened translation competence includes knowledge about the structure of text worlds, the ability to build up accountable text worlds from the source text, and the ability to re-present the text worlds in a justifiable manner in the target language. In short, the three parameters are knowledge about text worlds, text-world construction competence, and text-world presentation competence.

CONCLUSION

Since language reflects and is constrained by our embodied experience with the physical world via conceptual representations and translation is a cognitive process of presenting conceptual contents in different languages, it is justifiable and beneficial to introduce text worlds—our mental representations of the discourse—to translation studies. Translation is thus regarded as a cognitive communicative process of reproducing texts as worlds in the target language.

Enlightened by Text World Theory, we proposed a systematic cognitive approach to translation studies and addressed its implications for translator training. Similar to the world we live in, a text world has its own world-building elements and function-advancing propositions. As the discourse goes on, new text worlds might be built up. Following the three world levels, viz the discourse world, the text world and the sub-world, as well as the alteration and coherence of text worlds, i.e. world-switch, the proposed approach integrates the analysis of mental representations into the process of translation and provides a systematic and feasible method for discussions of translation issues from a cognitive-textual perspective.

When a text-world approach to translation as such is related to translator training, translation competence is observed at the interface of language and cognition, involving the matching of linguistic expressions and mental representations. Competent translators are sensitive to the influence of language use on text-world construction and could make proper use of the target language in order to present intended text worlds in a coherent and justifiable manner. In addition, to view translation as a cognitive-linguistic process of text-world construction and presentation may promise a more proactive approach to translator training by encouraging translator trainees to pay special attention to the expansion of their knowledge structures. Relying on their knowledge structures comprising linguistic, experiential, perceptual and cultural knowledge, translators conceptualize the source text as a world or a coherent world-series, and then by making use of their relevant knowledge of as well as their experiences with the target language and culture, create a target text which has the potential to trigger intended text worlds.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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ENDNOTES

1   Incrementation in Text World Theory refers to the transfer of knowledge from private to mutual ownership among the discourse participants (Gavins, 2007. p. 21).

2   The seven features are intentionality, acceptability, situationality, informativity, coherence, cohesion, and intertextuality (Neubert & Shreve, 1992. pp. 69-123).

3   The term "sub-world" was replaced with "world-switch" in Gavins (2007) in order to avoid the confusion the prefix "sub" might bring as newly created worlds are not necessarily subordinate to the text world it springs from (p. 52). In this paper, both terms are adopted, with "sub-world" particularly referring to the subordinate world stemming from a matrix text world and "world-switch" referring to the change of text worlds in general.

4   For more information on translation universals, see Baker (1993), Mauranen & Kujamäki (2004), Malmkjær (2011).

5   Further elaboration on the idea of overt/covert translation and cultural filter can be found in House (1997; 2001).

6   Another version of the lyrics in this sentence is "I'm sitting here in a boring room". Discussions on the differences between indefinite and definite articles for world building can be found in the section of "Enactors and Objects".

7   "Enactor" was used in Gavins (2007) to generally refer to all the sentient entities at all levels of text worlds. In Werth's (1999), "sub-characters" were distinguished from "characters" by the layer of text world in which they exist. "Characters" were further classified into "enactors" and "bystanders". Since "characters" sounds like it would be restricted to literary texts, we followed Gavins' terminology and adopted the term "enactor" to refer to the relevant element.

8   The principle of "text-drivenness" has considerable overlap with the idea of "relevance theory", which was first proposed in pragmatics (see Sperber & Wilson, 1986) and later introduced to the study of translation (see Gutt, 1998).

9   In an earlier version of the PACTE model, "strategic sub-competence" was in fact labelled "transfer competence" (PACTE, 2000. p.101).

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