Risk Disposition of Translators: A Study of Trainee Translators' Justifications for Decisions in the Simulated Setting

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Abstract. This study looks into nine Chinese Mandarin-speaking MA student translators' justifications for strategies while encountering problems when rendering an English marketing text into Chinese, and explores their risk disposition – habitual use of risk strategies. A list of "justifications" has been detected based on Englund-Dimitrova's (2005) "evaluation" model and Pavlović's (2010) "argument" model. Experiment-group and control-group translators were employed in a simulated setting to test the effects of the main variable of the translator's peer-group interaction with colleagues and non-Chinese clients. Subjects' screen activities and verbalization of thoughts while translating were recorded. Additional data were collected through the pre-experiment questionnaire and retrospective interviews. Qualitative and quantitative results suggest that use of peer-group interaction does not seem to have brought about much difference in subjects' use of risk-taking/averse/transferring strategies. The "client-based" justification is crucial for trainees with practical translation experience regardless the amount of the experience and the group they belonged to.

Keywords: risk disposition, risk management; translation process; translators' justifications

1 Background

Risk analysis has become an important issue in fields such as banking and finance, information technology, health, safety and environmental protection, and has been adopted in project management, including that in translation and/or localization. Risk managers are responsible for managing risk, i.e. adopting strategies with the intention to minimize loss and maximize gains in spite of uncertainty (Chan, 2004, p. 5). Which strategy to use depends on the frequency of an event and the severity of its outcomes. A quick summary is given in Table 1.

Table 3. General principles of risk management (Chan, 2004, p. 54).

Scenario	Frequency	Severity	Risk strategy
1	Low	Low	Risk taking
2	High	Low	Risk taking/Loss control
3	Low	High	Risk transfer (to an authority)
4	High	High	Risk aversion

Veteran localization consultant Stoeller (2003) adopts these general principles; he thinks project managers should plan for risks and any potential negative impact that may bring to the project. Another senior translation project manager Geller (2011) employs a quantitative approach when estimating risk probability and impact (i.e. "frequency" and "severity" respectively in Chan's model), e.g. a three-point scale from high to low probability and a five-point scale from high to low impact), hence a rough calculation for comparison of risk exposure in different scenarios. The risk exposure value can be obtained by adopting the risk equation often applied in project management in other fields:

Risk exposure value = Risk probability x risk impact.

In short, Stoeller and Geller consider risk to be negative, and analyze risk as a part of a business: for frequency/probability, they mean how often a particular problem occurs in a project or a series of project; for severity/impact, they mean how many days of project time are lost or how many clients are lost. However, there seems to be no real way to estimate the probability of negative outcomes resulting from implementing a translation strategy while one is translating. Besides, for analysis of translation performance, impact should be possibly positive or negative: gains can take the form of increased clarity, for example, and loss may involve loss of information and lower cultural acceptability, etc. In other words, the strict business model may not be easily applicable to risk analysis in the rendition process.

2 Risk Analysis in the Translation Process as an Uncharted Area

The application of risk analysis and management in translation could be traced back to Levý's decision-making model in the 1960s – the translation process resembles a (chess) game, and players have complete information because their previous moves are traceable and the moves that follow are noticeable; players act rationally (1967/2000, p. 143).

Wilss (1994, p. 132), however, believes factors such as the source text's type for translation and individual differences make it difficult or even impossible to objectify problems to an extent that all relevant decision-making factors could be thoroughly considered. Different solutions could be adopted for the same problem in a translation task. He advises translators to consider desirable and/or undesirable outcomes that could be brought on by a decision (1994, p. 142).

This view has been adopted in Gile's translator training model: "[f]rom the view point of professional ethics, consequences to be considered are those that will affect the Client, the author and the reader [...]. In real-life situations, decisions are sometimes also weighed according to the expected impact of errors on the Translators themselves [...]. Translators should try to aim for the best possible combination of Risk and Loss values for each situation [...] (1995/2009, pp. 108-109)". He does not point out what risk means and why "risk" in the above quotation should not be replaced with "gain", but he highlights risk-taking as an integral part of translation, and that can be done if positive impact is greater than negative impact.

Künzli (2004, p. 1) initiates research on risk taking in translation; what he means by "risk taking" simply means guesswork. Künzli looks into how his five translation students and five professional translators handle uncertainties while translating one ambiguous ST idea in a user guide from French into German, and finds that the novices show a higher propensity for guesswork, and thus "risk-taking". The study rationale and findings are fascinating, but the sample scale is relatively small.

Pym defines risk as "the probability of an undesired outcome as a consequence of an action" (2011, p. 91), and suggests that use of the same translation strategy can lead to different risk levels in different situations.

Akbari (2009) believes that translation is a purposeful activity requiring decision making, and the translator's decision process should involve conscious risk management in order to minimize negative consequences and achieve success, e.g. in terms of self-satisfaction, money or reputation. Risk is not confined to something negative; instead it refers to "the potential for events, decisions and consequences […] which constitute opportunities or threats to success" (ibid.). Akbari points out that the translator can implement four major risk strategies in the actual translation process: risk avoidance, risk reduction (which could be similar to loss control), risk transfer (to another party) and risk retention (or risk taking; i.e. bearing risk for an action to be taken). These strategies can be used separately or in combination. A question is whether risk reduction could be a specific category, when both reducing risk and avoiding risk seem to aim to minimize risk.

The literature suggests that only recently have a few translation researchers come to define "risk", but they have not reached a consensus, and little empirical research has been carried out to explore translators' risk disposition in the rendition process.

3 An Exploratory Study

This study looks into translators' justifications for strategies while encountering problems when working on a L2-to-L1 translation task, and explores their risk disposition. An experiment involving two roles, the translator and the simulated client, was designed and carried out with a class of translation students, attempting to test the effects of the main variable of the translator's peer-group interaction in a simulated setting – whether and how risk would be managed differently by translators with peer-group interaction and their counterparts without such interaction.

The research question is: How does the use of *peer-group interaction in a simulated setting* affect the translator's risk disposition, i.e. habitual use of risk strategies?

3.1 Working Definition of "Risk"

I have come to understand the term "risk" as "the probability of a desired or an undesired outcome as a consequence of a (translational) action". This incorporates the potential for a positive impact into Pym's (2011: 91) definition of "risk", and I agree with Pym that the concept of risk "should be used in such a way that the running of […] risk can be a rational, calculated option associated with the attainment of high benefits" (ibid.). Risk analysis and management (by the translator) is a relatively subjective issue.

Translators unavoidably face translation problems in an assignment. They implement translation strategies to handle the problems. Their general approaches to the adoption of translation strategies are called "risk strategies" in my research, which are classified into three types and listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Types of risk strategies.

Risk strategy	Description
Risk-taking (R+)	The adoption of a translation strategy via which the translator aims to get potential benefits even though they are not sure how great the probability of success is.
Risk-averse (R-)	The use of a step through which the translator aims to reduce some possible negative consequence that could arise.
Risk-transferring (R→the authority)	The employment of a translation strategy through which the translator shares with another party (e.g. the source text, the client, or an expert in a particular field or topic) the positive or negative consequences of a decision.

A translation strategy may be risk-taking in one situation but risk-averse in another. Take explicitation as an example: if the translator is not sure of a source-text (ST) idea, explicitation is a risk-taking strategy – the translation gains clarity but this increases the probability of misleading the reader; however, if the translator is sure of the meaning and wishes to avoid the risk of low cultural acceptability, then the strategy might be risk-averse. To explore translators' risk disposition, therefore, one has to interpret data (e.g. rationale behind the use of a translation strategy) in context.

3.2 Research Subjects

A role-playing experiment was conducted with a small class of Year 2 Masters students taking the Translation Practicum course at the Graduate School of Translation, Interpretation and Language Education at the Monterey Institute of International Studies (MIIS) in California. The Practicum course is specially structured so that students with different language combinations, e.g. English with Korea, Chinese or Spanish, and with varied backgrounds have an opportunity to interact with each other. A brief profile is given in Table 3.

Table 3. Student profile.

Subject	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	S1	S2	G1	K1
Sex	F	F	F	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	F	F	F
Age	24	24	32	38	25	27	33	33	30	38	22	24	29
Experience	√√	√√	√	X	√√√	√√√	√√√√	√	√√	√√√√	√	X	X
China/Taiwan	T	T	C	T	C	C	T	C	T	N/A			
Role	Exp-T		Exp-T		Exp-T		(Con-T) x 3			Clients			

This study looks into the nine Chinese Mandarin-speaking student translators' (C1 to C9) risk disposition, with non-Chinese students (i.e. two Spanish-speaking, one German and one Korean) being the clients. Among the nine Chinese translators, five were from Taiwan and four others from China; one (C7) with over 10 years' translation and/or interpreting experience, five (C1, C2, C5, C6 and C9) with different amounts of experience of translating for the media and public services, two (C3 and C8) with some experience of translating theses for other MIIS students, and one other had had no professional experience (C4) before taking the Practicum course.

I made use of an experiment group and a control group. The difference between the two was the main variable of translator's peer-group interaction: experiment-group translators (C1&C2; C3&C4; C5&C6), assigned to work with translation colleagues, were allowed to communicate with the clients during their recorded rendition processes, then they had to present their translations to the clients, whereas the control group (C7; C8; C9) had to translate the client-selected ST individually and simply email their work to me, without being given any opportunity to liaise with the clients.

3.3 Data Elicitation and Processing

The experiment generated textual and extra-textual data, e.g. questionnaires, a source text and its renditions, and recordings. Data collected are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Data collected from students.

Stage	Data
Pre-experiment	Pre-experiment questionnaire
Experiment	Non-Chinese clients: an English source text
	Chinese experiment-group translators: screen-voice recordings, renditions (and email to the clients); presentation videos & PPTs
	Chinese control-group translators: screen-voice recordings & renditions
Post-experiment	Recordings: interviews with subjects; post-experiment questionnaire (for students who were not comfortable attending a face-to-face interview)

The completed pre-experiment questionnaires offered students' background information, e.g. age, translation and/or interpreting experience, and perceptions of "translation" and "good translators' essential qualities", and so I could decide on which subjects to be put in the control group and to pair up people in the experiment group with similar backgrounds and translation beliefs.

The English ST selected by the non-Chinese clients was taken from the website of American retail grocery store Trader Joe's, consisting of about 200 words and composed of advertising and recipe elements. The store was known to all the participants because there is a Trader Joe's just four minutes' walk from their institute.

To explore what kind of problems the translators faced during the rendition process and how they handled risks, I made use of user-friendly screen-voice recording freeware, the Blueberry Flashback recorder. The program records everything that happens on the screen, including every word the translator types and every change they make to the rendition, the websites they browse and the reference tools they use, in addition to the verbalization of their thoughts throughout the process. Figure 1 shows a screenshot of a subject's rendition process.

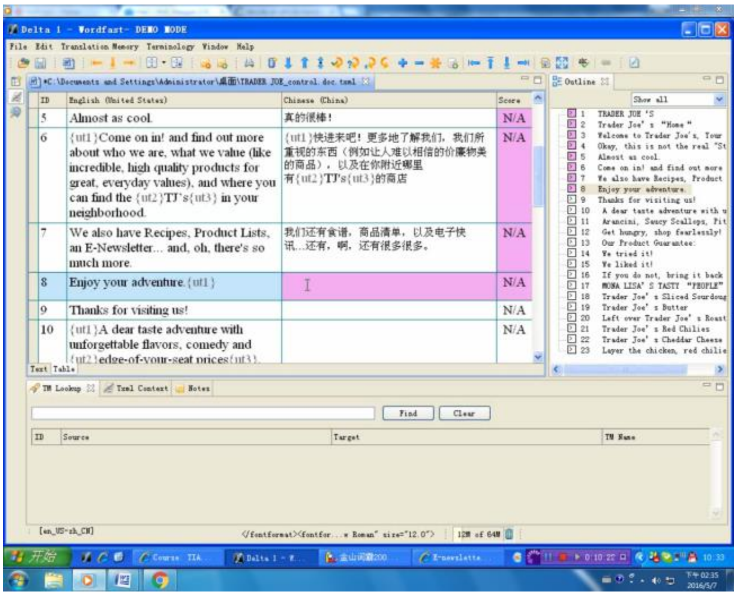

Fig. 1. Screenshot of control-group translator C8's translation process.

Based on the data elicited in the pre-experiment stage and during the experiment, I needed the subjects to elaborate their concerns and risk strategies adopted, hence retrospective interviews. I preferred individual interviews to pair interviews because I was seeking to obtain the individual subject's attitudes, beliefs and feelings. Some subjects felt uncomfortable about attending a video-taped interview, and they suggested answering my questions in a post-experiment questionnaire. (Non-Chinese clients were also interviewed). Table 5 shows students' participation in the post-experiment stage.

Table 5. Students' participation in the post-experiment stage.

Subject	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	S1	S2	G1	K1
Interview	√	X	X	√	X	√	√	X	√	√	√	√	X
Questionnaire	n/a	X	X	n/a	√	n/a	n/a	√	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	√

Among the nine Chinese subjects, two did not partake in the final stage; two others preferred to email me their answers to my questions. Three non-Chinese students were at the interview, and one other preferred to do the questionnaire. (These post-experiment questionnaires carried different questions: the ones for C5 and C8 aimed at exploring how they had made decisions while translating, and the one for K1 looked into her client experience in the project.)

For screen-voice recordings, I transcribed every word from subjects' verbalization of their thoughts, including the tone of voice and exclamations, and described their screen activities, e.g. websites they browsed and revisions they made to their translation drafts. Trainees' responses at the interviews were also transcribed, compared and studied together with other data, for a more thorough analysis.

3.4 Data Analysis

The translator's risk disposition, i.e. habitual use of risk strategies, could be inferred from their justifications for their use of translation strategies and solutions (i.e. translated versions). Working from Englund-Dimitrova's (2005) "evaluation" model and Pavlović's (2010) "argument" model, I have detected a list of "justifications" and looked into the way subjects justified decisions, not necessarily into the way they made decisions; hence the use of the term "justifications" instead of "evaluations" and "arguments". A quick comparison between these three models is given in Table 6.

Table 6. Quick comparison between the "evaluation", "argument" and "justification" models.

"Evaluation" (2005)	"Argument" (2010)	"Justification"	Description
Non-specified	"Sounds better"	Non-specified *(NS)*	A tentative solution is assessed in vague terms, with no specific reason, e.g. good/clumsy; like/dislike
	"It's (not) said that way"	Target-language convention usage *(TL)*	Concerning TL conventional usage, e.g. collocations & fixed phrases; verbalizations like "a word/phrase exists/doesn't exist"
Stylistic	Pragmatic/textual reasons	Pragmatic/textual (PT)	- On text-linguistic or pragmatic concerns, such as cohesion, coherence, register, consistency
Maxim-based	n/a		- (Maxim-based) On established guidelines, e.g. avoid wordy prose, or use parallel structure
Semantic	"Sounds as if"	"Sounds as if" *(S)*	Tends to be specific, stressing on the nuances of meaning, e.g. "sounds like"
ST-based	"What they wanted to say"	ST-based *(ST)*	Refers back to the ST to seek or offer explanations of an ST element
Intention-based		Client-based *(C)*	With the client explicitly mentioned and used in deciding which tentative solution to select
	Target text reader	Target-text reader-based *(TTR)*	With TT readers explicitly mentioned and used in deciding which tentative solution to select
Rule-based	"Rule"	Rule-based (R)	On standard rules for TL, e.g. grammar, orthography, punctuation
n/a	Free association: verbalizations not related to the task	n/a	n/a
n/a	Personal: general like or dislike; different from "sounds better", which refers to a solution	n/a	Included in *NS*

My subjects' justifications, similar to Pavlović's arguments, are grouped around a salient feature that is often epitomized by the *in vivo codes* used to label each category. *In vivo codes* (Strauss/Corbin 1998: 105 and passim) were taken from the words of respondents themselves. Other data such as recorded screen activities from subjects while translating, their views and responses given at the presentation sessions and post-project interviews/questionnaires may also reveal part of their rationales.

The translator may have more than one justification when implementing a translation strategy. A justification may be risk-taking in one situation but risk-averse or transferring in another. For instance, if the translator consults the clients in order to have an ST concept or an instruction clarified, this client-based move is risk transferring (R→Clients), but if the translator attempts to negotiate with the clients what is (not) to be translated, such a move could be risk-taking in nature.

4 Qualitative and Quantitative Results

4.1 An Example of Translators' Use of Risk Strategies: C1 & C2

The following example presents experiment-group translator pair C1 and C2's tentative and final solutions, translation strategies, justifications and risk strategies when encountering a source-text comprehension problem during translation.

ST item: $\boxed{\text{Left over}}$ Trader Joe's Roasted Turkey Breast (in the recipe part)

No.	Solution	Literal back-translation (LT)	Translation strategy	Justification	Risk strategy
1	TJ 燻火雞肉	TJ smoked turkey	Omission	TTR	R-
2	n/a	n/a	Consulting the clients	C	R→Clients
3	TJ 熱愛燻火雞肉	TJ-beloved smoked turkey	Explanation	ST	R+

C2 was shocked when she spotted the ST words "left over": "Left over!!! Left over 不是剩菜嗎? 騙我! 怎麼可以這樣?" [LT: "(ST) Left over"!!! "(ST) Left over" means remaining dishes, doesn't it? My God! How can that happen?]. With some hesitation C2 decided to postpone the problem to a later stage.

Around 20 minutes after C1 and C2 went back to this ST item and had the following dialog (with the less relevant parts omitted):

C2: 我不知道這裡的 left over 要不要翻, left over 就是什麼"剩菜"呀, 奇怪!
(Searching the dictionary function of translation software Lingoes for "left over")
C1: 我在想那個 leftover 會不會是冰箱裡之類的。
C2: 我覺得如果這樣翻很危險, 畢竟我們要跟東方人推銷, 因為這是個中文網站...... 如果翻"剩菜"就會很不好意思, 所以不要!
C1: 那不是要問他們 [clients] 嗎?
C2: 那, 我覺得就是"獨家", 就是愛不釋手, 一買再買, 就是我們自己的感覺, 那我們是不是把自己的 idea 放進去?
C1: "您熱愛的" ...... 因為很熱愛, 所以 left over, 就不要"獨家"!
C2: OK, "TJ 您熱愛的", TJ "熱愛"吧, 就不是"您熱愛的" ......

(LT)
C2: I'm not sure whether to translate the sense of "(ST) left over". "(ST) Left over" just means remaining dishes! So weird! (Searching Lingoes for "left over")
C1: I'm thinking whether "left over" would refer to something frozen in the freezer.
C2: I think rendering such a sense in the translation is very risky. After all we are selling something to Chinese/Taiwanese. This is a Chinese website... If we have the sense of "remaining dishes", we upset the readers. We shouldn't do that!
C1: Then shall we ask them [the clients]?
C2: Well, I feel it bears a sense of "exclusive", i.e. people are crazy about the products and keep buying them. This is how we feel, so are we going to put in this interpretation?
C1: "Your beloved"... that [the turkey breast] is beloved, so left over. Forget "exclusive"!
C2: OK, "TJ, your beloved", just "TJ-beloved", not "your beloved"...

Since they could not find any explanation of "left over" other than the sense of "remaining (dishes)", C2 intended not to translate the phrase in order to avoid creating any negative impression on Chinese people, a decision to be justified by target text readers' impression (TTR), hence risk aversion (R-).

C1, on the other hand, wondered if they should consult the clients (R→Clients), i.e. a client-based (C) consideration.

It seemed that C2 was a little reluctant to ask the clients. Instead, she started to discuss with C1 what the phrase could mean in the ST. Finally they reached an explanation with which both were happy, i.e. an ST-based consideration (ST), and put their interpretation in the rendition. This is rather risk-taking (R+). (This translator pair missed the fact that "left-over" referred to the turkey that is always left over from thanksgiving, which was in that week.)

To handle this problem, they came up with three justifications and three risk strategies, and eventually decided to take risk by putting in their own interpretation without really understanding the ST element; their final concern was rather ST-based.

Throughout the assignment, this pair considered 53 risk strategies for their 22 problems: three with ST comprehension and 19 others with producing appropriate target-text effects. Figure 2 presents the distribution of risk strategies in the rendition process: risk-taking 11 times (20.8%), risk aversion 24 times (45.2%) and risk transfer 18 times (34%).

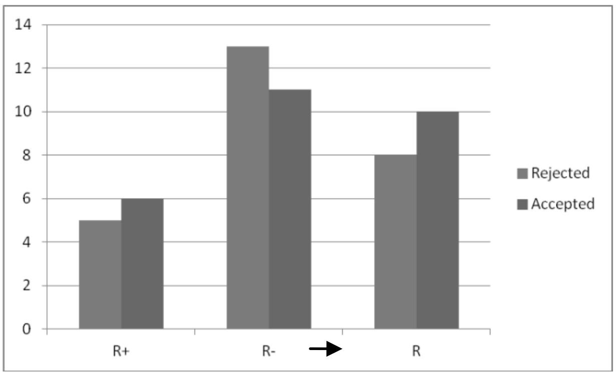

Fig. 2. Numbers of risk strategies rejected and accepted by C1 & C2 in the assignment.

Finally, C1 and C2 accepted risk strategies six times, avoided risk 11 times and transferred risk to other parties 10 times. They tended to be risk-averse in the task.

4.2 Quantitative Presentation of Translators' Risk Disposition

There are so many secondary variables in this study that the findings must be more qualitative than quantitative. I will nevertheless attempt to roughly depict the subjects' employment of risk strategies.

To check whether translators with peer-group interaction (with working partners and the clients), i.e. experiment-group subjects, took more/less risk than those without such interaction, i.e. control-group subjects, I calculated the numbers and percentages of my subjects' risk strategies eventually adopted in the translation task (Table 7).

Table 7. Translators' final employment of risk strategies while translating.

Risk strategy	Experiment-group translators			Control-group translators		
	C1&C2	C3&C4	C5&C6	C7	C8	C9
R+	6	1	7	2	4	1
	22.2%	9%	28%	14.3%	23.5%	9%
R-	11	6	12	11	8	5
	40.7%	54.5%	***48%***	78.6%	***47.1%***	***45.5%***
R→	10	4	6	1	5	5
	37.1%	36.5%	24%	7.1%	29.4%	45.5%
Total: 100%	27	11	25	14	17	11

According to Table 7, five parties of six adopted risk-averse strategies more frequently than other risk strategies while translating. The exception was C9, who used the same high percentage of risk-averse strategies and risk-transferring ones.

Most experiment-group subjects (C1 and C2; C5 and C6) and most control-group subjects (C8; C9) had similar percentages of the use of risk aversion; the patterns of subjects' implementation of two others risk strategies are relatively erratic. The use of peer-group interaction does not seem to have brought about much impact on subjects' use of risk-taking/averse/transferring strategies.

Besides, no high correlation is found between the amount of translation and/or interpreting experience one possesses and one's risk disposition: the most veteran translator C7 employed the highest percentage of risk avoidance; however, translators with the least experience – C3 and C4; C8 – did not use the lowest percentage of risk aversion.

4.3 Translators' Justifications

Most justifications given by translator subjects were non-specified in nature. Some subjects were not used to verbalizing their rationales while translating, and some just gave very vague comments on their suggested translations. Some justifications were not available. The main reason is that translators revised their work during the unrecorded post-translation stage, and their rationales cannot be traced from the research data. Distribution of the specified justifications for translators' final decisions is demonstrated in Table 8.

Table 8. Distribution of translators' specified justifications for final decisions.

Justification category	Experiment group			Control group		
	C1&C2	C3&C4	C5&C6	C7	C8	C9
Pragmatic/textual *(PT)*	1/3	1/2	3/7	0/0	0/2	**1/1**
Rule-based *(R)*	0/0	0/0	**3/5**	0/0	0/0	0/0
Sounds as if... *(S)*	0/1	1/1	1/3	0/0	0/0	0/0
ST-based *(ST)*	**5/8**	1/1	**4/5**	**3/3**	**5/7**	0/0
Client-based *(C)*	**3/6**	1/1	**7/7**	1/5	0/0	**0/0**
TT reader-based *(TTR)*	**4/8**	0/0	1/1	2/2	0/0	**1/1**
TOTAL	13/26	4/5	19/28	6/10	5/9	2/2

Table 8 shows the numbers of justifications in each category considered and finally offered by the subjects. For example, C1 and C2 held ST-based considerations eight times in the rendition process, but only five of them led to their final translation and risk strategies, hence 5/8.

Subjects seldom had concerns of TL conventional usage (TL) while translating, and those concerns were all replaced by others. Thus, this justification is not listed.

Translators have to produce a rendition for an assigned source text, and so it is normal for them to offer ST-based concerns most frequently.

The client factor may, however, be worth noting. It was an important consideration to C1&C2 and C5&C6, the two experiment-group translator pairs with more translation experience than the remaining pair. In fact, it was also a crucial concern for C7 and C9 in the control group although merely the figures themselves do not seem to support this proposition.

C7's screen-voice recording suggests that he attempted to consult the clients five times during translation, and he typed questions for them in a notepad file, hence five client-based justifications. However, when almost finishing the rendition, C7 said to himself that he was a control-group member and had been given no access to the clients, and so his questions were useless. Then he deleted all of them and left one piece of advice on name translation at the end of his rendition, hence 1/5.

C9 felt uneasy about verbalizing his thoughts while translating, so almost throughout the process he gave just sighs, happy humming and exclamations, and most of his justifications were non-specified. He was also upset about not being allowed to ask the clients questions. At the interview, C9 said his screen-voice recording could not fully reflect his practice as a freelance translator with the Taiwan government since he did have the clients in mind while translating although he could not contact them. Before this experiment, he had already been aware of the needs of the clients and was prepared to communicate with them when encountering any problems in a translation assignment: 當然需要客戶開心了, 可是我會在這方面, 要先跟客戶溝通一下, 就是說, 因為中英本來就不同, 所以如果我忠實地翻的話, 可能效果就不見……所以要按他們的需要, 也可以說, 盡量兩個都配合, 但要看他們怎樣才高興了, 再給他們怎樣的版本…… (LT: Certainly I have to make the clients happy. I would communicate with the clients first, explaining to them that owing to linguistic differences between Chinese and English, a faithful translation may not be good enough to produce the effect to the TT audience as the one the ST brings to its audience… so I have to cater for their needs. In other words, I try to serve both the author and the client, but will cater for the latter and hand in the rendition they want…). 會先解釋為什麼我會找他們, 為什麼我要問這個問題, 對我有什麼影響, 在聽完我解釋以後, 客戶通常都很配合的…… (LT: I would explain to them why I go to them, why I ask a particular question, and how their answers would affect my translation. After listening to my reasons, my clients often try their best to help…).

The client-based justification is crucial for students with practical translation experience – e.g. for the media and public services – regardless the amount of translation experience and the group the subjects belonged to in the experiment.

5 Applications of Study in Translator Training

Use of MIIS students with different language combinations and cultural backgrounds in this experiment aimed for providing a setting similar to the one facing most translation practitioners in reality. After all, clients tend to be more willing to hire translators to render a source text from or to the language(s) they are not familiar with or less comfortable to work with. This may, however, have affected my subjects' risk disposition as they knew that the simulated clients could not read Chinese the target language, e.g. some translator subjects made risk-taking moves in the rendition process but chose not to present them to the non-Chinese clients. In fact, all the three experiment-group translator pairs, when doing the presentation, tended to project an image that was more risk-averse than was their performance while translating the ST. However, in the most common didactic setting, translation students in the same class/course have same/similar language combinations. Translators' risk management in the process could be more meticulous and may lead to more discussion during their presentations and Q&A sessions with peers on the client position; the main variable of translators' peer-group interaction may cause difference in their implementation of risk strategies.

I instructed the non-Chinese clients to select a marketing text, one of the very practical genres in translation jobs around the world. This kind of text is mainly informative (or information-centerd) and vocative (or reader-centered) rather than too much expressive (i.e. author-centerd), and allows much room for students' communicative translation and cultural adaptation. My experiment setting, having served as one of the teaching activities in MIIS, can be replicated in highly-specialized translation courses, e.g. legal translation and medical translation. Students may also be given chances to explore if there is any change in their risk disposition when translating different genres.

I assume that the first thing for students to experience professional translation assignments should be their participation in the liaison with the clients themselves, preferably before they serve real clients. Thus, I employed role-playing simulation in this experiment. Based on their feedback given during the retrospective interviews and in the post-experiment questionnaire, I found that regardless the position assigned in the experiment, almost all Chinese and non-Chinese respondents thought the simulation experience made them aware of several things: (1) translation quality can be improved after the translator understands the expectation of clients; (2) translators should learn how to communicate with the clients, including what questions to ask and how to ask in a skillful way; and (3) translators' good presentation (of justifications for their use of translation strategies) is crucial, particularly to the clients who cannot read the target language; they tend to believe that translators with a more professional image are more competent translators (although there may not be necessary relationship in between). The client-based consideration seems to have become a significant concern when they work in future translation tasks. Respondents with little practical translation experience, i.e. C4, C8, G1 and K1 felt the importance of obtaining potential positive impact (i.e. probably taking risk) and/or losing negative impact (i.e. probably avoiding risk) in the task, and thus became more willing than ever to employ translation strategies other than their only resort to literal translation (i.e to transfer risk to the ST in most cases). In other words, role-playing simulation serves as an effective scaffolding tool for students' future work on authentic projects.

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