

Abstract

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Close-ups on literary translation

So far, translation process studies have focused on general texts or texts for special purposes, while literary translation processes are still very much unexplored territory. Within the context of my current research project on the training of literary translators I combine process-based and product-based research methods attempting to shed more light on what happens at various levels when literary texts are being translated, addressing questions such as differences between literary and non-literary translation, literary translators' competences, and creativity.

In my paper, I would like to present the results of a pilot study I will be carrying out in February of 2009 with two professional literary translators in Austria, translating from English into German. The source text used will be a 20th century American short story, and the research methods used will be key-logging, screen-recording, TAP and retrospective interviews on the one hand, and a comparative analysis of translations and source text on the other hand. Analysis of experiment data for the purpose of this paper will focus on aspects of creative text production, making use of recent findings in creativity research.

Gaining insights into creative translation processes, of course, is of great interest for anyone involved in the training of literary translators, and aspects of creativity are at the core of most discussions of literary translations. In Austria, the issue of creativity in literary translation has recently taken on added significance in the context of social legislation. While literary translations are protected by copyright law as they are deemed to be intrinsically creative works, professional literary translators in order to be eligible for a newly created state pension supplement scheme need to convince a commission of the creative nature of the literary translation work they do.