Relating translation effects to language contact phenomena *

Philipp Sebastian Angermeyer
York University
pangerme@yorku.ca

1 Introduction

Contact-induced language change originates in bilingual language use (Sankoff 2001)
- Bilingual speakers match structures of L1 and L2 (“Interlingual identification”
  Weinreich 1968 [1953])

Synchronic data analyses of language contact focus on in-group codeswitching
- Codeswitching (Backus 2005) and loan translation (Backus & Dorleijn 2009) as
  mechanisms leading to change

Alternative data source: Language contact as exolingual interaction
- Interpreter-mediated interaction as bilingual speech (Angermeyer 2010)

Translation effects: Interpreters are often observed to produce target language forms
that are influenced by source language structures

(1) from Russian-English court interpreting (Angermeyer 2006)

1  Defendant: according to my landlord he gave it back to 'em,
2           he gave back (their) security.
3  Arbitrator: (.) Y’all can’t prove it.
4  Interpreter: Ṣoglasno landlord-u
             ‘According to the landlord,’
5  Defendant: (But here)!
6  Interpreter: oni vam security otdali nazad.
             ‘they gave you the security back.’
7  Defendant: Here's the []
8  here the check for the security.

* This research is supported by a grant from the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies at York
  University. Creation of an online corpus of interpreter-mediated interaction is supported by the Image,
  Text, Sound and Technology Program of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
  (SSHRC) under the title “The Integration of Text, Sound and Image into the Corpus-Based Analysis of
  Interpreter-Mediated Interaction.”
Investigation of translation effects in the context of contact-induced language change (based on written data):

- Old English religious and secular translations from Latin (Taylor 2008)
- Scientific translations from English into Persian or German (Becher, House & Kranich 2009; Amouzadeh & House 2010)

Goal of the talk

- Investigation of translation effects in spoken data from non-professional interpreting (German/Turkish interpreter-mediated doctor/patient interaction)
- Comparison between phenomena found in translated talk and untranslated talk,
- Comparison to findings from studies of in-group speech with same language dyad
- Hypothesis: Translation effects parallel to language contact phenomena produced by bilingual speakers outside of translation contexts.

2 Data

Doctor patient communication from the project "Interpreting at the hospital" (“DiK: Dolmetschen im Krankenhaus”) at the Research Center on Multilingualism, University of Hamburg (Bührig & Meyer 2004; Meyer 2004)

The data are to be included in a joint online corpus, developed with Bernd Meyer (Universität Mainz) and Thomas Schmidt (Universität Hamburg) with support from Image, Text, Sound and Technology Program of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) under the title “The Integration of Text, Sound and Image into the Corpus-Based Analysis of Interpreter-Mediated Interaction.”

Participants

- Doctors: Mostly German L1, almost no knowledge of Turkish
- Patients: Turkish L1, came to Germany as adults, limited L2 knowledge of German
- Interpreters: young adults, mostly children of patients; native bilinguals or early L2 learners of German – all attended school in Germany

Patients are undergoing treatment at the hospital; interviews are conducted to discuss diagnoses and treatment plans or to obtain informed consent from patients for suggested treatments;

Two intertwined but partially separate interactions (Angermeyer 2010)
- Interpreter <-> Doctor: out-group talk in German
- Interpreter <-> Patient (Child <-> Parent): in-group talk in Turkish\(^1\)

- Translation (and translation effects) in both directions, from German to Turkish and from Turkish to German (different from written translation)

---

\(^1\) Simplification: children may align with doctor if parent resists treatment; patients may speak German
Not all interpreter turns represent translations of source talk (different from professional translation, e.g. court interpreting)

(2) Doctor: Sie haben eine Blutarmut und wir müssen die Ursache rausfinden.
‘You have anemia and we have to find the cause’
Die Magenspiegelung und die Darmspiegelung waren unauffällig.
‘The gastroscopy and colonoscopy were without pathological findings’
Auch das Dünn darmröntgen.
‘As was the colon x-ray’
Und deshalb muss man jetzt die Stelle der Blutbildung angucken,
‘that’s why we now need look at the location of hematopoiesis’
ob da eine Störung ist. Und das ist im Knochenmark.
‘To see if there’s a disruption. And that’s in the bone marrow’
Deshalb müssen wir da einmal mit einer Nadel reingehen,
‘that’s why we have to go in there with a needle’
n bisschen Knochenmark --
‘a little bone marrow --’

Interpreter: Raus--.
‘(take) out’

Doctor: rausnehmen und untersuchen.
‘Take out and examine’

Interpreter: Hmhm

Doctor: Darum geht’s.
‘That’s what it’s about.’

Interpreter: Das is am Becken gleich, oder?
‘That’s at the pelvis, isn’t it?’

Doctor: Am Becken. Fragen Sie Ihren Vater bitte,
‘at the pelvis. Please ask your father’
ob er das soweit/ oder übersetzen das soweit?
‘if he has (understood) so far, or translate so far?’

Interpreter: “Blutarmut” Das hab ich selber nicht ((lacht)) verstanden.
‘Anemia’ I didn’t understand this myself” ((laughs))
Was fehlt da?
‘What’s missing there?’

Doctor: Rote Blutkörperchen
‘red blood cells’

Patient: ((coughs))

Interpreter: Ach so.
‘Ah, okay’

Doctor: Sind zu wenig.
‘Aren’t enough’

Interpreter: Hmhm.

Patient: Kreislauf (sind) zu wenig, oder?
‘circulation (are) too little, right?’

Interpreter: Ş/ ş/ şey, kann içinde ee "Blutkörperchen" diye,
‘a thing, in the blood, something called “Blutkörperchen”’
bir beyazı olsun, bir kırmızısı.
‘those come in white and red’

Onlar ee (.) azmiş seninkinde, kırmızı olanı.
‘Those uh evidently in yours there are few that are red’

Niye (.) diye onun için o Beckenknochen-dan şeyi alacaklarmış.
‘To find out why, they will evidently take a thing from your pelvis bone’

Criteria for coding of interpreter utterances

1) Correspondence relation between interpreter talk (target) and prior talk by other participants (source); (online corpus project; Angermeyer, Meyer & Schmidt to appear)
   • “rendition” (Wadensjö 1998) – may be “close” or “divergent;”
   • “non-rendition” if no source talk exists

Distinction between rendition and non-rendition is not at all trivial in non-professional interpreting: Common pattern: doctor speaks for a while, then asks interpreter to translate (summarizing, often omitting or misrepresenting information contained in the source; “reduced summarized renditions”, Wadensjö 1998)

2) Language contact phenomena/translation effects
   • insertional or alternational codemixing
   • loan translation (calque)
     o semantic extensions
     o collocations
   • variable use of subject pronouns in Turkish

Loan translations are identified with the help of native speakers who do not speak the other language (e.g. Turkish-speaking students in Toronto who don’t speak German; see Backus & Dorleijn 2009: 79)

3 German/Turkish language contact

3.1 Research on contact-induced change in Turkish
Large body of research on Turkish in contact in Western Europe (e.g. Johanson 1993; Pfaff 1993; Backus 1996; Treffers-Daller 1997; Boeschoten 2000; Queen 2001; Backus 2003)

Observed features of Turkish in Western Europe (Backus, Jørgensen & Pfaff 2010)
   • Insertional codeswitching, integration of verbs with yapmak ‘do’ (Pfaff 2000; Backus 2009))
   • “slight” syntactic change (Backus et al. 2010: 490)
   • frequent use of loan translations from majority language (Backus & Dorleijn 2009)
3.2 Research on contact-induced change in German
Turkish-German ethnolect (Keim 2002; Hinnenkamp 2003)

Some observed features (Selting & Kern 2009)
- omission of articles or prepositions
- SV word order in inversion context
- Various phonetic & prosodic features

4 Translation effects and contact phenomena in the data

4.1 Translation to Turkish: Integration of insertion with yapmak

Dutch/Turkish codeswitching: inserted Dutch verbs combine with yapmak ‘to do’ (Backus 2009) (no exceptions: in the infinitive, no intervening material)

(3)

Doctor:  
\textit{Ich würde gerne (.) Sie noch einmal untersuchen.}  
‘I would like to (.) examine you one more time’

Patient:  \textit{Ja}  
‘Yes’

Doctor:  \textit{Und dann schilder ich Ihnen (.) noch einmal,}  
‘And then I’ll illustrate to you once more’
\textit{was man machen kann, um Ihnen etwas mehr zu helfen}  
‘What can be done to help you a bit more’

Patient:  \textit{Joa}  
‘Yeah’
[Moving chairs]
(2.0) \textit{Ne yapacak onlar şimdi?}  
‘What are they doing now?’

Interpreter:  \textit{Yapacak şimdi.}  
‘He’ll do now’

Patient:  \textit{He?}  
‘What?’

Interpreter:  \textit{Seni untersuchen yapcak.}  
You-ACC examine do-FUT  
‘He’ll examine you’
(4) yapmak occurs also with German nouns (especially nominalized verbs)

Doctor: Und zwar ist es so, dass man (1.0) umschriebene Regionen, wo solche Tumoren am Knochen sitzen, die Schmerzen machen, dass man diese Regionen auch gut bestrahlen kann. (1.0) Und dass diese Bestrahlung zu einer Schmerzlinderung führt.

‘while it is a fact that (1.0) the described areas where tumors are at the bones and cause pain, that these areas can be treated well with radiation (1.0) and that this radiation serves to ease the pain’

Interpreter: Ve o tumorlari Bestrahlung yapcaklar.

‘And they will do radiation therapy to the tumors’

(5) insertion avoidance with dummy object şey

Doctor: Wir möchten nachher noch einmal den Versuch machen, eine Lungenfunktionsuntersuchung zu machen.

‘Later on, we’d like to try one more time to test the pulmonary function’

Interpreter: Uhm .hh bugün işte şey yapcaklar, baba.

‘So today they’ll do a thing, Dad’

4.2 Translation to Turkish: Loan translations

Collocations primed by the source

(6) Doctor: Wo sitzt/ wo sitzt dieses betäubte Gefühl?

‘Where is/ where is this feeling of numbness located?’

Interpreter: Nerde oturuyor bu --

‘Where sits this’

Patient: Ne?

‘What?’

Interpreter: uyuşukluk yürürken?

‘numbness when walking?’

(6’) Informant provided alternative:

bu uyuşukluk yürürken nerde oluyor?

‘this numbness walk-during where be-3SG

‘this numbness, when walking, where does it occur?’
Collocations not primed by the source
(7) Interpreter: Öyle yaptırdılar mı burda?
that one make-CAUS-PRF-3PL question here
‘Did they have this (test) done here?’

compare German: einen Test machen lassen ‘let a test be made’

Semantic extension, primed by the source
operasyon ‘(military) operation’ instead of ameliyat ‘(medical) operation’
(8) Doctor: Das sind diese ganzen Operationen, die Sie immer wieder haben.
‘Those are all the operations you keep having’
Deshalb warden Sie operiert, um diese Schienen einzulegen.
‘That’s why you’re being operated on, to implant these splints’
Interpreter: … O yüzden yani bu operasyonlar
‘for that reason, you know, there are operations’

Not primed by the source
köşe ‘corner’ to mean ‘small piece’ (i.e. ‘biopsy’), parallel to German Ecke ‘corner, small piece’
(9) Doctor: Und dann wird ‘n bisschen von dem Knochenmark entnommen,
which has to be examined’
was untersucht werden soll.
‘And then a bit of the bone marrow will be extracted
… Sie müssen hinterher zwei Stunden auf dem Rücken liegen.
‘Afterwards you have to lie on your back for two hours’
Interpreter: Köşeyi aldıktan sonra yani bir saat öyle,
hich kipirdamadan yatırmışın.
‘After they have taken out a small piece you’re supposed to lie still
for about an hour, without moving.’

Loan translations compete with insertion
(10) ev doktoru vs. Hausarzt
house doctor-POSS house+doctor
‘family doctor’ ‘family doctor’

(11) Doctor: ich würde gerne wissen, wer der Hausarzt ist
‘I’d like to know who the family doctor is’

…
Interpreter: Şimdi ev doktorunu soruyor senin o.
‘Now he asks for your family doctor’

Family doctor also insert-3SG.PAST 1SG.POSS
‘My family doctor also inserted it’
4.3 Translation to Turkish: Variable features

- Pfaff (1993) identifies higher rate of use of optional subject pronouns, while Doğruöz & Backus (2009) report no change in their use; deictic shifts in non-professional interpreting prevent priming of all 1st person subject pronouns and many 2nd and 3rd person subject pronouns
- Pfaff (1993) reports frequent omission of evidential marking (e.g. suffix –miş); frequent use of reported speech in non-professional interpreting leads to greater emphasis on evidential marking

4.4 Translation into German:

Loan translation (primed by the source)

(13) Patient: İyi olmak istiyorum. ‘I want to be well’
Interpreter: Er will nur besser sein. 3SG want only good.SUP be ‘He only wants to be better’
(Std. German requires expletive subject: es geht ihm besser ‘it goes 3sg-dat better ‘he is feeling better’)

Lack of inversion (cf. Selting & Kern 2009)

(14) Interpreter: seit gestern es is in/ ganz schön intensiv geworden, mit dem Durchfall. ‘Since yesterday it has become pretty intensive, the diarrhea’
(Std. German seit gestern is es …intensiv geworden)

5 Summary and conclusion (preliminary data analysis)

- Insertion and contact phenomena in the speech of interpreters occur overwhelmingly in renditions of source talk rather than in untranslated talk;
- Most are primed by parallel structures in the source talk (small \( n \))
- Phenomena in interpreter-mediated talk correspond to those described in literature on German/Turkish bilingual speech
- Translation effects parallel language contact phenomena

Implications:
- Translation data can provide evidence for language contact studies (e.g. to confirm that a feature is subject to influence from language contact)
- Is translation a starting point for contact-induced language change?
References


Backus, Ad (2009). Codeswitching as one piece of the puzzle of language change: The case of Turkish yapmak. In Ludmila Isurin, Donald Winford and Kees De Bot (eds.), *Multidisciplinary approaches to code switching*.


Keim, Inken (2002). Language Variation and Social Style in Young Female Immigrants of Turkish Descent in Mannheim. *Deutsche Sprache* 30, 97-123.


