NOTES AND DISCUSSION

LINGUISTICS AND TRANSLATION

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The aim of this paper is a) to give a brief survey of the role of linguistics in translation, and b) to attempt to provide a linguistic framework for describing translations in relation to the original texts.

Nida[1] distinguishes between three possible theories of translation:

1. The philological theories, traditionally predominant, deal especially with literary texts. They give advice to the translator as to how to find corresponding structures in the source and target languages. The main problem of such philological theories is the evaluation of the functional equivalence of these structures. Philological theories of translation will obviously concern themselves with matters of style in the source language and target language texts.

2. The linguistic theories of translation offer translation rules which are based on a comparison of the linguistic structures of source and target texts. These rules may be based on surface structure or on deep structure comparisons. One such (partial) translation rule (from Dutch to English) might be e.g.: translate Dutch simple past or present perfect as English simple past if there is a time indication referring to a definite moment or period in the past.

Hij is gisteren gestorven → He died yesterday.

Such translation rules are especially important in the field of machine translation (cf. below), which has been a great stimulus to the development of linguistic translation theories.

A limitation of most linguistic approaches is that they take the sentence as the maximum unit for their syntactic analysis: sentences are considered apart from their contexts. They also fail to take stylistic features into account and they tend to consider meaning as referential function only. But although 'a cigarette' and 'a fag' refer to the same object, they do not have the same 'meaning'. These limitations are also illustrations of the translator's problems of choice: in many instances a word or a structure has several possible translations. The philological translation theories can account for this more adequately than the linguistic theories, but a philological theory may not so much look like a consistent theory than like a collection of ad hoc suggestions and advice. (One has to admit that there are no completely elaborated translation theories of the linguistic type either.)

3. The sociolinguistic theories avoid the problems presented by linguistic translation theories, in fact by adding suggestions and rules of the first type (i.e. as in the philological theories) to them. Only, in this case the preoccupation with style is from a sociolinguistic angle: there is emphasis on different dialects and registers, and on the response of the receptors. According to Nida, sociolinguistic theories of translation rely heavily on communication theory rather than on linguistics. The ideal translation theory, for Nida, should be able to take into account all the relevant factors. Its model should be a communication model, and "(. . .) the principles must be primarily sociolinguistic in the broad sense of the term."[2] One may wonder whether such an approach could still be considered as a 'unified theory': it looks more like an amalgam of all possible factors. Moreover sociolinguistics itself cannot exist without reference to linguistics and is still in a rather amorphous state (I know of no 'complete' sociolinguistic theory of one language, let alone of translation).

Since translation has to do with communication, but first and foremost with communication by means of language, it seems safer to start from linguistics. Even if there are no perfect, fully worked-out descriptions of language — in the case of translation, of at least two languages — available, the linguistic apparatus is at the moment the most complete for describing a text and

its translation. The lacunae that may then be left are best accounted for in a stylistic (sociolinguistic) component, which may be incorporated in the linguistic model. Nida points out[3] that a literal translation of all Greek conjunctions in an English text may transform a dignified Greek style into a 'babyish' English style. This need not be an example to illustrate that a communication model is necessary: the linguistic description of English should state the stylistic values of different means of cohesion in an English text. An example like the one from Mark 5:34[4], where Jesus addresses a women as 'daughter', can also be discussed in purely linguistic terms. In Shipibo, a language of Peru, the term 'daughter' can only be used of a girl before puberty or of one's own daughter. It is not necessary to view this in its communicative context: the semantic components of both source and receptor languages should contain the necessary information about the lexical item 'daughter'.

Nida's techniques of adjustment[5] can easily be described in linguistic terms (cf. translation shifts below). The only features outside the range of a linguistic translation theory would be footnotes giving additional information about cultural and historical background. A translation theory based on a linguistic description of the languages involved, provided that it has a carefully worked-out stylistic component, should be able to describe any translation. The reason why adjustments are made falls outside the scope of linguistic description proper. In some cases anthropology or sociolinguistics may give some explanation, e.g. why 'wolves in sheep's clothing' is rendered in Bulu as 'leopards'[6], but one will probably never be able to find why an expression like the French 'ventre à terre' is rendered in English as 'as quickly as possible', 'at full stretch' or 'hell for leather'[7]. In a linguistic theory of translation this is not even relevant: such idioms should be considered as self-contained lexical items and all that a dictionary should do is list them together with their translation equivalents.

The reason why Nida prefers to see translation studies in a wider framework, involving communication and cultural background, is probably that he is engaged in Bible-translation, and thus has to deal with widely differing languages and cultures, e.g. from Africa, South-America, or the Far East. The average translator in this country, who translates for instance for the European Community, will come into contact mainly with European languages which have a similar or to a large extent common cultural background. In such cases a translation theory on a linguistic basis should be sufficient at least to describe the translation accurately.

The ultimate objective of a translation theory, however, involves more than only a description of translations. It would be the elaboration of prescriptive rules for the translator, and some attempts have been made in that direction, especially in the field of machine-translation. Therefore it seems appropriate to pay some attention to the role of linguistics in machine translation.

Transformational generative grammar, which aims at formalization, explicitness and economy, was not developed with a view to translating by means of a computer, but it has been a stimulus: a rule-system which is able to generate all and only the grammatical sentences of a language must automatically be of interest for people who do research into machine translation. Another factor is that generative grammar has also led to investigation (and speculation) on language universals. Traditional grammar is not adequate for machine translation. Paul Garvin points out how many statements from traditional Russian grammar are "(. . .) not only inaccurate, but (. . .) insufficient for purposes of automatic syntactic recognition."[8] But since there is as yet no completely formalized and accurate description of any language available, the development of machine translation has more or less stagnated. Two schools of thought have developed: on the other hand, the perfectionist approach prefers to wait with machine translation in practice until better descriptions of language and more advanced technical equipment are available, and all research work is concentrated on these two fields. On the other hand, what Garvin calls the 'brute force' approach[9], based on trial and error, manages to produce machine translations, albeit imperfect ones. For a detailed description of how machine-translation works, the reader is referred to the work by

P. Garvin mentioned above, to Peter Toma[10], or to Droste[11]. Suffice it to say here that a computer, when translating, relies heavily on the 'bilingual dictionary' that it has in store for rapid access. By means of this 'dictionary' each item in the source language text is matched with its equivalent in the target language. The computer also performs algorithmic operations, such as changes in word-order if this is programmed.

The incompleteness of programmes and the unsatisfactory state of linguistic descriptions have led to an inferior quality in the machine-translated texts produced so far: mistranslations and non-translations still abound, and in order to obtain grammaticality, post-editing is necessary, even more so when there are homonyms and idiomatic expressions in the source language text (machine translation is basically 'word-for-word' translation). Compare e.g. the following extract, translated from a Russian text on industrial chemistry by the Euratom computer in Ispra:

In the production of KOSMETICHESKIKH products for boundary these compounds use as independent EMULGATOROV and in mixture with them polyoxyethylenederivatives upon the production of different emulsion KREMOV and LOSONOV.

A post-edited version of this translation would read:

In the production of cosmetic products abroad these compounds are used as independent emulsifiers, and in mixture with their polyoxyethylenederivatives for the production of different emulsion creams and lotions.

One is immediately struck by the fact that certain words remain untranslated, probably because loan-words have not been included in the computer's 'dictionary'. Furthermore, the phrase 'for boundary' is a word-for-word translation of the Russian idiom which means 'abroad'. The translation reflects that in Russian there is no formal difference between the personal and the possessive pronoun in the third person ('them' v. 'their'). The choice of 'upon' instead of *for/in* the production of . . .' again illustrates that the context has not been taken into account. The untranslated loan-words in Russian are more or less understandable to the English scientist who is interested in the subject-matter, but in the case of KREMOV and LOSONOV he is also supposed to know that the -OV-ending indicates a genitive plural in Russian, and that the premodifier 'emulsion' is in the Russian text an adjective, formally distinct from the noun. Perhaps 'emulsified' would have been a better equivalent?

Similarly, the computer seems to have overlooked the fact that 'polyoxyethylenederivatives' is plural in the original. Again there is a clear formal difference between the singular and the plural in Russian. (This mistranslation may have resulted from a human error during the key-punching.)

One conspicuous problem when computer-translating from Russian into English is the absence of articles in Russian. Imperfect linguistic analysis or imperfect programming may lead to incorrect omissions or superfluous insertions of articles in the English text, or to the insertion of an article in the wrong place. Cf. the following fragment from the same text:

In previously the described synthesis of obtaining of ether of the sorbite and oleic acid the process of esterification proceeds with formation in predominating quantity of monoester.

If machine translation can move away from a crude word-for-word type of translation it should be able to overcome such problems. The 'fulcrum approach' as outlined by Paul Garvin[12] seems promising in this respect: rather than considering the sentence as a linear sequence and dealing with one problem after another, the computer makes several passes at the sentence. For each pass, the computer tries to identify structured units ('fused units') and to find the 'fulcrum', i.e. that part of a fused unit which gives most information about the characteristics of the fused unit in which it occurs. The levels of grammar and lexis are not separate, so that lexical units consisting of several words can be translated as single items. For cases that the computer algorithm is unable to identify, the system has heuristics at its disposal: it tests out whether a particular trial is successful or not.

But even with such improvements, machine translations will be handicapped, since the encyclopedic knowledge so often necessary to bring a translation to a good end, is difficult to store

up in a computer together with information about the source and target languages. Another limitation is that machine translation still relies on intra-sentence analysis, whereas the broader context may have an influence on the interpretation of a sentence.

In the meantime, progress towards optical character reading (i.e. the computer can take in the source language text directly from the paper) is being made, but at the moment machine translation often still involves the chore of key-punching the source language text before it can be fed into the computer.

Machine translation so far is economically viable only for large amounts of text, and it is limited to scientific texts, since only these use a vocabulary with clearly defined, specific meanings, and since the style of the resulting translation matters less for the readers: machine translation is a useful means to convey to scientists the contents, but not the style of their foreign colleagues' publications. Poetry, where style and − among other things − ambiguity play an important role, will probably never come under consideration for machine translation: the result would be neither aesthetic nor economical.

Even for scientific texts it may be difficult if not impossible to tie the translator to hard and fast prescriptive rules, as there are always several possibilities. As Walmsley[13] puts it: "no single reconstitution can be held to be preferable to any other, simply on the basis of the form of the original text." Walmsley proposes to take the expected target language style in a given situation into account, e.g. the translation of a newspaper article from Dutch into English should display the style of English journalistic writing, as described by e.g. Crystal and Davy[14]. But even with this limitation there will be several words, phrases or clauses with more than one possible equivalent. In the translation of literature, esp. of poetry, problems are even greater: the style of poetry is so individual that one cannot render it in any readily available 'poetic style' in the target language. Judging the literary qualities of translations of works of literature, to what degree there should be formal correspondence with the original, is a task for the individual reader or for the literary critic[15], not for the linguist.

The role of linguistics in translation studies is then limited to attempting to provide an objective description of the translation within a consistent framework (as opposed to the ad hoc comments of philological translation studies). In this way it can help the literary critic in that he will no longer have to base his opinions on a personal impression or on some randomly taken features of the translation, but on an accurate description.

A valuable starting-point of a framework for the linguistic description of translations is provided by Catford[16] in his chapter on translation shifts. He defines translation shifts as departures from formal correspondence. Catford works within the linguistic framework of M.A.K. Halliday[17], and he distinguishes between level shifts and category shifts. A level shift implies that a source language item at one level (e.g. grammar) may have a target language equivalent at another level (e.g. lexis). Category shifts can be further subdivided: 1) structure shifts are changes in the order and occurrence of elements which can occur at all ranks. 2) In class shifts, a member of a class in the source language text is represented by a member of another class in the target language, e.g. an adjective may be rendered as a noun. 3) In unit shifts, a unit at one rank is translated as a unit at another rank, e.g. a word is rendered as a phrase. 4) In intra-system shifts the normal correspondence between a source language and a target language system is broken, as is the case with the singular-plural parallelism between Dutch and English *bril* − *spectacles*.

For further information about Catford's views on translations shifts the reader is referred to the relevant chapter in his work. It will be clear to the reader that the notion of translation shift presupposes some degree of formal correspondence: if there is no formal correspondence between source language and target language, it is impossible to describe departures from it. Translation shifts are therefore interesting only with related languages.

In the following paragraphs I shall try to describe an English translation of a Dutch poem by H. Marsman[18] in terms of translation shifts. For the purpose of this analysis it is necessary to clarify and adapt parts of Catford's theory. I shall distinguish between two types of structure shift. Type I involves changes in word order only. Type II deals with changes that have taken place in the relationship between constituents and thus looks at the underlying structure rather than at the surface structure. This type of structure shift may involve insertion or deletion of elements in the translation, which can sometimes be described in terms of unit shifts. In many cases it is also simultaneous with a class shift. For Catford, the class of a unit depends on its role in the structure of the unit above. In the analysis below however, I shall consider classes as what are traditionally called 'parts of speech': the class of a unit does not depend on its function, but it is fixed.

Herinnering aan Holland by H. Marsman	*Thinking of Holland* translated by J. Brockway
Denkend aan Holland	Thinking of Holland
zie ik brede rivieren	I see broad rivers
traag door oneindig	languidly winding
laagland gaan,	through endless fen,
5 rijen ondenkbaar	5 lines of incredibly
ijle populieren	tenuous poplars
als hoge pluimen	like giant plumes
aan den einder staan;	on the polder's rim;
en in de geweldige	and sunk in tremendous
10 ruimte verzonken	10 open expanses,
de boerderijen	the farmsteads scattered
verspreid door het land,	across the plain:
boomgroepen, dorpen,	coppices, hamlets,
geknotte torens,	squat towers and churches
15 kerken en olmen	15 and elms composing
in een groots verband.	a rich domain.
De lucht hangt er laag	Low leans the sky
en de zon wordt er langzaam	and slowly the sun
in grijze veelkleurige	in mist of mother
20 dampen gesmoord,	20 of pearl grows blurred,
en in alle gewesten	and far and wide
wordt de stem van het water	the voice of the water,
met zijn eeuwige rampen	of endless disaster,
gevreesd en gehoord.	is heard and feared.

- In the translation of the title there is a class shift (1): the noun phrase 'herinnering' is rendered as a verb-form, viz. a present participle. Hence the entire title, which is a noun phrase in the original, becomes a non-finite clause in the translation: this is a unit shift (2).
  The structural relationships between the elements in the title are also different: structure shift II (3)
- 1. 2: Zie ik → I see: structure shift I (4); (Change in word order: inversion is not possible in English here.)
- 1. 3-4: Door oneiding laagland gan → winding through endless fen
  - gaan → winding: class shift (5); (The Dutch infinitive is replaced by an English participle.)
  - Structure shift I (6); (Word order: in English the verb in non-finite subclauses has to precede lond adverbials.)

- 1. 5-6: Rijen (. . .) populieren → lines of (. . .) poplars
  { — Class shift (7): a noun postmodifier is replaced by a prepositional phrase.
  { — Structure shift (8): the noun phrase contains a prepositional postmodifier in the trans-
  {   lation, involving the insertion of *of*.
- 1. 7-8: als hoge pluimen aan den einder staan → like giant plumes on the polder's rim.
  { — staan → Ø: unit shift (9); (A non-finite clause becomes a phrase since the Dutch infini-
  {   tive has not been replaced by an equivalent in the target language; cf. Ik zie rijen popu-
  {   lieren staan v. I see lines of poplars.)
  { — Structure shift II (10): a complex sentence with a non-finite clause as direct object is
  {   replaced by a simple sentence with a noun phrase as direct object.
  - — Hoge → giant: class shift (11): an adjective premodifier has been replaced by a noun
      premodifier.
  { — einder → polder's rim: unit shift (12); (A single noun has been replaced by a noun phrase
  {   containing a genitive premodifier.)
  { — einder → polder's rim: structure shift II (13); (From a simple noun phrase to a complex
  {   noun phrase.)
- 1. 9-10: en in de geweldige ruimte verzonken → and sunk in tremendous open expanses
  - — in (. . .) verzonken → sunk in (. . .): Structure shift I (14); (Position of the past partici-
      ple).
  - — de geweldige ruimte → tremendous open expanses
    { — Unit Shift (15): Ø → open
    { — Structure shift II (16): extra premodifier in the translation
    { — Intra-system shift (17): from singular to plural
    { — Intra-system shift (18): definite article → zero article (indefinite plural)
- 1. 14-15: geknotte torens, kerken → squat towers and churches
  { — Intra-system shift (19): co-ordination by means of commas → co-ordination by means
  {   of a conjunction.
  { — Structure shift II (20): from apposition to co-ordination.
- 1. 15-16: in een groots verband → composing a rich domain
  { — Class shift (21): a preposition is replaced by a verb form, viz. a present participle.
  { — Structure shift II (22): the prepositional phrase becomes a verb phrase.
  { — Unit shift (23): a postmodifier within a noun phrase becomes a verb phrase.
- 1. 17: De lucht hangt er laag → Low leans the sky
  { — Structure shift I (24): inversion in English.
  { — Structure shift II (25): the adverbial pronoun *er* has not been rendered in English,
  {   hence a different sentence structure.
  { — Unit shift (26): er → Ø
- 1. 18-19: en de zon wordt er langzaam in grijze veelkleurige dampen gesmoord → and slowly
  the sun in mist of mother of pearl grows blurred.
  - — Structure shift I (27): langzaam → slowly; (front position in English.)
  { — Structure shift II (28): the adverbial pronoun *er* has not been rendered in English,
  {   hence a different structure.
  { — Unit shift (29): er → Ø
  - — Intra-system shift (30): dampen → mist; (Plural → singular.)
  { — Structure shift II (31): grijze veelkleurige dampen → mist of mother of pearl; (from
  {   pre- to postmodification.)
  { — Class shift (32): the premodifying adjectives 'grijze veelkleurige' have been replaced by
  {   a postmodifying prepositional phrase ('of mother of pearl').

- Structure shift II (33): wordt gesmoord → grows blurred; (from passive to intensive complementation.)
- Intra-system shift (34): the normal correspondence passive-passive is broken; the passive is rendered by intensive complementation in the translation.
- Class shift (35): wordt → grows; (an auxiliary is replaced by a copula.)
- Structure shift I (36): wordt (. . .) gesmoord → grows blurred; (the finite verb follows the adverbial adjuncts in the English text, whereas it precedes them in the original.)
- 1. 21: in alle gewesten → far and wide
  { — Structure shift II (37): the adverbial phrase is no longer a prepositional phrase in the English text.
  { — Class shift (38): from prepositional phrase to adverbial phrase.
- 1. 22-25: (. . .) wordt de stem van het water met zijn eeuwige rampen gevreesd en gehoord → (. . .) the voice of the water, of endless disaster, is heard and feared.
  - Structure shift I (39): in the translation, the finite verb follows the subject. In the Dutch poem, the finite verb precedes it.
  - Structure shift II (40): de stem van het water met zijn eeuwige rampen → the voice of the water, of endless disaster; (in the Dutch text there is one prepositional postmodifier with another prepositional phrase embedded in it; The English text contains two prepositional postmodifiers, the second in apposition to the first.)
  - Structure shift II (41): zijn eeuwige rampen → endless disaster; (the possessive pronoun has not been translated.)
  - Intra-system shift (42): rampen → disaster; (plural → singular.)
  - Structure shift I (43): gevreesd en gehoord → heard and feared.

The translation shifts indicated by braces occur simultaneously. It is not possible in such cases to determine which of them entails the other(s), but together they form as it were one complex translation shift.

It is also necessary to distinguish between obligatory and optional translation shifts. With obligatory translation shifts a word-for-word translation would run counter to the grammatical structure of the target language. This is the case in (4), (5), (6), (7), (8), (14), (25), (26), (28), (29), (36) and (39). The other thirty-one translation shifts are not necessary as such: they have probably taken place for stylistic reasons. Catford does not specify whether he would include translation shifts of the latter type – optional ones – in his discussion. His examples however are all translation shifts that are enforced by the structure of the target language when compared with that of the source language. Such translation shifts are interesting for the contrastive analyst in that they provide him with material for hypotheses on differences in structure between two languages. They can also be useful in the other direction: on the basis of contrastive studies, obligatory translation shifts can be predicted and taught to future translators: if they were not applied, either consciously or unconsciously, this would result in a bad (i.e. ungrammatical) translation.

It appears however that the extended application of the concept of translation shifts to the description of translations, including stylistic aspects involving optional shifts, is quite useful[19].

It then remains for the critic to determine whether the use of these shifts has improved the aesthetic value of the resulting translation. He might for instance find that shifts (11) and (33, 34, 35) result in a more vivid imagery, that (9, 10), (15, 16), (18), (27), (31, 32) and (40) benefit the rhythm and the euphonic qualities of the translation, or that (21, 22, 23) and (33, 34, 35) lead to a more 'dynamic' description. Shifts (12, 13) make the description more specific, perhaps for readers who are not familiar with the Dutch landscape: the horizon becomes 'the polder's rim'. It is not clear what the function of shift (43) was intended to be: if the translator had followed the word-order of the original, he would have kept the rhyme with line 20. Perhaps it is a

printing error? In all these cases the content of the original poem remains unchanged, as it should be, if the translation is to be considered accurate. Some critics may find that instances like (11), (12, 13) or (31, 32) already show a tendency to improve on the original and a move towards the creation of a 'belle infidèle', but on the whole, the translation appears to have benefited from the use of optional translation shifts, cp. for instance the following translation of the same poem, where only the obligatory translation shifts have been applied[20]:

Thinking of Holland
I see broad rivers
slowly going
through infinite low lands
lines of unthinkably
tenuous poplars standing
like high plumes
on the horizon;
and sunk in the mighty
space,
the farmsteads scattered
across the land,
coppices, villages,
squat towers,
churches and elms
in a grand combination.
The sky hangs low
and the sun is slowly
blurred in grey,
multi-coloured mists,
and in all regions
the voice of the water
with its eternal disasters
is feared and heard.

It is obvious that this translation has fewer literary qualities than Brockway's.

The two translations of Marsman's poem also illustrate one of the major limitations of Catford's translation shifts as a framework of description: they are limited to the level of grammar and cannot take account of the translator's choice of content words. I shall therefore call them 'grammatical translation shifts'. Only occasionally, when the choice of a content word (or a group of content words) that is not an exact translation equivalent of the source language unit has repercussions at the level of grammar, do translation shifts reflect such a choice, as in (11) or (31, 32). But in many other cases one translator's choice of lexical items will differ from another's, either because there are several dictionary equivalents with identical[21] or near-identical meanings, or because he has added something of his own creativity to his translation. 'De geweldige ruimte' in lines 9-10 for example could also have been rendered by e.g. 'the mighty space' instead of 'the tremendous expanse' (without optional grammatical translation shifts) or 'tremendous open expanses' (with optional grammatical translation shifts). 'Languidly winding' in line 3 involves more than 'slowly going', and 'fen' is not quite the same as 'low land'. 'Plain' in line 12 says more than 'land', and there is a difference in meaning between 'hamlets' in line 13 and 'villages'.

These changes in meaning cannot be accounted for by the system that has been outlined in this paper so far, but a system of 'lexical translation shifts'[22], based on a formalized semantic analysis of the lexical items of both the source and the target language, could be more revealing than the information from our bilingual dictionaries. In the case of this poem, it would indicate that the lexical items in the original are in general unmarked, whereas the ones mentioned above

in Brockway's translation have an additional marker. When looking at the same examples (infor-
mally) one will find that 'languidly' has an additional connotation of lassitude when compared
with 'traag'. 'Winding' has the meaning of 'gaan', but with the additional marker 'in a curving
manner'. 'Fen' is indeed 'laagland', but with the additional feature 'marshy'[23]. 'Plain' is a transla-
tion of 'land' but with the extra marker 'flat'. A 'hamlet' is a village with the additional character-
istic 'small'.

It is again the literary critic's task to judge the aesthetic effect of these lexical shifts and to
conjecture the stylistic and euphonic reasons why they have taken place. But with a semantic de-
scription of the type above he has an unbiased means at his disposal to illustrate that the transla-
tion is a more marked, and thus a restricted version of the original poem. Whatever its literary
qualities, it is already an 'interpretation' rather than a completely faithful translation. One may
argue that if the translation is to have any literary qualities at all, it will be necessary for the trans-
lator to 'betray' the original to a certain extent[24]. Although it is not the case with such closely
related languages as English and Dutch, in other circumstances a translation that is an accurate
rendering of content and style of the original may even be awkward and ungrammatical as far as
the target language is concerned (ungrammatical if the translator has overlooked the obligatory
grammatical shifts).

The ideal instrument for the study of lexical shifts in translation would be a bilingual diction-
ary based on componential analysis instead of the bilingual dictionaries as we know them, which
give rough translation equivalents. For each matrix one would then have (a) lexical item(s) in the
source language and (a) corresponding lexical item(s) in the target language. If there is no lexical
item with a completely identical set of semantic features the translator will have to take the
nearest equivalent, i.e. the one with the greatest possible number of identical features[25] (or other-
wise use a phrase or clause (unit shift) or borrow the lexical item from the source language). The
advantage of such an approach would be that one would immediately be able to see how far (i.e.
in which semantic features) the translation of the item deviates from the original, in other words
measure the degree of such a lexical shift.

Unfortunately there are as yet no complete componential analyses of any one language, let
alone a bilingual dictionary based on this principle. It is even questionable whether the complex-
ities involved in lexical meaning will allow of an exhaustive treatment along these lines. In the
meantime however, it is possible for the analyst to use the principle in at least an informal man-
ner, and to provide an ad hoc analysis (with regard to the context) of the lexical items that occur
in both the original text and in its translation. Such a system would be more complete and more
rigid than the information from our bilingual dictionaries.

One can discern four possibilities when describing the semantic characteristics of a translation:
1) The translator takes the only equivalent that is available, as in the case of 'populieren' –
'poplars'. No lexical shift is involved. 2) There are several translation equivalents with an identical
meaning. The translator may choose any one of these equivalents: as they can be considered as
synonyms there will be no difference in the meaning of the translation. An example would be the
following two translations of the Dutch 'vliegtuig': 'aeroplane' – 'aircraft'. This case does not in-
volve lexical shifts. 3) The translator takes a near-equivalent of the item in the source language
text because there is no exact equivalent in the lexicon of the target language. This involves an
obligatory lexical shift, as in the translation 'ruzie' for the English 'row'[26]. 4) The translator takes
a near-equivalent of the item in the source language text in spite of the fact that there is an equiv-
alent available. For examples cf. the translation of Marsman's poem: 'traag' – 'languidly', etc.
Optional lexical shifts such as this one are interesting for the literary critic who studies a transla-
tion.

Lexical translation shifts, unlike Catford's grammatical translation shifts, cannot be defined as
departures from formal correspondence: they are departures from the semantic equivalence be-
tween the source language and the target language text.

For the description of a comparatively faithful translation such as the one that has been discussed, the framework of grammatical and lexical translation shifts appears to be adequate. With the so-called 'free'[27] translations it is too cumbersome. One has only to look at the following fragment taken from *Hiawatha's Childhood* by Longfellow and its 'translation' by the Flemish poet Guido Gezelle, *Hiawadha's Kindsheid*:

Downward through the evening twilight,
In the days that are forgotten,
In the unremembered ages,
From the full moon fell Nokomis,
Fell the beautiful Nokomis,
She a wife, but not a mother.

Nederwaards in 't avond worden,
lang voorleên is dit en spoorloos
schier bij de oudst gedaagde menschen,
viel de schoone vrouw Nokomis
uit de volle mane, eens avonds;
vrouw was ze en ging moeder worden.

It is clear that Gezelle has abandoned many of the characteristics of the original and that he has concentrated on his own version. Even the content has been altered (cf. the sixth line). It seems to me that describing such a poem in terms of translation shifts is no longer relevant. In fact, one should no longer talk of a translation here: Gezelle's work is more an adaptation: inspired by Longfellow's poem, he has created something new, largely his own. If *Hiawadha's Kindsheid* is to be described in linguistic terms, for instance for a stylistic study, it should be considered as a new entity, separate from Longfellow's poem. Those who wish can then juxtapose the results of such a stylistic study with those of similar work on *Hiawatha's Childhood* in order to compare the merits of the two poems, but the linguistic relation is too loose to go into a description of the translation process.

For faithful translations of either poetry or prose, the extension of Catford's system of translation shifts appears to be adequate as a framework of linguistic description. This extension consists of the use of the concepts of obligatory and optional grammatical translation shifts and of obligatory and optional lexical translation shifts. Such a framework deserves further elaboration.

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FOOTNOTES

1 Eugene A. Nida, "A Framework for the Analysis and Evaluation of Theories of Translation", in R.W. Brislin, ed. *Translation: Applications and Research*, (Gardner Press, New York 1976) pp. 47-91.

2 Eugene A. Nida, "A Framework . . ., p. 78.

3 Eugene A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating. With Special Reference to Principles and Procedures involved in Bible Translating* (E.J. Brill, Leiden 1964), p. 224.

4 Eugene A. Nida, *Toward* . . ., p. 217.

5 Eugene A. Nida, *Toward . . .*, pp. 226-240.

6 Cf. Eugene A. Nida, *Toward . . .*, p. 237.

7 Also an example from E.A. Nida, *Toward . . .*, p. 238.

8 Paul Garvin, *On Machine Translation. Selected Papers* (Janua Linguarum, Series Minor, 128) (Mouton, The Hague – Paris 1972), p. 97.

9 Paul Garvin, *On Machine Translation*, pp. 10-11.

10 Peter Toma, "An Operational Machine Translation System", in R.W. Brislin, ed., *Translation: Applications and Research*, pp. 247-260.

11 F.G. Droste, *Vertalen met de Computer. Mogelijkheden en Moeilijkheden* (Wolters-Noordhoff, Groningen 1969).

12 Paul Garvin, *On Machine Translation*, pp. 90-113 & pp. 83-89.

13 John B. Walmsley, "Transformation Theory and Translation", *IRAL* Vol VIII/3 (1970), pp. 185-199 (esp. 197).

14 David Crystal & Derek Davy, *Investigating English Style* (Longman, London 1969), pp. 173-192.

15. Cf. e.g. James S. Holmes, "Forms of Verse Translation and the Translation of Verse Form", in James S. Holmes, ed., *The Nature of Translation – Essays on the Theory and Practice of Literary Translation* (Mouton, The Hague – Paris 1970), pp. 91-105.

16 J.C. Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation* (OUP, London 1965), Chapter 12.

17 M.A.K. Halliday, "Categories of the Theory of Grammar", *Word* Vol 17/3, 1961, pp. 241-292.

18 As published in *Ons Erfdeel* X/2 (December 1966), pp. 106-107.

19 It does involve some modifications of Catford's system with regard to unit shifts. He defines unit shifts as "(. . .) changes of rank – that is, departures from formal correspondence in which the translation equivalent of a unit at one rank in the SL is a unit at a different rank in the TL." (p. 79). This implies that e.g. a noun may have a phrase as its translation equivalent, or vice versa. I have extended the definition of unit shifts somewhat for the purpose of this paper: in my approach it also applies to instances where a unit has no equivalent unit in the target language text or when a unit that was not in the original text is inserted in the translation (e.g. (9), (15), (26)).

20 Literary critics would probably call this a 'literal' translation. In Catford's terminology, it would be a free translation, since no grammatical or idiomatic rules of the target language have been broken. (Cf. J.C. Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*, chapter 2, pp. 25-26).

21 There will obviously be few lexical items with a completely identical meaning if we consider meaning as more than referential denotation, thus including all stylistic and other connotations.

22 If there are several lexical equivalents, such as in the case of 'geweldige ruimte' above, there is no lexical translation shift. The different versions are then equally valid.

23 The translator might have been influenced by the place-name 'The Fens' (in Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire: this area has a landscape similar to the Dutch one.)

24 Cf. R. Jakobson, "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation", in R. Brower, ed., *On Translation* (OUP, London 1959), pp. 232-239. He uses the term 'creative transposition' for the translation of poetry.

25 This would be an obligatory lexical translation shift.

26 Another option open to the translator involves a unit shift: 'hevige ruzie', a translation which does not render the colloquial overtones of the English term.

27 The term is used in the sense that the literary critic would attribute to it.