

Multilingual and Parallel Corpora Translation Studies (ctd)

Amir Zeldes

amir.zeldes@georgetown.edu

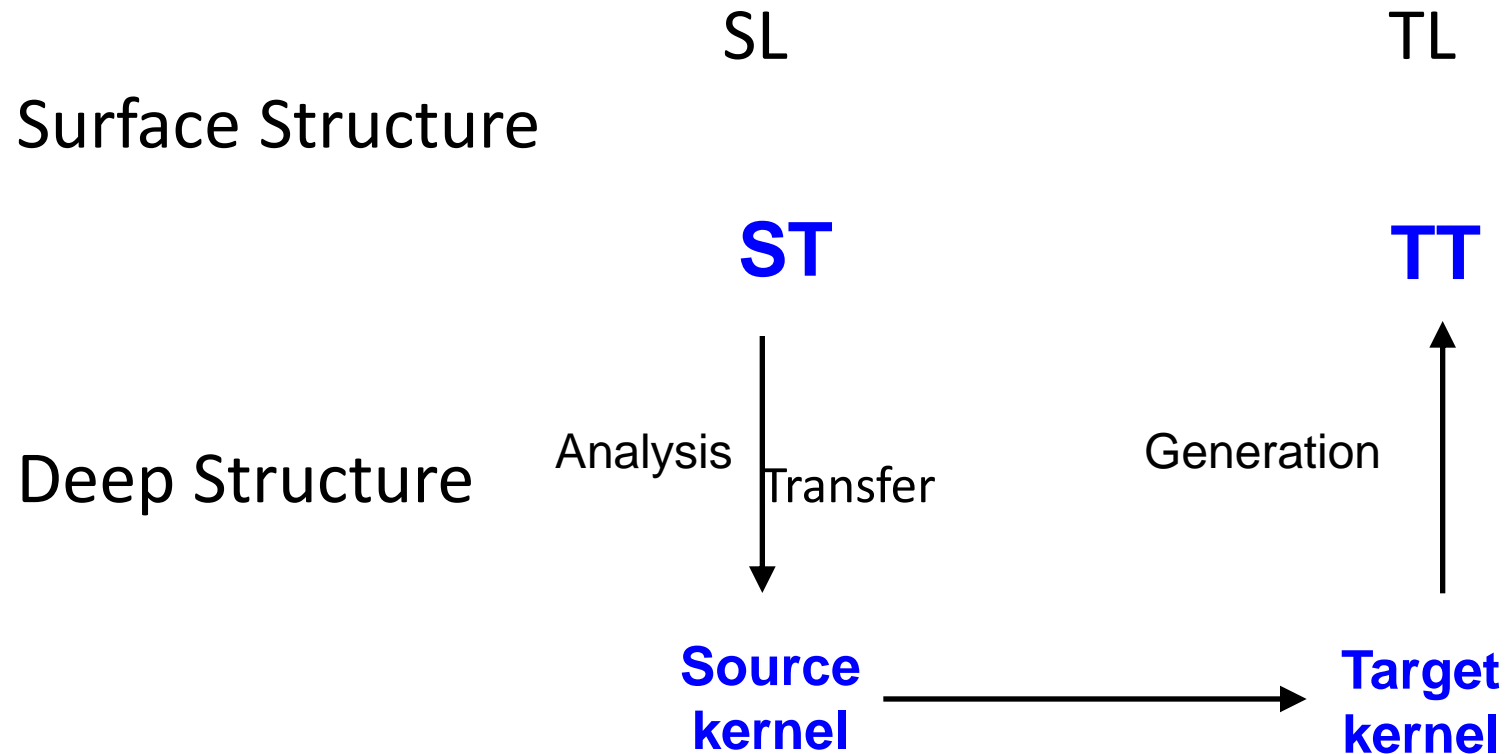
*Many critics, no defenders,
Translators have but two regrets;
When they “hit” no-one remembers,
When they “miss” no-one forgets.*

Wilson (2009), Translators on Translating

Correspondence and Equivalence

1. **Denotative** equivalence – same extension in the worlds
2. **Connotative** equivalence – corresponding choice of words, same stylistic connotations
3. **Text-normative** equivalence – same text type/register, corresponding conventions
4. **Pragmatic** equivalence – same effect on recipient, perceived the same
5. **Formal** equivalence – the same formal relationships between linguistic elements, including word games and linguistic style

Kernel approach (Nida & Taber)



Categorization systems

- A subsequent line of research starting in the late 50s and continuing into the 80s approached **formal correspondence types**
- What kinds of translation phenomena do we observe?
- Still largely anecdotal, non-quantitative

Vinay/Darbелnet (1958)

Important observations:

- Direct translation
 - Literal translation
 - Loan: **New York, mobbing(?)**
 - Loan translation:
das macht Sinn = makes sense
- Indirect translation
 - Transposition (part of speech change)
 - Equivalence: different phrase with corresponding meaning
 - Adaptation: Swap for similar appropriate concept
Cricket ~ Tour de France
 - Modulation – changes for fluency (e.g. negating the opposite):
**it's not difficult to show :
Il est facile de montrer**

**Still
literal : free?**

The Shift approach (Catford 1965)

- Among the first strong systematizations away from ‘free’ as an amorphous bag
- Starting point: **Correspondence** und **Deviations** from correspondence
 - If SL and TL have corresponding structures, translation proceeds directly
 - Otherwise a **shift** takes place

Level vs. Category Shift

- Levels are separate modules of the language faculty, such as grammar and the lexicon
- A **level shift** designates a correspondence across systems
- Example:
morphological vs. lexical vs. evidential subjunctive:
 - Er habe ihn getötet
 - He is **reported** to have killed him
 - 彼を殺した**そう**です

Level vs. Category Shift

- Category shifts happen on the same level
- Catford distinguishes four types:
 - Structural Shift
I like **it** **es** gefällt **mir** (it pleases me)
 - Class Shift (POS)
Verner's Law das **Vernersche** Gesetz (adj)
 - Unit/Rank Shift
es ist **un**möglich it's **not** possible (**impossible**)
 - Intra-system Shift
er hat **das** Bein gebrochen he broke **his** leg
(explicit possessor)

What kind of shifts do we have?

- Take a look at your translated IoL sentence
 - Where are there shifts?
 - What kinds do you see?
 - How frequent is each kind?
 - Individual language profiles?
- Level shifts, e.g.: morphological tense <> auxiliary, lexis/syntax/semantics/pragmatics...
- Category shifts: Structural, Class, Unit, Intra-System

Shift approach – pros and cons

- Strongly word based
- Appropriate for examining close to literal translation
- Neglects complex dependencies above the phrase/sentence
- + Still an influential attempt to systematically categorize types of correspondences
- + Cross-linguistically applicable
- + Possible to apply hierarchically

Data-based approaches

- Starting in the late 80s and increasingly in the 90s, availability of parallel corpora and computing changed approaches to translation
- Studies became focused on:
 - Consistent properties of translated language
 - Translation tendencies or ‘universals’
 - Quantitative evidence from larger data sets
 - Focus on translation as a product (next to as a process)

Data based analysis

- Points of focus:
 - Obligatory vs. free (how much **choice** is there?)
 - Mechanisms of **insertion**, **addition** and **omission**
 - Alignment types of translation units (different **scales** – more next week)
- Common goal: systematic study of translation and alignment phenomena

Translation Universals

- Are there phenomena typical to translation across all languages?
- Three processes suggested by Baker (1996):
 - Explicitation
 - Simplification
 - Normalization (a.k.a. 'levelling out')

Explicitation

- Translated language is further removed from the context of the original
- Lessened ability to rely on 'common sense' knowledge
- The translator adds contextual information

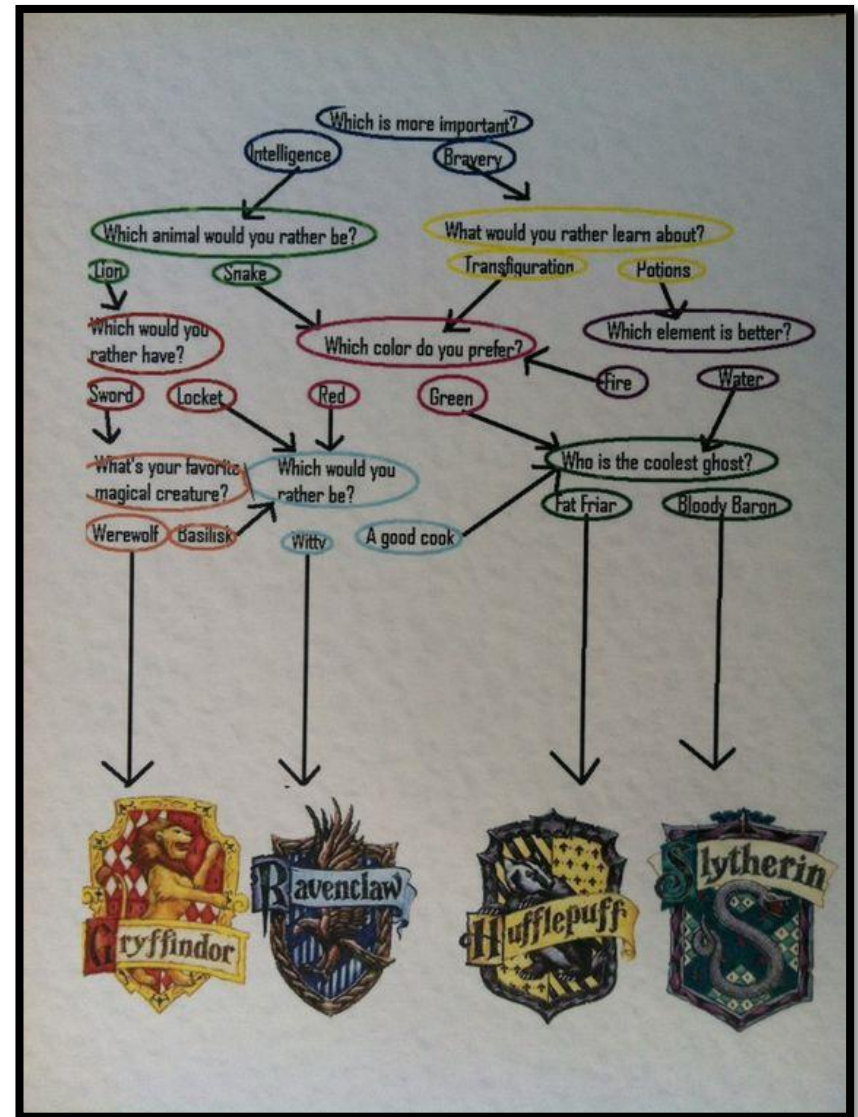
Explicitation

And now there were only three people left to be sorted.

Jetzt waren nur noch drei Schüler übrig, deren Haus bestimmt werden mußte.

Now were only still three pupils remaining, whose house determined become had-to

- sorted = into houses
- People = Schüler



Simplification

- SL may choose a complex or idiosyncratic construction (esp. in more 'artistic' genres, or direct speech)
- Even if TL has similar complex constructions, they may not map well to these situations
 - Result: 'flat' translated language, simple constructions
 - Additional motivation: lower complexity in translation may be desirable to compensate for other difficulties

Simplification

*but **there was no escaping** Dudley 's gang , who visited the house every single day*

*doch Dudleys Bande , die das Haus Tag für Tag heimsuchte ,
konnte er nicht entkommen*

Yet Dudley's gang, which the house day for day plagued
could he not escape

- “Standard” sentences and simple constructions are preferred



Normalization / Levelling

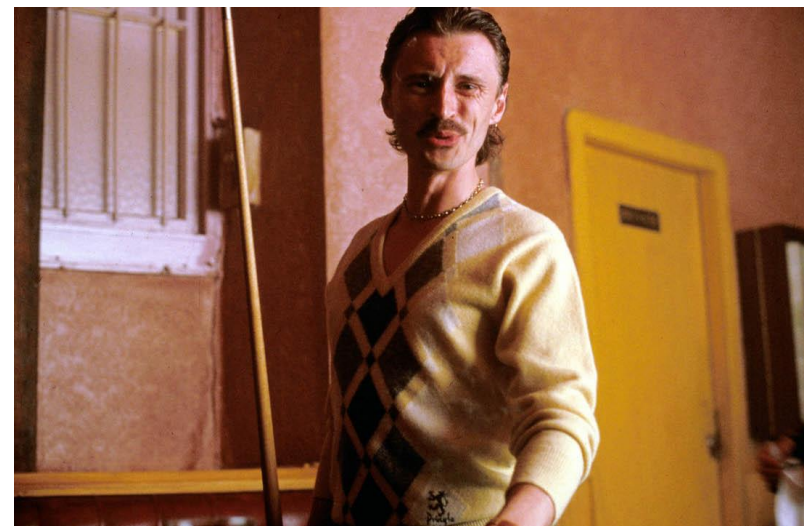
- How can non-standard language be translated?

He came **ter yer** house **an '— an '—**

Er kam **in euer** Haus **und - und —**

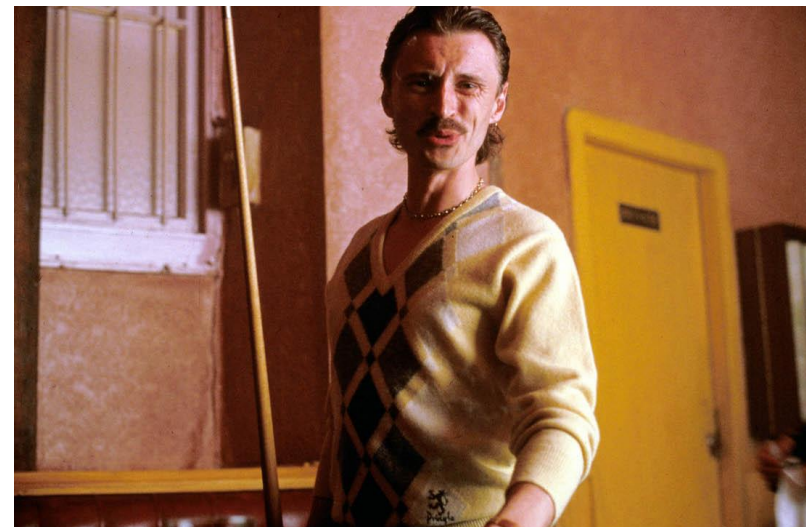
Normalization / Levelling

- How can non-standard language be translated?
 - *But Begbie is playing absolutely fucking gash .*
 - *Pero Begbie estaba jugando tan mal como siempre*
 - *Mais Begbie joue comme un nase .*



Normalization / Levelling

- How can non-standard language be translated?
 - *Begbie was hard, but not so hard that he didn't shite it off twenty years in Saughton.*
 - *Y por duro que Begbie fuese , veinte años en prision no los iba a aguantar .*
 - *Begbie était dur , mais pas au point de se foutre de vingt ans de taule .*



Assignment for Monday – no submission

- Take the first paragraph of the Wikipedia entry for “translation” in English
- Compare it to the entry in your L2
- Try to align sentences with similar content:
 - How good is the alignment? (good, fuzzy/partial overlap, passing resemblance)
 - If you found alignment, is the ordering the same or do you have crossing orders?
 - Are parts of the differences language/culture specific or coincidental?