

Literary Translation

الترجمة الأدبية

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4th stage/ Morning & Evening classes

Lecture 3: Prose Translation
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Literature and Style

In any language, the same idea can be expressed differently, thus creating various **linguistic forms**, i.e. **styles**. This is because each language has its own **linguistic system** (phonetics, graphology, semantics, morphology, syntax and pragmatics) that enables language users to choose for a particular linguistic form and exclude others (cf. McEnery & Wilson 2001; Murphy 2006). This goes in line with the definition of style provided by Crystal (1989):

Style is seen as the (conscious or unconscious) selection of a set of linguistic features from all the possibilities in a language. The effects these features convey can be understood only by naturally sensing the choices that have been made.

However, style can be defined in this course as a **kind of deviation** either from the patterns of structures or from the **direct literal meanings**

of words. Such a deviation occurs within any language system normally creates different sounds, ways of writing, meanings, structures, etc.

Literature and Shifts

In a translated text, such differences of sound, writing and structures are the translator's decisions and changes known as **translation shifts**. Consequently, shifts may occur in translation. In literary translation, these shifts are determined by the **translator's role** which has been referred to with such concepts as: the **translator's voice** (Herman, 1996), the **translator's thumbprint** (Baker, 2000), and the **translator's presence** (Bosseaux, 2001). All these metaphors reflect the underlying idea that translators contribute something of their own to the translation process, something that is not present in the ST, an **imprint of their own personality**. On the other hand, such concepts are linked with the choice that the translator makes; decisions in the process of translating a text to which translators have choices are connected to the use of certain strategies or shifts and sometimes some shifts are a **must**.

Having accepted that the translation process from one language to another includes various changes in a text relative to the source text, scholars have sought to address these changes through such concepts as "equivalence" and "transference" as mentioned earlier. A third concept used in this context is 'shifting', i.e., translation shifts, with emphasis on change.

This discussion comes to an inevitable outcome that formal correspondence is an instance of invariance. It is designed to reveal as much as possible of the form and content of the original message. In this respect, the translator should attempt to reproduce several formal elements, including:

- (1) grammatical units,
- (2) consistency in word usage, and
- (3) meaning in terms of the source context.

But sometimes the reproduction of grammatical and lexical units may not be the answer since 'translation involves far more than replacement of lexical and grammatical items between languages. Once the translator moves away from close linguistic equivalence, the problem of determining the exact nature of the level of equivalence aimed for begin to merge' Bassnett (2002). Hence, the other answer is to adopt shifts.

According to Catford (1965) there are two major types of shifts:

Level Shifts:

where an SL item at one linguistic level, for example "grammar", has a TL equivalent at a different level, for instance, "lexis". Cases of shifts from grammar to lexis are quite frequent in translation between languages.

While **category Shifts**: are further subdivided into four categories:

(a) Structure Shifts: (a change in a sentence or clause structure: e.g. S V Obj into V S Obj)
(b) Unit Shifts: (occur when a ST unit at one rank has a different rank in the TL (translating a phrase with a clause or a word with a morpheme).
(c) Class Shifts: (a change in word class. i.e. the change from one part of speech into another, e.g. from noun to verb).
(d) Intra-system Shifts: (a change in grammatical system e.g., number, article..).

Such shifts are a very vital weapon in the translator's hand to achieve equivalence. Baker (1992) states that: in establishing equivalence between languages, the process of translation may require the translator to make special shifts, i.e., to **add** or **delete** information of the ST in the TT or otherwise. As a result some lexical choices have to be 'sacrificed' in translation and some are said to be 'added'. Addition is an extension of ST units that are absent but must be restored in the TT. Addition can be made by using **lexical ties** or **linkages** that are considered being obligatory between sentences or even within the same sentence. Linkage as stated by Leech and Short (1981) is achieved with tools such as **coordinating**

conjunctions (e.g. and, or, but, etc.) and **linking adverbials** (e.g. however, therefore, etc.). Omission, on the other hand, occurs because some lexical elements in the ST cannot be reproduced in the TT, or to **avoid repetition**.

On the other hand, a **semantic shift** occurs when a word loses its basic meaning and takes a new, but often related meaning since the lexical meaning of a word is 'the personality it acquires through usage within a particular linguistic system (Baker, 1992). This implies that a metaphor can be present and a concept can be transferred from its normal location to somewhere else where it is not usually used or found (Ghazala et al, 2011). One of the striking shifts in semantic meaning is **metaphor** which transfers the **conceptual meaning** of a word into more **abstract sense**. Sometimes the SL text may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture. It may relate to a religious belief or a social custom. Such concepts are often referred to as culture-specific (Baker, 1992).

As proposed by both Catford and Baker, the following model summarizes the different types of shifts which are to be taken into account in the translation of literary texts.

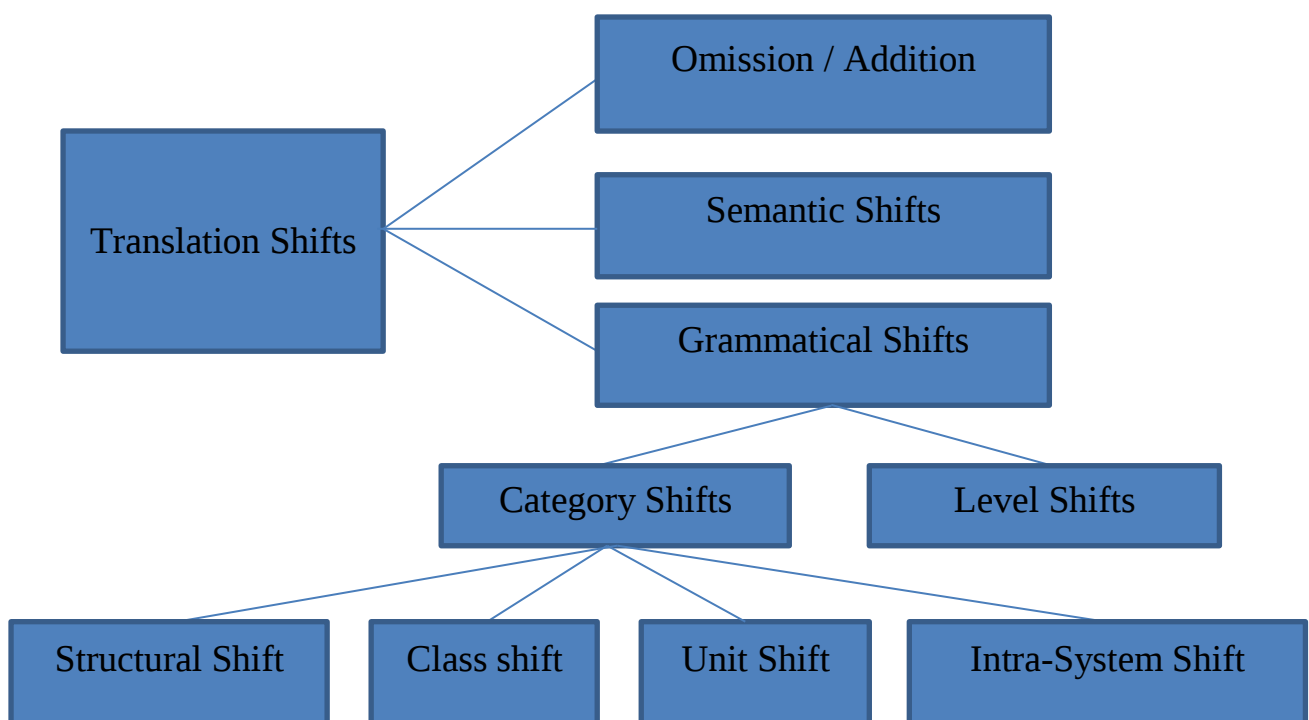


Diagram of the Model of
Catford and Baker's Translation Shifts