27   Terminology and translation theory: A functional-pragmatic approach

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ABSTRACT

In this paper the concept *terms* covers both the systematic designation of defined concepts within a specific field as well as 'field specific lexemes in a broader sense'.

The object of functional pragmatic translation is text as a communicative unit, representing a specific genre, which again is defined as conventionalized patterns of communication. In this context translation is seen as an interlingual, target group oriented reproduction of a text in a given genre.

Within a functional-pragmatic framework terms cannot be translated in communicative isolation, but as structural configurations of onomastic fields to fulfil a specific set of functions in the target text discourse community. This will be demonstrated by means of examples from translations between German, English, Norwegian and Greek.

In accordance with the theoretical statements and as shown in the examples, the translation of terminological elements in texts is carried out as 'lexeme-in-function': Both the specific translation situation (the intended effect(s) of the target text in a specific situation) and the specific socio-lingual context (semantic, structural and cultural factors) of the translation constrain the lexicalisation and grammaticalisation of specific onomastic fields.

Ορολογία και θεωρία της μετάφρασης: Μια λειτουργική-πραγματολογική προσέγγιση

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ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Στην παρούσα ανακοίνωση η έννοια *όροι* καλύπτει τη συστηματική κατασήμανση εννοιών που ορίζονται σε ένα συγκεκριμένο πεδίο καθώς και 'προσιδιάζοντα σε ένα πεδίο λεξήματα υπό την ευρύτερη έννοια'.

Αντικείμενο της λειτουργικής πραγματολογικής μετάφρασης είναι το κείμενο ως επικοινωνιακή μονάδα, που αντιπροσωπεύει ένα συγκεκριμένο κειμενικό είδος, το οποίο, με τη σειρά του, ορίζεται ως συμβατικός τύπος επικοινωνίας. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, η μετάφραση αντιμετωπίζεται ως διαγλωσσική, προσανατολισμένη στην ομάδα-στόχο αναπαραγωγή ενός κειμένου σε ένα συγκεκριμένο κειμενικό είδος.

Σε ένα λειτουργικό-πραγματολογικό πλαίσιο, οι όροι δεν μπορούν να μεταφραστούν απομονωμένοι από την επικοινωνιακή τους λειτουργία αλλά ως δομικά μορφώματα ονομαστικών πεδίων προς εκπλήρωση ενός συγκεκριμένου συνόλου λειτουργιών στην κοινότητα-δέκτη του κειμένου-στόχου. Αυτό θα αποδειχθεί με παραδείγματα από μεταφράσεις μεταξύ Γερμανικών, Αγγλικών, Νορβηγικών και Ελληνικών.

Σύμφωνα με τη θεωρητική προσέγγιση και όπως φαίνεται στα παραδείγματα, η μετάφραση ορολογικών στοιχείων σε κείμενα διεξάγεται ως 'λέξημα εν λειτουργία'. Τόσο η συγκεκριμένη μεταφραστική κατάσταση (το(τα) επιδιωκόμενο(α) αποτέλεσμα(τα) του κειμένου-στόχου σε συγκεκριμένη κατάσταση) όσο και το συγκεκριμένο κοινωνιογλωσσικό συγκείμενο (σημασιολογικοί, δομικοί και πολιτισμικοί παράγοντες) της μετάφρασης θέτουν περιορισμούς στη λεξικοποίηση και γραμματικοποίηση των συγκεκριμένων ονομαστικών πεδίων.

1 Definitions

1.1 Topic of analysis

The topic of the following analysis is terminology within the framework of functional pragmatics in translation theory. To discuss this, definitions of the central concepts terminology, functional pragmatics, and translation are needed.

Terminology is regarded as the systematic designation of defined concepts within a specific field, requiring specialized knowledge and the authorization to exercise a specific profession connected to this specialized knowledge. Terminology is thus not only defined onomastically, but also socially: it is also connected to language use in specific professional situations by people with specific qualifications for exercising a given profession.

This is indeed a pragmatic approach to terminology, being derived from a pragmatic definition of *Fachsprache* or *special language* as this is frequently labelled in English: Verbal and non-verbal official professional communication, carried out by specialists for the purpose of representing the social interests of an organisation ([8], 31; [5], 51ff.).

The basic aspect of *functional pragmatics* is closely related to the concept of meaning. In this paper meaning is a social, anthropologic category, not a fixed system of taxonomically organized semantic features as traditionally known in structural semantics. An example of the latter is the mathematical model of communication presented by [10] where meaning is seen as a fixed system of static entities outside communication from which certain elements were to be selected and shuffled though a channel of communication, passing filters of noise and reaching the receiver with the same exact amount of information as they were sent by the sender through the channel. A pragmatic approach, however, regards meaning as a dynamic category that is being constituted - and reconstituted – in a given socio-cultural context: "Meaning is not embedded in the form of an expression alone, and does not become transparent by the most elegant analysis of that form: it can only be interpreted

when it is located in a social organization and a praxis of communication" (Fredrik Barth, cited in: [7], 18). Functional pragmatics is based on this anthropologic definition of meaning. Meaning is thus a social category; it does not exist irrespective of and 'outside' a communicative situation, but is constituted in such a situation. A given communicative situation in a given culture is therefore a necessary precondition for the constitution – and also reconstitution - of meaning. Since meaning depends on situation and culture, it is also conventionalised. A situation is interpreted on the basis of tradition, conventions, i.e.: cultural constraints. In linguistics, this can be seen how communication is organised. Communication is patterned, it is realized by means of structured units called texts, and every text is interpreted by a given discourse community as token of a specific genre. *Genre* is defined according to the German tradition of *Textsorten* (e.g. [2], 129ff.) as historically developed, i.e. conventionalized patterns of communication serving as a point of orientation for social action within a given discourse community.

In this context *translation* very briefly can be seen as an interlingual, target group oriented reconstitution of meaning in the form of a written text in a given genre in a different socio-linguistic setting. The translation of terminology is thus more than just 'translating the words': In a translation situation the meaning of any textual element, including special lexis, is re-interpreted as parts of a given text in a given situation in a given language in an given culture and even 'textual details' like terminology can only be adequately analysed within this broad anthropologic approach. This does not mean that any analysis has to be carried out only at this broad, cultural level. Research on textual details is both interesting and necessary and therefore requires descriptive categories for such details, like traditional grammatical categories or a consistent model of syntactic analysis. But it would be erroneous to regard e.g. terminology as a purely lexical phenomenon: as a unit of analysis it is lexical, but as such it is embedded in the functional framework of the text as a whole and can only be properly analysed with this framework, cf. [9].

1.2 Goal of analysis

In the following I will first show how terms, most of them related to the onomastic field *diabetes mellitus* are translated differently depending on the specific needs of the translation situation, second, on the basis of these findings, I would like to set up a hypothesis in the form of a model or a scale for interpreting the translation of terminology within this functional-pragmatic framework.

2 Terminology in functional-pragmatic translation

2.1 Working hypothesis

As pointed out in chapter 1, no textual element can be translated in communicative isolation. As for terms as specific lexical textual elements, they are structural configurations of more or less pre-defined onomastic fields to fulfil a specific set of functions in the target text discourse community. This can be further explained by means of the following hypothesis:

A. If an onomastic field X of a subject field F is communicated by a specialist S in F in a situation C where S is acting officially in his or her role as SF, then the specific situational context CFS decides how X is contextualised and linguistically realised. Such linguistic realisations will be called *professional field specific denotations (PFSD)*.

B. PFSDs range from internationally normed lexemes (terminology) via more or less internationally conventionalised lexemes(semi-terminology) in field specialist internal knowledge management to language specific denotations in external knowledge management discourse by field specialists for different target groups of non-specialists.

C. In this paper, translation has been defined as an interlingual reconstitution of meaning in a different
socio-cultural setting. The management of these professional onomastic fields thus depends on the specific situation of the target discourse community, not only target language genre conventions, but also on the field knowledge of the target group and the purpose of the target text: This new contextualisation of professional onomastic fields calls for different linguistic choices all along the PFSD scale. In the following I will present some examples of the use of PFSD in different translation situations, thereby trying to shed some more light on the above mentioned hypothesis.

2.2 Examples

2.2.1 Change of target groups in professional medical communication

A text on eye diseases in connection with diabetes written by an American eye specialist for non-specialist doctors ([6]) was translated into Norwegian as an information leaflet for

nurses working at municipal health stations in Norway[1]. The knowledge level of the two target groups differed, but both target groups have professional knowledge on the field of diabetes. The American source text made use of a wide range of Greek-Latin medical terminology. Some of these were translated as Greek-Latin terminology (group A):

Endocrine – endokrin

Insulin resistance – insulinresistens

Hyperglycemia – hyperglykemi

Glycogenic amino acids – glykogene aminosyrer

Stenosis of the internal carotid artery – stenose i arteria carotis interna.

Other medical terms were translated into a non-terminological PFSD, preceded or followed by the corresponding Greek-Latin term (group B):

Chronic conjunctival injection – kronisk røde øyne (konjunktival injeksjon)

Pancreas – bukspyttkjertelen (pancreas)

Retina – netthinnen (retina)

Glycosuria - Glykosuri (glucose i urinen)

Most of the terms in the source text were translated into non-terminological Norwegian PFSD (group C):

Tissue hypoxia - Oksygenmangel i vevet

premature cataractogenesis – tidlig utvikling av grå stær

Myopia - nærsynthet

Ophtalmic – når det gjelder øynene

And some of the terms in the source text were first introduced by means of a non-terminological PFSD, later on in the target text as Greek-Latin medical terminology, i.e. as text determined presuppositions (group D):

Retinopathy – skadelige forandringer I netthinnen – retinopati

Cataract – grå stær (katarakt) --- katarakt

Fluctuations in refraction – fluktasjoner i brytningen (refraksjon) --- refraktive endringer

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[1]   Exam papers in LSP translation (Trans 2120) at the University of Oslo in April 2007.

Due to the fact that the source text sender and the target group community on the one side have shared knowledge with respect to diabetes, on the other side the commissioner of the translation prescribes the target text to be produced for a target group (nurses) with less field specific knowledge than the target group of the source text (doctors), a wide range of the PFSD scale is applied as a translation strategy: Group A represents the common field specific knowledge of both target groups – terminology is used without any further explanation. This is a clear sign of professional communication between different professional groups with differing knowledge within one onomastic field. In this case the use of terminology indicates the shared knowledge of the two groups. In group B a common field knowledge is presupposed, but not a common lexical knowledge. The semasiology of the case is explained, not the onomasiology. In group C the translator has left the terminology all together, using the Norwegian lexemes, but presupposing the onomasiology. Group D corresponds in a way to group B: first, the terminological PFSD is 'redenoted' in Norwegian, and then the Greek-Latin term is used in the thematic progression of these onomastic fields in the text. In group B – D the translation of terminology in the source text by semi-terminology and non-terminological PFSD clearly indicates the gap of knowledge not only between the sender of the source text (eye specialists) and the intended target group of the source text (doctors), but also between the target group of the source text (doctors) and that of the target text (nurses).

2.2.2 Changes in culture between target groups

In the case of the translation of an information leaflet for parents on diabetes by small children from German to Greek[2] the German expressions *Zucker, ins Bett machen* were represented as *Glukose, Sychnuria* in the Greek target text. In the Norwegian translation of the same source text these onomastic fields were realised as *sukker ('sugar')* and *hyppig vannlating ('frequent water release').* In this case all three languages realised the same onomastic field for corresponding target groups, all three using lexemes of external knowledge management, and the Greek text just being apparently terminological due to the etymology of these lexemes and since these lexemes also function as non-PSFD, i.e. these lexemes are also used by non-professionals in non-professional discourse on the given topic.

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[2]   This German text was made at the Erasmus Wisstrans seminar in Corfu in March 2006 and was translated into Greek, Danish, Norwegian and Latvian.

In all these examples professionally defined onomastic fields are filled with what could be called 'purpose oriented lexemes' in order to obtain a specific effect by a specific target group. In all these cases the function, defined as the intended effect by the intended target group, has been predominantly informative. Due to different levels of field specific knowledge within these target groups different types of PFSD have been used. But not all professional communication is informative – the use of PFSD may serve appellative purposes and then the PFSD scale is used completely differently.

2.2.3 Function as the key of analysis

Carbamid is used in a variety of creams and lotions for the skin and even for bleaching of the teeth. Carbamid is commonly known as *urinstoff* in Norwegian and *Harnstoff* in German. But the terminological *carbamid* is used in the description of the product (*karbamidsalve (Karbamidsalbe)* to avoid connotations with the smell of urine and urinating, like in adverts for Widmer Carbamid Cream *Carbamid cream for a healthy skin* and for a gel for tooth bleaching *Carbamid Peroxid Gel 35% zum Zähne bleichen*.

Another example would be the consistent use of *diabetes* in stead of *sukkersyke* ('sugar disease') by the Norwegian diabetes association in order to avoid depicting their members as people suffering from a disease. Diabetics are instead presented as social group with some special needs in order to lead a normal life like the rest of us. And – as well known in the world of adverts – we even find quasi-terminology used for marketing purposes like the use of *gardol* in a toothpaste generally guarding your teeth against caries and other unpleasant phenomena.

In these examples hard core terminology - and what could have been terminology - is used to not because the recipient of the text is expected to be a field specialist, but because the use of terminology is supposed to have some sort of marketing effect: in the case of *carbamid* a possible negative effect for the promotion of the product should be avoided, in the case of *diabetes* the social status of a group of patients is redefined and in the case of *gardol* positive connotations for the sale of the product are triggered by the use of a linguistically sophisticated terminological fake (' the product guarding your teeth'). In order to obtain the intended marketing effect , terminological PFSD is used in spite of the huge gap in field knowledge between the sender and the target groups. These terms are not used for descriptive purposes, but to give the impression of an expert status and/or connotatively

denoting a field in a way promoting economic or political goals. This appellative use of terminology takes advantage of the field knowledge deficit of the target groups in order to create a meaning coinciding with specific appellative, not descriptive goals.

3   Conclusion and final hypothesis

On the basis of the theoretical statements and as shown in the examples, the translation of terminological elements in texts is carried out as 'lexeme-in-function': Both the specific intention of the translation (the intended effect(s) of the target text in a specific situation by an intended target group) and the specific socio-lingual context of the translation (socio-cultural factors of the target group of the source text and that of the target text) constrain the lexicalisation and grammaticalisation of meaning, both generally and with regard to the lexicalisation of onomastic fields in professional communication. The specific function of a given onomastic field in a given communicative situation is thus the core of any analysis of terminology. It is important to emphasize once again that *function* is defined as the intended effect by a specific target group in a specific situation and not as the real effect by all sorts of readers of a given text in all sorts of situations.

In order to fill in these onomastic fields we would like to propose the notion of PSFD, which could be defined as a scale of denotations in professional communication ranging from internationally normed terminology with a highest possible level of specialist knowledge on the one hand to singular use of lexemes from everyday language on the other. The relevance of PFSD as a scale of referential and social meaning is clearly seen in our examples: Depending on the specific interaction in a specific the situation onomastic fields are filled differently, even in one and the same text. Thus a flexible concept of professional use of language to fulfil different communicative purposes, based on the notion of meaning as a social category, seems far more descriptively adequate than referring to terminology as a static system of lexical realisation of given semantic fields.

This does not, however, mean that terminology should be 'abolished' as a category for describing lexical phenomena in LSP discourse. Terminology could be identified as those pre-defined PFSDs designed for the use in specific LSP discourse, like in military discourse, air speak, police speak. In these situations the use of specific lexemes for specific denotations are prescribed by law. But they are also frequently used as a convention in scientific discourse between specialists of the same field and even as a means of promoting products with a fairly vague or even no connection to a specific onomastic field. Thus, as shown in the examples, the situation and its participants decide what level of PFSD is

chosen for a particular communicative purpose. In our examples, even the use of hard core terminology depends on the needs of a given interaction. This clearly shows that terminology first of all is a social category: It is not about a lexeme as corresponding to a predefined concept, but about how a lexeme is contextualised in a specific social setting. This again can be described by means of PFSD as a yardstick for interpreting the lexical realisation of onomastic fields in professional communication. The PFSD is thus a prototypically organised scale for the interpretation, not the classification of central aspects of professional communication.

With regard to translation the PFSD concept seems highly relevant. Since translation has been defined as an interlingual reconstitution of meaning in a different socio-cultural setting, onomastic fields that are terminologically lexicalised in one language for one specific target group, may need a quite different type of PFSD for another target group in another language. As shown in the translation of medical terminology in the American text on eye diseases by diabetes, the change of target groups in the Norwegian source text resulted in the use of different parts of the PFSD scale, not in a direct translation terms according to some fixed system for how medical terminology should be translated. Translation thus implies a contrastive analysis of the genre and situation of the source text and the designed situation for the target text. Depending on the use of a *tertium comparationis* [3] in the specific translation situation the problem of lexicalisation of onomastic fields in the translation of professional communication can be solved by using PFSD as a scale for the interpretation of a functional, target group oriented professional communication.

This again calls for a dominant status of *text function* as the overall intended effect by a given act of communication as the dominant category for the analysis of professional communication, as also stated and discussed in e.g. [3], 7-20. As we have seen in the present study, the use of different PFSD is connected to both appellative and informative functions and to shifts between these within one and the same text. But not only these two functions and variations between them would be relevant. It would be highly relevant to carry out research on other functional groups like obligative and declarative text functions, see [1], 31ff. and [2], 102ff. for further reading.

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3 A thorough discussion of the notion of tertium comparationis in translation analysis is carried out in the first chapter of [4].

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