4. Advances in Linguistic Theory and their Relevance to Translation[1]

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Linguistics has long been recognized to be a vital component of a translator's training. In this chapter, we will examine a number of subdisciplines of the field that seem particularly relevant to translation, especially those that have undergone major development over the past few decades. Though the subdisciplines dealt with doubtless reflect the special interests of the author, there has been an effort to achieve as much breadth as possible within the available space.

We will not consider formal theories of linguistics, since their direct contribution to translation theory and practice seems to be minimal.[2] Most formal approaches draw a pretty tight circle around what they consider legitimate linguistic inquiry. They are primarily concerned with sentence grammar, concentrate on competence to the exclusion of performance, assign meaning to only one component of the grammar and disregard the effects of context on structure and meaning. This suggests less fruitful ground for people who are looking to linguistics for help in dealing with the translation of texts.

4.1 Universalism versus relativity

One of the issues that most divide the field of linguistics today is that of *universalism* versus *relativity*. Universalism assumes that the underlying structures of all languages are pretty much alike, cut from the same mould, as it were. One approach posits universal principles that explain

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[2] Chomsky (1988:180) expressed the view that linguistics had little to offer people involved in practical endeavours such as translation and language teaching in response to a question put to him while delivering his Managua Lectures, and was presumably referring to generative linguistics.

the general alikeness of languages and describes the differences as simply language specific parameters or 'levers' that must be pulled by the language learner when acquiring a specific native language. It is assumed that language structure in the main is acquired genetically and that all languages share a universal semantic structure and underlying syntactic structure.[3] Whatever can be said in one language can be said in any other. Regarding the lexicon, Chomsky (1987:22) claims that "there is no clear alternative to the assumption that the acquisition of vocabulary is guided by a rich and invariant conceptual system which is prior to any experience".

Relativists argue that languages differ far more than universalists concede and that they reflect grammatically and lexically many of their speakers' assumptions about the world around them. In its stronger versions, it is assumed that languages *determine* to some degree the conceptual system of a linguistic community by leading their speakers to perceive some aspects of their reality, while concealing others from them. This is in essence what Boas, Sapir and Whorf[4] believed and taught during the first half of the twentieth century, and the idea that concepts are largely language determined goes back at least as far as Humboldt, in the early nineteenth century.

With the death – in the space of five years – of Boas, Sapir and Whorf and the birth of generative grammar, linguistic relativity fell upon hard times. Chomsky was bent on turning linguistics into a 'hard' science, and science was supposed to be a generalizing rather than a particularizing enterprise. The quest was for *universal grammar* (UG), and to focus on variation, especially at the level of cognition, was considered irresponsible scholarship (Lakoff 1987:304). Linguistic relativity could scarcely be mentioned in polite company.

Lately, linguistic relativity has been making a comeback, and has been closely associated with cognitive linguistics.[5] In a recent issue of *Language*,[6] one of the main articles and two of the book reviews had to do with linguistic relativity. Linguists such as Steven Levinson, John Gumperz, John Lucy, Elinor Ochs, William Foley, Dan Slobin and George Lakoff are among those who have lent their names to the cause. Today's linguistic relativity is not necessarily a carbon copy of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Much greater emphasis is now placed on empirical research, and some of those who do research in this area would not agree that languages *determine* aspects of a community's perception of their reality, preferring instead to talk in terms of *influence*. Still others would argue that it is culture that impacts language. Whichever way it is – and it may be both ways – there is a growing body of evidence that languages differ in intriguing ways that reflect equally intriguing differences in how people see and classify their world.[7]

The position one adopts with respect to the linguistic universalism versus linguistic relativity debate will ultimately influence one's position regarding crucial issues in translation theory as well. The assumption that languages differ widely to reflect widely differing cultures and world views seems heuristically more productive for a translation theory than the assumption that all languages are underlyingly very similar and share a common semantic structure. Needless to say, this does not imply that language diversity is totally free from constraints, a clearly untenable position, since there are numerous linguistic universals.

4.1.1 Metaphor

One popular example of the relativist approach is Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) *Metaphors We Live By*, in which they argue that metaphor is more than a rhetorical device employed in literary art forms. Rather, important concepts that people use to organize their world are conceptualized metaphorically. The authors are not talking about isolated metaphors, but rather entire networks of metaphors or *metaphor themes*, and they give numerous examples such as the *time is money* metaphor, common in Western civilization. We can *spend time, waste time, lose time, invest time, save time, give somebody our time, live on borrowed time*, etc. Another example is the *argument as war* metaphor. When we engage in arguing, *we*

[3] See, for example, Kayne's (1994) assertion that all of the world's languages have an S[vp VO] structure underlyingly (cited in Van Valin and LaPolla, (1997)).

[4] The groundwork for the theory of linguistic relativity was laid by Boas, but it was developed further by Sapir and Whorf. It was Whorf who expressed the strongest version of the theory and called it the theory of 'linguistic relativity' (Lucy, 1992).

[5] Palmer (1996) suggests that cognitive linguistics could be viewed as the 'modern revival' of the Boasian approach to linguistics, except for its lesser interest in culture and the ethnography of speaking. See also Duranti (1997) and Foley (1997).

[6] September 1998, volume 74, num. 3.

[7] See Lakoff (1987:305ff) for an enlightening review of different concepts of and approaches to linguistic relativity.

take different positions, we attack someone's ideas, we win, lose, retreat, we defeat or shoot down someone's arguments, etc. For Lakoff and Johnson, the very essence of metaphor is experiencing one thing in terms of another. And metaphor themes such as *time is money* or *argument as war* constitute frames that lend coherence to a large number of lexical collocations that would otherwise have to be viewed as exceptional or highly marked cases of lexical items. The authors argue further that metaphor themes are not arbitrary, but rather reflect the way that speakers perceive and experience the world around them: "In actuality, we feel that no metaphor can ever be comprehended or even adequately represented independently of its experiential basis" (ibid:19).

To affirm that metaphor themes are not arbitrary in no way implies that different cultures share the same ones. Certainly the members of different cultures perceive and experience the world around them in dissimilar ways, and come up with their own peculiar metaphor themes. Lakoff and Johnson ask us to consider a culture in which argument is viewed as a dance. In such a case, the participants would not be seen as at war, but rather as performers. They would have to execute their performance in a 'balanced and aesthetically pleasing way'. It would not look like an argument to us at all, and we may assume that they are engaged in some other kind of activity.

Translators have always known that metaphors from one culture often do not work in a translation for another and dealing with metaphors and figurative language in general has always been a part of Bible translators' training. What is interesting in Lakoff and Johnson is the pervasiveness of metaphor and the existence of metaphor themes, whose representation poses a greater challenge to translators than that of metaphors in isolation (cf. the discussion of archetypes in section 6.1.3).

4.1.2 Spatial orientation

An area of particular interest to linguists working within the realm of linguistic relativity or cognitive linguistics is that of spatial orientation (e.g. Foley 1997; Levinson 1996; Pederson *et al.* 1998). Apparently all languages have *absolute* spatial orientation, based on cardinal directions, whatever form these may take in a given language (*north, east, where the sun comes up, toward the mountains, down river, toward the ocean*). Many languages, but by no means all, have *relative* spatial orientation as well, based on positions relative to the human body, usually the speaker's. In

such languages, locations are often expressed as being *behind* or *in front of* the speaker or to the speaker's *right* or *left*. This is especially true when the location is nearby. The point of reference need not be the speaker. It can be projected onto someone or something else (*behind the table, to the right of the oak tree*).

In languages lacking relative spatial orientation, all locations are expressed in terms of cardinal directions. This, of course, implies that the speakers of such languages must have nearly perfect bearing at all times, and indeed this has been shown to be the case. Pederson *et al.* (1998) carried out a series of nonlinguistic experiments to determine whether a speaker's cognitive frame of reference corresponds to his linguistic frame of reference. In other words, they wanted to test whether or not the speakers of languages that differ in the categorization of spatial orientation differ in a corresponding way with respect to their perception of space and resultant behaviour. Spatial orientation is an important testing ground for linguistic relativity because space is something that presumably all human beings experience in the same way, so differences cannot be attributed to dissimilarity in culture or environment. Pederson and his colleagues (ibid:557) believe their research demonstrates a language-to-conceptualization directionality:

> The findings from these experiments clearly demonstrate that a community's use of linguistic coding reliably correlates with the way the individual conceptualizes and memorizes spatial distinctions for nonlinguistic purposes. Because we find linguistic relativity effects in a domain that seems basic to human experience and is directly linked to universally shared perceptual mechanisms, it is likely that similar correlations between language and thought will be found in other domains as well.

Clearly such correlations have implications for translation theory. For instance, the biblical languages have both absolute and relative spatial orientations and both commonly occur in the biblical text. Therefore, numerous passages would prove problematic for translation into a language such as Tzeltal (Mayan, Mexico), which does not have relative spatial orientation (Foley 1997, Levinson 1996, Pederson *et al.* 1998). Take, for instance, Ezekiel's description of his vision of the four winged beings all having four faces:

> Each living creature had four different faces: a human face in front, a lion's face at the right, a bull's face at the left, and an eagle's face at the back. (Ezekiel 1.10, TEV)

People who lack relative spatial orientation use absolute terms as in: "Pass me the salt. It's over there, just east of the catsup bottle." One could say something like, "They had a human face to the north, a lion's face to the east, a bull's face to the west and an eagle's face (presumably) to the south." But the Ezekiel text does not indicate which cardinal direction the four beings were facing, so one would be forced to make arbitrary choices. And what does 'facing' mean when a being has four faces all looking different directions. One could even ask if it makes much sense to talk about cardinal directions referring to a dream. Probably the best option would be to undertranslate and put something like "each had four faces on its head. On one side they had a human face, on another, a lion's face ... ." This is *undertranslating* because it gives us no real idea of the organization of the faces on the head, whereas the Hebrew text does.

Referring specifically to translation problems, Lakoff (1987:311ff) says essentially that the possibility of translation between two languages depends on the existence of common conceptual systems (the commensurability problem). Probably no languages have totally disparate conceptual schemata, so translation is possible, as we know. But of course translation problems arise at those points where there are mismatches. Foley (1997:171) observes:

> Because translation requires moving the categories of the alien system into those of our own, this imposes constraints on how radically different the alien system can be. If completely incompatible, even partial translation should be impossible. The fact that a fair degree of translation between conceptual schemes across languages and cultures does seem possible indicates that at least some minimal communalities (sic) do exist. But this should not blind us to the wide gulf between them. Quine emphasizes that languages are systems; we are not trying to match the meanings of words across the systems, but the conceptual schemes these belong to – a much taller order, as this implies aligning the systems as wholes.

Mismatching conceptual schemata between source and target languages are a source of problems for the translator that need to be addressed in any theory of translation. And learning to identify them and deal with them should be a part of any translator's training.

4.2 Typology

Linguistic typology attempts to lump languages into types on the basis of structural commonalities. Nowadays typology is concerned with practically all aspects of language, even at the discourse level.

4.2.1 Constituent order typology

One of the most traditional concerns of linguistic typology has been the order of constituents at the clause level or words at the phrase level. At the clause level, the overwhelming majority of the world's languages have one of the following three basic (i.e. unmarked) constituent orders: Verb Subject Object (VSO), Subject Verb Object (SVO) or Subject Object Verb (SOV). This does not mean, for example, that in a VSO language, only that order occurs. It means that it is the unmarked, most neutral, most expected order in that language, and that when speakers deviate from it, they are communicating something of pragmatic import to the hearer. English is now an SVO language, but certainly other *marked* orders are possible and occur all the time, as can be seen from examples 1a-b:

[1] **a.** I like guacamole (SVO)
b. Guacamole I like (OSV)

These two sentences are semantically identical, but pragmatically distinct and would be used in different contextual circumstances. It would behoove a translator who is translating from an SVO language like Spanish into, say, a VSO language like Garifuna (Arawak, Honduras) to be acutely aware of this typological difference. Garifuna permits SVO when there is a pragmatic need to confer special prominence on the subject. However, it is easy to imagine the disastrous consequences of a Garifuna translator's ingenuously reproducing the *unmarked* SVO order of Spanish as a *marked* SVO order in Garifuna. As she translates, it is unlikely that any single instance of this mistranslation would sound very wrong to her. But the overall impact on the discourse would be calamitous. And when she reviews her work, it would no doubt sound strange to her, though she may not know how to correct the problem. Certainly to ensure as high a degree of pragmatic similarity as is possible between the source text and the target text, workshops should include training with respect to the unmarked constituent orders of both the source and target languages and the kinds of pragmatic changes that occur in each when marked orders are chosen. Care should be taken to translate unmarked orders with unmarked ones and marked orders with marked ones of similar pragmatic effect.

The constituent order of clauses often correlates with other aspects of a language.[8] For example, if a language has a VO order, one can be fairly confident that it also has prepositions, whereas OV languages will more likely have postpositions. This is not too helpful – even if the source language and the target language are typologically different in this regard – since few translators are likely to start tacking prepositions onto the end of nouns in the target language just because the source language has postpositions. However, an awareness of other typological information – predicted by word order – can be crucial, because the differences they signal are nowhere nearly so mechanical nor so easy to deal with as adpositions. Basic word order also gives us clues as to what the marked and unmarked order of nouns and modifiers will be and recognition of this can help to avoid translating unmarked orders with marked ones or vice versa.

In current linguistic theory, the term *head* refers to the element that determines the syntactic character of a constituent. So the head of a noun phrase is the noun, the head of a verb phrase, the verb, etc. Theo Vennemann (cited by Comrie, 1989) noticed a universal tendency for VO languages to be *head-initial*, (i.e. for the head to be the first element in the phrase) and for OV languages to be *head-final* (i.e. for the head to be the final element in the phrase).[9]

Roberts (1997), a specialist in the languages of Papua-New Guinea, shows just how important this typology can be to translators. He is working with biblical Greek and Amele. Greek is a VSO language,[10] and therefore head-initial. Amele is SOV and therefore a head-final language. It happens that the head-initial/head-final contrast has profound consequences because it predicts how languages will order clauses expressing various kinds of logical relationships, as indicated in Table 2 (adapted from Roberts).

VSO (Greek)	*SOV (Amele)*
RESULT-reason	reason-RESULT
RESULT-means	means-RESULT
MEANS-purpose	purpose-MEANS
MEANS-neg purpose	neg purpose-MEANS

[2] **a.** *Greek*: The crowd ... was bewildered (RESULT) because (*hoti*) all the people heard them speaking in their own languages (REASON). (Acts 2.6)[11]
b. *Amele*: They all heard them speaking in their own native languages (REASON), so (*nu*) they were all bewildered (RESULT).

[3] **a.** *Greek*: They even carried the sick out into the streets, and laid them on cots and mats (MEANS), so that (*hina*) Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he came by (PURPOSE). (Acts 5.15)
b. *Amele*: Peter will come by and his shadow might fall on some of them (PURPOSE), so (*nu*) they carried the sick out into the street and laid them on mats.

Table 2: *Clause ordering in a VSO language and an SOV language.*

Roberts has found sufficient support among his colleagues working in OV languages in Papua New Guinea and elsewhere to suggest that this might be a linguistic universal. Although in less detail, Larson (1984) cites similar clause-order dissimilarities between English and Upper Asaro (citing data from Deibler and Taylor 1977) as well as some unnamed

[8] Predictions regarding the presence or absence of a specific linguistic parameter based on other linguistic parameters are known amongst typologists as implicational universals. This kind of linguistic universal was developed initially by Joseph Greenberg. An example would be: If a language has a trial number, it also has a dual: If it has a dual, it also has a plural.

[9] The terms 'head-initial' and 'head-final' were not used by Vennemann, who preferred the more technical terms 'operand-operator languages' and 'operator-operand languages' respectively.

[10] The VSO status of Ancient Greek is a judgement of Roberts. However, Greenberg (1966) also classifies it thus (assuming that he is referring to Ancient Greek, since Modern Greek is widely considered to be SVO), as do Friberg (1982) and Levinsohn (2000). Watters (2000:131) believes that verb and object order in Greek is determined more by discourse pragmatics rather than by syntax.

[11] The glosses indicate clause order in Greek and Amele, but no attempt has been made to reproduce the word or constituent order in these languages.

languages in Amazonia. Stephen Levinsohn (personal communication to Roberts) specifies Inga as one such Amazonian language. Bribri (Chibchan, Costa Rica) – also an SOV language – works the same way as Amele.

A translator who was unaware of these typological differences and was translating verse by verse would likely follow the structure of the often more prestigious source language, and wind up with a very unnatural sounding translation that would require considerably more processing effort to comprehend.

Further on in his article, Roberts suggests that this typological distinction is related to many other differences between Greek and Amele, including the way in which speakers construct an argument. For instance, in Greek the approach is deductive: The thesis is given first and then the supporting arguments. In Amele, the order is inductive: The supporting arguments are given first, followed by the thesis. When checking the translation, the Amele readers would come to a thesis and then backtrack through the text in search of the supporting arguments. But they were nowhere to be found because the translators had followed the structure of the source text, thereby placing the arguments after the thesis and rendering the argument impenetrable. Substantial restructuring was required to enable them to grasp the argumentation of the text. This would be particularly troublesome in the case of the epistles, where there is considerable argumentation.

4.2.2 Grammatical typology

One of the interesting grammatical differences between languages is the way they organize their grammatical relations or whether they even have grammatical relations. Two of the more common types are *accusative* languages and *ergative* languages. Accusative languages treat transitive and intransitive subjects the same, for example by putting them in the nominative case. Direct objects, on the other hand, typically go in the accusative case. Ergative languages, however, treat the intransitive subject and the direct object the same, putting them both in the absolutive case, while transitive subjects go alone in the ergative case.[12]

[12] We are somewhat inappropriately describing ergative languages in terms of accusative languages for the sake of brevity and simplicity. However, in ergative languages

Languages can be accusative or ergative in different ways. For example, a language is morphologically ergative if it marks the core arguments with ergative and absolutive cases. In an imaginary language that had the same vocabulary as English but was morphologically ergative we could expect the following constructions, in which the direct object in 4a and the intransitive subject in 4b have the same form, that is, are in the same grammatical case:

[4] **a.** *He* hit *him*. (transitive subject/direct object)
b. *Him* ran. (intransitive subject)

Languages can also be ergative with respect to word order if intransitive subjects and direct objects appear on one side of the verb, while transitive subjects appear on the other. If the same imaginary language had ergative word order, we would find constructions such as:

[5] **a.** Bubba scared Todd. (Preverbal transitive subject /postverbal direct object)
b. Fled Todd. (Postverbal intransitive subject)

We have syntactic ergativity if the intransitive subjects or direct objects function as the syntactic pivot, while transitive subjects do not. Syntactic pivots are the nouns that interact with syntactic rules, such as deletion in coordination. In syntactically accusative languages like English, the subject of the second of two coordinate clauses is normally deleted if it refers to the same person or thing as the subject of the first clause. The only requirements are that both nouns be subjects (either transitive or intransitive) and that they both have the same referent.

[6] **a.** The man hit the dog. The man ran off.
b. The man hit the dog and [the man] ran off.

Sentence 6b would be understood differently by speakers of syntactically

the properties of subjects are divided between the ergative and absolutive cases, so it is questionable whether *subject* is even a useful concept when referring to ergative languages. This has moved a number of functional typologists and others to prefer Dixon's more neutral term *syntactic pivot*, the grammatically most central noun of a clause. See Dixon (1994), F. Palmer (1994) and Van Valin and LaPolla (1997).

ergative languages because they apply deletion in coordination only between two *intransitive* subjects, two direct objects or one of each. Example 7b is normal, however, and herein lies the problem for translators:

[7] **a.** The man hit the dog. The dog ran off.
b. The man hit the dog and [the dog] ran off

Although 6b and 7b are phonetically identical, they clearly have different meanings (F. Palmer 1994; Payne 1997; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997). In a recent workshop for Iñupiak speakers, one participant brought up a conflict she had noticed between her Iñupiak and English New Testaments. The conflict was due to an Eskimo translator having read an English sentence similar to 6b and having interpreted it as 7b. Another student in the class, who is absolutely fluent in English, repeatedly read the English version and persistently misinterpreted it as though it had been written in Iñupiak.[13]

This translation error, which could conceivably occur whenever there are coordinate clauses with deletion of the second clause's subject, sneaked past the original Iñupiak team because of their unawareness of the typological implication of the contrast between syntactic ergativity and syntactic accusativity, and underscores again the need for translators and consultants to be cognizant of the typological distinctions between the source and target languages. It is not impossible to translate 6b into Iñupiak; it requires using the antipassive voice to alter the grammatical status of the participants. But the danger is that the translators will misunderstand the source language sentence and not realize the need to adjust the grammatical relations in the target language in order to preserve the meaning.

There may be important typological distinctions between neighbouring dialects as well as between languages. The translators of one dialect 'dialect A' of Chuj, a Mayan language spoken in Guatemala, were using a Spanish translation as their base text, but were also relying heavily on an already existent Old Testament translation in the neighbouring dialect B. Dialect B had only two grammatical numbers, *singular* and *plural*, whereas dialect A had three, *singular, dual* and *plural*. The plural of dialect B was derived from a previously existing dual and looked just like the dual of dialect A. The translators were unaware of this fact. They believed the plurals of dialect B were duals, and translated accordingly. So wherever the existing translation in dialect B had a plural, in dialect A they put a dual. This typological mismatch was not discovered until the translation was nearly finished. The resulting error, which occurred thousands of times in the text, was not amenable to a computer fix. So it had to be corrected manually, thereby delaying the project several months.

Garifuna has a morphologically very complex system of possessive marking in which possession is marked on the *possessum* rather than on the *possessor*.[14] Nouns referring to some things, for example trees and animals, cannot take possessive marking. This does not mean that their referents can never be possessed, but rather that Garifuna grammar does not allow such words to take possessive morphology. To get around this problem, for instance in the case of animals, they must use some form of the word *ilügüni* (roughly 'pet'), which *can* take possessive morphology. One does not say *my dog* in Garifuna, but rather *my pet dog*. Recently, while working on the book of John, we came to the passage where Jesus says to Peter: *Feed my sheep*. But, of course, the Garifuna word for *sheep* cannot take possessive marking. Inserting a possessed form of the word *ilügüni* before *sheep* caused raucous laughter amongst the translators, since to do so precludes any possibility of understanding *sheep* metaphorically.

Often different grammars simply transmit different information, information that cannot be conveniently approximated – much less duplicated – by the grammar of another language. Casad and Langacker (1985, quoted by Hudson 1996:83-84) discuss the case of two affixes that are widely used in Cora (Uto-Aztecan, Mexico). The use of these affixes is far too complex to describe here, but the choice of one or the other depends on the position of an object with respect to the line of vision of the speaker. In reading the description of how these affixes are used, it becomes clear that they reflect a particular conceptualization of space that is determined largely by the fact that the Cora people live out in the open, and yet are surrounded by mountains. Cases such as these lead us to conclude with Hudson (ibid:84) that "even if we concentrate on grammatical constructions, affixes and the like, we still find dramatic differences from language

[13] According to Tom Payne (personal communication), a Yup'ik Eskimo assured him that the only possible interpretation of the Yup'ik sentence *Tom ate the bug and got sick* was *Tom ate the bug and the bug got sick*.

[14] Garifuna is a head-marking language.

to language in the kinds of meaning that can be expressed". And we might add that there are dramatic differences as well in the kinds of meaning that *must* be expressed.

4.2.3 Typological semantics

In an important article published in 1985, Talmy did some groundbreaking work in *typological lexical semantics*. He deals with a large number of aspects of verbal semantics any one of which could have important implications for a theory of translation. For the purposes of this chapter we can consider only one of them, one that has often been a source of difficulty for translators who are unaware of the issues involved.

Talmy points out a crucial typological difference in the ways that different languages conflate semantic features in motion verbs. The central feature of a motion verb would have to be MOVE, and let's assume that by MOVE we mean move from point A to point B at least. In English, the semantic feature that most frequently combines with MOVE is that of MANNER, and English has a veritable wealth of verbs in which this happens, a few of which would be: *crawl (MOVE + MANNER: using all four limbs)*, *stumble (MOVE + MANNER: briefly losing control of one's legs), walk, stroll, wander, meander, roam, drift, amble, hike, skip, saunter, traipse, trot, lope, jog, run, bolt, dart, dash, sprint, scurry, race, rush, sail, fly, drive, swim*, and *cruise*. All of these verbs express motion (presumably linear) and the manner in which such motion is carried out. But they alone tell us nothing about the trajectory, which Talmy and others refer to as PATH. If it is necessary to express information about the PATH, this can be done with a wide variety of *satellites*, which usually take the form of a prepositional phrase. (In the following examples, the motion verb appears in *cursive* and the satellite in **bold face.**)

[8] **a.** Philip *sauntered* **into the house.**
b. The duck *flew* **up on the roof.**
c. The castaway *crawled* **up onto the beach.**

English has numerous other verbs which – while not essentially motion verbs – can readily be called into service as such: *push, shove, jump, hop, roll, kick, knock, float*, and even such non motion-like verbs as *laugh* and *drink*. These verbs, like the others, tell us nothing of the trajectory when used as bare verbs, but do so by adding satellites.

[9] **a.** The bottles *floated / rolled* **into the cave.**
b. They *bounced / knocked* the ball **into the street.**
c. They *kicked / pushed / laughed* Nigel **out of the pub**.
d. O'Riley *drank* Murphey **under the table**.

The pattern of combining motion and manner lexically into the verb is referred to as the MOTION + MANNER CONFLATION, and is very common among the Indo-European languages. It is not the preferred pattern, however, in the Romance languages,[15] Semitic languages, Polynesian languages, most Bantu and Mayan languages, Japanese, Nez Perce and Caddo (Talmy 1991). In these languages the prevailing pattern is MOTION + PATH, and they tend to have a large number of verbs that conflate these two features.[16] Spanish, for instance, has numerous verbs such as *entrar* 'enter', *subir* 'move up', *bajar* 'move down', *volver* 'move back' and *cruzar* 'move across' (Slobin 1999). But these verbs say nothing about the MANNER in which the MOTION takes place and Spanish has nothing like the sentences of 9 a-d. If in Spanish one needs to express the MANNER, it will have to be done by adding a satellite in the form of an adverbial phrase of some kind, often a gerund, as in examples 10a-c:

[10] **a.** Las botellas *entraron* a la cueva **flotando.**
The bottle *entered* the cave **floating**.
b. El muchacho *cruzó* el río **a nado.**
The boy *crossed* the river **by swimming**.
c. *Sacaron* a Juan de la casa **a patadas**
They extracted John from the house with kicks.

Talmy (1985:122) points out that one of the ways languages can differ is in the "amount of information they can express in a backgrounded way". For instance, the fact that English lexicalizes MANNER into the verb means that MANNER is, in effect, backgrounded. Because Spanish expresses MANNER by adding an adverbial phrase, it is necessarily foregrounded. So a good Spanish translation of an English movement sentence may well not include any mention of MANNER.

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[15] The Romance languages seem to be the only branch within the Indo-European family that typically conflates MOVE and PATH.

[16] English has a few of these verbs, mostly Latinate, such as *enter, exit, extract, introduce, ascend, descend, traverse* (see Goddard, 1998). Because of their Latin origin, they sound stilted in contexts in which they would be completely normal in Spanish.

Talmy (1991) considers PATH of movement *core information*. Those languages like Spanish that map such core information onto the verb itself have *framing verbs* and are called *verb-framed* languages. In contrast, those languages like English that map such core information as the PATH of movement onto a satellite have *framing satellites* and are said to be *satellite-framing* languages.

Slobin (1999), building on Talmy's work, takes the *verb-framed* language / *satellite-framed* language typology further, by studying how they behave in discourse, and by so doing, makes this typology even more relevant to translation. Slobin and his colleagues have elicited spontaneous narratives based on a wordless picture book they call 'the frog stories' about a lost frog and a little boy and his dog who go looking for it. Slobin has used the book to gather numerous narratives from children and adults in Spain, Latin America and the United States. The picture story is packed with action (i.e. movement) and therefore the narratives serve as an ideal database for a comparison of how a *verb-framed* language, Spanish, and a *satellite-framed* language, English, deal with all that movement.

The researchers didn't confine themselves to the spontaneous descriptions of the events depicted in the storybook. They also compared the way that movement was dealt with in a number of Spanish and English novels, and even analyzed the way motion events were treated in translation. Slobin uses statistics in his analysis and approaches the issue from a number of different angles, so it is not easy to summarize here his conclusions. But this will be attempted in very general terms.

Due to the tremendous diversity of MOTION + MANNER verbs in English, the English-speaking narrators used nearly twice as many distinct verb types in their narration of the frog stories as the Spanish-speaking narrators did, suggesting that the English narratives are richer in their description of movement. Many times in a narrative there appear extended paths, which Slobin calls *journeys*, and which can be spread out over several clauses. The journeys are described in terms of *figures* and grounds. A figure is the object which is moving (in 11, the deer) and the ground is the relatively stable object with respect to which the figure moves (in 11, the cliff and the water). Perhaps to intensify the action of the movement, narrators often avail themselves of a strategy Slobin refers to as *clause compacting*, in which several steps of a journey are compacted into a single clause:

[11] The deer starts running and he throws him off$_1$ over the cliff$_2$ into the water$_3$.

Three pieces of information are packed into the second clause of 11. Slobin says that there is nothing about verb-framing typology that should preclude Spanish speakers' use of clause compacting. Yet, though constructions such as that in [11] are very common in English, only two cases were found in the entire corpus of 60 Spanish frog stories (ibid:202-3). So Spanish speakers tend to use at most one prepositional phrase for each motion verb, thus including only one piece of information about a ground per clause.

> To sum up thus far: in comparison with English speakers, Spanish narrators use a smaller set of motion verbs; they mention fewer ground elements in individual clauses; and they describe fewer elements of a journey. Yet their narratives, overall, seem to 'tell the same story' as English accounts ... However, movement always takes place within a physical setting. The two languages seem to differ, further, in relative allocation of attention to movement and setting. English, with its rich means for path description, can often leave setting to be inferred; Spanish, with its sparser possibilities, often elaborates descriptions of settings, leaving path to be inferred. (Slobin 1999)

So it would seem that speakers of English and Spanish have distinct rhetorical styles. English speakers apparently pay more attention to the dynamics of motion in a narrative, while Spanish speakers "seem to be led (or constrained) by their language to devote less narrative attention to the dynamics and perhaps somewhat more attention to static scene-setting" (ibid:205). Slobin (note:205) points out that these same rhetorical differences hold for other *satellite-framed* and *verb-framed* languages he has studied.

Slobin reaches similar conclusions from his examination of the corpora of novels, and shows how this typological difference is dealt with in translation. Spanish translations of English novels reduce the level of detail regarding path given in the English original; presumably to do otherwise would result in a translation that would sound over laden with motion to the more setting-sensitive Spanish readers. Conversely, in English translations of Spanish novels, the amount of information given about the path is often increased. To refrain from this would possibly result in a text that sounds unbearably static to the English ear.

Slobin (ibid:218) believes that his study of motion events demonstrates that "typologies of grammar have consequences for 'typologies of rhetoric' [and that] the effects of such typologies on usage may be strong enough to influence speakers' narrative attention to particular conceptual domains".

All of the examples in this section strongly suggest that typology has a good deal to offer a theory of translation, and that much of this transcends the sentence to affect the discourse in major ways. It would seem that an essential part of translator training should be raising the translators' awareness of the typological differences between the source and target languages and of the kinds of other differences their respective typologies should lead them to expect. Wong (1997) points out that typology is important not only for the translators, but for the consultants as well:

> ... typological studies are directly relevant to the work of consultancy, especially for those who may not have an in-depth knowledge of the language involved. Typological studies across kinds of languages can provide us with a mapping guide to the 'type' of language one is dealing with.

4.3 Cross-cultural semantics

If Chomsky (1987:22) is correct about our inheriting genetically "a rich and invariant conceptual system prior to any experience", then we should expect translation to be a far more straightforward undertaking than it seems to be. Our problems should be limited mainly to the areas of grammar and syntax. Even there, the problems should not be severe, since Chomsky also presumes languages to have like underlying syntactic structures. With respect to semantic meaning, since both the speakers of the source language and those of the target language would share the same invariant conceptual system, our only problem would be to match the lexical items of the source language with those of the target language that express the same invariant concepts. Experience in translation suggests otherwise.

Wierzbicka, who together with her colleagues has spent decades looking into this matter, agrees that some concepts are universal or nearly so. But she disagrees sharply with Chomsky about the number of such concepts. Quoting his assertion that "the conceptual resources of the lexicon are largely fixed by the language faculty, with only minor variation possible", Wierzbicka (1992:19) considers that "cross-linguistic and cross-cultural variation are not minor but colossal". In her more recent work she assumes there to be in the neighbourhood of 60 very simple universal primitives such as *I, you, someone, something, want, don't want, this, say, feel, think, become, good* and *bad*. According to Dirven and Verspoor (1998:144), the number of universal semantic primes is 'almost certainly less than 100 words'. Languages take their basic stock of simple universal concepts and organize them into complex language-specific constellations, which are the source of the cross-linguistic variation.[17]

In her 1992 book entitled *Semantics, Culture and Cognition: Universal Human Concepts in Culture-Specific Configurations*, Wierzbicka forcefully argues for the conceptual diversity of human languages and proposes to demonstrate this to be the case by comparing cross-linguistically terms such as *soul, mind, heart, fate, destiny, courage, bravery, recklessness, fear, surprise, shame, embarrassment, humility*, and *pride*.[18] However, these are 'folk' terms taken from English, and Wierzbicka sees no reason whatever to assume that other languages, even closely related ones, will have matching terms. To investigate this, she needs some way of comparing lexicons that allows her to avoid the trap of ethnocentrism. Obviously one cannot simply ask how to say 'shame' in Hausa and then assume that whatever word is given means the same thing as 'shame'. To get around this, she has devised a Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) based on very simple words taken from her stock of putatively universal semantic primitives.[19]

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[17] Among the very basic concepts that Wierzbicka considers good candidates as semantic primes are: I, you, someone, people/person, something/thing, think, know, want, feel, say, hear, word, do, happen, move, there is, live, die, this, the same, other, one, two, some, many/much, good, bad, big, small, when/time, now, before, after, a long time, a short time, for some time, where/place, here, above, below, far, near, side, inside, because, if, can, very, more, kind of, part of, like (Goddard,1998:58).

[18] Wierzbicka deals with many terms organized into conceptual domains, making her treatment more useful than this chapter's brief description may suggest. [Her (2001) *What Did Jesus Mean?* was obtained too late for it to be discussed in this publication – *Editor*.]

[19] Wierzbicka readily acknowledges the tentative nature of her list of semantic primitives, and in fact has modified it numerous times. But she assumes that very simple concepts are more likely to be universal and that, conversely, the more semantically complex a concept is, the more likely it is to be culture-specific.

In the samples of her work that we have had access to, the metalanguage is based on English simply because she is writing in English, but presumably one could base the NSM on any language in the world. Wierzbicka uses the metalanguage to describe the semantic components of a lexical item in a given language. By then comparing the description with that of cognate words in a different language (or even the same language), Wierzbicka argues that we can free ourselves from attempting to get at their meaning through the use of the culture-bound folk terms current in one of the languages.[20]

For example, Wierzbicka maintains that English has no monolexemic equivalent for the Polish *tęskni*, which refers to a particular Polish emotion. However, it is possible to *explain* this feeling in English by breaking down the complex Polish concept "into parts whose names do have simple English equivalents" (ibid:121). Her description of *tęskni* looks like this:

X *tęskni* do Y →

X thinks something like this:
I am far away from Y
when I was with Y I felt something good
I want to be with Y now
if I were with Y now I would feel something good
I cannot be with Y now
because of this, X feels something bad

Her description of *tęskni* conjures up in the mind of an English speaker words like *homesick, long, miss, pine, nostalgia*, etc. However, Wierzbicka maintains that these words all differ from the Polish word – and from each other – in significant ways, and she proceeds to analyze each of them to show how they differ. In Chapter 4 of her book, on 'Describing the Indescribable', she tackles the description of numerous concepts she

[20] Wierzbicka is not the first to use explication of this type. For a somewhat similar approach, see Labov and Fanshel (1977). Semanticist Goddard (1998) also uses the Natural Semantic Metalanguage in his work. The use of the metalanguage to define lexical entries (as in the following paragraph) has initially amused some scholars because of its simple vocabulary and syntax. But obviously its simplicity is essential if it is to work.

holds to be culture-specific taken from more 'exotic' cultures, such as the Ilongots in the Philippines. Her aim is not just to prove that cultures vary in their concepts, but to show how an analysis of such concepts can reveal a great deal about the cultures themselves. Moreover, she suggests that lexical differences "may not only reflect but also encourage different, culture specific, modes of thinking and feeling" (ibid:124).

One of the cases she explicates is the concept of 'friend'. She points out that many languages have a word resembling 'friend', and that we blithely translate them from one language into another by means of each other, assuming a high degree of correspondence. However when the meaning of these words is analyzed, enormous dissimilarities appear. For instance, to Anglo Saxons, 'friend' refers to someone they are very fond of, want to spend time with, do things with and for, go places with and confide in. The corresponding Polish word, however, means something very different. It refers to a person who does the same thing you do at the same place you do it. If you sell fish at the market and there is a fellow across the aisle who sells carrots, and the two of you spend many hours together every day talking, complaining about the government, and grousing about the low price of fish and carrots, then you are friends. But it would never occur to you to invite him to your house or suggest that you go to the beach together. That's what the *family* is for. The Polish notion of 'friend' is strikingly similar to that of *amigo* in certain parts of Latin America. She attributes the Anglo Saxon concept of friend to this culture's having replaced the extended family with friends.

In the same vein, Hudson (1996:82), after providing a number of examples of putative untranslatability between such closely related languages as French and English, says, "The conclusion to which examples like these point is that different languages do not simply provide different ways of expressing the same ideas, but they are also different in the more fundamental (and interesting) sense that the ideas that can be expressed differ from language to language." After examining more 'exotic' examples, Hudson (ibid:84) adds, "It is hard to avoid the conclusion that semantic relativity is limited only by the limits of cultural variation, and it is at any rate certain that there is much more semantic variation between languages than most of us are aware of."

If it is the case that the differences between semantic structures cross-linguistically are indeed colossal as the analyses of Wierzbicka and others suggest, then the implications for a theory of translation would appear to be quite significant. This conclusion is bound to have an impact on certain core assumptions regarding the attainability of equivalence in translation and is doubtless partially responsible for the currently widespread assumption among translation theorists that various degrees and types of similarity – rather than equivalence – are what translators can and do actually achieve. Even translators professing to attain some kind of equivalence (formal, functional, etc.) characteristically hedge by using dubious qualifying phrases as in *closest natural equivalent*.

How is a theory of translation to deal with such colossal semantic variation? Hudson (ibid:84ff), though not referring specifically to translation, proposes prototype theory[21] as a way to at least put some limits on the differences. Semantic differences between languages seem to diminish 'if meanings are examined in relation to prototypes'. Hudson mentions several societies such as the Seminole Indians of Oklahoma and Florida and the inhabitants of the Trobriand Islands in which a single term (X) refers to all of these relations:

(1) father
(2) father's brother (English *uncle*)
(3) father's sister's son (English *cousin*)
(4) father's mother's sister's son (English?)
(5) father's sister's daughter's son (English?)
(6) father's father's brother's son (English?)
(7) father's father's sister's son's son (English?)

Where English has a word for these relationships, they do not accurately coincide with X except for number (1). So in the strict sense, English has no term that will translate X in all or even most of its uses. X may well seem chaotic to the speakers of other languages, but in fact all of the uses of X can be derived by means of three relatively simple rules.[22] English also has some exceptional uses of the word *father*, such as when it means *priest* or *stepfather*. But if we ignore all of the derived forms and focus on the prototypical meanings of both X and *father*, we will see that they do in fact coincide. This may impose some constraints on semantic variation, but translators can hardly restrict themselves to translating at the

[21] Developed by psychologist Eleanor Rosch.
[22] The three rules are: A. A man's sister is equivalent to his mother. B. Siblings of the same sex are equivalent to each other. C. Half-siblings are equivalent to full-siblings.

level of prototypes. Besides, Hudson readily admits that languages differ even in many of their prototypical concepts, so it seems that translation theory will have to find another way to deal with the problem of semantic variation.

4.4 Pragmatics

A number of philosophers of language and semanticists came to the realization that the logical formulation of the meaning of a proposition was frequently at odds with the meaning of the corresponding utterance as expressed in natural language. British philosopher Paul Grice's solution to the problem was foundational to the development of the field of pragmatics. He pointed out (1975) that much of the meaning of natural language was inferential in nature. We often communicate more than we actually say and understand more than we actually hear. And the problem lies not in the semantic or syntactic rules of natural languages, but rather in the 'rules and principles of conversation' (Fasold 1990).

4.4.1 *The cooperative principle*

The cornerstone of Grice's approach is doubtless his well-known Cooperative Principle (CP), which consists basically in making one's contribution to a conversation as appropriate as possible at the juncture at which it occurs. He defines 'cooperation' in terms of four general categories under which appear one or more maxims:

1) Quantity
   1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
   2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
2) Quality
   1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
   2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
3) Relation (Be relevant)
4) Manner
   1. Avoid obscurity of expression
   2. Avoid ambiguity
   3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)
   4. Be orderly

Relevance theory, which Gutt uses to discuss Bible translation (see section 1.4.4), contends that all of Grice's maxims can be melded into the third one: Be relevant.

According to Grice, there are five ways in which a speaker can react to these maxims.[23] The first one, of course, is to follow them. The second way is to violate them, as one would do if telling a deliberate lie. Thirdly, a speaker can opt out of a maxim. This is infrequent, and would occur, for example, when someone has information required by the speech event, but has been obliged not to divulge it, as when a person says, 'My lips are sealed.' The fourth possibility would be a maxim clash, as when following one maxim implies the violation of another: for example, if a person is unable to fulfil the maxim 'Be as informative as is required' without violating the maxim 'Have adequate evidence for what you say.' The most interesting way to deal with the maxims is to flout one of them. When a speaker flouts a maxim, he or she does not observe it, and yet cannot be accused of violating it because the infraction is so utterly obvious that the speaker knows he or she is not observing the maxim and knows that everybody else involved in the conversation knows it too.

This takes us to the notion of 'conversational implicature'. Conversational implicatures are what makes it possible for a speaker to communicate to the hearer more than what is actually said. Let's look at one of Grice's examples:

[12] A is standing by an obviously immobilized car and is approached by B and the following exchange takes place:
A: I am out of petrol.
B: There is a garage around the corner.

Literally speaking, B's response is irrelevant. He simply tells A that a certain kind of business is located around the corner, although A has not asked him that. Yet A would assume that B's contribution is somehow relevant and that he is indeed cooperating. But for B's participation to be relevant, it is necessary that he believe that the garage may be open and probably has petrol to sell (Fasold 1990). The implicature is that A, by walking a short distance, could solve his problem by purchasing petrol at the garage around the corner.

[23] Fasold's explanation (ibid:130) of the five ways that a speaker can respond to Grice's maxims is closely followed since it is more reader-friendly than Grice's own.

[13] A and B are going out for dinner and are trying to decide where they should go, when the following exchange takes place.
A: Shall we go for Chinese food?
B: I have high blood pressure.

Looking at B's response literally, it does not seem like much of an answer to A's question. A has asked a yes/no question about what kind of food they should go for and B responds by giving A some information about his health, thereby flouting the maxim of relevance. However A will normally assume that B is being cooperative and will therefore look for some way to make sense of what B has said. Both of them are aware the Chinese food is often high in sodium and that sodium is to be avoided by people with high blood pressure. The implicature then is that B feels that he should not eat Chinese food; that is, his affirmative statement about his health actually constitutes a negative answer to the question.

In general, communication theorists assume today that communication is vastly more inferential than it was ever thought to be a few decades ago. But the inferential capacity that makes mutual understanding of implicatures possible requires that the participants in a particular speech event share a large number of assumptions. In example [13], both participants must share the assumptions that Chinese food is high in sodium and that sodium is bad for people with high blood pressure for the implicature to be made and correctly inferred. And it is very likely that one and the same exchange between different sets of participants will generate completely different implicatures (Kempson 1975).

This brings us to the cross-linguistic application of Grice's maxims. Let's presuppose that the original readers of a text share many assumptions with the author, who was, after all, writing to them. The author adjusts the message to his or her audience and is aware of the kinds of implicatures they will be able and are likely to process. However, the readers of a translation of the source text are in a different communicative situation. Depending on how distant they are from the source text culturally, temporally and linguistically, they will share more or less the original author's assumptions. And to the degree that they do not share the author's assumptions, they will be unable to correctly process his or her implicatures. Such cases would seem to necessitate some benign intervention on the part of the translator to help the target readership resolve the unreachable implicature.[24] The degree to which this should or even can be done in the translation itself, as opposed to supplements to the translation, depends on a wide variety of communicative factors.

The universality of Grice's maxims is debatable. Is it the case that the same Cooperative Principle governs civil dialogue everywhere? Certainly some scholars think not. Ochs-Keenan (1977) argues that Malagasy speakers (Madagascar) do not observe the maxim, 'Make your contribution as informative as is required.' She points out that 'as informative as is required' means according to Grice, 'as informative as is required by the needs of the other person'. It is, after all, meeting the informational needs of one's conversational partner that makes one 'cooperative'. Yet, Malagasy speakers are regularly uninformative. Ochs-Keenan suggests some reasons for this. In Malagasy society, one's life is an open book to other members of the community. They share a common history, carry out the same daily activities, go to the same places, and in general live their lives under the unrelenting scrutiny of their neighbours. This places enormous value on the possession of 'new information', which therefore is not quickly surrendered. Let's look at another example:

[14] A encounters B in the street and the following exchange takes place:
A: Where is your mother?
B: She is either at the house or at the market.

Members of a typical Western society would assume that B, by not observing the maxim of informativeness, is making an implicature: B does not know for sure where his mother is. However, Ochs-Keenan maintains that no such implicature is assumed in Malagasy culture "because the expectation that speakers will satisfy informational needs is not a basic norm" (ibid:258). That is, Ochs-Keenan suggests that the maxim 'Be informative' is inoperative in Malagasy society.

Another reason given for the uninformativeness of Malagasy speakers is their reluctance to commit to the truth of new information. They 'do not want to be responsible for the information communicated' because of possible dire consequences in case it turns out to be false. Of course, if it

[24] However Gutt (1991:89) finds little reason to believe that "wrong implicatures can generally be remedied by explication".

is the case that Malagasy speakers withhold information because they genuinely fear it might turn out to be false, this would not suggest the inoperativeness of 'Be informative' so much as it would a clash between 'Be informative' and 'Don't say that for which you lack adequate evidence'. If Ochs-Keenan is correct that B's response in [14] does not communicate to Malagasy speakers the implicature that B does not know the whereabouts of his mother, then this would be an example of an exchange that would generate different implicatures for participants of different cultures.

Wierzbicka (1991) also disputes the universality of Gricean type maxims, arguing that they are based on a scandalously Anglocentric view of what is 'normal' in civil conversation. There is a need for further research in this area. However, should it turn out that people of different cultures and languages operate with different sets of principles governing conversational civility, this would clearly have implications for translation. For instance, in Matthew 26.63,4, when Jesus is appearing before the Sanhedrin, the high priest demands that Jesus state under oath whether he is the Messiah, the Son of God. And Jesus' response is simply, *Su eipas* ('You said'). Understood literally, this answer may not seem to provide all of the information requested. That is, Jesus seems to not be cooperating in Gricean terms, and this is doubtless what moved the translators of the NIV to expand the answer thus: 'Yes, it is as you say', making it seem more like a cooperative affirmation. It also makes more explicit what the translators presume to be the underlying speech act, an aspect of communication to be discussed in the next section.

4.4.2 *Speech acts*

One of the main interests of pragmatists has been the analysis of speech acts. The philosophers of language Austin and Searle pointed out that when speakers use language, they do not just say things; they also do things. In English some of the things they do are *promise, threaten, request, warn, order, beg, affirm, deny, suggest, complain, acknowledge, admit, explain, remark, apologize, criticize, stipulate, advise, describe, invite*, and *censure*. English has hundreds of such verbs used to name different speech acts and different linguists have classified them in numerous different ways. For instance, Fraser (1975) suggests the following speech act taxonomy:

[15] A. Acts of asserting (accuse, advocate, affirm, claim, comment, concede, conclude, etc.)
B. Acts of evaluating (analyze, appraise, certify, characterize, estimate, figure, judge, etc.)
C. Acts reflecting speaker attitude (accept, acclaim, admonish, agree, apologize, blame, etc.)
D. Acts of stipulating (abbreviate, characterize, choose, classify, describe, define, designate, etc.)
E. Acts of requesting (appeal, ask, beg, bid, enjoin, implore, order, request, solicit, etc.)
F. Acts of suggesting (admonish, advise, advocate, caution, counsel, exhort, propose, etc.)
G. Acts of exercising authority (abolish, abrogate, accept, adopt, approve, bless, condemn, etc.)
H. Acts of committing (accept, assume, assure, commit, dedicate, promise, undertake, swear, etc.)

There is no consensus regarding specific speech act categories or their number, and there seems to be little likelihood of coming up with any that is both universal and has an acceptably small number of categories (e.g. Goddard 1998:143). It is clear that there is tremendous diversity in the number and kinds of speech acts that occur cross-linguistically. English has an inordinately large collection, while the Mayan languages seem to get by with very few (*say, tell, ask*).[25] Kaqchikel seems to have no verbs that are similar to *threaten, warn, acknowledge*. Of course lacking names for speech acts does not necessarily mean that a language cannot express those speech acts. Presumably Kaqchikels can warn others of impending danger even though they have no word for *warn*. But it does seem reasonable to assume that a language would have names for those speech acts that are culturally salient. (Wierzbicka 1991:150) Gumperz (1972:17 [cited in Wierzbicka 1991]) says, "Members of all societies recognize certain communicative routines which they view as distinct wholes, separate from other types of discourse". And he adds, "These units often carry special names". Hymes (1962:110), considers that, "one good ethnographic technique for getting at speech events ... is through the words which name them".

[25] However, it may be the case that Mayan languages simply have different speech act verbs. For instance, according to Margaret Dickeman (personal communication), Jakaltek has a speech act verb that lexicalizes 'to speak softly next to a river'.

Wierzbicka considers speech acts to be mini speech genres and the names given to these genres (question, warn, threaten) to be folk taxonomies pertaining to a given language and culture. Probably no one would debate the language-specific nature of speech acts like *christening, absolving from sin* and *proposing matrimony*. Wierzbicka is convinced that speech acts such as *promising, ordering* and *warning* are no less language-specific. In fact, Kaqchikel has no word that corresponds closely to *promise*. The word they use to translate *promise* is the same one they use to translate *offer* and seems to involve a lower level of commitment than *promise*.

Wierzbicka points out that speech act genres are described in one of two ways: from without or from within. When they are studied from without, she says, researchers discuss issues like: 'Blessings and curses in Yakut'. When they are studied from within, we find topics more like *namakke* and *sunmakke*[26] in Kuna (Sherzer 1983:98ff). That is, the speech genres of a given culture are viewed in their own terms. The drawback of the first approach is that it imposes the folk taxonomy of one language onto another. Words such as *judging, acclaiming* and *apologizing* belong to the folk taxonomy of English speech acts, and taxonomies of speech act verbs are culture-specific. So to use them to analyze the speech acts of another culture is to look at the other culture's speech acts through a grid of English speech acts. The drawback to the second approach is that terms like *namakke* or *sunmakke* are not very accessible to outsiders.

An interesting exercise is to look through the domain of 'Communication' in Louw and Nida (1989, section 33). A surprising number of entries are Greek speech act verbs that have no monolexemic English equivalent and therefore must be explained. For instance, the verb *paradidomi* means 'to pass on traditional instruction', often implying over a long period of time. The English glosses that are given are simply 'to instruct, to teach', terms which obviously lack the features of 'traditional' and 'over a long period of time'. The verb *sophronidzo* is defined as 'To instruct someone to behave in a wise and becoming manner'. The glosses are 'teach', 'train'. The verb *entrepho* means 'To provide instruction and training, with the implication of skill in some area of practical knowledge'. The suggested

[26] These terms refer to specific types of ceremonial Kuna used only by priests in community meetings. Which one is used depends on there being only one priest present or more than one.

glosses are 'train', 'teach', as in the previous case. All three verbs are glossed 'teach'. Obviously if we translate all three as 'teach' we are losing a large part of their meaning, plus the fact that they are different verbs. Even if we exploit the glosses to the maximum and translate them as 'instruct', 'teach' and 'train' respectively, we are still not much closer to capturing their whole meanings. All we would have succeeded in doing is differentiating them in the translation.

The Greek verb *kauchaomai* is common in the writings of Paul and is usually translated into English as *boast*. But in many contexts it sounds forced at best (all citations are from the *New Revised Standard Version*):

1. *You that boast in the law (Romans 2.23)*
2. *... and we boast in our hope (Romans 5.2)*
3. *... we also boast in our sufferings (Romans 5.3)*
4. *Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord (1 Corinthians 1.31)*
5. *... we are your boast even as you are our boast (2 Corinthians 1. 14)*
6. *... since many boast according to human standards (2 Corinthians 11.18)*
7. *If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness (2 Corinthians 11.30)*

But because many translators have simply assumed that the Greek speech act verb means essentially the same thing as the English verb *boast*, it has typically been translated thus. However, unlike *boast*, *kauchaomai* is not always self-focused, and is not necessarily a negative thing to do. Therefore, to consistently translate it as *boast* seems to distort the text. George Davis, author of a dissertation on 'Boasting in the writings of Paul', says that *kauchaomai* is often associated with the theme of *trust*, and suggests that in Romans 5.2 we translate *take confidence in* (personal communication). The sense is quite different and the Greek's reference to a speech act no longer evident. David Baer (personal communication) points out that in the Septuagint this verb and its nominal derivatives frequently translate Hebrew words relating to *praise* and *rejoicing*, though they apparently did not have these meanings in Classical Greek. Some translators have, in fact, translated it thus in some contexts.[27] Whatever

[27] For example, Psalm 5.11: 'exult' (*New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV)); 'rejoice' *Contemporary English Version* (CEV)); Psalm 89.17: 'exult' (NRSV); 'be happy' (CEV).

kauchaomai really means, English does not seem to have a similar speech act verb.

Languages not only do not coincide in the speech acts their speakers perform, but they differ as well in the formulas they use for similar speech acts. English has imperatives and therefore the possibility of saying directly, 'Pass me the salt.' However most Anglo Saxon English speakers are reluctant to use the imperative in most situations, preferring instead a less direct strategy. There are numerous degrees of indirectness: 'Can you pass me the salt?' 'Could you pass me the salt?' 'Would you mind passing me the salt?' 'The soup needs a little salt, don't you think?' Wierzbicka (1991) points out that while it is possible to say, 'Can you pass me the salt?' in both English and Polish, it would be understood as a request only in English. A Pole who was learning English would have to learn both the propositional meaning of this sentence and the fact that it is used to express an indirect request. Poles do not use questions to make requests, and when English speakers do it, they sound wimpish to Poles. Poles are vastly more inclined to use bare imperatives, and therefore come across as pushy and overbearing to English speakers. Yet English speakers do not sound wimpish to each other, they sound polite. And Poles do not sound pushy to one another, but just appropriately assertive.

Translators would have to take this into consideration when translating between two such languages. An English translation of a Polish text would be defective if the Poles came across as overbearing. And likewise, a Polish translation of an English text would miss the mark if the normal discourse came across as wimpish. Could this be the reason that Jesus' response to the Sanhedrin (cited in 4.4.1) seems strangely evasive to us and yet is apparently understood as an affirmation by his judges? Translators should not only receive training in basic speech act theory, but also with respect to the particular speech acts and formulas of the source language in contrast to those of the target language, which they should be taught to identify.[28]

[28] For an in-depth discussion of the sociocultural reasons for the degree of directness with which a request is formulated, see Brown and Levinson (1987). For an application of their study to a Bible translation problem, see Wilt (1996).

4.5 Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics can be broadly defined as the study of language use in its social context. Sociolinguistics can help us relate speakers to communities, tease apart different registers and dialects, get a better grasp of the multilingual world in which the biblical cultures co-existed, seek solutions to the difficult issue of inclusive language and use language to better reflect the nature of interpersonal relationships or social deixis. Because a substantial amount has been written about the application of sociolinguistics to translation,[29] we will consider only one example of its importance.

Social deixis is the grammaticalization of the personal (social) relationships that obtain between interlocutors and even between a speaker and someone who is not present in the speech event but is being talked about. This crucial area has often been ignored by Bible translators in many parts of the world because it has no clear grammatical marking in the biblical languages. In many languages such as Spanish, Portuguese, German and French there is a two-way split in the grammar between the so-called 'formal' and 'familiar' forms.[30] Brown and Gilman (1960), in their seminal article 'Pronouns of power and solidarity', use V and T (from the French *vous* and *tu*) to represent these two forms respectively. The V form is used to reflect social distance and the T form to reflect social closeness.

In languages like Spanish all dyadic relationships between interlocutors must be defined as a symmetrical V V or T T relationship or, alternatively, as an asymmetrical V T relationship, in the case of interlocutors of unequal social rank. There is no neutral ground; this is an inescapable fact of the grammar. Yet, amazingly, before the publication of the Common Language Version, not a single Spanish translation of the Bible had ever taken this sociolinguistic fact into account, rendering all

[29] For example, Louw (1986), de Waard and Nida (1986).

[30] This is really an over-simplification, since many social forces come into play here. In many languages the 'formal' forms are used with persons considered to be socially superior or more powerful, while the 'familiar' forms are used to denote social inferiority or powerlessness, and this is indeed the way most of these systems began. However, as Brown and Gilman (1960) point out, such systems tend to evolve into others in which the axis is no longer *power/powerless*, but rather *solidarity/non solidarity*, and often both axes compete during a protracted period of transition.

first/second-person relationships as symmetrically T T, thereby giving the erroneous impression that the participants of virtually every dialogue that occurs in the biblical text takes place between persons who are either social equals or feel a high degree of mutual solidarity (Ross 1993).[31] This practice introduces an enormous amount of distortion into the text.[32]

Translating from a sociolinguistic perspective places the onus of correctly assessing countless biblical relationships squarely on the shoulders of the translator. Often there are clear contextual cues. When Abraham is talking to his servant, there is an obvious asymmetrical master/servant relationship that requires grammatical expression. But even in less apparent cases, an educated guess is far better than simply levelling all the relationships in the whole text.

Some languages pose even more challenging problems for translation. For instance, Hudson (1996:124ff, citing data from McGivney, 1993) describes the situation for Mijikenda, a language spoken in Kenya. Mijikenda, like a number of Western languages, uses a singular pronoun for T and a plural pronoun for V. However unlike Western languages, the choice of pronoun is determined by the respective generations to which the speaker and the addressee belong. If the addressee belongs to the same generation as the parents of the speaker, then the speaker is obliged to use V. This fact alone could make it seem that power is a factor. But the speaker is obliged to use V also when speaking to persons of the same generation as his or her children and the use of T and V is always reciprocal, while in power-based systems nonreciprocity is the norm. What happens when the generation gap spans more than one generation? Speakers use T with addressees of their grandparents' generation, V with addressees of their great grandparents' generation, etc. Mijikenda societies are close knit, so typically people are aware of how others fit into the generational scheme of things.

Of course the biblical text does provide substantial generational information about numerous biblical characters. But there are countless

[31] In French there is still no Bible translation that makes this distinction, although the use of second-person pronouns is similar to that of Spanish. For discussion, see Péter-Contesse (1991 and 1992).

[32] In some languages of Southeast Asia, the expression of social deixis is a great deal more complex, involving substantial lexical shifts and many more levels of relative status. For discussion, see Hatton (1973 and 1979).

cases where the reader is given no clue as to the respective generations of two interlocutors. What were the respective generations of Jesus and Nicodemus, for instance? It is likely that Nicodemus was older, given his status in the Jewish community, but was he one generation older or two? Such information is not grammaticalized in the biblical languages, and yet presumably must be known in order to choose the appropriate pronoun.

4.6 Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis deals with virtually any aspect of language use (Fasold, 1990:25). The field is so broad that it is often included as an essential component of other subdisciplines of linguistics such as sociolinguistics and pragmatics (e.g. Schiffrin, 1994). Its source of data are real texts, whether written or oral, taken as unified wholes. This distinguishes it from most versions of formal linguistics, the source of whose data is the imagination of the linguist, who makes up his own corpus in the form of sentences designed to suit his particular analytical purposes and deprived of any real-world context. Discourse analysts work with *utterances* (genuine acts of communication carried out in real contexts) and assume that 'meaning' does not stop with the semantic content of the words or even of clusters of words arranged into sentences, but is largely dependent upon the context in which the utterance is produced. Discourse analysts hold there to be functional differentiation in human language and they view the structure of speech as ways of speaking and not just a grammatical code (ibid:22ff). They look at discourses of any length and assume that chunks of language larger than sentences are grammatically relevant. Cotterell and Turner (1989:230-1) describe discourse thus:

> ... discourse has a beginning, a middle and an end, and the beginning could not be confused with the end; the parts could not randomly be interchanged and still have a reasonable discourse. Discourse, in fact, is characterized by coherence, a coherence of supra-sentential structure and a coherence of topic. That is to say there is a relationship between the sentences which constitute any discourse, a relationship which involves both grammatical structure and meaning.

More and more linguists are reaching the conclusion that sentence-

level linguistics is inadequate as an approach to the study of natural language. One of the reasons for this is the awareness that much of what happens in any real utterance of sentence length is determined by what has been happening in previous sentences and even what is expected to happen in following ones. The willingness of functionalists to look beyond the sentence and to focus on the role of grammatical structures within a context means that the questions they ask are very different from those that a formal linguist would ask. For example, while Chomsky and his disciples are interested in how passive sentences are derived (i.e. what is their underlying structure), discourse analysts are more interested in discovering why a speaker, given a choice of grammatical voices, decides to use the passive voice in a particular context rather than some other voice. What work is the passive voice doing in this particular context? And the answer will nearly always be found outside the sentence of which the passive verb is a part. Therefore, it seems clear that even to do good sentence linguistics, one must, as Grimes (1975) put it, 'peer out' beyond the confines of the sentence itself.

At least as important as accounting for sentence structure is accounting for the myriad structural features of the discourse that cannot even be seen at the sentence level. For example, participants need to be linked to events they participate in and also to other mentions of the same participants (Grimes1975), and the ways participants are tracked through a discourse vary considerably from one language to another. By grammatical means participants are introduced as topics, maintained for a while and then left behind, often to be reintroduced later on. It is crucial that the translator be aware of the strategies used by both the source language and the target language for participant tracking.

Discourse analysts have long noted that in narrative discourse, the main events of the story line are foregrounded, while crucial supportive information is backgrounded. Hopper's study (1979) was among those dealing with the linguistic marking of groundedness. He noted that in a number of languages groundedness is marked by means of grammatical strategies. For instance, at the beginning of Swahili narratives, there is an initial tense marker, often the preterit affix *-li-*, which seems to define the tense for the following discourse. From that point on, events that constitute part of the main story line are marked with the affix *-ka-*, whereas other events, such as explanatory or concurrent ones, are marked by other verbal affixes such as *-ki-*. Similarly, Hopper pointed out that Romance languages mark grounding by means of a contrast in verbal aspect, the central events of a narrative being in the perfective and the backgrounded ones in the imperfective.

But, Hopper noted, there are also non-grammatical ways of distinguishing foregrounded from backgrounded material. For instance, foregrounded text tends more toward action events, often punctual in nature, whereas the backgrounded portion of the narrative is usually more stative. Foregrounded events are prone to appear in chronological order, to the contrary of backgrounded events. Grammatical strategies and others such as these help the listener wend his or her way through the discourse and are a key part of the structure of a discourse that would unquestionably have to be taken into consideration in translation with regard to both the source and target languages.

Discourse analysts have also contributed to the study of frames and the framing of texts. Brown and Yule (1983:139), for instance, show how different titles for the same text could lead to radically different interpretations. Their example is taken from Anderson *et al* (1977:372):

> [16] Rocky slowly got up from the mat, planning his escape. He hesitated a moment and thought. Things were not going well. What bothered him most was being held, especially since the charge against him had been weak. He considered his present situation. The lock that held him was strong, but he thought he could break it.

This paragraph was read to one group of people framed by the title 'A Prisoner Plans His Escape' and to another framed by the title 'A Wrestler in a Tight Corner'. The two groups interpreted the text in radically different ways due to the difference in framing. Granted, their sample text is contrived, hence the extreme difference in interpretation. But a title undeniably provides a frame for interpreting what follows. Giving the familiar biblical parable the title *The prodigal son* will likely move the reader to focus on the reprehensible behaviour of a son who leaves home and squanders his inheritance. The same parable titled *The lost son* will probably lead the reader to associate this parable with the preceding ones about a lost sheep and a lost coin. Or, were the parable to be called *The forgiving father*, the reader would be more likely to focus on the father in the story as a representation of a merciful God.

Zogbo (1988) has written a helpful article devoted specifically to the

application of discourse analysis to translation. There she deals with a much wider variety of topics than can be considered here, and the interested reader is urged to see her article for a fuller view of one of the areas of linguistics that has the most to offer a theory of translation. An important book for translators and consultants alike is Levinsohn's (2000) *Discourse Features of New Testament Greek: A Coursebook on its Information Structure and Other Devices.*

4.7 Information structure

Space constraints and the inherent complexity of the field make it impossible to give this topic the attention it deserves. What can be done briefly is to describe what the study of information structure is useful for and why it should be taken seriously by translators. Information structure has been studied for quite a long time by a number of linguists, though not known necessarily by this name. But Lambrecht's *Information Structure and Sentence Form* (1994) has broken new ground and is required reading by anyone interested in the field today. Lambrecht's approach has been adopted by Van Valin and LaPolla as an integral part of their monumental *Syntax* (1997).

Every proposition can be expressed in a multiplicity of ways, and these different ways are not in free variation, but rather are determined by the surrounding discourse and the perceived communication needs of the hearer. The speaker tailors the syntactic structure of the proposition to the receiver, taking into account the linguistic context, the hearer's presuppositions, his presumed communication needs, etc. At the time of speaking, is the referent of a given noun phrase known to the audience or is it new information? If the addressee is able to identify the referent it may be because he has it in mind at the time, or he may have access to the referent because it is present in the physical environment or because he knows the referent, even though he is not thinking about it at the time of the utterance. The availability of the referent to the hearer is one of the many things that will have an impact on the structure of a sentence, because it will determine the status of the referent within the sentence. Can it be considered the topic (old information)? Or is it being introduced into the discourse at the time of the utterance?

The fact that the speaker tailors his utterance to the hearer is a major concern for the translator. Because the translator's audience is different from that of the original author, there is no reason to assume that they possess the same presuppositions, theories and communicative strategies as the primary audience and therefore neither is there any reason to assume that they will be able to make the same inferences. So translators will likely need to adapt their text to their own audience in a way that is quite distinct from that of the source text.

The two key elements of Information Structure are *topic* and *focus*. Lambrecht does not define them in the traditional ways, segmentationally, but rather relationally. Further, he does not really tie them to the traditional concepts of old and new information. Topic, rather than being the first constituent in the clause, must meet the condition of 'aboutness'. Focus is the piece of information with respect to which the presupposition and the assertion differ. It is not simply the new information, nor is it linked necessarily to a certain segment of the clause, that is, the predicate. Lambrecht distinguishes three different levels of focus and he uses the following examples to illustrate them. The words with 'focus accent' are in the upper case. There is 'narrow focus' in which a single constituent is in focus.

Question: I heard your motorcycle broke down.
Answer: My CAR broke down.

There are two kinds of 'broad focus'. The first is predicate focus:

Question: What happened to your car?
Answer: It BROKE DOWN.

And finally, there is sentence focus, in which the entire sentence is focused:

Question: What happened?
Answer: MY CAR BROKE DOWN.

In sentence focus, because the whole sentence falls within the focus domain, there is no topic.

Lambrecht compares the way that English, French, Italian and Japanese handle these different kinds of focus, and shows that they all do it differently. Most use some degree of prosodic prominence, but they use a variety of marked syntactic structures as well, such as clefting. The translator would have to know which kind of focus he is dealing with and how it is encoded in both the source language and the target language in order to appropriately represent the source text. Because of the frequent use of prosodic prominence as a marker of focus, this would also have important implications for audio translations.

There is much more to information structure than can possibly be dealt with here. Interested readers are urged to read Lambrecht's monograph themselves, or the shorter version in Van Valin and LaPolla (1997), and to explore the ways in which a study of information structure can enrich our understanding of translation.

4.8 Conclusion

Linguistics played an important role in Bible translation in the twentieth century, the understanding of its domains and the tools for analysis ever evolving. Throughout the century, increasingly sophisticated tools were developed for studying languages from the sound to the sentence: phonetics, phonology, morphology and syntax. In the last decades of the century, the level of analysis was carried even higher enabling appreciation of the function of various lower-level structures in terms of the texts and the communication situations in which they occur. In this chapter we have offered evidence that the newer subdisciplines of linguistics such as typology, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis and cross-cultural semantics have an enormous contribution to make in Bible translation, whether for the mother-tongue translator or for consultants working with the translators. These disciplines enable them to better understand the part-whole relationships of the source text and how to represent them in the target language. They also increase the translator's awareness of fundamental differences between the source and target languages that, when overlooked, can seriously skew the translation.