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# Language Studies

Stretching the Boundaries

*Edited by*

ANDREW LITTLEJOHN

*and*

SANDHYA RAO MEHTA

Andrew Littlejohn  
Sandhya Rao Mehta

Language Studies

CSP



# Language Studies



Language Studies:  
Stretching the Boundaries

Edited by

Andrew Littlejohn and Sandhya Rao Mehta

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**P U B L I S H I N G**

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Edited by Andrew Littlejohn and Sandhya Rao Mehta

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## CHAPTER THREE

# PROCEDURES FOR TRANSLATING CULTURALLY SPECIFIC ITEMS

JAMES DICKINS

### **Abstract**

The translation of items (words and phrases) which are specific to one culture from a Source Language expressing that culture (the Source Culture) into a Target Language expressing another culture (the Target Culture) necessarily involves 'dislocation'. This paper reviews three influential typologies for the translation of culturally specific items: Ivir (1987), Newmark (1981, 1988), and Hervey and Higgins (1992), referring also to Venuti (1995). It suggests a number of dichotomies for understanding these typologies and the translation of culturally specific items: 1 Source Culture-/Source Language-oriented (domesticating) vs. Target Culture-/Target Language-oriented (foreignising); 2 non-lexicalised/ ungrammatical vs. lexicalised/grammatical; 3 semantically systematic vs. semantically anomalous; 4 synonymy-oriented vs. non-synonymy oriented; 5 situationally equivalent vs. culturally analogous; 6 lexical vs. structural. As an aid to understanding these typologies, the paper provides a visual 'grid', siting the various procedures proposed by each of the four typologies.

Keywords: translation, culture, Arabic, domestication, foreignisation

### **Introduction**

This paper considers the translation of culturally specific items, as delimited by the following extreme procedures:

- i. In the translated text (Target Text) artificially including Source Culture-specific aspects of the original text (Source Text), by

extending the margins of the Target Language and Target Culture through ‘cultural borrowing’; or:

- ii. In the Target Text artificially presenting elements in the Source Text which are Source Culture-specific as if they were central elements of the Target Culture through ‘cultural transplantation’.

The proposals of Ivir (1987), Newmark (1981, 1988), and Hervey and Higgins (1992) are considered in detail because these are the best known and arguably the most coherently worked out sets of proposals in the literature. Venuti (1995), although less specific, will also be discussed, because of the important general orientation provided by his distinction between foreignisation and domestication. The approaches taken in these proposals are summarised in figure 4.1. The following discussion will make extensive reference to that figure, and the various columns it contains.

### **Source Culture-/Source Language-oriented vs. Target Culture-/Target Language-oriented, and Foreignising vs. Domesticating**

The most general distinction in respect of culture-specific items is whether the translation is oriented towards the Source Culture and, by extension, Source Language, or the Target Culture, and by extension Target Language. I assume that orientation towards the Source Culture implies also orientation towards the Source Language, and that orientation towards the Target Culture implies also orientation towards the Target Language. I also identify Source Culture-/Source Language-oriented with foreignising and Target Culture-/Target Language-oriented with domesticating (Venuti, 1995), domesticating translation procedures being those given in columns 1, 2 and 3 in figure 4.1, while foreignising translation procedures are given in columns 5, 6 and 7. Culture-neutral is used in figure 4.1, column 4 to refer to a translation which is neither foreignising nor domesticating, but is equally appropriate to both the Source Culture and Target Culture.

The boundaries between foreignising and culture-neutral, and between culture-neutral and domesticating are ‘fuzzy’: we cannot always be sure whether a particular element of translation is better defined as foreignising or culture-neutral, or culture-neutral or domesticating. Even within a single language cultural identity is complex: is curry an Indian dish because that is where it originated, or is it now also a British one because Indian restaurants and take-aways are extremely popular in Britain, and millions of people in Britain have curry for tea every night?



### Procedures for translating culturally specific items

SC-/SL-oriented	TC-/TL-oriented	
FOREIGNISING	CULTURE-NEUTRAL	DOMESTICATING
Lexicalised / Grammatical		
Non-lexicalised/ Ungrammatical	Semantically systematic	
Semantically anomalous	PROBLEM-AVOIDANCE ORIENTED	
SYNONYMY-ORIENTED	NON-SYNONYMY ORIENTED	
CULTURAL borrowing proper	lexicalised cultural borrowing	unique equivalent
<p><b>ROW A:</b> LEXICAL</p> <p>cultural borrowing proper</p> <p><b>H+H: cultural borrowing</b></p> <p><b>Ivir: borrowing</b></p> <p><b>Newmark: transference and naturalisation</b></p> <p>grammatical calque/exoticism</p> <p><b>Ivir: lexical creation</b></p> <p><b>H+H: calque/exoticism</b></p>	<p>semantic extension (narrowing SL usage (literal/lexical equivalent))</p> <p><b>Ivir: literal trans-lation</b></p> <p><b>Newmark: literal trans-lation</b></p> <p>grammatical but semantically anomalous calque/exoticism involving semantic extension ("literal" translation of phrase)</p> <p><b>Newmark: transference and naturalisation</b></p> <p><b>Ivir: borrowing</b></p> <p><b>Newmark: transference and naturalisation</b></p> <p>grammatically and semantically systematic calque/exoticism</p> <p><b>Newmark: through-translation</b></p>	<p>contraction</p> <p>culture-neutral word-phrase</p> <p><b>Newmark: descriptive equivalent</b></p> <p><b>Newmark: functional equivalent</b></p> <p><b>Ivir: defining</b></p> <p><b>Ivir: addition</b></p> <p><b>H+H: explanation</b></p> <p>expansion (explanation)</p>
<p><b>ROW B:</b> STRUCTURAL (morphotactic or syntactic)</p>	<p>grammatical but semantically anomalous calque/exoticism involving semantic extension ("literal" translation of phrase)</p> <p><b>Newmark: transference and naturalisation</b></p> <p><b>Ivir: borrowing</b></p> <p><b>Newmark: transference and naturalisation</b></p> <p>grammatically and semantically systematic calque/exoticism</p> <p><b>Newmark: through-translation</b></p>	<p>omission (for cultural reasons)</p> <p><b>Ivir: omission</b></p> <p>communicative translation</p> <p>multiple equivalents</p>
	COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2
	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4
	COLUMN 5	COLUMN 6
	COLUMN 7	COLUMN 8
	COLUMN 9	COLUMN 10
	COLUMN 11	COLUMN 12

Key: Ivir = Ivir (1987); Newmark = Newmark (1981, 1988); H+H = Hervey and Higgins (1992)

Figure 4.1 Procedures for translating culturally specific items.

### **Non-lexicalised/Ungrammatical vs. Lexicalised/Grammatical**

‘Non-lexicalised’ translation procedures are shown in figure 4.1, column 1. ‘Non-lexicalised’ means that the word in question is not a regular part of the language. By definition, non-lexicalised words are not found in dictionaries. *Mizmar*, used for example as the English translation of the Arabic *مزمارة*, is an example of a non-lexicalised word. ‘Ungrammatical’ means that the form in question does not conform to the standard grammar of the language. A translation of *ضربني ضربتين* as ‘he beat me two beatings’ is ungrammatical: the adverbial use of a noun phrase cognate to the verb is not part of the grammar of English. Non-lexicalised words are sometimes referred to as nonce-words, while ungrammatical forms can be referred to as nonce-formations (cf. Crystal 2003).

The boundaries between what is lexicalised and what is not are not always clear. ‘Islam’ is a well-established lexicalised word in English. ‘Sharia’ (also ‘sheria’) (i.e., *شريعة*) is given in Collins English Dictionary, but is likely to be unknown to many non-Muslims in Britain. While we might regard ‘sharia’ as lexicalised in a general sense, for those English speakers who do not know it, we may say that it is non-lexicalised.

### **Semantically Systematic vs. Semantically Anomalous**

‘Semantically systematic’ translation procedures are shown in figure 4.1, columns 3-7. ‘Semantically systematic’ means ‘a standard part of the semantic system of the language’. For example, the meanings of ‘fox’ as (1) any canine mammal of the genus *Vulpes* and related genera, and (2) a person who is cunning and sly, are semantically systematic in English. The meanings of ‘round the bend’ as (1) ‘around the corner’ and (2) ‘mad’, are also semantically systematic in English. In both these cases all the meanings given can be found in a reliable dictionary.

‘Semantically anomalous’ translation procedures are shown in figure 4.1, columns 1-2. ‘Semantically anomalous’ means ‘not part of the semantic system of the language’. The use of ‘armadillo’ to mean ‘an incompetent person’ is semantically anomalous. This is reflected in the fact that ‘armadillo’ is not given in the sense ‘an incompetent person’ in reliable English dictionaries. Similarly, ‘beyond the turning’ in the sense ‘mad’ is semantically anomalous, as reflected in the fact that ‘beyond the turning’ is not glossed as ‘mad’ in reliable English dictionaries. Non-lexicalised words (nonce-words) are by definition semantically anomalous.



Since *mizmar* is not lexicalised in English (not part of the vocabulary of the language), it cannot have a proper (systematic, fixed) meaning. Ungrammatical forms are similarly by definition semantically anomalous. Since ‘he beat me two beatings’ is not part of the grammar of English, it cannot, similarly, have a proper (fixed, systematic) meaning.

The fact that forms are non-systematic does not necessarily mean that they cannot be understood (or at least partially understood). In a phrase ‘he blew a beautiful long, single note on the *mizmar*’, it is fairly clear that the *mizmar* must be a form of wind instrument. Similarly, it is likely that a native English speaker would understand the phrase ‘he beat me two beatings’ even if they recognise that it is not English.

### **Synonymy-oriented vs. Problem-avoidance Oriented vs. Non-synonymy Oriented**

‘Synonymy-oriented’ translation procedures are shown in figure 4.1, columns 1-4. ‘Synonymy-oriented’ is not used here to mean ‘synonymous’. Rather, it means that the translation is likely to be close to synonymous—even if it is more specifically hyponymous (particularising), hyperonymous (generalising), or semantically overlapping (Dickins, Hervey and Higgins 2002, pp. 54-59), and that it can be reasonably analysed in relation to the notion of synonymy. Non-lexicalised words can be regarded as synonymous with their Source Text forms. Thus the non-lexicalised and semantically anomalous *mizmar* is—if we are to say that it has any sense at all in English—best regarded as synonymous with the Arabic مزمار. Similarly, ungrammatical forms, such as ‘two beatings’ (in ‘he beat me two beatings’) are best regarded as ‘structurally synonymous’ with their Source Text originals—i.e. ‘two beatings’ here is to be regarded as having an adverbial sense in English. In figure 4.1, column 5, I have identified omission as a cultural translation procedure with problem-avoidance: by not attempting to find any equivalent for the Source Text word or phrase, the problem of what an appropriate equivalence might be is avoided. Non-synonymy oriented translation procedures are given in figure 4.1, columns 6 and 7. Non-synonymy oriented translation procedures are those in which the issue of synonymy is not of focal importance. Non-synonymy oriented translations are domesticating in that they involve use of specifically Source Culture-oriented uses of language.

## Situationally Equivalent vs. Culturally Analogous

Figure 4.1 includes two types of non-synonymy oriented translations. The first, situational equivalence (column 6), involves cases in which the same situations (or functions) can be identified in both cultures. Thus, people see others off on a journey in both Western and Arabic culture. In Britain, one might say to someone one is seeing off, ‘Have a nice journey’, or ‘Have a safe journey’, or even ‘All the best’. In Sudan, the standard phrase is *ودعتك الله* (or *ودعناك الله*). These phrases are situationally (or functionally) equivalent; whether they are nearly synonymous or not nearly synonymous is of secondary importance.

The second type of non-synonymy oriented translation, that of cultural analogy (column 7), is where there is no obvious situational equivalent in the Target Text Culture: that is to say, the particular situation—or feature—in question is part of the Source Culture, but not part of the Target Culture. Culture-specific literary allusions often give rise to this kind of case. Thus *قيس وليلى* as an ironic description of two young lovers (cf. Dickins, Hervey and Higgins 2002, p. 32) involves a literary allusion which is specific to Arab (and more generally Middle Eastern) culture. Precisely the same ‘situation’ (i.e., characters) does not occur in Western culture. However, in English literature, and therefore English-language culture, Romeo and Juliet—as doomed lovers—occupy an analogous situation to that of *قيس* and *ليلى* in Arab culture. *قيس وليلى* may therefore, in some circumstances, be replaced by Target Text ‘Romeo and Juliet’ by a process of cultural analogy.

There are cases which fall somewhere between situational equivalence and cultural analogy. When someone has had their hair cut, it is customary in many Arabic countries to say *نعيماً* meaning ‘with comfort/ease’, to which the standard reply is *أنعم الله عليك* (with some variants) ‘may God grant you comfort/ease’. English has, of course, the cultural situation of haircutting—there is no need here to search for a cultural analogy. What it lacks, however, is any standard phrase which is uttered when someone has their hair cut: there is no real situational equivalent.

## Lexical vs. Structural (Morphotactic or Syntactic)

Row A and row B (columns 1-3 only) distinguish between lexical and structural translation procedures. In the case of foreignising translations not involving omission, the foreignising element may be lexical (row A, columns 1-3), i.e., a feature of the words used (considered as single units). Alternatively, it may be structural (row B, columns 1-3), i.e., a feature of



the way in which words are put together from individual morphemes (morphotactic) or the way in which words themselves join together to form larger phrases (syntactic)—or both.

What Hervey and Higgins call cultural borrowing (see below) is normally a case of a monomorphemic word, i.e., a word which consists of only one morpheme: as such it is lexical rather than structural. For example, in Yemen the word دَبَاب is used for a particular type of minibus (normally a Toyota mini-van). In Arabic, this is likely to be analysed as consisting of two morphemes: the root د ب ب and the pattern فَعَّال. If, however, we use the cultural borrowing *dabab* to translate the Arabic دَبَاب, the form in English consists of a single morpheme: the grammar of English does not allow us to identify separate root and pattern morphemes here. In the case of ungrammatical calque the foreignising element is structural. That is to say, it is either morphotactic, or syntactic. ‘He beat me two beatings’ consists of standard English words: the overall form, however, is structurally (syntactically) foreignising.

### **Plotting Ivir’s, Newmark’s, and Hervey and Higgins’ Procedures**

In the following sub-sections, I will firstly provide proposed general descriptions—some of which have also been used, or are usable, as terms—of the translation procedures defined by figure 4.1. These descriptions are presented in unboxed text in figure 4.1. Following that I will consider the specific procedures proposed in Ivir (1987), Newmark (1988), and Hervey and Higgins (2002) presented in boxes, as these are classified according to column and row (for columns 1-3) in figure 4.1. Because some of the procedures of Ivir, Newmark and Hervey and Higgins belong to more than one column and/or row, I will group these authors’ procedures together in common-sense categories, in order to present the information in a manner which is relatively coherent and comprehensible.

### **Cultural Borrowing Proper and Ungrammatical Calque/Exoticism**

The column 1, row A translation procedure could be termed *cultural borrowing proper*. The column 1, row B procedure could be termed *ungrammatical calque/exoticism*. Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (2002) specifically confine cultural borrowing to non-lexicalised lexical (non-structural) forms—i.e. column 1, row A. Thus, *dabab*—see section *Lexical*

vs. *structural (morphotactic or syntactic)*, above—is a cultural borrowing, but *intifada*, as a translation of انتفاضة, is no longer a cultural borrowing, on the grounds that *intifada* has now become a regular part of the English language (cf. Dickins, Hervey and Higgins 2002, p. 34).

Ivir seems to define as a borrowing any conspicuously foreign-derived word. This may be non-lexicalised, e.g., *dabab* as a translation of the Yemeni دَبَاب, in which case it belongs to column 1. Or, it may be lexicalised, e.g., *intifada*, in which cases it belongs in column 3. In figure 4.1, I have connected the two Ivir ‘borrowing’ boxes in column 1 and column 3 with a double-headed arrow, to indicate that they constitute, for Ivir, a single procedure. Since Ivir is talking about borrowing without structural complexity (both *dabab* and *intifada* consist of a single morpheme in English), Ivir’s borrowing belongs entirely in row A.

Newmark defines transference as “the process of transferring a Source Language word to a Target Language text as a translation procedure. It [...] includes transliteration, which relates to the conversion of different alphabets: e.g., Russian (Cyrillic), Greek, Arabic, Chinese, etc. into English. The word then becomes a ‘loan word’” (Newmark 1988, p. 81). Newmark includes within the procedure of transference both non-lexicalised terms (e.g., *dabab*) and lexicalised terms (e.g., *intifada*). Like Ivir’s ‘borrowing’, Newmark’s ‘transference and naturalisation’ thus belongs in both column A and column C (as with Ivir’s ‘borrowing’, I have connected Newmark’s ‘transference and naturalisation’ boxes with a double-headed arrow, to show that for Newmark these two boxes constitute a single procedure).

Newmark’s transference is a simple adoption of a word (or phrase) without any adaptation to the Target Language. Transference is by definition lexical—there is no internal structuring (whether morphotactic or syntactic) in the Target Language form—and thus belongs to row A. Naturalisation “succeeds transference and adapts the Source Language word first to the normal pronunciation, then to the normal morphology (word forms) of the Target Language” (Newmark 1988, p.82). Where naturalisation involves only phonological adaptation, it remains lexical: *intifada*, when pronounced by the average English speaker may sound English (almost rhyming with, for example, ‘winter larder’). However, as it is morphologically simple in English, it is lexical, rather than morphotactic.

One example which Newmark gives of naturalisation is French *thatchérisme*, from English ‘Thatcherism’ (the political philosophy associated with Margaret Thatcher). Here the root element *thatchér* has been somewhat adapted to French pronunciation and spelling—*thatchér* as

opposed to English ‘Thatcher’, the suffix has the standard French form *-isme* (English ‘-ism’), and the word is spelt with an initial lower-case letter ‘t’, rather than the English upper-case ‘T’. In the case of *thatchérisme*, the French form is morphologically complex—consisting of the morphemes *thatchér* and *-isme* (assuming that *-isme* is morphologically simple). *Thatchérisme* is thus structural (morphotactic) and belongs to row B.

By ‘lexical creation’ Ivir seems to mean non-lexicalised words, newly invented by the translator out of existing morphological elements in the Target Language. As such Ivir’s ‘lexical creation’ belongs in column 1 (non-lexicalised), row B (structural—morphotactic). Ivir may also mean to include words involving more than one morpheme in the Target Language which have become systematic in the Target Language, but are still perceived as neologisms—in which case Ivir’s ‘lexical creation’ box should be extended to include also column 3, row B.

Under ‘calque’, Hervey and Higgins include forms which are ungrammatical and semantically anomalous, such as ‘it increased the clay moistness’ for زاد الطين بلة (Dickins, Hervey and Higgins 2002, p. 31). This is ungrammatical, because the adverbial use of ‘moistness’ is not a grammatical feature of English, and semantically anomalous, because it cannot (as an ungrammatical form) have a systematic meaning. These cases belong to column 1 (non-lexicalised/ungrammatical), row B (structural—syntactic). Hervey and Higgins also use the term ‘calque’ to describe forms which are grammatically systematic, but semantically anomalous. An example would be ‘it increased the clay’s moistness’ (in which the ungrammaticality of ‘it increased the clay moistness’ has been eliminated) as a translation of زاد الطين بلة. Although ‘it increased the clay’s moistness’ is grammatical, it remains semantically anomalous if it is used to express the sense ‘it made matters worse’: this is not a standard meaning of this phrase in English. These cases belong in column 2 (lexicalised/grammatical, but semantically anomalous), row B (structural - syntactic).

Hervey and Higgins state that “a Target Text marked by exoticism is one which constantly uses grammatical and cultural features imported from the Source Text with minimal adaptation” (Hervey and Higgins 2002, p. 34). An example given (in slightly longer form) in both *Thinking French translation* (ibid.) and *Thinking Arabic translation* (Dickins, Hervey and Higgins 2002, pp. 139-140) is the following from the Maqamat of Al-Hariri:

شَخَّصْتُ مِنَ الْعِرَاقِ إِلَى الْغُوطَةِ . وَأَنَا ذُو جُرْدٍ مَرْبُوطَةٍ . وَجِدَّةٌ مَغْبُوطَةٌ . يُلْهِبُنِي خُلُوُّ الذَّرْعِ .  
وَيَزِدُّهُنِي حُفُولُ الضَّرْعِ .



I went from 'Irák to Damascus with its green water-courses, in the day when I had troops of fine-bred horses and was the owner of coveted wealth and resources, free to divert myself, as I chose, and flown with the pride of him whose fullness overflows.

This Target Text goes beyond the mirroring of grammatical and cultural features—at least if cultural features are defined in a narrow sense—to include replication of prosodic features (rhythm and rhyme) of the Source Text. If we include these additional features as elements of exoticism, the account given of exoticism in figure 4.1 is only partial (since it makes no reference to non-grammatical or non-semantic features). In this respect we can regard 'exoticism' as a hyperonym of 'calque'. The second feature of exoticism which is suggested by Hervey and Higgins' phrase "constantly uses" is that exoticism is a general orientation throughout a text, whereas calque is "a momentary foreignness" (Hervey and Higgins 2002, p. 34). This distinction is, again, not specifically represented in figure 4.1, which focuses on individual occurrences rather than global Target Text orientations.

### **Semantic Extension Mirroring Source Language Usage, and Grammatical, but Semantically Anomalous Calque/Exoticism Involving Semantic extension**

The column 2, row A translation procedure can be described as *semantic extension mirroring Source Language usage* ('literal' lexical equivalent). The column 2, row B translation procedure can be described as *grammatical, but semantically anomalous calque/exoticism involving semantic extension* ('literal' translation of phrase). Hervey and Higgins' *calque and exoticism* has been described above. As noted there, cases of calque which are semantically anomalous but grammatical belong in column 2, row B.

Ivir's 'literal translation' overlaps with Hervey and Higgins' calque (or calque/exoticism), and covers both grammatical but semantically anomalous phrases such as 'it increased the clay's moistness' and single words, e.g., the translation of Arabic سُنَّةٌ referring to the norms of the Islamic community, by the original basic (literal) meaning of سُنَّةٌ 'path'. Regardless of whether the element in question is a word or a phrase the operative principles are these:

1. The Source Text element (word or phrase) has more than one meaning (or sense), i.e., it is polysemous.

2. One of the Source Text element's senses is basic, while the other relevant sense is secondary. Typically the secondary sense is likely to be perceived as metaphorical, but it may be figurative in some other way, e.g., metonymical. It may even not stand in an unambiguous figurative relationship to the primary sense. Crucially, however, the secondary sense must be clearly conceptually secondary to the primary one.
3. The Target Text element must have the same primary sense as the Source Text element.
4. The Target Text element must not have the same secondary sense as the Source Text element.

Consider the English phrase 'go up the wall' in relation to a literal Arabic translation *صعد الجدار*.

1. English 'go up the wall' fulfils condition 1: it is polysemous, meaning 'i. 'climb the vertical partition (etc.)', and ii. 'get very angry'.
2. The Source Text sense 'climb the vertical partition' is conceptually primary. The idiomatic sense 'get very angry' is perceived as metaphorical.
3. The Target Text *صعد الجدار* has the same primary sense as 'go up the wall'.
4. The Target Text *صعد الجدار* does not have the same secondary sense as the Source Text 'go up the wall'. (*صعد الجدار* does not standardly mean 'get very angry' in Arabic.)

Ivir's 'literal translation' belongs to column 2 in figure 4.1 (semantically anomalous, in that the meaning assigned to the word or phrase is not a meaning which that word or phrase standardly has in the Target Language, but lexicalised/grammatical, in that the word or phrase is a regular part of the lexis/grammar of the Target Language). Where Ivir's 'literal translation' involves only a single word consisting of a single morpheme (or, by extension, where the morphological structure—morphotactics—of this word is not important in translation terms) this is a lexical form (row A). Where Ivir's 'literal translation' involves morphotactic or syntactic considerations, this is a structural form (column 2, row B), *صعد الجدار* in Arabic, if used in the sense 'get very angry' ('go up the wall') being an example. I have accordingly shown Ivir's 'literal translation' procedure straddling rows A and B (column 2) in figure 4.1. What Newmark means by 'literal translation' seems to be the same as what Ivir means by 'literal translation', and therefore also straddles rows A and B in column 2 in figure 4.1.

## **Lexicalised Cultural Borrowing, and Grammatically and Semantically Systematic Calque/Exoticism**

The column 3, row A translation procedure could be termed *lexicalised cultural borrowing*. The column 3, row B translation procedure can be described as *grammatically and semantically systematic calque/exoticism*. The reasons Ivir's borrowing belongs in both column 1 and column 3 (row A), and why Newmark's transference and naturalisation belongs in both column 1 and column 3 (row A and row B) have been discussed above (in the section *Cultural borrowing proper and ungrammatical calque/exoticism*).

Newmark defines 'through-translation' as "the literal translation of common collocations, names of organisations, the components of compounds" (Newmark 1988, p. 84). However, unlike Newmark's 'literal translation' (see discussion in section *Cultural borrowing proper and ungrammatical calque/exoticism* above), which is semantically anomalous (column 2) and may be lexical or structural (rows A or B), his 'through-translation' is semantically systematic (as well as foreignising) (column 3), and structural (morphotactic or syntactic) (row B). Examples given by Newmark include 'superman' from German *Übermensch* (*über* meaning 'above, over', *Mensch* meaning 'man, human being'). Newmark's procedure of 'through-translation' is similar to Hervey and Higgins' calque/exoticism, and Newmark himself notes that literal translation is also "known as calque or loan translation" (Newmark 1988, p. 84). However, whereas Hervey and Higgins' calque (see section *Cultural borrowing proper and ungrammatical calque/exoticism* above) is semantically anomalous, Newmark's through-translation is, as noted, semantically systematic.

### **Culture-neutral Word/Phrase**

In columns 4-7, we move away from translation procedures which are Source Culture/Source Text oriented. The distinction between lexical (row A) and structural (row B), which was important for considering how the elements of the Target Language-form relates to those of the Target Language-form for procedures in columns 1-3, no longer obtains, and is thus not made in figure 4.1 for columns 4-7. This translation procedure could be termed *culture-neutral word/phrase*.

'Descriptive equivalent' in Newmark seems to mean the same as 'defining' in Ivir (below). This can be regarded as a culture-neutral procedure. It involves a fairly precise description of what is meant by the



Source Culture element. However, it achieves this through the use of words and phrases which are generally understood in the Target Culture. Newmark's 'descriptive equivalent' belongs in column 4. Among the examples which Newmark gives of descriptive equivalence is "the Japanese aristocracy from the eleventh to the nineteenth century" for Samurai.

'Functional equivalent' in Newmark is somewhat more difficult to understand. Examples given by Newmark (1988, p. 83) are: *baccalauréat* 'French secondary school leaving exam', and *Sejm* 'Polish parliament'. Newmark says of functional equivalence that "[t]his procedure occupies the middle, sometimes the universal, area between the Source Language language or culture and the Target Language language or culture" (Newmark 1988, p. 83). He goes on, "[i]n translation, description sometimes has to be weighed against function. Thus, for *machete*, the description is a 'Latin American broad, heavy instrument', the function is 'cutting or aggression'. Description and function are combined in 'knife'. *Samurai* is described as 'the Japanese aristocracy from the eleventh to the nineteenth century'; its function was 'to provide officers and administrators'" (Newmark 1988, pp. 83-84).

'Descriptive equivalent' in Newmark seems to answer the question 'What is it?', while 'functional equivalent' seems to answer the question 'What does it do?'. I have analysed both as culture-neutral, and as synonymy-oriented (column 4). 'Functional equivalence' might appear to be less synonymy-oriented than 'descriptive equivalence'. In the case of tools (and similar) made by human beings for a purpose (or function), however, that purpose seems to be part of the definition. For example, a gimlet (a hand tool for boring small holes in wood) may look exactly like a small screwdriver: it is only because the intention is that this tool should bore holes in wood, rather than putting in screws into wood (or taking them out) that we classify it as a gimlet and not as a screwdriver. Given that function can be an essential part of the definition of an object, I have placed 'functional equivalent' directly next to (below) 'descriptive equivalent'. However, it might also be possible to interpret 'functional equivalent' in another way—as what is appropriate ('functionally appropriate') in a given situation; e.g., what one says when bidding farewell to a friend, or on finishing a meal. In this case, Newmark's 'functional equivalence' could be regarded as identical to Hervey and Higgins' 'communicative translation' (column 6). To indicate this possibility, I have put a single-headed arrow from Newmark's 'functional equivalent' in column 4 to column 6.

‘Defining’, in Ivir, typically involves textual expansion (additional words/phrases are used). We may, however, come across situations in which a definition is briefer than the original Source Text usage, in which case we can refer to this as (culture-neutral) contraction. The most extreme form of contraction is omission (section *Omission for cultural reasons*, below). Together with defining, Ivir mentions the procedure of addition, i.e., when additional information is added in the Target Text which is not in the Source Text. Addition comes very close to definition, and I have included it immediately below ‘definition’ in figure 4.1. In column 4, I have included a vertical double-headed arrow, to show that culture-neutral translation procedures may vary from contraction at one extreme to expansion at the other.

‘Explanation’ in Hervey and Higgins seems to mean the same as ‘defining’ in Ivir and ‘descriptive equivalent’ in Newmark. This procedure frequently occurs together with (cultural) borrowing (column 1), i.e., the foreignism is introduced, and the Target Text subsequently (or perhaps immediately before) makes plain, either directly or in a less explicit way, what the foreignism means.

### **Omission for Cultural Reasons**

The column 5 translation procedure could be termed *omission for cultural reasons*. As noted above (in the section *Synonymy-oriented vs. problem-avoidance oriented, vs. non-synonymy oriented*), omission involves avoiding the normal problems associated with translating a culturally specific element. It can be regarded as domesticating in that it removes mention of the foreign element in the Target Text. Newmark does not specifically discuss omission as a cultural translation procedure and I have not therefore included Newmark in column 5. He does, of course, recognise the possibility of omission in translation. Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (2002, pp. 23–24) discuss omission as a translation procedure, but stress that it may have a number of different purposes—not all of them to do with culture. I have not therefore included Hervey and Higgins in column 5.

### **Communicative Translation**

The column 6 translation procedure could be termed *communicative translation*. “A communicative translation is produced, when, in a given situation, the Source Text uses an Source Language expression standard for that situation, and the Target Text uses a Target Language expression

standard for an equivalent Target Culture situation” (Dickins, Hervey and Higgins 2002, p. 17), public notices, proverbs and conversational clichés providing good examples:

ممنوع التدخين	No smoking	(public notice)
ضرب عصفورين بحجر واحد	To kill two birds with one stone	(Standard Arabic proverb)
لاشكر على واجب	Don't mention it	(conversational cliché)

Communicative translation does not involve referring to something in the Target Culture which does not exist in the Source Culture. Rather, it involves using a phrase (or possibly a single word) in a context in the Target Text where this phrase (or word) is typically used in the Target Culture, as a translation of a phrase (or word) used in the Source Text which is typically used in this context in the Source Text, and where the meaning (and particularly the denotation) of the Target Text phrase (or word) is clearly different from that of the Source Text phrase (or word). An example given by Hervey and Higgins (1992) is Chinese Source Text (back-translated) ‘How many persons in your family?’ in the context of a greeting routine, translated into an English Target Text as ‘Nice weather for the time of year’. After greeting one another, strangers in China typically ask about one another’s family. In Britain, by contrast it is culturally normal to ask about the weather. Families and weather are aspects of culture (or life) in both China and Britain. The contexts in which these two topics are typically talked about are, however, rather different in the two cultures. Ivir does not have an equivalent of Hervey and Higgins’ communicative translation.

It is worth recognising a cline for communicative translation. At one extreme, there may be only one Target Language equivalent for a Source Language word or phrase. For example, in a particular culture (and language), there may be only one thing which it is standardly possible to say in condoling someone about a mutual friend’s death. At the other extreme, however, there may be numerous things one can standardly say in a particular situation in a particular culture (and language). Thus, in seeing a friend off in English, one can standardly say a number of things such as ‘Have a nice / good / pleasant trip / journey’, ‘Look after yourself’, ‘Goodbye’. These are multiple alternative communicative equivalents of what may be only one single possible phrase in a Source Language. The cline between a ‘unique equivalent’ and ‘multiple equivalents’ in communicative translation is recognised in column 6 by a vertical double-headed arrow.



Newmark (1981, pp. 36-69) uses the term ‘communicative translation’, but means something much wider than what Hervey and Higgins mean by it. Newmark’s notion of ‘communicative translation’ is thus not directly relevant here, and has not been included in figure 4.1. As noted in the section *Culture-neutral word/phrase* above, however, Newmark’s functional equivalent—understood in a certain way—could be regarded as the same as Hervey and Higgins’ communicative equivalent. We can regard Chinese ‘How many persons in your family?’ as fulfilling the same function—that of making polite conversation between strangers—as does English ‘Nice weather for the time of year’. The two phrases could, therefore, in this context be said to be functionally equivalent.

### Cultural Transplantation

The column 7 translation procedure could be termed *cultural transplantation* (as in Hervey and Higgins 1992). Newmark terms it *cultural equivalent*. As discussed in the section *Situationally equivalent vs. culturally analogous* (above), where there is no situational identity, communicative translation is impossible. One may in these cases invoke the notion of cultural analogy. If the same elements are not found in both cultures, the translator may substitute something in the Target Text from the Target Culture which is similar to the element referred to in the Source Text in the Target Culture. Newmark refers to this substituted element as a cultural equivalent. Examples given by Newmark (1988, p. 83) are British ‘cricket’ or American ‘baseball’ (common sports in Britain and America respectively) as translations of French *le cyclisme* (cycling), which is a very common sport in France, but less so in Britain or America. Ivir’s ‘substitution’ is the same as Newmark’s ‘cultural equivalent’.

Hervey and Higgins define cultural transplantation on a large scale as “the wholesale transplanting of the entire setting of the Source Text, resulting in the entire text being rewritten in an indigenous Target Culture setting” (Dickins, Hervey and Higgins, 2002, p. 32). They give as an example of wholesale cultural transplantation the remaking of the Japanese film *The Seven Samurai* as the Hollywood film *The Magnificent Seven*, but point out that in translation a much more likely procedure is small-scale cultural transplantation, e.g., the replacement of Source Text قيس وليلى by Target Text ‘Romeo and Juliet’ (cf. section *Situationally equivalent vs. culturally analogous*, above). It is this small-scale cultural transplantation which most closely corresponds to what Newmark means by ‘cultural equivalent’ and Ivir by ‘substitution’.

## Conclusion

I have argued that the translation of culturally specific items involves various procedures, ranging from extension of the margins of the Target Language and Target Culture at one extreme, to artificially presenting elements in the Source Text which are Source Culture-specific as if they were central elements of the Target Culture at the other. I have established a conceptual 'grid' (figure 4.1) which compares the procedures recognised by Ivir, Newmark, and Hervey and Higgins. Beyond this, however, the current account also provides a synthesis of previous approaches, by placing these procedures within a unified conceptual framework. It thus in fact presents a new model of procedures for translating culturally specific items—one which has more categories, and whose categories are, I believe, more coherently defined with respect to one another than are those of previous accounts.

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As a defining characteristic of what it means to be human, the use of language plays a central role in almost all human activity. Language functions as a cornerstone in the construction of our identity and in the relationships we build. It takes a central role in facilitating every enterprise we undertake, creates the thread which forms our own biographies, and enables us to play a part in the transmission and maintenance of our culture.

This pervasive nature of language means that it may form the starting point for an investigation into virtually any aspect of social life. In recent years, this has led to a stretching of the boundaries of language studies, prompted by an intense cross-fertilisation of ideas with a wide range of disciplines. It is this cross-fertilisation which forms the focus of the present collection. Taken together, the thirteen papers it contains provide an absorbing, rich array of subjects touched by the centrality of language. Encompassing themes from social psychology, translation theory, computer science, forensics, educational policy, language change, archaeology, and literature, the collection demonstrates that the study of language offers limitless possibilities to aid an understanding of the world in which we live.

International in scope, the collection includes contributions from scholars well-established in their fields, at work in Europe, the USA, the Middle East and Asia. As such, the collection offers a stimulating perspective for readers in a wide range of contexts, whether they themselves are principally concerned with language or are simply eager to see how the study of language may be relevant to their own discipline.

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