Serving Two Masters: Determining the Difference between a Translator and a Bilingual
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0. Abstract

Wei (2007) claims that natural bilinguals have difficulty translating. This paper explores the reasons for this difficulty by comparing the demands placed on translators with the day-to-day experiences of being bilingual. According to Romaine (1989) and De Bot (1992), bilinguals are not typically required to keep their speech free of influence from other languages they speak, and can mix elements from various languages unconsciously. Like monolinguals, bilinguals produce their language automatically, as described by Levelt (1989). Translators, however, work for an audience that has a low tolerance for deviations from the monolingual norm. This external pressure causes translators to monitor their speech production more closely, which they are able to do because translation does not require speech to be produced in real time. The present work covers translation, not interpretation – work with written texts, not speech. Taking examples of translations and mistranslations from Russian, Chinese, and English, I will outline the forms of interference often faced by translators in terms of morphosyntactic structure and lexical items. By choosing translation examples that are as unambiguous as possible, I will intentionally avoid many of the traditional concerns of translation theory, such as audience and authorial intent. Functional structures from Lexical-Functional Grammar are provided for sentential examples to illustrate in a formal, organized way how a good translation keeps meaning and grammatical relations constant and faithful during the transfer from one language to another. The conclusions of this paper will aid aspiring translators in understanding the demands of translation and any necessary training.

1. Introduction

For centuries, writers and academics have been asking: what is translation? What makes a good translator? The answer still has not been found; what’s more, there is sometimes a

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1 I would like to thank my advisor, Professor Theodore Fernald, for all of his guidance throughout the process of writing my thesis, and the Linguistics Department at Swarthmore for instructing me in linguistics. I would also like to thank Petra Currie and Professor Sibelan Forrester, who read drafts and wrote comments along the way; and Shuangle Chen, who helped me with grammaticality judgements in Chinese. Special thanks goes to Jean Chiang at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, who gave me access to training materials from the Institute’s translation program.
disconnect between the statements made in other fields and the conclusions of these discourses on translation. Take, for example, the following assertion by Willem Levelt, a specialist in monolingual speech production, in which he attempts to expand his analysis to account for multiple languages:

Slobin (1982) argued that the list of features that obtain an obligatory grammatical marking in one language but not in another is fairly small. In other words, if there is a “leakage” between the two systems, it will be of a limited sort. But there really is no reason to suppose interaction between the systems to start with. (Levelt 1989:104)

This assertion contradicts the findings of studies on bilinguals, many of whom routinely switch between languages and absorb features of one language into another. That being said, bilinguals and their environments vary significantly from individual to individual and community to community, and perhaps for some – possibly for Levelt himself – the two languages do remain separate. However, there exists an environment in which interaction between the grammatical systems of languages can and does occur: the meeting of two languages and two cultures is an integral component of translation. By the nature of their work, translators must make use of at least two languages at once, and in the process there will inevitably be interaction between their grammatical systems.

As it turns out, it is not sufficient to be familiar with two languages – translation demands more of the translator. Wei (2007) alludes to this in a definition of a natural (or primary) bilingual as “someone who has not undergone any specific training and who is often not in a position to translate or interpret with facility between two languages” (Wei 2007:6). This raises the question: why would a natural bilingual have difficulty translating? What kind of “specific training” would be necessary to turn a natural bilingual – or any other bilingual – into a
competent translator? Wei’s one-sentence definition does not elaborate: its focus is solely on bilinguals, not translators.

My goal in this paper is to explore the implications of these questions and look for possible answers. In the process, I will outline the key differences between the ways in which bilinguals and translators approach speech production, and what translators are required to do that bilinguals are not.

1.1 A Note on Terminology

I will be using the terms widely used in talking about translation, both by translators and academics in translation studies. The text to be translated is the original or the source text; it is written in the source language. The text produced by the translator is the translation, and it is written in the target language(s).

The use of the word translator above is deliberate. To begin with, it excludes a large category of professionals: interpreters, often mislabeled as translators by the general public. Translators work with written texts; interpreters deal in real-time speech. By necessity, interpreting functions considerably differently than translation. An interpreter must construct and utter a nearly fluent stream of words in the target language, sometimes even as the speech in the source language is going on. To keep up with the pace of their work, interpreters must make the same judgement calls as translators, but they must make them at the speed of natural speech, meaning that much of what forms the conscious process of translation must once again be rendered automatic in the interpreter’s brain.

To further narrow the focus, I intend the term translator to refer to a professional who works in technical translation. Technical, in turn, is a broad term that covers all translation that does not work with literature. Literary translation is a favorite among translation theorists –
Donald Frame (1989:70) writes, somewhat disdainfully: “The only kind of translation I want to talk about is what I call ‘free literary translation,’ or translation of literature chosen freely by the translator [...] This is the only kind I have much interest in.” Admittedly, literary translation presents the most interesting challenges to a translator who may feel constricted by a slavish reproduction of everyday words and phrases. However, these challenges relate primarily to figurative language, intended audience, and even the role of literature in society – all of which lie squarely outside the scope of this paper. I shall leave such concerns to translation theory, and focus instead on the daily, mundane translations of sentences that have no hidden or figurative meaning.

2. Background Review

2.1 Bilingualism

There are many types of bilinguals. If a bilingual is defined as any person who makes use of more than one language – even irregularly, as is the case with many second language learners in the United States – monolinguals would be well in the minority (Wei 2007). A more narrow definition of a bilingual would be a person who can carry on a conversation in more than one language, even if their proficiency in one language is significantly lower than their proficiency in the other. As Wei points out, these definitions are not entirely in line with popular perceptions of bilingualism:

Many people believe that, to be described as bilingual, the person has to have equal proficiency in both languages. The fact is, however, that balanced bilinguals of this kind are a rarity. The two languages in a bilingual’s linguistic repertoire are in constant contact and competition with each other. (Wei 2007:5)
No bilingual – not even the best translators or interpreters – can truly separate their two active languages. If the mixing of languages is not desirable, as is the case in translation, the bilingual must be constantly on the lookout for the results of this contact and competition. These results typically come in two recognizable forms: code-switching and interference.

2.1.1 Code-Switching

To be able to get a glimpse of how the bilingual brain is organized, researchers often focus on the phenomenon of code-switching, which may occur “when a bilingual talks to another bilingual with the same linguistic background and changes from one language to another in the course of conversation” (Wei 2007:14). Code-switching can range from saying different sentences in different languages to changing languages between clauses, or to inserting words, phrases, or idioms in the other language. In some cases, it may be true that the speaker does not know how to express their thought in the language needed, and therefore inserts the word that comes to mind from the other language; however, often the choice to switch is determined by myriad other factors, including situation, relationship between the speakers, conventions in the speech community, and others (Romaine 1989).

2.1.2 Interference

In addition to the kind of switching that is immediately evident through the insertion or mixing of words, a bilingual individual’s two languages also influence each other through interference – when the grammatical patterns of one language are applied to the other, causing a “rearrangement of patterns” (Romaine 1989:51) relative to what would have been produced by a monolingual speaker. Interference, like code-switching, can take a variety of forms. Most audibly, a foreign accent is a form of phonological interference, as are mistakes in stress and intonation. In English, inappropriate use or lack of articles – *I went to post office* – and particles
– *I will pick her at the train station* – is typically indicative of interference from a language that does not share these elements. Other signs of interference include incorrect word order, case marking, and use of phrases that would be idiomatic in the other language. These same phenomena are also called *cross-linguistic influence* and *transference*, as linguists try to avoid the negative connotations of *interference* (Romaine 1989).

2.1.3 Language Modes and Matrix Language Model

The ways in which bilinguals use the languages they know vary significantly by situation. Grosjean (2001) argues for a system of language modes, which refer to the levels of activation of a bilingual’s two (or more) languages. In any communicative situation, depending on who they are speaking with, the bilingual must choose a base (A) language, then, independently, choose the level of activation for the other (B) language – ranging from as deactivated as possible to as active as possible (although the B language can typically never be fully deactivated or fully active). The base language is “the language that governs language processing” (Grosjean 2001:4) and can be changed if necessary. When speaking with another bilingual, the speaker can leave their other language active to engage in code-switching; when speaking with a monolingual, “they deactivate their other language (most often unconsciously) so that it is not produced and does not lead to miscommunication” (Grosjean 2001:4).

The matrix language frame model of code-switching, proposed by Myers-Scotton and Jake (1995), echoes Grosjean’s conception of a base language. It posits the existence of a matrix language (ML), which “sets the grammatical frame in the unit of analysis,” (245) and an embedded language (EL) that provides words and phrases for insertion or interference during code-switching. Like Grosjean’s base language, the matrix language is also variable – it is not hard-wired in a bilingual’s brain as always being the dominant language, so it can change from
situation to situation. It is not always immediately apparent which language is the ML: Muysken (1995) offers several suggestions for identifying it through different approaches – language of conversation, language in which most words are uttered, language in which speaker is most proficient, language of first several words, or even language of the main verb (since the verb determines the subcategorization frame into which EL islands can be embedded). Each of these approaches makes some attempt to quantify which language appears more often or in a more central role based on the bilingual’s output. However, there does not yet exist evidence for which of these approaches is the closest to the actual functioning of any given bilingual’s brain. Furthermore, speakers will sometimes change the matrix language from sentence to sentence or even clause to clause, which makes it particularly difficult to pin a matrix language down at any one moment.

I would propose that translation itself can be conceptualized as a kind of language mode, in which one language is activated for reading the source text, but must immediately be deactivated for producing the target language. In addition, in this language mode the bilingual should not only deactivate the second language on the unconscious level, but also actively check to make sure there is no interference from the source language.

2.1.5 Societal Factors

The social surroundings of bilinguals are also important in understanding how they use their two languages. In some cases, the functions of the two languages are complementary: certain topics are discussed at home, in the language of the family, while official business or education is carried out in the language of the country or a broader community. In this situation a bilingual may not have the vocabulary needed for certain interactions in the other language. In some bilingual communities, the parsing strategies of one of the languages can become dominant
without a conscious switch: Dussias (2001) notes this effect among Spanish speakers living in an
English-speaking country, as they are more likely than monolinguals to use English frameworks
for interpreting ambiguous relative clauses. Most importantly, within a community of bilinguals
there may not be restraints on code-switching. As Romaine points out, the bilingual mind will
often provide two alternatives, one in each language:

In order to produce the correct phrase, the alternative must be suppressed. In the
case of code-switching there may be no external suppression. The output can be
free to vary according to which words reach threshold first. (Romaine 1989:94)

In this respect a bilingual community is different from the target audience of a
translation: the demand for natural-sounding translations is a form of external suppression of
alternatives that have interference from the source language.

These conclusions on bilinguals set the baseline for comparison: bilingualism – at least,
the ability to comprehend a text written in another language – is a necessary condition for being
a translator, but it is not sufficient. In the analysis that follows, translators will be compared to
non-trained bilinguals and their code-switching abilities, to try to isolate what makes translators
different.

2.2 By Translators, For Translators

Little to no work has been done on the language processing abilities of translators,
primarily because translators themselves may have no interest in such information. Few
translators are also trained linguists who would be capable of comprehending a linguistic
analysis of the nature of their work. Translators improve their craft primarily through practice,

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2 Some translators work in pairs, or with informants. In that case the translation process does not take place in a
single mind, and so it cannot be meaningfully compared to monolingual speech processing. This paper deals
exclusively with translators who work primarily on their own, relying on their own understanding of both languages.
3 The U.S. federal government uses “linguists” to refer to translators, interpreters, and specialists who are able to
work with foreign languages. I am using it here to refer to people with a background in linguistics.
and their materials are written in more pragmatic terms. Corinne McKay’s *How to Succeed as a Freelance Translator* is a case in point: her first piece of advice is to go out and translate, after which she spends the rest of the book discussing relevant business skills and taking for granted that the reader knows how to translate. While McKay mentions in passing that “being multilingual isn’t the only skill a translator needs” (McKay 2011:16), she then elaborates only on the business-related subset of a translator’s skills, without going into any detail about other linguistic skills a translator may possess. McKay’s lack of attention to the linguistic aspects of translation is representative of the informal training materials and self-help books that translators may turn to when starting out.

Somewhat more detailed are the articles and columns published in the *ATA Chronicle*, the American Translators Association’s monthly journal. The audience for this journal is comprised of professional translators and translation providers, so while it has the opportunity to be more detailed without losing the reader’s attention, it takes as much for granted as does McKay. Scattered among articles with business and networking advice one can find something about the day-to-day practices of translation: the definition, atmosphere, demands, and ethics of diplomatic translation (Mazza 2012); the potential pitfalls of translating museum labels (McKay 2011); or some of the intricacies of English compared to other languages (Rios 2012), and many other similarly specific topics. These several-page articles all assume that the reader is competent in their language, and focus instead on the idiosyncrasies of a particular type of translation.

When translators themselves explain their translation process, it is rarely couched in linguistic terms. William Weaver’s essay “The Process of Translation” points out the potential pitfalls of the craft, the kinds of false friends and awkward turns of phrase that would give away an inexperienced translator. He hints at the potential for cross-linguistic interference, although
from his explanation it would appear that Weaver himself is free of it: “I reject, of course, the passive” (121), he decides, without further discussion. In layman’s terms, he also brings up register – by calling a word “highfalutin” – and syntax (“sentence structure”), but his primary focus is on picking apart the meaning of words. His concern with the nuances of various words, their many synonyms and potential translations, is a reflection of his attempts to find lexemes that would map the meaning in both languages as closely as possible. While his examples and his frame of mind remain fixed on literary translations, the general process he describes applies to technical translation as well. The purpose of his description, however, is not to model the workings of a translator’s brain in comparison with the production of monolingual speech; he seeks to represent the many steps of translation, the constant search for the appropriate words and the appropriate tone, in terms that he himself understands and uses in his daily work.

2.3 Translation Studies

This is not to say that no academic materials have been written about translation, or that the study of translation remains an undefined field. Lawrence Venuti (2004:1) claims that within the last thirty years “translation studies [has] emerged as a new academic field, at once international and interdisciplinary.” As demonstrated in Venuti’s Translation Studies Reader, writings about translation can be traced back centuries, to Cicero’s statement that he translated the Greeks as an orator rather than as a grammarian. Among the most influential pieces is a letter by St. Jerôme, translator of the Bible and the appropriately named patron saint of translators. Jerôme was the first to write extensively on the distinction of word-for-word and sense-for-sense translation:

I have transferred not the words, but the meaning […] A translation expressed word for word from one language into another conceals the sense just as an overabundant pasture strangles the crops. (Trans. in Venuti 2004:24)
Jerôme acknowledged the fact that translation is more than the simple substitution of words in one language for words in another, and set off the search for a middle ground. This same distinction appeared again and again in the discourse on translation in the coming centuries, and still continues to be debated in modern writings in translation theory. The fact remains, however, that, as Toury (1995) admits, “[t]he process by which a bilingual speaker may be said to gain recognition in his/her capacity as a translator has hardly been studied so far” (205). The work done on translators and translating has not been based in linguistics; it has no doubt been academic and rigorous, but it has remained distant from the more concrete questions of linguistic theory, specifically those of language processing and production.

2.4 Speech Production

To bridge the gap between translation studies and linguistics, the present paper will draw on the language processing model outlined by Willem Levelt (1989). The model contains two major elements: the Conceptualizer, which puts together a preverbal message, and the Formulator, which encodes the preverbal message, first into a surface structure, then into a phonetic representation. The Conceptualizer draws on various forms of declarative knowledge: propositional knowledge of general facts about the world, situational knowledge of the interlocutors’ surroundings, and the discourse record of what has been said so far. The output from the Conceptualizer becomes input for the Formulator, which accesses lexical entries to determine the proper grammatical and phonetic representation of the preverbal message. Lexical entries consist of lemmas – the semantic and syntactic features of an entry – and lexical forms, which incorporate phonetics and morphology. To keep up with the demands of real-time speech production, many of these processes must run in parallel; there are also several competing theories as to how the Formulator accesses or activates lexical entries to be able to find them in
time. As pointed out elsewhere (Wei 2007; De Bot 1992), Levelt’s model has a sound empirical basis as far as monolingual speech production is concerned; however, he does not make significant attempts to expand his model to include bilingualism and code-switching in its various forms.

2.5 Bilingual Speech Production and Code-Switching

De Bot (1992) fills out Levelt’s model to account for multilingualism. His primary concern is whether for each phase of the model there are two separate language-specific processes or one that is language-independent or adaptable to different languages. With a few tweaks, the Conceptualizer remains mainly unchanged; the Formulator, however, is broken down into constituent parts. The process of encoding is split in two, with one system for each language. The lexicon, however, remains a single entity, containing the lexical entries for both languages. As far as the organization of the lexicon goes, De Bot gives preference to the Subset Hypothesis, “which assumes the use of a single storage system where links between elements are strengthened through continued use” (393). The lexical entries of one language form a natural subset, while the lexical entries of another form a different, equally natural subset. Similar meanings bridge the gap between them. This hypothesis builds on the model of activation spreading, which postulates natural connections between items in a monolingual lexicon as well. De Bot’s evidence for these revisions comes primarily from code-switching, from both balanced and non-balanced bilinguals. The purpose of his revision is to explain the ability of bilinguals to access both languages apparently simultaneously, in such a way that code-switching does not substantially slow down the speed of speech production. Like Levelt, de Bot is dealing with the natural, spontaneous, and automatic production of speech, whether in one language or in many.

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4 De Bot uses “balanced” to refer to a bilingual with native or near-native fluency in both languages – the sort of person who would be qualified for professional translation. The same definition is found in Table 0.1 in Wei 2007.
In this respect the study of bilingualism differs significantly from the study of translation: a translator has the time and the need to bring these spontaneous processes into the conscious realm.

### 2.6 Linguistic Competence

Andrew Pawley (1985) points out that “grammaticality does not ensure idiomaticity” (92) – a grammar and lexicon is not enough to create a native-sounding sentence. Pawley proposes the concept of linguistic competence, which draws on a general understanding of culture and society to inform sentence structure and word choice. He stresses that to be competent “we must know how things are said” and that “mastery of a language […] rests largely on command of a lexicon of conventional ways of talking about particular subject matters” (85). Native speakers of a language typically conform to these conventions automatically, such as when producing set phrases (speech formulas) or choosing the appropriate register for a conversation.

Many of Pawley’s eleven points of “nativelike standards” relate to pronunciation, intonation, and tempo. Of particular interest to a translator – who rarely, if ever, needs to work with spoken utterances – are standards of “contextual appropriateness: saying the right thing at the right time” and “idiomaticity: the selection of familiar, nativelike ways of saying things, as opposed to ways that are merely grammatical” (87). These issues are particularly salient in more technical or innovative texts that describe concepts or perspectives on the world that the target language may not be familiar with; however, the same issue comes up even in the simplest of sentences, as we arbitrarily choose to say I am going rather than I go, even though both are grammatical and could describe the same situation.
3. Scope and Methods

The traditional issues of translation theory – pragmatics, considerations regarding the intended audience, cultural factors – are all contained within the declarative knowledge of Levelt’s model, and so fall outside of the scope of the present analysis. While these are important issues for a translator to keep in mind, the most fundamental differences in how translators process and produce language are to be found in the function of their Formulators.

The purpose of the present work is to show how a translator builds on the necessary basic skill of familiarity with two languages to ensure a faithful translation. I will discuss what translators must take into consideration to minimize the effects of interference from the source text or from their own preconceptions. By comparing a good translator’s work with what a natural bilingual – an inexperienced translator – might produce, I will highlight the translator’s ability to ignore linguistic differences in an informed way and to get at the meaning of the text, independent of its surface structure. Examples will start with simple sentences and expand to slightly more complex ones to discuss syntactic issues, followed by examples of lexical mismatches and gaps.

3.1 Lexical Functional Grammar – A Formal Representation System

In order to formally represent the grammatical relations between the elements of sentences to be translated, I will be using an informal model based on the Lexical Functional Grammar (LFG) proposed and elaborated by Joan Bresnan (1982). The grammar makes use of two separate structures to represent each utterance: a functional structure (f-structure) that lists the features of the utterance and their values, and a constituent structure (c-structure), which is typically a syntactic tree describing the surface representation of the utterance. The c-structure is

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5 For more information on Lexical Functional Grammar, please refer to its “homepage,” maintained by Doug Arnold of the University of Essex: http://www.essex.ac.uk/linguistics/external/LFG/
dependent on the phrase structure rules of each given language, and so is language-specific; the f-structure, on the other hand, is language-independent\(^6\) and comes closer to representing the abstract meaning of the utterance. I will be using f-structures to represent the grammatical features of my examples in a language-independent way, adapting existing terminology from Dalrymple (2001). The purpose of these representations is to provide a formalized, schematic version of the intermediate step between parsing a source text and formulating a target-language equivalent, which often includes the mental addition or deletion of grammatical features or functions – I do not intend to imply that translators use specifically the categories set down by Bresnan, nor that the features listed are the only ones considered during translation.

3.2 The Translation Quality Metric – An Objective Evaluation of Translations

To evaluate individual translations I will make reference to one of many possible standards for evaluating translation quality, specifically the Translation Quality Metric issued by SAE International, revised August 2005. Currently, various companies and industries must develop their own standards and methods for evaluating translations; the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is working on ISO 11669, which would set the standard for communication between translators and clients (Melby 2011). Since this single standard is not yet prepared, I have arbitrarily chosen to use the metric issued by SAE, as a representative of other such standard rubrics.

The Translation Quality Metric outlines one possible method of evaluating translations on a point-based scale. It describes seven errors – Wrong Term, Wrong Meaning, Omission, Structural Error, Misspelling, Punctuation Error, and Miscellaneous – each of which is given a

\(^6\) Some distinctions (case, gender, number) are not made in certain languages, and so they may not be relevant to the f-structure for that language; however, an f-structure that includes these features could still generate a well-formed c-structure, just with those features not morphologically marked. How these distinctions are treated when moving across languages will be explored further below.
description, a few examples from various languages, and a weighted point value. A summary of these errors can be found in Appendix B. Note that I will not be referencing Omission, Misspelling, and Punctuation errors, because these errors occur due to a lack of attention or intentional misrepresentation, not interference during language production.

3.3 Transliterations and Glosses

The transliteration systems used in this paper will be GOST 7.79 System B for Russian and the official pinyin system for Chinese. Abbreviations used in glosses and f-structure diagrams are listed in Appendix A.

4. Deceptively Simple Translations

For all the troubling and untranslatable passages that translation theory likes to pick apart, there are myriad examples of translations working properly – at least, as properly as is possible, given the irresolvable differences between languages. Suppose a translator is presented with a Chinese translation project containing the following isolated sentence:

1) 玛喝茶。

Mā hē chá.
Ma drink tea.
‘Ma drinks tea.’

Of course, in a real translation project, there would typically be more context. Who is Ma? When were they doing the drinking? Today? Yesterday? Every week? There are, however, instances when sentences stand all by themselves – in quotations, or advertisements, or when communication with the client breaks down. In this case, the translator must provide a Russian and an English equivalent of this one sentence, all by itself.
To begin with, the translator must understand the meaning of the sentence without reference to the words in which it is expressed, i.e. break it down into propositions and add it into their propositional knowledge, the subset of declarative knowledge that holds statements about the universe. These would be the truth conditions and conventional implicatures of the sentence, as well as conversational implicatures in more complex situations where the context is known. Listed below are the propositions representing sentence 1, presented in English for lack of a non-linguistic method for doing so:

- There exists a person named Ma (瑪).
- Ma is currently imbibing or habitually imbibes some unspecified quantity of tea.

These propositions, however, are not enough to accurately translate the sentence. The best translation also keeps the same grammatical relations, as much as possible. This is where the two structures of LFG come most in handy: according to Bresnan’s system, the functional structure of two equivalent sentences should remain almost the same, even as constituent structures vary widely (Dalrymple 2001). The functional structure of sentence 1 is as follows:

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[ PRED  'DRINK(SUBJ,OBJ)' ]
  [ ASPECT  NEUTRAL ]
  [ SUBJ  [ PRED  'MA' ] ]
  [ OBJ  [ PRED  'TEA' ] ]
```

The main verb, *drink*, requires a subject and an object; these requirements are represented as `DRINK(SUBJ,OBJ)` in the value of the `PRED` feature. These roles are filled by the person Ma and the

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7 The `TENSE` feature will be used to indicate temporal location relative to speech time, since tense proper is a language-specific concept. The `ASPECT` feature will be used to indicate the general aspectual viewpoint of the sentence (perfective, imperfective, or neutral), following the analysis in Smith (1997). Smith’s situation aspect (Aktionsarten) is more closely tied to the semantics of a given verb or phrase – an action that belongs to a given Aktionsart class in one language will typically automatically be in the same class in another. Since in this section I will be assuming that the translator can appropriately translate lexical items, situation aspect will not be discussed. For a more complete treatment of the topic, see Smith (1997).
indefinite amount of tea, respectively, neither of which specify any further grammatical functions; there are no modifiers in the sentence.

With this structure in mind, the translator is ready to transfer the message to the target languages. First, however, they have to fill out any missing information, to account for the differences in grammatical systems (Jakobson 1959). Chinese, with its notable lack of inflection, is missing a lot: the Chinese sentence does not mark for tense at all, and only marks for viewpoint aspect insofar as there is no aspect marker, leaving it neutral with a completely open reading (Smith 1997). Since Russian and English have no neutral viewpoint and require explicit marking of tense, the structure must be updated to include an imperfective viewpoint aspect (which is the default reading of the Chinese neutral aspect) and present temporal location (tense), in the absence of any context. Where the target language requires agreement, we can deduce that the subject (a person) is third person singular. These additions result in the following expanded f-structure:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{PRED} & '\text{DRINK(SUBJ,OBJ)}' \\
\text{ASPECT} & \text{IMPERFECTIVE} \\
\text{TENSE} & \text{PRESENT} \\
\text{SUBJ} & \begin{cases}
\text{PRED} & '\text{MA}' \\
\text{PERS} & 3 \\
\text{NUM} & \text{SG}
\end{cases} \\
\text{OBJ} & \begin{cases}
\text{PRED} & '\text{TEA}'
\end{cases}
\end{array}
\]

Now, all preparations complete, the translator can confidently produce the following translations, English and Russian:

2) Ma drinks tea.
3) Ma p’yt chaj.

Ma IMP/drink-3SG.NPST tea-ACC
In this rare case, it is possible to render the sentence word for word, even while keeping the same meaning. All three versions contain three words, with an SVO word order. The f-structure written out above applies, as do the truth conditions. Naturally, there are also differences: as mentioned above, the translator had to explicitly mark information that would otherwise be inferred, such as tense and number. Furthermore, the processes by which the features from the f-structure are encoded vary from language to language. For example, Chinese and English mark imperfective aspect in the present tense by not marking aspect at all; in Russian, on the other hand, perfective and imperfective aspect are coded into the morphology of verbs (Timberlake 2004). The verb used in the Russian sentence, *pit’*, is by definition imperfective, and the translator needs to know to choose this verb instead of one of its pairs, like *vypit’* ‘to drink to the end’, *popit’* ‘to drink a bit’, or *pivat’* ‘to drink time and again.’ These differences aside, however, the final f-structure is the same, no matter how it is achieved – and that is what matters to the translator.

Nonetheless, even with a sentence as simple as this one, the translation is not as straightforward as it looks. The English translation presents some additional difficulties: if the Chinese sentence is to be interpreted as narration of a currently occurring event, English is more likely to mark for progressive aspect as opposed to a general imperfective. This detail of usage is not written directly into the grammar or the lexicon: nothing about the present tense itself dictates when and how it should be used. Rather, the use of progressive in English is an element of linguistic competence, as described by Pawley (1985) – a kind of competence that the reader of the translation will expect the translator to have.

The English translation given above is therefore an instance of cross-linguistic interference: the translator saw the simple three-word sentence in Chinese and wanted to have
the same number of words in English. While sentence 2 is perfectly grammatical in English, it may constitute a Structural Error according to the Quality Metric (SAE 2005). While there is no doubt that *drink* is the correct verb to use, the translator may have committed an error by rendering the phrase as *Ma drinks tea* rather than *Ma is drinking tea*, inasmuch as such a rendering deviates from what a monolingual native speaker would produce.

An inexperienced translator could point out in their defense that the Chinese sentence does not have the durative aspect marker *在*, and so the progressive would not be accurate. However, in “The Process of Translation” William Weaver points out: “The worst mistake a translator can commit is to reassure himself by saying, ‘that’s what it says in the original’” (Weaver 1989: 117). By giving such an excuse, the translator legitimizes interference from the lexemes or syntax of the original and cut themselves off from finding the language-independent meaning of the text. In this case, the translator should be aware that a progressive marker would draw particular attention to the ongoing nature of Ma’s drinking (Li and Thompson 1981); if it were present, a more accurate translation would be *Ma is drinking tea right now*. In English the use of the progressive does not have such an intensifying effect, and so is the more faithful translation of an unmarked Chinese verb – even if, on the surface, it seems like the translator is using some creative license.

Of course, as Weaver explains, “faced with a choice […], the translator does not put the words on trial and engage attorneys to defend and accuse” (Weaver 1989:117). They do not consciously formulate the truth conditions and functional structure of every sentence they must translate – not least because few translators are familiar with these concepts. In reality a large portion of this process must be automated, and a translator simply recognizes that the original and the translation are equivalent. Otherwise the process of translation would take too long to be
effective. However, the process can be made conscious when necessary: when proofreading, or when asked about a particular choice, the translator must be able to defend and discuss their translation in concrete, objective terms.

5. Same Skills, Harder Cases

In real translation projects, simple sentences are hard to come by. As sentences become more complex, the grammatical structures of the source and target languages quickly diverge. The same skills – understanding the underlying grammatical functions, recognizing and fixing cross-linguistic interference – come into play to keep more complex translations sounding natural.

5.1 Word Order

One of the most common pitfalls to avoid in translation is matching word order. In some cases, differences in word order are fundamental elements of the languages’ grammar – when translating from an SOV language like Japanese into an SVO language like English, rearranging words and phrases is unavoidable. However, even when translating between languages that share the same basic structure, the issue of word order still comes up. English, Russian, and Chinese are all underlyingly SVO languages, but unlike English and Chinese, Russian has flexible word order due to its system of case marking. For example, the following is a common way to say I love you, with the object and verb switching places:

4) Ya tebya lyublyu.
   I-NOM you.SG-ACC IMP/love-1SG.NPST
   ‘I love you.’
Only someone unfamiliar with English – poorly-written machine translation, for example – would think to translate this sentence as *I you love*. English requires that in an affirmative, active sentence the direct object follow the verb, so *I you love* is unquestionably ungrammatical.

On the surface, this example is trivial. Even an untrained bilingual would know better than to follow the word order. Nonetheless, it gives a glimpse into how the translator approaches the rearrangement of syntactic patterns. The f-structure for sentence 4 is given below.

```
  PRED 'LOVE(SBJ,OBJ)'
  ASPECT IMPERFECTIVE
  TENSE PRESENT
  SUBJ
    PRED 'PRO'
    PERS {s}
    NUM SG
  OBJ
    PRED 'PRO'
    PERS {h}
    NUM SG
```

Note that the f-structure is not the same as a deep structure – it does not represent the underlying word order, nor does it assume that words have been shifted around in accordance with predetermined rules. Instead, it is entirely devoid of word order: the words of a sentence in any order can map onto this structure.\(^8\) This structure represents the intermediate step that the translator’s mind goes through to rid the message of interference from the original text.

### 5.2 Relative Clauses

In some cases, the entire structure of the sentence needs to be completely rearranged, and once again, the intermediate, non-linguistic representation helps to transfer the meaning from one language to the next, changing structure without changing content. Our next sample text – say, a sports commentary – contains the following English sentence:

\(^8\) If, however, the order of the words changes the focus of the sentence (which is not the case in sentence 4), then additional terms would be added to the f-structure to mark the topic or focus.
5) The player who hit the ball scored a goal.

An excessively faithful, inexperienced translator may attempt to translate sentence 4 with the same structure, and in Russian they may even seem to be successful. Word for word, the translation presented in sentence 6 would match the original in sentence 5:

6) Igrok, kotoryj udaril myach, zabil gol.

An experienced translator or proofreader would then point out that this sentence sounds stilted and unnecessarily complex – again, a linguistically competent speaker is unlikely to speak this way, even though it follows Russian’s grammatical rules. Clark and Gregor (2012) advise translators that “instructions from the client might even forbid you from making any ‘unnecessary’ stylistic changes.” However, as professional translators, we need to be able to recognize when style problems go beyond slightly awkward and actually detract from the meaning” (25). What the translator has ignored, in their rush to match the original English

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9 The authors of the SAE Quality Metric stress that stylistic errors are not taken into account under their rubric. If this kind of error appeared particularly offensive to the proofreader, they could list it as Miscellaneous.
syntax, is that Russian has a rich system of participles, including adjectival participles that can take the place of relative clauses (Timberlake 2004). Therefore, a better, more native-sounding translation would be:

7) Udarivshij myach igrok zabil gol.

Incorrectly translated back into English, sentence 7 would be: ‘The ball-hitting player scored a goal.’ In this English re-translation the role of ball is ambiguous, while in Russian it remains separate from the participle and is clearly a direct object.

Note that the f-structure for sentence 7 deviates slightly from the f-structure for sentence 5. The original sentence contained articles (marked as SPEC ‘THE’) and the relative pronoun who, which were reflected in the f-structure. However, this results in an f-structure that is too language-specific, because it cannot apply to languages that do not use relative pronouns or explicitly mark specificity or familiarity.10 As a result, as written this structure cannot apply to either Russian or Chinese, and needs to be changed in preparation for translation. If in the

10 The Russian udarivshij implies specificity in this example; in Chinese only context (or demonstrative pronouns) would mark specificity. It is up to the translator to decide whether specificity is important enough to the message to mark it explicitly, through the insertion of a demonstrative pronoun.
previous section we had to add features to the f-structure to produce a translation, here it is necessary to remove features that do not apply to the target language. The new f-structure does not change the relationships between grammatical elements – in fact, all the same features are present.

While the Russian translation is tricky because there are two valid choices (as shown in the f-structures corresponding to sentences 5 and 7), Chinese presents a challenge because there is only one possibility. This lack of choices is due to the particular structure of Chinese grammar. Chinese has no relative clauses that resemble those found in English (Li and Thompson 1981). Instead, Chinese makes heavy use of the character 的 de, which can attach to any size phrase to make it into a specifier for the noun to be modified.11

8) 你看過我的朋友的書。

nǐ  kàn=guò  wǒ=de  péng-yǒu=de  shū.
you look=EXP  I=NOM  friend-friend=NOM  book.
‘You have read my friend’s book.’

---

11 Other written characters are used to render de when it is used to mark an adverb or a verbal complement; in the past the same character may have been used for all three versions.
9) 我吃你做的飯。

wǒ chī nǐ zuò=de fàn.

I eat you make=NOM food

‘I eat the food you make.’

When attached to a noun phrase, as in sentence 8, de functions similarly to a genitive case marker or the ‘s morpheme in English (marked in the structure as CASE GEN). When attached to a verb phrase, as in sentence 9, it creates the equivalent of a relative clause. In sentence 9, the de modifies ‘FOOD’, which is the direct object, causing the connection, marked by a framed numeral 1, between the value of the OBJ feature of the matrix clause and the OBJ feature of the relative clause. De can also modify the subject, as in example 10:

10) 做飯的人

zuò fàn=de rén

make food=NOM person

‘the person/people who make food’

The result closely resembles the Russian adjectival participle. Using de, the Chinese translation of sentence 5 can only be:
11) 踢球的球员進了球。

How does the translator know that the player kicked the ball, rather than hitting it?

Unfortunately, 打球 dā-qiu ‘hit-ball’ is a verb-object word in Chinese, with the idiomatic meaning to play sports, play ball, which is inappropriate in this translation. The translator then takes their cue from the other words in the sentence, or from context, if any is provided in the text. Perhaps scored a goal would tip them off, because goal is typically used in the context of soccer games. The replacement of hit with kick is therefore not a Wrong Meaning error.

5.3 Cross-linguistic Mapping

The f-structure that we drew up for the Russian translation – sentence 6 – matches this Chinese sentence as well. The only necessary change would be ADJ to SPEC, to reflect the fact that Chinese word order is much more strict. This does not, however, change the syntactic relations within the sentence.

Compare the two mappings below, in Figures 1 and 2. Note that the lexical entries ‘SCORE’ and ‘GOAL’ map rather loosely in both languages. In Figure 1, ‘SCORE’ maps to the gloss ‘hit_in’; in Figure 2, ‘SCORE’ maps to ‘enter’ and ‘GOAL’ maps to ‘ball.’ In both cases, the issue is the idiomatic nature of the phrase score a goal – it is not merely the sum of its parts. The Russian phrase zabit’ gol and Chinese verb-object compound jìn-qiú are equivalent to it, even though when broken down their individual pieces appear not to match. Similarly, in Figure 2 ‘HIT’ maps to ‘kick’ for the reasons outlined above.
The asterisk in each figure marks the segment of the gloss – word, morpheme, or feature – that licenses the ADJ/SPEC section of the f-structure. The superscript numbers in Figure 1 show the mapping of case markers to grammatical functions (to avoid extra lines in the mapping).
As mentioned earlier, the f-structure does not depend on the surface structure of either sentence, and its final form is not influenced by exactly how each language marks for particular features. The perfective aspect, for example, is marked by a separate character in Chinese, but is written into the verb in Russian. Past tense in the matrix clause is inferred from the aspect in Chinese and explicitly marked in Russian; the past tense of the Russian relative clause, however, is inferred from aspect, just like in Chinese. Finally, the assignment of grammatical functions – in this case only subject and object – is done by word order in Chinese and by case marking in Russian. The crucial point is that despite all these differences the structure maps to both of them, showing that it is truly language-independent, just like the conception the translator has of the source text as they write their translation.

5.4 Keeping Languages Separate

As demonstrated in the sample translations above, the translator must hold fast to the f-structure of the phrase while letting go of the source language’s syntax – otherwise the translation may turn out stilted or simply incorrect. Good translators are not thrown off by the particularities of tense and aspect, word order, or by different ways to express the same thought. As necessary, they add and remove features within the f-structure – their mental representation of the source text, separated from its concrete form – to tailor it to their target language, thereby minimizing interference from the source. For the average bilingual, separating the two languages can be difficult, since their experience is typically with code-switching, where one language’s syntax will often remain dominant and lexicons are allowed to mix. With practice, the switch from one language’s surface structure to another becomes more automated, and the translator learns what pitfalls to avoid for the text to sound natural.
6. Awareness and Word Choice

Over time, with more experience, translators become conscious of their choices and of their mistakes. In addition to the issues of syntactic structure described above, translators are faced with the challenges of choosing the right words – terms, lexical entries – as they construct sentences in the target language. This awareness of choices they make helps translators to avoid the translation equivalents of slips of the tongue – when the automatic processes of speech production misfire and suggest a target word or phrase inadequate to the original.

Just like a monolingual, the translator needs to access lemmas stored in their lexicon. For a monolingual speaker, for lemmas to be accessed quickly enough in spontaneous fluent speech, there must be a near-instantaneous connection between the needed concept and the lemma – the brain may be a powerful processor, but it is highly unlikely that it searches through tens of thousands of entries for a match every time it needs a new word – usually about one word per 200-400 milliseconds (Levelt 1989). Levelt points out that linguists have good reasons for searching for other models:

Not only is a parallel account of access necessary for theoretical reasons; there is also convincing empirical evidence for parallel lexical access in speech. Speech errors (blends, in particular) often reveal the simultaneous activation of two near-synonyms, such as in *stummy* for *tummy* and *stomach*. (Levelt 1989:199-200)

The few slips of the tongue that do occur in fluent speech do not usually cause entirely unrelated words to appear, which would indicate that the brain does not access lemmas that have no connection to the message being conveyed. Levelt himself gives preference to the proposal of activation spreading, in which lexical entries contain certain entailing characteristics that, when mentioned in discourse, will activate the entry for quick access, as well as spread the activation to entries with similar characteristics.
In De Bot’s (1992) revision of Levelt’s model, connections are created between lexical entries, whether on the basis of shared language, shared meaning, or shared syntactic form. With repeated use, these connections grow stronger – in the translator’s case, connections based on shared language become less relevant, while shared meaning and syntactic or phonological form become more pronounced. As De Bot points out, these pathways are likely the same ones used by activation spreading.

### 6.1 False Friends

While these pathways are valuable automatic tools for a translator, they must be used with caution. Of particular danger are loan words and other cognates that may have slightly different meanings. One such deceptive pair consists of the Russian *akkuratno* ‘neatly’ and English *accurately*, where the two adverbs sound similar enough to activate one another, but have distinct meanings.

12) The answer was accurately expressed.
13) *Otvet byl akkuratno vyrazhen.*
   - *answer-NOM is-MSG.PST neatly PER/express-PAR-M.SH*
   - ‘The answer was neatly expressed.’
14) *Otvet byl tochno vyrazhen.*
   - *answer-NOM is-MSG.PST accurately PER/express-PAR-M.SH*

While sentence 13 is grammatically well-formed, it expresses a different proposition than the original text in sentence 12. Sentence 14 would be a more accurate translation. The professional translator must take a moment to consciously correct this mistake, thereby strengthening the mental connection between lexical entries ‘accurately’ and ‘tochno’ and overriding the original sound-based connection between ‘accurately’ and ‘akkuratno.’
6.2 Phrases and Idioms

The sound-based error in lemma access is much less likely when translating between English and Chinese, but there are other potential mistakes. With Chinese a particularly dangerous pitfall is in having the individual characters of a multi-character word or phrase activate their associated meanings. For example, Chinese has many separable verb-object phrases which appear to contain two separate words, but in reality should be interpreted as a single compound (Packard 2000). One such phrase is 吃飯 chī-fàn ‘eat-meal’ meaning eat.\(^\text{12}\)

15) 你會吃飯嗎？
   nǐ hui chī-fàn ma?
   ‘Are you going to eat?’

16) 吃了飯以後，我去跳舞。
   chī=le fàn yī-hòu, wǒ qù tiào-wǔ.
   ‘After having eaten, I went dancing.’

17) 打了他以後，我去跳舞。
   dǎ=le tā yī-hòu, wǒ qù tiào-wǔ.
   ‘After having hit him, I went dancing.’

A sentence like 15 appears rather straightforward – all the translator needs is to ignore the internal structure of the word chī-fàn and translate it as eat. However, in sentence 16 the perfective marker le is able to split the verb chī from its apparent object fàn, which may lead the translator to access the lemma that corresponds to fàn, which would be ‘food’ or ‘rice.’ What the translator needs to realize when encountering a sentence like 16, where a set verb-object pair has been separated, is that it corresponds to the compound chī-fàn and does not need to be translated.

\(^{\text{12}}\) See also example sentences 8 and 11 above, which contain the separable V-O phrases 看書 ‘look-book’ meaning read a book and 進球 ‘enter-ball’ meaning score a goal.
as two words, unlike in sentence 17, where dā and tā are not idiomatic and should both be translated. Therefore, they should override their Formulator’s automatic activation and not include food anywhere in the translation.

Note that this is not a problem specific to Chinese verb-object pairs – the same problem arises with idioms that are taken too literally in any language. For example, an English idiom like pull the wool over their eyes may activate the lemmas involved in its literal meaning – here those would be pull, wool, and eyes – instead of activating the intended figurative meaning of con or trick.

6.3 Lexical Gaps

In addition to realizing when the wrong lemmas are being activated, a translator needs to be aware when there does not exist a lemma to be activated at all. A concept without an associated lexical entry is a lexical gap. Such gaps can come about in several ways, and the appropriate workaround would depend on the nature of the gap.

6.3.1 Category Subdivisions

Levelt (1989) cites cross-linguistic variation in spatial reference: English only has here and there, whereas Spanish has three terms – aquí, ahí, allí – to indicate distance. An understanding of distance is universal; the subdivision of this understanding is language-specific. A translator could choose to ignore the distinction if it does not contribute meaningfully to the overall message, or to translate the most distant term as over there or all the way over there if the additional distance needs to be highlighted.

6.3.2 Cultural Associations

Languages do not develop in a vacuum – they are heavily influenced by the culture and history of the people who speak them. Over time certain words acquire connotations that cannot
be replicated in a translation. These may be historical or controversial terms like *socialism* that can only be explained within a historical context; they may be references to widely known works of literature or film, like “curioser and curioser.” Some evoke poetic images: in the realm of color words, Chinese has the character 青, which can sometimes be blue and sometimes green, but is always meant to evoke the freshness of the natural world. Similarly, Russian has two words for blue: *sinij*, which is a generic, neutral blue, and *goluboj*, which is not only lighter – it is also the color of the sky, of childhood, of innocence, of hope. There is simply no word in English that can translate all of these positive associations with 青 or *goluboj*.

### 6.3.3 New Concepts and Technologies

In a rapidly changing world, certain concepts have to be introduced sooner or later, and new words need to be invented or borrowed to express them. In some cases clients will provide glossaries with terms pre-defined by their localization or marketing departments; ignoring the translations provided, or using an unconventional phrasing, constitutes a Wrong Term error, even if the meaning seems to be clear. In other cases translators can borrow the source-language word directly (Russian *marketing*,\(^\text{13}\) or *piar* for English *PR*), or create a calque from target-language morphemes (Chinese *lánqíú* ‘basket-ball’ for *basketball*).

These problems apply not only to technology, but also to abstract concepts, which may have to do with how the people in a given culture interact with each other. For example, when I was recently translating training materials from an international car dealer into Russian, I was faced with the challenge of translating *follow-up*. This was an important and recurring term, as one of the six steps of serving customers and ensuring continued business. Conversations with

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\(^{13}\) It may not appear so, but this is a transliteration of the Russian *маркетинг*. It so happens that the word was borrowed so exactly that transliterating *маркетинг* gives what looks exactly like the English word *marketing*. Note that the last two letters are pronounced separately – [ng], not [ŋ].
several other Russian speakers confirmed my suspicions: with customer service still in its infancy in Russia, following up with a customer to make sure they were satisfied would not be understood by a Russian audience. Contact with clients after a purchase would typically involve spamming them with additional offers. This was the reality of the Russian business world, and I as a translator could not change the situation. In the end, we created the phrase *posleduyushhaya proverka* ‘following inspection’ and hoped that the explanation in the training would make the concept clearer than our wording. Over time, this lexical gap will likely be filled, not without help from translators like us and the training materials we translate.

### 6.4 Translation Tools

Of course, translators do not have to rely merely on their own active memory. Every translator uses dictionaries, translation memories, thesauruses, or advice from fellow translators and native speakers, or some combination of the above. When a translator uses these tools, they do not need to wait for a lexical entry to be activated by the meaning required – instead, seeing or hearing a potential translation from another source allows them to access the lexical entry independently and consciously check whether it matches the meaning. In addition, unlike the spontaneously produced speech of Levelt’s model, a translation typically has enough time to be revisited and revised, proofread and discussed. It is in a translator’s best interest to make the most use of this added time to avoid any errors made through automatic speech production.

### 7 Conclusion

As mentioned early on, few translators are also trained linguists. However, as was outlined in the sections above, they must be very knowledgeable about the lexicons, grammars, and linguistic conventions of the two languages they work with on any given project. To achieve
this level of linguistic competence, they must be educated, they must read extensively, especially in their area of specialization, and learn from mistakes they have made on past translations. They need to monitor and correct themselves if the source text causes interference in the target language; they must also readily identify idioms, subtle connotations, and lexical gaps. They must be able to fully deactivate their source language as soon as they understand the meaning of the source text, to make sure that it does not cause their translation to sound unnatural. In short, they must know the pitfalls and consciously, actively work to avoid them.

As shown through the formalized prism of Lexical Functional Grammar, a large part of remaining faithful to the original text is the translator’s ability to abstract an utterance’s meaning away from the words and morphemes used. Obviously, few translators use linguistic terminology, and certainly none limit themselves to the distinctions drawn in Bresnan’s formal model, but they must have a sense of the grammatical relationships between elements in each sentence; coordination and subordination; situation type, aspect, and temporal location. This understanding must be subject to alteration to meet the demands of the target language’s grammar, lexicon, and linguistic conventions. Whether from context, from knowledge about culture and society, or from general linguistic competence, the translator must be aware of both explicit and implicit features in the source text, and if the target language marks features differently, or ignores certain features altogether, the translator must be ready to remove them from their conception of the sentence and conform to the patterns of the target language.

Willem Levelt contends that, at least for monolingual speakers, “this process [grammatical encoding] is highly automatic and nonintentional” (Levelt 1989:282). The translator cannot allow their grammatical encoding to be automatic or nonintentional – they must learn, with practice, to make informed choices and to proofread attentively to avoid deviations
from the monolingual norm. Whereas a bilingual community does not put external pressure on its speakers to keep their language free of interference, a translator must be conscious of this pressure as it comes from the future readers of their translation, who will expect it to sound natural in their language and who would not welcome elements of the source language in their text.
### Appendix A

#### Gloss Abbreviations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PER</td>
<td>Perfective aspect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMP</td>
<td>Imperfective aspect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG</td>
<td>Singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, F, N</td>
<td>Masculine, feminine, neuter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PST</td>
<td>Past tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPST</td>
<td>(Russian) Nonpast tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SH</td>
<td>(Russian) Short adj. form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOM</td>
<td>(Russian) Nominative case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PER/</td>
<td>(Russian) Perfective verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMP/</td>
<td>(Russian) Imperfective verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAR</td>
<td>(Russian) Participle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>Accusative case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOM</td>
<td>(Chinese) Nominalizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXP</td>
<td>(Chinese) Experiential aspect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>(Chinese) Question marker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### F-structure Abbreviations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRED</td>
<td>Predicate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPEC</td>
<td>Specifier</td>
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<td>OBJ</td>
<td>Object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERS</td>
<td>Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{S}</td>
<td>Speaker (1st person)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{H}</td>
<td>Hearer (2nd person)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B.1 See Figure B1.

J2450 Quick Reference

1. When an error is ambiguous, always choose the earliest primary category.
2. When in doubt, always choose ‘serious’ over ‘minor.’

A. Wrong Term: (WT) A ‘wrong term’ is any target language term that
   a. violates a client term glossary;
   b. is in clear conflict with de facto standard translation(s) of the source language term in the automotive field;
   c. is inconsistent with other translations of the source language term in the same document or type of
document unless the context for the source language term justifies the use of a different target language
term, for example due to ambiguity of the source language term;
   Serious weight: 5; Minor weight: 2

B. Wrong Meaning: (WM)
   a. denotes a concept in the target language that is different from the concept denoted by the source
   language.
   b. a translation that contradicts the meaning of the original.
   Serious weight: 5; Minor weight: 2

C. Omission: (OM) An error of omission has occurred if:
   a. a continuous block of text in the source language has no counterpart in the target language text and, as a
result, the semantics of the source text is absent in the translation;
   b. a graphic which contains source language text has been deleted from the target language deliverable.
   Serious weight: 4; Minor weight: 2

D. Structural Error: (SE) A structural error comprises the following instances of syntactic errors,
   incorrect word structure, or agreement errors:
   a. a source term is assigned the wrong part of speech in its target language counterpart.
   b. the target text contains an incorrect phrase structure, e.g., a relative clause when a verb phrase is
   needed.
   c. the target language words are correct, but in the wrong linear order according to the syntactic
   rules of the target language.
   d. an otherwise correct target language word (or term) is expressed in an incorrect morphological
   form, e.g., case, gender, number, tense, prefix, suffix, infix, or any other inflection.
   e. two or more target language words disagree in any form of inflection as would be required by the
   grammatical rules of that language.
   Serious weight: 4; Minor weight: 2

E. Misspelling: (SP) A misspelling has occurred if a target language term:
   a. violates the spelling as stated in a client glossary,
   b. violates the accepted norms for spelling in the target language.
   c. is written in an incorrect or inappropriate writing system for the target language.
   Serious weight: 3; Minor weight: 1

F. Punctuation Error: (PE) The target language text contains an error according to the punctuation rules for
   that language.
   Serious weight: 2; Minor weight: 1

G. Miscellaneous Error: (ME) Any linguistic error related to the target language text which is not clearly
   attributable to the other categories listed above should be classified as a miscellaneous error.
   Serious weight: 3; Minor weight: 1

FIGURE B1—SAE J2450 QUICK REFERENCE
Works Cited


14 This book appears to be self-published. It does not have any location listed.
