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Translating a Human Rights Pedagogical Manual through Memes of
Translation

Thesis submitted to the School of Translation and Interpretation (ETI) to
obtain the Masters of Arts in Specialized Translation

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Introduction

Foreward

In September 2009, as university courses were just starting to get underway for the autumn session, I found myself confronted with several pivotal tasks on my shoulders. First of all, I needed to select a class in order to finish off my coursework at the ETI. Furthermore, I was faced with finding a subject for one of the most intimidating aspects of earning a Master's degree, the thesis. To further compound the aforementioned burdens, I had to: a) continue working a part-time job b) continue looking for freelance translation assignments in order to dress up my CV so as to facilitate the job-search upon finishing my studies.

Based on my own experience, I have found that writing a thesis and hunting down freelance assignments are the most complex and intimidating since the former involves long-term dedication and discipline as well as a commitment to see a substantial project through to the end. With respect to the latter, the pressure is magnified since the translation student must first of all find freelance assignments by continuously marketing his/her skills in such a way as to convince clients that their services are indeed worth some sort of remuneration. Moreover, the translation student must decide on a rate, during which endless questions arise such as: What do translator's typically charge? Should I charge as much as a professional

based on my experience? How should I proceed with negotiating a fee if the client finds my quote too expensive? Is the client sufficiently trustworthy to pay the fee?

Personally, I have found that, in the words of my 10th-grade English teacher, "Experience is the best teacher." Perhaps this should be modified to "Baptism by fire is the best teacher" as my very first translation job was a complete disaster. The client was arrogant, demanding and seemed to care little in the way of providing the optimal environment for successfully bringing a translation to fruition. Notwithstanding, as I acquired increased experience, negotiating a fee as well as deadlines and terms of payment became smoother. I noticed that the more experience I obtained, clients themselves gained more trust in me as, what I often refer to myself as, a pseudo-specialist (I would not presume to put myself on the same par with my instructors). In the end, I've learnt that translation is a trade which does not provide enormous sums of money right away but rather, it rewards the dedicated and those with a true love for languages gradually. In other words, it is truly a profession for those who take an interest in a variety of disciplines, thus approaching each text as a window which opens out upon new, uncharted universes.

About the Translation Assignment

The topic of my thesis, like so many other important events in my life, was a result of chance rather than careful, meticulous planning. In September 2009, the translation students of the ETI English unit received an e-mail from Dr. Hewson according to which a Mrs. Monique Prindezis, an official of the EIP, which is a Geneva-based NGO, was looking for a translation student to assist her organization in translating the second edition of *100 et 1 mots*, an instruction manual in the field of human rights education. Seeing it as an excellent opportunity to broaden my horizons and tackle a more sizable translation job, I immediately contacted Mrs. Prindezis and set up an appointment. A couple of days later, I met with her at the EIP headquarters in the Eaux-Vives neighborhood of Geneva. She told me about the mission and aims of her organization as well as the purpose of the manual. Above all, she insisted that the final version go through an extensive and laborious editing process, hence I promised her that I would contract the editing process out to one of my fellow students at the ETI. I told her that I would go home and read through the manual before agreeing to accept the assignment in order to make sure I was up to the task.

Afterwards, I did just that and fed the 1st edition of *100 et 1 mots* into *winalign* in order to generate an invoice with a fair and accurate fee. For those readers who may not be familiar with *winalign*, this is a software that

allows the translator to feed already translated documents into a system which carries out a detailed analysis with regard to the number of repetitions. Consequently, the translator charges the client a fee that is truly reflective of the quantity of text at hand. For example, had I used Microsoft word count, the fee would have been approximately CHF 7,000, whereas with *winalign*, I was able to lower the fee to CHF 5,000. This is crucial since information is widely available in our globalized world, and a translator's reputation as honest and reliable is pivotal if he/she is to succeed professionally in the long-term. Had I charged the initial fee of CHF 7,000, I would have made a substantial sum in the short-term but, had the association discovered the existence of software such as *winalign* through another freelancer, my reputation as honest and reliable would be compromised. This is also an ethical course of action since, despite the fact that language specialists deserve fair compensation for their services, NGOs often have limited budgets.

Background Information on the EIP

The EIP (Ecole instrument de paix) was founded by Jacques Mühlethaler, who was born of Swiss and French parents and lost two brothers during World War II as well as the Algerian War for Independence. After having suffered two traumatic losses, he came to the conclusion that education brought about a mere acquisition of intellectual knowledge and tended to lead to war rather than procure peace. Therefore, he believed that

increased emphasis should be placed on peace and human rights when educating tomorrow's generations. Consequently, he decided to establish the NGO *Ecole instrument de paix (EIP)* in 1967, which is not affiliated with any political, religious or philosophical group.¹

Today, the EIP's activities aim to educate the public on the proper role of an education which strives to serve humanity. The EIP does so in several ways. First of all, it publishes a bulletin in order to inform EIP members, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, national ministries of education and the UNESCO national commissions on EIP activities and projects on peace and human rights education. The EIP also publishes the French, English or Spanish writings of educators having worked in the aforementioned fields. These writings are intended for an international audience with the aim of drawing the attention of governments on the interest and motivation of educators toward a human-rights based pedagogy while reminding them of their commitments toward human rights and peace.²

The EIP has branches in approximately 20 countries, each of which adapts its methods in line with the development and culture of the particular

¹ M. Prindezis, *L'Ecole instrument de paix*, p. 125.

² *Ibid.*

country in question. The primary mission of these branches is to make public opinion aware of the need for peace education, especially through documentation that is already in existence and future projects that the branches wish to carry out. One such project is the *cahier de l'amitié*, in which children of educators of different cultures exchange letters with the hope of developing a prolonged correspondence so that children learn about their own culture and discover cultures different from their own.³

The EIP has also published pedagogical materials, such as:

- a translation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights into a simplified language that is accessible to children and individuals unfamiliar with legal jargon;
- an illustrated storybook entitled "*Dessine-moi un droit de l'homme*" in which 53 graphic artists contributed their time as volunteers to illustrate the 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as the provisions of the International Covenants on Human Rights, the Geneva Conventions and other international instruments;
- a record on which 11 artists interpret the Universal Declaration through song;
- an educational platform on the Universal Periodic Review;
- "*100 et 1 mots*" by Ramdane Babadji, a glossary containing entries on international organizations, international instruments, treaties and any other phenomena pertaining to the international community at large and which is the subject of this thesis.⁴

³ *Ibid*, p. 126.

⁴ *Ibid*.

Purpose of Thesis

Whenever translators carry out a specific assignment, they are often confronted with deadlines and time constraints that force them to resolve and troubleshoot issues at hand with little time to focus on the motivations and theory behind their choices. Such was the case for the text upon which this thesis is based: *100 et 1 mots pour l'éducation aux droits de l'homme*. As if often the case in the translation world, the translator was first of all obliged to complete the translation and resolve the issues in as timely a manner as possible. Only then was he able to set aside the necessary time in order to reflect more deeply on the motivations and reasons for his choices.

The basis for exploring and analyzing these choices is meme theory. According to this theory, which Andrew Chesterman has explored extensively, memes refer to ideas that metamorphose into a concept through general usage and application, much like a gene in a gene pool. Furthermore, these memes are classified into five categories of supermemes. One of the aims of this thesis is to explore these supermemes as well as their usefulness and limitations through concrete examples from *100 et 1 mots*.

Moreover, various syntactic, semantic and pragmatic strategies will be explained and demonstrated through examples from the aforementioned text. This section will not merely consist of a list of strategies followed by examples but also an explanation on the implications of these examples with respect to a French-English translation assignment. Where necessary, other views on memes and concepts have also been introduced in order to assist the reader, as well as the translator himself, in obtaining a more thorough, global understanding of the fundamental concepts of meme theory.

The ultimate goal of this thesis is to demonstrate that, although it might not be apparent during the translation process itself, translators are confronted with a series of choices when translating any document. The final outcome is the result of a patchwork of weighing solutions and consequences that stem from the inherent structure of the source and target languages but also the gap between the cultural frameworks, which the translator must bridge as much as possible.

What is a meme?

Before drawing up a relationship between translating a manual like *100 et 1 mots* and meme theory, it is necessary to scratch the surface of the concept of a meme and explore several comparisons in order to determine

its role among the constellation of ideas that exist throughout the universe. One of the most succinct and concrete comparisons is derived from a sociobiological concept explored by Dawkins in his 1976 publication The Selfish Gene. According to Dawkins, "a meme is a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of imitation."⁵

Based on this citation, we could sum up the idea of a *meme* as just that, an idea. However, upon closer examination of Dawkins' statement, it becomes clear that an idea is composed of many integral parts, and a meme constitutes the common denominator upon which an idea is based:

Examples of memes are tunes, ideas, catch/phrases, clothes fashions, ways of making pots or building arches. Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperm or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation. If a scientist hears, or reads about, a good idea, he passes it on to his colleagues and students. He mentions it in his articles and lectures. If the idea catches on, it can be said to propagate itself, spreading from brain to brain.⁶

In other words, an idea does not necessarily exist identically among different individuals. Nonetheless, the core characteristics comprising a meme, which is the central nucleus of an idea, are identical.

Ultimately, translations of various texts exhibit many features of scientific theories that are transmitted from generation to generation through the so-called meme pool. Much like genes, scientific theories are relentlessly

⁵ R. Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, p. 206.

⁶ *Ibid.*

tested and scrutinized against all odds in order to see if they are adaptable enough to withstand the trials of time. Likewise, good translations strategies are tested time and time again, and only the successful ones are imitated and copied. Another interesting observation about the translation process itself is that it provides a bridge in order for memes to be propagated from culture to culture. Thus, the translation process is a bridge between different meme pools, and if this bridge ceased to exist, the chances of propagating memes throughout the world would be significantly diminished.

The Formation of a Translation Meme

So far, we have defined a meme and examined this notion's significance with respect to translation. However, in order to understand just how a translation is formed, it is necessary to draw a parallel between translating a passage and the theory of Karl Popper. The formation of a meme in accordance with Popper's theory can be summarized through the following diagram:

$$P1 \rightarrow TT \rightarrow EE \rightarrow P2^7$$

With an example from *100 et 1 mots*, this process will now be explained in further detail. First of all, it is imperative to identify a problem. In this case, it will be the term *droits intangibles*. According to Popperian theory, the mere existence of the problem of translating *droits intangibles*

⁷ A. Chesterman, *Memes of Translation*, p. 16.

constitutes **P1**, or the initial problem to be solved. Then, the translator will propose a tentative theory, or **TT**. This theory is also devised by logic, imagination, dialogue with other colleagues or even chance. In the case of *100 et 1 mots*, the tentative theory, or solution, was *inalienable rights*. Following the establishment of the tentative theory stage, the translator, and eventually the editor, scan the proposed solution for as many defects as possible. This is known as error elimination **EE** and is carried out through evaluating, analyzing, critiquing and testing the preliminary solution. Like any devised theory, if the translation survives intact, which it usually does not, it becomes corroborated. As Popper stated, the essential goal is not how accurate the theory proves to be but the degree to which it can be falsified in order to provide the best possible insight for future generations. Furthermore, the error elimination process inevitably gives rise to new problems, or **P2**. Following the **EE** stage in which the translator and the editor carried out further research, the two parties eventually opted for *inherent rights* in lieu of *inalienable rights* due to the cultural specificity of the latter. However, the solution *inherent rights* is not a means to an end since the term at hand cannot be applied categorically in all contexts. In other words, there are certain contexts in which the term *inalienable rights*, as a result of its cultural specificity, would be a more appropriate term. Thus, we have reached **P2**, or the stage whereby the debate on the appropriateness of *inalienable rights* or *inherent rights* comes into play.

On a final note, the aforementioned example also typifies situations in which social and ideological factors may bear weight in determining the final translation of a particular text.⁸ In this case, the term *inalienable rights* would be an inappropriate solution for the context at hand due to its cultural specificity with respect to the American bill of rights, whereas *inherent rights* is more resonant of international humanitarian law, which was the subject of the translated manual.

Establishing a Supermeme

The life cycle of a meme is a difficult phenomenon to predict. This is due to the fact that a meme's life cycle never follows a specific pattern. Some memes are initially received with great skepticism only to blossom into concepts and notions embraced by the community at large to this day. One such example would be the theory of the earth's spherical shape. It goes without saying that this theory is still valid to this day. Other memes, such as Sir Isaac Newton's views on universal gravitation, enjoyed success for centuries only to be partially debunked by a more modern theory, such as Einstein's theory of relativity. Therefore, a meme's life span is anything but easy to predict.

⁸ I. Niiniluoto, *Notes on Popper as Follower of Whewell and Perice*, p. 272-327.

Notwithstanding, some memes become so pervasive and influential that they reveal themselves repeatedly within a certain field. These memes are called supermemes. With respect to translation, Chesterman identifies five categories: source-target, equivalence, untranslatability, free-vs-literal and all-writing-is-translation.⁹ The following sections aim to define these various memes, explore their underlying characteristics and discuss their validity through examples, where pertinent, from *100 et 1 mots*.

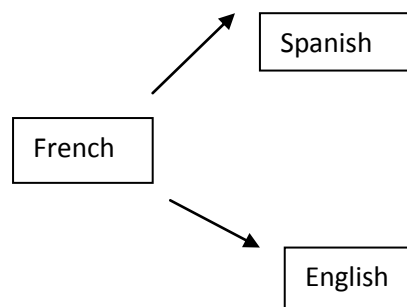
Source-Target

A defining feature of the source-target supermeme is the direction in which the translation process itself is carried out. In fact, this supermeme is a result of the common view that translation consists of a trajectory through which a source text is rendered into a target language. In other words, the translation process consists of moving from **ST** to **TT**. According to Chesterman, however, this supermeme fails to take notice that once a product is converted from A to B along a trajectory, product A ceases to exist.¹⁰ This may be the case in some circumstances whereby the TT is intended for publication, and the ST serves as a crutch in order to obtain the TT, only to be disposed of once the TT is realized. While some translations follow this route, others, as is the case within international organizations that publish their documents in multiple languages, follow a more chaotic path in which the basic document is translated into numerous

⁹ A. Chesterman, *Memes of Translation*, p. 7-8.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 8.

languages at once by their permanent staff and freelancers. Such a translation scenario would tend to be more orbital in scope. In other words, the basic document functions as a nucleus from which the multilingual equivalents radiate. In the end, the source-target supermeme does not adequately reflect the translation process since it is anything but a single trajectory along which a single language is converted into another. With respect to *100 et 1 mots*, the translation process was rather bidirectional in scope since the French original was simultaneously translated into English and Spanish. Ultimately, the translation of *100 et 1 mots* could be summarized through the following model:



Equivalence

A translation supermeme which is increasingly in decline is that of equivalence. Equivalence has also been addressed and studied from a seemingly endless set of angles by translation theorists, including Vinay and Darbelnet, Jakobson, Nida, Catford and House.¹¹ Basing their approach on comparative stylistics, mainly French and English, Vinay and Darbelnet divided translation strategies into two categories: oblique and direct. In

¹¹ V. Leonardi, *Gender and Ideology in Translation: Do Women and Men Translate Differently?*, p. 77.

turn, they divided each category into sub-categories. For example, direct translation could be divided into *borrowing*, *calque* and *literal* translation, whereas oblique translation consisted of *transposition*, *modulation*, *adaptation* and, of utmost importance for this section, equivalence.¹²

With respect to equivalence, Vinay and Darbelnet emphasized that equivalence consists of replicating the context of the source language within the target language but with different wording. In other words, equivalence involved replicating the same stylistic impact as the source text within the target text. They considered this to be the ideal method when dealing with proverbs, idioms and the onomatopoeia of animal sounds. Above all, they state that the translator should always focus on the source text itself since a bilingual dictionary, or any other manual, could never prove to be a definitive source when attempting the most adequate translation. For example, the English phrase *Take one* would most readily be translated as *Prenez-en un*. On the other hand, if the actual context was a basket of free samples in a department store, a more appropriate translation would be *Echantillon gratuit*. Therefore, if the translator neglects replicating the actual situation, or context, when taking an equivalence approach, the target text equivalent is far from accurate.¹³

¹² *Ibid*, p. 79.

¹³ *Ibid*, pp. 79-80.

On the other hand, Jakobson addressed the issue of equivalence through the notion of difference. His views on equivalence are also marked by a more semiotic approach in which he states “there is no signatum without signum.”¹⁴ Furthermore, Jakobson expands the notion of equivalence by concluding that not only does translation occur between two languages (interlingual) but also within a single language (intralingual) and between two sign systems (intersemiotic). It is in the field of interlingual translation that Jakobson emphasized the notion of equivalence through difference. According to this notion, full equivalence does not exist between two code units. Rather, the translator must resort to synonyms when aiming to convey the source text message.¹⁵ However, Jakobson does not limit his list of possible solutions to synonyms; other possible approaches include loanwords, neologisms, semantic shifts and circumlocutions.¹⁶ Ultimately, Jakobson concludes that due to contrasting degrees of difference between languages, equivalence can only be achieved through taking stock of these differences and working around them in order to convey the message of the source text. In other words, “translation involves two equivalence messages in two different codes.”¹⁷

¹⁴ R. Jakobson, *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation*, p. 232.

¹⁵ V. Leonardi, *Gender and Ideology in Translation: Do Women and Men Translate Differently ?*, p. 81.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 82.

¹⁷ R. Jakobson, *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation*, p. 233.

Eugene Nida devised a twofold theory which called on translators not to only focus on the content but also the form, depending on the nature of the source text at hand. Unlike Vinay and Darbelnet, Nida emphasized equivalence through meaning rather than style although he did not negate the importance of style all together. Furthermore, Nida's theory on equivalence consists of two parameters, *formal* and *dynamic*. Nida views *formal equivalence* as an attempt to find the equivalent translation of a source text on a lexical or morph-syntactical level. Since languages often lack formal equivalents, Nida advocates using *dynamic equivalence* in order to render the target text more coherent and smoother by creating the same impact on the target audience as that created by the source text on the original audience. In other words, the translator, in addition to the linguistic expectations of the audience, must also take stock of their cultural expectations. Nida stipulates this in his work entitled The Theory and Practice of Translation:

Dynamic equivalence in translation is more than mere correct communication of information.¹⁸

Furthermore, Nida stipulates that translators, in undertaking dynamic equivalence, must move beyond the printed words on the page and consider how the target text will impact the reader:

[Intelligibility] is not, however, to be measured merely in terms of whether the words are understandable and the sentences grammatically constructed, but in terms of the total impact the message has on the one who receives it.

¹⁸ E. Nida, *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, p. 25.

To sum up Nida's theory, translators can either be concerned with the grammatical correctness of their text or, in addition to proper usage, take into account the semantic ramifications the target text version might have on the audience and ensure that its impact is maximized.¹⁹

On the other hand, Catford's approach to defining equivalence was more linguistic in orientation. Through his linguistic-based approach, Catford claimed that translation consisted of replacing textual material of the source language with textual material from the target language. When replacing this textual material, Catford claimed that different types and shifts of translation occurred. According to Catford, there are broad categories of translation based on three criteria:

1. Full Translation vs. Partial Translation (Extent of Translation)
2. Rank-bound Translation vs. Unbounded Translation (Level at which Equivalence is Established)
3. Total Translation vs. Restricted Translation (Levels of Language involved in Translation Process)

Thus, Catford believed that equivalence could be established either for each lexical item or morpheme within a language (rank-bound translation) or on a broader level, such as through sentences and clauses (unbounded translation). The number of levels through which equivalence could be established differed according to the language pair. For example, between English and French there are five levels, whereas between English and

¹⁹ V. *Leonardi*, *Gender and Ideology in Translation: Do Women and Men Translate Differently*, pp. 83-84.

Kabardian, a language of the Caucasus, there are four. Whenever a translator is able to establish equivalence through rank-bound translation, due to two languages possessing similar grammatical configurations, *formal correspondence* is said to exist. On the other hand, when the aforementioned configurations differ, so-called *level shifts* occur in which a source text item may have an equivalent item in the target text at a different level. Furthermore, equivalence, in the absence of formal correspondence, may also need to be established through a *category shift*, of which there are four types:

- 1.) Structural (grammatical changes between the ST and TT)
- 2.) Class-shifts (an SL item is translated into a TT item as a different grammatical class)
- 3.) Unit-shifts (the SL version is reworded in the TT version)
- 4.) Intra-system shifts (e.g. the SL singular becomes plural in the TT version)²⁰

However, Catford's analysis was heavily criticized due to the isolated nature of the examples used to corroborate his theory. In addition, many translation theorists, such as Snell-Hornby, claim that Catford failed to take into account additional factors, such as textual, cultural and situational aspects.²¹ One of the most scathing criticisms of Catford's theory has also stemmed from the manner in which textual equivalence is established through a process known as commutation, whereby "a competent bilingual informant or translator [is consulted on] what changes if any occur in the

²⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 85-86.

²¹ Snell-Hornby, *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach*, p. 19-20.

TL text as a consequence.”²² Ultimately, Catford’s theory was eventually debunked due to his view that a bilingual individual or translator was a final authority over a particular TT version. However, this only proves that a bilingual informant or translator is personally pleased with a particular translation but fails to prove empirically that equivalence has indeed been established.

In regard to House’s approach to equivalence, it is rather functionalist in orientation. In order to determine whether equivalence has occurred, House proposes a textual analysis of the source text and the target text. If the two diverge with respect to their situational features, they are not functionally equivalent, and the translation is therefore of poor quality. An example would be a political speech in which a politician urges his audience to take action; if the target text version merely informs the audience, then the translations fail to correspond on a functionalist level. However, House does take stock of the whole picture by drawing up a distinction between *covert* and *overt* translation. The former, as opposed to the latter, consists of a translation that is not directly intended for the target audience and is thus not required to be functionally equivalent.²³ An example would be a speech by Hitler urging his citizens to protect themselves from “Jewish propaganda.” Obviously, such a speech, if it were translated into another

²² J. Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay on Applied Linguistics*, p. 28.

²³ V. Leonardi, *Gender and Ideology in Translation: Do Women and Men Translate Differently?*, pp. 87-88.

language, would not aim to move the target audience to react accordingly. Nonetheless, House's theory fails to take into account the translation of a broader range of texts. For example, she claims that, when dealing with poetry, translators are not translating but performing a transposition of ideas between languages.²⁴ Furthermore, her theory, while not entirely useless for translators, provides a tool through which translations may be checked and verified but offers little insight into how translators may carry out their work.

As the reader has noticed, equivalence is indeed a controversial supermeme due to the simple fact that it has been studied and analyzed from such a wide array of specialists, of whom the main ones have just been cited. In the following section, I would like to explore the equivalence concept from the viewpoints of other translation scholars, as addressed in an article by Halverson, and offer my own insight and interpretations of the concept.

Is the equivalence concept a dead supermeme?

Needless to say, equivalence is possibly the most controversial and complex supermeme within Chesterman's categorization. First of all, Chesterman defines translation through the equivalence supermeme as a mirrored phenomenon. According to such a phenomenon, the target text,

²⁴ *J. House, A Model for Translation Quality Assessment*, p. 69.

or Y, is a replica of X, or the source text. In other words, X=Y, thus we can assume that through backtranslation, Y=X.²⁵ However, as many seasoned translators are well aware, backtranslations rarely, if ever, lead to an exact replica between the source text and the target text. This is due to the fact that equivalence does not provide a perfect replica but rather "replicates the same situation in the original, whilst using completely different wording."²⁶ In other words, languages are a reflection of a seemingly infinite number of cultures' perception of the world around them. Since cultures do not necessarily perceive the world around them in the same manner, it is safe to assume that the instrument used to convey their beliefs and perceptions, or language, will reflect each culture's individual perceptions.

In her article, Halverson acknowledges the controversial nature of equivalence. She states that "Perhaps the most divisive issue is that surrounding the concept of equivalence, whose role in the field has been the subject of considerable debate over the past 20 odd years."²⁷ First and foremost, the concept of equivalence is difficult to define. On a basic level, dictionaries have been obliged to define equivalence as succinctly as possible. For example, the *Collins Dictionary of the English Language*

²⁵ A. Chesterman, *Memes of Translation*, p. 9.

²⁶ D. Kenny, "Equivalence" in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, p. 342.

²⁷ S. Halverson, *The Concept of Equivalence in Translation Studies*, p. 208.

defines equivalence simply as “equal or interchangeable in value, quantity or significance.”²⁸ *Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* defines the concept as “equal in force, amount or value” or “like in signification or import.”²⁹ However, in the concept of translation, the notion of equivalence becomes problematic. For the purposes of conciseness, it suffices to say that, in order for translations to be equivalent, they must manifest the same weight, quantity, value and significance as the original. On the other hand, when languages come into play, the entire equation is thrown off since languages can manifest equivalence in varying degrees. With respect to Chesterman’s equation, where $X=Y$ and $Y=X$, the notion of equivalence is only applicable on a word-to-word level. As language specialists branch out into more complex linguistic dimensions, such as syntactical and textual aspects as a whole, Chesterman’s equation does not necessarily prove useful. Chesterman is not alone in subscribing to this mathematical formula. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, equivalence consists of “...a proposition from two others which are linked by the phrase ‘if, and only if.’” The equivalence formed from two propositions p and q also may be defined by the statement ‘ p is a necessary and sufficient condition for q .’”³⁰ An example from *100 et 1 mots* will be discussed later on to show that this mathematical formula is flawed, but first I would like to explore the

²⁸ *Collins Dictionary of the English Language* (1991), p. 526.

²⁹ *Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (1991), p. 421.

³⁰ *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1975), p. 935.

findings of other translation theorists to show why equivalence has been so controversial as a result of over-simplification.

In a study by Hartmann and Stork, the authors' conclusions illuminate the dangers of over-simplifying equivalence within the framework of translation. Rather than prescribe to the mathematical formula of Chesterman, they emphasized that languages may indeed manifest equivalence but in varying degrees. In other words, rather than stating $X=Y$ and $Y=X$, they concluded that "[t]exts in different languages may be equivalent in different degrees, in respect of different levels of presentation and at different ranks."³¹ Thus, Hartmann and Stork transcend the mathematical notion of equivalence and take into account the dynamic dimensions of translating between two languages. Catford identified this shortsighted approach by stating that "[a] central task of translation theory is that of defining the nature and conditions of translation equivalence."³² He continues his argument by highlighting that "a textual equivalent is any TL text or portion of text which is observed on a particular occasion, ... to be the equivalent of a given SL text or portion of text."³³ The keyword in obtaining a more complete definition of equivalence is *on a particular occasion*. In other words, equivalence in translation is not a flawed concept

³¹ Hartmann and Stork, *Dictionary of Language and Linguistics*, p. 713.

³² Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, p. 21.

³³ *Ibid*, p. 27.

per se, but it cannot be reduced to a set of mathematical principles or formulas that guarantee $X=Y$ and $Y=X$. Unfortunately, translations rarely transcend time and space in order to make way for a list of universal principles to be described infinitely. Any seasoned translator is well aware of this since we often do not translate a certain phrase in the same manner when working with different source texts. A prime example would be the French-English advertisement regarding free samples previously mentioned.

Furthermore, other scholars have often cited the failure of translation theorists to define equivalence as an empirical, scientific concept. In one article, Wilss states that “...the science of translation has so far failed to develop clear cut criteria for the measurability of TE and has thus failed to explicate the concept of TE. The science of translation (and this is probably a major argument against raising translation to the rank of a science of translation) can therefore presently make no reliable statements on how a translator must proceed in order to arrive at an adequate, qualitatively evaluable transfer results.”³⁴ Such an argument is flawed since the concept of equivalence in translation should be approached from the other end of the spectrum. In the words of Halverson, “[m]ore recent developments in the philosophy of science, however, have shown that the

³⁴ W. Wills, *The Science of Translation: Problems and Methods*, p. 136.

problem may actually be the reverse. If a concept does not fit the idea of science of scientific knowledge, then perhaps it is the idea of scientific knowledge which needs to be re-examined.”³⁵ Rather than question the pursuit of science to establish fundamental universal principles, I propose to approach translation studies from a different angle and question whether translation studies should be “re-examined” as a scientific concept. Why should we develop measurable yardsticks in order to determine whether equivalence has been achieved? Why should translation, as a field that often involves sociolinguistic aspects, be approached as a science with universal principles to be applied categorically with no exception?

Moreover, the very notion that the sciences’ ultimate aim of discovering objective, universal truths is also a relic of the past. As past theories are reexamined and dissected, scientists have noticed that, although they purported to etch concepts and ideas universally in stone, theories can be revisited, modified or even debunked all together. While it is always worthwhile to open enquiries for the sake of intellectual discovery, scientists have become more modest in their pursuit of the truth. In other words, there may not be an ultimate answer. According to Halverson, rather than ask “what is”, we must ask ourselves “what is, for whom, when

³⁵ S. Halverson, *The Concept of Equivalence in Translation Studies*, p. 221.

and where.”³⁶ Consequently, she states that the primary error of translation scholars in the past was being “so fervent in their desire for a science [that they] were convinced that they could find out what translation really *is*.”³⁷ Ultimately, in seeking to define equivalence, translation theorists should not only avoid science’s past shortcomings by trying to establish an all-mighty truth but also keep up with developments in the field of science in order to devise a more inclusive and well-rounded vision on what constitutes translation equivalence.

Simply put, this means that when considering equivalence as a supermeme from a linguistic perspective, languages do not function in the same way, as this was especially true for French and English in *100 et 1 mots*. This rule of thumb could be applied to any linguistic transfer at hand and to even the most culturally neutral texts, such as an international treaty. Below is an example taken from the foreward of *100 et 1 mots*:

Aujourd’hui, agir dans le domaine des droits de l’homme découle à la fois d’un sentiment de nécessité et du désir de vouloir contribuer à la construction d’une société plus **juste, équitable** et **conviviale**.

The last three adjectives have been highlighted since they posed a particular problem. In fact, they had to be translated as *fair, equal and harmonious*. The final adjective was particularly problematic since *convivial* exists in French as well as English with the exact same spelling.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 222.

³⁷ *Ibid*.

However, the cultural notions of *convivialité* and *conviviality* differ sharply. In accordance with its usage in the above example, the French *convivialité* may transcend a context merely depicting a group of friends gathered around a table for a friendly chat and convey society's peaceful functioning as a whole. However, with respect to the latter usage, English prefers to use *harmony* to refer to social peace on a global scale.

In the end, the aforementioned example provides a quintessential example of equivalence since the choice of using *fair, equal and harmonious* replicates the situation and not the wording within an English-speaking framework. In fact, the translator would be advised to focus on replicating the situation rather than the wording, as laid out by Nida's theory of dynamic equivalence. As discussed earlier, Nida stipulates that the translator should be concerned with ensuring that the target text produces the same effect on the target audience as that produced upon the audience by the source text.³⁸ Since *juste, équitable et conviviale* alert a French-speaking audience that the author is addressing the issue of social equality and harmony throughout the world, the translator should translate the lexical triplet as *fair, equal and harmonious* since the latter would alert the target audience of the same issue at hand. Thus, Nida's notion of dynamic

³⁸ V. Leonardi, *Gender and Ideology in Translation: Do Women and Men Translate Differently?*, pp. 83-84.

equivalence provides further proof that the translator should be wary of false cognates.

However, the notion of “same effect” gives rise to another debate. Is it possible for the translator to predict this very effect through dynamic equivalence? In order to explore this issue, we will turn to some of Nida’s examples involving cultures that contrast starkly with respect to their view of the world order. For example, Nida cites Homer’s epic poem *The Illiad*. The original Greek version was written in verse since the ancient Greeks were accustomed to telling stories through rhyme, possibly to facilitate memorization since literacy was not as widespread as in modern times. On the other hand, the English version is often translated in prose since modern English speakers are unaccustomed to having epic adventures told through poetry. If the aforementioned story had been translated as poetry, it would come across as antiquated and queer.³⁹ And yet, Nida’s cites Souter, who stated that “[o]ur ideal in translation is to produce on the minds of our readers as nearly as possible the same effect as was produced by the original on its readers.”⁴⁰ He reinforces this viewpoint by citing Procházka, who stated that “the translation should make the same resultant impression on the reader as the original does on its reader.”⁴¹ Regarding

³⁹ Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, p. 157.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 164.

⁴¹ *Ibid*

The Illiad, one of the original effects of the epic was not only to inform the ancient Greeks of a historical battle but to do so through emotional intensity, which was achieved through verse form. Just how can this same effect be conveyed upon a modern English-speaking readership, especially when the final result seems odd rather than lively? In the end, the translator is forced to modify the form of the original in order for the target audience to be receptive to the target text. Therefore, Chesterman was justified in calling the equivalence supermeme the “bug bear” of translation theory since it rarely gives rise to an exact replica due to the form often being just as integral to a text as the content as a result of cultural conventions.

Untranslatability

Upon examining the basis of this supermeme, we might say that *untranslatability* constitutes a type of antithesis with respect to the notion of equivalence. In fact, *untranslatability* rests on the belief that equivalence is impossible, and since equivalence is impossible, the act of translating ideas is also impossible. In other words, ideas are untranslatable. Following the example of equivalence, however, this supermeme fails to take into account an important aspect of language. According to Ortega y Gasset, translation itself is a utopian task.⁴² While the translation process itself is worthwhile in order for cultures to exchange ideas and improve

⁴² J. Ortega y Gasset, *Obras Completas: Tomo V (1933-1941)*, 429-448.

themselves, it is only natural that cultures adapt the ideas of another culture to their needs. In other words, once introduced into the receiving culture, the ideas take on a modified form as the dimensions of the host culture alter and shape a particular concept or idea. Furthermore, according to Keenan, languages themselves are by nature imprecise.⁴³ This is not necessarily a disadvantage since the very imprecise character of languages provides humans with the flexibility required to innovate and spread an infinite number of ideas and concepts as well as adapt their languages so that they may incorporate foreign ideas and concepts. Keeping this in mind, the supermeme of untranslatability actually proves itself more useful than its name might suggest. While debunking the notion of equivalence, it also provides the translator with the insight to read between the lines of a particular document and accept the fact that every little word, clause or sentence in the source text will not necessarily have an exact equivalent in the target text since language is more than written material. Behind each text lies a distinct cultural vision of the world that is conveyed through syntax, verb tense, aspect and numerous other phenomena. This explains why translation is more than merely transposing words and segments from one language into another. Ultimately, the notion of untranslatability in the strictest sense of the term does not provide us

⁴³ E. Keenan, *Some Logical Problems in Translation*, p. 157-189.

with a useful strategy as the only possible course of action would be to throw one's hands in the air and make no attempt to translate. After all, if texts are untranslatable, pursuing translation as a task is futile. However, it is useful to the extent that it opens up another angle from which to view translation as surpassing a superficial transposition of written text from one printed medium to another.

Free-vs-Literal

The *free-vs-literal* supermeme emphasizes translation as a binary opposition in which the nature of the translation process correlates with the size of the linguistic unit to be translated.⁴⁴ Generally, translation tends to become freer as the linguistic unit increases. For example, as linguistic units increase in complexity from morpheme, word, phrase, clause to sentence, their degree of freeness also increases. Some theorists, such as Newmark, have claimed that "provided that equivalent-effect is secured, the literal word-for-word translation is not only the best, it is the only valid method of translation."⁴⁵ Others, such as Robinson, conclude that translators are entitled to exploit a wide range of relations between the source and target text, thus enabling to translate how they feel.⁴⁶ However, rather than translate how they feel, language specialists must often face constraints as a result of text type. To compound the issue,

⁴⁴ L. Barkhudarov, *The Problem of the Unit of Translation*, p. 39-46.

⁴⁵ P. Newmark, *Approaches to Translation*, p. 39.

⁴⁶ D. Robinson, *The Translator's Turn*, p. 153.

many texts are composed of a patchwork of various text types. In other words, texts are actually made up of smaller types of texts, known as micro-texts, and the translator must take each micro-text into account in order to adapt the overall textual strategy accordingly.⁴⁷ Therefore, text type is actually “a conceptual framework which enables us to classify texts in terms of communicative intentions serving an overall rhetorical purpose.”⁴⁸ Consequently, larger texts, as was the case with *100 et 1 mots*, contain text types which are divisions of the underlying rhetorical purpose of any particular publication.⁴⁹ On a concrete level, this means that the translated manual’s rhetorical purpose was instructional in scope but still contained elements of other texts types. Rather than deviate from its instructional scope, this underlying rhetorical purpose was interwoven with elements of expository and conceptual text types in order to inform young readers of the importance of international rights. Thus, we could also say that *100 et 1 mots*, by convincing its readers of the aforementioned importance, contains a rhetorical purpose that is instructional *with option* since the writers hope that, through early instruction, its readers will someday take up the cause of defending human rights in their daily actions. Consequently, the argumentative features of *100 et 1 mots* are much more subtle compared to other texts exhibiting such features more prominently

⁴⁷ B. Hatim & I. Mason, *Discourse and the Translator*, p. 139.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 140.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 142.

in their overall rhetorical purpose.⁵⁰ After all, children may respond better to reverse psychology through calm reasoning rather than a strong argumentative stance. In the end, Robinson is correct in stating that translators must exploit a wide range of relations, but these relations are not only between the source and target texts but also between the myriad of text types constituting the underlying rhetorical purpose. Once translators have observed and understood this patchwork, they are constrained to translating the intent and emotions of the author and not their own.

Ultimately, and in the words of Chesterman, "[t]he disadvantage of this supermeme is that it takes one particular type of translation – literal translation – and sets it up as one end of a single dimension. This rather prejudges the whole issue, and prevents us from looking at other dimensions."⁵¹ Simply put, the free-vs-literal supermeme fails to consider other phenomena that may impact the translation process itself, and such is the case of *100 et 1 mots*. With respect to the free aspect, certain citations from international treaties, despite their sizeable units, did not allow the translator to work "freely" in accordance with his feelings since these very units had already been officially translated into English. This applied to certain concepts which had already been assigned a *de facto* term through

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 154-156.

⁵¹ A. Chesterman, *Memes of Translation*, p. 13.

repeated usage. Such was the case of inherent rights and the Fact-Finding and Conciliation Commission of the ILO. Furthermore, certain terms, which are a reflection of smaller units and should in theory be translated in a more literal manner, required the translator to read between the lines and move beyond literal translation. To do so, he often had to distance himself from the signifier and reach a state whereby he attempted to grasp the nature of the underlying signified. For example, a term such as *auto-saisine* hardly lends itself to a literal translation. Instead, the translator, by dint of focusing on the signified, had to assume a freer approach in order to attain *assumption of jurisdiction*, which more accurately reflects the concept conveyed in the ensuing definition. As a result, Newmark's assumption that literal translation is the only valid approach where applicable should be used sparingly and preferably excluded all together since word-for-word translation is inefficient, even on the simplest level as seen above with *auto-saisine*. Furthermore, this proves that syntax is pivotal when translating a text because it provides the translator with a more detailed overview of the context at hand, which is crucial to understand in order to translate a text satisfactorily since translators can never be sure that they will be able to render similar syntactic constructions in the same manner. Thus, the *free-vs-literal* supermeme fails to take into account outside phenomena that are just as significant as the two reflected in its name.

Although the previous example has proved that literal translation should be avoided where it fails to render a coherent target language equivalent, the aim of this section is not to undermine the potential effectiveness of a literal approach. First of all, the notion of translating *literally* has come to be viewed as a dirty word by language specialists owing to its association with the failure to take into account the text as a whole. In fact, any translator who claims to translate literally is usually viewed as carelessly substituting lexical items throughout the text while showing no regard for semantic cohesion. This is not a recent debate either. In the 1966 publication, Vinay and Darbelnet stated:

...l'unité de traduction est le plus petit segment de l'énoncé dont la cohésion des signes et telle qu'ils ne doivent pas être traduits séparément.⁵²

Furthermore, the fact that translation theorists developed their ideas throughout the previous decades by emphasizing the importance and impact of the target culture when creating a target text version as well as the need to integrate elements of the aforementioned culture only continued to pave way for the demise of literal translation as a viable strategy. After all, how can translators take into account the target language's stylistic features when they are focused on tirelessly plugging one element in lieu of another?⁵³ On the other hand, the reader should not assume that the

⁵² J.P. Vinay & J. Darbelnet, *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais*, p. 37.

⁵³ M. Ballard, *Créativité et traduction*, p. 88.

controversy of literal translation is confined to the previous half-century. Actually, its polemical nature stretches as far back as the Protestant Reformation when Martin Luther was ridiculed for adding a term into one of his translations. To this, he responded:

Je sais parfaitement en ce qui concerne Romains III que, dans le texte latin et dans le texte grec, on ne trouve pas le mot *solum*, les papistes n'ont pas besoin de me l'apprendre...Mais l'usage de notre langue allemande implique que lorsqu'on parle de deux choses dont on affirme l'une en niant l'autre, on emploie le mot *solum* (seulement) à côté du mot « pas » ou « aucun ».⁵⁴

Therefore, we can see that literal translation has been ridiculed and criticized for hundreds of years due to the increasing momentum of taking into account the target language's stylistic notions.

However, this does not mean that literal translation fails to serve as a viable translation strategy. In fact, Ballard states that “[l]a traduction courante est un mélange de littéralisme et de restructurations. Le littéralisme n'est pas (contrairement à l'image qu'en donnent certains) forcément une mauvaise méthode tant qu'il ne choque pas. Quand il choque, c'est-à-dire lorsqu'il heurte le génie de la langue d'arrivée, il est perçu comme une faute, c'est un calque – à moins qu'il ne s'agisse d'une politique délibérée d'un traducteur soucieux de faire 'craquer' la langue d'arrivée, auquel cas il devient processus créatif.»⁵⁵ Nonetheless, the translator should never be duped into thinking that smaller lexical items will

⁵⁴ M. Luther, *Œuvres*, p. 190-204.

⁵⁵ M. Ballard, *Créativité et traduction*, p. 95.

necessarily lend themselves to a literal approach. For example, we cannot guarantee that the fragment “Behind Winston’s back” could be translated literally as “Derrière le dos de Winston.”⁵⁶ First of all, the expression at hand can be interpreted from a variety of semantic perspectives. Does it refer to another party talking about Winston behind his back? Or does it refer to someone creeping up on Winston *behind his back*? Therefore, literal translation should not be dismissed all together, but translators should be wary of neglecting the context in which a small unit of language appears since the former is often the decisive factor in selecting the most appropriate translation.

All-Writing-is-Translation

This brings us to our final supermeme, *all-writing-is-translation*, which is based on the notion that translation and writing have much in common. In other words, writing a text is like translating between two languages: there is no such thing as an original text since writers and translators utilize a semiotic code implemented by past generations.⁵⁷ With this in mind, translating between two languages as well as writing have much in common since both are forms of rewriting. According to Schleiermacher, the notion of rewriting is also reflected in everyday speech since the speaker must often rephrase another person's words in his own mind in order to

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 93.

⁵⁷ A. Chesterman, *Memes of Translation*, p. 13.

understand successfully.⁵⁸ Evidence of this is whenever a speaker rewords the other party's message aloud in order to verify that comprehension was successful.

Therefore, *all-writing-is-translation* assumes the view that a translation is shaped much like a dialogue when communicating. The translator reads the text and attempts to understand it by rephrasing it in his own words. Once comprehension has been obtained in accordance with the appropriateness of the context, the translation is born and gradually comes to life.⁵⁹ In the end, this supermeme proves useful since it recognizes the fact that translators do not mindlessly and mechanically convert one language into another but that they are actively engaged in deciphering a text's meaning much like two human-beings interact when engaging in a dialogue. However, translators should take into account that intralingual and interlingual communication differ to a certain extent. Whereas a dialogue in intralingual communication involves rephrasing linguistic units within the same language through synonyms, whose nuances alter the precise meaning of the original message, interlingual communication, or translation, involves rephrasing the meaning of the source text in the target language and fine-tuning the results so as to capture the original message as faithfully as possible. In other words, in intralingual communication,

⁵⁸ F. Schleiermacher, *Ueber die verschiedenen Methoden des Uebersetzens*, p. 38-70.

⁵⁹ A. Chesterman, *Memes of Translation*, p. 14.

clarification through rephrasing another speaker's statement with synonyms reduces the importance of precision since the main goal is to achieve comprehension of one's ideas and arguments. On the other hand, interlingual communication takes this process a step further. First of all, the translator must understand the original idea and argument, rephrase the idea or argument with synonyms in the target language, perhaps after occasionally doing so in the source language, and eliminate all superfluous elements in order to convey the source text's ideas as precisely as possible. On a practical level, this means that translators should avoid basing their approaches on the *all-writing-is-translation* supermeme excessively since it could be misconstrued as justifying unrestricted recourse to translating a text too freely.

Is there an ideal translation supermeme?

Having explored the five main translation supermemes, the reader is probably wondering if, considering each one's drawbacks and shortcomings, there is such a thing as an ideal supermeme. First of all, the idea that an ideal supermeme exists is a mere illusion. Although we could argue that the advantages of some outweigh those of others, we should remind ourselves that flexibility is the key. In other words, as language specialists, we should pick and choose. While *source-target* or *untranslatability* may seem ill-adapted to certain situations in *100 et 1*

mots, the concepts at hand are nonetheless useful to a certain extent. Indeed, although it seems ludicrous and counterproductive to go so far as to say that translation is impossible, witness *untranslatability*, specialists should remember that certain cultures are so distinct from others with respect to their perception of reality that in many cases, the most precise translation that can ever be obtained is at best an explanation of the phenomenon in the target language. This is even evident in languages whose cultural pasts have often been intertwined with similar institutions, such as French and English.

Below is a modern concrete example from *100 et 1 mots*:

Jurisdiction

Au premier sens, le mot « jurisdiction » désigne la mission de dire le droit et de juger. Cette mission consiste dans le droit et le devoir de rendre la justice en appliquant le droit. Le mot a fini par désigner l'organe qualifié pour exercer ce pouvoir. Les juridictions internationales en matière de droits de l'homme ne sont pas nombreuses. Elles se résument pour l'instant à la Cour africaine des droits de l'homme et des peuples, la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme et à la Cour interaméricaine des droits de l'homme auxquelles il faut ajouter les juridictions pénales internationales : tribunaux pénaux internationaux et Cour pénale internationale.

Notice the manner in which the above entry was translated into English:

Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction has two meanings. The first one refers to the mission of establishing the law and handing down a ruling. This mission consists of the right and the duty to render justice by enforcing the law. In French, this term has come to designate an organ qualified to exercise this power. In this context, English-speaking countries prefer the word "court." International human rights courts are not all that common. They are limited to the European Court of Human Rights, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights as well as international criminal tribunals and the International Criminal Court.

While the aforementioned entry could have been translated in numerous ways, the translator opted to build a link between the original and the English version without severing the link at the end of the translation process in order to mark the continuity between the French and English version. However, he decided to insert an additional sentence in order to show how French and English differ with respect to the usage of the term *jurisdiction*, or jurisdiction. Another possibility would have been to eliminate the concept of *jurisdiction* having two meanings and simply to include only the meaning shared by the French and English languages. In this case, he would have been forced to eliminate a significant part of the entry all together since the French text went on to discuss the presence of international courts as a part of international jurisdiction. In turn, international jurisdiction is a concept present in the English language. Whichever approach is eventually taken, the translator is faced with a concept that is alien to the target audience. In other words, the notion that *jurisdiction* can refer to a legal body itself is not a part of the cultural repertoire of an English-speaking audience and is thus untranslatable. In the end, the translator is advised to remain receptive to all translation supermemes, including untranslatibility, when carrying out his tasks in order to adapt his strategy accordingly, no matter how renegade or out-of-touch they might seem. In other words, all translation supermemes have the potential to provide us with insight in order to choose the proper course

of action, be it a word-for-word translation or an explanation of a concept that simply has no meaning for the target culture.

Popper's Contributions to Meme Theory

In order to understand the role of the editing phase within the translation process, it is worth examining Popper's concept of plastic control. However, before proceeding with such an analysis, it is pivotal to understand Popper's views with respect to the multi-dimensional composition of ideas and concepts. Only then can we fully appreciate the intervention of the editing process as a form of plastic control as translations take shape and are brought to life.

According to Karl Popper, ideas and objects comprise a three-dimensional space made up of worlds.⁶⁰ World 1 contains physical objects. World 2 is subjective by nature and includes states of consciousness as well as mental states. World 3 is "the world of objective contents of thought, especially of scientific and poetic thoughts and of works of art."⁶¹ In other words, World 3 contains ideas as they exist in the public domain, such as books, libraries and databases. Each world reflects a phenomenon's multidimensional and multilayered nature. Let us take the example of a garden. World 2 is a garden as conceived by an individual. The physical implementation of this conception would be World 1. Eventually, Worlds 1 and 2, as perceived by

⁶⁰ K. Popper, *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach*, p. 106f.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

different individuals and cultures, would interact in order to give rise to World 3, or the scores of features that characterize a garden as a theoretical concept. Although the interactions between these various worlds appear as a linear progression in ascending order since World 3 is born as a result of the existence of Worlds 1 and 2, the process is actually anything but linear. First of all, theories from World 3 affect our own views and perceptions of particular phenomena as the former are constantly modified and altered.⁶² In other words, as human beings create and innovate ideas, they do not start from scratch at World 1 since their ability to implement a phenomenon physically is shaped first and foremost by their individual conception, or World 2, which was likely inspired from knowledge and ideas gathered from the public domain, or World 3. Thus, according to Popper, memes are an interdependent network in which each part contributes to the integral manifestation of a concept as a whole. This network is in a state of constant flux, and outside this network, the dimension, or world, of a particular concept is unable to hold its own ground.

In order to understand how Popper's theory applies to the translation process, particularly *100 et 1 mots*, we must examine the particular role of plastic control within the aforementioned network. According to

⁶² A. Chesterman, *Memes of Translation*, p. 15.

Chesterman, "the control of ourselves and of our actions by our theories is a plastic control. We are not forced to submit ourselves to the control of our theories, for we can discuss them critically, and we can reject them freely if we think they fall short of our regulative standards. So the control is far from one-sided. Not only do our theories control us, but we can control our theories (and even our standards): there is a kind of feed-back here."⁶³

This means that freely discussing, modifying and even debunking the content of World 3 influences how we conceive new ideas as individuals in World 2 and how we incarnate them physically in World 1. With respect to translation, this plastic control is partially embodied in the editing process. For example, the translator originally suggested, based on his own understanding of the term *réclamation*, "submittal." Once the first draft was submitted to the editor, she observed the content of the entry more closely and noticed that it mentioned the specificity of the term *réclamation* with respect to ILO terminology. Therefore, after using the term "submittal", which was the original World 1 manifestation of the manner in which a concept was devised by an individual in World 2, the critical discussion and analysis of the term "submittal" through the resources available in World 3

⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 240-241.

eventually led the translator and editor to carry out further research and replace the original World 1 manifestation with *representation*.

Translation Strategies

The following pages deal with various norms and strategies that may be used by translators when attempting assignments on a variety of levels. These strategies may be classified as syntactic, semantic or pragmatic in scope.⁶⁴ However, before defining the strategies within each of the aforementioned categories through examples from *100 et 1 mots*, it is necessary to understand in further detail the nature of translation strategies as a process according to a multi-hierarchical model devised by Steiner as well as research conducted by Lörscher, Kirilay and Jääskeläinen. Only then can we have a better understanding of the complex thought-process inside the translator's mind – a thought-process that at times seemingly occurs at chaotic lightening speeds.

Translation Strategies as a Process

While carrying out translation assignments, translators may turn to strategies in order to produce the best translation possible. Indeed, relying on strategies often arises for a variety of reasons, such as the need to conform to political, social and cultural pressures; the significance threshold and compensation.⁶⁵ The former refers to the actual necessity for including specific content in the target text, while the latter refers to

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 93.

⁶⁵ A. Chesterman, *Memes of Translation*, p. 113-116.

the translator's decision to insert stylistic devices that may not be present in the source text but which may have been justifiably removed elsewhere from the target text. The ultimate goal of compensation is to avoid having the target language appear too simplistic. Although Chesterman believes that translators engage in these strategies while seeking to conform to norms⁶⁶, I am of the opinion that translators tend to take a middle-of-the-road approach. In other words, when they are aware of certain strategies that have proved to be successful almost universally, translators indeed carry out their strategies as a result of well-established norms. When translators find themselves forced to troubleshoot more problematic passages where no well-established norm proves successful, they tend to rely on whatever resources are at hand in order to find a satisfactory solution. If a particular strategy has proved itself useful on a regular basis, translators may adopt it permanently. After all, in the words of Steiner, translation, or any activity for that matter, is "a type of human behavior which is aroused by a cultural and/or physiological need, expressed as a state of the individual in relation to his/her environment."⁶⁷ Consequently, translators may develop strategies in order to fulfill a cultural need, which is the need to bridge the cognitive gap between two languages.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p. 88.

⁶⁷ E. Steiner, *Describing Language as Activity: An Application to Child Language*, p. 147.

The Direction of the Translation Process

Despite the fact that the translation process is indeed hierarchical in scope, it does not necessarily move in an orderly fashion from one level to the next. For example, we can safely assume that the translator does not carry out all strategical planning at one initial stage. Whenever he/she is confronted with a problematic passage, as was often the case in *100 et 1 mots*, the translator will continuously reassess and modify strategies that had previously been executed as a result of feedback from the editor or other colleagues. In other words, the translation process is not a linear progression from start to finish but rather a spiral one whereby the translator tends to work somewhat chaotically. This spiral movement is the result of shifting between strategic and non-strategic behavior, which were defined by Lörcher in the following manner:

...translation strategies [are] defined as potentially conscious procedures which the subjects employ when faced with translation problems. Thus, *strategic translating* is translating in which problem-solving is involved, whereas *non-strategic translating* is characterized by a problem-free, automatic replacement of source-language text segments by target-language text segments.⁶⁸

According to Lörcher's psycholinguistic study, translators tend to work strategically when confronted with problematic passages and non-strategically when faced with passages resembling previous ones or covering material with which they are familiar and can thus translate with relative ease.

⁶⁸ W. Lörcher, *Translation Performance, Translation Process and Translation Strategies: A Psycholinguistic Investigation*, p. 88.

While a strategic progression would explain the spiral nature of the translation process, its non-strategic nature proves that the aforementioned process does contain a linear aspect which cannot be neglected. Ultimately, translating any text consists of a chaotic as well as a harmonious flow as reflected by strategic and non-strategic phases of the translation process. In other words, translators may commence an assignment in a linear manner as they render the initial pages of the target text equivalent, or they may find themselves troubleshooting passages from the very beginning. Further evidence of this haphazard feature of the translation process is corroborated through a study in which, in addition to verbal protocols, observing eye-movements proves that translators continuously switch between strategic and non-strategic behavior.⁶⁹

The Case of Auto-Saisine

Now we will take a look at a particularly problematic example from *100 et 1 mots* as further proof of the translation process's spiral nature, which results from resorting to strategic behavior. *Auto-saisine* was selected due to the complicated nature of the entry. In fact, the translator hesitated endlessly throughout the assignment, even after consulting with the editor and receiving her feedback. At first sight, the term *auto-saisine* may come across as one of those fortunate instances in which the translator's task of

⁶⁹ J. Tommola, *Translation as a Language Process: An Empirical Approach*, p. 118-140.

providing a target-language equivalent will be rather straightforward. After all, the term *saisir* represents a concept with which a translator working between French and English becomes familiar in a timely manner – usually as *saisir la cour*. The translator often has no problems in rendering an idiomatic equivalent into English, such as *to submit a case before the court*, *to refer a case to the court* or *to bring a case before the court*.

In the case of *100 et 1 mots*, the task at hand was anything but straightforward. First of all, the term consisted of a noun and not a verb. Unfortunately, the noun *saisine* does not easily lend itself to being translated as a noun in English without going beyond a string of words that would be too dense to sound as if they had been originally written by a native English-speaker, which is one of the ultimate aims of any translator. Therefore, the translator found himself confronted with a single-word that was nonetheless a problematic entry that would force him to turn to strategic behaviour in order to come to a satisfactory solution.

With respect to *saisine*, The Council of Europe French-English Legal Dictionary, one of the most reliable sources for an English-speaker translating from French, suggests the following:

...act or fact of bringing a case before a court; case referred (to a court)⁷⁰

Since the aforementioned legal dictionary provides a definition rather than a single lexical item, as it does with other legal terms, the translator has little choice but to rely on his own judgment and creativity in order to find an equivalent that captures the meaning of the concept yet faithfully embodies the essence of the English language. Furthermore, the translator's job is compounded by the fact that *saisine* is preceded by the prefix *auto-*. As of now, the translator must dissect the term *auto-saisine* and determine the link between the two halves. Upon doing this, he must then find an English word which captures this relationship. But first and foremost, the language specialist must understand the concept depicted in the source text:

... On parle d'auto-saisine lorsque un organe chargé de veiller à l'application et au respect d'un ou de plusieurs traités peut, de lui-même, examiner une situation où des droits prévus par le ou les traités en question seraient violés. Hormis les juridictions pénales internationales qui obéissent à des règles qui leur sont propres, l'auto-saisine n'est pas prévue dans le cas des différentes juridictions en matière de droits de l'homme. Par contre, dans des conditions relativement contraignantes, cette faculté est reconnue à un certain nombre de comités : Comité contre la torture ; Comité des disparitions forcées ; Comité des droits des personnes handicapées ; Comité des droits économiques, sociaux et culturels ; et, Comité pour l'élimination de la discrimination à l'égard des femmes.

Quand elle est prévue, l'auto-saisine ne peut être mise en œuvre que dans des cas de violations graves et/ou systématiques des droits de l'homme prévus dans les traités. De plus, elle n'est pas automatique; les États conservent en effet la possibilité d'y échapper. Dans certains cas, en vertu du traité lui-même, ils peuvent dénier cette faculté au comité considéré: Comité contre la torture, Comité des droits des personnes handicapées et Comité pour l'élimination de la discrimination à l'égard des femmes. Dans le cas du Comité des droits économiques, sociaux et culturels, ils peuvent s'abstenir de faire la déclaration

⁷⁰ F. Bridge, *The Council of Europe French-English Legal Dictionary*, p. 279.

reconnaissant la compétence du Comité à cet effet. Seul le Comité des disparitions forcées peut se saisir de lui-même du seul fait de la ratification de la Convention pour la protection de toutes les personnes contre les disparitions forcées.

En pareilles circonstances, les traités ont généralement prévu, mais avec l'accord de l'Etat, une enquête pouvant comporter une visite. La procédure est en règle générale confidentielle et peut donner lieu à des observations et recommandations et/ou la publication d'un compte-rendu dans le rapport annuel ...⁷¹

Unfortunately, only the first sentence of the entry is devoted to providing some sort of notion of *auto-saisine*. Furthermore, this one sentence does little in the way of providing a basic definition. The ensuing text simply lays out the circumstances in which an *auto-saisine* might take place. Therefore, we must turn to a secondary source in order to carry out the necessary background reading in order to understand the concept at hand. The translator should also be aware that the term *saisine* alone carries more than one meaning in French. It may also mean:

Habilitation dont la loi revêt l'héritier légitime ou naturel appelé à la succession, en sa qualité de continuateur de la personne du défunt, d'exercer les droits et actions de celui-ci sans avoir à accomplir aucune formalité réglementaire préalable, la même aptitude étant, d'une part, reconnue au légataire quand il n'existe pas d'héritier réservataire, mais, d'autre part, refusée aux successeurs irréguliers (conjoint survivant, Etat), qui sont tenus d'obtenir de justice l'envoi en possession des biens.⁷²

Thus, the translator must be meticulous in selecting his reference documents for background reading and ensure that the scope of such a document is in line with the subject matter addressed in the text. In this

⁷¹ R. Babadji, *100 et 1 mots pour l'éducation aux droits de l'homme*, p. 13-14.

⁷² A. Perraud-Charmantier, *Petit dictionnaire de droit*, p. 208.

case, the manual *100 et 1 mots* revolves around the area of international human rights law, thus I turned to the Dictionnaire de droit international public, which states that a *saisine* consists of the following:

Fait de porter devant un organe une question sur laquelle celui-ci est appelé à se prononcer⁷³

The dictionary then proceeds with the entry by providing an example of a legal text in which the term *saisine* appears:

(...) la presentation d'un renvoi prejudiciel en application de validité d'un tel acte ou la saisine de la Cour par les Etats ou les particuliers en vue de l'annulation de cet acte demeurent de simples éventualités sur la réalisation desquelles le Parlement ne peut pas compter (CJCE, *Parlement c. Conseil*, aff. C-70/88, arrêt du 22 mai 1990, *Rec. P. I-2041*, § 18).⁷⁴

Thus, the translator could translate the term *saisine* as *referral* or *submission of a case*. However, the prefix *auto-* now comes into play. According to the Dictionnaire méthodique du français actuel, *auto-* is an "élément qui signifie 'soi-même'".⁷⁵ We can now deduce that *auto-saisine* refers to the ability of a legal body to refer a matter upon which it must issue a ruling to *itself*. In other words, the body in question may assume jurisdiction independently on a particular legal matter. If we look at the following French extract from the document *Case No. RW/06*, a resolution issued during the 179th session of the Inter-Parliamentary Union on October 18, 2006, as well as its official English translation, we notice that

⁷³ G. Guillaume & J. Salmon, *Dictionnaire de droit international public*, p. 1017.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ J. Rey-Debove, *Dictionnaire méthodique du français actuel*, p. 96.

one way to convey ideas more naturally in English is through the process of *nominalization*:

...en octobre 2005, le Parlement a porté l'affaire Hitimana devant la Commission nationale des droits de la personne, qui **avait déjà décidé par voie d'autosaisine** d'examiner le cas...

...in October 2005 the Parliament referred the case of Mr. Hitimana to the National Commission for Human Rights, which **had already assumed jurisdiction** in this case...

Nominalization refers to the process by which a noun used in a French construction will often, albeit not always, be translated as a verb into English.⁷⁶ The aforementioned extracts are perfect examples of this phenomenon. This is an effective tool which could be applied in the entry itself but what choice does the translator have when he must solve the puzzle by finding a single noun under which the notion of *auto-saisine* is addressed in the dictionary? Consequently, this is one instance where verbalization of the French term amounts to nothing since the term under which the definition appears must contain a noun and as few of them as possible. Finally, the ultimate solution, in order to convey the meaning of *auto-saisine* and devise a term that sounds natural to the English-speaking ear is a twofold process. First, the translator must verbalize between the source and target language, in this case French and English. Second, he must *nominalize* within the target language. In this case, the term *to assume jurisdiction* becomes *assumption of jurisdiction*. Therefore, the

⁷⁶ J. Dancette, *Le protocole de verbalisation: un outil d'autoformation en traduction*, p. 63-82.

translator had initially attempted to find a literal equivalent through previously translated documents containing the term *auto-saisine*. Once he found that the translator of one document, *Case No. RW/06*, had deverbilized the term *auto-saisine*, he then used the English equivalent as a springboard in order to re-nominalize the target language equivalent. In other words, he took a frequently employed strategy, nominalization, which is usually applied between two languages, and decided to try applying it within a single language. As a result, it is safe to conclude that translators not only apply their strategies between two language pairs, but they also apply them within the same language.

As previously witnessed, when faced with problematic entries, the translator is forced to resort to strategic as well as non-strategic behavior in order to come to a final solution. This behavior is anything but linear and orderly. In fact, the translator usually confronts many twists and turns before reaching a satisfactory solution which is often far from ideal due to time constraints. Ultimately, despite the image of translation as a monotonous and repetitive undertaking, the aforementioned analysis of the thought-process when translating a specific entry from *100 et 1 mots* proves the opposite – that translation, as it occurs in the actual mind of the translator, is frequently an onerous and chaotic process. In the following

section, we will take a look at some of the most common meme-derived translation strategies used to confront the cumbersome task of translation.

Examples of Meme-Derived Translation Strategies

Translation strategies comprise a minute part of the entire meme pool. As a result, these strategies propagate like any other meme. In the past, individual translators would devise a particular strategy, and as this strategy was increasingly used by other translators, which would then be passed along as other translators took note and used this strategy repeatedly until it eventually became a part of the overall meme pool of translation strategies, which continues to expand today. In accordance with Chesterman's classification⁷⁷, which categorizes translation strategies along syntactic, semantic and pragmatic features, the following pages will examine some of the meme-derived translation strategies and norms and provide concrete examples from *100 et 1 mots*. Before proceeding, the reader should take note that some strategies were more prominent than others when translating *100 et 1 mots*. As a result, although Chesterman's classification system will be presented in its entirety, only those strategies that were most apparent will be analyzed and explained in detail.

Syntactic Strategies

According to Chesterman, strategies involving syntactic modifications primarily deal with form. These strategies may be subdivided into *literal*,

⁷⁷ A. Chesterman, *Memes of Translation*, p. 93.

*loan/calque, transposition, unit shift, phrase structure change, clause structure change, sentence structure change, cohesion change, level shift and scheme change.*⁷⁸ In this section, we will deal with *literal translation, loan/calque, clause structure change, cohesion change, and level shift.*

Literal translation consists of rendering a target language equivalent that is "maximally close to the SL form, but nevertheless grammatical."⁷⁹ As was the case with *100 et 1 mots*, this strategy, despite appearing to be the most linear in scope, is rarely used since languages always differ to a certain extent with respect to what they deem proper style and syntax. Hence, the rare occasions in which the translator relied upon *literal translation* involved sentences whose structure happened to follow source language closely, as was the case with the following excerpt from the foreward:

La première édition était précédée d'une préface cosignée par la Secrétaire générale de l'EIP et Mme Cecilia Braslavsky.

The first edition began with a preface signed by the Secretary-General of the EIP and Mrs. Cecilia Braslavsky.

Whereas *literal translation* is often the result of a coincidental overlap between the two languages, *loan/calque* words refer to a deliberate exchange between two languages whereby one language bases its lexical items used to convey certain phenomena on the lexical structures of

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p. 94.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*.

another language. Although Chesterman includes *loan/calque* words as a single category, it is necessary to make a distinction between the two. *Loan words* refer to the lexical units in the target language being based on the same structure as their equivalents in the source language. For example, the structure of the German term *Übermensch* is based on the English word *Superman*.⁸⁰ On the other hand, *calque words* are words that maintain their exact form in both the source and target language, such as *piña colada* or *croissant*. While *calque words* were not an issue in *100 et 1 mots*, *loan words* did appear on a regular basis. Some frequent examples include *droits de l'homme* (human rights), *le droit à l'éducation* (the right to education) as well as the title itself, *100 et 1 mots pour l'éducation aux droits de l'homme* (100 and 1 Terms for Human Rights Education).

On a more complex level, certain strategies reflect a change in more developed units within a text. For example, *clause structure changes* involve a change as a result of the relationship among the individual components of a particular sentence with respect to correct usage as laid out by the target language specialists. For example, in instances where a French sentence may use a particular structure, its English equivalent may require a reworking of the structure due to the range permitted by the English language as reflected by the individual components within a certain

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

context. Let us take the following example from the introduction of *100 et 1 mots*:

Il s'est constitué empiriquement, au gré des rapports de forces et des conjonctures politiques sur une période de plus d'un demi-siècle.

It was built empirically at the whim of balances of power and political circumstances over a period of half a century.

Indeed, this example typifies a *clause structure change* since the author decided to utilize a French structure that is inexistent in English – the reflexive pronoun as an alternative to the passive voice. Faced with a problematic structure that is entirely absent from the repertoire of English grammatical constructions, the translator was obliged to translate the remainder of the sentence and observe the interplay between these elements and the core component introducing the subject at hand, **Il s'est constitué**. In the end, the translator opted to employ the passive voice in the target text.

Another common recurring observation is that languages often use transitions, or *les connecteurs*, in different ways. A few examples would be the use of *éventuellement* and *actuellement*, which would be respectively translated as *possibly* and *currently* in English. When such a change is necessary, we are confronted with a strategy known as *cohesion change*. A *cohesion change* may also involve "intra-textual reference, ellipsis,

substitution, pronominalization and repetition...of various kinds."⁸¹ With respect to this phenomenon in *100 et 1 mots*, we will take another example from the introduction and that actually contains a series of *cohesion changes*:

Il convient néanmoins de mentionner que la liste des entrées figurant dans la rubrique «*Voir*» n'est pas exhaustive. Elle ne saurait d'ailleurs l'être ; autrement, sous chaque entrée figurerait la totalité des mots qui composent le lexique. Il revient donc au lecteur et à l'utilisateur de s'affranchir de cette rubrique et de créer lui-même ses propres liens entre les mots.

However, the list of entries under the "See also" section is not exhaustive. If this were the case, each entry would contain the total number of items which make up the glossary. Thus, it is up to the reader and the user to go beyond this section and create their own relationships between the terms.

First of all, the structure *Il convient néanmoins de* immediately caught the translator's eye. In order to render the English sentence more *coherent*, the translator had to first decipher the meaning behind the printed word *néanmoins* and, with help from the editor, decided to avoid *nonetheless* and use *however* instead. Furthermore, he added *also* to *see* with respect to the cross-reference section in order to render the sentence more idiomatic. Finally, instead of leaving *donc* in its original position, the translator transferred it to the beginning of the sentence so that the flow of ideas in the target language would be as smooth as possible. Ultimately, *cohesion change* appears to require a high degree of intuition, which further

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 98.

validates the norm of seeking a native-speaker of a particular target language when commissioning a translation assignment.

Interestingly enough, some changes are the result of aspects that lie outside the scope of traditional writing. Some of these aspects may give rise to what is known as a *level shift*. According to Chesterman, a level shift occurs when "the mode of expression of a particular item is shifted from one level to another."⁸² In layman's terms, this means that where the source language exhibits a specific stylistic effect, the target language does not always follow suit. This is often the result of languages that unveil their richness through different features. Such is the case with analytic and agglutinative languages.⁸³ In the case of an analytic language, such as English, the role of word order to convey meaning is prominent. With respect to agglutinative languages, such as Finnish, morphology rather than word order plays a pivotal role in conveying a particular message. Although French and English share many similarities, the two languages also differ on many levels. Although both languages are rather strict with respect to word order, writers of French are allotted slightly more freedom when placing the subject within a sentence. Thus, while writing in French, one could place the subject further away from its verb in order to emphasize the subject's importance with respect to its role as the subject

⁸² *Ibid*, p. 99.

⁸³ *Ibid*.

of a subordinate clause. The following is an example from the entry for *Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*:

A l'inverse, **ne peuvent** devenir parties au Protocole que les Etats qui ont ratifié la Convention.

Conversely, **only those** States having ratified the Convention may become party to the Protocol.

The bold-print segments show where French and English both place emphasis on the States that have ratified the Convention at hand. Upon using the construction **only those**, the text alerts the English-speaking reader to a point that the writer wishes to emphasize. However, the writer had originally done so in the French text by manipulating the fact that French has a variety of options when expressing the idea of *being restricted to one*. In this case, the author opted for *ne ... que*, which allows emphasis to be placed on the term immediately following the second half of the construction *que*. Therefore, where the source text conveys emphasis through exploiting the myriad of possibilities with which to express the idea of *being restricted to one*, the translator decided to use the demonstrative pronoun *those* after *only* since the latter alone fails to bring out the emphasis present in the source text.

Semantic Strategies

Semantic strategies refer to situations in which the translator manipulates the meaning of lexical components of a sentence in order to render an appropriate target language version. Many of these strategies derive from

Vinay and Darbelnet's notion of modulation.⁸⁴ Chesterman divides semantic strategies into the following categories: *synonymy*, *antonymy*, *hyponymy*, *converses*, *abstraction change*, *distribution change*, *emphasis change*, *paraphrase* and *trope change*.⁸⁵ In this section, we will limit our discussion to *synonymy*, *antonymy*, *distribution change* and *paraphrase*.

Synonymy is a situation in which the translator selects a synonym, or near-equivalent, rather than a more obvious alternative for a variety of reasons, some of which include avoiding repetition, conveying the connotative aspects of a source text term more accurately and bringing out the richness of the target language.⁸⁶ Nonetheless, it is imperative to emphasize that other motives might be at stake, such as the need to avoid ambiguity, witness the case with *100 et 1 mots*. Once again, I shall turn to *réclamation* as an example but in relation to other terms with similar meanings, including *communication*, *pétition*, *plainte*, *recours*, and *requête*. First of all, let us look at the basic definition of *réclamation* as defined by *100 et 1 mots*:

De manière générale, réclamation a le même sens que communication, pétition, plainte, recours ou requête. Plus particulièrement, c'est ce terme qui est utilisé par la Constitution de l'OIT pour qualifier l'acte par lequel une organisation de travailleurs ou une organisation patronale saisit l'organisation contre tout Etat qui n'aurait pas exécuté d'une manière satisfaisante une convention à laquelle il est partie.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 101.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 102.

As underscored in the first sentence of the entry, *réclamation* essentially carries the same meaning as the aforementioned terms. Therefore, the translator not only opted to avoid repetition but was compelled to do so by carrying out the necessary background research in order to use the precise term selected by each organization. In other words, using the same term twice (i.e. petition for *pétition* as well as *réclamation*) was out of the question.

Conversely, *antonymy* occurs when "[t]he translator selects an antonym and combines this with a negation element."⁸⁷ This goal is usually, but not limited, to render the target language version more idiomatic. For example, in the German sentence *Alle Preise inklusive MWSt., jedoch exklusive Nachnahmegebühr*, which was taken from an Austrian Airlines flight magazine, one translator opted for *All prices include V.A.T. (value added tax) but do not include the C.O.D. (cash on delivery) fee and mail charges*. The same occurred under the entry for *Déclaration* with the sentence "[e]n elle-même, la Déclaration n'a à l'origine aucune valeur obligatoire." Rather than follow the original French structure, I chose to use an antonym of *obligatoire*, which gave rise to "[h]owever, a Declaration within itself is by nature non-binding." Furthermore, this example proves that Chesterman's

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 102.

definition may need to be expanded: Not only can an affirmative sentence be translated as a negative by dint of turning to an antonym, the opposite is also true.

In this paragraph, the strategies designated by Chesterman as *distribution* and *paraphrase* will be addressed simultaneously since both approaches are closely related. *Distribution* refers to a shift in the semantic elements through either more terms (expansion) or fewer terms (compression). *Paraphrase* occurs when the translator renders a target version of the text by taking a freer approach. This usually results in either undertranslating or overtranslating.⁸⁸ Although Chesterman addresses the strategies at hand separately, I have concluded that there exists a high degree of similarity between the two. In fact, one might say that *distribution* and *paraphrase* are actually a single twofold strategy. For example, confronted with the need to overtranslate or undertranslate due to expressions for which no equivalent can be found in the target language, translators often decide to paraphrase. This frequently leads to either compressing or expanding the semantic components of a sentence, which is reflective of *distribution*. Although French and English are linguistic cousins with respect to idiomatic expressions, such as *Comme on fait son lit, on se couche* and *Lancer d'une pierre deux coups*, there are others, often less picturesque ones, that pose

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 104.

a problem for translators and language students alike. In *100 et 1 mots*, this was true for some of the terms alone, such as *auto-saisine*, which was eventually translated by means of overtranslating through expansion in order to come to a somewhat more complex term, in this case *assumption of jurisdiction*. In other instances, the translator opted for undertranslating by means of compression. The following passage from *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights* typifies this:

On peut considérer que la Charte africaine est devenue l'élément central d'un système régional de protection des droits de l'homme qui comprend d'autres traités relatifs à des catégories particulières de personnes humaines (réfugiés, enfants, femmes) **d'une part** et, **d'autre part**, à la mise en place d'une juridiction africaine des droits de l'homme.

The African Charter can be viewed as a central element of a regional system for the protection of human rights, which includes other treaties pertaining to specific categories of human persons, such as refugees, children and women, and the implementation of an African human rights court.

As seen by the difference in size between the source and target texts, as well as the bold font which is absent from the target text, the translator considerably reduced the size of the English version by omitting the expressions *d'une part* and *d'autre part*. From a logical point of view, *on the one hand* and *on the other hand* are usually reserved for states of contrast. Since the Charter seeks to protect groups of persons under the aegis of a set of treaties and a human rights court, the two apparatuses actually go hand in hand and constitute individual elements of the broader goal of protecting human rights. Therefore, the translator simply chose to view the idea of implementing a court as an additional measure to

implementing treaties and compressed the target version from *on the one hand x, on the other hand y* into *x and y*.

Pragmatic Strategies

The final set of strategies, known as pragmatic, are of particular interest to translators and language enthusiasts alike as they tend to denote strong cultural aspects of the source language and are less technical and grammatical in scope than syntactic and semantic strategies. According to Chesterman's classification system, pragmatic strategies encompass *cultural filtering, explicitness change, information change, interpersonal change, illocutionary change, coherence change, partial translation, visibility change* and *transediting*.⁸⁹ As with the previous sections on strategies, our discussion will be limited to a selected view that were prevalent in *100 et 1 mots*. These strategies are *cultural filtering, explicitness change, information change* and *interpersonal change*. Following the example of the previous sections, some of these strategies may be explained at the same time due to their similar features.

Cultural filtering refers to any strategy that seeks to naturalize, domesticate or adapt the source text so that its target equivalent will conform to the cultural expectations of the target audience. For example, if a translator were working on a German tourist brochure for an American

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p. 107-108.

audience and that included measurements, such as temperature, he might consider converting the metric system into imperial figures. On the other hand, if he were translating a research paper by an eminent Russian scientist for an audience of American counterparts, he would do well to leave any metric figures as they stand since the metric system is universally understood in the world of science. Another example is translating the German term *Familiennamen* as *Surname* or *Last Name* rather than the less common *Family Name*.⁹⁰ In this case, the former two are considered more natural and idiomatic for English speakers, whereas the latter one is viewed as a loan word. As a common rule of thumb, translators should strive to use terms that reflect the essence of the target text as faithfully as possible. Therefore, although *family name* does not impede comprehension for the reader of the source text, translators owe it to themselves as well as the target language to filter, or adapt, culturally the content of the source text to be conveyed within the target text. Moreover, translators are often obliged to do so.

In *100 et mots*, *cultural filtering* was reflected through the term *Comité des droits des personnes handicapées*. Much like the aforementioned German example, the first solution that would leap out at the translator would be *Committee on the Rights of Handicapped Persons*. However, in order to

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 108.

meet the target audience's expectations of a neutral tone through political correctness, the translator decided to neutralize the name with *Committee on the Rights of Disabled Persons* since the term *Handicapped* carries negative connotations in English. Furthermore, the translator had little choice in selecting a name for the committee at will since its official title has already been established by the UN translation service.

Explicitness change and *information change* are two inter-related strategies since *explicitness change* refers to either augmenting or reducing the amount of information available within the target text based on information that is either implied or stated in the source text. For example, one of the advertisements written on the package of a Chanel perfume sample was *Le Fleuri inattendu*. In English, it was translated as *The Unexpected Floral Fragrance*. This is a classic case of explicitness whereby the target language version contains a notion, in this case fragrance, which is implicit in the source language. This strategy was also apparent when translating *100 et 1 mots*. For example, under the entry for *Convention*, the translator turned to *explicitness change* as a matter of style when rendering the first sentence of the entry at hand in English:

Convention

C'est un traité international.

A convention is a type of international treaty.

Regardless of the possibility to render an accurate equivalent of the French expression *c'est* with *this is*, the translator decided to repeat the term *convention* in the first sentence of the entry. In other words, he relied on explicating what was implied in the source text in order to follow the conventions of good style when writing a pedagogical manual.

Information change, according to Chesterman, involves "the addition of new (non-inferable) information which is deemed to be relevant to the TT readership but which is not present in the ST, or the omission of ST information deemed to be irrelevant..."⁹¹ Ultimately, there seems to be significant overlap between *explicitness change* and *information change*. Nonetheless, *information change* is distinguished from *explicitness change* since information, with respect to the latter, may be added or deleted altogether but is still inferable in the mind of the reader. In the case of *information change*, on the other hand, information is deemed either irrelevant or relevant and subsequently removed or added. Perhaps no other example typifies this strategy more than the term *Pacte* in *100 et 1 mots*. According to the source text, a *Pacte* is described in the following manner:

Certains traités internationaux ont été désignés de cette manière. C'est le cas par exemple du *Pacte de la Société des Nations*, organisation universelle qui a existé entre les deux guerres et qui a précédé l'Organisation des Nations unies ou du

⁹¹ *Ibid*, p. 109.

Pacte de la Ligue des Etats arabes qui crée une organisation régionale : la Ligue des Etats arabes. **En matière de droits de l'homme**, c'est ce terme qui a été utilisé pour désigner les deux traités adoptés par l'Assemblée générale des Nations unies et qui portent sur les droits économiques, sociaux et culturels pour le premier et, les droits civils et politiques pour le second. Le choix de ce terme n'implique aucune conséquence précise. Il s'agit de traités internationaux.

Certain international treaties are entitled pacts, such as the Pact of the League of Arab States, which gave rise to a regional organisation, the League of Arab States. **In regard to human rights**, the term "covenant" has been used as the title for two treaties adopted by the General Assembly, the first of which addresses economic, social and cultural rights and the second of which addresses civil and political rights. This choice of terms bears no specific consequences since both types of text deal with international treaties.

In this entry, the translator is faced with a linguistic roadblock as a result of French using the term *Pacte* to refer to the founding treaty of the League of Nations, that of the League of Arab States as well as subsequent agreements ratified by the United Nations. Due to the designation of all three as a *pacte* in French, the examples at hand appear alongside each other in the above entry. However, in English the founding treaty of the League of Arab States is known as a *pact* while the other agreements, including the founding treaty of the League of Nations, are known as *covenants*. This is particularly problematic since this latter, due to its designation as a *pacte* in French, appears alongside the founding treaty of the League of Arab States. Therefore, the translator is faced with a distinction within the target text that is entirely absent from the source text. In order to resolve this issue, he decided to insert information that is absent from the source text in order to make the distinction between *pact* and *covenant* clear for the English-speaking reader. Moreover, in lieu of

following the first sentence's French structure, he opted for deleting the non-inferable information on the League of Nations since it was not at all logical to place a sentence dealing with an international organization's treaty, which had already been introduced at the beginning of the entry, alongside the final sentences addressing human rights treaties implemented by another international organization that came at a later date, in this case the UN.

Finally, *interpersonal change* “operates at the level of the overall style: it alters the formality level, the degree of emotiveness and involvement, the level of technical lexis and the like: anything that involves a change in the relationship between the text/author and reader.”⁹² A classic case of *interpersonal change* is expressing varying degrees of formality in one language that may not be apparent in another language. For example, if a Spanish-speaker were to ask a group of people their country of origin, the sentence might vary with respect to the second-person pronoun. If he/she were speaking to a group of the same age or status, they would ask “*De dónde sois?*”. On the other hand, if they were talking to a group of strangers or a large audience, they would be more inclined to ask “*De dónde son?*”. In English, this distinction in number is generally not

⁹² *Ibid*, p. 110.

expressed. The following example taken from the introduction of *100 et 1 mots* is a typical example of *interpersonal change*:

L'éducation aux droits de l'homme n'est pas une idée nouvelle. **Rappelons que**, depuis 1948, elle est présente dans les principaux instruments internationaux qui ont été adoptés en la matière.

Human rights education is not a new idea. **Since 1948**, it has been a part of the main international human rights instruments.

By examining the highlighted segments, we notice that, in this case, the second sentence of the French version actually contains the construction *rappelons que* in order to bring the reader into the writer's realm by reducing the distance between the two. For stylistic reasons, however, the translator chose to eliminate the construction in the target text since it is considered bad form in English to start a sentence with an subordinate clause followed by a temporal clause. Therefore, he decided to focus on the more essential piece of information, which was the time reference with respect to the presence of human rights education as a concept within the international system.

Conclusion

As stated throughout the discussion, translators are confronted with a wide range of strategies and techniques when confronted with a text, be it an international treaty, the latest bestselling novel or a politician's autobiography. Such a text, no matter how simple it might appear, is embedded with various ideological and cultural references that explain why a translator must often look beyond the printed word on the page and

consider all implications at hand since monotonously substituting one word for another would clearly fall short of rendering a comprehensible target text. If we consider the endless array of ideological and cultural phenomena prevalent in a single language, there is little wonder that some translation scholars have spent decades attempting to devise an all-encompassing prescriptive strategy. And it is also not surprising that they have done so to little avail. How can we expect a specialist to devise such a strategy when scholars are not even able to write a comprehensive repertoire of all the ideas and innovations within a particular culture? Rather than present *100 et 1 mots* as a text for which the translator applied a certain strategy, one of the primary goals was to prove that, even within a manual whose style and syntax are often straightforward, a variety of techniques are nonetheless employed in order to render a somewhat satisfactory target text. A strategy may indeed prove itself useful in some cases but fail to be of any use in others. In the end, as language specialists, we should realize that, owing to the infinite repertoire of cultural ideas and innovations, all strategies are capable of proving themselves fruitful, even if their usefulness might be restricted to specific circumstances. As a result, we would all be wise to follow the age-old maxim that moderation is the key.

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