The editor’s invisibility: Changes to nominalisation in the translation workflow

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Translation in Transition 3
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Toury’s (1995) critique

Comparing only source and target text → weakness in discovering translation processes

“no way of knowing how many different persons were actually involved in the establishment of a translation playing how many different roles. Whatever the number, the common practice has been to collapse all of them into [...] ‘the translator’.”
(Toury 1995: 183)
The editor’s invisibility

translator’s invisibility  cultural critique
editor’s invisibility  methodological critique
The editor’s invisibility

translator’s invisibility  cultural critique
editor’s invisibility  methodological critique

- editing and revising: part of translators’ daily lives
  ⇝ yet few studies take into account intermediate versions of translation products
  ⇝ published translations usually taken to wholly represent translatorial action
Editorial changes to nominalisation

Aim of this study

- to investigate editors’ motivations to maintain or change nominalisations in translated texts:
  1. the process type of the source text verb
  2. the information density of the target text nominal group
Previous research

Product research

Empirical strength of product research → relies on published sources

- “actual translated texts-in-function” (Holmes 1988: 101)
- “real data” (Baker 1993: 237)
- “language as it is used in the translation product” (Olohan 2004: 16)
- “authentic data, as attested in texts” (Kenny 2009: 59)
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Problem

Do these sources really represent translators’ work?
Editorial influence in literary translation

Orality in romance novels (Sinner 2012)

- fictive dialogue in 26 romance novels published between 2003 and 2009
Editorial influence in literary translation

Orality in romance novels (Sinner 2012)

- fictive dialogue in 26 romance novels published between 2003 and 2009
- corpus of English source texts, their German manuscript translations and published translations (Sinner 2012: 136)

Significant editorial changes to the translations, elimination of swear words and sexual references, even though translators had already toned them down. This is especially the case in sex scenes, which significantly reduce the representation of credible orality (Sinner 2012: 133). This trend is confirmed by Andújar Moreno (2016) for Spanish to French translations.
Editorial influence in literary translation

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Editorial influence in literary translation

ideologies in advertising of novels (Harvey 2003)

- “bindings” of three 1970s gay fictional texts (English → French)
Editorial influence in literary translation

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- different ideologies and understandings of the homosexual compete in those "bindings"
Editorial influence in literary translation

- “bindings” of three 1970s gay fictional texts (English → French)
- different ideologies and understandings of the homosexual compete in those “bindings”

→ “in-house editorial policies make it dangerous to assume that the translator as individual […] is singly responsible for textual outcomes even in the main body of the text” (Harvey 2003: 69)
Cross-genre analysis of editorial influence

Kruger (2012): translation universals in “mediated discourse”

- normalisation, explicitation & simplification in “mediated” (translated, edited) and “unmediated” (unedited) text
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- academic, instructional, popular and reportage texts
- no evidence of shared “mediation effect”
  - translators favour “explicit and standardised language”
  - editors “introduce collocational variety”
Corpus details

Sources: *Harvard Business Review, Harvard Business Manager*
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- manually reduce to only have instances where the editor
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resulting dataset: 11,000 words
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How do HBM editors work?

Do editors consult the source text?

Yes—“…legen wir uns in der Regel den Originaltext aus der Harvard Business Review daneben und vergleichen beides Satz für Satz.”

[‘…we usually have the source text from the HBR next to us and compare both texts sentence by sentence.’]
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**What do they look for?**

“...formulieren [wir] Substantivierungen und Passivkonstruktionen um...”

[‘...we reword nominalisations and passive constructions...’]
(1) So if there is some chance that a deal between a buyer and a seller can **create** extra value, it’s better to **negotiate** than to hold an auction. (HBR 12/09,101)

Wenn also die Möglichkeit besteht, dass ein Verhandlungsabschluss zwischen einem Käufer und einem Verkäufer zu einer zusätzlichen **Wertschöpfung** führt, sollten **Verhandlungen statt Versteigerungen stattfinden.** (manuscript)

[‘If there is a possibility that the closing of a deal between a buyer and a seller will lead to an extra **value creation**, **negotiations** rather than auctions should take place.’]

Wenn also die Möglichkeit besteht, dass ein Geschäftsabschluss zwischen einem Käufer und einem Verkäufer im Fall von Verhandlungen zusätzlichen **Wert schöpft**, sollten Sie **verhandeln**, anstatt eine Auktion durchzuführen. (HBM 6/10,74)

[‘If there is a possibility that the closing of a deal between a buyer and a seller will **create** extra value in the case of negotiations, you should **negotiate** instead of conducting an auction.’]
Quantitative analysis

Quantitative results

- Source text verbs nominalised by translators: 541
  - nominalisations retained in the published document: 339
  - nominalisations changed to verbs: 202
- Are these decisions random or systematic?
Qualitative analysis

Hypotheses to be tested

- 2 hypotheses to be tested
Qualitative analysis

Hypotheses to explain editors’ decisions

- 2 hypotheses to be tested
- a nominalisation is likely to be unpacked
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a nominalisation is likely to be unpacked

1. according to the process type of the source text verb
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    → some process types more acceptable as nominalisations than others
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  1. according to the **process type** of the source text verb
     → some process types more acceptable as nominalisations than others
  2. if the nominalisations in the manuscripts receive **pre**- or **postmodification**
     → increases information density of the sentence
What are process types?

Grammatical metaphor and transitivity

- “Grammatical metaphor” in Systemic Functional Grammar

Processes are usually expressed using verbs, but may be metaphorically expressed as nouns. For example, the sentence “crime has increased” can be rewritten as “there has been an increase in crime.” These metaphorical expressions are also known as deverbal nominalizations (Heyvaert 2003: 66). The system of transitivity in Systemic Functional Grammar distinguishes six process types, such as material processes of doing, which are usually concrete and tangible actions (Eggins 2004: 215–225), and mental processes that describe what we think or feel, about cognition, affection, and perception.
What are process types?

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Process type analysis

- Each source text verb was attributed to a process type according to
  - list of verbs in Banks (2003)
  - my own subjective analysis
### Hypothesis 1: Process type of the source text verb

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Interpretation of results

Mental processes occur more often among the retained nominalisations ($p = 0.04$). Mental processes add affection to author-reader relationship – not enough distance for German communicative norms?

I think; we believe → Meiner Meinung nach; unserer Ansicht nach to material → ?
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Qualitative analysis – What makes editors revert the translator’s nominalisations?

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Interpretation of results

- Mental processes occur more often among the retained nominalisations ($p=0.04$)
- Mental processes add affection to author-reader relationship – not enough distance for German communicative norms?
  - *I think; we believe* → *Meiner Meinung nach; unserer Ansicht nach*
  - *to matter* → ?
(2) Managers’ day-to-day (and moment-to-moment) behaviors matter not just because they directly facilitate or impede the work of the organization. (HBR 5/07,72)

Das kurzfristige Verhalten von Managern ist nicht nur von entscheidender Bedeutung, weil es sich direkt hinderlich oder förderlich auf die Arbeit des Unternehmens auswirkt. (manuscript)

['Managers’ short-term behaviour is not only of decisive significance because it directly affects impedingly or supportively the work of the organisation.]

Das kurzfristige Verhalten von Managern ist nicht nur von entscheidender Bedeutung, weil es sich direkt hinderlich oder förderlich auf die Arbeit innerhalb des Unternehmens auswirkt. (HBM 9/07,48)

['Managers’ short-term behaviour is not only of decisive significance because it directly affects impedingly or supportively the work within the organisation.']
Hypothesis 2

Pre- and postmodification

Editors change nominalisations if they are pre- or postmodified (=if the nominal group structure is more complex)
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Method

- separate analysis of premodification and postmodification
### Premodifiers

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<th>z-ratio</th>
<th>p-value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Article</td>
<td>206 (61%)</td>
<td>132 (66%)</td>
<td>-1.064</td>
<td>0.287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronoun</td>
<td>30 (9%)</td>
<td>6 (3%)</td>
<td>2.654</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>20 (6%)</td>
<td>10 (5%)</td>
<td>0.467</td>
<td>0.641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverb</td>
<td>3 (1%)</td>
<td>2 (1%)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>259 (77%)</td>
<td>150 (75%)</td>
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## Hypothesis 2: Pre- or postmodification of the target text nominalisation

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<td>0.002</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postnominal modifier</td>
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<td>Phrasal genitive</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Postmodifiers seem to be changed if they are postmodified by genitive attributes.
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→ nominalisations seem to be changed if they are postmodified by genitive attributes
(3) **The beauty of the PWP model is that it offers the potential for using operational strengths to expand into new areas while at the same time maintaining the operational excellence [...].** (HBR 9/09,90)

\[\text{Die Attraktivität des PWP-Modells ist sein Potenzial bei der Nutzung betrieblicher Stärken zur Expansion in neue Bereiche bei gleichzeitiger Wahrung der hervorragenden betrieblichen Leistung, [...]}.\] (manuscript)

\[\text{Der Charme des PWP-Modells besteht darin, dass es die Möglichkeit bietet, betriebliche Stärken zur Expansion in neue Bereiche zu nutzen und zugleich die Fähigkeit zu betrieblichen Spitzenleistungen zu wahren, [...]}.\] (HBM 12/09,78)

[‘The beauty of the PWP model is its potential for the use of operational strengths for the expansion into new areas with a concomitant maintenance of the excellent operational performance [...]’]
Conclusions

Process types

- Some indication that nominalisations of mental processes are retained
- No difference for material processes, by far the largest group
  → No significant overall effect on editors’ decisions
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Nominal group structure

1. Premodification
   - Some indication that preceding pronouns may “protect” nominalisations
     → no significant overall effect

2. Postmodification
   → genitive attributes seem to motivate editors to change the nominalisation
Thank you for your attention!

Read more
- on quantitative findings: Bisiada (2017a)
  → The Translator; DOI 10.1080/13556509.2017.1301847
- on qualitative findings: Bisiada (2017b)
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References I


References II


References III

