

POETRY TRANSLATION AND COMPUTATIONAL LINGUISTICS: A DIALOG

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Abstract - This study establishes a dialog between poetry translation and Computational Linguistics. Annotation is one of the activities of Computational Linguistics, which identifies and classifies a certain linguistic phenomenon, using labels, tags, categories, in a given corpus, so as to achieve a certain goal. In this paper, annotation is used to show some semantic-lexical aspects of an original poem in English which were altered, omitted, added, inverted, in the Portuguese translation. The aim of this paper is to show the convergences and divergences between two different annotations of the same original and translation, highlighting, thus, the imprecision of the categories used.

Keywords - Poetry Translation, Computational Linguistics, Annotation.

I. INTRODUCTION

This study discusses categories for evaluations of poetry translations, taking into consideration only the semantic-lexical level. The formal level (metric and rhymic levels) and the poetic field of sound resources are not part of this paper.

These categories correspond to translation strategies: semantic alteration; omission; addition; inversion. They were created by the Brazilian poet and translator Paulo Henriques Britto – BRITTO (2002;2006c) – and defined and systematized in the doctoral dissertation MENEZES (2017).

The aim of this study is to show the convergences and divergences between two different annotations of the same original and translation, highlighting, thus, the imprecision of the categories used. This paper is connected to MENEZES (2017), which had as its

main goal to provide, to diverse scholars, categories for evaluating translations of poems in a minimally consensual way.

Annotation is one of the activities of Computational Linguistics, which identifies and classifies a certain linguistic phenomenon, using labels, tags, categories, in a given corpus, so as to achieve a certain goal (LEECH, 1997). The corpus in this study is made of two poems: original, in English, and translation, in Portuguese. In this paper, annotation was made using tools of the Microsoft Word. Two annotators, with very good knowledge in the translation field of study, volunteered to help in this paper: TM and AD. Both used a manual to instruct them through the annotations.

This manual contained the explanations of the categories, guidelines for annotation, and examples of annotation of each category.

II. DETAILS EXPERIMENTAL

2.1. Manuals

2.1.1. Categories and explanations

Table1: SEMANTIC ALTERATION, OMISSION, ADDITION, INVERSION and their explanations.

SEMANTIC ALTERATION	Translating a word or phrase of the original altering its semantic elements in a corresponding word or phrase of the translation.
OMISSION	Omitting semantic elements present in a word or phrase of the corresponding stanza of the original.
ADDITION	Adding semantic elements which are not present in the corresponding stanza of the original, through a word or phrase in the translation.
INVERSION	Inverting the order of words of a phrase of the original in the corresponding phrase of the translation.

2.1.2. Guidelines for annotation

SEMANTIC ALTERATION	It should be annotated like this : [XXXX] ^{salt} , with the specific word or phrase between brackets
OMISSION	It should be annotated like this : [XXXX] ^{omi} , with the specific word or phrase between brackets
ADDITION	It should be annotated like this : [XXXX] ^{add} , with the specific word or phrase between brackets
INVERSION	It should be annotated like this : [XXXX] ^{inv} , with the specific word or phrase between brackets

Table 2: SEMANTIC ALTERATION, OMISSION, ADDITION, INVERSION and the guidelines for annotation

2.1.3. Examples of annotation of each category

These examples were taken from SARAIVA (1999). Tables 3, 5 and 6 present verses from Catarina to Camoes, by E.B. Browning, and table 4 presents verses from To a Skylark, by Shelley. In addition, all the four tables in this item present Fernando Pessoa's translations; Pessoa was a very important Portuguese writer and translator. It is possible to find further information about him also in SARAIVA (1999).

Rings through the abyss of our [eternal] ^{salt} fall.	Pelo abismo da queda [original] ^{salt} .		
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Table 3: SEMANTIC ALTERATION

Note: "Eternal" means "eterno/a" in Portuguese. Thus, "Rings through the abyss of our eternal fall", means, in Portuguese, "Pelo abismo da queda eterna", and not "original". "Original" is a cognate between English and Portuguese.

By [warm] ^{omi} winds deflowered,	E o vento desflora,
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Table 4: OMISSION

Note: "By warm winds deflowered" means in Portuguese "E o vento quente desflora". "Warm" means "quente" in Portuguese.

And recall the choral singing	Lembrando-te, [a chorar] ^{add} , do cantochão
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Table 5: ADDITION

Note: "A chorar" means, in English, "crying". Thus, "Lembrando-te, a chorar, do cantochão" means, in English, "And, crying, recall the choral singing".

[Eyes of mine, what are ye doing?] ^{inv}	[Mas que fazeis, meus olhos] ^{inv}
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Table 6: INVERSION

Note: "Eyes of mine, what are ye doing?" means, in Portuguese, "Meus olhos, mas que fazeis?"

2.3. The case study: sonnet 130, by Shakespeare, and the Portuguese translation, by Ivo Barroso

2.3.1. Sonnet 130, by Shakespeare

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.

I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight

Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.

I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress when she walks treads on the ground.

And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

2.3.2. Portuguese translation, by Ivo Barroso

IVO Barroso is an outstanding Brazilian writer and translator. It is possible to find further information about this translator in GUERINI;VERÇOSA (2005).

Seus olhos nada têm de um sol que arda
E mais rubro é o coral que sua boca:
Se a neve é branca, sua tez é parda;
São fios negros seu cabelo em touca.

Vi rosas mesclas de rubor e alvura,
Mas tais rosas não vejo em sua face.
Sei de perfumes que têm mais doçura
Que o hálito da amada evolasse.

Amo ouvi-la falar, porém insisto
Que mais me agrada ouvir uma canção.
De deusas nunca devo o andar ter visto —
Minha amante ao andar pisa no chão.

No entanto, pelos céus, acho-a mais rara
Do que a mulher que em falso se compara.

In this paper, I decided to discuss only the first stanzas of the original and translation. It is possible to find both poems in SHAKESPEARE (2005).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Comparing the annotations

In this study, this comparison shows convergences and divergences. Whenever there are divergences between different annotations of the same category, it will need to be reformulated, aiming at future convergences. The ideal scenario is the following: different scholars using these categories in evaluations of the same translations, reaching a minimum consensus.

3.2. Annotations made by TM

3.2.1. Original

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
[Coral is far more red]^{inv} than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her [breasts]^{salt} are dun;
[If hairs be wires]^{omi}, black wires grow on her head.

3.2.2. Translation

Seus olhos nada têm de um sol [que arda]^{add1}
[E mais rubro é o coral]^{inv} que sua boca:
Se a neve é branca, sua [tez]^{salt} é parda;
São fios negros seu cabelo [em touca]^{add2}

3.3. Annotations made by AD

3.3.1. Original

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
[Coral is far more red]^{inv} than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her [breasts]^{salt1} are dun;
[If hairs be wires,]^{omni} [black wires grow on her head]^{salt2}.

3.3.2. Translation

Seus olhos nada têm de um sol [que arda]^{add}
[E mais rubro é o coral]^{inv} que sua boca:
Se a neve é branca, sua [tez]^{salt1} é parda;
[São fios negros seu cabelo em touca]^{salt2}

3.4. Notes about the original and the translation, according to both annotators

According to both TM and AD:

First verse: “que arda” means, in English, “that burns”. Thus, “Seus olhos nada têm de um sol que arda”, means, in English, “My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun that burns”. (ADDITION)

Second verse: “Coral is far more red”, means, in Portuguese “E o coral é mais rubro”. (INVERSION)

Third verse: “breasts” in Portuguese means “seios”, not “tez”, which means, in English, “face skin”. (SEMANTIC ALTERATION)

Fourth verse:

According to TM:

“If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head” means in Portuguese “Se cabelos são fios, são fios negros seu cabelo”. (OMISSION)

“Em touca” means “in a mobcap”. Thus, “São fios negros seu cabelo em touca” means, in English, “Black wires grow on her head in a mobcap”. (ADDITION)

According to AD:

“If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head” means in Portuguese “Se cabelos são fios, fios negros crescem em sua cabeça”. (OMISSION)

“Black wires grow on her head” means in Portuguese “fios negros crescem em sua cabeça”, not “São fios negros seu cabelo em touca”. (SEMANTIC ALTERATION)

“São fios negros seu cabelo” and “fios negros crescem em sua cabeça” have very similar meanings in Portuguese. In English, the former means “Black wires form her hair”, and the latter, “black wires grow on her head”. According to AD, there is semantic alteration when translating “black wires grow on her head” into “São fios negros seu cabelo”. On the other hand, according to TM, there is not.

3.5. Convergences and divergences between the annotations

By analyzing the results, we can say that the categories which led to convergences were OMISSION AND INVERSION. Perhaps it could have happened because it is easier to identify these categories, comparing to others: their explanations “omission of words” and “inversion of words”, respectively, deal partly with lexical aspects.

SEMANTIC ALTERATION and ADDITION were the categories which led to divergences. Concerning SEMANTIC ALTERATION, we may say that these divergences could have happened due to the vagueness of the category explanations. It is easy for different annotators to disagree on what would be “alteration of semantic elements”.

ADDITION also has explanations that deal partly with lexical aspects, “addition of words”. Even so, it was one of the categories which led to divergences. It is difficult to try to explain what might have happened in this case.

By discussing the results, we can say that giving people instructions on how to annotate is much trickier than one may think.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The comparison of annotations was made to check if the categories needed reformulations, and major conclusions are as follows:

1. The categories SEMANTIC ALTERATION and ADDITION need reformulation, because they caused divergences between annotations. It shows the instability of these categories. Their explanations seem easy to understand, and the annotations seem simple to make. However, after comparing annotations, we can notice that the identification and classification of categories are not so obvious.
2. Since the categories of the lexical-semantic level led to a lot of divergences throughout the doctoral dissertation MENEZES (2017), future researches might be done, aiming at creating new categories, abandoning and/ or reformulating the present ones. Through this new work, perhaps one may get a little closer to the main goal of achieving minimal consensus in evaluations of poetry translations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dialog between poetry translation and Computational Linguistics is still very new. Perhaps we may say that many studies in both fields can really benefit from this partnership, getting enriching results.

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