Ewa Kujawska-Lis

Syntagmatic translation : translator's friend or foe?

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Ewa Kujawska-Lis
Olsztyn

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Tłumaczenie syntagmatycznie: przyjaciel czy wróg tłumacza?

The term "syntagmatic translation" can be applied to such types of translation techniques as literal translation, calque or transfer. While these are often perfectly legitimate translation procedures resulting in correct target texts, they can also lead to translation errors that can, potentially, completely ruin the translator's efforts. Excessive adherence to syntagmatic translation stems from lack of time, insufficient attention devoted to the process of translation and its various stages, inadequate knowledge of the source and target languages, as well as source and target cultures. It seems, however, that errors that are caused by excessive syntagmatic translation appear most frequently in target texts produced by inexperienced translators (students of translation, in particular). Hence, it is extremely important to direct attention to this specific problem in the didactic process. This paper discusses some examples of problematic syntagmatic translations produced by students of translation with the view of highlighting the necessity for employing control mechanisms when creating target texts.

Key words: translation, direct translation procedure, syntagmatic translation error, compe-
tence

1. Direct methods of translation

One of the first modern typologies of translation procedures was created by two Canadian linguists Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet. Their *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais* was published first in 1958 and is considered the most influential work concerning translation studies in the 1950s (Venuti 2003: 69). By applying comparative stylistics methods to French-English translation, these aforementioned linguists created a theoretical framework for a number of translation methods that have been later adopted by various scholars and practitioners of translation. As Lawrence Venuti emphasises, "they produce[d] a textbook that has been a staple in translator training programs for over four decades" (Venuti 2003: 70).

Basically, Vinay and Darbelnet divided translating methods into two major types: direct (or literal) translation and oblique translation. Direct methods are applicable in a specific number of limited situations. According to the authors:

> In some translation tasks it may be possible to transpose the source language message element by element into the target language, because it is based on either (i) parallel categories, in which case we can speak of structural parallelism, or (ii) on parallel concepts, which are the result of metalinguistic parallelisms. But translators may also notice gaps, or "lacunae", in the target language (TL) which must be filled by corresponding elements, so that the overall impression is the same for the two messages. (Vinay, Darbelnet 1958/1995/2003: 84)

In these cases direct procedures can be used. Other situations, in which "certain stylistic effects cannot be transposed into the TL without upsetting the syntactic order" (Vinay, Darbelnet 1958/1995/2003: 84), require more complex procedures named oblique ones.

Direct methods as differentiated by the two scholars include: borrowing, calque and literal translation. Borrowing is, clearly, the "most direct" method par excellence. It is not only used to overcome a lacunae, but often to create a stylistic effect (Vinay, Darbelnet 1958/1995/2003: 85) and to emphasise the foreignness of the source text. As the authors highlight, "the decision to borrow a SL word or expression for introducing an element of local colour is a matter of style and consequently of the message" (Vinay, Darbelnet 1958/1995/2003: 85). Borrowings are the most obvious sources of enriching the target language. They are used copiously by translators who are reluctant to introduce neologisms in order to name the phenomena absent in the target culture and therefore requiring naming. Presently when translating texts in such fields as information technology and medicine, translators very frequently borrow original terms, especially from English. If one looks at the IT jargon in Polish, it is dominated by words transferred directly from English, or transferred and adapted to Polish grammar and pronunciation (transcribed).

The next direct procedure, that is calque, is defined as "a special kind of borrowing whereby a language borrows an expression from another, but then translates literally each of its elements" (Vinay, Darbelnet 1958/1995/2003: 85). This procedure can result either in a lexical or structural calque. The former introduces a new mode of expression while respecting the syntax of the target language. The latter enriches the target language with a new construction. This method of translation is very often applied when translating names of organizations and compound-nouns.

The third direct method involves literal translation. While this term is ambiguous and various scholars understand it differently, Vinay and Darbelnet

provide an apparently clear definition. According to them, literal translation is "the direct transfer of a SL text into a grammatically and idiomatically appropriate TL text in which the translators' task is limited to observing the adherence to the linguistic servitudes of the TL" (Vinay, Darbelnet 1958/1995/2003: 86). The difference between calque and literal translation involves the size of the translated unit. Calque refers to a smaller unit (expression), literal translation – a larger one, such as a clause. Based on their comparative approach, the scholars claim that literal translation is a unique solution (since its result must not violate grammatical rules and the idiomaticity of the target language) and is most frequently found between two languages of the same family.

These direct methods (as well as oblique ones that are not the subject of this study) have been incorporated into typologies of translation procedures created by other scholars. Roman Jakobson, another scholar of that period, proposes to overcome a deficiency in terminology by, inter alia, loan-words and loan-translations (Jakobson 1959/2003: 115) that correspond to borrowings and calques, respectively. Jakobson obviously does not mention literal translation as he focuses in his classification of available procedures on terminological problems that need to be tackled rather than all translation issues. Peter Newmark, on the other hand, attempting to create an all-encompassing classification of procedures, mentions all three direct methods. He chooses the term transference for Vinay and Darbelnet's borrowing and Jakobson's loan-word, which he further subdivides into transliteration (conversion of different alphabets). He treats transcription as a separate procedure that he terms naturalisation. According to him, naturalisation "succeeds transference and adapts the SL word first to the normal pronunciation, then to normal morphology (word-forms) of the TL" (Newmark 1988/2005: 82). Calque/loan-translation in his terminology becomes through-translation, this term being more transparent in his view (Newmark 1988/2005: 84). Literal translation in Newmark's typology is differentiated from word-for-word and one-to-one. Word-for-word translation "transfers SL grammar and word order, as well as the primary meanings of all the SL words, into translation, and is normally effective only for brief simple neutral sentences," whereas "[i]n one-to-one translation, a broader form of translation, each SL word has a corresponding TL word, but their primary (isolated) meanings may differ" (Newmark 1988/2005: 69). Literal translation then extends beyond one-to-one and ranges from one word to one word, through group to group, collocation to collocation, clause to clause, to sentence to sentence (Newmark 1988/2005: 69).

At some point of the didactic process, any student of translation in an institutional framework comes across these classic typologies of translation

procedures. Institutional courses of translation involve not only practice but also theory, thus students examine these typologies when investigating the theoretical premises of Translation Studies. Generally, they regard Newmark's classification as particularly challenging, finding it difficult to differentiate between one-to-one, word-for-word, literal and through-translation. Irrespective of these difficulties, even inexperienced adepts of translation are quite familiar with these methods that are available to them. Yet, it seems they are not actually fully aware of their pitfalls.

2. Syntagmatic translation errors

Interestingly, while discussing translation errors, most resource books mention linguistic interference at the word and above-word level in the form of false friends, borrowings and calques (cf. Dąmbska-Prokop 2000: 57). In other words, under specific circumstances a perfectly adequate translation procedure turns into a translation error, that is a form of translation which is for some reason unacceptable in the target language. The creators of the mentioned typologies of translation procedures actually warn against overusing them, since their inappropriate application may result in all sorts of problematic translations. Vinay and Darbelnet explicitly state that if, when translated literally, the message gives another meaning, has no meaning, is structurally impossible, does not have a corresponding expression within the metalinguistic experience of the TL, or has a corresponding expression, but not within the same register, then oblique methods should be used (Vinay, Darbelnet 1958/1995/2003: 87). Otherwise, in such situations, if translators adhere to direct methods of translation they violate grammatical, idiomatic, and/or stylistic rules of the target language, thus leading to an erroneous translation. They also indicate that calques may become an integral part of the language and may undergo a semantic change, thus turning them into false friends. Consequently, translators need to be particularly conscious of this aspect of interlingual interference. Newmark, who believes that literal translation is a basic translation procedure, warns that above word level it "becomes increasingly difficult" (Newmark 1988/2005: 70). He states that in any problematic issue, literal translation should be ruled out because it may lead to unnatural (unidiomatic) translation. Moreover, in his pragmatic approach, Newmark enumerates those instances of expressions or words that should be transferred, stressing that in fact, in principle, it is preferable to translate creatively and authoritatively names of objects, inventions, devices, processes if they are neologisms, rather than transferring them. He also warns against through-translations (calques) since

these frequently result in translationese, in particular in brochures, guide-books, and tourist material (Newmark 1988/2005: 85).

All things considered, excessive and unjustified adherence to direct methods of translation can lead to translation errors, thus there is a thin red line between a procedure and an erroneous choice. Hence, typologies of translation errors frequently mirror translation procedures. In his extended classification of translation mistakes, Krzysztof Hejwowski separates syntagmatic translation errors as his first group of mistakes. These include: dictionary equivalents (choosing the most common dictionary equivalent, often irrespective of the context), false friends (words that are similar graphically or phonetically to the source language words, but which have a different meaning), commonly accepted equivalents, calques, and unnecessary transfers (Hejwowski 2004: 203–210).

Inexperienced adepts of translation are often confused with respect to syntagmatic translation procedures. Being unsure as to what extent they can depart from the original, they far too often cling to the source text structures and lexis thus producing target texts that are not only unidiomatic, but often nonsensical. The choice of direct methods of translation is then directly interrelated with the translation unit (the stretch of the ST on which the translator focuses attention in order to represent it as a whole in the TL) and translational competences.[1] The smaller the translation unit chosen, the greater the chance of syntagmatic translation. As is well documented, inexperienced translators tend to focus on smaller units (single words, expressions) than experienced ones who can isolate and translate units of meaning, that is phrases, clauses, or sentences. Competent translators realize when direct procedures are applicable, and when they should be avoided. Those who lack linguistic competence (proficiency in both the source and target languages) and, especially, psychological competence along with logical competence (ability to interpret and understand the original text and draw conclusions concerning it, as well as the awareness of one's own limitations and self-criticism leading to searching for the most appropriate solutions) often fall into the trap of direct translation that becomes a curse rather than a blessing.

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[1] For a concise summary of translator's competences see, for instance: the entry "Kompetencje tłumacza" [Translator's competences] in *Mała encyklopedia przekładoznawstwa* edited by Urszula Dąmbska-Prokop (2000: 109–110) or the section "Rozumienie" [Understanding] in *Współczesne tendencje przekładoznawcze* by Alicja Pisarska and Teresa Tomaszkiewicz (1998: 81–88) where various competences are enumerated and discussed.

3. Empirical examples

Adherence to syntagmatic translation is particularly evident in the target texts produced by students who learn the art and craft of translation. Problematic syntagmatic solutions are mostly caused by students' lack of experience, but also by their lack of higher-level analysis abilities, and, unfortunately, lack of professionalism understood as a willingness to conduct additional research in order to achieve the best quality translation possible under given circumstances. The following examples have been collected from the works produced by students of English Philology (BA level) who specialise in translation. They participated for two years not only in Practical English classes at the university level (B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), but also in such courses as: Translation in a Historical Perspective (lectures), Introduction to the Theory of Translation (lectures), Translation Studies (lectures and classes), Written Translation (classes). During these courses students were instructed not only in translation procedures, but also translator's competences and workshop, as well as the reasons for translation errors. Particular stress was placed on the ethical issues connected with the profession of translator (professional responsibility) and the need to constantly extend one's knowledge (both linguistic and extralinguistic). Nevertheless, despite these didactic efforts, they continued to adhere excessively to syntagmatic translation procedures.

To exemplify the problem of syntagmatic translation, informative texts concerning tourist information have been chosen, as they constitute a large bulk of translated texts. Travel agencies that welcome international clients need to have their offer in several languages, English and German being most common in Poland. Apart from general information, they provide specific itineraries, and the first five examples constitute a sample translation of this type of text produced by a student. The original text consisted of the description of one-day trips in the region of Mazury (Masuria).

Ex. 1. KRUTYŃ – boat cruise on the river Krutyń

Apparently this translation is perfectly correct. No mistakes can be noticed as far as the use of English is concerned (grammar). A foreigner will not find the offer incomprehensible and will be likely ready for an adventure. He will be surprised, if not shocked, however, when, having arrived at the village of Krutyń, he will see the river: knee-deep and 5-6 meters wide. A mental image created by the expression "boat cruise" will be contradictory to the reality of the natural environment. In the context of a river, the noun "cruise" refers to a voyage by a rather large vessel on a relatively large river (the Mississippi, the Thames, the Seine). The Krutynia River is a small river perfect for canoeing and

kayaking trips as well as trips in self-propelled boats. Its main attraction for tourists is its picturesqueness which can be enjoyed when sitting in an open wooden boat propelled by a helmsman.

Fig. 1. The Krutynia River
(https://www.google.pl/search?q=krutynia)

A very useful tool, that is Google image, would help the translator to avoid using the phrase "boat cruise." When this phrase is entered into the search engine, the images provided demonstrate a completely different size of river and type of vessel.

Fig. 2. River boat cruise
(https://www.google.pl/search?q=boat+cruise)

The result of such preliminary investigation, based on double checking the meaning of the suggested translation solution, should initiate a searching mechanism for a completely different equivalent for the originally used *spływ łodzią* [boat trip; literally *spływ* means flow]. In order to differentiate the trip as by a boat propelled by someone else (fig. 1) and canoeing or kayaking, in the source text the noun "boat" is added which resulted in a wrong dictionary

equivalent "cruise" since this word is associated with travelling by a vessel.[2] This mistake was caused mainly by the lack of extratextual knowledge. Understanding *spływ* as a type of trip (*wycieczka*) resulted in looking for a word that collocates with a boat, hence "boat cruise." The translator having no first-hand experience with this particular river and activities available on it, rather than searching for information (psychological competence in its broad understanding) resorted to dictionaries. Insufficient encyclopaedic competence (general knowledge) is evident in the mistranslated name of the river. The village is named Krutyń, whereas the river – Krutynia. Since the Polish language is inflectional, in the original the name of the river was used in its instrumental case Krutynią. The translator simply transferred the proper name, having produced the text referring to the village.

This example clearly demonstrates the effect an incompetent translation has on the receiver – the target reader's expectations concerning the trip based on the received message are completely different from the actual offer of the travel agency. Thus the reader is misled and misinformed by this translation. A similar effect is achieved by the translation of information concerning Galindia:

Ex. 2. GALINDIA – Masurian Paradise – fortified town of the Galind's tribe

Galindia is the historical name of the area where Galindians – a West Baltic tribe, and later an Old Prussian clan – formerly lived. Presently this name additionally refers to an area on the peninsula on Lake Bełdany where the old wooden settlement of Galindians has been reconstructed. This reconstruction consists of basically two stylised buildings housing a hotel and conference rooms, surrounded by a wooden palisade. It can therefore hardly be called a fortified town.

Fig. 3. Galindia
(https://www.google.pl/search?q=Galindia)

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[2] See the entry *wycieczka* in *Wielki słownik polsko-angielski PWN-Oxford* (2004: 1261).

The translation again evokes a completely different mental image than the reality. It is caused by choosing a wrong dictionary equivalent. "Town" implies a much larger place than a settlement. The original promotional materials employ the word *grodzisko* that is derived from *gród* [town]. *Gród* was a medieval Slavonic fortified settlement and later a town, hence many bilingual dictionaries provide the latter word as its equivalent. This is incorrect in the context of Galindia that features just two buildings. Consequently the translator's choice can be either classified as a wrong dictionary equivalent or a commonly accepted equivalent (often the border between the two types of errors is fluid). Irrespective of the classification, it evidences a complete divergence from reality (resulting from word-for-word translation) because the translator lacked sufficient knowledge and did not conduct proper research. This is even more evident in transferring the Polish name of the tribe used in the genitive case (*Galindów*) in the original. The translator left the case ending and transferred the root *Galind* instead of providing its English equivalent Galindians. Such mistakes of incorrect borrowing confuse the target recipients who, at least potentially, may have problems in finding information about the phenomena they are interested in. Searching for *Galind* may not return expected results, and Krutyń will refer to the village rather than the river.

Excessive adherence to dictionaries without reflecting upon the extratextual reality is probably best evident in the following example:

Ex. 3. MIKOŁAJKI – seaman's village, summer capital of Masuria

Mikołajki is a picturesque town (though with its population of about 4000 people it would be considered a village by the UK standards) in the heart of Mazury, the Lake District in Poland, with no connection to the sea. Located on the shore of Śniardwy, the largest lake in the country, it is a Mecca for yachting. The original place of interest to visit was termed *wioska żeglarska* [literally: sailing village] and referred to a modern inland harbour with several marinas. The translation is utterly misleading as it suggests that the town of Mikołajki is in fact a village located at the seaside (or, from the point of grammar: belonging to some seaman). The mistranslated phrase resulted from calquing the original expression and choosing a wrong equivalent for sailor (online bilingual dictionaries provide "seaman" as an equivalent of *żeglarz* [sailor]).[3] Instead of adhering to direct methods of translation, the translator should check what the

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[3] Compare: http://www.translatica.pl/slowniki/wyszukiwanie-polsko-angielsko-polskie/%C5%BCeglarz/?show=best; http://pl.bab.la/slownik/polski-angielski/%C5%BCeglarz.

expression *wioska żeglarska* stands for in reality and then, based on this knowledge, translate the phrase, harbour being the most obvious option.

Grammar problems, as already evidenced in the above examples featuring two incorrect uses of the Saxon genitive, are also frequently caused by syntagmatic translation. In the next example the receiver of the target text is forced to apply much cognitive effort to understand the message:

Ex. 4. SZTYNORT – former aristocratic residence of the Lehndorfs family, castle remains, antique park

This translation obviously contradicts the notion of the minimax strategy: pragmatically speaking, "the translator resolves for that one of the possible solutions which promises a maximum of effect with a minimum of effort" (Levý 1967/2003: 156). In this case the translator's effort was indeed minimal, yet the result is far from maximal. Being part of a tourist offer, the text should be immediately intelligible. Initially, it is quite difficult to follow the message as "remains" seems to function as the verb, thus one is likely to understand that the castle remains in Sztynort. There are three major problems in this example. The first is grammatical error concerning the plural form of the family name. Since the definite article and the noun "family" are added, the name should remain in the singular form – the Lehndorff family (spelling is also incorrect, as the name is spelled with double 'f'). Then in the village of Sztynort there has never been a castle, but a palace, as can be easily checked in numerous, readily available sources. So the equivalent chosen is inappropriate. And finally, since the palace is ruined, in the original the phrase *pozostałości pałacu* [the ruins of the palace] was used. The dictionary equivalent of the noun *pozostałość* is "remains" (plural)[4] and so the translator used it without consideration given to the transparency of the created message. "Castle remains" can thus be seen as a confusing through-translation that apparently observes the grammatical rules of English.

Direct translation may not only confuse the reader or create a different image of reality for him, but also be completely incomprehensible. This can be illustrated by the description of the village of Wojnowo:

Ex. 5. WOJNOWO – countryside with the antique nunnery of an old ceremonial from 19th century

If the previous examples were understandable without referring to the original texts (though obviously misleading), this translation leaves the reader in

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[4] See the entry *pozostałość* in *Wielki słownik polsko-angielski PWN-Oxford* (2004: 829).

the dark. One could imagine perhaps that during one's trip one will enjoy the countryside, but why would this countryside have a name? Then the collocation "antique nunnery" is quite surprising, even more so if we consider the date – the 19th century. One would rather expect an "old nunnery," which is much more idiomatic. Finally the phrase "nunnery of an old ceremonial" is simply gibberish. Yet, when confronted with the original this translation becomes relatively easy to decipher since it is based entirely in direct translation methods:

Ex. 5a. WOJNOWO – countryside // with // the antique // nunnery // of an old // ceremonial // from // 19th century

WOJNOWO – wieś // ze // starym // klasztorem //staro//obrzędowców // z // XIX w.

Each word was translated directly into English with the noun *staroobrzędowcy* being through-translated. *Staroobrzędowcy* is a compound noun that consists of the adjective *stary* [old] and a noun *obrzędowcy* that derives from *obrzęd* [ceremony]. The "creative" translator coined a very innovative term for an ethnic and religious minority group of *Staroobrzędowcy* (also called: *starovery*, *staroobryadtsy*, *raskol'niki*, *Filippians*), whose English name is the Old Believers. They follow the Orthodox faction termed the Russian Old Orthodox Church, and their history began in the mid-17th century as a result of church reforms introduced by Patriarch Nikon. Some of the Old Believers migrated to the Republic of Poland and arrived in Mazury in the 1830s. Between 1847 and 1972, an Orthodox monastery functioned in the village of Wojnowo, known all over the world as the ideological centre of the Old Believers. And this is the place of interest on the translated itinerary. Having adequate linguistic competence and willingness to search for information (psychological competence) would allow the translator to create a perfectly understandable item:

Ex. 5b. WOJNOWO – village with an old 19th-century monastery of the Old Believers

Since all the above examples are taken from the translation of one-day tours organized by a specific travel agency, one wonders how many complaints from dissatisfied clients this company would have received after the first season had this translation been used in its offer, and whether the translator would be held responsible in any way for the financial loss. These questions refer directly to the ethical dimension of the profession. Making mistakes is unavoidable in any human activity. But here we are confronted with something more serious than just a human shortcoming. These examples indicate an indiscriminate use of

direct translation procedures that are applied irrespective of the extratextual reality. Since we deal here with a tourist itinerary and the places worth seeing are simply enumerated along with their attractions, the translator cannot depend on the context or co-text. Only moving beyond the text, that is analyzing the text at its referential level (the level of real objects the text refers to)[5], can result in the quality-translation.

In order to demonstrate that direct translation can be a really deadly weapon that kills the text, one more example will be provided. This is a fragment of the informative text concerning the concentration camp in Stutthof. Reading the first sentence, the reader is surprised by an unusual choice of words: "Stutthof was the first concentration camp located in the territory of Poland and the last to be emancipated in 1945." One would rather expect the concentration camp to be liberated, since the verb "to emancipate" evokes such associations as becoming free from social, political or legal restrictions.[6] Instead of choosing a dictionary equivalent without conducting a componential analysis, it would be sufficient for the translator to refer to parallel texts: For instance, a text concerning Auschwitz concentration camp in English, in which an appropriate verb could be easily found. Even an entry in Wikipedia has a subsection named "Evacuation, death marches and liberation."[7] If a foreign reader just smiles at this "innovation," the following example may be more of a challenge:

Ex. 6. The first commandant of Stutthof concentration camp (until 1942) was Hauptsturmführer (Nazi party paramilitary rank) Max Pauly. (…) Later on, he was a commandant of Neuengamme concentration camp near Hamburg. In 1946 he was brought to trial in Hamburg for crimes committed in Neuengamme (but not for those committed in Stutthof). Death sentence was handed down to him and he was hung. In 1955, his successor an SS-Sturmbannführer (Nazi party paramilitary rank) Paul Werner Hoppe was sentenced by the court in Bochum to 5 years and after a body search to 9 years in prison. He was released from prison 18 months earlier.

The entire paragraph lacks coherence and several grammar mistakes could be pointed out. But in the context of the present deliberations, the most striking expression is "a body search." The first image that comes to the English-speaking reader's mind is that of the person's body and clothes being searched

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[5] The referential level obviously also involves imaginary objects or phenomena (especially in literary texts), but in the present analysis we deal only with texts that refer to the objects that actually exist, which should facilitate the translator's work rather than impede it, because information concerning real objects is much easier available.

[6] See the entry "emancipate" in *Collins Cobuild Dictionary* (1990: 458).

[7] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auschwitz_concentration_camp.

for illicit weapons, drugs, or other articles, as consistent with the definition of this expression. It seems improbable, however, that the commandant of the concentration camp awaited his trial out of prison, so a body search would not make much sense in this context. Another, less likely, but still probable solution, could be to understand "body search" as the search for bodies of people murdered in the concentration camp. In other words, as a result of more corpses found the sentence was increased. This train of thought has one drawback – if someone is tried for war crimes the exact number of victims would not heavily influence the verdict, and, more importantly, it was difficult to establish the specific number of people killed in Stutthof since they were cremated. So the target reader deals at this point with an incomprehensible message or, at the least, an extremely confusing one. A comparison of this translation with the original revealed the application of a direct translation method:

Ex. 6a. Jego następcą był SS-Sturmbannführer Paul Werner Hoppe, którego w 1955 roku sąd w Bochum skazał na pięć, a w wyniku rewizji na dziewięć lat więzienia.

In this case *rewizja* [revision, inspection, search, body search, but also: appeal, judicial review] is translated by means of a dictionary equivalent that completely ignores the context of the text. The translator understood the word in its basic meaning of a body search given by a police officer, not noticing the fact that this noun refers to *rewizja wyroku* (ellipsis confused the translator) that is an appeal against the verdict (in this case by the prosecutor) or simply a judicial revision.

One could argue that when translating into a foreign language, the translator is more prone to syntagmatic translation since one is hardly ever as proficient in a foreign language as in one's mother tongue. Thus it is more difficult to find appropriate equivalents. Based on the empirical observations, however, this is not the case. Students as frequently calque foreign expressions into their mother tongue as they do the other way round. Just to quote two examples: "conference room" was calqued as *pokój konferencyjny* instead of *sala konferencyjna*, *pokój* being a direct dictionary equivalent of "room;" the phrase "forum closing ceremony" was through-translated as *forum zamykające ceremonię*, each word forming the English phrase being directly translated into Polish and so creating a complete nonsense; "working group" was calqued as *grupa pracująca* instead of *grupa robocza*; "representatives" became *reprezentanci* (false friend) instead of *przedstawiciele*. Many more such examples could be provided.

4. Conclusions

These, and numerous other examples collected, indicate that syntagmatic translation (both into one's mother tongue and into a learned language) is a very common procedure among learners of the craft of translation. This type of translation should definitely be treated as their foe rather than friend, since adherence to direct translation methods combined with insufficient translator's competences invariably leads to target texts that are funny, misleading or incomprehensible. The didactic process needs to account for this extremely strong tendency to resort to direct translation. Obviously students of translation need to know the available procedures (hence they get familiar with source texts by Vinay and Darbelnet, Jakobson, Newmark, and others), but it seems of utmost importance to make them aware of the dangers associated with these procedures. The majority of the mistakes stemming from the application of syntagmatic translation are directly related to insufficient competences (linguistic and encyclopaedic). But what seems to be of superior importance is psychological competence combined with specific traits of character – the willingness to extend one's knowledge, the readiness to work hard and the awareness of one's own deficiencies. Without these skills and personal features, the translator resorts to the simplest available solutions, instead of searching for the most appropriate ones in given contexts. In all the discussed examples a correct translation could have been easily arrived at if only the translator (1) had used a monolingual dictionary (and so read the definition of the word before using it – conducted a componential analysis) apart from a bilingual one; (2) had considered the reality hidden behind the linguistic material (analyzed the referential level of the text); (3) had resorted to parallel texts (carried out basic research). These three simple conditions should become the mantra for inexperienced translators.

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