

Biological Taxonomy as an Extended Analogy in Translation Research

Structuring and Investigating the Relations between Texts

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Abstract

This paper focuses on how a biological concept can be utilised as a translational tool. This takes the form of an extended analogy that constitutes a viable and useful aid in research. My basis is the terms and categories of biological taxonomy and speciation as commonly understood, and how these may be applied to the study of the translation of novels, in my case the Discworld series by Terry Pratchett. The paper introduces the use of metaphors and analogies used both about and in translation studies, discussing these to demonstrate how they differ from mine. I justify the use of analogy as a tool before presenting a biological analogy used to aid creativity in my research. I show how the analogy was constructed and highlight an initial weakness as an example of potential pitfalls. On the relationship between source text and translation, I reflect upon their sameness or otherwise, looking at how changes made in the language and other features may be considered speciation. I also briefly introduce some parallels created by the analogy that can be explored. My study is thus an exercise in meta-methodology, attempting to introduce a novel way of self-reflection on theoretical thinking.

Keywords: analogy, metaphor, translation environment, text relations, speciation

1 Introduction

Metaphor and metonymy have frequently been used in translation studies to discuss translation both as a theoretical concept and as part of the process when translating. In this article, I add to these two levels by setting out the use of an extended analogy at the practical and productive level as a potential creative tool for researchers. For this reason, the article provides arguments for the use of analogy, presents the analogy in question and explains how it was created before setting out some of the avenues of research that it contributes to. The focus is on process rather than on wider-ranging theory in the field as a whole.

I first define the terms metaphor, metonymy and analogy before introducing some of the metaphors previously employed in, and about, translation and Translation Studies, differentiating these from an analogy. I move on to provide an example of the use of an extended analogy in research. Through this example, I will demonstrate some of the

advantages of the tool, such as its ability to provide explanations for forces acting upon translations, to suggest new avenues of research involving the cultural environment and to encourage re-evaluation of relationships both between source texts and their translations as well as between translations and other versions. In addition, I shall provide an example of a weakness of analogy as a tool when insufficiently developed. I conclude with a discussion of the areas of interest that the process has produced thus far. Séan Golden sought to “offer a glimpse inside the otherwise black box of the construction of a metaphor” in his chapter “Pushing Hands with Martha Cheung: The Genealogy of a Translation Metaphor” (2016: 34). In a similar vein, in this paper I aim to show the development of an extended analogy.

2 Metaphors, metonymy and analogies

Metaphor, metonymy and analogy are ways in which a point of comparison can be employed as an aid in understanding. In this section, I will briefly introduce these and comment upon points of similarity and difference in terms of scope and purpose. I then consider metaphors for translation as a concept before moving on to metaphors and metonyms employed within translation studies. The section therefore narrows the focus, from wider theory to a specific narrow practice.

2.1 Definitions

The entry for ‘Metaphor’ by Antonio Barcelona (2004: 677) in the *Encyclopedia of Linguistics* (EoL) states that metaphor is considered “a figure of speech in which one word is used to indicate something different from the literal meaning, so that one thing or idea is likened to a different thing or idea.” According to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980), creators of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), “Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature,” and “our concepts structure what we perceive” (3). They also discuss the relationship between metaphor and metonymy:

[They] are different kinds of processes. Metaphor is principally a way of conceiving of one thing in terms of another, and its primary function is understanding. Metonymy, on the other hand, has primarily a referential function, that is, it allows us to use one entity to stand for another. (36)

They further note that both metaphoric concepts and metonymic concepts are “grounded in our experience” (39), and this is important for my use of an extended analogy. This is because, as Barcelona points out in the entry for ‘Metonymy’ in the EoL, as “metaphor is a mapping across *different* domains” and “metonymy is a mapping within the *same* domain” (2004: 681), both require that the usages and meanings involved are already understood by the reader, that is, the metaphor or metonym activates the intended referent. The extended analogy I propose is not pre-established – its purpose is to generate new potential parallels that need to be explored.

The extended analogy I construct uses terminology from the area of speciation in biology and applies it to individual works and their translations. Esa Itkonen (2005: 1) discusses analogy as follows:

Analogy is generally defined as ‘structural similarity’. At the level of maximum generality, an analogical relationship obtains between two or more ‘wholes’ or ‘systems’ each of which has the same number of ‘parts’. The relation holding between the parts of a system is that of contiguity (or proximity), understood in a sense wide enough to cover both physical and non-physical cases.

I have modified the term by adding ‘extended’ to indicate that this is a structured attempt to build the analogy over time, using multiple points of comparison. However, I wish to note that other extended analogies are possible and may be better suited to other research areas – the crucial point is that the analogy must be productive and useful.

2.2 Metaphors for Translation

The word ‘translation’ itself has been discussed in terms of metaphor by a number of authors. Theo Hermans (2002) states:

In several Indo-European languages the terms for translation, with their metaphorical baggage, derive from the Latin “trans-latio” which itself translates the Greek “meta-phor”. We picture the translator as a relay station, as transformer and conduit at the same time. (Hermans 2002: 4)

Another to note the metaphorical nature of the name ‘translation’ is Pietro Dini (2009), who highlights the pitfalls of accepting metaphors uncritically – especially if we somehow internalise them subconsciously. He points out that in Europe translation is represented overwhelmingly by the “nouns *traduction, traducción, traduzione, tradução, translation, Übersetzung, perevod*, etc. The terms create an impression that it is possible to transfer something from one language to another properly and integrally” (387–388). He goes on to claim that this has contributed to the importance of equivalence in translation theory; metaphors can have unsuspected consequences due to the associations that they carry.

Maria Tymoczko (2002) has discussed the use of a scientific metaphor, in her case optics, to aid in discussion of what she calls the two ‘infinite orders’ in translation studies. She used the analogy of how microscopes and telescopes revolutionised science to discuss how Translation Studies had developed both towards detail on the one hand (e.g. phonetics and semantics) and expanded to broader issues on the other (e.g. semiology and socio-linguistics). She also discusses the metonymics of literature in translation in an earlier article, writing “[t]he choice of which metonymies to preserve has much to do with the translator’s purpose” (1995: 19). However, here she is concerned with the translation process itself, which differs from the concerns of Lakoff and Johnson – and from mine, as I focus not on the challenges of translation but of research.

In his introduction to *Thinking through Translation with Metaphors*, the editor, James St André, adopts a somewhat reserved stance to metaphors for translation despite their being the subject of the volume, noting that they obscure as often as they enlighten. Nonetheless, he himself points out that “there is growing recognition in the sciences that metaphors can be useful, not just as a tool to explain an already proven hypothesis, but also to think in new ways – to actually develop new models and paradigms” (2014: 5).

2.3 Metaphor within Translation Studies

We now move away from metaphors *about* translation studies to metaphors and analogies *within* translation studies. The use of metaphors in translation studies for translation and the process of translation has been present for some time. Andrew Chesterman (1997), in his book, *Memes of Translation: The spread of ideas in translation theory*, discusses the use of the meme metaphor, borrowed from sociobiology, to provide a new way of thinking about translation:

The metaphor comes from sociobiology: ideas spread, replicate themselves, like genes do. My motive in using this metaphor as an umbrella-idea to cover many aspects of this book is to provide an alternative to the traditional transfer metaphor of translation [...]. I offer the meme metaphor as a helpful way to look at translation. If it works as a way of stimulating new insights, fine; if not, we can forget about it. (Chesterman 1997:1)

His use of metaphor is essentially theoretical and focused upon the conception of translation at a broader level. This makes it quite different to my suggested usage of an extended analogy at the level of research involving translation rather than about translation itself. Nonetheless, his aim is to help in ‘stimulating new insights’ and the closing remark is important also for my purpose: if it helps, good; if it becomes a hindrance, it can be abandoned.

One way of utilising an analogy is to use it as a theoretical model, as does Martha Cheung (2012). She and Seán Golden together worked on a paradigm that used *tuishou*, ‘pushing-hands’, for work within translation studies and comparative cultural studies, respectively. Cheung used the yin-yang symbol to focus on the movement, change and dialogue involved between correlative pairs (162–163), whereas Golden’s (2016) yin-yang model metaphor incorporated existing depictions of cultural horizons and hermeneutic circles. As Cheung says, “For scholars in translation studies, the pushing-hands approach provides them with a fruitful mode of engagement with translation history and historical research on translation” (162). Of note for the present paper is the fact that she carefully refers to her idea as an ‘approach’.

It must be stressed, however, that the relation between conceptual approach and methods of application in any particular case is not unidirectional but one of continuous interaction, depending crucially on the specific object of research. That is why I call “pushing-hands” an “approach” and not a “research model”. (Cheung 2012: 163)

Whilst not metaphors, the use of methodologies from biology when researching languages in general has been put forward as long ago as the mid-19th century. Unni Leino et al. (2020) point out that “[t]he similarity between the differentiation of languages and biological species is not a new idea,” and quote August Schleicher (1863): “It is also one of my most spirited hopes that the methodology of natural sciences finds increasingly its way into linguistics” (Leino et al. 2020: 180). Both Leino et al. and Schleicher discuss and recommend methodologies, specific methods for investigating the point of interest being researched. This differs from my usage as my interest is in an analogy, which does not require similarities in patterns of research but rather provides creative stimulus and suggests further lines of enquiry.

Perhaps the closest parallel is with Terhi Honkola (2016). Although she does not mention it in the introduction to her doctoral thesis on the macro and microevolution of

languages, in the abstract she states that “approaches from evolutionary biology make it possible to revisit old questions ... with new methods, and adopt novel perspectives to pose novel questions” (2016: 4). Although she employs actual investigative methods and models from evolutionary biology, the phrase above is the closest to what can be gained from an extended analogy.

Examining the statements by the researchers above brings us to an important distinction regarding terms used and purpose for which the ideas are used. Cheung (2012) referred to the pushing-hands analogy as an approach allowing a mode of ‘engagement’, Schleicher (1863) to importing a ‘methodology’ from the natural sciences, Honkola (2016) to an approach that allows ‘new methods’, and Chesterman (1997) to a ‘metaphor’. I am not suggesting a methodology but an analogy as a tool to help the researcher to, as Honkola says, “adopt novel perspectives to pose novel questions,” an approach “depending crucially on the specific object of research” in the sense of Cheung (2012: 163).

3 An analogy as a tool

The function of an extended analogy is to encourage new strands of thinking and promote the discovery of parallels that then lead to creative ways forward in research. I justify the value of analogy as a tool in section 3.1 below, outlining how an analogy can be employed at different points in research, provide potential solutions to different types of problem and have different degrees of visibility. I discuss these elements in turn before introducing my extended analogy in section 3.2 and providing examples of how it can be applied in the sections that follow.

3.1 New perspectives

A good extended analogy allows a new perspective on the relations between the concepts studied, including, but not restricted to, the following: rethinking, discovery of new relationships and re-weighting of existing relationships. These are all highly useful, but it is not to be assumed that any given analogy will necessarily provide benefits for each of these elements – or in equal measure.

Rethinking is a jump in thought patterns and is a prerequisite for the subsequent two elements. By reconceiving of your subject matter in other terms, different approaches are possible. If you conceive of a process solely in a certain way, then your thinking may be conditioned, as discussed by Dini (2009) above, regarding seeing translation as a means of simply ‘carrying across’ something from one language/culture to another; for example, why not reconceive of translation as a ‘turning’ as does Finnish? New vantage points provide new patterns of thought and lead to the discovery of new relationships. For translation studies research, such a change could be to connect texts and their translations together not as a series of links in a chain but as a biological connection with genetic input from many sources and also variation over time and space.

In addition to new relationships, existing relationships may need reassessment in terms of their strength and relevance. In the context of translation studies, the influence of other translations can affect a text nominally translated from one language to another directly and the simple one-to-one relationship of author-translator and source text-target text often held to be standard or normal has been reconsidered with research on indirect

translations, especially compilative translations. This issue I return to later with regard to my analogy.

There are potential weaknesses in using an analogy, however. The aim of an analogy is to encourage thinking. Making lazy assumptions or being uncritical will reduce or remove the benefits entirely. If you work too hard to make an analogy somehow ‘fit’, that is a problem. It is the reverse of creativity as time is wasted in something fundamentally unnecessary. It is not important if you do not find equivalents to all features of the analogy as many issues may have no parallel.

A good analogy has specific uses and is used intentionally. Creation of an analogy can grant a license to speculate, to think outside the box, to use ‘blue sky thinking’. There are many ways to do this. By scribbling down what comes to mind when using an analogy, one can generate many potentially interesting points in a short time. A mind map may be used – this is especially good at visualising relationships, and parallels between the topic and the analogous element can be displayed as an image rather than as text. This allows the planning of a topic to occur as the different associated elements reveal themselves.

Another important aspect is visibility. This is the degree to which the readers of the final research work are aware of the existence of the analogy. An analogy can be considered to have high visibility when it is explicitly acknowledged within the text and is introduced, explained and developed as a more-or-less integral part of the work. If used in a low visibility manner, the analogy may appear occasionally; a point of comparison may be made here and there, or examples may be drawn from the analogous concept, but it does not imprint itself on the work in the same way as a high-visibility analogy does. Finally, an invisible analogy is disassembled and removed from the work after the research phase; the reader is unaware it has been used. Its purpose is served in the creative stage and plays no role in the structure or appearance of the final work. Naturally, the analogy is fully visible in this present paper as it is itself the focus.

3.2 Speciation as an analogy

The analogy I propose is speciation, borrowed from the realm of ecology. I will show how the analogy developed through two stages, beginning as a little more than a taxonomy to allow analogy between a biological taxonomy on the one hand and a literary taxonomy on the other. In the following stage, the focus moved to the species level with parallels between how a species evolves over time and in different environments. This demonstrates one way in which an analogy can be constructed – not all analogies present themselves immediately as fully-fledged, productive equivalents to the research material. In this case, it was developed in steps as successful parts of the analogy suggested further change and refinement. While the analogy is still not fully explored, and I expect it to provide further material in the future, it is important to clarify that other analogies could also be created for other researchers working in different areas.

The idea of an analogy as a tool is clearly not itself theoretically dependent upon eco-translation as a theoretical body, but the specific analogy I have chosen is certainly in sympathy with its ideas and can contribute to work in that area. In his 2003 article “Translation as adaptation and selection”, Hu Gengshen states as follows:

In the triangle of ‘source text-translator-target text’, the ‘translator’ is the subject, while both ‘source text’ and ‘target text’ are the objects. According to the Darwinian principles of ‘natural selection’

and ‘survival of the fittest’ (1859), only ‘organic beings’ (animals and plants) have the ability of adapting themselves to the environment. (2003: 284)

However, this idea prioritises ‘adaptation’ in a sense that seems intentional, whereas natural selection lacks intentionality. The focus on the translator as noted above and the observation that follows, “since adaptation and selection in translating are due to the translator” (284), do not allow for what can be learnt by focusing on the texts themselves as does my use of speciation as an analogy.

A second point that suggests this is a possible gap is that a few lines earlier Hu says, “A ‘translational eco-environment’ refers to the worlds of the source text and the source and target languages, comprising the linguistic, communicative, cultural, and social aspects of translating, as well as the author, client, and readers” (2003: 284). Target texts as independent entities are again absent. Use of the speciation analogy would serve to shine the spotlight on these, too.

4 Initial creation and application of the analogy

In this section, I show the first stage that the analogy developed through to its present state, providing an example of how an analogy may be constructed. I also show how this initial structure proved unsatisfactory as an analogy, being largely unproductive, though not a complete dead end as it nonetheless formed a stepping stone to the speciation analogy I eventually created. I provide this stage as an example of how analogies can develop; they do not necessarily spring to life fully-formed – the researcher must construct an analogy relevant to their needs.

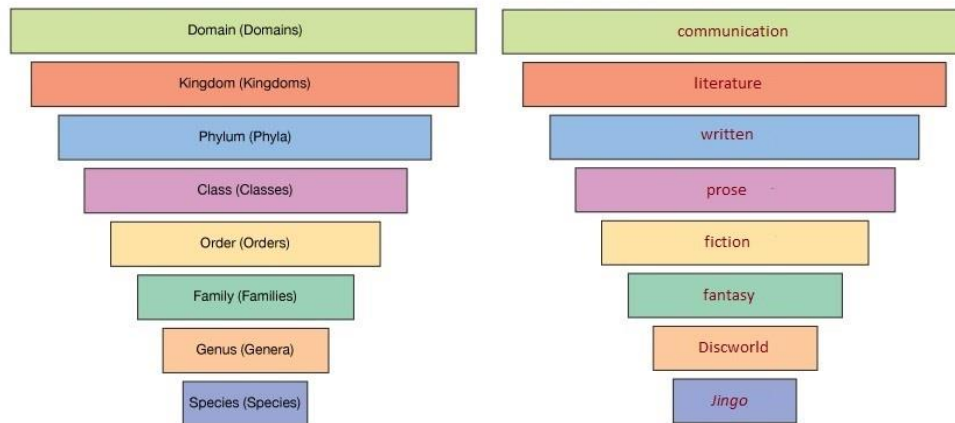
My motivation for developing the analogy was to open up new lines of consideration for my research. I wanted to rethink relationships, both in terms of discovering new connections and in terms of re-weighting existing ones. I was interested in the connections between various works and their translations and felt that a new vantage point might help me explore any connections I was missing and consider existing ones in a fresh light.

In my research, I am examining the translation into Finnish of the Discworld series by Terry Pratchett, with particular attention paid to how the translator has dealt with cultural references. My research material is the novel *Jingo* (1997) and its translation by Mika Kivimäki, *Pojat urhokkaat* (2007). Other works could equally well have been represented here in this category as its role is to serve as an example.

4.1 A taxonomy as a basic analogy

I began developing the analogy by creating a taxonomy. I considered how one could classify written works in a manner parallel to the phylogenetic system of biological science. It quickly extended upwards to include communication (analogous to the domain) and downwards to an individual novel (analogous to the species), as displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1: A Literary Phylogenetic Classification



However, while providing an interesting perspective, the simple mapping of one system onto another alone generated little that was new. After mapping, the areas that were of greatest interest were the lowest, and it became clear that it was unnecessary to investigate categories higher than the family. Even the family level merely served to provide a category that contained the genus ‘Discworld novels’. In terms of creating an analogy, this was a first step and one that was largely unsuccessful as in many ways it was simply substitution. Other researchers, constructing other analogies, can expect similar (mis)steps. However, focusing on the species level led to a better, more extended analogy.

4.2 The novel as species

If each novel is a species, then each individual novel in the Discworld series is analogous to another species in the same environment. The idea of multiple similar species in competition, co-existing or in symbiotic relationships is something that will be returned to later in this paper. Here, I begin to focus on the relationship between a species and its other versions and translations.

The definition of species in biology is fraught with difficulty. A common line of reasoning considers whether two animal types can interbreed and produce young capable of further reproduction – thus dogs are one species despite the differences in breed, but horses and donkeys are not, since, despite being able to have offspring, these offspring are sterile. How would this work for book species? We can here consider the text to be the DNA; thus, when sufficiently different, as the individual novels naturally are, they are not the same species. Using the masculine noun *liber* (book) as the basis for the declined form of the adjective, I produced the following for the English-language original work:

Family	fantasy novel
Genus	Discworld novels
Nominate species	<i>jingo anglicus scriptus</i>

In biological taxonomic systems the ‘nominate species’ is actually a sub-species itself, but as the first of the sub-species to be identified and described it is known as the nominate sub-species – it gives its name to the species as a whole.

The idea of the species as a specific work (novel/book) was sufficiently robust that it was used as a springboard to develop the analogy further. Other terms were now added that are related to biological categories – sub-species and varieties (the latter borrowed from the botanical taxonomic nomenclature). I elaborate on these in the following section.

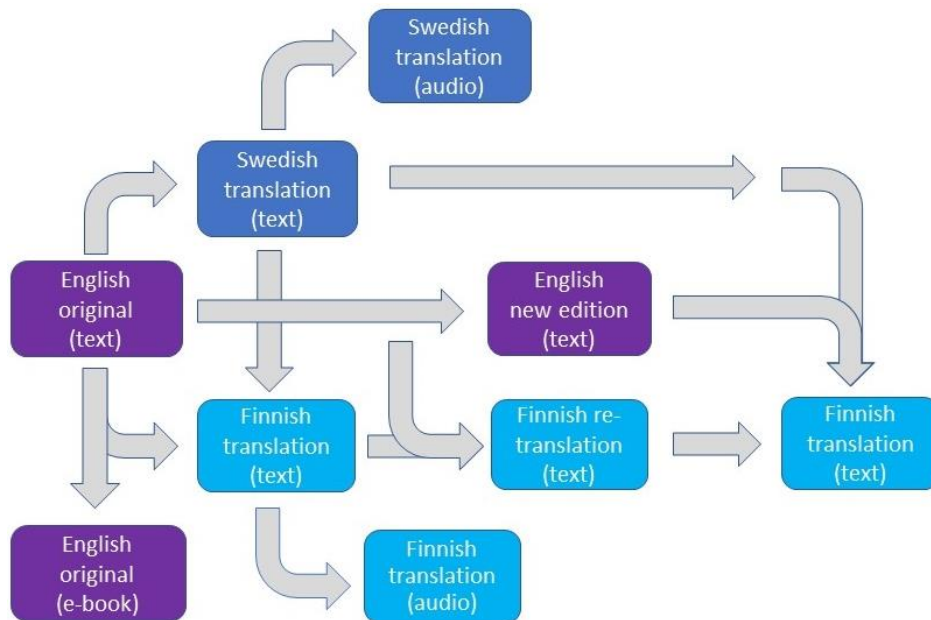
5 Extending the analogy – sub-species and varieties

With the use of the term ‘species’ to describe an individual work, several questions became immediately apparent, the most interesting of which are:

- How does a book ‘species’ relate to other works?
- How does this book species relate to a ‘translated’ species, that is, its own translation(s)?
- How do these translation ‘species’ relate to each other?

The issue of relationships between a work and its translation(s) is one that has been widely discussed; I addressed these issues through the biological analogy, making a step forward in complexity. Figure 2 below outlines some straightforward theoretical relationships between English language texts (purple), some Swedish translations (darker blue) and some Finnish translations (lighter blue). These are not research results but indicative of relationships to allow discussion.

Figure 2: Text relationships



The texts move chronologically from left to right with the source text to the left and the most recent text to the right. None of the positions are spaced or measure time in an exact manner, so works aligned vertically do not necessarily match precisely in terms of theoretical publication, but are roughly contemporaneous in terms of stages of development. Five stages in the sequence are present in the horizontal plane. Some works

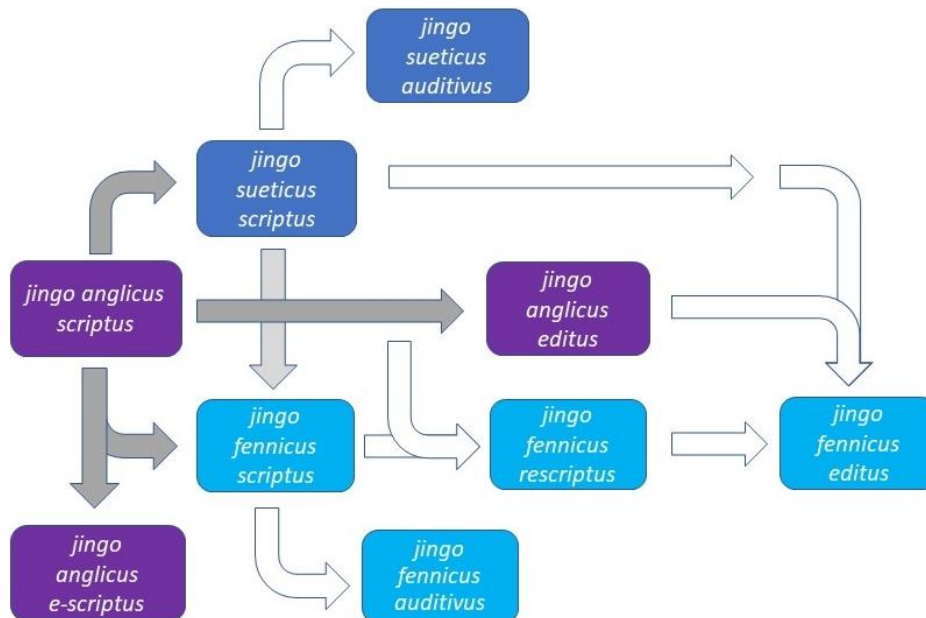
would be published throughout much of the timeframe (e.g. the original English e-book or the Swedish translation), others would be phased out (e.g. the English original text or the theoretical Finnish re-translations).

Only some of the translations shown are directly from the English source text. The audio versions are based upon their respective written translations, and others would be compilative translations in the sense set out by Laura Ivaska (2020: 29): “there are several mediating texts in different mediating languages, and/or because the languages may include a combination of the ultimate SL, the mediating languages, and/or the ultimate TL.” Examples here would be the Finnish initial translation, the Finnish retranslation and the Finnish translation of the new edition. Having set out the system of relations in a theoretical sense, we can turn to view the situation through the analogy.

5.1 Sub-species

In terms of the biological analogy, there are strong parallels that can be made. By considering an example of the translation of the source text *Jingo* into Finnish and Swedish, we can create the situation set out in Figure 3, below. I have modified the nomenclature as trinomials and structured it as follows: the name of the species, the name of the sub-species and the name of the variety, the latter of which I will discuss in section 5.2. The darker arrows are existing confirmed relationships, the light grey arrow indicates a potential relationship currently being investigated in my research, and the remaining white arrows are theoretical only but important for the discussion below as they indicate further possible areas of investigation.

Figure 3: Species and varieties



How do we describe the relationships here in terms of the analogy? To begin at the level of the language involved, three of the entries in the first two vertically aligned sections are sub-species. The element ‘scriptus’ in the name indicates a written text, the first in its

genealogy (the element ‘e-scriptus’ will be discussed in section 5.2 below). These three comprise the original work in its text form, *jingo anglicus scriptus* and the two sub-species in Swedish and Finnish, *jingo sueticus scriptus* and *jingo fennicus scriptus*, respectively. These two sub-species have adapted to live in an environment different from the English-speaking landscape – in Swedish-speaking and Finnish-speaking environments. The language used (and culture it inhabits) defines and determines the sub-species.

The relationship between the original work and the translations is interesting when considered in the light of this analogy. As mentioned earlier, in biology the first sub-species to be described becomes the nominate sub-species and while this does give it primacy in terms of naming and in chronology, it is otherwise considered no more important than any other sub-species. One can argue that we can find justification here for a movement away from the source text, as with skopos theory, a sort of ‘death of the source text’ if we borrow, *mutatis mutandis*, from Roland Barthes: “The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text’s unity lies not in its origin but in its destination” (Barthes 1982: 148). Clearly, Barthes’ focus is on the author-reader relationship, but if the ‘reader’ is the sub-species and the ‘quotations’ are the genetic input, the speciation analogy would lend weight also to the idea of a work being independent of its progenitors; after all, it is a new species in a new environment. The appearance and behaviour of the species no longer reflects the exigencies of life associated with its original home but rather those of its new linguistic, cultural and social environment.

Leena Laiho works on the ontological status of literary translations vis-à-vis their source text, and in the conclusion to her doctorate she addresses the issue of this relationship. She concludes that “it is not the same literary work as the original subjected to translation but not another work either” (2021:48). This certainly accords well with the idea of the relationship of a sub-species with others of its wider family. She uses an analogy to express the complex ontological position of a translation: “the relationship between a literary translation and an original is similar to the relationship between a musical performance and a composition as an original work” (2021:48). She feels that a translation, like a performance of a piece of music, represents the source text or original score in its new environment. Based upon the application of the speciation analogy, I would tend to agree.

5.2 Varieties

The term ‘variety’ used here is borrowed from the botanical nomenclature. It presents an interesting further sub-category below that of sub-species that allows consideration of other versions of texts that are created and aids in exploring their relationships both with each other and with the sub-species above them.

As noted above, the element ‘scriptus’ in the name indicates a written text that was the first in that sub-species’ genealogy. This type of ‘variety name’ is added to the main subspecies to aid with comparisons. The alternatives to ‘scriptus’ used here are ‘editus’ (an edited version), ‘rescriptus’ (a retranslation), ‘e-scriptus’ (an e-book version) and ‘auditivus’ (an audio book version).

We have already considered the ‘dethroning’ of the source text when considering the relationship between the main sub-species; however, when considering other forms of

translation, specifically compilative translation, there is an even stronger case to make. A translation that draws from several distinct sources (though to differing degrees) would clearly be compilative, as in the case of *jingo fennicus scriptus* in Table 3. To a degree, there must be considered to be a ‘flow of genes’ between these various versions of the source text, with some sources dominant, so we can conceive of the changes that occur being caused by ‘genetic input’ from elsewhere.

This can be considered to be the creation of the text varieties being paralleled by epigenetics in biology – not actual permanent changes in the DNA but in how the genes activate:

Epigenetics (also sometimes called epigenomics) is a field of study focused on changes in DNA that do not involve alterations to the underlying sequence. The DNA letters and the proteins that interact with DNA can have chemical modifications that change the degrees to which genes are turned on and off. Certain epigenetic modifications may be passed on from parent cell to daughter cell during cell division or from one generation to the next. The collection of all epigenetic changes in a genome is called an epigenome. (National Human Genome Research Institute)

Thus, we can consider different varieties as existing in different environments. Some varieties co-habit with and overlap with other sub-species and varieties, possible examples being e-books, audio books, illustrated volumes, large print versions etc.

They face differing conditions, triggering changes that make them suited to specific locations/audiences. Further genetic exchange can occur between varieties as audio books and e-books, etc. can also go through the process of editing or even retranslation/rerecording.

Retranslations and edited volumes are varieties chronologically speaking; they inhabit slightly different environments, the pressures of which have created change. This implies that they form the genetic basis for potential new sub-species. If older works are withdrawn from sale due to societal pressures, this may lead to varieties ousting their predecessors and occupying their ecological niche. Examples of such pressures would be changes in the language itself (older words or phrases), changes in the acceptability of language (use of racist or sexist terms), changes in the relevance of reference points or values (forgotten or out of date) etc. This is the inherent difference in these varieties – retranslations and new editions have the capability to supplant the original sub-species over time, at least in part, whereas varieties such as e-books do not replace sub-species but co-exist with them chronologically, just in a slightly differing environment.

6 The cultural environment as ecosystem – the work as species

The features of the ecosystem in which it finds itself must be conducive to its survival and reproduction. There must be sufficient food and shelter and few threats. What might this mean in the context of translation? I consider this in terms of the cultural environment, by which I mean the degree to which the time and place favour the introduction or proliferation of the new species, whether as a source text or a translation.

6.1 How species ‘transfer’

One cause behind the transfer of a species to new surroundings is that a change in local ecology favours the species and attracts it. This requires potential manners of transfer.

The well-established translation industry terms ‘pitch’ and ‘catch’ are candidates here. Pitching could be seen as intentional species introduction, where the translator deliberately sets out to create the new sub-species, and catching could be understood to be unintentional from the translator’s perspective, that the species attempts the transfer in some way of its own volition. Naturally, the introduction of the source text in a country that shares the language also fits this pattern – for example, a British work being published in the US – it does not have to be a translation.

Some features change when such a transfer takes place, whereas others are retained – for instance, humour is always relevant if that is part of the genre written in and accepted as such in both the source and target contexts, but cultural references may throw up difficulties. In translation, some of these may be shed or adopted/adapted to fit better with the new ecosystem, but this can also happen to texts being adapted intralingually, such as the changes made to the English-language versions of the Harry Potter series for the US audience – the title of the first book in the series in the UK was *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, whereas in the US it was published as *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*. The speciation analogy provides an explanation of the pressures on texts, even intralingual ones, in evolutionary terms.

6.2 Cultural environment

This section presents two examples of how the cultural environment may favour new works, or species. First, the success of a particular novel or television series can spark a genre – creating new species. Secondly, the success of a particular work or series can create a demand for translations – sub-species.

From the early to mid-1990s to the present, there has been a sudden burst in interest in what is known as Scandinavian noir (or Nordic noir). This began as detective novels and has grown into well-known TV series and films. Notable authors include Stieg Larsson with the three books in his Millennium trilogy, the most famous of which is probably *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (its English title), and Henning Mankell’s *Kurt Wallander* series, published throughout the 1990s to 2009 in Swedish and translated into English from 1997 until the final novel translated by Laurie Thompson in 2014, the year before Mankell’s death (Henning Mankell 2024). In addition to the books, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* was released as a film in 2011, and the TV series *The Bridge* appeared in that same year in Scandinavia and in 2012 in the UK, with three more seasons by 2018. The popularity of the genre has grown and grown, and at the time of writing there are 57 authors listed as contributing to the genre on the Wikipedia page dedicated to the subject (Nordic noir 2024).

It is clear that the success of a work, or several similar works, can inspire others to write in the same style, creating a fertile environment – a form of symbiosis as the books receive funding, exposure and critical acclaim in the media that is then shared with others. This happened in the case of Scandinavian noir both in terms of original texts and of translations and adaptations. This can also happen within established genres when an event occurs that shakes up the environment – as happened with the Harry Potter series and its effect on the translation of the Terry Pratchett Discworld series into Finnish.

When the first of the Terry Pratchett Discworld books was translated into Finnish in 1993, there were 14 works in the series that needed to be translated, yet by 2002 this number had actually grown to 17 despite translation continuing throughout that time. This

is partly due to the prolific rate at which Pratchett wrote and published, but the fact that only ten had been translated by that date reveals that the rate of translation was barely one a year, despite the fact that Pratchett had sold close to 25 million books by 2002. Something was making the publisher somewhat dilatory about having the books translated as there were several different translators and the works were often published in no particular order. Then came the success of Harry Potter and the speed of translation changed markedly.

In 2002, a different translator, Mika Kivimäki, was employed by the publishing house Karisto, specifically to translate the Discworld series (Kivimäki, e-mail to author, 22.07.2022). He began with *Sourcery* in 2002, and the remaining 30 Discworld novels were all translated by 2018, doubling the speed that they had been translated at before. The first three Harry Potter books had been published in 1997, 1998 and 1999, and it is notable that in 2001 the first of the Harry Potter films was released, bringing a whole new fan base to the franchise. Whilst it is certainly possible to consider the authors and their works to (have) be(en) rivals, it is also clear that in this case, the presence of other highly successful similar works served to encourage rather than prevent. Fantasy literature was very much in demand: the climate had changed – the environment became favourable.

8 Conclusion

Not all parallels are necessarily suitable for developing into an extended analogy that permits a large-scale comparison providing a new perspective and encouraging creative new lines of enquiry. Some risk becoming the “single-sentence or, at most, single-paragraph ideas raised only then to be immediately abandoned” that St. André cautions against, continuing by saying that “[s]uch use of metaphors does little to advance our knowledge of translation” (St. André 2014: 3). He adds that, “In all too many cases the metaphors do not, upon close examination, provide much in the way of fresh insights” (2014: 4). He is speaking of metaphors, but these risks apply also to analogies. However, the speciation analogy works well – it has produced new aspects to consider, and it continues to produce new avenues of enquiry.

The speciation analogy remains to be explored in full. Investigating the evolutionary pressures on a work and even on a series of works has the potential to reveal a great deal about competing works and authors. Research could pursue which authors appeared together at public events and formed overlapping fanbases, as well as which seemed antagonistic – or whose fans adopt an either-or attitude. Consideration of the on-line world, the new frontier for fan-fiction and fan-translation, could also reveal how support for a work, series or author is mustered and enacted, so providing a broader ecological niche for those most successful. For any researcher interested in pursuing this, there is much still to uncover.

Through this introduction of the speciation extended analogy, I offer an additional level of comparison to that of metaphor and metonymy as used in discussion of translation as a theoretical concept and in the process of translation. I have sought to show the benefits of this approach to research. I have, I hope, made it clear that I do not expect each element of an analogy to have a counterpart that it matches perfectly in all details – it would be extraordinary if they did –, instead, the analogy should suggest and provoke: it is the researcher’s job to analyse, rejecting areas that are redundant or unproductive, and to accept, develop and explore areas that are promising.

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