UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA

PROGRAMA DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM LÍNGUA INGLESA E LITERATURA CORRESPONDENTE

ON TRANSLATABILITY: AS ILLUSTRATED BY THE EQUIVALENCE BETWEEN ENGLISH AND PORTUGUESE PROVERBS

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SUMÁRIO

Esta dissertação aborda a questão da traduzibilidade de provérbios do inglês para o português. Dentre as diferentes abordagens sobre tradução, a teoria de equivalência formal e dinâmica de Eugene A. Nida foi escolhida como a mais adequada,visto que ela explica a traduzibilidade com base nos universais de linguagem e de cultura. Os provérbios são analisados sob dois aspectos: (1) equivalência formal; e (2) equivalência dinâmica. Em vista das limitações pertinentes àquela, apenas quinze provérbios de equivalência formal são dados como exemplo. Como a equivalência dinâmica propicia uma ampla margem de possibilidades, foram escolhidos cinco campos semânticos, a título de ilustração. Assim, ficou constatado que os provérbios de equivalência dinâmica superam os de equivalência formal.

Ficou concluído que, ao invés de tradução, o termo 'equivalência' é mais adequado, quando se comparam provérbios em inglês e português. Ficou ainda constatado que existem três grandes categorias de provérbios: (1) os que apresentam equivalência plena, em forma e em conteúdo; (2) os que apresentam apenas equivalência de conteúdo e não de forma; e (3) os que não apresentam qualquer equivalência, seja de conteúdo, seja de forma, mas cujas mensagens podem ser entendidas por outros povos num determinado contexto.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation discusses the translatability of proverbs from English into Portuguese. From among the different approaches to translation, Eugene A. Nida's theory of formal and dynamic equivalence has been selected as the most suitable, for it explains translatability on the basis of both language and cultural universals. The proverbs are analysed under two aspects: (1) formal equivalence; and (2) dynamic equivalence. Because of the limitations involving the former, only fifteen of such proverbs are given as examples. Since dynamic equivalence entails a wide range of possibilities, five semantic fields have been selected for the purpose of illustration. It has been found that dynamically equivalent proverbs by far outnumber formally equivalent proverbs.

It was concluded that rather than translation of proverbs, equivalence is the most suitable word when comparing proverbs in English and Portuguese. It has also been found that there are three major categories of proverbs: (1) those with full equivalent, in form and in meaning; (2) those with an equivalent in meaning but not in form; and (3) those without an equivalent, either in form or in meaning, but whose messages can be understood by other peoples in a certain context.

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INTRODUCTION

I had always thought that every language was provided with its own particular repertoire of proverbs. However, some time ago, to my surprise, I realized that the English language also had proverbs which I thought were essentially Brazilian.

At first, I noticed that some English proverbs were like a literal translation of their Portuguese counterparts (or perhaps, it was the other way around). Then, I noticed other English proverbs which although did not have a literal Portuguese equivalent as far as form was concerned, they had meanings similar to those of the Brazilian proverbs. Besides there were still some Brazilian proverbs which did not have any English translation or equivalent whatsoever, and vice-versa.

The main purpose of this dissertation is to analyze the translatability or untranslatability of proverbs. That is to say, in the area of translation, I am interested in finding out whether there is such a thing as translation of proverbs from English to Portuguese, and, if so, how, when, why and

under which circumstances this occurs or fails to occur.

I also want to find out why some proverbs in English are so similar in form and meaning to their Portuguese counterparts; why other proverbs in English and in Portuguese have the same meaning but a different form; and, finally, why there are proverbs in English and in Portuguese which are unique, that is that cannot be translated.

In addition to that, I want to see if there are any models or basic guidelines applicable to the translation of proverbs from English to Portuguese.

Therefore, in order to achieve this goal, first I used Gerardo Vázquez-Ayora's review of translating techniques, in which he presents and discusses what he calls the French-Canadian and the American schools of translation, and introduces his own 'integrated model'. Besides these three techniques, I also chose to analyze the theories on translation of six renowned scholars and, from among all nine approaches reviewed, I have selected one model which I thought to be the most suitable to the translation of proverbs from English into Portuguese.

The subject matter has been divided into four chapters. In chapter one, I present the nine current approaches to translation and choose Nida's theory of formal and dynamic equivalence as a model for the translation of proverbs from English into Portuguese. In chapter two, I provide an overall picture of Nida's concept of translating so as to familiarize the reader with the basic lines which govern his principles of equivalence. Chapter three is a detailed analysis of two major items, i.e. 'kernel constructions' and cultural universals, on

the basis of which Nida has probably laid the groundwork for his theory of equivalence, which is also fully discussed there. Chapter four defines and provides the main characteristics of proverbs and illustrates Nida's theory of equivalence as applied to the translation of proverbs from English into Portuguese. Finally, some conclusions are drawm.

CHAPTER ONE

CURRENT APPROACHES TO TRANSLATION

In this chapter, I will discuss Gerardo Vázquez-Ayora's presentation and criticism of the American and French-Canadian schools of translation. To my knowledge, Ayora's is the only review of translating procedures which analyses translating techniques from a different viewpoint: geographical division of areas. Hence, my choice of his work.

I will also discuss Ayora's own 'integrated model' of translation and I will present six other approaches to translation which I have selected from among some of the most renowned and representative scholars.

Finally, I will choose one from among all the approaches discussed which in my opinion is the most suitable, at least as far as translation of proverbs is concerned.

1.1. The American School and the French-Canadian School

Although the art of translation is one of the oldest professions known, according to Vázquez-Ayora in his book

Introducción a la Traductologia (1977), it was not until the last two decades that the technical procedures of stylistic performance in connection with translation methodology were defined with the advent of two systems or schools which have set forth the guidelines and laid the foundations for the development of a theoretical and linguistic history of translation: the American school and the French-Canadian school.

The American school, represented by Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, has introduced a theory of three basic components — analysis, transfer and re-structuralization — as the most relevant stages in any translating procedure. As Ayora points out, this is a rather complex system which can only be followed and developed by those who know perfectly well all the principles which govern the structuralization of scientific semantics or by those who are thoroughly familiar with the theory of generative transformational grammar. That is to say, the most outstanding issue relevant to this system is a deep analysis through transformational and structural semantic means as well as through notions pertaining to the theory of communication.

Thus, in order to be able to carry out an effective analysis as defined by this school, the translator must be familiar with current linguistic theories, basic concepts and particular structures of the languages involved in his work. Only then will he be able to have a full understanding of such important items as universals of language, lexical semantic categories as well as interferences and differences between syntax and semantics. In other words, the translator must have a sound knowledge of the contribution and application of

contemporary linguistics — especially of generative transformational grammar — to translation so as to go from the surface to the underlying structures of a text, to analyze their contents and pertinent relations and to make the transfers at that level.

Once the transfers have been carried out at that level, the translator will then re-structure the message in the most suitable manner so as to provide a naturalness of expression in the target language. The idea is that the methodology of all translating procedure should be based upon an exhaustive analysis which may establish a transfer level far less complex than that of the surface structure. Furthermore, as Ayora asserts, the special emphasis placed upon analysis does not necessarily mean neglect of orientation toward the results or the general effects deriving from adaptations, alterations and conditionings of the text, both at the lexical and at the syntactic levels.

Both Nida and Taber seem to agree that the critical issue involving faithful transmission of a message is a full approach by means of dynamic and spontaneous correspondences and through the recognition — by the translator — of the borderline of different cultures and different linguistic issues involved in a translation process so as to achieve the most natural equivalence.

The French-Canadian school comprises such followers of Ferdinand de Saussure as M. Strohmeyer, André Martinet, Charles Bally, Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet, among others.

As noted by Vázquez-Ayora, according to this school, the fundamental step of all translating process is analysis methodically performed both at the lexical level and at the level of linguistic utterances. The mainstays of the French-Canadian school are Saussure's theories of linguistic signs and the duality between 'langue' and 'parole'; André Martinet's theory of double articulation of languages; and Charles Bally's stylistic principles. In addition to that, the notions of linguistics as well as the concepts of situational and metalinguistic contexts are taken into account as important elements for any translating procedure and, just like in the American school, special emphasis is also placed upon sociocultural differences of languages. Unlike the American school, however, the French-Canadian school does not use the principle of generative transformational grammar or linguistic semantics in its analysis.

In short, it can be said that the French-Canadian school has a different approach to the translation problem in that it applies processes to adjust, alter, adapt and condition the context, in addition to expanding the syntax. Actually, these processes give rise to what Peter Newmark in his book Approaches to Translation (1981:10) calls Vinay and Dalbernet's seven procedures of translating, namely transliteration, loan translation, literal translation, transposition, modulation, equivalence and adaptation.

Ayora states that although the American school is essentially based on analysis, it certainly lacks a methodological taxonomy as well as defined techniques of application which make its procedures dilute and disperse in such a chaotic manner that it is quite difficult to follow them

suitably. Besides that, he also feels that the principles which govern its theory are almost always abstract and difficult to classify, bearing such excessively general concepts as adjustments, alterations, adaptations, dynamic dimensions, contextual conditioning, syntactic expansion, etc.

Ayora also finds fault with the French-Canadian school in that in spite of the fact that it develops methods of stylistic performance, it runs the risk of converting such performance into a mechanical application since it ignores the transformational and structural semantics which accounts for the elements underlying the organization of semantic and inter-structural relations.

1.2. Ayora's 'Integrated Model'

Ayora's 'integrated model' comprises two main technical translating procedures: literal translation and free or oblique translation.

By literal, he means the type of translation in which between the source-language (SL) text and the target-language (TL) text there is full and exact correspondence of structure and meaning, and equivalence is achieved on a moneme-for-moneme basis. The great shortcoming of this type of translation, in his opinion, is that it applies to very few cases only.

Oblique or free translation comes very close to what Ayora calls the ideal of a true translation. This ideal is reached by means of procedures of stylistic performance divided into two categories: (a) main procedures, consisting of transposition, modulation, equivalence and adaptation; and (b) complementary

procedures, comprising amplification, explicitness, omission and compensation.

The main purpose of transposition is to reach a naturalness of expression at all levels in the target language. That is to say, in this translating procedure one part of the SL text is replaced by a different part which in the TL text carries the main semantic meaning of the original text. This theory is based upon the principle that the same semantic strength may exist in two different forms. Ayora points out the following varieties of transposition, among others: a) adverb/verb; b) adverb/noun; c) adverb/adjective; d) past participle/noun; e) verb/adverb; f) verb/adjective; g) adjective/noun; h) adjective/verb; i) past participle/adjective.

Modulation is a principle of stylistics involving a change of conceptual basis within a certain sentence but without altering its meaning, thus resulting in what Ayora calls a 'modified viewpoint or a different metaphorical basis.' In other words, the meaning must be the same but the symbols used in one language are different from those employed in the other language.

Ayora divides varieties of modulation into the following categories: a) the abstract for the concrete or the general for the particular; b) explicative modulation (the cause for the effect, the means for the result, the substance for the object); c) the part for the whole; d) one part for the other; e) inversion of terms or of viewpoints; f) opposite in negative; g) modulation of form, aspect and use; h) change of comparison or symbol. Ayora sees equivalence as an extreme case of modulation closely related to human experience and hence

providing each language with its own characteristics and symbols. Following this procedure, the same situation may be expressed through completely different stylistic and cultural means.

Adaptation occurs when the same meaning is expressed in another language through an equivalent situation. This translating procedure is applied in such cases where the situation should evoke an idea or a message which does not exist in the TL thus making it necessary for the translator to create another situation which may evoke the same idea.

As for the remaining technical procedures introduced by Ayora, amplification undoubtedly seems more important than both explicitness and compensation. Amplification is an expansion, in the target language, of the corresponding configurations presented in the source language and can be performed as follows: a) amplification of verb; b) amplification of adjective; c) amplification of pronoun; d) amplification of demonstrative; and e) amplification of prepositions through:

1) a noun;

2) a verb; and

3) a past participle.

Explicitness is the translating procedure through which what is implicit in the SL context is explained and expressed in the TL text. Omission aims at conciseness and is intended to avoid unnecessary amplifications which may be caused by repetitions, tautologies and excessive redundancies. Compensation is based on the difficulty — by the translator — of finding a natural and correct equivalence which may make up for any loss of meaning or of content which may occur in the course of a translating process.

1.3. Six other approaches to translation

In addition to the two schools analysed by Ayora and to his own theory on translation, I would say that many other linguists and scholars representative of several different currents have also tackled the problem of translation using different approaches.

Although there are distinct views on translation from the ones I will discuss further in this chapter, I have selected six which in my opinion supply enough evidence of how complex and controversial this issue is.

1.3.1. J.C. Catford's approach

In A Linguistic Theory of Translation (1965), J.C. Catford defines three broad types or categories of translation in terms of the extent, the levels and the ranks of translation: a) full versus partial translation; b) total versus restricted translation; c) rank-bound versus unbounded translation.

In a full translation process every part of the SL text is substituted by the TL material whereas in a partial translation there is merely a transfer or incorporation of part(s) of the SL text.

Total translation means the type of translation in which all levels of the SL text are replaced by TL material, i.e. nouns are replaced by nouns; verbs are replaced by verbs; adjectives by adjectives; adverbs by adverbs, etc. in a translating process similar to that of literal translation. Restricted translation means, as Catford puts it, "replacement of the SL material by equivalent textual material at only one of the two levels of grammar and lexis" (p.22).

A rank scale is that on which units are grouped in a grammatical or phonological hierarchy. Catford uses Halliday's (1976) hierarchy of five units in English grammar. The highest of such units on the rank scale is the sentence and the lowest is the morpheme. Between these two in descending order we find the clause, the group and the word. Every sentence consists of one or more than one clause, every clause of one or more than one group, every group of one more than one word, and every word of one or more than one morpheme.

A rank-bound translation is that in which the choice of TL equivalents is intentionally limited to one rank in the hierarchy of grammatical units. According to Catford, machine translation is rank-bound since the translating process is performed at word or morpheme rank, in the sense that there may be word-to-word or morpheme-to-morpheme equivalents but not equivalence between high rank units such as clause or sentence.

On the other hand, an unbounded translation is that in which equivalents are allowed "to shift freely up and down the rank scale" (p.25). To this effect, Catford maintains that the so-called free translation is always unbounded, for equivalence displaces freely up and down the rank scale. A word-for-word translation, in turn, is rank-bound while a literal type of translation lies between these two extremes.

Another very interesting aspect of Catford's theory is the distinction he makes between linguistic and cultural untranslatability. A translation is considered linguistically untranslatable when there is no lexical or syntactical substitute in the TL for an SL item. A translation is considered culturally untranlatable when the TL culture lacks a

relevant situational and/or cultural characteristic introduced in the SL text.

1.3.2. Peter Newmark's approach

In his book Approaches to Translation (1981:12), Peter Newmark quotes Cauer's theory of 1896, according to which "the translation should be as literal as possible and as free as is necessary", and introduces two types of translation: communicative and semantic. The former aims at creating in its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained by the readers of the original material. The latter attempts to render "as closely as the semantic structures of the second language allow the exact contextual meaning of the original" (p.39).

While communicative translation addresses itself exclusively to the second reader who is not supposed to foresee any difficulties, problems or obscurities when reading the text and who would certainly not expect a generous transfer of foreign items into his own culture, semantic translation remains within the original culture and is bound to be more complex, more awkward, more detailed and more concentrated, unlike communicative translation which tends to be smoother, simpler, clearer, more direct and more conventional.

As Peter Newmark observes, in a communicative translation the translator is bound to use "more generic hold-all terms in difficult passages" (p.39), i.e. he is likely to undertranslate, whereas in a semantic translation there is a tendency for the translator to be more specific than the original, i.e. to overtranslate. A communicative type of translation emphasizes what Newmark calls the 'force' rather than the context of the

message. Also, in a communicative translation it is assumed that the translator is trying in his own language to write a little better than the original since one is entitled to correct or enhance the logic of the text, to replace clumsy with elegant forms, to remove obscurities, to eliminate repetitions and to normalize eccentricities of idiolect.

Peter Newmark also admits that

> Communicative and semantic translation bifurcate at a later stage of analytical or cognitive translation, which is a pre-translation procedure which may be performed on the source-language text to convert it into the source or the target language - the resultant versions will be closer to each other than the original text and the final translation (p.40).

That is to say, in the pre-translation process a text is reduced to simple language before it can be reconverted into the corresponding jargon. Actually, this process entails a good deal of interpretation by the translator.

1.3.3. Wolfram Will' approach

Wolfram Wills, who is constantly quoting von Humboldt's view that thought is dependent on language and that in spite of all structural differences among individual languages, translation is ultimately possible, in his book The Science of Translation (1982), holds that

> apparent untranslatability brought about by interlingual structural incompatiblities among individual languages and the thought processes of individual speech communities can be countered with potential translatability (p.36).

From this statement, it can be inferred that Wills firmly and strongly believes in the existence of semantic and

syntactic universals, including universal pragmatics, which make comparisons between languages possible, despite the fact that the surface structure realizations taken on by these universals may vary.

Wills thinks that the difference between literal translation and free translation

> amounts to a basic decision on the methodology of translation which commits the translator either to an SL - oriented, retrospective, or to a TL - oriented, prospective translation approach (p.87).

Furthermore, he does not see a clear conceptual distinction between literal translation and word-for-word translation, so much so that in his opinion the notion that these two concepts are one and the same is furthered by the fact that "the borderline between word-for-word translation — like the borderline between literal and non-literal — is constantly being crossed" (p.87).

Perhaps the most interesting issue raised by Wills is the contradictions and divergences centered around the concept of Translation Equivalence. "Equivalence is one of the central issues in the theory of translation and yet one on which linguists seem to have agreed to disagree" (apud Svejcer, 1981: 321). Wills illustrates these contradictions and divergences with the following collection of principles adopted from Jumpelt (1961):

1) A translation must reproduce the words of the SLT;
2) a translation must reproduce the ideas (meaning) of the SLT (literal vs. free translation);
3) a translation should read like an original;

4) a translation should read like a translation;
5) a translation should retain the style of the SLT;
6) a translation should mirror the style of the translator;
7) a translation should retain the historical stylistic dimension of the SLT;
8) a translation should read as a contemporary piece of literature;
9) in a translation, a translator must never add or leave out anything;
10) in a translation, a translator may, if need be, add or leave out something.

Actually, these divergences become even more evident when one looks at the current terminology on equivalence which includes, among other terms "total equivalence" (apud Albrecht, 1973); "functional equivalence" (apud Jager, 1973); "equivalence in difference" (apud Jakobson, 1966); "closest natural equivalence" (apud Nida, 1964); "formal correspondence vs. dynamic equivalence" (apud Nida, 1964); "stylistic equivalence" (apud Popovic, 1976); "communicative equivalence" (apud Reiss, 1976); and "text-pragmatic equivalence" (apud Wills, 1980b:135).

Based on the above, Wills arrives at the conclusion that so far the science of translation has not succeeded in developing clear-cut criteria for the measurability of translation and therefore it cannot make any reliable statements on how a translator should proceed in order to reach what Wills calls "an adequate, qualitatively evaluable transfer result" (p.136).

1.3.4. Roman Jakobson's approach

Roman Jakobson, for whom translation is only an adequate interpretation of an alien code unit and equivalence is impossible (Bassnett-McGuire, 1980:15), points out three different types of translation in his book Linguística e Comunicação (no date:64): 1) intralingual translation or rewording, i.e. interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language; 2) interlingual translation or translation proper, i.e. interpretation of verbal signs by means of another language; and 3) intersemiotic translation or transmutation, i.e. interpretation of verbal signs by means of nonverbal sign systems.

However, the central problem and common denominator in all three types of translation defined by Jakobson is that although messages may serve as adequate interpretations of code units, ordinarily full equivalence through translation is out of the question. Even apparent synonymy, in his view, does not necessarily imply equivalence since each unit or word carries within itself a set of associations and connotations which cannot be transferred.

It is Jakobson's belief that all poetic art is technically untranslatable since complete equivalence (in the sense of synonymy or sameness) is not feasible in any of the categories spelled out by him. Hence, instead of equivalence of translation, Jakobson sems to opt for creative transposition which, in his opinion, can be performed either from one poetic shape into another (intralingual transposition) or from one language into another (interlingual transposition) or still from one system of signs into another (inter semiotic

transposition).

1.3.5. Susan Bassnett-McGuire's approach

Susan Bassnett-McGuire, who in her book Translation Studies (1980:76) says that "the translator who makes an attempt to understand the "how" behind the translation process is like the driver of a Rolls who has no idea what makes the car move", also seems to agree with Roman Jakobson that there can be no sameness between two languages and adds that the process of translating involves a whole set of extra-linguistic criteria.

She makes an interesting distinction between what she calls variants (or transformations) and invariants in translation. Variants are all those changes which do not alter or affect the core of meaning but which influence the expressive form. Invariants are those elements which exist in common between all translations of a single work so much so that they are part of a dynamic relationship.

As for translation equivalence, Bassnett-McGuire quotes Popovic's four types, namely: 1) linguistic equivalence, in which homogeneity on the linguistic level of both SL and TL texts prevails. In other words, this is a type of word-for-word translation; 2) paradigmatic equivalence, in which the items or elements of a paradigmatic expressive axis are equivalent. Incidentally, Popovic sees these elements of grammar as being a higher category than that of lexical equivalence; 3) stylistic equivalence, in which there prevails a functional equivalence of elements in both the original material and the translation; 4) textual (syntagmatic)

equivalence, where there is equivalence of form and shape, in the sense that the syntagmatic structuring of a text should be equivalent (p.25).

Bassnett-McGuire thinks that translation theory is likely to be normative, i.e. it instructs translators on the optimal solution to a problem whereas actual translation work is pragmatic in the sense that the translator opts for one of the possible solutions which promises a maximum of effect with a minimum of effort. Furthermore, she claims that translation involves much more than the definition of what equivalence may be. In her opinion, translation also involves discarding the basic linguistic elements of the SL text so as to achieve what Popovic calls 'expressive identity' between the SL and the TL texts.

1.3.6. Georges Mounin's approach

In Os Problemas Teóricos da Tradução (1969:252), Georges Mounin says that "communication through translation is never truly concluded which means to say, at the same time, that it is never inexorably impossible" (my translation) since he believes in language universals, i.e. in traits susceptible to be found in all languages or in all cultures expressed by such languages.

Mounin also seems to support von Humboldt's notion that all languages should be able to communicate among themselves considering that they all talk about the same universals as well as the same human experience analyzed and viewed in accordance with identical categories of knowledge for all men.
His idea of biological universals is based on

André Martinet's statement that

> since all men live on the same planet and therefore share the common circumstance of being men, with all implications of physiological and psychological analogies, it is only natural to expect that there should be a certain parallelism in the evolution of all languages (apud Mounin:184) (my translation).

This theory is further supported by Mounin when he quotes the seven essential linguistic fields at a biological level defined by Ethel and Burt Aginsky: food, beverage, respiration, sleep, excretion, temperature and sex (p.185). In addition to these, Mounin also lists what he designates as the ecological universals: cold and heat, rain and wind, the earth and the sky, the animal kingdom and the vegetal kingdom, planetary divisions of time, day and night, parts of the day, months and vegetation cycles (p.184) so as to supply enough evidence that both the basic referential meanings and the framework of reference toward the world are essentially the same.

1.4. A Critical Overall Review of All Theories

After reviewing the most important aspects in connection with some of the current approaches to translation as seen by these linguists and scholars, one thing stands out: there seems to be a clear-cut division between those — like Ayora, Catford, Newmark, Jakobson and Bassnett-McGuire — who perceive translation from an essentially linguistic point of view placing special emphasis on equivalence and correspondence, and those — like Wills and Mounin — who see translation essentially on the basis of a principle of universals.

Eugene A. Nida, however, seems to stand between these two extremes and to have combined both viewpoints in order to create his theory of formal and dynamic equivalence.

Two other aspects that are also noteworthy are a certain lack of objectivity and a certain obscurity in the definitions and concepts provided by some of these authors.

Ayora's theory on translation, for example, is as chaotic and as difficult to follow as he claims Nida's principles to be. His concepts are much too detailed and in some cases there seems to be an evident interference of one concept with another. When he says that equivalence is an extreme case of modulation, he fails to specify to what extent equivalence may be used instead of modulation, or vice-versa. Likewise, his notion of adaptation seems to be very similar to that of equivalence. There also seems to be some contradiction when Ayora states, on the one hand, that "translating does not mean to explain or to comment", and, on the other, when he asserts that explicitness — one of the translating procedures defined by him — should take place when "what is implicit in the SL text must be explained in the TL text" (p.266).

Catford's definitions of full and total translation are also confusing, for if, in total translation, he claims that "all levels of the SL text are replaced by TL material" it is implicit that the same could also occur in a full translation where, according to his definition, every part of the SL text is replaced by TL material."

Hence, in my opinion, there does not seem to be a difference between the two concepts or if there is, he should have made it clear by means of examples. Actually, Catford

himself admits that 'total' translation is a misleading term since "though total replacement is involved, it is not replacement by equivalents at all levels" (p.22). In addition to that, his definition of each type of translation should have been accompanied by example(s) which would definitely illustrate his viewpoints much better and show the different points he is trying to make in a much clearer way.

Roman Jakobson's principles of translation are also abstract and obscure. When he attempts to clarify his concept of intralingual translation by saying that "intralingual translation of a word utilizes another word more of less synonymous or resorts to a circumlocution" (p.65), he makes it even more intricate because the idea of 'more or less' is extremely vague and flexible. In my opinion, a word is either synonymous with another word or it is not. Also, the idea of a word being "more or less synonymous" sounds as if Jakobson does not want to commit himself to any fixed principle or parameter and is ready to accept any alternative presented to him. Besides that, it also conveys a certain feeling of uncertainty and even unreliability.

On the other hand, when he says that on translating from one language into another the translator is substituting messages provided in one language for whole messages provided in another language rather than for separate code units, and when he adds that translation involves two equivalent messages conveyed in two different codes (p.65), I think Jakobson is summarizing in a very clear, simple, objective, perfect and straightforward way the three types of translating procedures which he defines in such an abstract and vague manner.

Peter Newmark's two types of translation — communicative and semantic — are clear, objective and simple, although I feel that he should have provided examples to illustrate his viewpoints.

Anyhow, Newmark raises a very important question which is the conflict every translator is assailed with between overtranslating, i.e. a tendency to use increased detail, and undertranslating, i.e. a tendency to use increased generalization. In either of the two cases, as Newmark points out, there is always the danger of loss of meaning in the translation as compared with the original text.

Another very interesting subject broached by Newmark is what he calls the pre-translating procedure which I think every experienced translator — especially the technical translator — is very familiar with and which consists in putting complex source-language material in simple source-language material — by means of re-arrangement of word order and structures — before actually translating it into the target language.

Susan Bassnett-McGuire is absolutely right when she says that the process of translating involves a whole set of "extra linguistic criteria", but unfortunately the reader is left to wonder which 'extra linguistic criteria' she means.

If, on the one hand, she does not sound too confident to create her own theory of translation, on the other, the collection and variation of several different scholars — e.g. Juri Lotman, Hilaire Belloc, Ferdinand Saussure, Popovic, Eugene Nida, Vinay and Darbelnet, Octavio Paz, Edward Sapir, Roland Barthes and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, among others —

that she quotes throughout her book Translation Studies (1980) provide the readers with different viewpoints on such a controversial issue as translation. This is highly positive since it enables the readers to be familiar with a wide range of approaches to the theory of translation.

The distinction she makes between variants and invariants in translation is quite simple. As a matter of fact, I think that what she calls variants — all those changes which do not alter or affect the core of the meaning but which influence the expressive form — is nothing more and nothing less than what Peter Newmark calls 'communicative translation' and Eugene Nida designates 'dynamic equivalence'. Her quoting of Popovic's four types of equivalence — stylistic equivalence, linguistic equivalence, paradigmatic equivalence and textual equivalence — does not seem to have added much to the theories of translation equivalence.

Furthermore, although she does not overtly admit it, she implies that she believes in something other than essentially grammatical principles to explain the theories of translating. The 'extra linguistic criteria' she refers to when she talks about the process of translating might be indicative of that.

Likewise, her belief in Edward Sapir's theory that "language is a guide to social reality and experience is largely determined by the language habits of the community" (p.13) shows that in her opinion language has a lot to do with culture and vice-versa and that "each separate structure represents a separate reality," as Sapir once stated (p.13).

Unlike Susan Bassnett-McGuire, Wolfram Wills makes it

very clear that he firmly believes in linguistic and cultural universals as a basis which has laid the groundwork to allow for communication between men from different cultures.

Maybe this is due to two things: a) he thinks that so far the science of translating has not succeeded in creating clear-cut criteria for the measurability of translation on an essentially grammatical basis; and b) the concepts of translation are as many and as different as they are contradictory and conflicting.

As an example, Wills says that he does not see a clear enough conceptual distinction between literal and free translation. However, the most important issue raised by Wills has to do with cultural translatability or untranslatability. He seems to believe in cultural untranslatability when he quotes Schleiermacher, according to whom every man is

> in the power of the language he speaks; he and everything he thinks are but a product of the same... the shaping of his concepts, the way and the extent to which they may be linked to one another, are preprogrammed by the language in which he is born and raised (p.33).

On the other hand, he also seems to accept the principle of cultural translatability because of his conviction in the existence of universals which allow comparison between languages. Actually, this contradiction is also apparent in von Humboldt's views on the limits of translation and is explained by Wills taking into account the fact that "all languages even the so-called primitive ones, possess a comparable potential for expression capable of multidimensional development" (p.36).

Although highly philosophical, Georges Mounin's view of translation on the basis of language universals is convincing because of the biological and ecological universals that he defines. It is only a pity that he quotes so many other linguists and scholars in order to support his ideas and seems to be a bit hesitant in expressing his brilliant viewpoints more overtly.

In his book Toward a Science of Translating (1964:165), Eugene A. Nida says that a formally equivalent translation "attempts to reproduce several formal elements including (1) grammatical units; (2) consistency in word usage; and (3) meaning in terms of the source context focusing attention on the message itself in both form and content," while a dynamically equivalent translation "aims at complete naturalness of expression."

Eugene A. Nida's principles of formal and dynamic equivalence as applied to translation — especially to the translation of proverbs — are objective, consistent, comprehensible and simple. Furthermore, he also points out four basic elements which allow a relatively high degree of mutual intelligibility not only within a single language but also between members of different speech communities. These elements are: 1) similarity of mental processes of all peoples, i.e. fundamentally thought processes are the same, irrespective of race and culture; 2) identity of somatic reactions, in the sense that certain automatic responses are universal; 3) range of cultural experience of the major elements of culture, namely, material, social, religious, linguistic and aesthetic, in which all societies participate in all phases and in rather

analogous ways; and 4) capacity for adjustments to the behavioral patterns of others.

Considering the combination of Nida's principles of formal and dynamic equivalence with his views on universals, I think that his approach to translation is much more suitable, concrete, concise, realistic and feasible than any of the other complex and abstract principles introduced by most of the other scholars.

Therefore, I will analyze some English proverbs and their Portuguese equivalents in the light of Nida's principles of formal and dynamic equivalence and of his theory of cultural universals as applied to the translation of proverbs.

However, before conducting an exhaustive review of these two principles I think it is essential to have an overall picture of Nida's concept of translating as a whole in order to familiarize the reader with the basic lines which have governed his theory of formal and dynamic equivalence.

CHAPTER TWO

EUGENE A. NIDA: ON TRANSLATION

Eugene A. Nida's notions on translation are the central theme of the present chapter which will also cover such other relevant issues as technical and organizational procedures in translation; the process of communication through translation; the role of meaning in a translating process; the conflicts between form and meaning and between literal and free translation; and communication load in translation.

The importance of this chapter is to provide the reader with an overall picture of Nida's concepts of translation, thus allowing better understanding of his theory of formal and dynamic equivalence.

2.1. Preliminaries

In The Theory and Practice of Translation (1982), Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber state that translation has been approached from two different concepts: the old concept, in

which emphasis is placed upon the form of the message and "translators took particular delight in being able to reproduce stylistic specialties, e.g. rhythms, rhymes, plays on words, chiasmus, parallelism and unusual grammatical structures," and the new concept, according to which the receptor's response is the most relevant item to be taken into consideration when the suitability of a translation is being judged.

However, I think that translation goes far beyond these two simple concepts mentioned above. It involves languages of different peoples from different countries with different cultural customs which, in turn, provide each single language with certain distinctive characteristics that make it unique and give it its own personality.

Actually, this difference between languages is pointed out by Nida in his book Toward a Science of Translating (1964: 2) in a somewhat paradoxical manner when he says that

> Underlying all the complications of translation is the fundamental fact that languages differ radically one from the other. In fact, so different are they that some insist that one cannot communicate adequately in one language what has been said originally in another. Nevertheless, as linguists and anthropologists have discovered that which unites mankind is much greater than that which divides mankind, and, hence, there is even in cases of very disparate languages and cultures, a basis for communication.

I certainly agree that there are some words inherent in the culture and language of a people which cannot be properly communicated in any other language. For example, in the specific case of Portuguese, I could list such words as: feijoada,acarajé, ginga, caipira, cangaceiros, novenas,

retirantes and favelados, which — in Varig Inflight Magazine "Icaro", issues nºs 41 and 43 — have been translated as follows:

- 'feijoada' = beans boiled with bits of pork, sausage, jerky, etc.;
- 'acarajé' = a cake of ground beans deep-fried in palm oil;
- 'ginga' = body swing;
- 'caipira' = hillbilly;
- 'cangaceiros' = Brazilian outlaws;
- 'novenas' = group prayers;
- 'retirantes' = migrants from drought areas; and
- 'favelados' = shantytown dwellers.

Although these words have been reasonably well explained, with the exception of 'caipira' and 'cangaceiros', it is more than evident that in the process of translating they have lost much of the force and meaning embedded in their original. On the other hand, I also agree that in spite of all the gaps between languages, communication is possible, for the common traits which unite mankind indeed outnumber and are stronger than the cultural peculiarities which each single people expresses through language.

I would compare this process of communication between languages to a tree. If, in the process of communication, all languages share common traits, in a tree all branches share the same trunk. Each branch would correspond to a language, and the peculiarities of each language would correspond to a twig in the branch of a tree.

2.2. Technical and organizational procedures

Nida divides translating procedures into two categories: technical and organizational. Technical procedures are the translating techniques to be adopted by the translator when changing a source language text into receptor language material. Organizational procedures are the basic organizational lines to be followed by the translator for the proper performance of the work.

Technical procedures comprise three stages: (1) analysis of the source and receptor languages; (2) careful review of the source language text; and (3) definition of suitable equivalents.

As for the first of these three stages, Nida points out that it is absolutely essential for the translator to have a good command of the linguistic structures of the two languages; to be fully acquainted with, and have complete understanding of the meanings of syntactic structures and of lexical items in both languages; and to specialize in any specific area — commercial, legal, literary or technical — within the broad field of translation.

The second stage is rather complex and involves a thorough analysis of: (a) lexico-grammatical characteristics of the immediate unit; (b) discourse context; (c) communicative context; (d) cultural context of the two languages involved in the translation process; and (e) cultural context of the receptor language.

The third stage, i.e. determination of equivalents, is achieved through two procedures: (1) decomposition of the message into the simplest semantic structure; and (2) recomposition of the message into the receptor language. Both

these procedures will be more thoroughly discussed in the next chapter.

Nida says that any competent translator should adopt the following organizational procedures on performing a translation:

1. read the whole text or document before actually translating it;
2. get any background or additional information available about the text or document to be translated;
3. compare existing translations of the text;
4. make a first draft of sufficiently comprehensive units;
5. revise the first draft after a short period of time;
6. read the text or document aloud for style and rhythm;
7. study the reactions of the receptors by having another person read the text;
8. submit the translation to the scrutiny of other competent translators; and
9. revise the text for publication.

Nida's technical procedures are reasonable although I think that complete understanding of, and full acquaintance with the meanings of syntactic structures and lexical items can only happen in a person's own native language since in my opinion nobody can master a foreign language as well as his/her own, no matter how excellent a command he/she may have.

As for his organizational procedures, I daresay that they sound a little utopian, in practice. Of course, all translators know every single one of these procedures, in theory. But to put them into practice is next to infeasible and I think Nida knows it too.

On the other hand, some of the procedures — like 'making a first draft of the translation and revising it'; 'reading over the whole text before actually translating it', and 'obtaining background information on the topic object of translation' — are feasible, depending, however, on the availability of the translator's own time and of others willing to provide additional information on a certain matter.

As for the eighth procedure, I definitely believe that it is a good policy for a translator to submit his work to the scrutiny of one competent and reliable translator only, instead of submitting it to the judgement of several different translators — as implied by Nida — since opinions may diverge and bring about changes in the meaning of the message contained in the original text.

From among these nine procedures, the two which I find the most difficult to follow are: comparing existing translations of the text and studying the reactions of receptors by having a third party read the material translated.

Comparisons are tricky because an existing translation may have involved completely different circumstances — such as time, place, approach, the intended audience or receptors, etc. — from those prevailing in the text being translated. Studying the receptors' reactions does not necessarily mean to say that a piece of translation is good or bad depending on how someone has responded to it. Reactions are subjective and vary in accordance with the degree of sensitivity of the reader. Anyhow, I think that these two procedures would apply solely in the case of technical translation when there should not be any margin for subjective interpretations.

2.3. Source, Receptor and Message in the Process of Communication

In Nida's (1964) concept, the process of communication through translation involves three basic components: source, receptor and message.

The source, which is the process of creating a message, comprises three different stages: (1) the choice of a subject or topic, i.e. the notion or message to be conveyed; (2) the encoding of this notion or message into symbols and arrangements of symbols; and (3) the transmission of such symbols, i.e. the actual physical process of uttering or writing out these symbols.

Likewise, receiving a message also consists of three steps: (1) reception of the signal; (2) decoding of the signal which, as Nida puts it, is a kind of reversal of the process of encoding and implies "extracting the image from the symbols in a manner analogous to that used by the encoder in selecting symbols to express the image;" (p.122) and (3) response.

The message is composed of two items: (1) the signal, involving all the formal characteristics of the message; and (2) the content, i.e. the meaning of such signals.

When discussing such components, Nida (1964:122) asserts that

> ... the decoding of a message in a language we know is far different from the process involved in figuring out the meaning of a signal in some purposefully obscured code or in a partly known foreign language.

I agree and would add that both the decoding and the

encoding of a message are much easier in one's own native tongue than they are in a foreign language, for in the former one is perfectly familiar with the nuances, idiosyncrasies, hints, cues, puns, connotations, peculiarities, etc. since they are all part and parcel of a vast repertoire inherent in one's own culture.

Both processes and both languages are equally important in any translating process. It just so happens, however, that the translator will always have a better command of one language than of the other. Hence, with very few exceptions, the translation may lose some of the meaning contained in the original message. On the other hand, there are also those cases in which the translation is better than the original text. It is very likely that this results from the translator's deftness to make the proper arrangements and additions thus considerably enhancing the initial text. In this case, there is no question that the translation gains in meaning as compared with the original message.

There is also the case of holophrasis, i.e. words which bear certain particular traits relevant to a specific civilization without any correspondence or equivalence in any other cultural environment. Some examples of holophrasis are 'Weltanschauung', 'Gemütlichkeit' and 'kitsch', in German; 'parvenu' and 'savoir-faire', in French; 'understatement', in British English; 'know-how' in American English; 'mafia' and 'vendetta', in Italian; and 'saudade', 'jeito' and 'sertão', in Portuguese.

Any attempt to provide a faithful translation of these words will prove to be fruitless because they are inherent in

the culture of their respective peoples.

This does not mean, however, that translation is impossible. Rather, it means that translation has obstacles which can be surmounted depending on the translator's creativity, ingenuity, knowledge of the two languages, notion of balance and even a certain degree of boldness. And I imagine that this is what Nida (1964:144) is trying to say when he claims that

> A really successful translation must provide a challenge as well as information. This challenge must lie not merely in difficulty in decoding, but in newness of form — new ways of rendering old truth's, new insights into traditional interpretations, and new words in fresh combinations.

I feel that it is exactly in this innovative process that the translator's talent and gift are at stake, for he must be bold enough to surpass apparently unsurpassable obstacles, without, however, losing the necessary sense of equilibrium and harmony between the original text and the translation.

2.4. Meaning

One of the most fundamental issues in any discussion of translation is the role of meaning. The importance of meaning is evidenced through the several approaches made by grammarians, linguists and scholars in an attempt to define and understand its real nature.

In his book Semantics (1981:1), Geoffrey Leech says that the word 'meaning' is 'among the most eminently discussable terms in the English language' and quotes C. K. Ogden and I. A.

Richards' book The Meaning of Meaning (1923) in which the authors provide a list of twenty-two definitions of the word, nine of which Leech has selected for interest's sake:

1. an intrinsic property;
2. the other words annexed to a word in the dictionary;
3. the connotation of a word;
4. the place of anything in a system;
5. the practical consequences of a thing in our future experience;
6. that to which the user of a symbol actually refers;
7. that to which the user of a symbol ought to be referring;
8. that to which the user of a symbol believes himself to be referring; and
9. that to which the interpreter of a symbol
   a) refers
   b) believes himself to be referring
   c) believes the user to be referring.

In doing this, I believe Ogden and Richards have attempted to illustrate how disagreement about such a basic word as 'meaning' may give rise to confusion and misunderstanding.

Nida (1964) says that the scientific approaches to meaning seem to be determined by whether emphasis should be on the semantic field or on the semantic context and maintains that

> An adequate theory of meaning cannot, however, remain tied to either the semantic field or to the semantic context, for both field and context are equally important, particularly if one views language as a dynamic structure, capable of producing an infinite number of meaningful combinations of symbols (p.38).

At the same time, he distinguishes the three following dimensions of meaning on the basis of a series of contrasts: (1) situational vs. behavioral; (2) linguistic vs. extralinguistic; and (3) intraorganismic vs. extraorganismic (apud Lounsbury, 1955).

The distinction between situational and behavioral meaning lies in the stimulus-bearing parts of a certain context and the respective reaction to it. As an example, Nida (1964) says that while a certain flame may trigger the stimulus for the verbal reaction of 'fire', the screaming of 'fire' in a crowded place may generate panic. In contrast, if someone declares that there is a large, destructive conflagration at a certain site, the type of reaction may not be similar to that produced by the screaming of the word 'fire', even though the former may be regarded as a valid lexical substitute for the latter.

In Nida's (1964) opinion, the difference between linguistic and extralinguistic meaning is bound to be disregarded or even neglected because usually one tends to think of extralinguistic items only. For example, when someone mentions such words as 'head', 'stomach', and 'book', one is likely to consider them in relation to certain extra-linguistic features and referents, i.e. the objects proper.

However, one must also bear in mind that these words have linguistic distributions as well, and although they generally take place in a position in a sentence which is described as occupied by a noun, they can also occur in a position occupied by a verb as, for example, in these sentences: 'Julie came into the kitchen and headed for the cupboard' (verb 'to head' = to go in a particular direction); 'You never could stomach the

idea of living in Hull, could you?' (verb'to stomach' = to tolerate, to abide, to bear); and 'He booked a ticket to Washington (verb 'to book' = to reserve).

Some other linguistic symbols, however, have practically no relevant extralinguistic distribution, i.e. they occur almost exclusively in terms of linguistic distributions. Such is the case of the English particle 'to' before infinitives, as, for example, in 'to say', 'to enjoy' and 'to open'; of the adverbial suffix 'ly' used in forming adverbs from adjectives (e.g. strongly); of the suffix 'th' used in forming nouns from verbs and adjectives (e.g. width) and the prefix 'de', signifying separation, cessation, etc. (e.g. detach). In addition to these, there are also many cases of grammatical forms which associate linguistic and extralinguistic elements of meaning as in such categories as number, mode, person, size, shape, etc.

The distinction made by Nida (1964) between intraorganismic and extraorganismic meaning lies in the fact that there are some words — like war, hatred and death, e.g. — which are not only connected with the phenomena occurring outside the body but are also likely to provoke certain reactions within the body.

He divides intraorganismic meanings into two types: (1) cortical, i.e. cognitive, referring to cerebral processes; and (2) somatic, i.e. affective, regarding the physical responses which take place when an individual utters or hears such symbols. As examples, Nida quotes a series of four-letter English words which refer to parts or functions of the body and which may cause two kinds of reactions: unfavorable, when they

are considered vulgar, and normal, when the same parts or functions of the body are referred to by other symbols. This has led Nida to the conclusion that the intraorganismic meaning of a word is basically linked with the symbol rather than with the body part or function.

A very interesting aspect in this classification of meaning is that these categories often meet and cross each other. In other words, Nida says that the situational meaning may also be categorized intraorganismic and extraorganismic since the events which generate symbols may be found either outside or inside an individual. Likewise, behavioral reactions may also be intraorganismic and extraorganismic, whereas situational meaning may be sub-divided into linguistic and extralinguistic.

Besides the three categories of meaning presented above, Nida (1964) also makes a differentiation between what he names referential and emotive meaning. The former — usually thought of as 'dictionary meanings' — are extralinguistic, extrasomatic and situational, being treated on the basis of field and/or context. The latter are extra-linguistic, somatic and behavioral and are very difficult to determine or to explain because they involve feelings — something which cannot be objectively classified and which differs considerably from one individual to another.

If, on the one hand, I think that Nida's concepts of meaning are sound and consistent in the sense that they are supported by very clear and objective notions dealing with the linguistic, referential and emotional aspects involved in this issue, on the other I am still of the opinion that the concept

of meaning is something extremely difficult to establish because it implies a whole set of biosocial and cultural features which change depending on the time, place,individual and circumstances. That is to say, the notion of meaning is also very dynamic and Nida (1964:49) seems to realize that when he points out that

> ... the meanings of words can never remain fixed, but are forever shifting in one direction or another under pressure from one or another linguistic and cultural factor. Thus complete standardization of meaning is difficult to achieve for any living language...

2.5. Meaning vs. form; literal vs. free translation

One basic conflict involving any translating procedure is the constant clash between form and meaning and between literal and free translation. I would definitely not follow Wolfram Wills' (1982:35) pessimistic and radical view that

> ... all translation seems ... to be simply an attempt to solve an impossible question. Every translator is doomed to be done in by two stumbling blocks: he will either stay too close to the original, at the cost of taste and the language of his nation, or he will adhere too closely to characteristics peculiar to his nation, at the cost of the original. The medium between the two is not only difficult, but downright impossible.

I do not think one should look at translation as an impossible task. Rather, I consider translating a challenge worth trying. Wills' opinion is that of a perfectionist and of a radical.

Nida (1964) approaches the problem of form vs. meaning and literal vs. free translation in a rather different and

reasonable way. He claims to opt for the medium which Wills deems impossible, even though he seems to agree with Wills that any attempt — by the translator — to approximate to the stylistic features of the original text is bound to sacrifice much of the meaning, whereas strict compliance with the literal content of a message usually proves to be detrimental to stylistic flavor.

However, the important thing in Nida's theory on this issue is that, unlike Wills, he seems to have found a certain harmony between the two items and he does not see them as two antagonistic elements. Instead, he sees one as a natural and necessary complement of the other and this seems evident when Nida (1964:156) states that

> ... the content of a message can never be completely abstracted from the form, and the form is nothing apart from content; but in some messages the content is of primary consideration and in others the form must be given higher priority.

Whether emphasis should be placed on meaning or on form is something Nida seems to leave completely up to the translator's discretion, as long as the translation meets the four basic requirements which he thinks of utmost relevance for the proper rendering of a message, namely (1) making sense; (2) conveying the spirit and the manner of the original; (3) having a natural and easy form of expression; and (4) producing a similar response.

Although all these items are equally important, I believe item no 1, i.e. 'making sense' is the most crucial because a translation which does not make sense either does not say anything at all or says something in a misleading way, which

can be even worse. The fact is that a senseless translation is like a vacuum -- a space with nothing at all in it; a completely empty space, a void.

In order for a translation to make sense, however, it is unconditionally necessary that the translator understand the message contained in the original and be familiar with the topic being translated, including the pertinent terminology and jargon.

In technical translation, for example, in addition to being a translator, the individual also has to be a specialist in a certain field. And the combination of these two basic requirements is not always easy. So, what happens very often in technical translation is that either the text is grammatically perfect but fails to convey the intended message because it simply does not make sense at all, or the text is grammatically faulty or imperfect and yet makes sense. Needless to say in the former case, it is very likely that the text has been written by a translator who lacks the technical knowledge required to understand the message and in the latter case it was written by a technician with insufficient knowledge of the foreign language.

The second most difficult of the four basic requirements listed by Nida is to provide a translation with naturalness of expression, for usually translations sound so heavy and artificial that they appear to have been written in any other language than one's own, and anyone can tell that a certain text was not originally written in one's native tongue. On the other hand, however, it is very difficult for any translator to be completely abstracted from the original text because whether

one wants it or not, one is always forced to consult it.

I think a good example of lack of naturalness of expression is found in the sentence 'desengordure sua dieta' (Seleções, fevereiro 1988:18) which was translated from the original English 'de-fat your diet' (Reader's Digest, December 1987:161). Of course the translation is grammatically good and faithful, but it does sound unnatural and odd.

On the other hand, however, the same translator has succeeded in achieving naturalness of expression in the translation of the following sentence:

> No two people are more concerned about their weight — and more unsuccessful at keeping off unwanted pounds — than Americans (Reader's Digest, December 1988:159).

Which has been rendered in Portuguese as follows:

> Será que, apesar de estar mais preocupado do que nunca com seu peso, você ainda assim não consegue evitar aqueles quilinhos indesejáveis? (Seleções), fevereiro 1988:15).

In this particular case, the meaning has prevailed over the form, and granting that the form has been changed radically, the effect of the sentence on the Brazilian reader is still substantially equivalent to that caused on the American reader. Hence, the message must have also produced in the Brazilian reader a similar response to that produced in the American reader.

A translation may make sense, may have a natural and easy form of expression, may even produce a similar response and yet it may not convey the spirit and the manner of the original. While the first three requirements listed by Nida are difficult

to meet, they are not infeasible. The last requirement, however, is almost impossible because conveying the spirit and the manner of the original is inherent in the very culture of a people. Besides that, the spirit and the manner of a people cannot be merely translated into words. They take feelings. And in order to feel them one has to experience them. And however hard a translator may try to convey these feelings in any translation he is very likely to fail.

Such is the case of Elisabeth Bishop in the translation of Manuel Bandeira's "Tragédia Brasileira" whose original text reads as follows:

Misael, funcionário da Fazenda, com 63 anos de idade.

Conheceu Maria Elvira na Lapa - prostituída, com sífilis, dermite nos dedos, uma aliança empenhada e os dentes em petição de miséria. Misael tirou Maria Elvira da vida, instalou-a num sobrado no Estácio, pagou médico, dentista, manicura... Dava tudo quanto ela queria.

Quando Maria Elvira se apanhou de boca bonita, arranjou logo um namorado.

Misael não queria escândalo. Podia dar uma surra, um tiro, uma facada. Não fez nada disso; mudou de casa.

Viveram três anos assim.

Toda vez que Maria Elvira arranjava namorado, Misael mudava de casa.

Os amantes moraram no Estácio, Rocha, Catete, Rua General Pedra, Olaria, Ramos, Bonsucesso, Vila Isabel, Rua Marques de Sapucaí, Niterói, Encantado, Rua Clapp, outra vez no Estácio, Todos os Santos, Catumbi, Lavradio, Boca do Mato, Inválidos.

Por fim na rua da Constituição, onde Misael, privado de sentidos e de inteligência, matou-a com seis tiros, e a polícia

foi encontrá-la caída em decúbito dorsal, vestida de organdi azul.

E. Bishop's translation is as follows:

Misael, civil servant in the Ministry of Labor, 63 years old.

Knew Maria Elvira of the Grotto: prostitute, syphilitic, with ulcerated fingers, a pawned wedding ring and teeth in the last stages of decay.

Misael took Maria out of "the life", installed her in a two-storey house in Junction City, paid for the doctor, dentist, manicurist... He gave her everything she wanted.

When Maria Elvira discovered she had a pretty mouth, she immediately took a boy-friend.

Misael didn't want a scandal. He could have beaten her, shot her, or stabbed her. He did none of these: they moved.

They lived like that for three years.

Each time Maria Elvira took a new boy-friend, they moved.

The lovers lived in Junction City, Boulder. On General Pedra Street. The Sties. The Brickyards. Glendale. Pay Dirt. On Marques de Sapucai Street in Vila Isabel. Niteroi. Euphoria. In Junction City again, on Clapp Street. All Saints. Carousel. Edgewood. The Mines. Soldiers Home...

Finally, in Constitution Street, where Misael, bereft of sense and reason, killed her with six shots, and the police found her stretched out, supine, dressed in blue organdy (apud Ronai, 1981:52).

In order to understand the exact meaning of this message, the reader should not only be familiar with all the streets and

places listed by Bandeira, but also know what they denote.

By giving names of boroughs in New York supposedly equivalent to their carioca counterparts, E. Bishop was trying to make the American reader understand and feel the connotations and the implications behind each specific name and place. But Lapa will always be Lapa. And the Grotto will always be the Grotto and however similar they may be or seem to be, they certainly bear their own characteristics which provide them with their own personality.

This illustrates how difficult — not to say almost impossible — it is to convey the spirit and the manner of the original text in a translation.

E. Bishop's efforts to comply with this requirement are praiseworthy and her talent both as a renowned translator and as a famous poet does not leave any doubt as to her capacity. And in spite of all her qualities, she has failed to meet this requirement in the translation of Bandeira's "Tragédia Brasileira". Hence, I feel that however talented, capable and skillful a translator may be, somehow he will never be able to fully meet with the four basic requirements proposed by Nida for the proper rendering of a message.

Again, these requirements reflect the conflict between form and meaning and although Nida (1964:157) claims that the translator should at all times try to reach an effective blend of 'matter and manner', he also recognizes that 'only rarely can one reproduce both content and form in a translation.'

The issues involving the conflicts between literal and free translation are very similar to those regarding form and meaning. Actually, Nida (1964) says that the clashes between

the two pairs of opponents are closely related because in both cases the translator is fatally caught in the dilemma of choosing between the letter and the spirit and in general the issues which are assumed to differentiate one item from the other are not suitably defined.

Thus, I suppose that the same comments he makes when he indicates the major conflicting elements between form and meaning also apply in the case of literal vs. free translation. Nevertheless, Nida (1964:24) claims that the difference between literal and free translation is "no mere positive-negative dichotomy but rather a polar distinction with many grades between them", adding that both in the case of the conflict between form and meaning and in the distinction between literal and free translation, the differences proclaimed are battle cries for those who wish to defend their own position and attack the work of others.

By saying that I assume Eugene Nida makes it very obvious that he does not want to commit himself to any specific technique of translation, even though after analyzing the pros and cons involved in this discussion he seems to imply that emphasis should be placed on meaning rather than on form, which means to say that he also seems to favor free translation instead of literal translation. My assumption is based on Nida's (1964:164) quotation of Tancock (1958:29) that "in general, translators are agreed that, where there is no happy compromise, meaning must have priority over style."

2.6. Communication load

One very interesting question raised by Nida (1964) as regards literal translation is what he calls the 'communication load' which this type of rendering may entail since it attempts to put in the target language text the same amount of data and information in the same length as that found in the source language.

Actually, this can bring about an inevitable awkwardness of forms if proper arrangements and adjustments are not made in the target language text so as to render the communicative event lighter, smoother, more consistent and more intelligible to the reader.

Nida's Figures 1, 2 and 3 below illustrate the three different types of communicative events which will be discussed in this section and the main factors which may give rise to 'communication load' in a translation.

According to Nida, 'communication load' is due to the fact that while in the original communication (figure 1) the decoder's channel is as wide as the message because presumably the original receptors are familiar with the source, know something of the background and are full members of the linguistic and cultural community involved in the communicative act, in the literal translation (figure 2) the decoder's channel is substantially narrower than the decoder's channel in the original text because probably the readers of the receptor language lack much of the cultural information which the decoder of the source language text was naturally provided with.

Also, in the literal translation because of the use of

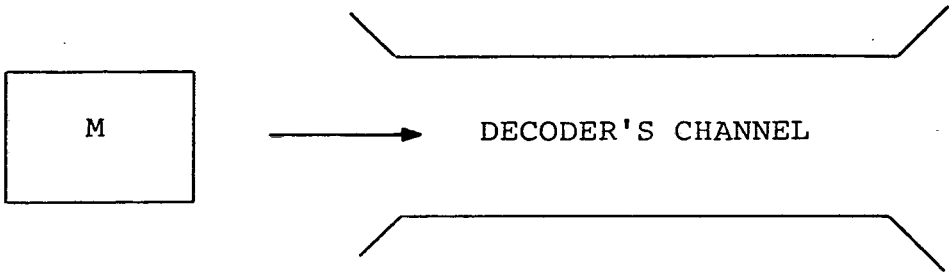

FIGURE 1 - Original communication

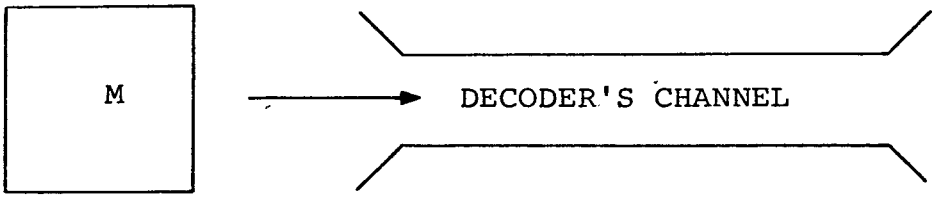

FIGURE 2 - Literal translation into receptor's language

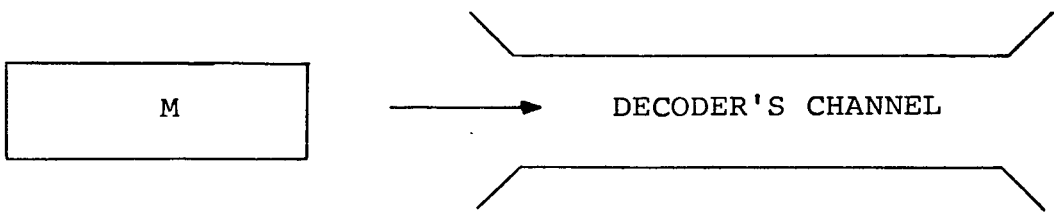

FIGURE 3 - Adjusted translation into receptor language

NOTE: 'M' here stands for 'Text'

rare forms of words, unusual syntax, strange combinations of words and even unfamiliar themes which literally force the reader to draw out and assume facts which are not contained in the text, the message will seem to be much heavier and bulkier than it actually is, and this inevitably gives rise to 'communication load'.

Therefore, Nida proposes that in order to enable the reader to decode the message satisfactorily, the translator should make adjustments and arrangements in the text, thus widening the decoder's channel and enlarging the message (figure 3).

It should be noted, however, that although the decoder's channel of the readjusted translation is wider than that of the literal translation, it is still considerably narrower than the decoder's channel of the original communication.

This is accounted for by the fact that no matter how many and/or what type of devices a translator may resort to, he will never be able to fully bridge the gap between the original text and the translation because of all the sociocultural, environmental and even linguistic differences between languages. So, what the translator usually and really should do is to diminish this gap. And as a result of all such readjustments and rearrangements, it is obvious that the new adjusted translation will be substantially longer than both the original communication and the literal translation. On the other hand, it will be less bulky than the latter.

Nida (1964:131) seems to favor this kind of technique, for he says that "almost all good translations tend to be appreciably longer than their original."

In order to understand the phenomenon of 'communication load' in a translation — especially in literal translation — let us analyze how and under which particular circumstances it usually occurs and revise its major characteristics.

Eugene A. Nida (1964:132) argues that "a translation often tends to overload the channel of communication simply because of its foreign background and content" and indicates two types of overloading features: (1) formal and (2) semantic. The former comprises (a) orthography, (b) word formation, and (c) syntax. The latter involves (a) words, (b) collocation, and (c) themes.

From among the items comprising formal features, orthographic overloading stands out as one of the most important and is generally caused by such reasons as: (1) the use of uncommon or unusual letters such as may be introduced through borrowed words; (2) errors in the representation of verbal symbols, i.e. failure to conform to the orthographic system; (3) unsuitability of the orthographic system; and (4) incompatiblity or inconsistency in the orthographic system.

In this respect, Nida says that unusual letters and even errors in the representation of verbal symbols are relatively less a factor of overloading the communication than are inadequacy and inconsistency of the orthographic system since these can be so extreme as to produce a complete breakdown in a program of written communication.

Indeed, while orthographies generally tend to represent most of the segmental phonemes, i.e. consonants and vowels, a number of other features are often only partially represented. Such is the case of the nasalized quality of some vowels, tonal

distinctions and length of vowels. In a practical alphabet, it is not always necessary to represent all these features and in many instances their occurrence is redundant. As an example, Nida points out that although there may be tonal distinctions on the verbs to indicate tense, certain obligatory particles in the sentence may also represent corresponding differences of tense thus providing a clue to the tonal contrasts occurring with the verbs. In these cases and with such factors as length and quality of vowels the tonal distinctions in the verbs do not have to be indicated. However, Nida asserts that the accumulation of several inadequately marked differences may make the orthographic system inadequate, for the communication load carried by the rest of the symbols is too great.

Nida goes on to say that even when an alphabet represents most of the distinctions in a language, the inconsistent way in which these contrasts are indicated may complicate the orthographic system. As an example, he claims that in one language in Central Africa there is a contrast between aspirated and nonaspirated consonants but the nonaspirated types have been inconsistently represented, sometimes by the letter 'p', 't' and 'k' and in other words by 'b', 'd' and 'g'. The aspirated series has been represented in some words by 'ph', 'th' and 'kh' and in other words by 'p', 't' and 'k'. The result has been a greatly overloaded system of spelling.

A communication is semantically overloaded through the use of rare words, rare collocations and rare events or concepts. To this effect, Nida asserts that ordinarily the unusual words which are likely to overload a translation are

borrowed terms, for in many cases the translator reaches the conclusion that the receptor language has no suitable equivalent for a certain word and decides to borrow it from the source language.

Likewise, lack of correspondence between the linguistic order of words and the non-linguistic order of events may also increase 'communication load'. Theme is unquestionably another element which can greatly overload communication, for a certain concept may be so new and odd that it will make decoding a serious problem.

Nida suggests that a heavy 'communication load' deriving from unusual combinations of words and from lack of correspondence between linguistic and historical orders of events can be considerably mitigated through (a) the introduction of a certain degree of redundancy so that the receptor may be suitably prepared to decode the meaning of a term, and (b) the alteration of the linguistic order so that it may match the historical order of events.

It should be pointed out, however, that these two solutions only reduce and do not solve the problem of 'communication load' in translation. In the special case of redundancy, for example, Nida (1964:175) asserts that

> ... the form of the original message is almost always expanded both as a result of differing patterns of obligatory features and because of cultural diversity. Even so, there is an inevitable loss of meaning, for a translator can rarely do complete justice to the cultural context of the communication.

From this statement, one is led to the conclusion that for Nida sameness cannot exist between two languages. Hence,

it is assumed that almost every translation somehow implies a certain degree of loss of meaning basically because of two main factors: (a) no two languages have exactly the same grammatical and sound systems however close they may be; and (b) every text depicts situation(s) having components or elements which are peculiar to the natural environment, institution and culture of its language area.

I think there is a very close connection between the four basic requirements listed by Nida for the proper rendering of a message in a foreign language and the phenomena of 'communication load' and loss of meaning, in the sense that any translation which fails to meet any one of these four items will be doomed to bear 'communication load' which somehow and inevitably leads to loss of meaning. It is as if one element were the natural and predictable consequence of the other. And the logical conclusion is that since, with very few exceptions, those requirements are very difficult to comply with, at least in their full entirety, 'communication load' and loss of meaning will always be hauntiny every translating exercise.

This does not mean, however, that translating is impossible. When Nida (1964:163) asserts that "the test of a real translation is that it should not read like translation at all", I understand he means to say that instead or trying to be faithful to one language or another or even to a certain translating standard, to the detriment of another, in order to achieve the naturalness of expression required for a suitable translation, the translator has to work on the basis of equivalence. Being faithful carries a certain idea of bias,

prejudice and accompliceship which the translator should be totally free from when performing his task.

Actually, Nida's (1964:233) notion and concepts on translation are nicely and straighforwardly summarized when he claims that "any satisfactory translation must mean inevitably a new birth in a new tongue."

In my opinion, this new birth materializes in the form of equivalence and this new tongue is embodied in the shape of a hybrid and neutral language. In other words, by creating an equivalence, the translator is — as a mediator between the source language and the target language — generating a third language which results from the symbiosis of the two languages involved in a translating process and which, nevertheless, bears its own characteristics, traits, personality and naturalness of expression.

I believe this chapter has provided enough material to familiarize the reader with Nida's theory on translation and to make it easier for him/her to understand the basic lines leading to the principles of formal and dynamic equivalence proposed by Nida, which principles will be more fully discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

EUGENE A. NIDA's PRINCIPLES OF EQUIVALENCE

In this chapter I will review Nida's theory of kernel constructions and of cultural universals outlined in Toward a Science of Translating (1964). I also want to show that it was probably on the basis of these two principles that Nida laid the groundwork to build his theory of formal and dynamic equivalence — the central theme of this chapter.

The importance of this chapter is to show that in spite of all the obstacles and limiting factors which somehow adversely affect and thwart intercourse between persons of different countries, communication of peoples through translation is ultimately possible because of a series of common denominators and identity traits shared by all peoples throughout the world.

3.1. Preliminaries

For Nida, the transmission of a message from one language to another should be analyzed on the basis of a dynamic

dimension, considering that much more than the meaning of the symbols and their combinations, language consists essentially of a code in operation working for a specific purpose. Hence this type of analysis is of utmost relevance for translation since as Nida himself points out

> the production of equivalent messages is a process, not merely of matching parts of utterances but also of reproducing the total dynamic character of the communication. Without both elements the result can scarcely be regarded, in any real sense, as equivalent (p.120).

It is important to bear in mind, however, that for there to exist some degree of equivalence between languages, there must also be some kind of common denominator or identity traits between them, both at the linguistic and at the cultural levels. In Nida's theory, the former is accounted for through what he calls 'kernel constructions' whereas the latter results from what he designates cultural universals. Therefore, before reviewing Nida's principles of formal and dynamic equivalence proper, it is important to discuss this theory since there seems to he a very close relationship between the principles of formal and dynamic equivalence, on the one hand, and the notions of 'kernel constructions' and cultural universals, on the other.

3.2. Kernel constructions

According to Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary, 'kernel' is the central, most important part of anything; the essence; the nucleus.

As Eugene A. Nida puts it, the kernel constructions in any language are "the minimal number of structures from which the rest can be most efficiently and relevantly derived" (p.66). Nida goes on to say that the striking similarities between the basic structures of different languages are increasingly arousing the interest of linguists as an object of study to such an extent that, for example, it has been discovered that all languages seem to have something equivalent to subject-predicate construction.

Likewise, there seems to be some kind of distinction between nouns and verbs in all languages, where objects are bound to be expressed by nouns and events by verbs, at least in the most basic structures.

Languages also appear to share certain particular ways of depicting abstractions of events and objects. To this effect, Nida asserts that sometimes this may be performed by formal classes of adjectives and adverbs respectively, although in many cases static verbs are used to indicate abstracts of objects while particles — whether free or attached to verbs as affixes — are used to symbolize abstracts of events.

In short, Nida thinks that the remarkable similarities between languages involve particularly (1) very identical kernel structures which, in turn, generate several other structures by means of permutations, substitutions, additions and subtractions; and (2) a high rate of correspondence — at least on their most basic structural levels — between formal classes of words (e.g. nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.) and the essential function classes in transforms; objects, events, abstracts and relationals.

Based on these premises, Nida finds it most suitable to formulate an approach to translation by taking these facts into full account. That is to say, instead of trying to set up transfers from one language to another through a long series of equivalent formal structures, Nida proposes that the translator (1) reduce the source text to its structurally simplest and most semantically obvious kernels; (2) transfer the meaning from source language to receptor language on a structurally simple level; and (3) produce the stylistically and semantically equivalent expression in the receptor language.

As a matter of fact, these three steps can be reduced to two rather simple procedures of equivalence between source and receptor languages, as established by Nida: (1) the message is decomposed into its simplest and purest semantic structure with the most explicit statement of relationship; and (2) the message is recomposed into the receptor language by means of alterations, readjustments and rearrangements introduced by the translator so as to allow the use of correspondences which may conform to and be consistent with the provisions set forth for the production of a formally equivalent type of translation, of a dynamically equivalent type of translation or of a compromise translation.

Nida's notion of 'kernel construction' is extremely important for a proper understanding of the theory of translatability because it shows how equivalence and comparisons can be worked out on the basis of amazing linguistic similarities between languages. Actually, this idea seems to be fully supported by Wolfram Wills in his book The Science of Translation (1984:39) when he speaks of the

development of research on language universals, i.e. the assumption that there are semantic and syntactic universals, including universal pragmatics, which allow comparisons between languages, even though there may be variations of the surface structure realizations taken on by such universals.

As for Nida's procedures of decomposition and recomposition of a message for translating purposes, while I think that they may be feasible in theory, I wish he had show -- through examples -- how they operate in practice so as to make them seem more tangible.

Nevertheless, as a whole, I find these common denominators or identity traits perfectly consistent with Nida's overall view on translation to account for the notion of equivalence between languages at the linguistic level. Let us see, now, how they work at the cultural level.

3.3. Cultural universals

In Nida's opinion, communication among individuals is greatly thwarted and adversely affected because of two essential facts which are unquestionably serious obstacles to human interaction.

Firstly, no two people use identical symbols to express the same type of experience under similar circumstances. In other words, within the same group, family, community, creed, profession, society or country every single individual is provided with a single, exclusive and personal background which makes him unique among all the other individuals of the same group, family, community, creed, profession, society and

country. Hence, every single individual uses different language codes to express the same situation.

The second limiting item in human communication is an expansion and a natural consequence of the first in the sense that no two people use exactly the same symbols or arrangements thereof in exactly the same ways. That is to say, just as people have distinctive and particular manners of reacting emotionally, psychologically and even physically to an identical situation, they also resort to different language codes to respond to a similar register.

Based on these principles, one would easily and mistakenly be led to assume that absolute communication between persons is entirely impossible. Nida asserts that such is not the case, mainly because of four basic factors which allow a relatively high degree of mutual intelligibility both within a single language group and between components of different speech communities. These four items are:

1) Similarity of mental processes. Primarily and fundamentally thought processes are identical, irrespective of race and culture, and even certain tendencies to generalization seem to be considerably alike between peoples of radically different cultural background (apud Charles E. Osgood, 1960a).

2) Resemblance of somatic responses. Granting that somatic constituents are of the utmost relevance in determining meaning — since they are undoubtedly one of the most important elements of meaning — it is indeed significant that there is such a high degree of resemblance among peoples throughout the world, as far as somatic responses are concerned. For example,

blushing and higher blood pressure are typical common universal automatic responses to anger, even though the reasons which lead to these kinds of reactions may differ from one culture to another. But the important thing is that the way the somatic responses are expressed is amazingly identical.

In addition to these, there are also some other semiautomatic somatic reactions — such as laughing, smiling and grimacing — which are nearly universal but which, on the other hand, may also be influenced by different cultural conditioning. For example, in many parts of the Eastern civilization, a smile may mask hostilisty.

Another very intersting aspect pertaining to resemblance of somatic reactions is the capacity that people have to understand the underlying types of somatic experience which render expressions found among people of another language meaningful to them. Hence, one may say that similarity of somatic experience of all peoples provides at least a basis for intercommunication.

3) Range of cultural experience. All societies are engaged in activities involving the material, social, religious, linguistic and aesthetic areas which are performed in analogous ways throughout the world. It is obvious that there are variations and nuances from one society to another but roughly the range of common human experience is similar enough to build up a basis for mutual understanding. And this particular fact has led Nida to the conclusion that "... the similarities that unite mankind as a 'cultural' species are much greater than the differences that separate" (p.55).

4) Capacity for adjustment to the behavioral patterns of

others. The human species is provided with a tremendous capacity for adjustment. That is to say, people from one culture can adjust to, absorb and assimilate both the patterns and the behavior of an alien culture, whether consciously or unconsciously. Of course, the degree of adaptation to, and acceptance of an alien culture may change from one individual to another and in some cases any endeavor to that end may prove to be fruitless. But here we are speaking in termsof a general rule, rather than exceptions.

These four basic elements listed by Nida leave no doubt as to the existence of a margin of correspondence among different cultures and as to the prevalence of identity traits common to humankind, regardless of any interference or influence which may be exerted by culture, race or society upon man.

In fact, the same issue raised by Nida is also approached by Georges Mounin in his book Os Problemas Teóricos da Tradução (1963).

Mounin quotes Whatmough to define universals as those traits found in all languages — or rather in all cultures expressed by such languages, and lists the following categories of universals (pp.184-185):

- **cosmogonical universals**, based on André Martinet's theory that "since all men live on the same planet, it is only natural to expect to find a certain degree of parallelism between languages."
- **ecological universals**: cold and heat; rain and wind; the earth and the sky; day and night; hours, months and

years; vegetation cycles; the animal kingdom; the vegetal kingdom. These are all characteristics inherent in humankind and are closely connected with the cosmogonical universals since they are all part and parcel with our planet.

- **biological universals**, based on André Martinet's principle that "since all men live on the same planet and share the common circumstance of being men with all that that implies, in terms of physiological and psychological analogies, it is only natural to expect to find a certain degree of parallelism in the evolution of all languages." To this effect, Ethel and Burt Aginsky (apud Mounin: p.185) maintain that "the fundamental unicity of the human species and the living conditions in our planet" provide for the identification of seven essential biological fields: food, beverages, respiration, sleep, excretion, sex and temperature.

Mounin goes on to say that there are also biophysiological universals, i.e. universals of sensation and perception which are closely connected with the biophysiological unicity of the human species and which provide for referential meanings common to all men and to all languages (p.189).

Based on these facts, Georges Mounin reaches the conclusion that the prevalence of such common traits provide for equally common references and denotations between cultures and languages thus allowing the translation of a message from one language to another (p.206).

Nida's approach to the principle of cultural universals is different from Mounin's in that the former places emphasis upon

the behavioral and cultural patterns common to all men, while the latter focuses attention on the cosmogonical, ecological and biological aspects common to our planet and to its inhabitants.

Nevertheless, both approaches pave the way for a better understanding of the notion of translatability on the basis of equivalence and in the particular case of Nida this is further supported by his theory of 'kernel constructions' to account for similarity between languages at a linguistic level as well.

Therefore, Nida's two principles of equivalence contained in his book Toward a Science of Translating (1964) provide for the matching of parts of utterances of a message — on the basis of identity traits between languages at a linguistic level, i.e. 'kernel constructions' — and for the reproduction of the total dynamic character of the communication — on the basis of identity traits between languages at a cultural level, i.e. cultural universals. The first is the mainstay of the formal equivalence principle and the second is the foundation of the principle of dynamic equivalence.

3.4. Formal and Dynamic Equivalence

A formally equivalent translation is essentially source-oriented since it is intended to disclose as much as possible of the form and content of the original message. In this type of rendering, attempts should be made in order to reproduce several formal items of meaning including, among others: (1) grammatical units; (2) consistency in word usage; and (3) meaning in terms of the source context.

Grammatical units can be reproduced through (a) the translation of nouns by nouns, adjectives by adjectives, verbs by verbs, etc.; (b) the maintenance — in the target language text — of all phrases and sentences intact as they were originally produced in the source language, i.e. there should not be any splitting up, readjustments or rearrangements of structures in the target language material; and (c) the preservation of all formal indicators (e.g. punctuation marks, paragraph breaks etc.).

Usually, concordance of terminology is the basic requirement to be complied with upon performing a formally equivalent translation considering that it always attempts to render a specific term or expression in the source language material by the corresponding term or expression in the receptor language so much so that rather than making adjustments in idioms, for example, it often tries to reproduce these expressions more or less literally so as to enable the reader to realize something of the way in which the original material used local cultural elements to transmit meanings.

In short, one basic concern as regards formally equivalent translation is that the message in the receptor language should match as closely as possible the different elements in the source language and to this effect Nida points out that the kind of translation which most thoroughly typifies such structural equivalence is what might be called a 'gloss translation' wherein "the translation attempts to reproduce as literally and meaningfully as possible the form and content of the original" (p.159).

In contrast with a formally equivalent type of translation,

a translation of dynamic equivalence is not so much concerned with matching the receptor language message with the source language material. Instead, the main concern in a dynamically equivalent translation is that the relation between receptor and message should be substantially identical to that between the original receptors and the original message.

Nida (1964:166) defines a dynamically equivalent translation as "the closest natural equivalent to the source language message" and points out that this definition bears three fundamental elements, namely, (1) equivalent, which aims at the source language message; (2) natural, which refers to the receptor language; and (3) closest, which links the two previous concepts and binds them together on the basis of the highest degree of approximation.

In a dynamically equivalent translation attention is focused toward the receptor's response rather than toward the source language. Therefore, the basic requirement to be met by any translator upon performing this kind of translation is to achieve thorough naturalness of expression.

For Nida, a natural translation has to deal with two main fields of adaptation: grammar and lexicon. Usually, grammatical changes can be performed more promptly, for they are commanded by the compulsory structures found in the receptor language. These modifications can be carried out by means of such readjustments or rearrangements as altering word order, using verbs instead of nouns, and replacing nouns by pronouns. On the other hand, the lexical structure of the source message is less readily susceptible to adjustments to the semantic provisions of the receptor language because in this particular

case the translator will be faced with alternative possibilites rather than with strict rules to be followed as in the instance of grammatical changes.

To this effect, Nida indicates the three following lexical levels: (1) words or expressions for which parallels or equivalents are easily and promptly found, e.g. street, car, spoon, etc.; (2) words or expressions referring to items which may be culturally distinct but which present somewhat identical functions, e.g. the word 'book' which in English means an object with pages bound together into a unit, but which in New Testament times meant a long parchment or papyrus rolled in the form of a scroll; and (3) words or expressions which refer to cultural particularities, e.g. synagogue, chrerubim, etc.

Generally, the words belonging to the first item do not present difficulties. The words in the second item, however, may involve obstacles and Nida suggests that "one must either use another term which reflects the form of the referent, though not the equivalent function, or which identifies the equivalent function at the expense of formal identity" (p.167).

As for the words under the third item, Nida asserts that "no translation that attempts to bridge a wide cultural gap can hope to eliminate all traces of foreign setting" (p.167). As an example, he lists such foreign words as 'Pharisees', 'Sadducees', 'cities of refuge', 'Salomon's temple', or such Biblical terms as 'anointing', 'adulterous generation', 'living sacrifice' and 'the Lamb of God', which are so deeply embedded in the thought structure of the message that they can rarely be avoided.

For Nida, naturalness of expression in the receptor language is basically a matter of co-suitability on several different levels, of which the most important are as follows:

1) word classes, e.g. if there is no noun for the word 'love', one must say 'God loves', instead of 'God is love';

2) grammatical categories, e.g. in some languages, the so-called predicate nominatives must agree in number with the subject, so that, for example, the expression 'The two shall be one' cannot be said, and, accordingly, one will say 'The two persons shall act just as though they are one person';

3) semantic classes, e.g. swear words in one language may be based upon the perverted use of divine names, but in another language they may be primarily excremental and anatomical;

4) discourse types, e.g. some languages may require direct quotations and others indirect;

5) cultural contexts, e.g. in some societies, the New Testament practice of sitting down to teach seems strange, if not unbecoming.

In addition to the characteristics mentioned above, a dynamically equivalent translation also entails formal adjustments, thus reflecting a certain degree of limitation in three main areas: (1) special literary forms; (2) semantically exocentric expressions; and (3) intraorganismic meanings.

Although Eugene A. Nida fails to define 'special literary form' he says that a good example of it is poetry because it involves more adjustments in terms of rhythm and aesthetics than does prose.

I certainly agree with Nida on this issue and to this end I would like to add that proverbs unquestionably fit in the category of special literary form as well because they may involve rhythm and rhyme; some of them consist in plays on words or puns; some others include figures of speech; and still others come in the form of poetry, also entailing adjustments in terms of rhythm and aesthetics. All such characteristics and peculiarities in connection with proverbs will be more fully discussed in the next chapter.

Nida designates semantically exocentric the expressions in which combinations of words constitute single lexical units, i.e. in this type of expression the meaning is not traceable to the sense of the parts or to their arrangement, but applies to the unit as a whole. Therefore, when semantically exocentric expressions in the source language are meaningless or misleading when translated literally, one is forced to introduce adjustments in a dynamically equivalent translation.

In A Dictionary of American Idioms (1984), there are some good examples of semantically exocentric terms in English, the translation of which into Portuguese I did, on the basis of the explanations provided in that book. Below is a sample of such expressions and their respective Portuguese translation:

- to rob Peter to pay Paul (p.286) = descobrir um santo para cobrir um outro.
- to be between the devil and the deep blue sea (p.26) = estar entre a cruz e a espada.
- school of hard knocks (p.297) = escola da vida.
- yesperson (p.384) = maria vai com as outras.
- to call on the carpet (p.45) = passar um sabão.

- come hell or high water (p.61) = quer chova, quer faça sol.
- when hell freezes over (p.376) = no dia de São Nunca ou quando a galinha criar dentes.
- the straw that breaks the camel's back (p.328) = ser a gota d'água.
- the pot call the kettle black (p.270) = o sujo falando do mal lavado e o roto rindo do esfarrapado.
- poison-pen (p.269) = carta anônima.
- there's a fly in the ointment (p.104) = ter um porém.

As for intraorganismic meanings — which have been discussed in the previous chapter — Nida says that they are the most affected in the process of translating since 'they depend so largely upon the cultural context of the language in which they are used and hence are not readily transferable to other language-culture contexts" (p.171).

According to Nida, between the two extremes, i.e. a strictly formal equivalence and a completely dynamic equivalence there are different levels of interference which represent several acceptable patterns of literary translation, even though in the last 50 years there has been "a marked shift of emphasis on dynamic equivalence" (p.160).

A very interesting aspect in connection with equivalence — whether formal or dynamic — is what Nida calls the degree of relatedness determined by the linguistic and cultural distance between the codes employed to convey meanings. This relatedness may occur in any translating exercise under three different circumstances:

(1) a translation may include comparatively closely related languages and cultures, as in the case of Hebrew and Arabic, for example;

(2) sometimes the languages may not be related although the cultures are closely parallel, as in the case of German and Hungarian; and

(3) a translation may involve not only differences of linguistic affiliation but also highly distinctive cultures, as in the case of Greek and Javanese.

Still as regards relatedness between languages in translation Nida says that

> Where linguistic and cultural distances between source and receptor codes are least, one should expect to encounter the least number of serious problems, but as a matter of fact if languages are too closely related one is likely to be badly deceived by the similarities, which the result that translations done under these circumstances are often quite poor (p.160).

There is no question that Nida is talking about one of the trickiest, most dangerous and harmful items in any translation, the so-called 'false friends', i.e. borrowed or cognate words which seem to be equivalent but are not always so.

Below is a list of 10 such cognate words and their translation from English to Portuguese, as extracted from the book Os Falsos Cognatos (1984):

- 'commodity' não é comodidade (= comfort), mas artigo, mercadoria (p.30)
- 'fastidious' não significa fastidioso (= annoying),

enfadonho (= boring) tedioso (= tedious), mas difícil de contentar, que tem gosto delicado, exigente, meticuloso (p.54)

- 'contemporize' não significa contemporizar (= transigir, condescender), mas sim dar como contemporâneo (p.37)
- 'casualty' não significa casualidade (= chance), mas baixas ou perdas (p.26)
- 'eventually' não significa eventualmente (= fortuitously), casualmente (= accidentally), mas finalmente, conseqüentemente (p.50)
- 'vermin' não se traduz por verme (= worm). É geralmente usado no plural e designa animais, pássaros e insetos que são nocivos ao ser humano, a outros animais, plantações, etc. como ratos, piolhos, moscas, pulgas, doninhas, gaviões, etc. (p.111)
- 'tentative' é adjetivo e se traduz por: 1) experimental, provisório; 2) indefinido, hesitante, incerto (p.107)
- 'prevaricate' não se traduz por prevaricar, faltar ao dever, mas tergiversar ou mentir (p.87)
- 'morose' não significa moroso (= slow), demorado (= tardy), mas mal-humorado, rabugento, taciturno (p.74)
- 'jest' não se deve confundir com gesto (= gesture). 'Jest' significa zombaria, gracejo (p.66).

Another very interesting aspect to which Nida draws our attention is the fact that when there is a connection between the cultures but the languages are disparate, the translator is required to make a series of small shifts in the translation. However, he asserts that the cultural resemblances in such

cases generally allow many parallelisms of content which render the translation proportionately much less difficult than when the two languages and the two cultures are not alike. This has led Nida to the conclusion that 'differences between cultures cause many more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure" (p.160).

Any issue involving extreme positions is bound to give rise to conflicts. According to Nida, the three main areas of tension between formal and dynamic equivalence are: (1) formal and functional equivalents; (2) optional and obligatory equivalents; and (3) rate of decodability.

A clash between formal and functional equivalents may result from three situations.

First, the receptor culture may lack a certain item or event which corresponds to some referent in the source-language text but the equivalent act is performed by a different item or event. As an example Nida says that in a culture where people have no experience of — and therefore no word for — 'snow', such a phrase as 'white as kapok down' is perfectly and functionally equivalent to 'white as snow'.

The second situation occurs when even though the receptor culture is provided with the same item or event referred to in the source language, it may have a completely distinctive function from that indicated in the source culture. For example, while in most Western European civilizations the 'heart' is used to indicate the center of emotions, in many other languages anyone wishing to express an identical feeling would refer to the 'liver',the 'abdomen' or even the 'gall'.

The third circumstance under which a conflict may arise between formal and functional equivalents is when a certain culture lacks equivalents, either formal or functional. For example, gambling is unknown by some Indian tribes which have no words to express objects with which to cast lots or for the process of selecting by chance.

Nida proposes four basic ways of handling problems resulting from clashes between formal and functional equivalence.

The first one consists in using footnotes to describe an item or event placed in a translation in a formally equivalent mode. In the second way, the functional equivalent item or event is placed in the text, with or without identifying the formal referent in the margin. This is characteristic of a dynamically equivalent type of translation.

The third way of handling problems resulting from clashes between formal and functional equivalence consists in resorting to a borrowed term, with or without a descriptive classifier. For example, the word 'Pharisees' may be borrowed from the source language. However, an extra word such as 'sect' may be added to it so that instead of the word 'Pharisees' only, one would have an explanatory phrase as 'sect called Pharisees' thus providing a clue to the meaning of the borrowed word.

In the fourth way, Nida proposes that descriptive expressions be employed using only words of the receptor language so that instead of being borrowed — as would normally occur in a formally equivalent translation — a word such as 'phylacteries' would be rendered by a descriptive equivalent, e.g. 'small leather bundles with holy words in them', as is

done in Navajo.

It is in the second area of conflict between formal and dynamic equivalence — involving optional and obligatory elements — that translators are faced with their most serious problems, for as Nida puts it

> ... the obligatory categories of various languages give them their distinctive character, and at the same time impose serious restrictions on the extent to which corresponding expressions can be made fully equivalent (p.173).

Furthermore, it is important to bear in mind that the obligatory or optional characteristics of a certain language are not limited to such morphological categories as tense, aspect, voice, gender, animate-inanimate and alive-dead. They can also comprise other formal items of the language such as word order, number and arrangement of attributives and overt specifications of all possessive relationships. As an example, Nida says that in many languages instead of using the word 'son' one must specify 'son of so-and-so'.

Nida says that when a certain characteristic is compulsory in the receptor language, the translator has no choice other than use it, "for the first requirement of any adequate translation, whether formal equivalent or dynamic equivalent, is that it conform to the obligatory formal features of the receptor language" (p.173).

To this effect, Nida indicates three sets of situations which usually constitute serious obstacles for the translator, due to the existence of obligatory elements both in the source and in the receptor languages.

One is when something which does not exist in the source language has to be indicated in the receptor language. For example, he says that a category of repetitive vs. nonrepetitive action may require the translator to specify whether in Mark 1-21 Jesus had ever visited the city of Capernaum. Supposedly he had, but there is no evidence in the source message to this effect.

Another kind of obstacle occurs when something which was only poorly described in the source message must be often specified in the receptor language. As an example, Nida asserts that any language may employ an elaborate system of honorifics to classify all speakers and people involved in a certain event. However, when this system is applied to the New Testament serious doubts may arise since onde does not know how the renowned Pharisees should be represented as speaking to Jesus, for they probably considered him an upstart, even though he was accepted by some as a Rabbi.

The third situation pointed by Nida as creating serious obstacles for the translator is when something which is explicit in the source message cannot be expressed in the receptor language.

Serious difficulties may also arise when the translator feels free to choose among several optional features. The provisions set forth to handle optional items in translation basically involve the notion of communication load since, as Nida asserts, these optional items are significant in the maintenance of the proper flow of the message and include such fundamental requirements as sensitivity to style, insight into the intent of the author, and empathy with the receptor in

order for the translator to achieve a suitable dynamically equivalent translation.

It is obvious that in any translating process not everything is to be carried over from one language to another even though Nida maintains that there is a clear tendency 'toward gain in linguistic forms and loss of meaning" (p.174). This is so because the translator usually takes for granted that everything in the original message somehow must be rendered in the receptor language and also because in addition to what takes place in the source text certain compulsory characteristics of the receptor language must be inserted as well.

To a certain extent, this is so because while in the original message the writer assumes that his readers have a good deal of background information since they are full participants of the culture in which the information is naturally conveyed, the translator cannot do the same because the receptors of a translated text usually belong to a different cultural setting. Hence, the form of the original message is almost always expanded in the receptor language.

Finally, in the third area of conflict between formal and dynamic equivalence — involving the rate of decodability — one must take into account the rate at which the message is transmitted and decoded. That is to say, the receptors must be provided with a clear text comprising a satisfactory basis to decode the message at a suitable level; otherwise, they are bound to be bored, weary and perplexed. Nida says that unlike a formally equivalent translation, a dynamically equivalent message aims at a higher degree of decodability considering its nature and its dynamic aspect.

The linguistic common denominators or similarities found between languages and the cultural identity traits prevailing among cultures have unquestionably laid the groundwork for Nida's theory of formal and dynamic equivalence thus allowing us to understand why, when and under which circumstances one type of equivalence should be used instead of the other.

Furthermore, when showing the characteristics and peculiarities of either one of the two types of equivalence, I think Nida is thoroughly unbiased although more than once he makes it very clear that because of its nature and because of the dynamic aspect inherent in all languages, a dynamically equivalent translation is likely to prevail over its formal counterpart. That does not mean, however, that the former is to be excluded or neglected and this is fully evidenced when he declares that

> From what has been said directly or indirectly about formal equivalent translation, it might be supposed that such translations are categorically ruled out. To the contrary, they are often perfectly valid translations of certain types of messages for certain types of audiences (p.166).

Based on this statement and on what has been discussed throughout this chapter, it is my intention to show that Nida's theory of formal and dynamic equivalence is fully applicable to the translation of proverbs from English into Portuguese.

I also want to show that because of all limitations which a formal equivalent type of translation entails, a dynamically equivalent rendering of proverbs is far more feasible, in spite of all natural restrictions involving this very complex and special literary form called proverbs, which will be examined in the folowing chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

FORMAL AND DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE IN THE TRANSLATION OF PROVERBS

This chapter will be divided into two sections. The first section will comprise one definition of proverbs and its main characteristics. The second section will focus on the application of Eugene A. Nida's principles of formal and dynamic equivalence in the translation of proverbs from English into Portuguese. In this section I will also show that because of the difficulty of conveying — in the target language — a message which faithfully reproduces the form and content contained in the source-language text, dynamic equivalence naturally prevails over formal equivalence.

I would like to point out that most English proverbs found in this chapter have been extracted from Burton Stevenson's The Macmillan Book of Proverbs, Maxims and Famous Phrases (seventh printing, 1968); from Michael Langley's The Panton Book of Pungent Proverbs (1982); and from Adam Makkai's A Dictionary of American Idioms (1975), while their Portuguese equivalents have been selected from Martha Steinberg's 1001 Provérbios em Contraste (1985); from Leonardo Mota's Adagiário

Brasileiro (1987); from José Perez' Provérbios Brasileiros (no date); and from Raimundo Magalhães Jr's Dicionário de Provérbios, Locuções, Curiosidades Verbais, Frases Feitas, Etimologias Pitorescas, Citações (no date).

4.1. Proverb: Definition and Characteristics

The Grande Enciclopédia Delta Larousse says that a proverb is an independent sentence which — whether directly or indirectly, but often metaphorically — expresses a thought, an experience, a rule, a code of behavior, a warning, etc. and indicates three main types of proverbs: classical, literary and popular.

Classical proverbs are those of erudite origin and can be sub-divided as follows:

- Latin, e.g. 'Praemonitus, praemonitis' = 'forewarned is forearmed' = 'O homem prevenido vale por dois' (Steinberg:42);

- biblical, e.g. 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's' = 'A César o que é de César, e a Deus o que é de Deus' (Magalhães Jr.:94);

- philosophical, e.g. 'In the kingdom of the blind, the one-eyed man is king' = 'Em terra de cego quem tem um olho é rei' (Magalhães Jr.:117);

- religious, e.g. 'God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb' = 'Deus dá o frio conforme a roupa/cobertor/capa' (Steinberg: 44).

Literary proverbs are equally erudite and generally derive from the universal classical literature, the theater or

from sayings and phrases of famous historical personalities. Below are three samples of literary proverbs and their sources.

- 'Honesty is the best policy' (Aesop's fable, dated 600 B.C.) = 'A honestidade é a melhor política' (Steinberg:54);

- 'Out of sight, out of mind' (21st. elegy, book III of the Latin poet Sextus Propertius) = 'Longe dos olhos, longe do coração' (Magalhães Jr.:185);

- 'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder' (chapter 12, of Margaret Hungerford's Molly Brown, 1878) = 'Quem o feio ama, bonito lhe parece' (Steinberg:18).

Popular or folk proverbs are all those sayings provided with a special flavor and very particular characteristics which reflect the events of everyday life of a certain people and therefore mirror the customs, nature and psychology of a nation thus becoming an integral part of the national folklore of that people. As indicated in the Encyclopaedia Britannica these proverbs use such homely imagery as pot and kettle, pig, sheep, horse, cock and hen, cow and bull, dog, etc. to convey their messages. Two typical Brazilian popular proverbs quoted by the Delta Larousse are 'Mais vale um cachorro amigo que um amigo cachorro' and 'Quem não gosta de samba é ruim da cabeça ou doente do pé'.

Although proverbs are universal since they derive from a similar human experience throughout the world, they can nevertheless be adapted to each people, thus reflecting their characteristics and nature, in addition to providing insight into the effects of cultural conditions, language and local variations on expressions.

Hence, as shown in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, the equivalent to the biblical proverb 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth' among the Nandi of East Africa is 'A goat's hide buys a goat's hide and a gourd a gourd'.

Likewise, as pointed out by Leonardo Mota in his Adagiário Brasileiro (p.25), when a Brazilian says that 'Pobre só alevanta a cabeça quando quer comer pitomba', he is only ratifying a millenary and universal belief that the poor should always be humble. However, this is expressed in such a genuinely Brazilian way that the proverb could be well considered typically Brazilian. Mota goes on to say that an Eskimo would probably express the same feeling in a completely different way.

Another important characteristic of proverbs is that often the same proverb — or rather the same message contained in a proverb — may be found in many variants in the same language. For example, below is a list of 10 English proverbs denoting impossibility and their respective Portuguese equivalents, as provided by Martha Steinberg in her book 1001 Provérbios em Contraste (1985):

1. one cannot be in two places at once = não podemos estar em dois lugares ao mesmo tempo (p.78)
2. you cannot burn the candle at both ends = não se pode queimar a vela nas duas extremidades (p.106)
3. you cannot catch old birds with chaff = anzol sem isca peixe não belisca (p.106)
4. you cannot get a quart into a pint pot = elefante não cabe em estante/São Paulo não cabe em Campinas/não se pode colocar um oceano num copo d'água (p.106)

5. you cannot get blood out of a stone = não se pode tirar leite de pedra (p.106)
6. you cannot have it both ways = não se pode querer duas coisas ao mesmo tempo (p.106)
7. a door must be shut or open = não se pode chupar cana e assoviar ao mesmo tempo/ou bem uma coisa ou bem outra (p.34)
8. you cannot make an omelette without breaking the eggs = não se pode fazer omelete sem quebrar os ovos/não se faz fritada sem quebrar os ovos (p.107)
9. you cannot sell the cow and drink the milk = ou bem se vende o porco ou se come a lingüiça/não se pode comer o bolo e guardar o bolo (p.107)
10. you cannot serve God and Mammon = não se pode servir a Deus e ao Diabo ao mesmo tempo (107)

The universality of proverbs is evidenced through equivalents found in many languages. The Macmillan Book of Proverbs, Maxims and Famous Phrases provides a series of examples of such proverbs, among which the following are noteworthy:

. The Latin proverb 'Equi donati dentes non inspiciuntur' (p.1182) has the following equivalents:

- in English - 'A given horse may not be looked in the teeth';
- in German - 'Einem geschenkten Gaul, sieht man nicht in's Maul';
- in Italian - 'A caval donato non si guarda in bocca';
- in French - 'A cheval donné, il ne faut pas regarder aux dents';

- in Spanish - 'A caballo dado no le mires los dientes'; and
- in Portuguese - 'A cavalo dado não se olha o dente' (Mota:37).

. The proverb 'He who has a roof of glass should not throw stones at that of his neighbor' (p.1193) has the following equivalents:

- in German - 'Wer ein glasern dach hat, muss andere nicht mit Steinem werfen';
- in Italian - 'Chi ha tegali de vetro, non tiri sassi al vicino';
- in French - 'Qui a sa maison de verre sur le voisin ne jette pierre';
- in Spanish - 'El que tiene tejados de vidrio, no tire piedras al de su vecino'; and
- in Portuguese - 'Quem tem telhado de vidro não atira pedra no dos outros' (Mota:201).

. The proverb 'Name not a rope in the house of him that was hanged' (p.1057) has the following equivalents:

- in German - 'Im Hause der Gehenkten soll man nicht vom Stricke reden';
- in Italian - 'Non ricordar il capestro in casa dell' impicatto';
- in French - 'Jamais nommer la corde chez le pendu';
- in Spanish - 'No se ha de mentar la sogra en casa del ahorcado'; and
- in Portuguese (from Portugal) - 'Em casa de ladrão, não lembrar baraço'; and
- in Portuguese (from Brazil) - 'Não fale de corda em casa

de enforcado' (Steinberg:72).

. The proverb 'Better be the head of a lizzard than the tail of a lion' (p.1099) has the following equivalents:

- in Italian - 'E meglio esser capo di gatto che coda di leone';
- in French - 'Mieux vaut être tête de chien que queue de lion';
- in Spanish - 'Mas vale cabeza de raton que cola de leon'; and
- in Portuguese - 'É preferível ser sapão de pocinho a ser sapinho de poção' (Steinberg:21).

. The proverb 'To make hay while the sun shines' (p.1092) has the following equivalents:

- in German - 'Man muss Heu machen, weil die Sonne scheint';
- in Hindi - 'Turn the mill while there is sugarcane';
- in Arabic - 'Be like the ant in the days of summer'; and
- in Portuguese - 'Malhe o ferro enquanto está quente' (Steinberg:89).

. The proverb 'Never put off till tomorrow what may be done today' (p.2340) has the following equivalents found in The Panton Book of Pungent Proverbs:

- in German - 'Was du heute kannst besorgen, das verschiebe nicht auf morgen';
- in Italian - 'Non rimandare a domanni quel che potresti fare oggi';
- in French - 'Ne remets jamais a demain ce que tu peux faire aujourd 'hui';

- in Spanish - 'No dejes para mañana lo que puedes hacer hoy'; and
- in Portuguese - 'Não se deixa para amanhã o que se pode fazer hoje' (Mota:134).

In Estudos de Tradutologia (1981), Delton de Mattos says that the differences between proverbs of distinct languages are more striking in the semantic area than they are in the proper and full meaning of the messages contained in the proverbs. Indeed, if we take some proverbs of similar meaning and message in English and in Portuguese and compare them, we will see that their semantic fields are diverse, as shown in the examples below, extracted from 1001 Provérbios em Contraste:

- birds of a feather flock together = cada ovelha com sua parelha (p.22);
- cut your coat according to your cloth = não dê o passo maior do que a perna (p.28);
- the fish will soon be caught that nibbles at every bait = cobra que muito anda ou come sapo ou cacete (p.41);
- the biter is sometimes bit = um dia é da caça, outro do caçador (p.22);
- all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy = nem só de pão vive o homem (p.16);
- best to bend while it is a twig = é de pequenino que se torce o pepino (p.20).

As a special literary form, proverbs may also be characterized by rhymes, alliterations and play on words, including deliberate deformations of words and of syntax.

Some examples of rhymes in proverbs are:

in English

- constant occupation prevents temptation (Stevenson: 1216);
- no gain without pain (Stevenson:924);
- idleness leads to lewdness (Stevenson:1214);
- drift is as bad as unthrift (Stevenson:1238).

in Portuguese

- muito riso é sinal de pouco siso (Mota:124);
- pouco fel faz azedo muito mel (Mota:169);
- quem não sabe calar, não sabe falar (Mota:192);
- velho com amor, inverno em flor (Mota:227).

Some examples of poetic word plays in proverbs are:

in English

- after feasting, fasting (Stevenson:789);
- many a mickle make a muckle (Encyclopaedia Britannica);
- to set hard heart against hard hap (Stevenson:1111);
- goose, gander and gosling are three sounds but one thing (Stevenson:1011).

in Portuguese

- ao doido, doideras digo (Pérez:21);
- falar é fácil, fazer é que é difícil (Pérez,69);
- quem com ferro fere com ferro será ferido (Mota:180);
- tanto tens, tanto vales; nada tens, nada vales (Pérez: 183).

Some examples of play on words, deliberate deformations of words and of syntax are:

in English

- one good forewith is worth two after wits (Stevenson: 866);
- a friend in need a friend indeed (Stevenson:902);
- a hungry man is an angry man (Stevenson:1201);
- may-bee was never a gude honey-bee (Stevenson:1234);
- do not say go but gow.

NOTE: 'Gow' is an abbreviation of 'go we' and Stevenson (p.967) says that there is a great deal of difference between go and gow, i.e. between ordering a person to do a thing and going with him to see him do it

- losers seekers, finders keepers (Stevenson:803);
- every cause of a cause is cause of a thing caused (Stevenson:304);
- never trouble trouble till trouble troubles you (Steinberg:74).

in Portuguese

- sol de agosto, calor a gosto (Mota:213);
- é dos tais que "assado não gosto" e "cozido não como" (Mota:87);
- deixá-los falá-los que eles calar-se-ão (Mota:77);
- dar dói e pedir "incói" (encolhe) (Mota:75);
- mais vale um toma que dois "te darei" (Mota:118);
- logo é logro (Mota:113);
- a gente nunca se esquece de quem se esquece da gente (Mota:39);

- muitos "Diabos te levem" botam uma alma no inferno (Mota:124).

The Encyclopaedia Britannica says that proverbs also embody superstitions, weatherlore and medical advice, and provides the following examples of such proverbs in English:

- marry in May, repent alway;
- rain before seven, fine before eleven;
- early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.

Actually, these same characteristics are also found in proverbs in Portuguese, as shown in the following examples taken from Adagiário Brasileiro:

- agosto mês de desgosto (p.46);
- lua nova, lua cheia, preamar às quatro e meia (p.114);
- Elia disse a Elói
  E Elói disse a Elia
  Que o cobreiro se cura
  Com arruda e água fria (p.88).

As pointed out by Leonardo Mota, nobody should seek in proverbs a consistent philosophy. To the contrary, a great number of proverbs are inconsistent in the sense that sometimes the message contained in one proverb is exactly the opposite of that in another proverb. That is to say, very often two proverbs are contradictory in their messages, which, however, should not be any demerit to either one of them. Rather, one should see this as another curious characteristic of proverbs,

instead of considering it a flaw in their structure.

Below is a list of English proverbs which contradict each other and their respective Portuguese equivalents, as extracted from 1001 Provérbios em Contraste:

- absence makes the heart grow fonder = longe dos olhos, perto do coração (p.15);
- out of sight, out of mind = longe dos olhos, longe do coração (p.80).

- after a storm comes a calm = depois da tempestade vem a bonança (p.15);
- misfortunes never come singly = uma desgraça nunca vem só (p.71).

- many hands make light work = a união faz a força (p.69);
- too many cooks spoil the broth = cozinheiros demais entornam o caldo (p.96).

- clothes do not make the man = o hábito não faz o monge (p.26);
- the tailor makes the man = a roupa faz o homem (p.90).

- he who hesitates is lost = onça que dorme no ponto vira tapete (p.52);
- look before you leap = faze pé atrás e melhor saltarás (p.67).

- one is never too old to learn = nunca é tarde demais para aprender (p.79);

- you cannot teach an old dog new tricks = papagaio velho não aprende a falar (p.107).

Some proverbs refer to historical occasions, e.g. 'When in Rome do as the Romans do' - which Martha Steinberg (p.102) has translated 'Em Roma, faça como os romanos' - refers to St. Ambrose's reply to St. Augustine's mother who asked whether, when in Milan, she should follow the Roman habit and keep the Sabbath as a feast day, or that of her hometown Togaste, where it was a fast.

Popular usage sometimes gives rise to new proverbs deriving from old ones. Hence, some biblical proverbs have been assigned new meanings. For example, 'The love of money is the root of all evil' has turned to be 'Money is the root of all evil' — which Martha Steinberg (p.71) has translated 'O dinheiro é a raiz de todo mal'.

Many proverbs are legal in their origin, even though the laws to which they refer are no longer in effect. For example, the proverb 'An Englishman's house is his castle' — which Martha Steinberg (p.36) has translated 'Em sua casa cada um é rei' — is related to the premise by which man is safe from bailiff if he locks himself up in his own house and denies access.

Some proverbs found in literary form have been adapted from speech. Therefore, it is difficult to decide the authorship of a particular proverb. Abraham Lincoln, for example, is said to have made up the saying about not changing horses in the middle of the river but he may only have used a proverb already current. Likewise, Shakespeare, Erasmus,

Cervantes and Seneca are also said to have created many proverbs although no satisfactory evidence of it has been supplied to date.

After reviewing the main characteristics of proverbs, let us analyze now how Eugene A. Nida's (1964) principles of formal and dynamic equivalence can be applied to the translation of proverbs from English into Portuguese.

4.2. Proverbs and the Principles of Formal and Dynamic Equivalence

Although Eugene A. Nida's theory of formal and dynamic equivalence seems to be meant to be applied solely to the translation of prose, rather than to the translation of a particular literary form — as is the case of proverbs — it is so far-reaching that its applicability to the translation of proverbs from English into Portuguese is perfectly feasible, as we will see further in this section.

But before putting Nida's theory into practice, it should be pointed out that originally the proverbs intended to be used in this dissertation were selected randomly. That is to say, the only criterion employed for their choice was Nida's principles of formal and dynamic equivalence. Therefore, I started sorting proverbs out and classifying them on the basis of these two principles.

Gradually, however, it became more and more evident that dynamically equivalent proverbs by far outnumbered their formally equivalent counterparts to such an extent that it was even possible to sub-divide the former into semantic fields.

Hence, in addition to those dynamically equivalent proverbs initially chosen at random and which incidentally have been used in the first section of this chapter to illustrate certain characteristics of proverbs, I decided to sub-divide other equally dynamically equivalent proverbs in accordance with five semantic fields dealing with appearances, influence, unambition, precaution and experience. And for each semantic field I have picked out five English proverbs and will provide their Portuguese equivalents.

My choice of these specific semantic fields is intended to reinforce Nida's notion of cultural universals. In other words, I want to show that all peoples share a certain amount of emotional, physical, biological, psychological and social characteristics, irrespective of cultural customs, religion or geographical features of their countries.

On the other hand, an attempt to apply the same procedure of sub-division into semantic fields to formally equivalent proverbs has proved to be utterly fruitless, in view of the very small number of formally equivalent proverbs found in general. Thus, any possibility of sub-dividing such proverbs into semantic fields as done with dynamically equivalent proverbs has been ruled out. Fifteen formally equivalent proverbs are given below.

4.2.1. Formally equivalent proverbs

As seen previously in chapter three, a formally equivalent translation is intended to show as much as possible of the form and content of the original message through a series of devices so as to reproduce several formal items of meaning comprising

the main following aspects, among others: a) reproduction of grammatical units through the translation of nouns by nouns, adjectives by adjectives, verbs by verbs, etc.; b) maintenance, in the target-language text, of all phrases and sentences intact as they were originally produced in the source language; and c) preservation of all formal indicators, e.g. punctuation marks, paragraph breaks, etc.

Below is a list of fifteen English proverbs and their respective formally equivalent translation in Portuguese.

It should be noted that I have provided my own translation of proverbs 13, 14 and 15 of this list since no Portuguese translations were found in any of the books used for reference, although these sayings are widely known and used in Portuguese.

1. The end justifies the means
   O fim justifica os meios (Steinberg:35);

2. Every man has his price
   Todo homem tem seu preço (Steinberg:37);

3. The eye is bigger than the belly
   O olho é maior do que a barriga (Steinberg:39);

4. Good fences make good neighbors
   Boas cercas fazem bons vizinhos (Steinberg:45);

5. A good husband makes a good wife
   Um bom marido faz uma boa mulher (Steinberg:45);

6. Live and let live

   Viva e deixe viver (Steinberg:66);

7. Take the bull by the horns

   Pegue o touro pelos chifres (Steinberg:90);

8. Time is money

   Tempo é dinheiro (Steinberg:96);

9. To err is human

   Errar é humano (Steinberg:96);

10. The voice of the people is the voice of God

    A voz do povo é a voz de Deus (Steinberg:98);

11. Where there is smoke there is fire

    Onde há fumaça há fogo (Steinberg:103);

12. While there is life there is hope

    Enquanto hã vida há esperança (Steinberg:104);

13. To play with fire

    Brincar com fogo

14. One hand washes the other

    Uma mão lava a outra

15. To weigh in the same balance

    Pesar na mesma balança

4.2.2. Dynamically equivalent proverbs

In chapter three, we saw that in a dynamically equivalent translation, faithfulness to meaning should at all times prevail over faithfulness to form, and naturalness of

expression is the basic requirement to be met. Therefore, in this type of translation all kinds of changes, modifications, readjustments and rearrangements are allowed, as long as the target-language text reflects the closest natural equivalent to the source-language message.

As explained earlier in this chapter, I have selected five semantic fields dealing with appearances, influence, unambition, precaution and experience, and for each field I have picked out five English proverbs to provide their respective dynamic equivalents in Portuguese.

I would like to point out that I myself have selected the Portuguese equivalents of all the English proverbs listed below whose correspondents in Portuguese are not given by Steinberg or by Mota. My choice of such equivalents is strictly based on a dynamic correspondence, in which meaning should have priority over form.

The dynamically equivalent proverbs sub-divided into semantic fields are as follows:

APPEARANCES

1. The bait hides the book
   Atrás da cruz se esconde o Diabo (Steinberg:18)

2. Fine feathers make fine birds
   O pau se conhece pela casca (Steinberg:40)

3. Beauty is skin deep
   Quem vê cara não vê coração (Steinberg:19)

4. All are not hunters who blow a horn
   As aparências enganam

5. Not all who carry harps are harpists
   Nem tudo o que reluz é ouro.

INFLUENCE

1. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump
   Quem com porcos se mistura, farelo come

2. One rotten apple infects a hundred
   Uma ovelha ruim bota um rebanho a perder

3. Tell me who are your friends and I will tell you what you are
   Dize-me com quem andas e dir-te-ei quem és (Mota:84)

4. He who lies down with dogs, will rise with fleas
   Quem com cães se deita, com pulgas se levanta (Mota: 179)

5. He who lives with cripples, learns to limp
   Quem com coxo anda, aprende a mancar (Mota:179).

UNAMBITION

1. Half a loaf is better than no bread
   Antes pouco do que nada (Steinberg:46)

2. Better a louse in the pot than no flesh at all
   Mais vale um toma que dois te darei

3. Better an egg today than a hen tomorrow
   Mais vale um hoje que dois amanhã

4. One foot is better than two wooden legs
   Antes fanhoso que sem nariz

5. Better be master of one trade than Jack of all trades
   Mais vale um pássaro na mão do que dois voando
   (Steinberg:22)

PRECAUTION

1. Do not hallo till you are out of the wood
   Não cante vitórias antes do tempo (Steinberg:30)

2. First catch your hare
   Antes de matar a onça não se faz negócio com o couro
   (Steinberg:40)

3. There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip
   Do prato à boca, perde-se a sopa (Steinberg:94)

4. Don't count your chickens before they are hatched
   Não conte com os ovos dentro da barriga da galinha
   (Steinberg:31)

5. Catch your bear before you sell its skin
   Não vendas a pele do urso antes de matá-lo
   (Steinberg:25)

EXPERIENCE

1. The wounded fisherman learns sense
   A dor ensina a gritar

2. Who has eaten the pot knows the taste of the broth
   Quem sabe a quentura da panela é a colher

3. The shoe knows whether the stocking has holes
   A experiência vale mais do que a ciência

4. He that has been bitten by a serpent is afraid of a rope
   Quem foi picado por cobra tem medo de corda
   (Steinberg:49)

5. Once bitten, twice shy
   Gato escaldado de água fria tem medo (Steinberg:78).

Although all the Portuguese renderings of the English proverbs listed above are dynamically equivalent, some of these translations come closer to the characteristics of dynamic equivalence than do others. Such is the case, for example, of 'Não cante vitórias antes do tempo' and 'Antes pouco do que nada', whose English originals are 'Do not hallo till you are out of the wood' and 'Half a loaf is better than no bread at all', respectively, in which there is a thorough re-creation of the English message.

On the other hand, in the translation of other proverbs, the characteristics of dynamic equivalence are not so striking as, or so similar to those prevailing in the sayings quoted above. Actually, some translations come very close to the characteristics of formal equivalence, even though they are dynamic. For example, in 'Quem foi picado por cobra tem medo de corda' and 'Quem com coxo anda, aprende a mancar', whose English originals are 'He that has been bitten by a serpent is afraid of a rope' and 'He who lives with cripples learns to limp', there is a clear prevalence of formal characteristics.

It should be also noted that for some proverbs, e.g. 'Better an egg today than a hen tomorrow' and 'One foot is

better than two wooden legs', I have deliberately chosen 'Mais vale um hoje que dois amanhã' and 'Antes fanhoso que sem nariz', as respective equivalents, even though Mota (1987:117-118) has translated the first 'Mais vale um ovo hoje que uma galinha amanhã' and the second 'Mais vale uma perna que duas muletas'.

By choosing different equivalents from those indicated by Mota, I wanted to avoid giving too obvious equivalents whose characteristics are too close to those of formal equivalence, as in the translation provided by Mota. At the same time, I also wanted to show that the important thing is that the messages translated have exactly the same meanings and convey precisely the same notions as those contained in the original communication.

Furthermore, in any of the five English proverbs and Portuguese equivalents comprising the second set of dynamically equivalent proverbs, the main idea is that one should not be ambitious and should be happy about anything.

As seen from the proverbs listed above, in dynamic equivalence the messages can be totally or partially re-created whereas in a formal equivalent type of translation there is a faithful reproduction — both in form and content — of the message conveyed in the source language.

Although in both cases the messages contained in the English proverbs are faithfully transmitted in the Portuguese proverbs, it is only natural that, because of the restrictions and limitations found in a formal translation as opposed to the flexibility and freedom which a dynamic translation entails, the former is much more difficult to perform than the

latter, for only rarely can one skilfully match form and content in a translation.

CONCLUSIONS

In spite of the great controversy on translatability and untranslatability, one cannot deny that translatability is possible. This is fully evidenced through the existence of semantic and syntactic universals including universal pragmatics which account for linguistic translatability, on the one hand, and through such other universals as cosmogonical, ecological and biological universals which are found in all languages, or rather in all cultures explained by such languages and therefore account for cultural translatability, on the other hand.

Proverbs are universal since they derive from, and reflect similar human experience. The universality of proverbs is evidenced through equivalents found in many different languages throughout the world.

However, as a special literary form, proverbs are difficult to translate because only rarely can one faithfully transfer the form and the meaning of a message conveyed in a

certain language to another. Hence, when speaking of proverbs, rather than the right translation, one must search for the suitable equivalent.

Eugene A. Nida's theory of formal and dynamic equivalence, as applied to the rendering of proverbs from English to Portuguese, has shown that because of all the obstacles imposed by formal equivalence, as opposed to the wide range of possibilities which dynamic equivalence may give rise to, the latter naturally prevails over and outnumbers the former. This is so because, as Nida (1964:162) puts it, "The resolution of the conflict between literalness of form and equivalence of response seems increasingly to favor the latter, especially in the translating of poetic materials or literary forms."

This does not mean, however, that Nida favors one or another type of equivalence. Whether equivalence is formal or dynamic, the two basic requirements in any process of transposition of a text from one language to another are that (1) the receptors' responses to the messages conveyed in both languages be similar; and (2) there should be naturalness of expression. Actually, these two important notions are nicely summarized by Nida (1982:10) when he states that "translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning, and secondly in terms of style."

Sameness of meaning is indeed one of the most challenging items involving equivalence since it has to do with similarity of responses, in the sense that the reactions of the receptors of the original text and the responses of the receptors of the transposed text should coincide, even though the original

message has been conceived in a sociocultural environment and in a language different from the sociocultural environment and from the language into which the message was transferred.

In this respect, Jakob Grim (apud Matos, 1981:48) uses a very interesting metaphor when he says that translating is 'traducere navem', i.e. to displace a shipful of load from one coast to another where the soil is different and a different kind of wind blows.

I certainly agree with Nida (1964) that naturalness of expression can be measured by the extent to which the message suits the receptor-language audience, this suitability being judged on the basis of the level of experience and the capacity for encoding. Likewise, when he asserts that "a natural translation can in some respects be described more easily in terms of what it avoids than in what it actually states" (p.168), I think he is perfectly right, for it is the existence of serious anomalies in a translated text that causes "communication load", thus making the translation sound unnatural and heavy.

Despite language and cultural universals which make translatability possible, there are words and expressions which have no equivalents in any other language because they are inherent in the very culture of a people. Likewise, there are culture-bound proverbs which have no equivalents in other languages. Usually, they are popular or folk proverbs expressing events of every day life and, as pointed out by McGuire (1980:32), the cultural untranslatability of such proverbs is due to the "absence in the target-language culture of a relevant situational feature for the source-language text."

This does not mean, however, that the message contained in such proverbs cannot be understood by other peoples. That is to say, the fact that a proverb in a certain language does not have equivalent form or meaning in any other language does not necessarily rule out the possibility of this message being understood by other peoples, exactly because of the cultural identity traits and common denominators shared by humankind. This also shows that there are minor cultural divergences which hamper the process of transposition of an equivalent message from one language to another simply because one culture probably lacks a certain feature that exists in the other.

On the other hand, the transfer of proverbs from English to Portuguese is not hindered by linguistic differences existing between the two languages. As seen through Eugene A. Nida's theory of formal and dynamic equivalence, where the former is not applicable, the latter is a most useful device to resort to, as a means of getting around such differences, through modifications of semantic fields, re-structuralization of sentences, readjustments, etc. There are also cases in which structurally and semantically speaking the original text is completely different from the transposed text. But the important thing is that the message conveyed in one language is exactly the same as that rendered in the other language, i. e. there is full equivalence of meaning between one language and the other.

This has led me to the final conclusion that where no equivalence can be found between proverbs in English and proverbs in Portuguese, this is not due to linguistic differences but to minor cultural divergences which naturally exist between the two languages and which transcend cultural universals.

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