

Munday, Jeremy. *Evaluation in Translation: critical points of translator decision-making*. London/New York: Routledge, 2012. Print.

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With *Evaluation in Translation: Critical points of translator decision-making*, Jeremy Munday aims primarily to investigate the translator's "intervention and subjective evaluation" in the translation of value positions represented in a source text (ST) (p. 2). As he draws mostly on Martin & White's (2005) appraisal framework, developed within systemic functional linguistics (SFL), he also aims to test out the model's effectiveness in revealing "critical points", i.e. points that require interpretation and intervention from the translator (cf. p. 2). The book comprises an introduction plus 6 chapters.

In the Introduction, Munday announces his aims and main theoretical model. He further specifies his focus as the translation of "lexical evaluation", especially "sensitive terms" like religious terms, and "how such evaluation operates and varies in real, contemporary settings" (p. 4). He provides illustration and mentions alternative theoretical models. Finally, he outlines the structure of the book, pointing out the range of modes, genres, languages and levels of experience to be dealt with.



In Chapter 1, Munday briefly reviews SFL's central concepts and SFL-based translation approaches, engaging more closely with Hatim & Mason (1990, 1997) and House (1981, 1997, 2001). He introduces the appraisal framework, describing its main systems - attitude, graduation and engagement - and their main subtypes. He also discusses the concept of reading position, i.e. the idea that by means of their evaluative choices texts construct putative readers, naturalizing a given point of view on what is proposed (cf. p. 38). To round off, he cites some classic examples in which the ST is "completely reworked and rearranged" (id.) not only in terms of evaluation but of ideational meanings, pointing out that these are in contrast to his focus on unconscious "values inserted into the text by the translator..." (p. 40).

In Chapter 2, Munday proffers applications of his "model of analysis drawn from appraisal theory" (p. 42). He contrasts realizations of attitude, both inscribed (explicit) and invoked (implicit), and even proposes a new category - "invoke associate" (p. 63). He then proceeds to graduation and engagement and, afterwards, he deals with the translation of pronouns and deixis. Finally, he addresses the switching of voices (translator's, reporter's and commentator's) in interpretations.

In Chapter 3, Munday investigates "professionals' perceptions of critical translation points" in the translation of technical texts and their awareness of such points. For such, he interviews translators "working in a range of languages and contexts" (p. 84) and also analyses queries in two online forums. Among the critical points mentioned by the informants are: false friends, polysemous words, German modal particles and auxiliaries, text type (e.g. ambiguities in legal texts), and in the forums, technical terminology, especially neologisms which evoke attitude.

In Chapter 4, Munday investigates critical points in "archive material related to literary translation", i.e., correspondence,

revisions and self-revisions through which authors, translators and revisers negotiate meanings in translations of Tacitus, Vargas Llosa's and Georges Perec. The main conscious critical points found include: the instability of the ST - translator and revisors use different editions and make different readings, consequently producing different translated texts (TTs); culture-specific items like "regionalisms, swear words and racial terms" (p. 112); and reaching a domesticating translation - e.g., "avoidance of lexical calque and standard translation equivalents" (p. 125).

In Chapter 5, Munday aims to find out differences and similarities between translators regarding their use of attitude resources (p. 131). For such, he compares extracts from a short story by Jorge Luis Borges to published translations into English and to "a corpus of translations by trainee translators" (p. 132). He finds variation is small in frequency and category but substantial in lexical realization.

Finally, in Chapter 6, Munday comments on the results obtained in previous chapters, discusses the translator's possible reading positions and emphasizes the "usefulness of appraisal theory for the analysis of translation" (p. 159), pointing out the analyses offered as worth replicating and extending.

For a book that is advertised as "key reading for researchers and postgraduates studying translation theory within Translation Studies and Interpreting Studies" (back cover), it is not quite reader-friendly, presenting problems in terms of organization, clarity, fidelity to theoretical sources and precision in the application of concepts.

Readers will not find information like the book's aims, foci and main definitions clearly or sufficiently given in the Introduction or in Chapter 1. Munday keeps rewording his initial aim in ways that in fact add new aims, confusing the reader. At first, he is interested in identifying "places in a text" (p. 1), then "linguistic signs" (p. 2), then signs become "points in a text" (p. 2) and these become "critical

points” or “critical ideological point[s] of translation” (p. 2-3). Then, the focus is said to be “lexical evaluation” like in the translation of “sensitive terms” - “names of deities”, “proper names”, insults (p. 3-5). Additionally, Munday aims to investigate “how such evaluation operates and varies in real, contemporary settings” (p. 4). And then includes in such evaluation “crucial evaluative features... that deal with the language of certainty and truth” (p. 6). Then, the aim is not only to identify critical points but also their range and “the trends in their translation” (p. 9). Later on, critical points will include “values inserted into the text by the translator, perhaps surreptitiously and not consciously” (p. 40). Thus, the book turns to investigation of variation of critical points in technical texts and awareness of such points by technical translators (cf. p. 84). Last but not least, in Chapter 5, Munday shifts his focus from translation products to the translation process, proposing to investigate “the differences that exist between translators, and... in what characteristics translators share and how this can be traced in their work” (p. 131). Only then he aims to find out whether the elements that are “most open to shifting are expressions of attitude and feelings” (id.).

Besides the chameleonic and expansive nature of aims, there is the taken-for-grantedness of some key concepts like intervention, equivalent and shift. Intervention is used in the Introduction to define the translator as “one who ‘intervenes’...” (p. 2), and to state the book’s aim as “to investigate the linguistic signs of a translator’s intervention...” (id.). It is only mentioned again in Chapter 1, when it is compared to Hatim and Mason’s (1997) “mediation”, a concept whose definition is not offered either. Munday apparently adopts House’s (2008) definition of intervention¹ (cf p. 19-20) but adds to it “unconscious choices made by the translator” (p. 20).

Shift and equivalent are also underdefined terms. Shift seems to be taken as synonymous with House’s (1981, 1997) ‘mismatches’² (cf Munday 2012: 19). However, Munday makes it much broader and flexible, including differences in ideology, evaluation,

lexicogrammar, discourse, representation, categories in languages (like pronouns, cf. p. 74), reading position, metaphor, explicit/implicit meanings and cultural value systems. It seemingly ends up standing for “change” of whatever type (cf. p. 125). Equivalent is even more taken-for-granted. It wavers from 1) the - “literal”/”direct”/”default”/”most obvious”/”conventional”/”common and accepted”/”dictionary” - equivalent, to 2) the - “justified”/”desired” - equivalent, and to 3) “an equivalent”/”competing potential equivalents”/”suggested equivalents”. Such looseness in terminology culminates with both shift and equivalent used to refer to the same translated item - “mission” (p. 138).

Contradictions ensue: for example, if Munday defines a translator as someone who “intervenes”, how can he subscribe to House’s view that “In many - if not most - cases it might be wiser to not intervene at all” (House 2008: 16 apud Munday 2012: 20)? Another conundrum is the supplementation of House’s definition of intervention with translators’ unconscious choices. If House even separates “linguistic, textual considerations from social ones” (id.) how would unconscious considerations (which we can suppose are at a further remove) fit in?

Indeed, Munday’s book seems undecided as to which considerations - conscious or unconscious - are to be investigated and how. In Chapter 1, he says the type of translator’s values to be uncovered are those “inserted into the text ... surreptitiously and not consciously” (p. 40). He also says that critical points “include more subtle and potentially less conscious choices, involving the recognition and reproduction of invoked attitude (...) (p. 41). And he announces that “the following chapters present case studies of different forms of translation in an attempt to shed further light on such critical points” (p. 41). However, none of the following chapters says anything about unconscious or even less conscious choices. By the way, who says sheer use of appraisal theory can reveal unconscious values?

Even if confusing, the announced aims indicate the construal and use of appraisal theory as vital for their attainment. Now, while it is encouraging to see a renowned translation scholar take an interest in this new development in SFL and undertake to test and divulge it, it is also disheartening to notice that the model is neither properly construed nor effectively applied.

Munday's book is at odds with what is proposed in Martin and White (2005) in various occasions. For example, in the Introduction, appraisal is presented as a theory "embedded within Systemic Functional Grammar"³ (p. 2). Conflictingly, Martin and White (2005) situate appraisal "within the general theoretical framework of SFL" (p. 7), specifically in its "'Sydney' register" (id.). Regarding metafunction and stratification (or rather, realization), they conceive of appraisal as an "interpersonal system at the level of discourse semantics" (id, p. 33). Surprisingly, Munday (2012) acknowledges this in Chapter 1, pointing out the two other systems - negotiation and involvement (p. 22).

Munday's account of appraisal's subsystems is likewise vicious. Regarding engagement, he likens monogloss to dialogic contraction and heterogloss to expansion (cf. p. 24, Table 1.2). He says that monogloss "constricts response, for example, with categorical assertions (...) or reporting verbs (e.g. demonstrate, show [...]) that do not allow for easy disagreement" (p. 33), and that heterogloss "is 'dialogically expansive' by acknowledging the possibility of alternative viewpoints (...)" (id.). He then proposes to represent these as a "cline of dialogism" (p. 8, 34). Yet no such cline is possible in Martin and White (2005) who define monogloss as "dialogistically inert", i.e., it simply ignores or chooses not to overtly recognize dialogistic alternatives (cf. p. 99-102). According to these authors, it is heterogloss that will allow for the choices of either contracting or expanding the dialogic space (cf. p. 102-104).

Some contradictions and inaccuracies are also found in Munday's account of the strategies for expressing attitude. In Chapter 1, he privileges the simplified taxonomy of White (2006) and Thomson and White (2008)⁴ over Martin and White's. However, he says his representation of the system (Figure 1.3) is adapted from Martin and White (2005). He affirms Thomson and White (2008) have replaced "Martin and White's (2005) term "invite" with 'evoke' and remove[d] the sub-classifications of 'flag' ... and 'afford'..." (Munday 2012: 163, note 22). He also says they have extended the category provoke "to encompass counter-expectancy indicators and intensification through non-core lexis" (p. 30). In fact, they haven't done so but simply re-arranged Martin and White's (2005) categories so as to have only two choices instead of three - "evoked" standing for evaluation invoked via "purely experiential ('factual') material" (Thomson and White 2008: 12), and "provoked" standing for evaluation invoked via "material which, while evaluative, is not of itself positive or negative - for example via intensification, comparison, metaphor or counter-expectation" (id.).

In his illustrations (Figures 1.3 and 2.1), Munday chooses not to follow SFL's conventions. The disadvantage is that it is not clear whether counter-expectancy and non-core lexis/intensification are under provoke or not. This gets even worse when, in Chapter 2, he proposes the new category "invoke associate". Is it replacing "invoke" in the previous system (Figure 1.3) and so comprising provoke and evoke? Or is it a new subsystem under "invoke"? The figure seems to indicate the first case while the text favours the second one.

As for the new category proposed, "invoke associate", it is expendable since the system is already called "invoke" and all the mechanisms under it are already "mechanisms of association" (Thomson and White 2008: 11). What's more, the examples given (p. 63-64) can be easily coded by means of the taxonomies already proposed -

1. “Concord and Gettysburg; Normandy and Khe Sahn” - afford/evoke a positive judgement of tenacity;
2. “patchwork heritage” - provokes (in both taxonomies) a negative appreciation of composition: complexity;
3. “the kindness to take in a stranger when the levees break” - provokes (according to Thomson and White’s taxonomy) a positive judgement of propriety since it constitutes a comparison: like that kindness that people showed when the levees broke during the hurricane. Those people epitomize American’s kindness.
4. “the father of our nation” - provokes (in both taxonomies) positive affect: feelings of happiness/affection and security/trust, like feeling part of one family under the love and protection of this father;
5. “the firefighter’s courage to storm a stairway filled with smoke” - similarly to 3 above, it provokes a positive judgement of tenacity since the courage of the people is compared to that of the firefighter who did so in the 9/11 attacks.

Also, the example Munday gives when introducing appraisal’s “evoked attitude” (p. 27-28), which involves “the triggering of a latent contextual association” (p. 28), is identical to the first example above.

Another problem with Munday’s account of appraisal theory is that he keeps mixing it with alternative divergent models. For example, in his presentation of engagement he interposes at least Fairclough’s (2003) dialogicality (p. 33, 34), Chilton’s (2004) deictic positioning, and Chafe and Nichols’ (1986) evidentiality. Apparently, he does so to try and redress appraisal’s privileging of rhetoric over the “truth functional orientation” (Martin and White 2005: 40, 94, 105, 261), since he takes translation, with Newmark (1999) as a “truth-seeking activity” (cf. Munday 2012: 36) and thus cannot dispense with “the evaluation of the veracity of an

argument” (id.). If that is so, why did he choose appraisal in the first place?

It is probably this patchwork of concepts that Munday calls his “model of analysis drawn from appraisal theory” (p. 42). Now, if he does not even present the original model clearly and completely, how can he talk of a model derived from it? Where is it? How does it differ from the original one? And worse, how can he claim to have tested the original model?

Munday’s applications of appraisal theory are also problematic. One example are his codings of judgement in Chapter 2. If only he had accounted for the possibility of double coding allowed by the model, i.e., the possibility of simultaneous realization of different categories of attitude, involving different degrees of explicitness (cf. Martin and White 2005: 67-68), he would possibly have been able to explain his coding of “toiled in sweatshops” as i) inscribed positive tenacity (Table 2.3, p. 49); ii) “invoked judgement” (p. 52), iii) “tenacity and expanded capacity” (p. 53); iv) an “oblique allusion” (p. 53); v) “evoked evaluation” (p. 54), and as vi) “invoked-associative attitude” (p. 78). In sum, the example is coded as all appraisal categories he proposed to use (cf. p. 63, Figure 2.1) except “provoke”. Now that is amazing that in my own analysis, I would indeed distinguish more than one value in the expression, but I would separately ascribe provoked positive tenacity to “toiled”, due to its sense of intensification (toil = “to work hard, to labour continuously till exhaustion”), and evoked negative propriety to “sweatshops”. The latter is also coded as such by Munday (p. 50, Table 2.4).

Another example is his classification of counter-expectancy indicators (p. 66). Of the 22 items he lists only seven are correct - “those that seek *only*”, “favors *only*”, “*still* light in the world”, “our power *alone*”, “*even* greater” (twice), “but *rather* seize gladly”. Four other items are part of a complex where counter occurs, not

where he indicates, but in the “but” that follows. In 6 others, what occurs is denial instead of counter. There is one example which is concur (“*surely* passed”), in another there is simply graduation: force (“*scarcely* imagine”), in another there is no evaluation where indicated (“we are ready to lead *once more*”), and the last two ones (“*ultimately*” and “*finally*”), as far as I know, are not resources of appraisal, though I suppose they could be seen as adding emphasis and so as contributing to invoke the idea of difficulty.

There are still other important similar issues but I suppose the ones above suffice to evidence that Munday’s venture into appraisal meant a crude and unwieldy proposal for a “general theory of evaluation in translator decision-making” (id., p. i). Thus, to conclude, I will attempt to explain why, after discovering such a rich lode for the study of translation, Munday barely scratches its surface.

Among the main factors sabotaging Munday’s project, I would include unfamiliarity with appraisal and other new developments in SFL, and the skipping of a necessary theorization step in the path from a sociolinguistic framework to a translation studies model of analysis. Munday makes some moves in this direction when he defines the translator as “one who ‘intervenes’ not as a transparent conduit of meaning but as an interested representer of the source words of others ...” (p. 2), and when he starts discussing “translator-reading positions” and the translator’s projecting of a “new reading position onto the TT audience” (p. 38-40, 168). However, he fails to take such a reflection to its ultimate consequences and conclude that instead of reproducing the ST, a TT rather reconstructs a reading (or readings) of it made by a translator in order to negotiate its meanings not only with the intended TL readers but with whoever ends up reading it, including other users of the languages involved like translators and translation scholars with whom the very notion of what is faithful or equivalent becomes a more conspicuous part of the meaning negotiation.

In tune with the SF approach to translation that since Halliday (1956, 1960, 1964) and Catford (1965) has modelled translation against parameters of similarity and difference between language systems – equivalence and shift – in relation to the hierarchy of realization (stratum, system, rank, axis and metafunction), Munday focuses on equivalence in terms of the system of appraisal, and aims to identify and chart shifts between the languages considered. Notwithstanding, appraisal theory and subsequent developments revamp and expand the SF theory of language in social context, opening up new research avenues within SFL and in its interface with translation studies. Modeling appraisal in terms of both realization and instantiation⁵ and proposing the concepts of “reading” and “reading position” triggered the broadening of the focus on languages to include its uses and users more pronouncedly. This is what is proposed in Martin’s (2006) multinocular analysis based on three complementary hierarchies - 1) realization, concerning the organization of the language system in strata at increasing levels of abstraction; 2) instantiation, concerning the relation between the overall meaning potential and text as a concrete instance of that potential; and 3) individuation, concerning the relation between language as a reservoir of meanings and the repertoires of individual users.

Drawing on such analysis, Souza (2010, 2013) proposes a model of translation which accounts for the language systems involved (by means of realization), their uses (by means of instantiation) and their users (by means of individuation). The focus is turned from the mapping of equivalences and shifts between systems to the investigation of how TTs are semantically related to STs through a process of re-instantiation in which translators negotiate ST’s meanings, according to their repertoires, with different communities of TL users.

Even if faulty, Munday’s testing of appraisal might be seen as a harbinger of “a new paradigm for translation studies research”

(Munday 2012, cover). The recent developments reported above promise to enable as comprehensive a sociolinguistic picture of translation as possible. Let the exploration go on.

Notes

1. “Manipulation of the source text beyond what is linguistically necessary” (House 2008: 16 apud Munday 2012: 20).
2. These refer to differences in the “individual textual function” of ST and TT, defined by means of SFL concepts (House 2001: 137-139).
3. Systemic functional grammar refers to the system networks of lexicogrammar which is just part of Systemic Functional Linguistics (cf. Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 31).
4. He mistakenly refers to “Martin and Thomson (2008)”.
5. As an interpersonal system (*realization*) and also as a “generalised systemic potential” with its subpotentials - “key (register)”, “stance (text type)” and “evaluation (instance)” (*instantiation*) (Martin and White 2005: 163).

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