

## COHESIVE DEVICES AND TRANSLATION: AN ANALYSIS

Rosane Silveira  
UFSC

ADVANCES IN AREAS SUCH AS TEXTUAL LINGUISTICS, discourse analysis, systemic grammar and cognitive psychology have contributed to the development of a descriptive theory of translation, in contrast to the traditional prescriptive approach. In a descriptive approach to translation, one major concern is to identify the kinds of knowledge that are used by the translator (Bell, 1991). As Bell observes, the translator's *communicative competence* is made up of various kinds of linguistic and social knowledge in both the source and the target language. In the present paper, I will analyze one aspect of the linguistic knowledge that translators must possess — knowledge about textual cohesion.

Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) regard cohesion as one of the seven *standards of textuality* (p. 3). Therefore, in order to be *communicative* a text must be organized, and this organization can be achieved through the use of cohesive devices. Carter (1987:72) defines cohesion as “the term... [that] embraces the means by which texts are linguistically connected”. It is important to notice, however, that cohesion is “a surface relation” (Baker, 1991:6), i.e. it enables us, by means of lexical, grammatical or other devices, to connect different items that make up a text.

Following Halliday's Systemic Grammar, Bell (1991:121) mentions the three macrofunctions of language: *ideational* (related to meaning), *interpersonal* (related to the reader/hearer) and *textual*

(related to text organization). Bell places cohesion within the *textual function*, since it contributes to organize the propositional content (*ideational function*), bringing the utterances together to “constitute a linguistically linked text” (121).

As mentioned above, cohesion can be achieved through the use of grammatical and lexical words. The distinction between the two kinds of words is given by Carter (1991:8), who argues that lexical words “carry a higher information content, and... are syntactically structured by the grammatical words”. Examples of *grammatical* or *functional words* are pronouns, auxiliary verbs, prepositions, and conjunctions; while examples of *lexical* or *content words* are nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. Carter argues that grammatical words are the most common type of cohesive devices used to organize texts.

A more detailed classification of types of cohesion is presented by Halliday and Hasan (1976) in their model. They identify five types of cohesion in English:

1 - *reference* (pronominal, demonstrative, definite article and comparative);<sup>1</sup>

2 - *conjunction* (additive, adversative, causal, temporal, and continuative);<sup>2</sup>

3 - *lexical reiteration* (same item, synonymous, superordinate, and general item) and *collocation*;

4 - *substitution*, and

5 - *ellipsis*

The first type of cohesion —reference— involves the use of pronouns, articles or adverbs to refer back (or forward) to an item mentioned in the linguistic or situational text. The reference can be

anaphoric (the referent precedes the cohesive device) or cataphoric (the referent follows the cohesive device). Thus, in a sentence like:

I want to buy *a car*. *The car* must be red.

the definite article *the* is used in the second sentence to refer back to the object *car* that was introduced in the previous sentence, as the use of an indefinite article indicates.

As opposed to *reference*, *conjunctions* do not signal to information present in the text, rather they signal, by means of “formal markers”, “the way the writer wants the reader to relate what is about to be said to what has been said before” (Bake, 1991:190)

The device of lexical reiteration can be observed in the following example:

There is *a dog* outside. *The animal* seems to be dangerous.

As we can see, the nominal group *the dog* is replaced by a superordinate: *the animal*.

Furthermore, the fourth device —substitution— is marked by the use of nouns, verbs or clauses to replace some information previously presented, as in the dialog:

- You shouldn't *go to the beach today*.
- But I want to *do it*.

in which the verb *do* stands for the clause *go to the beach*.

Finally, the device of ellipsis consists of omitting information that was presented previously, without affecting comprehension:

- Do you have an extra pen?
- Yes, I have.

As we can see, the omission of the noun phrase *an extra pen* in the second sentence is possible because the hearer/reader can infer

the meaning of the whole sentence.

In the present paper I am only concerned with cohesive devices involving *reference*, *conjunction* and *substitution*. It is important to notice, however, that I will not follow all the categories proposed by Halliday and Hasan. The adaptation of their framework is due to the fact that I intend to analyze only those cohesive devices that proved to be problematic in the corpus investigated by this paper.

### Corpus

The corpus consists of a short English text in the area of management. The text — “Discipline, self-discipline, “self-realization’”— is an extract of the chapter “Liberation management”, from the book *Necessary disorganization for the nanosecond nineties*, by Alfred A. Knopf. The translation of the text (TT) into Portuguese was produced by a post-graduate student in the area of management. This translation is part of the requirements of the post-graduate programs of the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina. The conditions<sup>3</sup> under which the translation was produced were the following: (1) the student received a text related to his major area; (2) the student had two hours to translate thirty lines of the text (it was not necessary to translate the whole text); (3) the student could make use of dictionaries.

### The Analysis

As I have suggested in the previous sections, the present paper aims at investigating the issue of cohesion within the context of translation. In order to achieve this purpose, I will analyze the use of cohesive devices by a native speaker of Portuguese while translating an English text.

To facilitate the visualization of the use of cohesive devices in

the ST and the TT, some charts were elaborated to display the types of cohesion analyzed. I have to point out, however, that these charts only present cohesive devices that posed some difficulty for the translator. The results of this selective analysis will be discussed bellow.

## SUBSTITUTION

substitution	source text	target text
	do	∅

The device of substitution was not extensively used in either text. Only the ST employed it once, using the verb *do*. In Portuguese, the translator opted for omitting the verb ("Mas eu não queria ∅ *isso*."), with no negative effects on the structural organization and the propositional content.

## REFERENCE

reference	source text	target text
<i>article</i>	a	a
<i>pronoun</i>	those	(todos)
	those	(os)
	such	∅
	such	(desta maneira)
	them	∅
<i>adverb</i>	it	(isto)
	in effect	∅
<i>relative</i>	that	∅

In regard to *reference*, the TT tends to present cohesive devices that are equivalent to the ones used in the ST (see appendixes I and

II). Nevertheless, there are also omissions, partial equivalences and even complete alterations of the connection signaled by the cohesive device in the ST.

The first example of omission is connected with the use of the pronoun “such” in the ST (“indoctrinated in *such* basic skills”). In the TT, this pronoun is omitted (“instruído em  $\emptyset$  habilidades básicas”). Such an omission results in the loss of information, since the “basic skills” mentioned in the ST refer back to important information presented throughout the text, and the lack of the pronoun “such” does not make it clear that the author is pointing to the same information previously mentioned. Similarly, the personal pronoun “them” is deleted in the TT (“staring at *them*.” / “sua administração [ $\emptyset$ ].”). However, this deletion is connected with the translator’s difficulty to translate a whole chunk of the ST, thus omitting and distorting part of it.

Another instance of omission occurs with the adverbial adjunct “in effect”. Nonetheless, this cohesive device is used by the author of the ST to emphasize the utterance (“*They* told me, *in effect* / “*Eles* me falaram  $\emptyset$ ), and its omission is not as problematic as the other two mentioned above. Finally, there is the omission of a relative pronoun in the sentence: *that* apprenticeship program /  $\emptyset$  problemas de aprendizagem”. Besides the omission, the translation of the cognate “program” by “problemas” seems to be a lapse.

As to the use of a different cohesive device by the translator, resulting in partial equivalence or no equivalence at all, we can observe the use of the definite article “os” and the indefinite pronoun “todos” in the TT, instead of the demonstrative pronoun “those” in the ST. In both cases, the use of different grammatical words reduces the degree of specificity of the referents promoted by the demonstrative pronouns, but the use of the definite article and the indefinite pronoun keeps the original referent of the ST (“workers”): “*those* workers” / “os trabalhadores”; “*those* in the plant / “*todos* na fábrica”. Likewise, the demonstrative pronoun “isto” replaces the pronoun “it”. However, such a change makes the translated sentence sound rather awkward. The awkwardness of the sen-

tence in the TT is corroborated by the wrong translation of the indefinite article “a” as the definite article “a” (the) in Portuguese (“The idea of self-discipline has *a* concomitant—“self-realization”, as Hintersberger labels *it*.” / “A idéia de auto-disciplina tem *a* concomitante — auto-realização *como* Hintersberger indica *isto*.”).

A last aspect concerning *reference* is the substitution of the adverbial adjunct “desta maneira” for the pronoun “such”. This substitution interferes with the ideational meaning of the ST: “*Such* ground for mutual respect / *Desta maneira* o respeito mútuo”.

#### CONJUNCTION

conjunction	source text	target text
<i>additive</i>	that is	ou
<i>adversative</i>	instead	entretanto (que isto)
<i>causal</i>	for that matter	por este assunto
<i>temporal</i>	at times	um tempo
	in the end	no fim
<i>conditional</i>	even if	∅
<i>comparative</i>	as ... as	mais ... do que
	far better	melhor

Similarly to pronoun *reference*, the cohesive device of *conjunction* proves to be problematic for the translator of the TT. A first problem is with the additive conjunction “that is”, which is translated as “ou”. Such a translation, although partial, does not affect the connection established by the cohesive device of the ST (“*that is*, the Japanese theory” / “*ou* a teoria japonesa”).

On the other hand, the conjunction “instead” is replaced by a possible equivalent “entretanto”. This choice leads the author to change the structure of the TT, thus altering other cohesive devices, such as the substitution of “isto” for “it’s one of the”. Of course, this structural change results in the loss of some informa-

tion provided by the ST, yet the results concerning the grammatical structure of the TT are positive (“*but I think, instead, it’s one of the special attributes*” / “*mas eu penso, entretanto que isto é um especial atributo*”)

Another strategy used by the translator while dealing with *conjunction* is the literal translation. Therefore, the conjunctions “for that matter” and “in the end” were translated as “por este assunto” and “no fim”, respectively (“*And, for that matter, the reason Siegfried Meister*” / “*E, por este assunto, a razão de Meister*”; “*in the end, a cop.*” / “*no fim, um guarda*”). A possible translation for “for that matter” could have been “por isso”, and “in the end” could have been translated as “afinal”. A rather similar strategy (except for the fact that the translator apparently mixed up the preposition “at” with the article “a”) was used to translate “at times”, replaced by “um tempo”, instead of “às vezes” (“The no-walls, easy communication story was *at times* hard to fathom.” / “A história da comunicação fácil, sem muros era *um tempo* difícil para se penetrar.”). In all cases, the translation disrupted the propositional meaning of the ST.

As in the case of referential cohesive devices, the translator also made use of the strategy of deletion while translating the conditional conjunction “even if”. It is important to notice, however, that this deletion occurred in one sentence that was problematic for the translator, leading her to delete or change information present in the ST.

Also problematic were the comparatives “as ... as” and “far better”. The first conjunction is translated as a comparative of superiority (“*mais ... aqui do que*”, instead of “*tão ... aqui quanto*”, thus changing the propositional meaning of the ST (“*their job is as secure here as at a giant company*” / “*seus empregos estão mais seguros aqui do que em uma grande companhia*”). The last example (“far better”) is not so problematic, since the translator just omits the adverb “far” that emphasizes the comparative in the ST (“*you’re far better off here.*” / “*você está melhor aqui.*”



### **Final remarks**

The analysis of the corpus revealed how problematic inconsistent knowledge about cohesion in both the source language (SL) and the target language (TL) can be for the translator. In many cases, the translator failed to keep the propositional content of the source text because she misunderstood or misused the cohesive devices of the SL and the TL respectively.

Some of the problems of the target text are connected with the fact that the translator overemphasized the textual structure of the source text. This attitude resulted in the literal translation of conjunctions which do not have a correspondent meaning in the TL. As Baker (1991:188) proposes, "transferring the devices used in the source text into the target text will not do... what is required is a reworking of the methods of establishing links to suit the textual norms of the target language". In other words, simply transferring the patterns of the SL to the TL are likely to result in an awkward translation, i.e. a translated text that sounds "foreign" (Baker, 1991:202).

Nevertheless, the other extreme, that is, randomly altering the structure of the source text can result in changes in the propositional content. Therefore, the translator is expected to keep "a balance between accuracy and naturalness" (Baker, 1991:196). Unfortunately, the translation analyzed in this paper does not present such a balance in general. However, we have to consider the context in which the translation was produced: a two-hour test. Another drawback is that the translator seems to have a naive view of the translation process, being unaware of the complexity of this activity, as the structural awkwardness and the various alterations in the propositional content of the target text indicate.

### Notes

1. Following Nicola & Infante (1992), I place the category of comparatives within the group of (subordinate) conjunctions.
2. This subcategory is used to place all kinds of conjunctions that do not fit the other subcategories. I opted for replacing it by more specific subcategories, having as a basis *Collins Cobuilds English Grammar* (1993).
3. Note that these conditions are established by the Foreign Language Department.
4. For a more complete chart, see appendixes I and II.

### Bibliography

- BAKER, Mona (1992) *In Other Words: a coursebook on translation*. London and New York: Routledge.
- BEAUGRANDE, R. de & DRESSLER, W.U. (1981) *Introduction to Text Linguistics*. London/UK: Longman.
- BELL, Roger (1991) *Translation and Translating: theory and practice*. London and New York: Longman.
- CARTER, Ronald (1987) *Vocabulary: applied linguistic perspectives*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- HALLIDAY, M.A.K & HASAN, R. (1976) *Cohesion in English*. London and New York: Longman.
- NICOLA, José de & INFANTE, Ulisses (1992) *Gramática Contemporânea da Língua Portuguesa* (8ª ed.). São Paulo: Editora Scipione.
- PETERS, Tom (1992) "Liberation management". In: *Necessary Disorganization for the Nanosecond Nineties*. Alfred A. Knopf. New York, p. 300.
- SINCLAIR, John. (chief editor) (1993) *Collins Cobuild English Grammar*. London: HarperCollins Publishers.

## APPENDIX I

## Discipline, self-discipline, "self-realization"

Source Text	Target Text
The no-walls, easy communication story was <i>at times</i> hard to fathom.	A história da comunicação fácil, sem muros era <i>um tempo</i> difícil para se penetrar.
In my tour through German, <i>for instance</i> ...	Em meu roteiro através de empresas alemãs, <i>por exemplo</i> ...
The new American theory ( <i>that is</i> , the Japanese theory, <i>which</i> we've imported) is <i>that</i> quality control...	A nova teoria americana ( <i>ou</i> a teoria japonesa <i>que</i> nós importamos) <i>é de que</i> o controle de qualidade...
<i>Yet</i> the German approach seems to work, and apparently isn't <i>as</i> dispiriting to workers <i>as</i> it is in the United States - <i>where</i> quality control is the cops policing idiots ( <i>those</i> workers)...	<i>Todavia</i> o método alemão dá a impressão de que o trabalho não é $\emptyset$ desanimador para os trabalhadores <i>como</i> nos Estados Unidos, <i>onde</i> o controle de qualidade é um guarda policiando idiotas ( <i>os</i> trabalhadores)...
I asked a Rational quality-control officer, Roland Klages, <i>whether</i> he wasn't, <i>in the end</i> , a cop.	Eu perguntei a um comandante do controle de qualidade <i>se</i> ele não era <i>no fim</i> , um guarda.
I got an earful: "we might look like policemen (...), <i>but that's</i> not our job.	Eu ouvi o suficiente: "nós podemos parecer policiais (...), <i>mas esta</i> não é nossa função.
Klages insisted that his job was supporting <i>those</i> in the plant.	Klages insiste que sua tarefa era <i>o que</i> dava suporte a <i>todos</i> na fábrica.
"Everybody makes mistakes, and <i>if you</i> make a mistake, that's fine", he said.	" <i>Todos</i> cometem erros, e <i>se você</i> cometer um erro, ótimo", ele falou.
"The issue is how people treat <i>each other</i> . And <i>here</i> it's a matter of respect for the worker."	"A questão é como as pessoas agem <i>com as outras</i> . E aqui está a importância do respeito pelo trabalhador."
<i>That</i> might sound like motherhood and apple pie, <i>but</i> I think, <i>instead</i> , it's <i>one</i> of the special attributes...	<i>Isto</i> pode parecer com maternidade e moleza, <i>mas</i> eu penso, <i>entretanto</i> que <i>isto</i> é um especial atributo...
<i>Almost everyone</i> in the plant has been tempered by that apprenticeship program.	<i>Quase todos</i> na fábrica tem sido ajustados pelos $\emptyset$ problemas de aprendizagem na fábrica.
Workers are competent, and are <i>perceived as</i> competent.	Trabalhadores são competentes, em percebidos <i>sua</i> competência.
<i>The point</i> ... is not <i>discipline</i> , but " <i>self-discipline</i> ."	<i>O objetivo</i> ... " <i>não é a disciplina</i> mas a <i>auto-disciplina</i> ."
<i>Such</i> ground for mutual respect are absent in <i>most</i> U.S. operations, <i>where</i> the "worker" hasn't been indoctrinated in <i>such</i> basic skills, and the hands-clean "boss" wouldn't know the results of their application, <i>even if</i> he were staring at <i>them</i> .	<i>Desta maneira</i> o respeito mútuo estão ausentes na <i>maioria</i> das operações americanas, <i>aonde</i> o trabalhador não é instruído em $\emptyset$ habilidades básicas, e os chefes não podem saber os resultados de sua administração $\emptyset$ .
The idea of self-discipline has a concomitant- " <i>self-realization</i> ", as Hintersberger labels it.	A idéia de auto-disciplina tem a concomitante - <i>auto-realização</i> como Hintersberger indica <i>isto</i> .
<i>And, for that matter</i> , the reason Siegfried Meister never went to work <i>there</i> in the first place.	<i>E, por este assunto</i> , a razão de Meister nunca ter ido trabalhar <i>lá</i> na sua primeira colocação.
"They told me, <i>in effect</i> , [...], 'Go to Siemens...' But I didn't want to <i>do that</i> .	" <i>Eles</i> me falaram $\emptyset$ 'vá para a Siemens e tenha um emprego seguro'. Mas eu não queria $\emptyset$ <i>isso</i> ."
Young engineers at Rational, he insists, "feel that <i>their</i> efforts can make a difference <i>right away</i> . And incidentally, <i>their</i> job is as secure <i>here</i> as at a giant company. <i>If you</i> really want to move <i>something</i> , you're <i>far</i> better off <i>here</i> ."	Jovens engenheiros são racionais ele insiste "sentir <i>seus</i> esforços podem fazer a diferença $\emptyset$ . E provavelmente <i>seus</i> empregos estão <i>mais</i> seguros <i>aqui</i> do que em uma grande companhia. <i>Se você</i> quer realmente mudar <i>alguma coisa</i> , você está <i>melhor</i> <i>aqui</i> ."

## APPENDIX II

SOURCE TEXT	COHESIVE DEVICE	TARGET TEXT	COHESIVE DEVICE
at times	adv. of time	um tempo	article + noun
for instance	additive conj.	por exemplo	additive conj.
that is	adverb	ou	coordinate conj.
which	relative pronoun	que	relative pronoun
that	subordinate conjunction	(de) que	subordinate conjunction
yet	coordinate conjunction (adversative)	todavia	coordinate conjunction (adversative)
as ... as	conjunction (comparative)	Ø ... como	conjunction (comparative)
where	adverb of place	onde	adverb of place
those	demonstrative pronoun	os	article
whether	subordinate conjunction	se	subordinate conjunction
in the end	adverb of time	no fim	adverb of time
but	coordinate conjunction (adversative)	mas	coordinate conjunction (adversative)
that	demonstrative pronoun	esta	demonstrative pronoun
those	demonstrative pronoun	todos	indefinite pronoun
everybody	indefinite pronoun	todos	indefinite pronoun
if	subordinate conjunction (conditional)	se	subordinate conjunction (conditional)
but	coordinate conjunction (adversative)	mas	coordinate conjunction (adversative)
instead	coordinate conjunction	entretanto que isto	coordinate conjunction + subordinate conjunction + demonstrative pronoun
almost	adverb	quase	adverb
everyone	indefinite pronoun	todos	indefinite pronoun
that	relative pronoun	Ø	Ø
as	subordinate conjunction	sua	possessive pronoun
not ... but	coordinate conjunction (additive)	não ... mas	coordinate conjunction (additive)
such	pronoun	desta maneira	adverb
in most	adverb	na maioria	adverb
where	adverb	onde	adverb
such	pronoun	Ø	Ø
even if	subordinate conjunction	Ø	Ø
them	object pronoun	Ø	Ø
as	subordinate conjunction	como	subordinate conjunction
it	pronoun	isto	demonstrative pronoun
and	coordinate conjunction (additive)	e	coordinate conjunction (additive)
for that matter	causal conjunction	por este assunto	preposition + demonstrative pronoun + noun
there	adverb	lá	adverb
they	personal pronoun	eles	personal pronoun
in effect	adverb	Ø	Ø
do	verb	Ø	Ø
that	demonstrative pronoun	isso	demonstrative pronoun
their	possessive pronoun	seus	possessive pronoun

right away	adverb	Ø	Ø
and	coordinate conjunction (additive)	e	coordinate conjunction (additive)
their	possessive pronoun	seus	possessive pronoun
as ... as	comparative ( <i>equality</i> )	mais ... do que	comparative ( <i>superiority</i> )
here	adverb	aqui	adverb
if	subordinate conjunction (conditional)	se	subordinate conjunction (conditional)
something	indefinite pronoun	alguma coisa	indefinite pronoun
far better	adverb + comparative	melhor	comparative
off here	adverb	aqui	adverb