TRANSLATION AND LANGUAGE.
Peter Fawcett. Manchester: St
Jerome, 1997, 160 pp.

For almost three decades now,
Translation Theory has frantically
been developing, permanently
searching for a niche and an
identity of its own. Such an
ongoing attempt to construct its
own ethos has provoked strong
frictions with [correlated?] fields.
The most explicit seems to be that
with Linguistics. By denying
reciprocal importance or influence,

both linguistics and translation
theory have created what Fawcett
establishes as the motto of his book
Translation and Language, i.e. a
"love-hate relationship." With the
publication of this book, readers can
gain access to a broad view of the
issue overtly expressed in its title
and also to the tensions necessary
to its enhancement.

The book is divided into twelve
chapters plus a final 'conclusions
and perspectives' section which I
take up in order. The chapters are
arranged in a kind of hierarchical
structure, the focus moving from
smaller units, such as the
morpheme and the word, through

word relations and the sentence, to spheres beyond the sentence including the text and its function in the context of situation where it comes into being. In the different chapters, Fawcett explores the potentiality of basic concepts of structural linguistics, generative grammar, text linguistics, functional linguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and psycholinguistics to the study of translation, always illustrating the contribution with examples.

Chapter 1, *Introduction*, is one of the longest and probably the most important of all chapters in this book. Here the author outlines the basic concepts which, in his opinion, are important to translation, tracing back the roots of the contentious relationship mentioned above. Such concepts function as foundations to everything else which will be discussed in the remainder of the book. It is also in the introduction that the purpose of the book is set _ "to explore the contributions of linguistics to the study of translation"; the position of the author is declared_ " linguistics quite clearly does have something to offer the study of translation"; and the limitations of linguistics are pointed out, " especially if

people want to see translation as an entirely linguistic activity or want to use linguistics as a recipe giving ready-made solutions to specific translation problems rather than as a resource for extrapolating general problem-solving techniques from specific concrete problems" (p. 2). On this respect, Fawcett points out in his Foreword that "he [the author of this book] does not see linguistics as the grand liberator or the great oppressor of translation studies; he believes rather that there are many things in translation which can only be described and explained by linguistics".

In Chapter 2, *Sub-Word Components*, Fawcett discusses the extent to which sound level may be important to translation, mainly in literary texts where there are special sound effects that can produce special effects. The issues that arise here are related, among others, to the achievement of adequate rendering of sound effects and also to decisions on whether the translation will consider the level of sound or of meaning.

The perspective is changed in Chapter 3, as it moves to the area of Semantics, area that, as the author argues, for some time was refused to be taken into

consideration by structural linguistics under the claim of not being experimental. However, meaning is crucial in translation and linguistics was urged to create concepts at word level: denotation, connotation, semantic field, for example; and on sentence level: presupposition and entailment. The point is that without considering those concepts, linguistics can explain what is going on structurally in the text but cannot account for the elements that do take part of the universe of translation (e.g. world knowledge, reader expectation, information loading, text type, desired effect, etc.) that provide for solutions to the problems arisen with the no one-to-one correspondence of meaning and meaning structures between two languages. These differences between languages lead to the creation of "a catalogue of translation techniques" and this is the topic of Chapter 4.

Chapter 4, *Translation Techniques*, is a powerful tool serving the purpose of the book under review. Fawcett introduces the taxonomies of Vinay and Darbelnet, Yakob Retsker, and Shveitser, which are based on the types of relationship between a source language and a target language.

Chapter 5, *Equivalence*, tackles this core concept in translation studies as viewed by Catford, Nida, and Komisarov. Fawcett analyses the three views, pointing out their positive aspects as well as their limitations.

The backdrops of Chapter 6, *Beyond the Word*, echoes Catford's (In: Fawcett, p.1) position according to which "any theory of translation must draw upon a theory of language _ a general linguistic theory". This leads to Chomsky's generative grammar, although Chomsky himself has declared his skepticism "about the implications of his theory for translation" (p. 1). Nida's, Shveister's, and Malone's models, proposed following the boom of research resulting from Chomsky's ideas, also receive Fawcett's attention.

A related issue is focused in Chapter 7, "Beyond the Sentence: Context and Register", which is devoted to the discussion on the importance of the concept of context to translation and makes comments on the change in its definition, from "the text that goes around the text we are looking at" to a wider meaning _ as in *context of situation*, or to a narrower one_ *co-text*. Such changes should be considered from the language

user's and the language use point of view. Language users are constrained by features such as time/space/society which may be seen as sources of problems in translation.

Chapter 8, *Text Structure*, looks at the sentence meaning under the perspective of its conceptual structure, referred to in linguistics as *theme-rheme* organisation. The author also discusses the concepts of cohesion and coherence, which are referred to as *binding agents* encharged of creating textuality through grammatical devices or through the creation of a semantic network. It is suggested that the translator should try to recognise how these devices are used to create texture in the source text and how to use them for similar purposes in the target text.

In Chapter 9, *Text Functions*, the author discusses language functions and how they are maintained or disrupted in the target text. The different approaches and authors mentioned along Fawcett's discussion and related to changing or not changing language functions between the translation and its original proves that this is a problematic and an emblematic issue. Halliday's functional

grammar is drawn upon for explanations of the functional components of the semantic stratum of the linguistic system (the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual), through which language allows users to model reality, to interact with other user.

The last chapter, *Psycholinguistics*, focuses on recent trends in the study of translation as a mental activity. Two are specially discussed: the first, based on methods of psychological investigation, is concerned with a model that attempts to explain how people's minds handle the process of translating. The second, which Fawcett considers first, Gutt's approach to 'Relevance Theory' (1991), and which is thoroughly discussed, is, according to him, "less obvious psycholinguistic but we place it here because it is based on a theory of cognition and claims to offer an ambitious account of translation purely in terms of the psychology of communication, and, more specifically, in terms of the concepts of relevance" (p.135).

In the *Conclusion and Perspectives* section, Fawcett insists on the ratification of his position on the importance of linguistics to translation, drawing attention to the fact that linguistic

discourse is one of the theories which could help translation studies find its ethos, though not the only one. Nonetheless "it has a role to play and a voice which will not be silenced". Moreover, he emphasises that social, historical and cultural dimensions in addition to written and textual aspects are all part of linguistics, thus having a contribution to offer Translation Studies.

Peter Fawcett's *Language and Translation* is the book to be read if one feels skeptical about the extent to which linguistics can be viewed as a helper to translation studies. In fact, *Language and Translation* gives an instructive overview of the various ways linguistics provides subsidies to translation. No doubt, the book is very persuasive, with all the chapters returning regularly to the issue of providing support to its self-proclaimed purpose. The topics have been set very well and the choices, very relevant. Chapters 7, 8 and 10 are specially interesting and in which I found confirmation to some of my own beliefs in relation to translation.

A lecturer in French at the University of Bradford, Peter Fawcett is a prolific translator on a wide range of subjects. Thus, being a translator himself and not only a theoretician, it is not a surprise that a special concern with straightforward issues is central in his book. *Language and Translation* is an essential introductory reading to novices in translation studies, but it would also be a very wise choice for both translation scholars and skeptical linguists.

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