Pura Vida

– A study on translation of proper nouns, figures of speech and terminology in an English travel guide about Costa Rica

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to discuss some of the difficulties that came up in the translation of an English travel guide about Costa Rica into Swedish, and what strategies may be employed in order to solve them. The focus is on how to handle proper nouns, figures of speech and terminology.

In order to gather material for the study an English travel guide about Costa Rica was translated into Swedish and then some of the translation problems encountered during translation were chosen for an in-depth analysis. The analysis is mainly based on Rune Ingo’s and Peter Newmark’s theories, but other sources have also been used as a basis for the discussion.

Proper nouns were mostly handled by transference of the names in their original forms into the TT as well as transference in combination with a functional or descriptive equivalent. Where appropriate, some proper nouns were translated with recognized Swedish translations or partially translated and partially transferred. Many metaphors and idioms were translated into corresponding figurative expressions found in the target language. When this was not possible, they were either translated word-for-word, provided that they still conveyed the meaning of the ST metaphor or idiom, or translated with a non-figurative expression. In order to make up for lost figurative expressions, one non-figurative expression was translated with a metaphor. Regarding terminology, terms were mostly translated with corresponding terms found in Swedish bilingual dictionaries or other resources on the Internet. However, some terms had to be transferred from the ST in their original forms or translated with less specific words, since no corresponding terms could be found in the target language.

The findings show that several different strategies were used to handle translation of proper nouns, figures of speech and terminology in this specific travel guide and which strategy to use depends on situational factors.

Keywords

Travel texts, tourism, translation problems, cultural aspects, names, metaphors, idioms, biological terms, tourism terms
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1. Introduction

“Translation is not a matter of words only: it is a matter of making intelligible a whole culture” (Burgess 1984: 4)

When you tell people that you are studying to become a translator, you often get responses like “Why pay a translator when Google Translate can do it for free?” or “Do you actually have to study to become a translator?”. Many people seem to believe that translation is an easy process that can simply be accomplished by replacing each word in the language you are translating from with a corresponding word in the language you are translating to. They believe that translation is about words and grammatical forms only. But there is so much more to translation than that. Just like Anthony Burgess states in the quote above, translation is not simply a transfer of words from one language to another. Since each language reflects its own culture, translators have to go beyond the words and also consider the cultural context in which the words figure, in order to make a good translation (Ingo 2007: 16).

For example, consider the American expression *average Joe*, which refers to an average person – or, perhaps more specifically: an average American (Macmillan Dictionary). To translate this expression word-for-word into Swedish with *vanliga Joe* would not make much sense for Swedish readers. Since *Joe* is not a very common name in Swedish, they would probably not understand the link being made between averageness and the name *Joe*. Instead, the Swedish corresponding expression *medelsvensson* (*Svensson is a common last name in Sweden*) would be a better solution.

Translation goes beyond mere word-for-word translation in so many ways: in terms of cultural references, in terms of figurative language and in terms of terminology. Hence, in addition to a good command of the language, a translator must also have good knowledge about the cultures related to the languages he or she is translating between, as well as be well-informed about a variety of subjects.

With this being said, translation is not an easy task. A translator is constantly faced with many different problems that have to be solved in order to be able to convey the meaning of the original text in a way that will be comprehensible for the target text readers.

This paper will look in some detail at some of these problems, namely how to handle translation of proper nouns, figures of speech and terminology when translated from English into Swedish.
1.1 Aim
The aim of this paper is to discuss what strategies may be used in the translation of a travel guide from English to Swedish, with focus on how to handle:

- Proper nouns,
- Metaphors and idioms, and
- Terminology

1.2 Method
In order to collect primary material for the study, an English travel guide about Costa Rica was translated into Swedish. (See Section 1.3 for a more detailed presentation of the travel guide). During the translation process, several dictionaries and encyclopedias such as Nordstedts ordbok, Merriam-Webster Online, Oxford Dictionaries Online, the Swedish National Encyclopedia (Nationalencyklopedin) and Proz Travel and Tourism Glossary were consulted to check up meanings of difficult words or expressions and to find correct terminology.

Several parallel texts were also consulted (see the list of references for further information), to find out what kinds of terms that tend to be most frequently used in Swedish travel guides. Internet sources such as Google’s search engine, Google maps and websites on subjects to do with Costa Rica and tourism were also helpful in order to ensure a correct understanding of the original text.

The study is based on a qualitative research methodology, were examples from the translation were chosen for an in-depth qualitative analysis. The qualitative research methodology was chosen because it is best suited for the aim of the study, which is to discuss what different translation strategies may be used in translation of proper nouns, metaphors, idioms and terminology rather than, say, the relative frequency of different strategies. The advantage of the chosen method is that it seeks to answer questions like why and how and thereby can provide a deeper understanding of the things being studied compared to, for example, a more statistically based quantitative study that measures quantity and merely answers questions like how many (Green & Thorogood 2004: 5).
1.3 Material

The material that will be used in the analysis is an English travel guide about Costa Rica – the source text (henceforth referred to as the ST) – and a translation of this text into Swedish – the target text (henceforth referred to as the TT). The ST is published on the website www.worldtravelguide.net by the British company Columbus Travel Media. According to their website, their aim is to provide detailed and accurate travel content designed to inspire global travelers. The ST is mainly informative, but also has the aim to persuade the reader to visit Costa Rica. The text contains culture-specific aspects, such as proper nouns. There are also many examples of metaphors and idioms and quite a specialized terminology that has to do with Costa Rican animal life and tourism.

The ST is mainly intended for British readers, sometimes with UK citizens being explicitly addressed in the text – “What we know as bed and breakfast in the UK is more commonly known as guest houses in Costa Rica” (Columbus Travel Media Ltd.) – but it also aims at other English speaking tourists.

The TT readers are Swedish travelers interested in learning more about traveling to Costa Rica and the aim of the TT is same as that of the source text that is, to provide high-quality information for global travellers and to entice them to visit the country.

2. Theoretical background

This section will present some background information about the different translation problems that will be discussed in the analysis (see Section 3). Different strategies that may be used when handling these problems will also be presented.

2.1 Proper nouns

Proper nouns are words that refer to people, places and things such as Alice, Great Britain and Statue of Liberty. Newmark (1988) suggests several possible strategies for translating proper nouns. Which one to use depends on the text type, the intended readership and the importance of the name in the text (ibid: 119). The strategies that will be discussed in this paper are:

- **Transference**, which refers to the process when a foreign name in the ST is transferred unchanged into the TT (ibid: 98). For example, to transfer the name of the British cuisine *Fish n' Chips* into Swedish in its original form.
• **Recognized translation**, which refers to the process when a foreign name in the ST is translated with an official name already established in the target language (ibid: 106). For example, to translate Belarus to the recognized Swedish translation Vitryssland.

• **Functional equivalent**, which refers to the process when a foreign word is translated with a culturally neutral word or set of words that points to the functional properties of the intended referent, for example, to translate synagogue with Jewish temple (ibid: 83).

• **Descriptive equivalent**, which refers to the process when a foreign word is translated with a culturally neutral word or set of words that describes the intended referent, for example, to translate borscht with a soup made of beetroots popular in many eastern and central European countries (ibid: 83).

• **Couplet**, which refers to the process when two of the above mentioned strategies are combined (ibid: 91).

People’s names do not usually cause any problems in non-fictional texts such as travel texts, since the original name should normally be transferred in its original form from the ST (Newmark 1988: 82; Ingo 2007: 137). There is, however, an exception for names of certain historical people like, for example, William the Conqueror, which becomes Wilhelm Erövraren in Swedish and Guillermo el Conquistador in Spanish (Newmark 1998: 214, Ingo 2007: 137).

A potential translation problem area with proper nouns is country and city names. This is because some names of countries and cities have different names in different languages, while others retain the same name regardless of language, and there does not seem to be a consistent rule for which situation applies when (Castañeda-Hernández 2004). Consider, for example, the capital city of Portugal, Lisboa, which is called Lisbon in English and Lissabon in Swedish, while the capital of Spain Madrid keeps its original Spanish name both in English and Swedish. Consequently when it comes to names of countries and cities it is important to check in dictionaries and atlases if there are any recognized translations of these names in the target language (Newmark 1988: 216). If there are, the names should be translated into these official names used in the target language, and if there are not, the names should be transferred in their original forms (Newmark 1998: 216; Ingo 2007: 138). For instance, just as in the previous example with Madrid, the name of the Japanese town Kyoto should be transferred in its
original form, since there is no corresponding name for this city in Swedish. Helsinki, on the other hand, should be translated into the recognized Swedish translation Helsingfors.

When cities or objects are not likely to be known to the readers of the TT, their names often need to be transferred in combination with a functional or descriptive equivalent – that is, the translator needs to use a couplet (Newmark 1998: 216). This combined strategy would, for example, be useful when dealing with small foreign towns that do not have recognized translations in other languages.

Many names are composed of two parts; a specific part, which names the specific referent, and a generic part, which describes the referent (United States Board on Geographic Names 1997: 2). For example, in Niagara Falls, Niagara is the specific and Falls is the generic. According to United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (2006: 104) the specific part should normally not be translated, i.e. it should be transferred in its original form from the ST. The generic part, on the other hand, can often be translated with a corresponding word in the target language, as long as it is not a false generic (ibid: 105). False generic refers to a generic that does not describe the entity it denotes, for example, falls in Wichita Falls, which is actually a name of a city and not a waterfall (ibid: 105).

2.2 Figures of speech

Figurative language can be challenging for translators. The kinds of figurative language that will be discussed in this study are metaphors and idioms. They will each be further explained in the following sections, and strategies for translating them will also be presented.

2.2.1 Metaphors

It seems as though there is no such thing as a universal definition of metaphors. As a case in point, Oxford Dictionaries Online defines a metaphor as “a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable”, while Encyclopaedia Britannica defines it as a “figure of speech that implies comparison between two unlike entities, as distinguished from simile, an explicit comparison signaled by the words ‘like’ or ‘as’.”

Something that can be gleaned from any of the various definitions of metaphors is that a metaphor can be described as explaining one thing in terms of something else
like, for example, to say that someone is a coward by equalizing him or her with a chicken (Berger 1999: 29).

In the book *Metaphors we live by* (1980), the authors Lakoff and Johnson claim that metaphors are not just a linguistic matter, but also a cognitive process. In other words, they suggest that we do not only use metaphors when we speak, we also think in metaphors (ibid: 6). To illustrate this, they give the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR as an example. They explain that we understand arguments based on the knowledge we already have about wars and that this is reflected in our language since we speak about arguments in terms of wars (ibid: 4-5). For example, political debates are often referred to as battlegrounds where the opponents are attacking each other’s arguments in order to win.

Since we can only think about things we have heard about or experienced, metaphors are closely related to our cultural background (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 5). Different cultures view their world differently and this is also what can make translation of metaphors very difficult (Al-Hassnawi 2007). For example, in Sweden, an owl is often used in a metaphorical sense to represent wisdom, while this animal in the Arabic world often is portrayed as something bad (ibid). Consequently, to translate the metaphor *owl* with *booma*, which means ‘owl’ in Arabic, would not be very successful, since it would convey a negative meaning compared to the original.

2.2.2 Idioms

According to Oxford Dictionaries Online, an idiom is “a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words”. An example of an English idiom is “The wheel is turning but the hamster is dead”. This phrase does not literally mean that there is a wheel spinning around with a dead hamster in it; it means that someone is not very clever.

Just like metaphors, idioms are often closely connected to culture and thus, when translating idioms, it is important to have sufficient cultural understanding of both the ST culture and the TT culture to be able to understand the meaning of the idiom and correctly transfer it to the TT (Ingo 2007: 120).

2.2.3 Translation of metaphors and idioms

When it comes to translation of metaphors and idioms, the most important thing to consider is to ensure that the same conceptual image will be produced in the minds of
the target text readers as the one produced in the minds of the ST readers (Newmark 1998: 105). In order to do this, it is important to determine if the ST metaphor is used in a positive or in a negative way (ibid: 115). The translator has to translate the ST idiom with words that convey correct associations in the target language (Ingo 2007:121).

According to Ingo (2007: 144-145) the following translation strategies can be used when translating idioms, and he also suggests that they can be applied for translation of metaphors as well:

- To translate the idiom with a corresponding idiom used in the target language (ibid: 144). For example to translate the English expression “piece of cake” with “lätt som en plätt” (‘easy as a small pancake’) in Swedish. This is the preferred strategy, since it will keep the stylistic effect of the ST (ibid: 144). Sometimes, however, it is not possible to find a corresponding idiom in the target language and then the ST idiom has to be handled by one of the strategies shown below (ibid: 144).

- To translate the idiom word-for-word (ibid: 144). For example, to translate the English idiom “mouse potato”, which according to Merriam-Webster Online refers to a person that spend too much time in front of a computer, with “muspotatis” in Swedish. This strategy should, however, be used very carefully and can only be used if the translation will be comprehensible to the TT readers (ibid: 144).

- To translate the idiom by using a non-figurative expression that conveys the meaning of the idiom. For example, to translate the Swedish expression “Inte för allt smör i Småland” (‘not for all the butter in Smaland’) with “Under no conditions”. This strategy should only be used if the two above mentioned strategies are not possible, because it changes the stylistic level of the text and may make the TT less vivid compared to the ST (ibid: 145). If this strategy is the only option, then the translator can translate a non-figurative expression in the ST with an idiom as a way of making up for lost figurative expressions (ibid: 145). For example, “Ge upp” (‘Give up’) with “Throw in the towel”.


2.3 Terminology

Terminology is a set of specialized words that are specific for a certain subject area or in a certain profession, like for example the fishing term *crickhopper*, which refers to a plastic lure bait resembling a grasshopper, used when fishing, or the dentistry term *gutta percha* which refers to a material used in the filling of root canals (Oxford Dictionaries Online).

In recent years, the interest in studying tourism from a socio-linguistic perspective has grown stronger, and tourism can even be considered to be a specialized discourse (Dann 1996: 2). The specialized vocabulary found in tourist texts usually belongs to many different subject areas, such as architecture, geography, biology, gastronomy, art, etc. (Beaver 2005: 9). There are also terms which are specific for the tourism business in its own right, for example the term *flashpacker*, which, according to Dictionary.com, can be defined as a high-budget traveler.

Words like these can be difficult to translate, since they are not always easy to find in general dictionaries, and sometimes corresponding terms are missing in the target language (Ingo 2007: 107). In order to find recognized corresponding terms in the target language, translators often have to consult more specialized dictionaries or turn to professionals in the field for advice (Ingo 2007: 107). When there are no corresponding terms for the ST word in the target language, there are some other strategies that can be applied. If the ST term is unfamiliar in the target language, it can be transferred to the TT in its original form, but should then normally be complemented with a descriptive equivalent that explains it (Newmark 1998: 81). Whether to add an explanation or not depends very much on the intended readership and the function of the text (Ingo 2007:136). Consider, for example, to translate the surf term *turtle-roll*. If the text is intended for surfers, who probably already are familiar with surf terminology, *turtle roll* could just be transferred without an explanation of the term. In contrast, if the text is intended for the general public a transfer of *turtle roll* in combination with an explanation is likely needed in order for the readers to understand the term.

3. Analysis

In this section the handling of proper nouns, metaphors, idioms and terminology will be analyzed in terms of different translation strategies.
There were many proper nouns in the ST such as names of countries, cities and tourist sites. All of these required some decision-making regarding whether they should be translated, left unchanged or rendered in some other way in the TT. As already mentioned in Section 2.1, recognized translations in the target language should preferably be used as long as these can be found in for example dictionaries or atlases (Newmark 1988: 82, Ingo 2007: 137). Hence many proper nouns in the source text did not cause any problem when translated into Swedish, since their recognized translations could easily be found in general dictionaries. For example, almost all country names in the ST were translated into their recognized Swedish names in accordance with Newmark’s (1988: 82) and Ingo’s (2007: 137) recommendations:

(1) In fact, no less than 5% of the entire planet’s species can be found here - in a country smaller than Switzerland.

Inte mindre än 5 % av alla jordens arter finns faktiskt här – i ett land som är mindre än Schweiz.

In one instance, however, the above mentioned strategy could not be applied, viz when translating US, which is an abbreviation for United States, which, in its turn, is a short form of United States of America (Merriam-Webster Online). According to Nordstedt’s ordbok the corresponding name in Swedish would be Förenta Staterna, but a search in the corpora of Språkbanken (The Swedish Language Bank) suggests that this name variant is not widely used in Swedish. For example, a search in the corpus Press98, which is a large collection of language examples used in major Swedish newspapers, resulted in a mere 145 hits. USA, on the other hand, which refers to the same country, proved to be more frequently used in Swedish, with 4529 hits on Google. This name variant is also recommended by EU style guide for Swedish translators to use in less formal contexts and since the travel guide, in general, is written in a rather informal way it would probably sound rather stilted to use Förenta Staterna. Consequently, USA was the name variant that was chosen in the end:

(2) Main trading partners: US, Netherland [sic], China, Mexico, Venezuela
Viktigaste handelspartner: USA, Nederländerna, Kina, Mexiko, Venezuela
In some instances, it was difficult to decide whether a ST proper noun should be translated or if it should be transferred in its original form into the TT. An example of this is the *Pan-American Highway* in (3). This is the name of a highway that stretches from Alaska in North America down to the lower reaches of South America (Encyclopaedia Britannica). As already stated, names should be translated if there are recognized translations in the target language, but in this case there does not seem that there is one. *Panamerikansk* (Pan-american) is listed as an adjective in Swedish dictionaries like Nordstedts ordbok and Svenska akademiens ordbok, but an official Swedish translation for the actual road does not seem to exist. At least, it is not to be found in bilingual dictionaries or in Svenska Akademiens ordbok. Nationalencyklopedin uses the English name *Pan-American Highway* and the name of the road is not included in Swedish maps, like for example *Bonniers Världsatlas*. Despite, that there does not seem to be an “official” translation for *Pan-American Highway* in Swedish, a word-for-word translation of the name with *Panamerikanska landsvägen* seems to be in frequent use in Swedish texts published on the web – it gets 2300 hits on Google. It is used both in articles from major Swedish newspapers, like Dagens Nyheter and in Landguiden, which is published by the Swedish Institute of International Affairs. The adjective *panamerikansk*, also seems to be frequently used in other Swedish compounds, for example, *Panamerikanska spelen* (Pan-American Games) and *Panamerikanska konferensen* (Pan-American Conference). Because of this, the name of the American road was translated with the Swedish version of the name, as illustrated in Example (3):

(3)  **Coming into and leaving Costa Rica is by way of the same road – the *Pan-American Highway*.**

                         **Du kommer in i och lämnar Costa Rica via samma väg – *Panamerikanska landsvägen*.**

As we saw in Section 2.1, a translation problem regarding proper nouns may be how to handle city names. The majority of the city names in the ST were names of Costa Rican cities. None of these cities were listed in any Swedish dictionaries and the ones that could be found on maps were written in their Spanish names (Google maps 2013). In cases like this it is recommended that the ST proper nouns should be transferred into the TT (Ingo 2007: 137). For this reason, all Costa Rican city names were transferred into
the TT in their original form. In most cases the city names were transferred into the TT in combination with a functional or a descriptive equivalent, a couplet, as illustrated in Example (4):

(4) Several of the larger hotels in and around San José have conference facilities. The largest is the Ramada Herradura, at Ciudad Cariari, about 10 miles northwest of the city.

Ciudad in (4) is Spanish and means ‘city’ (Nordstedts ordbok). If the target text were aimed solely at Swedish tourists with some basic knowledge of Spanish, for example language students, transference without a classifier would most likely be enough, but since the TT seems to address a more general public förorten was added to Ciudad Cariari for clarity. According to Newmark (1988:215), this translation strategy is preferred when readers are not likely to be familiar with a foreign place; considering that only 7842 Swedish tourists visited Costa Rica in 2011 (The Costa Rica Tourism Board 2011), it seems reasonable to assume that Costa Rica is not a major Swedish tourist destination.

Another proper noun that was handled with a couplet is illustrated in Example (5). Drake Bay is the English name for a bay in Costa Rica, which is called Bahía Drake by the locals (Google Maps). The question was whether to use the domestic Costa Rican name or trying to create a Swedish version of it. As mentioned in Section 2.1, it is always important to consider the purpose of the text and how important the name is in the text when translating proper nouns (Newmark 1988: 119). Considering the function of the TT, which is to inform potential Swedish visitors about Costa Rica, it is important that the text contains information that will facilitate for them to find the specific places when visiting the country. Since Bahía Drake is the name used in Costa Rica it will also be the name that the tourists have to look for on local maps. A Swedish version of the name such as Drakeviken would not only sound odd, it would also make it difficult for potential visitors to find the place. Because of this, the final solution opted for was to use the domestic Costa Rican name, i.e. Bahía Drake:
Down in the Osa Peninsula is Drake Bay, and here is the best place in Costa Rica for seasonal whale-watching.

However, in Example (5) a functional equivalent explaining that Bahía Drake is a bay also had to be included in the TT. The reason for this is that in the ST, the second part of the name, bay, indicates the nature of the proper noun, i.e. that it is a bay, and this information would get lost to the Swedish readers if not translated.

All America Airpass in (6) is yet another example of a proper noun which was handled by a couple, but in contrast to Example (4) and (5) this proper noun required a more extensive explanation. All America Airpass refers to a specific airpass that offers unlimited air travel for international travelers all over the Americas. To translate this name into Swedish with for example, Amerikaflygpasset, would not be a good idea, since it would make it difficult for potential visitors to find the airpass. Instead, the name of the pass was transferred in its original form from the ST in combination with a descriptive equivalent to clarify the function of the pass, as illustrated in (6):

If you’re travelling further afield in Latin America it’s also a good idea to have a look at the All America Airpass (www.allairpass.com) to see if any of the airlines and flight paths work for you.

In some instances, however, where it is obvious from the context what the proper nouns refer to, the names were simply transferred without an addition of a functional or descriptive equivalent. In Example (7), for instance the reader can tell that Liberia is a city from other words in the sentence such as centre, so there is no need to clarify this further by addition. Hence, the ST proper noun Liberia was transferred without an addition of a functional or descriptive equivalent:
Wander the historic centre of Liberia, which is home to the most typical colonial-era architecture in the nation.

In a less contextualized text, one could argue that Liberia in (7) could be mistaken for the African country with the same name. An alternative translation could then have been to transfer the ST proper noun and add a functional equivalent in the same way as was done in Example (4) and (5). Nevertheless, since this travel guide is about Costa Rica it would probably be rather obvious from the context that Liberia in (7) is referring to a place in Costa Rica and not Africa.

Besides geographical names, the ST also contained names of tourist sites. These were mostly handled by transference of the part that names the entity – and translation of the part that indicates the nature of the entity – the generic. An example of this is given in (8):

The main city is Puerto Jimenez and the Corcovado National Park in this region is one of the most biologically diverse places on earth.

In Example (8), the specific part of the name Corcovado has been transferred in its original Spanish form, while the generic part national park has been translated into a corresponding word in Swedish.

### 3.2 Handling metaphors

The ST contained quite a few metaphors, and, as already mentioned in Section 2.1, the most important thing to consider regarding translation of metaphors is to ensure that the same conceptual image will be produced in the minds of the target text readers as the one produced in the minds of the ST readers (Newmark 1998: 105). In order to achieve this, the different ST metaphors had to be handled in different ways when translated into
Swedish. Most of the ST metaphors had a corresponding metaphor in the target language, as illustrated in Example (9):

(9) if *Mother Nature* can ever be accused of showing off, it is in Costa Rica.

*Mother Nature* in (9) is an old metaphor, dating back to early human pre-history, which represents the whole of nature by equating it with human motherhood (Roach 2003: 28). It is based on the traditional conception of a mother as a caring and nurturing person and the one responsible for the care of children (ibid: 32). This metaphor is also used in Swedish (65 300 hits on Google), so it could easily be rendered into the TT by translating it word-for-word.

Not all ST metaphors, however, had corresponding metaphors in Swedish and therefore had to be handled by means of other strategies. An example of this is the animal-based metaphor *little monkeys* in Example (10). The meaning of this ST metaphor is, according to Macmillan Dictionary, “someone, especially a child who behaves badly but in a funny way rather than in an annoying way”. Newmark states that when translating metaphors it is very important for the translator to determine if the metaphor is used in a positive or in a negative way (1998: 105). According to a study on the use of animals as metaphors for human characteristics, where test persons rated favorableness of different animal names, *monkey* proved to have mixed connotations and can be used both in a positive and in a negative way depending on how it is used (Sommer 2011: 245). The study showed that *monkey* is uncomplimentary when applied to adults, but becomes a term for affection through an addition of a qualifier, often a diminutive, for example *little* (ibid 2011: 145). This means that the metaphor in Example (10) is used in a positive way, as a term of affection for mischievous children.

In Swedish, however, we do not usually speak about monkeys in a positive sense. Consider, for example, *din jävla apa* ('You fucking monkey') or *härmapa* ('copycat') and *klängapa* ('someone who is difficult to shake off'). Consequently, a strict word-for-word translation of this metaphor with *små apor* would not work, since this phrase has a less positive connotation in Swedish than in English.
According to Nordstedts ordbok, a possible figurative translation of *little monkeys* could be *små rackarungar*. This is a translation that would work in the present context. It would keep the stylistic effect of the text, stressed by Ingo (2007: 144), and convey the same positive connotation as the ST metaphor. The problem is, however, that other connotations of the ST metaphor would get lost in the TT metaphor. The monkey metaphor in the ST is also used to compare children with monkeys swinging around in the jungle canopy. *Rackarungar* would only convey the mischievous and playful characteristics of a monkey. Therefore a monkey metaphor had to be used in the TT too. After some research, the metaphor *klätterapa* was found, which according to searches on Google, seems to be used in a positive way for children who run around high and low. Hence, this metaphor was the final solution opted for:

(10) *Little monkeys* will be thrilled with a ride on the Rain Forest Aerial Tram (website: www.rfat.com) through the jungle canopy

*Små klätterapor* kommer att älska en linbanetur högt uppe bland regnskogens trädskronor (webbplats: www.rfat.com)

An alternative in (10) could have been to translate the ST metaphor with a non-figurative expression such as *små barn*, but as Ingo states, this should be avoided as far as possible since it affects the stylistic level of the text (2007:144).

Another ST metaphor that did not have a corresponding metaphor in the target language was *hit*, as in ‘hit the beach’, which describes the act of going somewhere by comparing it with an immediate and forceful strike (Dictionary.com). In contrast with example (9), a word-for-word translation of this metaphor could not even be considered to be a solution, since it does not have a metaphorical meaning in Swedish. Most Swedes would probably agree that *slå stranden* would just sound odd to Swedish readers and not make any sense. In cases like this, when a corresponding metaphor does not exist in the target language and when it is impossible to translate it word-for-word, the metaphor can be translated with a non-figurative expression that conveys the same meaning (Ingo 2007: 145). Therefore, *hit* in Example (11) was translated with *bege sig* which is a non-figurative way to say ‘to go to” in Swedish.

(11) If all that sounds a bit too much on the wild side, *hit* the beach for

Om detta låter lite för våghalsigt kan man istället *bege sig* till stranden för att koppla
relaxation, surf lessons, fishing with the locals or banana boat rides.

This solution proved to be best since it will produce the same meaning in the ST and the TT. The disadvantage with this solution, however, is that it will affect the stylistic level of the TT (Ingo 2007: 145). It will not be as figurative and colorful as the ST. In order to preserve at least a part of the stylistic effect a regular word in the ST was translated with a metaphor in the TT (Ingo 2007:145) as seen in Example (12):

(12) Throughout the 20th century, Costa Rica enjoyed peace and a steady growth in prosperity, with the notable exception of a civil war in 1948, which followed a disputed presidential election.

In Example (12) the non-figurative ST word followed has been translated with the metaphor följde i kölvattnet (In the wake of). This is a common Swedish metaphor with 17,300 hits on Google which is used to denote that something is following a negative event, for example a war or a crisis. According to Ingo this is a good solution in order to preserve the tone and style of the ST, but he also points out that it should only be used in order to make up for lost idioms and not be used on a regular basis, since this too would in its turn change the style (2007:145).

3.3 Handling idioms

As already mentioned in section 2.2, just like metaphors, idioms can be difficult to translate since they are culture bound and often unique for a specific language (Al-Hassnawi 2007). The majority of the ST idioms where, however, quite easy to translate since most of them had corresponding idioms in Swedish which were quite easy to find in dictionaries.

An example of an idiom that was easy to handle is off the beaten path, which, according to Dictionary.com, means “a place where few people go, out of the ordinary”. A word-for-word translation of this idiom with bortom de upptrampade stigarna would work as a solution, since it would convey the same meaning as the ST idiom. The
problem, however, is that this expression does not seem to be very commonly used in Swedish. It only gets 90 hits on Google. A more frequently used idiom used in a travel context proved to be *bortom de vanliga turiststråken*, with 17,900 hits. Since this idiom seems to be more frequently used, this was also the solution finally opted for, as illustrated in Example (13):

(13) You can get thoroughly off the beaten path this way.  
På det här sättet kan du få uppleva något långt bortom de vanliga turiststråken.

An alternative solution in Example (13) could have been to translate the ST idiom with the non-figurative expression *uppleva något annorlunda*, which conveys the same meaning of the idiom used in the ST, but since this strategy is not preferred by Ingo (2007: 145) because it changes the stylistic level of the text, this solution was rejected.

On the other hand, this solution proved to be the best way to handle another ST idiom, namely *face to face*. According to Merriam-Webster Online this idiom means to “get into direct contact or confrontation, or to be within each other’s close presence”. A search in Nordstedts ordbok results in two possible corresponding idioms in Swedish; *ansikte mot ansikte* (‘face to face’) and *öga mot öga* (‘eye to eye’). Despite this, the ST idiom was translated with a non-figurative expression in the TT, as illustrated in Example (14):

(14) One of the best is canopy walking, moving through the cloud forest on a series of rope bridges and platforms high above the ground, coming face to face with the wildlife and affording great views.  
En av de bästa är canopy-turer. Här promenerar du uppe bland molnskogens trädkronor på hängbroar och plattformar högt över marken, som låter dig komma nära inpå djurlivet och erbjuder fantastiska vyer.

Considering that the idiom in (14) refers to direct contact between humans and animals, *ansikte mot ansikte* would come out a bit strange since in Swedish *ansikte* (face) seems to apply more to human beings. A general search on Google shows that *ansikte mot ansikte* tends to be more frequently used when speaking about direct contact between humans and not animals. *Öga mot öga*, on the other hand, seems to be more commonly used in texts about confrontations between humans and animals, for example in safari
contexts. The problem is that this idiom seems to have a more negative connotation in Swedish compared to *face to face* in the ST. This is because when checking parallel texts, such as Ecospheres and Temaresor, *öga mot öga* tends to be used to describe encounters with animals that are perceived dangerous by people, such as white sharks, bears and lions. Because of this, a non-figurative expression seems to be the best solution in this specific case.

The ST idiom that was most difficult to handle was *la pura vida*, which is a common Costa Rican idiom with many different meanings. It can be used both as a greeting, farewell and to show gratitude (Pacheco 2007:400). Literally it means ‘the pure life’, but in the Costa Rican culture it has a more profound meaning than that – it symbolizes the idea of enjoying life and can almost be considered to be a national motto (La Nacion 2013).

Since the meaning of *pura vida* is so embedded in the Costa Rican culture, it was very difficult to find a corresponding Swedish idiom that signifies the same connotations. One option considered was to translate *la pura vida* with *det goda livet*, which is an established Swedish expression that conveys some sense of the ST idiom – viz to enjoy life. This solution was, however, rejected. The reason for this is that the ST author has probably intentionally used the Spanish expression in order to mix in some Costa Rican flavor in the text and to translate this idiom into Swedish would not create this effect. Instead, the Spanish idiom was transferred in its original form into the TT in combination with a word-for-word translation of the ST idiom in brackets:

(15) Go with a group of friends or even on your own to really get away from it all and indulge in *la pura vida* (the pure life). Åk med ett gäng vänner eller kanske till och med på egen hand för att verkligen komma bort från allt och hänga dig totalt åt att leva ”*la pura vida*” (det rena livet).

One could argue that the solution in (15) may be negative from an informative point of view. The reason for this is that, according to Newmark (1988: 95), this strategy can make it difficult for the target readers to understand the message of the text. An alternative solution could have been to add more extensive information in brackets, for example, telling the TT readers that the idiom is a common expression used in Costa Rica etc., but too lengthy insertions may, one the other hand, annoy the reader and interrupt the readers flow (Newmark 1988: 92). Therefore, the solution used in (15) is
the best solution, since it will keep the local color produced in the ST. By keeping the Spanish expression and adding a translation in brackets the reader will presumably understand that this is a specific expression in Spanish that (s)he can check out further if (s)he wants to find out the exact meaning.

3.4 Handling terminology

3.4.1 Biological terms

Many of the biological terms in the ST were easy to find in general dictionaries. Therefore, they did not cause any difficulties and thus will not be analyzed here. Some of the terms listed in dictionaries, however, required further checking in order to ensure correct terminology. An example of this is the term *humpback whale*. Nordstedts ordbok suggests two possible translations for this term. The first one is *knölval* and the other one is *puckelval*. After some investigation, consulting Nationalencyklopedin and Svenska akademiens ordbok, *puckelval* was rejected, since it seems to be an old name for this kind of whale, not frequently used in Swedish anymore. For example, a Google search on *puckelval* only resulted in 206 hits compared to 19,600 hits for *knölval*. Hence *knölval* was used, as illustrated in Example (16):

(16) From August through to March, *humpback whales* migrate from both the north and south through Drake Bay

Från augusti till mars vandrar *knölvalar* från både nord och syd förbi Bahía Drake

Another example of a term listed in dictionaries with two possible translations was *quetzal*, which, according to Merriam-Webster Online, is a Central American bird. A search in Nordstedts dictionary gives two possible translations. The first one is *quetzal* and the other one is *påfågelstragon*. In order to choose which one that would be most suitable to use, further research had to be done. Considering, that *påfågelstragon* refers to a particular species of bird in the Quetzal family (Planet of birds), it seems to be more specific than the term used in the ST. Since *Quetzal* is closer to the level that the ST term finds itself on, this was the term finally opted for:

(17) It holds over 400 types of birds

Här ryms mer än 400 fågelarter, inklusive
including the rare and beautiful den ovanliga och vackra quetzalen. quetzal.

In some instances, terms could not be found in Swedish dictionaries at all. An example of this is cloud forest in Example (18), which, according to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, is “a forest in tropical or subtropical parts of the world that usually has a thick cloud at the level of the tops of the trees”. A problem with this term is that there are many different terms describing this kind of forest depending on where they are situated, for example upper montane rainforest in Asia and Afromontane forest in Africa. The most common term worldwide is, however, cloud forest (United Nations University Website). In Sweden two terms seem to be used, viz molnskog and dimskog (Nationalencyklopedin). After a search on Google, it seems like both these terms are used in Swedish texts about Costa Rican forests, but molnskog gets more hits than dimskog; about 7000 hits compared to about 1000. Consequently, molnskog was the best term to use:

(18) Costa Rica, with its high tropical mountains and cloud forest-capped volcanoes, is a haven for orchids; more than 1,400 different species grow wild. Costa Rica är med sina höga tropiska berg och molnskogsbeklädda vulkaner ett paradis för orkidéer; mer än 1 400 olika arter växer i det vilda.

Another term that was not listed in any Swedish dictionaries was marlin, which is a big billfish (Merriam-Webster Online). Proz Glossary suggests that the term marlin should be used also in Swedish, i.e. the English term should be transferred in its original form. This is also the term used by the Swedish National Food Agency (Livsmedelsverket). Since the term marlin seems to be used in Swedish as well, and there does not seem to be any recognized translation for it, the original term was transferred into the TT, as illustrated in Example (19):

(19) Wrestle a marlin in the Pacific coast, which offers excellent sport fishing from Gulf of Papagayo to Golfito. Brottas med en marlin i Stilla havet, som erbjuder utmärkt sportfiske från Papagayogulfen till Golfito.
3.4.2 Tourism terms

Given that the ST is a travel guide, it naturally contains many tourism terms. As Newmark points out, a problem with terms can be that they are relatively newly coined and corresponding terms have not yet been established in the target language (1988: 140). An example of a newly coined term in the ST is *backpacker*, which refers to a budget traveler that travels far away for long periods of time (Gomio 2012). The corresponding term in Swedish is *ryggsäcksresenär* (Nordstedts ordbok), but the problem with using this term is that it seems like it has not yet been accepted in common language. It only gets 1590 hits on Google and most of the times it is placed behind the English word in brackets. The English term *backpacker*, on the other hand, seems to be frequently used on its own in Swedish travel texts and it is also an accepted word in Svenska akademiens ordbok. One possible solution could have been to transfer the ST term into the TT and place the Swedish corresponding term in brackets, as a way to make the text more comprehensible for all readers and to help establish the Swedish term. This strategy can, however, if overused make the text sound banal (Ingo 2007: 135) and since the TT already contained so many insertions in brackets this strategy was rejected. In order to not make the text sound strange for Swedish readers, the final solution was to transfer the English term in its original form into the TT:

(20) *Backpacker* hostels  
Vandrarhem för *backpackers*

Other terms that were difficult to handle were terms referring to accommodations. One example is *retreat*. According to Merriam-Webster Online *retreat* has many different meanings, but something that can be gleaned from all the definitions listed is that it seems to refer to a place where you withdraw from difficulties in order to relax and find peace. The Swedish terms closest in meaning to this definition are *fristad* and *tillflyktsort* (Nordstedts ordbok). However, a Google search on these two terms shows that they do not seem to be used in travel contexts. Both terms seem to be more frequently used in religious or spiritual contexts. The final solution opted for was to translate the ST term with *spaanläggning*, as illustrated in Example (21). This word is not exactly the same as *retreat*, but it will convey the sense of relaxation and well-being.
Resorts/Retreats: Costa Rica has a wealthy tourism market, and there are plenty of retreat-style resorts in every corner.

Semesteranläggningar/Spaanläggningar: Costa Rica har en välsmäende turistnäring och överallt finns flera spaniriktade semesteranläggningar.

Another example of an accommodation term where it was difficult to find a corresponding term in Swedish is boutique hotel, which, just like backpacker, is a word for a relatively new phenomenon. The word boutique has been in use in the English language since 1767 with the meaning “small shop of any sort” (Online Etymology Dictionary). Since then, the meaning seems to have changed a bit to become more specialized and now the word refers to a small exclusive establishment that specializes in a special selection of goods (Dictionary.com). When used in a hotel context it can be defined as a small hotel with a unique design and a customized service (Anhar 2001). The term boutique is listed in SAOL, but with a slightly different meaning – ‘modebutik’ (‘fashion boutique’). This term seems, however, to be frequently used in hotel contexts in Swedish as well (473,000 hits on Google). Since it was not possible to find a recognized translation for this term in any dictionaries, and since the English term seems to be in use in Swedish too, the final solution was to transfer boutique but translate the generic part hotel, as illustrated in Example (22):

(22) Several of the best boutique hotels in the country promote themselves through the Small Distinctive Hotels of Costa Rica (see Accommodation Information).

A disadvantage with the strategy used in Example (22) is that readers that are not familiar enough with the word boutique will not understand exactly what it refers to. However, the reference to the website Small Distinctive Hotels of Costa Rica, gives the reader an option to go there and find out the specific meaning for him(her)self.

Some terms may seem easy to translate at first sight, but may, in the end, be quite a challenge. One such term was al fresco, which according to Dictionary.com, means “in the fresh air or outdoors”. The term could not be found in any bilingual dictionaries, but it was listed in Svenska akademiens ordbok – unfortunately with another meaning.
According to Svenska akademiens ordbok, the term *al fresco* refers to a painting technique where you paint on moist plaster. Considering the context where this term is used in the ST this meaning would not be correct. Hence the ST term could not be transferred into the TT, since it would then convey the wrong meaning. The best solution in this specific situation was to translate the meaning of the English term with a culturally neutral term, as illustrated in (23):

(23) Each day concludes with a candle-lit gourmet dinner *al fresco* Varje dag avslutas med en gourmémiddag som serveras *utomhus* i skenet av tänta ljus

4. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to discuss how to handle proper nouns, figures of speech and terminology in an English travel guide when translated into Swedish. To gather material for the analysis, an English travel guide about Costa Rica, published by Columbus Travel Media Ltd, was translated into Swedish. Translation problems encountered during the translation process, which related to the above mentioned aspects were chosen for a qualitative analysis. The analysis is mainly based on Ingo’s and Newmark’s translation theories and strategies, but other secondary sources have also been used (See section 1.2 for detailed information).

Regarding proper nouns, many different translation strategies were used. Many country names in the ST could be translated with recognized translations in Swedish. *US*, on the contrary, could not be translated with the conventionalized form in Swedish – *viz Förenta Staterna* – since it would have changed the informal tone of the text. Instead it had to be translated with the less formal name variant *USA*. Most city names had to be transferred into the TT in their original forms, since there do not exist any conventionalized forms for these names in Swedish. Some were transferred on their own or, when appropriate, in combination with a functional or a descriptive equivalent for clarification purposes. This strategy was used to a great extent and the reason for this may be that the travel guide is about Costa Rica, and hence contains many proper nouns that refer to cities and other places that Swedish readers are not familiar with. Some proper nouns were partly translated, and partly transferred. For example, this often happened with words of the kind consisting of a specific part and a generic part.
Regarding metaphors and idioms, many had corresponding figurative expressions in the target language and could hence easily be translated with these in accordance with Newmark’s and Ingo’s recommendations. Some ST metaphors and idioms, however, did not have any corresponding metaphors or idioms in the target language and consequently had to be translated with non-figurative expressions. This may have resulted in a less colourful and vivid text, but it was required in order to make the text comprehensible for the Swedish readers. In order to make up for some loss of figurative language one non-figurative expression in the ST was translated with a metaphor in the TT.

Regarding terminology, the ST contained mainly tourism terms and terms related to Costa Rican fauna and flora. Many ST terms were translated with corresponding terms in the target language, but in cases where no such terms could be found in the ST terms had to be transferred in their original forms. One ST term – viz. backpacker – had to be transferred into the TT, even though a corresponding term exists in the target language. Since the Swedish term – viz. ryggsäcksresenär – is relatively new and it seems like it has not yet been fully accepted in common vocabulary, this strategy was necessary in order to not make the text sound strange to the TT readers. This strategy is, however, not recommended by Ingo and Newmark, but in this specific situation it proved to be the best solution and since the ST term already is commonly used in Swedish it will likely not block the TT readers comprehension.

To sum up, the analysis showed that several different strategies had to be applied when translating proper nouns, figures of speech and terminology in this specific travel guide from English to Swedish, and that it was not always possible to use the strategies that are preferred by Ingo and Newmark.

The findings of this study are limited, since they apply only to the material presented in one single travel guide and not to all travel guides in general. Nevertheless, they may provide useful insight in how to handle proper nouns, figures of speech and terminology in travel related texts and can be used as a basis for more extensive research. For example, a study that looks in more detail on just one of the above mentioned translation problems and where translations of several travel guides are included. Something that would be of interest to study further would be how to handle newly created terms that not yet have found their ways into the TT. This is because they can really be a challenge and there does not seem to be any standardized solutions for how to handle them.
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