”I can’t get a bucket, but I tried to get every damn board”

A study on the translation of basketball terminology
Abstract

With a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, this study investigates what procedures are used when translating a text on basketball from English to Swedish. The focus was on the basketball terminology used in the text. Parallel texts and corpora were consulted in the translation as well as in the analysis. Different sources of translation theory have also been consulted, mainly Vinay & Darbelnet (1958), Newmark (1988) and Ingo (2007). The study came to the conclusion that different types of loanwords were common procedures when translating basketball terminology in the source text (ST), both borrowing, calque and a combination of these procedures. There was also terminology that had to be translated using equivalence and explicitation, mainly due to differences in culture and the general knowledge level of basketball. The following examples show how terminology was translated using calque and equivalence, respectively. The examples have been discussed in more detail in the analysis section.

(1) The next month Smart bench[Cousins […] Månaden efter bänkade Smart honom […]

(2) His struggle is not uncommon in an era of one-and-done players. Många spelare går nu till NBA efter bara ett år på collegenivån och de har samma problem.

Apart from the use of the procedures mentioned above, the study also concludes that consulting parallel texts is of essence and that it certainly is helpful for a translator to have some extent of knowledge about the topic beforehand.

Keywords: Basketball, terminology, loanwords, explicitation
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1. Introduction

Terms, technical words that are specific to a subject field, usually do not make up more than 5-10 percent of a text (Newmark 1988:151). Still, it is mainly the terminology that differentiates genre-specific texts from more general texts.

There have been many studies regarding the translation of different types of special languages, but as far as I can tell, no research has been done on the translation of basketball terminology from English to Swedish. Basketball does not have a very large following in Sweden, but there are factors that indicate that basketball is on the rise in Sweden. The women’s national team played in the European Championship 2013, for the first time since 1987 (SBBF). The men’s team also played in the European Championship 2013, and Sweden is now represented by two players in the NBA, the professional league in the U.S. that is considered the best league in the world by many. Until 2009, Sweden had not had any player in the NBA. These factors could help increase the popularity of the sport in Sweden, which in turn could lead to an increased need for translating basketball texts.

This paper intends to investigate the translation of basketball texts from English to Swedish. The focus is on the translation of basketball terminology, which is not part of the general language. The following excerpts are examples of the specialized language of basketball that was the focus of this study:

(1) After the 6-foot-1 Bledsoe authoritatively blocked one of his shots […]

Efter att den 185 cm korte Bledsoe bestämt blockat ett av hans skott […]

(2) His struggle is not uncommon in an era of one-and-done players.

Många spelare går nu till NBA efter bara ett år på college-nivån och de har samma problem.

The first example shows a kind of borrowing where the term blocked is translated into the borrowed term blockat. Borrowing was quite commonly used when translating this text and this procedure has been discussed further in the analysis. The second example shows how the term one-and-done players was translated using the translation procedure equivalence, which also has been discussed in the analysis. This procedure had to be used in some cases where there was no established equivalent term in the target language (TL). Equivalence and equivalents are concepts that have many
different definitions, both as terms in translation theory as well as in other areas
(Halver 1997:208-215). In this paper, Vinay & Darbelnet’s (1958) definition of
equivalence has been used. The term equivalent has been used in its more general sense.
This definition is from the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (OALD): ‘equal in
value, amount, meaning importance etc.’.

Different types of borrowing are quite frequently used when translating the
language of basketball, but that is hardly the only translation procedure used. Due to the
fact that the English language seems to have a more developed basketball language,
some terms do not have established Swedish equivalents. If basically all terms where
borrowed, the translation of basketball text might prove to be quite easy, but other
translation procedures need to be used in order to properly translate basketball texts,
some of which has been discussed in this paper. The labels for most of the procedures
mentioned in the analysis were originally coined by Vinay & Darbelnet (1958).

This paper also looks into how synonyms are used in both languages. The focus is
on synonyms within basketball terminology, and how the usage differs between the
languages.

1.1 Aim and research questions

The aim of this thesis is to see what kinds of problems arise and what kinds of
procedures come into play when translating basketball terminology from English to
Swedish, based on my translation of the ST The Ballad of Boogie. The objective is also
to see if there is a difference in the number of synonyms used, and how this can affect
the translation. The analysis begins with quantitative data of the different types of
loanwords that were used in the translation, this is followed by a discussion about the
differences in the use of synonyms between the two languages. The analysis continues
with more detailed discussions of different translation procedures that were used when
translating, namely borrowing, calque, equivalence and explicitation. These procedures
are described in the theoretical background. The analysis concludes with a discussion of
cultural aspects that are argued to be closely intertwined with basketball and therefore
relevant to discuss in this paper. This paper tries to answer the following questions:

1. Which translation procedures can be helpful when translating basketball
terminology in order to create an understandable and idiomatically correct target
text?
2. What are the reasons for choosing a particular translation procedure in a particular situation?

1.2 Material

My ST is the article *The Ballad of Boogie*, written by Jonathan Abrams and published on grantland.com, a website that focuses on sports and pop culture. The article contains just over 5700 words and depicts the life of NBA player DeMarcus Cousins. The stylistic level is somewhat informal, as can be seen in the examples below:

(3) After the T, the game deteriorated for the Kings.
(4) “If he comes in and is fucking around, then everyone else will fuck around,” Malone said.

The first excerpt contains the phrase *the T*, an abbreviation of the term *technical foul*. *The T* is considered a slang word (Phelps et al., 2011:354) and according to OALD *slang* means ‘very informal words and expressions […]’, the kinds that are typically not associated with formal writing. This suggests that the text has some more colloquial elements and also that it requires a certain measure of expert knowledge. The second is a quote containing some explicit language, the phrase *fucking around*. The inclusion of such language can be explained by the fact that the phrase is a part of a quote, but a more formal text likely would have omitted the quote.

The article contains much language that is specific to basketball, as well as some phrases that can be considered more general sports language. The target audience of the ST mainly consists of people with an interest in basketball, so basketball terminology is rarely, if ever, explained. The author presupposes that the reader has quite a bit of knowledge of the subject already. The target audience I intend to reach with the article are people with an interest in sports, and not necessarily just basketball. Basketball is not a very big sport in Sweden, so in an effort to raise its popularity, attempts have been made to make the target text (TT) accessible to more people than just those who are already initiated into the basketball world. I tried to keep this in mind when translating, so basketball terminology that appears in the texts has been explicated where it was deemed fitting and necessary. If it was necessary was decided based on parallel texts and the amount of information that I presupposed that readers had beforehand. The purpose of the TT still remains the same as the ST, to be an informative source of the
life and basketball career of DeMarcus Cousins, with the addition of hopefully making the text more accessible to people who are not particularly well versed in basketball.

It is of course hard to draw any definitive conclusions regarding the translation of basketball terminology from this very small sample size, but this paper might be able to serve as a starting point for the discussion of how English basketball terminology is best translated into Swedish. To my knowledge, no paper has touched on this subject before.

1.3 Method
The ST has been translated, and the TT is the starting point of my analysis. After translating, I identified and classified the terms that I found in the text. The focus of the analysis was the basketball terminology, what type of strategies are used and what types of translation procedures are applicable when translating terminology in this type of text. I have used a quite wide definition of terminology, as some cultural phenomena that are closely intertwined with basketball in the source culture has been discussed and considered as a part of basketball terminology. The discussion has also focused on how these cultural basketball words were translated into the source culture.

In order to behave ethically, a translator has to be faithful to the ST and convey the intended meaning, if not always by the same linguistic measures. I have tried to stay true to the original, although some changes have had to be made in order for the TT to make sense in the target culture.

It has proved quite difficult to find parallel texts to find out what type of words and phrases are used in typical Swedish basketball language. A major reason for this is that basketball is certainly not as big of a sport in Sweden as it is in the U.S., and therefore only few texts have been written about it. However, the website Basketsverige [www] is the biggest basketball site in Sweden (Newsme) and it has a search function through which it is possible to search for specific terms and see how frequently they are used in texts posted on the website. The Swedish Basketball Federation publishes their own magazine, Give and Go, and they are also posted on their website, so that is another option to use when searching for the frequency of certain expressions. The language of Basketsverige is very colloquial and is permeated by borrowings and calques from English basketball language. This type of language can be used when the author is certain that the readers are very proficient in basketball, and is also the type of language that I have encountered through my years as a basketball player. The language used in Give and Go is a bit more formal, as you might expect from a published
magazine from Sweden’s official federation. Cabré (1999:59) states that “we speak of special or specialized languages to refer to a set of subcodes (that partially overlap with the subcodes of the general language), each of which can be ‘specifically’ characterized by certain particulars […]”. Among these particulars he names situation, context and type of participants in the discourse. This is in line with how the way basketball discourse differs from Basketsverige to Give and go. I imagine that the type of text I have translated would fit better in a magazine such as Give and Go. So even though there is a larger selection of texts on Basketsverige, and that site’s search function has been used to get a broader view of phrases used, parallel texts from Give and Go have been used more often, as the stylistic level seems more similar to that of my TT. Give and Go has a more formal and explanatory style of writing that can be understood by a broader audience. That the style is more explanatory is evidenced early on, as every magazine contains an explanation of the term Give and Go on the magazines first spread, as shown below:


Since the intention of the TT is to be more explanatory as well, it seemed like a good idea to focus more on the parallel texts found in Give and Go. Sportbladet’s [www] website has also been used as a source for parallel texts, to see how basketball terminology is translated by a more general sports magazine that is not specifically directed towards people with a great interest in basketball. Språkbanken’s corpus Korp was also consulted, but the corpora included there that contain texts from social medias have been excluded so that the results were representative of how the language is used in more formal writing.

I want to make my TT available to a larger target audience than just people who are very well versed in basketball, so I have tried to explain some of the more difficult terminology used. However, not all words and phrases can be explained in layman’s terms, as this would make for a very long and boring text to read. The readers might have to make some investigations by themselves if they are unaware of the meaning of certain terms. I consulted parallel texts in an effort to find out what terms usually are mentioned without an explanation, and adhered to that in my own TT.
The discussion contains some quantitative data, namely the frequencies of loanwords in the TT. The quantitative data is then followed by qualitative examples of some of the procedures that were used. Vinay & Darbelnet’s (1958) definitions have mostly been used, but Newmark (1988) and Ingo (2007) have also been sources of translation theory that have been consulted when discussing the translation.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Terminology and special languages

Palumbo (2009:112) defines a term as a linguistic denotation of a given concept that is first and foremost associated with a specific subject field. Anderman and Rogers (1999:104) simply refer to terms as “technical words”. Debating over where to draw the line between specialized language and the more general language is difficult. Bergh & Ohlander (2012:16) claim that there is a great deal of overlap between general language and the special language of football, and the same can be said for basketball language. But, the line has to be drawn somewhere, especially when a paper contains some quantitative data on terminology, as this one does. Talent is a word that is too much a part of the general language. This quote from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) suggests that the word can be used in a wide variety of areas: “A person has to demonstrate talent to be accepted into a program of study”. In the example below from my ST, I have not considered talent a basketball term, even though it refers to Cousin’s basketball talents.

(6) No one has ever questioned Ingen har någonsin ifrågasatt Cousins
Cousins’s talent. talang.

Basketball is a subject field that differs from the general language, mainly because of its terminology. Not all basketball terms are solely a part of basketball terminology; some are used in other sports as well but are nonetheless also a part of basketball’s special language, and some are also a part of the general language. I have considered all terms that are used in other sports as terminology as well. An example of a term that is specific to basketball is the play pick-and-roll, which is discussed later. Assist is a term that is used in many sub-genres of the language of sports and a term that is also a part of the general language is win.
So what is a special language and how is it different from the general language? Cabré (1999:64) defines general language as “subjects that are the object of usual conversation and language exchange in the general situations of people’s everyday life [...]”. Special languages demand that speakers learn a vocabulary that is specific to a certain field (Cabré, 1999:64). When it comes to basketball, not all of the criteria for a special language apply, though. Cabré (1999:65) makes a list of criteria for a special language, and one of the criteria states that “communication in special languages is usually formal and occurs in situations governed by professional or scientific criteria”. Basketball is often spoken of in situations that are definitely considered as informal, but the language used is not a part of speaker’s general knowledge.

We have discussed terminology and that the line between general language and a special language is not always easy to define. The next section covers sports language as well as basketball language.

2.2 The special language of sports in general and basketball in particular

Tingbjörn (2003:7) states that sports language is a special language mainly because of its terminology. This terminology serves to create nuance and precision with denominations for actions specific to the subject of sports. Tingbjörn (2003:8) stresses that the large variation of sports creates many different sub-genres to sports language, and each of these differs from the others lexically and stylistically. He also writes that the level of knowledge and interest varies from person to person within the special language groups.

As stated earlier, the general language and special languages often have many features in common (Cabré, 1999:62). Bergh & Ohlander (2012:14-18) state that the language of football consists of a multitude of words that also exist in the general language as well as in other special languages, such as basketball language.

To make matters more complicated, basketball and general language are also intertwined the other way around, in the sense that basketball expressions have begun to be used in non-basketball language. An example is the phrase *slam dunk*, which in basketball language means “a shot in which a player thrusts the ball down through the basket” but also has come to mean “something reliable or unfailing; a foregone conclusion or certainty” (OALD). An example from COCA: “Virginia is a toss-up, certainly not a slam dunk for Romney”. A search in *Korp* for *slam dunk* reveals only four hits. One of them contains a direct quote in English: “Enligt Washington Post-
journalisten Bob Woodward svarade Tenet med en basketboll-term: ‘It’s a slam dunk’ – ungefär: ‘det är öppet mål’”. This indicates that basketball expressions might not be used in general language in Swedish. The people of Sweden would rather use an expression that most likely comes from football language. This is not surprising given football’s status compared to basketball in Sweden.

The fact that the game was invented in the U.S. means that the first basketball terms where in English. Many of these terms have followed the game to other countries through different forms of borrowing. For example, the term dribbling has been borrowed into Russian (Benson, 1958:257). This is true for Swedish as well, as this analysis provides examples of.

Basketball as a sport has been around a lot longer in the U.S. compared to in Sweden, and is also followed by a much bigger crowd. This can be one of the reasons why basketball terminology in English is more complete, and contains many words and phrases that have no established Swedish equivalent. For example, McLaughlin (1999:13) discusses a term called undercutting, which means “taking the legs out from under a jumping player.” After carefully examining many parallel texts, it can be confidently stated that no such term exists in Swedish basketball language, so there is a great chance that a translation would have to look more like the description of the term than the actual term.

Ingo (2009:229) discusses language that is specific to a field and concludes that the most notable difference between a field-specific language and general language is the terminology, which is plentiful in basketball language. Ingo also claims that these special fields require a constant stream of neologisms because of new ideas, inventions etc. This is true in some regard for basketball. Many of the terms used have been around for a very long time, but there are still areas of basketball that are developing and thus creating the need for new words and phrases, which this analysis looks into.

The next section covers the translation procedures that were a part of the analysis.

2.3 Translation procedures

Vinay & Darbelnet (1958:31-40) present a list of different procedures that can be used when translating, some of which has been included in the present study. They state that there are two methods of translating, direct and oblique translation, and these two consist of a number of procedures. Procedures that were frequently used when translating the ST and that were discussed in the analysis were borrowing, calque,
**equivalence** and **explicitation**. According to Vinay & Darbelnet (1958:31), *borrowing* is “the simplest of all translation methods” when faced with the need to fill a void in the TL. It means to simply take the source language (SL) word into the TL without any translation at all; an example in Swedish is *Internet*, “borrowed” from English. *Calque* (Vinay & Darbelnet 1958:32) means taking a word or phrase and translate it part-for-part, *skyskrapa* is a calque from the English word *skyscraper*. *Equivalence* (Vinay & Darbelnet 1958:38) means expressing a word or phrase in a totally different way, as Vinay & Darbelnet (1958:38) put it, “using completely different stylistic and structural methods.” *Equivalence* can be used in many different ways and is often used when translating idioms. The English idiom *as like as two peas* can be translated with the Swedish equivalent *lika som bär*.

Vinay & Darbelnet (1958:342) also discuss a supplementary translation procedure that is called *explicitation*. It is a translation technique that involves making something that was implicit and not stated in the ST explicit in the TT. This technique can be used to further explain aspects of a text that are not considered common knowledge in the target culture, as seen in (6) below:

(7)  
His definition of leadership would have made John Wooden beam.  
Hans definition av ledarskap skulle göra den *legendariske basketcoachen* John Wooden stolt.

Further research has differentiated between different types of explicitation. Klaudy (2008, cited in Becher 2010:4) states that there are four different types: obligatory explicitation, optional explicitation, pragmatic explicitation and translation-inherent explicitation. Obligatory explicitation is caused by lexicogrammatical differences between the SL and TL, optional explicitation are due to stylistic differences and pragmatic explicitation is mainly due to culture-specific differences. The last type, translation-inherent explicitation, is hard to define and has been criticized for its vagueness. It is caused by “the nature of the translation process itself” (Klaudy 2008:107, cited in Becher 2010:4).

### 2.4 Loanwords in Swedish sports language

Tingbjörn (2003:9–14) claims that Swedish sports language, even though there are many different sub-genres, is unified in the adopting and acceptance of English words.
The amount of terminology used differs, depending on whether the text is written for a specialized sports magazine or if it is written for a newspaper. This means that a translator has to consider where a text is to be published when deciding on how to deal with terminology. An abundance of difficult terminology can turn away a more general reader, but might entice someone with expert knowledge in the sport. This has been argued by Levin (2008:146) with regards to football language, he states that certain phrases are expected by people with knowledge of football, but these phrases can also lead to exclusion of some groups of readers. The same can be said for basketball language.

When a phenomenon, such as a sport, makes its way from one culture to another it is reasonable to borrow the words used to describe this phenomenon (Tingbjörn 2003:12). This is a very economical way of describing new occurrences in a culture. However, Tingbjörn (2003:12) argues that it is not only the economical aspect that is the basis of the abundance of English loanwords. The globalization of sports is another big factor, with international tournaments and teams made up of players from different countries making it essential to have a “common language”. The fact that the U.S. has been a trendsetter for many sports also has increased the role of English, according to Tingbjörn (2003:13). This is certainly true for basketball.

Sweden is not the only country that has incorporated English loanwords, many languages use English loanwords in their basketball terminology. The term basketball was from the beginning called *das Korbballspiel* in German, but the use of the borrowing *basketball* has since increased and is now well established and the normally used phrase (Krauss 1961:46). The frequent use of borrowing in Swedish basketball language has both positive and negative consequences. It makes it easier for people from different countries to understand each other, which is important in a sport such as basketball. Almost every team in the top basketball league in Sweden has at least one or two players from another country than Sweden. The fact that many terms are the same, or similar can make it easier for both the Swedish and the foreign players to understand each other. Many Swedish teams also have English names, such as Norrköping Dolphins, further proof of the English influence on basketball in Sweden. The negative aspect is that when a language becomes too influenced by another language, it can lead to domain losses (Josephsson 2004:69). This is when English, for example, is the main language used in a specific domain in Sweden. This could impoverish the Swedish language and could, if it happens in too many domains, kill the language completely.
2.5 Culture

Newmark (1988:94) defines culture and the words that are specific to a certain culture as “the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression”. He gives examples of words such as monsoon and tagliatelle, words that will create a problem when translating if there is no cultural overlap between the SL and TL.

According to Newmark (1988:119), there are three aspects that need to be considered when translating cultural words: the text-type, the requirements of the readership and the importance of the cultural word in question. Newmark (1988:95-102) also categorizes cultural words into different cultural categories; among these categories are social culture and organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts. In the social culture category Newmark puts sports and the culture-specific expressions that come with them. The other category contains a sub-category called social organization – political and administrative. School system and non-profit social organizations must be considered a part of this category, and the translation of the names of non-profit organizations is discussed in the analysis.

The inclusion of a cultural discussion might seem misplaced in an essay such as this. However, I have attempted to show that some cultural aspects are closely associated with basketball, particularly in the source culture, and therefore need to be addressed.

2.6 Synonyms

It should be stated that the word synonym is used in a broad sense in this paper. Cruse (2001:249-251) suggests that there are three different types of synonymy: absolute synonymy, propositional synonymy and near synonymy. Absolute synonyms are “equinormal in all (grammatically well-formed) contexts” (Cruse 2001:250) with a meaning that is entirely identical. Cruse does not give any examples of absolute synonyms, but states that they are very rare. Propositional synonymy means that two words can be exchanged in all declarative sentences, without any change in its truth-value. Begin and commence are propositional synonyms, according to Cruse. Near synonyms, then, are words “which share a salient common core of meaning, but differ in relatively minor respects” (Cruse 2001:251). These minor respects are not discussed more precisely, but calm, placid, tranquil, peaceful and serene are all considered near
synonyms. Cruse (2001:249) also writes that dictionaries often define synonyms as ‘words with the same or similar meaning’. This broader view of synonyms has been applied in this paper, meaning that words that are mentioned as synonyms will likely only be near synonyms in the view of Cruse.

3. Analysis

The ST contains many words that are connected to basketball, i.e. basketball terminology. The paper provides examples of some of the different translation procedures that were used, mainly using Vinay & Darbelnet’s labels. Firstly, the analysis provides a quantitative approach to some of the translation procedures involving loanwords that were used. After that, the analysis gives examples and discusses differences in the number of synonyms used in basketball terminology in the two languages. The analysis then begins to discuss some of the different types of loans that were used, namely borrowing and calque and also how these two can be combined. Then, the use of equivalence as a procedure is discussed. After the section regarding equivalence, explicitation as a procedure is discussed. The analysis also brings up a few examples of cultural differences that are closely intertwined with basketball in the source culture and how these were translated.

3.1 Translating basketball terminology

Let us begin the analysis with a table that shows the distribution of the translation procedures involving loans used in this translation. Each term has only been counted once, but terms such as guard and point guard are not considered the same, as they are rather hyponyms, and have therefore been counted as two separate terms. The first category counts the number of borrowings (guard – guard), the second counts calques, part-for-part translations (teammate – lagkamrat) and the last category includes terms that were translated using a combination of borrowing and calque (rookie season – rookiesäsong). The distribution of the mentioned translation procedures can be seen below in Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Borrowing</th>
<th>Calque</th>
<th>Borrowing + calque</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of times used</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. The distribution of translation procedures in basketball terminology
The usages of these procedures are quite evenly distributed, with borrowing being used a bit more frequently. Not all terms can be borrowed without changes, though. These numbers show that a translator has to consider how terms fit in with the Swedish language. Sometimes a language already has conventionalized ways of expressing certain terms, in which case a translator of course should adhere to these pre-existing formulations.

We will look at more specific examples of the procedures in the table, but first, a look at how Swedish and English differ in terms of the number of synonyms used in basketball texts. As mentioned in the background, these examples are rather near synonyms than absolute synonyms, but they have been defined simply as synonyms in this paper.

Bergh & Ohlander (2012:28) state that they have noticed that the English language has more synonyms than Swedish. Their study regards the language of football but the same seems to hold true for basketball language as well:

(8) [...] he pawed a rebound, dribbled the length of the floor [...] [...] rev han ner en retur, dribblade över hela planen [...]  
(9) Like tonight, I can’t get a bucket, but I tried to get every damn board.  
Som ikväll, jag kunde inte sätta ett skott, men jag försökte ta varje jäkla retur.  
(10) When DeMarcus Cousins entered the league, he [...] argued with referees.  
När DeMarcus Cousins började spela i NBA [...] tjafsade (han) med domare.  
(11) Ray would tell Cousins that he had never seen an official call or change a personal foul [...]  
Ray brukade säga till Cousins att han aldrig hade sett en domare blåsa eller ändra en foul [...]  

The above examples show how different, but synonymous, words in the ST are translated with the same word in the TT. Rebound is the standard way of talking about the retrieval of a missed shot, but board is also used for the very same concept (Phelps et al., 2011:349). However, its use seems to be mostly colloquial. Out of the first 1000 hits for the word board in a corpus search through American sports news texts, only one pertained to basketball. I have not found any corresponding alternative phrase used in Swedish in the parallel texts. Retur is also an example of a semantic loan, meaning that a Swedish word that already exists takes on another meaning (Bergh & Ohlander
2012:27). The word has many meanings in Swedish, and the meaning of retrieving a missed shot is oftentimes not even mentioned in Swedish standard dictionaries, such as SAOB and Nationalencyklopedin. This indicates that this usage is highly specialized.

The word referee translates to domare in Swedish, according to Nationalencyklopedin. It can be said that a referee is a form of official, so it can be a case of hyponymy, which is when “the meaning of one form is included in the meaning of another” (Yule 2012:118). In this context, I would argue that they are used synonymously, since a referee is the only one that can call a foul in basketball. Phelps et al. (2011:352) also state that officials refers to the referees, but that is also “may be expanded to describe the scorer, shot-clock operator and timekeeper”. The only sports-related translation of official in Swedish is funktionär, but that would not have worked in the TT. Nationalencyklopedin defines a funktionär in a sports context as ‘personal vid sportävlingar’. This could refer to a referee as well, but funktionär and domare are not used synonymously in the way that referee and official are. A corpus search reveals this quote from a Swedish newspaper: “Förbundet har bara pratat med domarna och en funktionär”, which indicates that they are not used in the same way as their English equivalents. Newmark (1988:xi) states that a translator should deviate from a literal translation “when there are good semantic and pragmatic reasons for doing so, which is more often than not”. In these examples the lack of variation in the TT is mostly for semantic reasons. The translation lacks a bit of stylistic variation, but as Vinay & Darbelnet (1958:169) write, translation will surely involve some loss. The text becomes more repetitive and lexically impoverished, but Ingo (2007:76) claims that in modern translation studies, meaning is the most important aspect for a translator to transfer. Stylistic features are of secondary importance. In the examples above, using a more varied style could have conveyed a different meaning.

This lack of variation can also stem from the fact that basketball has existed in American culture for a longer period of time, and since the sport is more popular than in Sweden, more people have likely discussed and invented new terms pertaining to basketball.

We have seen how English and Swedish differ in the number of synonyms used, now we will look at two different types of borrowing that were used in the translation.
3.1.1 Borrowing

As stated in the theoretical background, a term is a lexical label for a given concept that is specific to a field. The examples below are certainly field-specific. They show how different aspects of basketball terminology are translated into Swedish by using borrowing.

(12) […] said Isaiah Thomas, Sacramento’s point guard. […] sade Isaiah Thomas, point guard i Kings.

As stated in section 1.2, one of the positions in basketball is called point guard, in Swedish basketball terminology as well. This is in line with Ferguson’s view of specialized language. He states that social groups, in this case basketball players in Sweden, “develop shared norms of the varieties of language appropriate for different occasions” (1983:170). There was a need for a term for that specific position in basketball in Swedish, and the borrowing is now recognizable to everyone with basic knowledge of basketball. Ingo (2007:229) states that when an object or a phenomenon that is created in its origin country is transferred to other countries, the name oftentimes comes along with it, either in its original shape and form or slightly changed. This is an example of when the name is transferred in its original form. A search for point guard on Sportbladet yielded 41 hits. None of them were accompanied by an explanation of the term, which leads me to believe that it is not necessary in this translation either.

(13) In one game against Phoenix, the Suns tried to take advantage of Cousins in their pick-and-roll, switching him onto a guard. Phoenix försökte göra det svårt för Cousins när de spelade sitt anfallsspel pick-and-roll genom att se till att han fick byta till att försvara på en guard.

The term pick-and-roll is a particular play that is often employed in basketball (Phelps et al., 2011:96). It is quite simple, an offensive player dribbles the ball and one of his teammates stands in the way of the person defending the ball handler, this is called a pick, but is also known as a screen. The ball handler tries to break free from his defender while the screener starts moving towards the basket and tries to get open so he or she can receive a pass, this is called to roll (Phelps et al., 2011:96), hence the name pick-and-roll. It is likely a harder term to grasp for a more general target audience, but it is in fact the phrase that is used in Sweden as well. A search for the term on Sportbladet
reveals 7 hits, which may not seem like much but the fact that basketball is a sport that does not receive a substantial amount of media attention has to be taken into consideration. There was only one instance where the term was explained, in an article called “Sportbladets basketskola” where additional basketball terms were explained as well. Otherwise the term was just written with no explanation, such as “[…]så kanske kan han bli ett stabilt komplement till ”pick-and-roll”-spelet med Kemba Walker […]” (Sportbladet). Akyüz and Kotsalainen (2005) have written an essay named Är pick and roll övervärderat?, further showing that the term is implemented in the Swedish basketball terminology. As stated, all readers might not grasp it but not every single term can be thoroughly explained, as it would render the TT far too long and boring. Ingo (2007:135) states that texts can become too heavy and mundane if too much additional information is added. However, I explicated by adding anfallsspel in the TT, which at least gives readers a little more information about what the term means.

While the terms in (12) and (13) look precisely the same in Swedish as in English, some terms have become more adjusted to the Swedish language. Bergh & Ohlander (2012:27) discuss English football terms and how they are “integrated to varying degrees into Swedish, phonologically and/or morphologically”. The same holds true for basketball terms, as some borrowings have been integrated into the Swedish language, which is shown in the examples below.

(14) Veteran coach Paul Westphal joined that year, becoming the team’s fourth in as many years. Den erfarme coachen Paul Westphal skrev på för Sacramento det året och blev då laget fjärde coach på lika många år.

The issue of translating coach did not pose any particular problems, but it turned out to reveal interesting facts that separate Swedish basketball language from much of the other sport language that exists here. A search for tränare on Korp gives roughly 75 000 hits, and a search for coach generates about 8000. So at first, this led me to believe that I should be using tränare in my TT. However, a search for the same terms in the Give and Go publications showed quite different results. In the last four publications of the magazine, the term coach outnumbers tränare 91 to 33. This led me to the conclusion that I should use the direct loan coach in my translation, as this seemed to be much more common in Swedish basketball terminology, while still being common enough to be understood by a more general audience. This was also a proof of the importance of
consulting parallel texts when translating, as they can prove very helpful in choosing the correct word to use in the TT.

(15) After the 6-foot-1 Bledsoe authoritatively blocked one of his shots […]
Efter den 185 cm korte Bledsoe bestämt blockat ett av hans skott […]

The term blockat has also been adapted to fit in morphologically in the Swedish language. The singular noun form, block, looks the same in both languages, but the pronunciation differs a bit. This example from a corpus search shows that the same word is used in singular noun form: “Jerebko spelade i drygt 25 minuter hade 5 returer och en block”. A corpus search also shows usage of the supine tense that is used in this TT: “Han har i snitt gjort 22,9 poäng per match, tagit 10,4 returer och blockat totalt 171 skott”.

The analysis will now go on to discuss another one of Vinay & Darbelnet’s translation procedures that was used when translating, namely calque.

3.1.2 Calque

As mentioned in the background, a calque is a direct translation of a word or phrase in the SL. According to Ingo (1991:179), these types of loans are easy to master, for the translator as well as for other language users, and formally close to the expression of the SL. The terms in the examples below are quite general sport words and not specific to just basketball. As mentioned in the background section, Tingbjörn (2003:13) states that many different genres of Swedish sports language are unified in the way that they accept and use English loanwords. (16) and (17) are examples of calques:

(16) “Leadership is being the best example you can be for your teammates,”[…]
”Ledarskap är att vara det bästa föredömet du kan vara för dina lagkamrater” […]

Schultz (2013:14-15) discusses the translation of teammate in football texts. According to Norstedts online dictionary, teammate has two Swedish equivalents: lagkamrat and lagkompis. Schultz found that lagkamrat was much more common in football texts, but the distribution seems to be more even in Swedish basketball texts. In eight publications of Give and go, the terms are used roughly the same number of times. Based on this
overview, it was hard to decide which word to use in the TT. However, when looking
more closely at the context of both words, it became clear that lagkompis was more
often used when the texts where about children and adolescents, while lagkamrat was
more often used in texts about adult players. For example, in an interview with a player
in the Swedish top league, this quote was found: “[…] och kan förutse, veta hur
lagkamraterna rör sig på planen”. In an interview with a coach regarding how to build
team spirit in a youth team, the coach says: “Det handlar om att visa respekt för sina
lagkompisar […]”. As my TT is about a person playing in the top league in the U.S. and
is mainly aimed at a slightly older readership, the conclusion was that the use of
lagkamrat would be preferable.

(17) The next month Smart benched Cousins for the second half of a
loss to the Clippers following a verbal outburst.

Månaden efter bänkade Smart honom i halvtid i en förlustmatch mot Los Angeles
Clippers. Anledningen var ett utbrott från Cousins sida.

According to Nationalencyklopedin, bänka in the meaning of placing someone on the
substitutes’ bench has been used in Swedish since 1992 and a corpus search reveals that
bänkade has been used in Swedish newspapers since at least 1994. Arntz (1993:12)
claims that due to the false friends that exist, it is advisable to have a look at the
definitions of the term in both languages to ensure that they are referring to the same
phenomenon. One of Merriam Webster’s definitions of the verb bench is ‘to put (a
player) on the bench’. Nationalencyklopedin defines bänka as ‘placera på
avbytarbänken’. The terms have very similar definitions and therefore the translation is
suitable. Tingbjörn (2003:8) states that spoken and written sports language in Sweden
has begun to look more similar. Bänka could likely be an example of this, where it first
began to be used in colloquial spoken sports discourse and then found its way into the
written discourse. Petades could also be a possible translation choice, but a corpus
search shows that petades is rarely used when someone is not allowed to play out a
game, but rather when someone is not allowed to play for a longer period of time, be it
one game or for periods longer than that. Here are two examples from Korp: “‘Husse’
petades mot USA, får kanske vila även mot Österrike idag […]” and “Björklund, som
varit bosatt i landslaget under hela 90-talet, petades plötsligt ur blågult i vintras”.

The analysis will now move on to look at a few cases where the procedures
borrowing and calque are combined to create a fitting translation.
3.1.3 Combination of borrowing and calque

Translation of terminology is not always clear-cut. A translator cannot always decide one specific translation procedure to use when translating a term, sometimes a mixture of procedures have to be used to produce the best translation possible. Vinay & Darbelnet (1958:31) acknowledge this as well, saying that the procedures that they present can be used by themselves or they can be combined. Most of this paper provides examples where one procedure is used, but the following examples show how they can be combined:

(18) Cousins received a technical foul in his next game against the Utah Jazz.

This example shows a combination of the procedures borrowing and calque. In (18) the first word in the phrase is calqued and the second is borrowed. There are different types of fouls; a technical is given if a player or coach is deemed to have behaved in an unsportsmanlike manner, yelling vulgarities etc. (Phelps et al, 2011:354). Foul is the term that is used in Swedish as well, and it is quite integrated into the language. A corpus search that excluded social media provides 264 hits pertaining to basketball, some dating as far back as 1987.

(19) The Kings won only 24 games during Cousins’s rookie season, Kings vann bara 24 av 82 matcher under Cousins rookiesäsong, […]

(19) is built up in a similar way as (18), though here the initial part or the term is borrowed and the latter part is calqued. Rookie is a term that is used in more sports than basketball. A corpus search indicates that ice hockey has been the sport that made this term more or less common knowledge among people with an interest in sports in Sweden. It is even used in areas outside of sports, as evidenced by this quote from a corpus search: “Kungafadäsen i Brunei och kristdemokraternas ledarstrid har gjort folkpartiets Birgitta Ohlsson till årets rookie hittills […]”. This is further indication of the fact that the line between general language and special languages is a blurred one.
The preceding sections have looked at how different loanwords were used as translation procedures. Next, we will look at examples where equivalence was used.

3.1.4 Equivalence

When a term in the ST does not have a proper equivalent in the TL, a translator often has to make use of the equivalence procedure. Ingo (2007:228) discusses difficulties with translating non-literary texts and terminology and mentions the explanation of phenomena that are complicated as a source for problems. For example, he mentions the difficulty of explaining the relativity theory in a simple fashion when translating. While the terminology in the ST is not on that level of difficulty, the examples below show that there are still phenomena that are complicated to explain, not only for linguistic reasons. Equivalence is a procedure that can prove helpful in these instances. As mentioned, equivalence means to express the meaning of the ST using different stylistic and structural forms (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958:38). The following extracts are examples of when equivalence was used in the TT.

(20) [...] and whipped a behind-the-back pass to a cutting teammate.  
[... ] och kastade en passning bakom ryggen till en lagkamrat som sprang mot korgen.

In (20), the word cutting poses some problems for a Swedish translator. To cut means to ‘quickly move from one spot to another in an effort to elude a defender and try to score’ (Phelps et al., 2011:349). The phrase is used as a direct loan in more colloquial Swedish basketball discourse, such as this phrase from Basketsverige: “[…] Uppsala lyckades ofta cutta mot korgen för enkla lay-ups”. However, in Give and go there were no examples of the use of cut or any other forms of the word. Since no established Swedish equivalent seems to exist, the TT instead contains a more explanatory relative clause. The next excerpt is another example of when equivalence was used:

(21) His struggle is not uncommon in an era of one-and-done players.  
Många spelare går nu till NBA efter bara ett år på collegenivån och de har samma problem.
Ingo writes that the rapid development in the special fields creates a constant need for new terms (2007:229). (21) contains a phrase that is relatively new in English basketball language as well. College basketball athletes who only attend school for one year and then make the leap to professional basketball are called one-and-done players (About 2014). Before 2006, many of the most talented young basketball players entered the draft straight out of high school, but a new rule stated that players must be at least 19 and that at least one NBA season has to elapse after their high school graduation before they can enter the draft (NBAPA). This led to a number of players going to college for just one year, hence the term one-and-done. This is a kind of neologisms (at least the use of the term in this specific subject field), and Newmark (1988:140) writes that neologisms are often “short-lived, individual creations”. In this case, that might prove to be correct. The phrase one-and-done is quite established in the English basketball language, but it might not be for long. There seems to be a consensus regarding the fact that the age-limit will be raised an additional year (Mahoney 2014). If players had to play at least two years of basketball at the college level, it would render the term one-and-done players obsolete. Translating a possibly transient phrase like this, which does not have an equivalent in Sweden, can be difficult. Equivalence had to be used in the TT in order to make sense of the meaning of the ST, just as in (22) below:

(22) Sacramento selected Cousins fifth overall, two picks after the Nets took another freshman post player, Georgia Tech’s Derrick Favors. New Jersey Nets (numera Brooklyn Nets) var det tredje laget att välja, de tog Derrick Favors från Georgia Tech-universitetet, som också bara gick ett år på college och spelar samma position som Cousins.

The post is the area around the free throw line, which is close to the basket (Phelps et al., 2011:353). Derrick Favors is a player that, like Cousins, usually occupies this area and their style of play is quite similar. This translation is not a direct semantic equivalent, but it does convey the same pragmatic information, which is deemed more important (Ingo 2007:154). Parallel texts in Swedish show that the term is sometimes used as a borrowing, both in Give and go and on Basketsverige’s website. The term is used quite frequently on Basketsverige, but the term is only used twice in all of the publications of Give and go. On Basketsverige the term is also used as a verb, such as in this quote: “Paul gillar att ha stora treor som kan posta upp i anfall”. In Give and go it is
only used in quotes, such as “Framför allt är mitt skott och mina postmoves bättre”. These searches in parallel texts indicate that the term has gained some traction as a borrowing in Swedish basketball language, and a variation of the term is even used in Sportbladet, albeit with an explanation in both cases. Both examples discuss the “low post”, which is explicature as being the area close to the basket. Quotes from parallel texts thus support the notion that I could have used post as a borrowing in the TT as well. However, since my text is supposed to be understandable for a larger audience, it would likely have to have been accompanied by an explicitation. It could have looked like something along the lines of “[… som bara gick ett år på college och är en postspelare, en spelartyp som gillar att vara nära korgen, precis som Cousins. This could have worked, but the added explication would have made the sentence unnecessarily long.

3.1.5 Explicitation

The technique of explicitation can be used to further explain aspects of a text that is not considered common knowledge in the target culture. Vinay & Darbelnet (1958:342) believe that an exaggerated use can lead to overtranslation, but in these cases I believe that the explicitations are relevant and necessary to provide the target audience with a pleasant reading experience. (23) and (24) show how explicitation was used in the TT:

(23) [...] though a poor shooting performance resulted in a 73-66 loss to West Virginia in the Elite Eight. [...]

(24) [...] men en match med dåligt skytte resulterade i en förlust med 73-66 mot West Virginia i Elite Eight, *college-slutspelets kvartsfinal*.

In (23), the concept of *Elite Eight* is explicated. Fox Sports’ web site has a bracket that shows that when there are eight teams remaining in the college play-off tournament, that round is called the Elite Eight. When eight teams are left in a tournament, that is usually called the quarterfinals (NE). The majority of readers likely do not possess expert knowledge regarding the college play-offs in U.S. basketball. A corpus search gave only one hit in Swedish texts. The text did not explicate the term, but it was a blog post, which is not the most reliable source and not where I intend for the TT to be published. It could be argued that *Elite Eight* could just as well have been omitted completely, but that would involve even more loss in the TT. Furthermore, Newmark
(1988:96) states that transferring words in their original form “enables the readership (some of whom may be more or less familiar with the SL) to identify the referent – particularly a name or a concept – in other texts (or conversations) without difficulty.” So keeping the original phrase might prove helpful for readers in future encounters with texts about basketball. (24) shows another example of when explicitation was used:

(24) […] yet he moves like a guard, with a deft touch around the basket. [...] men ändå rör han sig lika snabbt och smidigt som en guard och har en bra touch nära korgen.

Guards are usually among the smallest and quickest players on the court (Phelps et al., 2011:351). Cousins is oftentimes one of the biggest players on the court, so his ability to move smoothly and swiftly is quite unusual. It can give him an advantage over other big players who are not as fast as him. Similar to the discussion about the term point guard in section 2.1.1.1, guard is mainly mentioned without any further explanation in Swedish basketball texts. However, more general readers might not be perfectly clear on what characterizes a guard’s appearance and style of play, even if they have heard the term before. In order for the readers to understand why it is mentioned that Cousins moves like a guard, some explicitation was needed.

3.1.5.1 Cultural aspects translated using explicitation

The examples that are discussed in this section are more marginal to basketball terminology per se, but they nevertheless refer to specific concepts crucial to the understanding of a ST dealing with basketball. This paper attempts to prove that these are connected to basketball and therefore relevant to discuss.

(25) His definition of leadership would have made John Wooden beam. Hans definition av ledarskap skulle göra den legendariske basketcoachen John Wooden stolt.

It could be argued that a proper name cannot be considered as terminology, but in this case, John Wooden is used as an epitome of basketball standards. In a way, he metaphorically stands for the highest excellence of leadership and respectability. This usage of proper names is supported by the work of Sonnenhauser (2008). She argues that proper names can stand for something other than its original referent. When a name
is used in more and more situations, it can become a symbol (Sonnenhauser 2008:183). Quotes from a search on COCA also suggest that his name is used in more unconventional ways. “What in the name of John Wooden is going on?”, a quote from a newspaper predicting how a season would turn out for a college basketball team, and “Bill Tierney is the John Wooden of college lacrosse”, a quote from another newspaper. These quotes indicate that the name is used to refer to more than just the person.

John Wooden was one of the most respected and admired basketball coaches of all time in the U.S. (Associated Press), but most Swedish people probably do not know who he is. This is an example of a pragmatic explicitation (Klaudy 2008:106, cited in Becher 2010:4), as it had to be explicated due to the differences between English and Swedish culture. His position in the U.S. culture differs so much from his position in the Swedish that an explicitation is needed in order to explain who he is. Without it, reading a name in this context with no explanation as to why it is mentioned could annoy a Swedish reader. Why would Cousins’ definition of leadership have made him beam, and why would his reaction have been important at all? The explicitation does not extensively explain who Wooden is, but at least the reader can understand that his reaction would have been important because of how revered he was (and still is) in American basketball culture. (26) is also an example of a translation of a cultural concept:

(26) Gary Williams, an assistant coach with the AAU’s Birmingham Storm [...] Gary Williams, en assisterande coach för AAU-laget Birmingham Storm [...] 

1 AAU står för Amateur Athletic Union och är en av de största ideella idrottsorganisationerna i USA. Inom basket håller AAU i turneringar på sommaren, då den vanliga basketsäsongen har uppehåll. För unga spelare är dessa turneringar ofta väldigt viktiga, spelarna får en chans att utvecklas samtidigt som de får större möjligheter att visa sina färdigheter.

Corpus searches show that AAU is not a well-known phenomenon in Sweden. AAU-laget only received one hit, AAU received around 40, but only one of the hits was related to basketball. The term AAU-laget possibly could have been replaced with just laget, as the concept of the AAU organization does not really have an equivalent in Sweden, so it might be hard for readers to grasp the concept. However, for the reasons stated in the footnote, and because it is mentioned several more times in the article, it
was important to explain what the AAU means for young, aspiring players like Cousins was at the time.

As stated earlier, a translated text can become too obvious and tiring if too much additional information is added (Ingo 2007:135). However, some differences between the source culture and the target culture cannot be easily explained in a few short words, like the examples above. Ingo (2007:134–136) states that it oftentimes is necessary to add complementary information when translating. If this additional information cannot be placed within the text in a smooth fashion, it can be placed in footnotes. Chesterman & Wagner (2002:27–38) discuss the invisibility of translators, which can be linked to the use of footnotes. A footnote makes it obvious that the text is a translation, which can be seen as undesirable, but it is at times needed. As Wagner (2002:31) writes in their book, “our job is to communicate, to help the reader to understand; so we do often make the text more explicit.”

4. Conclusion
In this paper I argue that different types of loans are common translation procedures when translating terms in basketball texts from English to Swedish, that it is hard to find established Swedish equivalents for some terms and that information oftentimes has to be explicated because of the differences between the source culture and the target culture. The reasons for choosing a particular procedure in a particular situation differed. Loanwords were used when it was clear that they were already established in Swedish basketball language and explicitation and equivalence had to be used when no established equivalent existed. Explicitation was also used in order to overcome cultural differences. Also, the paper argues that it seems as if English basketball language has more synonyms for terms than Swedish does. This can pose problem for a translator, as it can make the TT more repetitive and lexically impoverished.

The aim of this study was to look into how basketball texts, and particularly the terminology, could be translated from English to Swedish. The intention was to find out what kinds of procedures were used in order to produce an idiomatic TT and why. The analysis has come to the conclusion that there are many variables to consider when translating this type of text.

As basketball is not as popular in Sweden as football, for example, an important aspect for the translator is to know the target audience. If the TT is intended for an audience that is well versed in the intricacies of basketball, terms might not have to be
explained at all. On the other hand, if the target audience is not especially knowledgeable about basketball, terms will have to be simplified or explained. As my intended audience were people with an interest in sports, but perhaps without much special knowledge about basketball, some terms had to be translated using equivalence or explicitation.

Borrowing was a procedure that was used quite often, in different forms. These direct loans were sometimes borrowed as they were, and sometimes had to be changed to fit in with the Swedish language. The combination of borrowing and calque was also used. The usage of these direct loans might make it seem as an easy task for a translator, but the translator cannot expect that the target audience will understand all terms that were borrowed without an explanation.

As with most other special languages, it is of great help for a translator to have some background knowledge of the specialized subject. Even though most terms and their meaning can be found, it is helpful to have some pre-existing knowledge in order to produce an idiomatically correct text. This study also shows that consulting parallel texts is very important when translating a basketball text. There is not an abundance of material written in Swedish about basketball, but the material that does exists proved valuable. When finding out how integrated a borrowing is and what type of synonym is most frequently used, parallel texts can be of great help.

The study included some quantitative methods, but the main focus is on qualitative examples. It has hard to draw any definitive conclusions from such a small sample size, both regarding the quantitative and qualitative data, but it can at least give a hint of what types of translation procedures are most common. As basketball hopefully continues to grow in Sweden and the demand for more translated basketball texts increases, more research can be necessary to conduct, and this study might be able to inspire such studies.
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