Advanced thesis

Translating sentence openers

An analysis of the potential risk of syntactic interference in a translation from English to Swedish

Author: Emma Larsson Christensen
Supervisor: Ibolya Maricic
Examiner: Fredrik Heinat
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Abstract

In this paper the changes that occur in the translation of initial sentence elements regarding clause element function as well as thematic structure are analyzed. The first part of the aim is to investigate how these functions and structures change in translation. The second part of the aim is to analyze the potential risk of syntactic interference from using thematic or word order solutions that are too close to the SL or too uncommon in the TL. To answer this the source text and translated text were divided by individual sentences and categorized by word order, thematic structure and differences between ST and TT. The results were compared to previous research by mainly Altenberg (1998) and Hasselgård (1998), with additional use of primarily Bohnacker (2010), Munday (2012) and Tirkkonen-Condit (2014) for further definitions of syntactical interference. The quantitative results suggested that there may be syntactical interference. This can be found mainly in the lack of ASV→SV word order structures, possibly due to a fear of deviating too far from the ST structure, and by an abundant use of formal subject (det), due to overcompensating by using TL specific structures that are perceived as common. However, it is not easy to find examples of translationese in syntax from only a cursory glance and the in-depth qualitative analysis was necessary for this conclusion.

Key words

Syntax, word order, sentence openers, interference, thematic structure
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1 Introduction

The way we start a sentence is arguably the gateway to the reader’s understanding of it (Altenberg 1998: 136-137; Hasselgård 1998: 149). With the first few words we present the starting point and thereby the perspective we as text producers want the reader to have in mind. If we translate a text we have the power to alter that perspective, and sometimes, maybe even a responsibility according to the linguistic rules of our target language to do so. In English, there is a strict Subject Verb word order, which means that adverbials can be placed both before and after the subject as long as that order is retained. The same is not possible in Swedish due to the V2-constraint in Swedish, which means the verb always has to be in the second element position. Adverbials in Swedish can be placed either in the initial position of the sentence, directly followed by the main verb, or after both the subject and the verb. This leads to translators having to make choices for how to transfer the contents of the source text (henceforth ST) without violating the syntactic rules of the target language (henceforth TL). But even when adhering to the rules of the TL, there is a risk of the SL (perhaps unconsciously) interfering leading to a translation that although syntactically and semantically correct, seems stiff and unnatural with an abundance of structures that exist in both languages but are more common in one. In this study such sentence structure choices are to be investigated.

Since English permits adverbials almost anywhere but needs to have the verb after the subject, the V2-constraint means that all ASV or SAV sentences need to be adapted accordingly in the Swedish translation. In Example (1) a sentence where the adverbial was originally placed in a median position between subject and verb in the ST is moved to after the finite verb in the TT.

(1) These classically cause severe inflammation resulting in facial deformity and skin ulceration, along with nasal discharge (unilateral > bilateral)

De brukar i typfallet orsaka allvarlig inflammation som leder till deformering av ansiktet och hudsår, samtidigt som nasalt sekret utsöndras (unilateralt > bilateralt)

In Example (2) an SV is transformed into AVS when the noun phrase is modulated (Munday 2012: 99) into a circumstantial adverbial and the abstract nouns are replaced with a noun and a pronoun that refers to the cat that is only implied in the ST. Making
what is implied in the ST explicit in the TT is a stereotypical example of the translation strategy *explicitation* (Munday 2012: 101).

(2) Calicivirus infection results in a carrier state with continuous shedding for variable periods of time.

### 1.1 Aim and research questions

The main aim of the study is to investigate how often translated sentences begin with an adverbial and other elements other than a noun as a subject. Furthermore, differences in thematic structure between the source text and the translated text are analyzed as they may explain why there are differences in the clause elements of the source text and the translated text. Parallels to translationese can possibly be drawn from the results of these analyses. There is also an aim to compare this frequency to ‘natural’ use, i.e. non-translated texts in Swedish, as described in previous research.

The research questions are:

- How frequently do the sentences translated from English to Swedish begin with adverbials as opposed to other elements?
- What are the different solutions for translating the sentence openers?
- What is the frequency of changes to the thematic structure?
- In what way are the changes in the sentence openers indicative of or could be interpreted as a form of ‘syntactic translationese’?

### 2 Theoretical background

#### 2.1 Translation strategies

The translation strategies and the terminology that will be used in this paper consist of *transposition* and *modulation*; and *explicitation* as well as *generalization*.

Transposition (Munday 2012: 99) here means changing the clause constituents without changing the sense, e.g. noun → verb. The description of modulation is to shift the
perspective when other techniques would lead to what would be considered awkward or unidiomatic even though it is grammatically correct (ibid). Explicitation is taking what is only implied in the ST and stating it explicitly in case the readers would be unable to detect the message otherwise. Generalization is replacing a detailed ST structure with a less detailed TT one where it is deemed unnecessary to keep the original information (Munday 2012:101).

2.2 Word order and sentence openers

“Translations form a very suitable material for a contrastive study of sentence openings, since they highlight changes in word order that are either obligatory or optional as we go from one language to another”

(Altenberg 1998:121)

Word order is something all languages with words have and thereby they can be categorized accordingly. Both English and Swedish are generally classified as Subject Verb Object (SVO) languages, but in some circumstances VSO, known as ‘reversed word order’, is permitted or even necessary. Andersson suggests that by deviating from the standard word order part of the text is especially emphasized or it has a stylistic effect. Furthermore, most Germanic languages except English are V2 languages, meaning that regardless of how the constituents are put together, the second position will always be held by the finite verb (Andersson 2001: 14-15).

In Ingo’s (2007) description of the differences between English and Swedish he states that English more often makes use of embeddings to convey core clauses than Swedish does (Ingo 2007: 176). By ‘core clauses’ Ingo (ibid 40) refers to breaking down a complex structure into several simple sentences corresponding to each of the pieces of information that is conveyed within it, i.e. their cores. For instance, a sentence such as The small cat sleeping on the cloth-covered table is snoring is broken down into its core clauses as: There is a cat on a table. The table has a tablecloth. The cat is small. The cat is sleeping etc. Ingo suggests that seeing the individual core clauses allows the translator to make his/her own connections about how they are interrelated and thus they can be put together in a freer and more target language appropriate manner (ibid 36). Embeddings, Ingo states, usually consist of infinitives, participles, nominalizations and gerunds (ibid 34). They are described as “quasi clauses” that, although they might stem from complete, standalone clauses, now function as constituents in an overlaying clause (ibid 45-46). Examples of embeddings are the
underlined attributes to the nouns in *I see the sleeping cat* and *Jag hör den sovande katten snarka*. Swedish, however, much prefers keeping the focus in sentences on complete clauses, i.e. main clauses and subordinate clauses which are clauses that fill a semantic function of their own but are subordinate to the main clause (ibid 176). An example of this is: *Jag hör att katten snarkar när hon sover*. He also points out that something that is very noticeable is the word order. Ingo states that reversed word order in Swedish occurs when the sentence starts with a determiner to the predicate, i.e. an adverbial. It can also be because the sentence starts with a subordinate clause (ibid 177). Specifically regarding the placement of adverbials he suggests that adverbials that affect the entire clause, such as e.g. *not* and *maybe*, can be placed in either initial position, between the finite verb and the object, between finite and infinite verb, or between subject and infinite verb (ibid 178). Altenberg explains that adverbial placement highlights discourse progression, e.g. shifts in focus of point of view, room etc. and can be used “for modal or other scope-setting reasons” (Altenberg 1998: 136-137). English always has the subject in what Altenberg refers to as the *onset*, which comprises all elements before the finite verb (ibid 138).

As linguists, readers of this paper will be well familiar with the distinction between the form and the function of linguistic elements. Since the readers are expected to know it, the terminology for the elements that sentence openers consist of will not be covered more than in a brief summary. The noun is the shape or form, and the function might be subject (S) or object (O), and is determined by its role in the sentence or clause. The function of an adverbial (A) can be conveyed by any number of ways and is an interesting research area in its own right, albeit this is not the focus of this paper. The finite verb phrase, the predicate, is in this paper only referred to as the verb (V).

Adverbials modify or describe the setting of the clause, and can simply be said to answer the questions when, where, how. There is both the word class adverb (e.g. *maybe, not*) and the clause element function of adverbial (Svartvik & Sager 2005: 304). In this paper the functions of adverbials are categorized into the categories of time, place and circumstance. Objects and other structures such as ellipsis, imperatives, emphasis, stylistic figures etc. are not analyzed here.

The subject (S) is the *who* or *what* that is in congruence with the verb of the entire clause (Svartvik & Sager 2005: 9). This mostly consists of a noun, pronoun or noun phrase but can also be an entire clause such as an infinitive clause (Eng: infinitive *to* or gerundium *-ing* clauses; Swe: infinitive *att* clauses). Both Swedish and English
makes use of ‘expletive subjects’ where an “empty” pronoun or construct (Eng: *it*, existential *there*; Swe: *det*) is placed first in the sentence. Svenska Akademiens Grammatik describes the expletive subject as a constituent empty of a meaning of its own or without a referent but that fills a function in a clause (Teleman et al. 1999: 168). Svartvik & Sager (2005: 431) suggests that putting the heavier clauses or information would cause “clumsy” sentences. The function of these expletive elements is also known as ‘formal subject’ (Svartvik & Sager 2005: 431; Teleman et al. 1999: 172). A formal subject is always paired with a ‘real subject’, which is the main agent of the sentence (Teleman et al. 1999: 165).

Bohnacker (2010) also makes a note of the Swedish use of ‘expletive subject’ “det” in her comparative analysis of Swedish and German sentence-initial constituents. Bohnacker (2010: 114) states that she has found a stronger tendency in Swedish than in German to avoid placing the previously unknown, rhematic, information first in sentences (definitions of thematic and rhematic information is discussed more detailed in Section 2.4.1). Instead, by using an “element of no informational value, such as an expletive subject”, the rhematic information, which contains the real subject, can be moved to the preferred post-verbal position (Bohnacker 2010: 117).

Kaussman and Hönig have presented the translation strategy “maxim of necessary degree of precision” which involves the notion that during translation the translator should only transfer the semantic features that are “relevant in a given context with regards to the function of your translation” (Kaussman 1995: 92).

Hasselgård, on the other hand, refers to Ventola (1995: 88) who suggested that altering word order leads to altering the meaning the reader perceives: “the readers are forced to focus on different things – orientation to the “starting-point” in the forthcoming text is different”. With this Ventola argues that because the translators have given the readers a different focus, a different starting-point to steer the perception than the way the original author intended, the ST and TT “are not saying the same thing” (Ventola 1995: 88). When focusing on the translation of something, i.e. syntax, that does not alter the semantics or the “meaning” of the text in the same obvious way that altering lexicon does, other issues become clear. The same overall information is arguably still conveyed, but the way it is structured can signal different producer intentions by downplaying certain elements and emphasizing others.
2.3 Interference, translationese and syntactic translationese

The term *translationese* has been credited to Gellerstam, who coined the term in 1986 when he wanted to describe what he called “översättningssvenska”, a form of Swedish where due to the use of correct, but unusual lexicon translated texts became obviously identifiable as translations (Gellerstam 1986: 88) He also briefly mentioned that syntax can be affected as well, but the only example he mentioned in that article was the English -ing form is one to often end up transferred into the uncommon Swedish -ande form (“the approaching car → den annalkande bilen”) (ibid 92). To find more modern perspectives other research on the topic of syntactic interference was investigated as well.

Munday (2012: 173) suggests that divergences that cannot be explained by other translation strategies may be caused by language norms in use. Relating this to word order, there can be ‘negative interference’ where “non-normal TT patterns” are made, or ‘positive’ where something that would not be wrong or abnormal but is less common than another alternative will be used because it is closer to the ST (Munday 2012: 176).

Tirkkonen-Condit’s not so recent study from 2002 investigated whether it was possible to distinguish translated texts from non-translated texts going by linguistic markers only. She had L1 Finnish speakers try to identify texts as either translated or written originally in Finnish using only the style and general language of them. There were no extralinguistic references such as e.g. names of organizations included in the excerpts that could make it possible to identify the texts. Her hypothesis beforehand was that there is a difference between translationese that was caused by incompetent translators and that due to unavoidable “translation universals”. She mentions style simplification to increase readability, normalization (exaggerated use of common terms and idioms over e.g. less frequent colloquialisms), explicitation and a generally more conservative style as possible examples of translation universals. Additionally, she suggests that language unique items which exist in the TL but not in the ST may be useful for identification. This since using these over equivalents that are closer to the ST are indicative of the translator having a wider grasp of the language they are translating to, Tirkkonen-Condit claims. The idea of her study is that if the TT is sufficiently, systematically deviant from the normal TL patterns the readers will notice and thereby understand or suspect it is in fact a translation (2002: 208-209). If the translated text is too standardized, it will become bland enough to stand out (2002: 217). However,
although her findings suggested there is validity in the “unique item hypothesis” the subjects were not able to distinguish translated from non-translated texts in an extent that would suggest it is possible to differentiate between the two using only linguistic markers (2002: 216).

Izwaini’s (2014) recent paper presents a corpus study of how syntactic interference, among other aspects, has affected the Arabic language in general. Izwaini uses contemporary and pre-modern corpora to investigate different features of translational interference and how it is implemented into everyday Arabic. He coins the term *linguistic cloning* to refer to the process where interference from translations lead to a transfer from the SL into the TL. The transferred expressions and structures are received by the readers through official media who then adopt them as norm, even though they are originally divergent or non-existent in the TL. There is also a process of adopting and normalizing interference structures that he refers to as *linguistic recycling* (2014: 489).

2.4 Information structure

The study of how the pieces of information is put together to convey different meanings is known by several names. The one used in this paper, ‘information structure’ is taken from Lambrecht (1994). However, he mainly focuses on the structuring of information in spoken discourse. In the introductory chapters, Lambrecht reports that other terms have been used to describe this area of language research. For instance, ‘information structure’ was coined by Halliday in the 1960’s, ‘information packaging’ was Chafe’s choice of term in the 1970’s, and both ‘discourse pragmatics’ and ‘informatics’ have been used as well (Lambrecht 1994: 2). As Bohnacker puts it “[r]esearch on information structure is characterised by a bewildering heterogeneity in terminology” (Bohnacker 2010: 109).

Having varying definitions and approaches means it is open for misunderstandings if one term is used without clarifying which perspective is in effect. Lambrecht (1994: 3) stresses how he sees information structure as being one of the parts that make up sentence grammar. This, he continues, is to differentiate between the discourse functions of grammar vis-à-vis those of pragmatics, which he describes a subdomain of semantics and primarily focused on the meaning of individual words and sentences (Lambrecht 1994: 3). All different aspects of language are of course interwoven and never completely separable from another. According to Lambrecht,
information structure could be described as the link between the “formal” and the “functional” aspects of text, where *formal* refers to the shape of the textual representation as it is, and *functional* refers to the interaction between writer and reader via the textual medium (ibid: 2). Basically the concept refers to the effects that the manner in which the information conveyed in the text is presented and structured has on this interaction.

### 2.4.1 Classifying the pieces of information

One part of information structure is the notion that the pieces of information within a sentence (or a larger section of the text, for that matter) can be evaluated according to their perceived importance in comparison to the other information presented. This depends on what the sender presupposes would be the most important information for the receiver. Instead of claiming one piece of information is more important than other information, another way of looking at it is through considering the newness of information, i.e. information that is previously known to the reader vs. information presented for the first time. The difficulty with this definition is that utterances are inherently non-fixated, which means that there will be times where all the clause elements in an utterance have already been presented to the reader, or none. A third perspective on information structure is which information is in focus as opposed to being background information (Bohnacker 2010: 105). Bohnacker (ibid) refers to the three perspectives she prefers as *topic/comment* (importance of content), *theme/rheme* (new/previousy known to the receiver) and *focus/background* information (sender’s intention).

What makes matters more difficult is that there are also those who use the term “theme” but classify it according to its placement in the sentence. Altenberg (1998), for instance, states that he uses theme according to Halliday’s language model. In this view, theme is mostly identified through placement, regardless of newness of information because it tends to be found in the beginning of clauses. He explains the distribution of information throughout sentences and the placement of theme as “what is regarded as contextually retrievable or ‘given’ is placed before what is regarded as more important or ‘new’ information” (Altenberg 1998: 116). Thus he makes his approach more in line with Bohnacker’s description of ‘topic vs comment’ in which topic is the receiver’s “referential frame” of the sentence and comment is the information that
complements the topic (Bohnacker 2010: 110). Altenberg’s definition of theme and terminology is also the one that will be used in this paper.

Since Swedish is a V2 language, Altenberg (1998: 117) goes on to explain, only one element is generally accepted before the verb. This means that there should only be one clause element before the finite verb in Swedish which is different from English, which permits several constituents as long as the subject comes before the verb. Altenberg continues by pointing out that in contrast, Swedish is more accepting of other clause elements than the subject in the first position just as long as word order inversion takes place to keep the finite verb in second element position (ibid 117). Consequently, English permits multiple thematic elements at the onset (ibid 130) and Swedish requires word order changes that leave only one clause element before the finite verb.

Altenberg found that onsets in the Swedish sentences generally contained the subject (71%) or an adverbial (28%) (ibid 130). A drawback with comparisons to Altenberg for this research is that he was not using specifically non-literary corpora. Furthermore, he found that 99% of onsets in the sentences in English contained the subject, and 38% of these contained an additional adverbial. He also differentiated between textually connective adverbials called conjuncts, such as at least, however and i alla fall, emellertid, and adverbials that modify or describe the contents of the clause. He discovered two tendencies in the translated sentences (ibid 124-125):

- When the competition for theme position is between the subject and a conjunct the subject “won” in the Swedish TT in 86% of cases.

- In the choice between a conjunct, the subject or an adverbial, it was almost always the adverbial that was chosen. The hierarchy of element choice that Altenberg deduced was A > S > L where adverbials have the highest rank and conjuncts (L) have the lowest.

Adverbials, Altenberg (ibid 129) continues, are the most likely to “win” the thematic position in the onset according to this hierarchy. They are preferred over subjects regardless of the subject’s information value. He suggests that this is because adverbials can reveal important shifts in the continuity of discourse or because they display the viewpoint of the author, an attitude or a condition that restricts the validity of the message. “Initial adverbials of this kind can be said to function as modal scope-setting
‘prefaces’ which specify the perspective from which the message is to be interpreted” (ibid).

An additional distinction of theme types is that they can be either ‘marked’ or ‘unmarked’. Altenberg (1998: 131) states that when it comes down to marked and unmarked themes, both English and Swedish tend to be the same. An unmarked theme is when the theme contains the subject (e.g. The cat has a tail – ‘Katten har en svans’), and this has a tendency to coincide with information that signals the continuity of discourse. Information is presented in a straightforward manner with the expected constituents placed first and constituents representing information that can be unexpected is presented in rhematic position. In marked themes, sentence initial adverbials usually signal that the discourse progression is broken off or is shifted (e.g. Most commonly, cats have tails - ’Oftast har katter svans’). That is, the themes represent what the starting points for the reader’s perception of the discourse continuity should be (Altenberg 1998: 131).

2.4.2 Hasselgård’s model of thematic structure changes in translation

To categorize the different types of alterations that occur when the thematic structure is translated into another language Hasselgård (1998: 151) has made a model. She identifies three types of alterations (see Table 1, below) in a study using a corpus consisting of fiction books. These are ‘movement’, where one sentence element is moved to another place within the sentence, ‘replacement’, where an element is completely replaced, and sentence ‘restructuring’. This is when the sentence is altered to another structure entirely. The model also contains ‘full match’, where the thematic structure has not been changed in the translation. The above mentioned sentence The cat has a tail – Katten har en svans is an example of this, where every clause constituent is in the same position in the translation as in the original.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Hasselgård’s types of alterations to thematic structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full match</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of the 46% TT themes that had been altered in her (literary corpus) data, most of the changes were restructurings (58% in total, counting translations both to and from Norwegian), where the entire sentence was changed to achieve a more suitable
Norwegian syntax (Hasselgård 1998: 151). In (3) I have highlighted the different subject in italics and the new, corresponding verb in bold in her example (ibid 157).

Restructuring
(3) The teacher..., Miss Watkins, Lærerinnen..., frøken Watkins, kom inn brought in a teatowel with the med et kjøkkenhåndkle med Proclamation of Independence Uavhengighetsklæringen på.... *Skriften var* on it.... *It had* the writing part in *i midten og rundt kanten var de syv the middle and the seven men mennene som hade undertegnet den. who signed it around the sides.

Second in frequency of occurrence was *movement* (9.5% in total). She identified these to either be an adverbial changing place, as with the italicized adverbial in Example (4) below (ibid 163), or since her data was taken from fiction, reversed order for reporting clauses and quotes. She points out that since all the elements from the original are there, but in a different order, the total information remains the same (ibid 151). Regarding adverbial placement, she goes on to state that since the English initial position adverbials mainly provide the frame of reference for the rest of the clause, there is no specific place for them in the translation – the cohesive link to the context might be looser (ibid 152). The TT prefers to move initial position adverbials to medial position. However, English adverbials in medial position are usually there to mark the subject from the rest of the clause and in the translation Hasselgård found this “markedness” to be lost (ibid 154).

Movement
(4) *On the contrary*, he had continued Han hade *tvärtemot* fortsatt som vanligt. as before. (My translation)

*Replacement* was the smallest group (7% in total) and mostly occurred after the topical theme, i.e. the first theme connected to what the clause is about and not a textual or interpersonal connective or conjunct adverbial. In the few cases where a change took place, it was mostly due to lexical verb or the constituents immediately after the verb. For instance, Norwegian, like Swedish but unlike English, can have an “unstressed object pronoun” (i.e. *den/det*) in initial positon (ibid 155) as in italics in (5). The English
sentence can omit the pronoun referencing back to the previous sentence entirely instead, and thereby avoids the incorrect middle structure.

Replacement

(5)  

ST  Incorrect SL structure  TT

He didn’t know what I ... *That I didn’t either, meant. I didn’t either, not really. Han visste inte vad jag menade. Det gjorde inte jag heller egentligen. (My translation)

3 Material and method

3.1 Material

The translation this research is based on is of the Canadian article “Snots and Snuffles: rational approach to feline upper respiratory syndromes” from 2010 by Margie Scherk, a veterinarian specialized in cats. The article was published in the veterinary journal “Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery”. It is an informative, medical text. However, as is seen by the choice of wording in the title, it is occasionally less formal than it could be. This was initially thought to make it ‘easier’ to translate, and to adapt to different target groups if necessary. The original target group as well as that of the translation is veterinarians. The style of the translation is therefore quite formal with difficult medical terminology. The text could have been repurposed for use among cat owners, such as myself, with an interest in the health of their pets, especially since the risk of chronicity is a major side effect of certain common kitten respiratory diseases but I decided against this. There are other studies available on repurposing texts for general instead of professional target groups.

3.1.1 Delimitation of material size

The translation (the TT) excluded figures and pictures from the article (the ST) to keep the material within the 25,000-30,000 character limit of the advanced thesis guidelines. After this delimitation the ST consists of 25,661 characters without spaces or 4,418 words. The TT is 26,079 characters without spaces, or 4,369 words all in all. Furthermore, only full, declarative sentences that could be compared between ST and
TT were analyzed. This excludes all headlines, sentences in the imperative mood and ellipted sentences (e.g. fact boxes). In total, 208 sentences were compared.

3.2 Method

For the translation, the method consisted of translating the text section by section rather than sentence by sentence to avoid severing cotextual ties, i.e. the thematic progression. The ST and the TT segments were thereafter placed in a table to be compared side-by-side in the research phase. To aid with the translation dictionaries, encyclopedias and parallel texts within the fields of veterinary medicine and especially virology were used. For reliability, online terminology banks and encyclopedias issued by official organizations such as for instance the EU’s inter-institutional terminology database IATE, the Swedish medical products agency (Läkemedelsverket), and the Swedish trade association for the research-based pharmaceutical industry LIF (Läkemedelsindustriföreningen) were preferred. For parallel texts in Swedish, articles written by veterinarians and researchers at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences were also preferred but due to low yields of similar research in Swedish it became necessary to use blogs and second hand accounts from the general public as well in some cases. However, as these mainly concern the semantics of lexicon they should not affect the research on syntactic translationese. During the translation, notes were made to highlight different translation solutions as well as difficulties and these were subsequently used as a basis for the research. Parsing and readability were also considered for the finished TT in its’ own right before the quantitative analysis.

In the research phase for this study the two texts, ST and TT, were compared both side by side as well as quantified individually. The texts were deconstructed into the full sentences (from the initial word to the full stop). Further limitations of the material that was analyzed include focusing on complete, declarative sentences, and therefore headlines, imperative sentences and elliptic bullet points were excluded from analysis. The sentence structure, i.e. sentence element order, was analyzed for each of the remaining 208 sentences. This resulted in a list of different combinations (e.g. ASV, SV, SAV) that could be quantified. They were thereafter compared, to see how often and why one order was altered in the translation (e.g. SV→AVS). The findings are discussed and compared in relation to previous research on information structure in translations and syntactic interference as presented in the theoretical background. The discussion especially relies on Altenberg’s (1998) previous
corpus research on sentence openers and Hasselgård’s (1998: 151) model in particular is used as a foundation for the discussion on thematic structure.

3.2.1 The forms and their function
As has been stated previously, the Swedish sentences can open with either a subject, the who or what of the clause, or an adverbial, the when, where or how. In some instances, the object (the to whom) can be first (Kattsvansen trampade jag på – ‘It was the cat’s tail I stepped on’, i.e. not some other part). In this paper only subject and adverbial openers are investigated as no object openers were discovered. The adverbials were simply categorized into time, place and circumstance adverbials. The subjects in both ST and TT were divided into four groups based on the word order analysis. As infinitive clauses quickly stood out, they were given a category of their own. This lead naturally to a distinction between infinitive clauses and all other subordinate clauses functioning as subjects. Since both long noun phrases and subordinate or embedded clauses occasionally made the sentence difficult to disentangle, they were placed together in a category that was differentiated from the simpler noun strucutures. Simple constructs such as pronouns and short noun phrases thus became a category of their own. After further analysis of these, the formal subjects were separated into a fourth category as they too were found to be of special interest. All in all, the categories were:

- Pronouns, nouns and short (≤ 3 words) noun phrases e.g. a snoring sound, glucocorticoids, older cats and den här tekniken, vissa katter, man etc.
- Long noun phrases and clauses, e.g. “Cats with conformational (breed or malformation) characteristics…”, “Sounds that are worse after exercise or at rest…” and “Ljud som är värre efter fysisk aktivitet eller vid vila…”
- Infinitive clause: “Att katter som får antibiotika oftast förbättras kliniskt…”
- Formal and real subject/added pronoun, i.e. expletive det, as in “Det saknas helt andningsljud från luftrośrblåsorna när lungorna är vätskefylda eller inflammerade”.

4 Analysis and discussion
In this section the results of the quantitative results are both presented and discussed in relations to the research questions and the theoretical background.
4.1 Word order changes in the TT

There are two solutions to altering the English ASV word order that is impermissible in Swedish due to the V2-constraint; these are SV or AVS. However, those are not the only alterations that can be found in the TT word order in the investigated material. There are instances where SV has been turned into AVS. Furthermore, in several cases where the word order consists of the same elements (SV→SV) the constituents themselves are different and thereby warrant further discussion. These are most noticeably sentences beginning with a formal subject, either using a pronoun (det) or infinitive clauses with att. These will be discussed further in the Section 4.2 where the sentence openers themselves are presented.

The majority of structures were transferred intact to the TT. In total, about two thirds, 67% (139/208) of the sentences were SV→SV. Roughly a combined third of the sentences were changed due to the need to adhere to the V2-constraint. Table 2 (below) summarizes the total frequency. Interestingly, about 5% of the total number of analyzed sentences contained structures where an unmarked SV structure was modulated to a marked AVS one. These will be discussed further in Section 4.3. What is most remarkable is the small size of the ASV→SV portion, only 1% or two sentences out of 208. This could affect the perception of the text negatively as this may be an indicative of transference if the overall AVS/SV-proportion is different from untranslated texts. On the other hand, the results are supported by Altenberg (1998:129) who states that adverbials are more likely to “win” the onset position in a choice between adverbials and subjects. A quarter of the sentences were ASV→AVS conversions.

Table 2. Number of word order changes in translation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word order change</th>
<th>Total number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASV→AVS</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASV→SV</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SV→AVS</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SV→SV</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The individual word order analyses showed that the ST and the TT had very similar proportions of the two possible word order solutions (see Figure 1 below). Out of the
ST sentences, 71% (155 tokens) to 69% (145 tokens) of the TT ones made use of the unmarked SV word order in the first main clause. The TT used AVS in 31% (63 tokens) of the analyzed sentences and the ST used the English equivalent ASV in 26% (53 tokens) of cases. This seems to be following the norms of the TL, as Altenberg’s corpus results were that 71% of onsets began with subjects to 28% adverbial sentence openers (1998: 130). This study’s ST, which because it is in English permits multiple elements before the finite verb, also used SAV where an adverbial phrase was placed between the subject and the verb. However, only 2% of the sentences in the ST have their constituents in this order. In Altenberg’s study, he found that in total 38% of the English sentences he investigated contained an adverbial as well as the subject (ibid). In the next Section (4.2) the different sentence openers are explored more fully.

Figure 1. Word order frequency comparison.

4.2 Sentence openers

Further dividing the word order categories of the sentence openers into the different types of subjects and adverbials results in another graph (Figure 2, below) displaying very small differences from the ST to the TT. There is, however, a noticeable increase of formal subjects and the use of infinitive clauses in the TT. Slightly more than 10% of the total number of subjects in the TT use expletive subjects. This suggests that the TT has diverged from the ST in this matter, and thus the risk of interference from the ST sentence structure may be considered lower. In regards to the adverbials, the TT is once more very similar to the ST, which may be indicative of staying too close to it and being syntactic interference. Almost 70% of the TT adverbials depict the circumstances of the sentence, compared to 76% in the ST.
4.2.1 Subjects

4.2.1.1 Nouns and noun clauses
There were a total of 88 nouns or short noun phrases functioning as subjects in the TT. The ST had a larger number at 105 instances. In the TT, 33 sentences started with a longer (>2 determiners or attributes to the main noun) noun phrase or a whole clause. Comparing this to the ST results there is an even 23% (TT) to 21% (ST).

4.2.1.2 Infinitive clause as a subject
In total, 7, or 3%, of the 208 investigated sentences started with an infinitive clause. Out of the 145 SV sentences the number is 5%. This is a low number on its own, but compared to the source sentences in the ST (2%) it warrants further examination. All three in the ST are gerundium -ing forms but only one has been translated to an infinitive TL att-clause, as seen in Example (6). The two others have been modulated (Munday 2012: 99) to a time adverbial and a formal subject, respectively.

(6) Maintaining hydration is essential for tissue perfusion, and also to make secretions less viscous and to improve cell function (eg, ability to clear mucus via the cells' mucociliary apparatus) Att bibehålla goda vätskenivåer är nödvändigt för vävnadsperfusionen, och för att ändra exkretets viskositet, och för att förbättra cellfunktionen (t.ex. förmågan att avlägsna slem med cellernas mukociliära transport)
Out of the other *att*-clause instances in the TT, all of the ST sentences begin with longer noun phrases. In Example (7) an SV-construction in the ST is turned into a heavy to process structure, potentially making it more difficult to read rather than easier as was intended. However, the divergence from the ST suggests that this example is not directly affected by syntactic interference.

(7) A logical diagnostic plan to differentiate probable etiologies and to rule out non-viral causes results in appropriate therapeutic choices. Att ha en logisk diagnostikplan för att skilja mellan olika möjliga etiologier och för att utesluta icke-virala orsaker resulterar i lämpliga behandlingsval.

4.2.1.3 Formal subject and real subject
An alternative to using infinitive clauses was found to be using formal subjects. The TT opened 18 sentences in total, or 9%, out of 208 sentences using this structure. In Example (8) the TT word order was almost reversed from the ST and the formal subject *det* was added. The sentence is now clear and easy to read. To use an infinitive clause (*att*-clause) would have resulted in the same dilemma as Example (4). As Svartvik and Sager (2005: 431) suggested, using the expletive (Teleman 1999: 172) element has meant avoiding a clumsy sentence. This modulation (Munday 2012: 99) is one of the most common word order changes in the translation at 18 instances out of 145 SV sentences.

(8) Knowing the timing, onset, duration and frequency of sneezing can be helpful. Det kan vara hjälpsamt att känna till nysningarnas tidpunkt, start, varaktighet och hur tätt det är mellan dem.

4.2.2 Adverbials
4.2.2.1 Place adverbials
The category of place adverbials is the smallest category of adverbials in both ST (2 occurrences) and TT (5 occurrences). In the Example below (9) the sentence is opened with an adverbial describing where the contents take place, thus setting this as the perspective the reader should have (Altenberg 1998: 136-137). In this case it is worthwhile to consider whether the place of the contents is more important than the subject and predicate. To find this it is necessary to look beyond the boundaries of that
one sentence and look at the whole paragraph. The paragraph is about the bacteria that may cause runny noses in cats and uses this one single study as an example. Therefore, the distinction of explaining that it is just in this one study should be highlighted for the reader’s perspective but it is not the main message of the sentence. Since it is the starting point for the understanding but not the main thing to understand, it was kept in the initial, thematic position allowing the more “focal” information, according to Bohnacker’s (2010: 105) definition, to stay to the right of the finite verb.

(9) In one study of cats with and without chronic rhinosinusitis, aerobic bacteria were cultured from biopsy samples from proportionately more clinically affected cats…

4.2.2.2 Circumstance adverbials
This is the largest category of adverbials, as it would be since it contains all clause adverbials that connect the sender’s intentions with the receivers’ introduction to the sentence, the springboard to perception (Altenberg 1998: 136-137; Hasselgård 1998: 149). It contains 43 instances in the TT and 40 in the ST, which suggests that they are very close to each other. Without further analysis of the differences in content and the thematic progression this could mean that there might be a too high number of sentences mimicking the SL structure for what is common in the TL, and a sign of ‘positive interference’ (Munday 2012: 176).

4.2.2.3 Time adverbials
There are 16 sentences in the TT that begin with a time adverbial against 11 in the ST, see Table 3. There are 3 more sentences beginning with när than beginning with when. In one case a då has been added, which makes the sentence different. This will now be discussed further in the next section.

Table 3. List of the time adverbials found in both ST and TT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST adverbial</th>
<th>Occurrences</th>
<th>TT adverbial</th>
<th>Occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When…</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>När…</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With ongoing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Med löpande</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 Thematic structure

Based on Hasselgård’s model (1998:151) for the translation of thematic elements, the solutions used in this translation were categorized as full match/same order of thematic elements, movement of one element to a different position, restructuring, replacement and most noticeably added pronoun, see Figure 3 below. This last category is included under restructuring in Hasselgård’s analysis but as it comprises 17% of the sentences investigated here it was deemed prominent enough to discuss separately. If the addition of pronouns that the ST does not have is incorporated into the reconstruction category, this would be the second largest at 31%. The movement category is mainly comprised of the ASV→AVS solutions and makes up for 14% of the total material. Replacement makes up for 4% of sentences and represent the instances where one element was sufficiently altered from the original to make the sentence different entirely.

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*Figure 3. Frequency of thematic structure changes.*
4.3.1 Full match

In Example (10) the sentence starts with a subordinate clause functioning as a circumstantial adverbial, just like the ST. The main verb (underlined) and subject bold) lies far to the right and in the TT, and thus the reader might need extra time to deconstruct the information. An option could be to reformulate all structures like this to increase readability and aim for an easier to read, verbal Swedish with most of the information to the right of the verb. KORP [www] was used to see if that really is more common and ‘natural’. Using only the academic and medicine text corpora of KORP [www], and searching for adverbials placed at the start of sentences specifically, the result was 174,689 occurrences. Skimming through the first approximately 100 random results shows that adverbials are for the most part followed directly by the main verb, with the exception of även and också which usually initiate sub clauses as in Example (10).

(10) While an adenocarcinoma or sarcoma appears as a discrete mass, lymphoma may present as a mass or as a diffuse infiltrate

Även om adenocarcinom eller sarkom förekommer som en diskret massa kan lymfom se ut som en massa eller som en diffus inträngning

Next is Example (11) where the initial position elements were retained in the translation but transposed (Munday 2012: 99) from noun to verb (the response→ with it disrupts). The main clause structure goes from ST ASV to TT AVS. Transferring the same syntax of the first elements as the ST but with changes to abide to the Swedish V2-constraint creates a clumsy albeit correct sentence in the TT. In this case, the alternate solution of changing the structure more and using an SV structure might have been better. It might be a sign of interference from English to be unwilling to restructure the sentence more. However, the chosen solution uses the same starting point as the ST, just as Ventola (1995: 88) states is necessary for the translation to have the same meaning.

(11) 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST (ASV)</th>
<th>TT (AVS)</th>
<th>Alternate TT (SV)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With chronicity and inflammatory changes this response may be abolished, resulting in accumulation of</td>
<td>På grund av varaktigheten och inflammationen störs den här nysreaktionen som till slut kan förstöras helt, vilket leder till att</td>
<td>Förändringar pga. varaktighet och inflammation kan till slut förstöra den här nysreaktionen helt, vilket leder till att</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.2 Movement
In the ASV→AVS solutions, the subject, acting as a second thematic element in the ST, has been moved in the TT to the rhematic or in focus position (Bohnacker 2010: 105) in order to comply to the V2-constraint. As Altenberg found, adverbials are more likely to be chosen over subjects as the one TT theme if the ST contains multiple thematic options (Altenberg 1998: 129). In this Example (12) the adverbial in question is also functioning as the entry point of the readers’ perception (ibid).

(12) Even with a viral etiology, therapies to reduce the pathological consequences of infection may modulate and help control the clinical signs. 

4.3.3 Replacement
The majority of the infinitive clauses are classified as replacements, where complex noun phrases and sub clauses have been replaced. In the Example below (13) the infinitive clause makes the sentence easy to read and contemporary. The structure bomullsfiber hållna from the alternate TT is an example of an awkward, somewhat archaic sounding, albeit grammatically correct, structure. For this reason, it is better to modulate (Munday 2012: 99) it. The alternate structure is also similar to the type of syntactical translationese suggested by Gellerstam (1986: 92) with den annalkande bilen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
<th>Alternate TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wisps of cotton held in front of the nostrils are also helpful.</td>
<td>Att hålla bomullsfiber framför näsborrarna hjälper också till</td>
<td>Bomullsfiber hållna framför näsborrarna hjälper också till</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.4 Restructuring

The introduction of new formal subjects (det) were categorized as restructuring rather than as replacement as the information was not replaced, only restructured with the previously thematic information placed in rhematic position and the expletive pronoun added. In Example (14) a gerundium knowing is altered to avoid the clumsy, archaic structures Gellerstam (1986: 92) found indicative of syntactic translationese.

(14) Knowing the timing, onset, duration and frequency of sneezing can be helpful

Another reason for restructuring the thematic structure and adding a formal subject is in sentences as Example (15). In sentences like this the real subject contains a list or a large amount of information that the translator may feel the reader needs help digesting, by placing the verb earlier in the sentence. Formal subject thereby fills the function of both increasing the readability and of decreasing the risk of interference from remaining too similar to the SL syntax.

(15) Mucus exudation (image b), a polyp (image c) or mass, foreign body (image d) or ‘webbing’/nasopharyngeal stenosis (image e) may be apparent

5 Summary and conclusions

This study found that the majority of sentences started with unmarked thematic structures, where the subject is before the verb. In the TT 69% of the sentences did so and 31% consisted of the AVS construction. This is in line with Altenberg’s (1998: 130). corpus results of 71% SV and 28% AVS (as well as 1% other), which suggests that the TT does not diverge from non-translated Swedish in this regard. However, the ST also have roughly 70% SV to 26% ASV (with the rest being other constructions) which means that it is equally possible the TT is staying too close to the ST structure.

After more thoroughly investing the word order structures, the sentence openers themselves, both those opening with adverbials and those opening with subjects
were interesting. The SV were discovered to consist primarily of the same nouns and noun phrases as the ST, but in the longer, more complex noun clauses there was more deviation. The structures that were identified that was the most prominent as different from the ST were infinitive clauses and the use of formal subjects. As the V2-constraints does not permit more than one element before the verb all ASV structures had to be changed to AVS or SV structures, but only 2 sentences where changed to SV. In contrast, 11 sentences where changed from an unmarked SV to AVS. The adverbials were primarily circumstantial and did function as scope-setters and perception springboards for the reader just as Ventola (1995: 88) and Altenberg (1998: 129) state the marked sentence openers do.

English and Swedish syntax should be different enough to warrant the risk of syntactic interference. Swedish prefers embeddings and sub clauses in the initial position more than English (Ingo 2007: 176-177), and there is a great variety available in the subject structures because of this. On the other hand, English allows for multiple clause constituents in the onset of sentences, before the finite verb. Defining theme by placement as Altenberg (1998: 116) does, English thereby allows for multiple thematic elements which the V2-constraint in Swedish renders impermissible. There are also differences between English and Swedish in the preferred placement of adverbials, and what type of adverbial is placed where. Yet, finding syntactic interference is not an easy task. The definitions are quite vague and rely heavily on the translator or researcher being familiar with common versus uncommon structures in the target and source language. Only when the interference is caused by obvious errors or uncommon structures does it stand out. Gellerstam’s (1986) original research on translationese suggested that finding the occurrences was feasible, although he mainly focused on the semantic features of translations rather than syntax. Tirkkonen-Condit found that it was difficult to find translationese when there are no obvious markers. In the case of syntactic interference, this study is in line with her results. There are small indications that can point to the TT adhering too closely to the ST syntax, namely the very low number of ASV→SV conversions and, possibly, a high frequency of the use of formal subjects could be a means of overcompensating for uncommon Swedish structures with these very common ones.

Syntactic interference is an interesting area with some potential for further research. Although Gellerstam and Ventola paint a picture that suggest that it is only negative, there is more to it. As Izwaini (2014) presented, it can have an effect on whole
languages and the constant flux of change that they are in. This study investigated a very small amount of data and found that syntactic interference can only be found in the statistics of frequency comparison if they are divided and analyzed in-depth. Future research would benefit from using corpora or several texts for a larger database, since the main difficulty of this study was finding conclusive trends in such a small amount of data. Additionally, it might be difficult to use only non-literary material as this study did. One of the main drawbacks with using the previous research of Altenberg and Hasselgård was that their corpora included literary works, whereas this study is only interested in non-literary language use. However, future studies are definitely recommended as the area of syntactic interference in particular has not been fully explored and clarified within the field of translation studies.
References

Primary

Secondary


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