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Lakota and Translation Theory - One Phrase – Many Translation Possibilities Analysis of Selected Translation Examples Lakota – English – German

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Lakota und Translationstheorie - Ein Satz - Viele Übersetzungsmöglichkeiten

Analyse ausgewählter Übersetzungsbeispiele Lakota - Englisch – Deutsch

Abstract:

It has often been assumed that translation (among other activities) involving Native American texts falls into a "special case" status. This designation then perpetuates the already prevalent "exoticizing" of Native cultures. Even in translation studies the question is often posed of whether or not Native texts can be translated. The general translatability of Native texts is not only approached herein but, according to a translator's cultivation of cultural knowledge, linguistics, and translation theory, shown to be quite feasible. Acknowledging translation as fundamentally a communicative act, as well as applying Vermeer's Skopos theory and Katharina Reiss' text functions, assists in demonstrating translation procedures that can yield thoughtful, meaningful, and therefore successful Lakota translations. Given examples include, but are not limited to, the exploration of a popular Lakota song in Lakota, English and German. In the end, it is made increasingly clear that with a genuine interest in and appreciation of culture, aligned with the proper academic background, Lakota texts do not pose unique barriers for translation. Lakota is indeed translatable and poses no further complications than are seen in any source text culturally referenced and enriched by the use of "realia".

Oft wird behauptet, speziell das Übersetzen von Texten der Native Americans (Indianer) würde einen „Sonderfall" darstellen. Diese Kategorisierung schreibt die bereits klischeehafte „Exotisierung" der Kulturen amerikanischer Ureinwohner fort. Sogar innerhalb der Übersetzungswissenschaft stellt sich oft die Frage nach der Übersetzbarkeit indianischer Texte. Im Folgenden wird nicht nur die prinzipielle Übersetzbarkeit indianischer Texte vertreten, sondern auch dargestellt, dass diese im Zuge der Aneignung von kulturellem, sprachlichen und übersetzungswissenschaftlichem Know-how durch den Translator sehr gut durchführbar ist. Ausgehend von der Betrachtung der Übersetzung als vom Wesen her kommunikativem Akt, sowie unter Anwendung der Skopos-Theorie von Vermeer und Katharina Reiss' Textfunktionen, werden Translationsprozesse vermittelt, um sodann durchdachte, inhaltlich zutreffende und somit glückende Übersetzungen aus dem Lakota vorzuführen. Die gegebenen Beispiele umfassen, ohne sich auf diese zu beschränken, die Untersuchung eines bekannten Lakota-Volksliedes sowohl auf Lakota und Englisch als auch Deutsch. Im Endeffekt wird verdeutlicht, dass bei wirklichem Interesse an und Auseinandersetzung mit der jeweiligen Kultur, in Verbindung mit dem geeigneten akademischen Background, auch Lakota-Texte keine unüberwindlichen Hindernisse bei der Übersetzung aufweisen. Lakota ist in der Tat übersetzbar und bietet keine andersartigen Schwierigkeiten als jeder andere Ausgangstext auch, der einen Kulturbezug zeigt und mit dem Gebrauch von „Realien" angereichert ist.

Contents:

1   Exploration of "the Question" through Modern Translation Theory

"Is ethical translation of Native American[1] oral and written texts possible?" We have often been approached about the feasibility of translation without a loss of substance, that is, cultural and spiritual relevance and meaning. Although we cover a broad academic spectrum, one being an ethno-linguist and translation theorist, the other a germanist, and doctoral candidate and lecturer in translation studies, we have both often been involved in discourse concerned with this line of questioning, indeed even with each other. On the one hand, the question itself supports the long held belief that non-European languages and cultures are

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[1] Although this usage is controversial, the fact is, the first inhabitants of the continent are "Native Americans"; besides, the term is widely accepted and used in American academia. So, whereas some Americans may also have been born on the continent and the land is thereby native to them, the first inhabitants are native to the land. Thus, the chosen term, "Native American" will be used when referring to the first Americans and their respective nations.

untouchably "exotic", which they are not. This prejudice, which has been refuted, continues to linger in scientific discourse due to the not insignificant contributions of the Sapir-Whorf-Hypothesis (Koller 1983). On the other hand, resonating with such questions here is foremost a reservation about general and absolute translatability of such texts, which is grounded in the debate on the basic principles of the philosophy of language. This includes debate on the pros and cons of translation, and criteria with regard to a "successful" translation being seen as a double "exception" to both the act of translation and the success of the intended communication. Essentially it is a question of the treatment of translation within scholarly discourse that goes back to Humboldt's views on the limits of translation (as with "traduttore – traditore"). However, we need not reach so far back.

In an article from 1964, Otto Kade argued that everything could be translated and any deviation from this belief would lead to racist ideology by placing value on one language and its modes of expression over another (Kade, 1964: 88; qtd. by Wilss, 1982: 47-48; in Gentzler 2001). In *Wordarrows*, Gerald Vizenor profoundly states that, "nothing but silence can be translated" (Vizenor 2003). "The Saphir / Whorf school of thought, which denies the *a priori* existence of universal categories of thought and whose followers have a skeptical view of the possibility that two languages might share a common core of experience", (Gentzler 2001: 62) might agree with Vizenor. Luckily, for the field of modern translation studies, Hans Vermeer's *Skopos* theory (Reiß and Vermeer 1984) has already addressed these considerations quite pragmatically. His views on intratextual and intertextual coherence, and equivalence, with an emphasis on both the commitment to source text and target text cultures and maintaining or preserving communicative functions, lends credibility to the aim of translating culturally divergent texts. His adaptive procedures for translation circumvent the pitfall of positing exotic otherness of the source culture for the target culture. Further functional relationships between the source and target texts are set up by Katharina Reiß (Vermeer's coauthor and successor) within the translation procedures, based on equivalence theory. One of these text functions, the "referential" function, addresses the issue of communication breakdown due to "source culture realities" or "realia", as referred to in

Christiane Nord's textbook, *Translating as a Purposeful Activity*, in which she sums up the referential function as follows:

> The referential function is oriented toward objects in real or fictitious worlds. To carry out the referential function, the receiver must be able to coordinate the message with their model of the particular world involved. Since world models are determined by cultural perspectives and traditions, receivers in the source culture may interpret the referential function differently to those in the target culture. This gives rise to significant translation problems. (Nord 1997: 41)

Further, application of the Organon-Model of Karl Bühler (1965) is quite suitable for the process of translation. Due to his communicative focus on three basic text types: informative, expressive, appellative (or, operative), which correlate to the vertices of sender, receiver and situation, and the translator's role both as receiver 1 and sender 2, his model can easily be applied. The harnessing of the Organon model for translation theory and practice was brought forth primarily by Katharina Reiß in her work *Texttyp und Übersetzungsmethode – Der Operative Text* (Reiß 1983) (Text Types and Translation Methods – the Operative Text), in which she assigns the ever present *Texttypen* (text types) specific *Textfunktionen* (text functions) – as they are always present in natural texts. The existing text functions appear, depending on text type, with varying degrees of emphasis. Accordingly, Reiß developed her own translation-oriented text typology that could be applied to translational practice. The foundation for which was based in the recognition of predominant text functions – such as the already mentioned referential one, as well as expressive or appellative functions, and whether functional constancy or functional change should be the basis for a translation. Even today, Reiß and Vermeer's coauthored book, *Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie* (Reiß and Vermeer 1984), which reflects on the principle dimensions of a translation process, is regarded as a standard of the still young field of translation science[2].

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[2] The translations of the Lakota myths and legends, completed by Rebecca Netzel, are based on the foundations of this theory, and have been addressed in her publication, *Sagenschatz der Western Sioux* (2009).

So we see that ultimately translation, with its challenges, has been possible since time immemorial (Nida and Taber 1969). The question is not then whether or not translation is within the realms of possibility, but much more what criteria are necessary on which a translation can be evaluated, assessed, and critiqued. A translation from foreign languages and cultures is especially successful when from the source language culture as much as possible is transferred. As such, Katharina Reiß and Hans Vermeer have repeatedly pointed out that translation invariably represents and includes the transfer of culture. What must be stressed here is, as well, the moral responsibility to the representation of the source culture on the part of the translator, which is only viable through exposure to said culture, and cultivating knowledge of both one's own culture and the source culture. This is especially significant with regard to the referential function. Let us assume this level of knowledge is the springboard for the translators in question.

2   Text Functions / Communicative Functions

In brief summation, a modern translation is contingent upon a focus on communicative functions, which serve to justify the translation. This includes either maintaining the original text features (*Funktionskonstanz* – functional constancy) or adapting them due to possibly divergent interests of the target language culture (*Funktionswechsel*- functional change). The act of translation is no longer seen as having to be an exact preservation of the source text; rather it is the aim and intended purpose of an effective transfer to assure that the communicative function of a text is upheld. In other words, the aim and Skopoi, or intended purpose, of the communicative function may be justifiably altered to guarantee communication. Maintaining or preserving communicative functions means that translation is then seen as a special form of a communicative act. The criterion of loyalty, or "fidelity", to the source text can therefore be a legitimate Skopos parameter, but it does not have to be. In fact, an entire range of translation possibilities exists, running a gamut from literal translations to the point of free translation, with all transferences possible (even partially transferred deviations). With this in mind, it becomes necessary to provide examples for

examination and roughly outline the procedural steps behind a modern translational act. The translations included herein serve as examples of how to set up a rudimentary translation procedure to achieve an adequate transfer from Lakota texts.

Let us take, for example, a Lakota text and apply two different Skopoi. The same Lakota mythical legend, (*ohúnkakan*), with differing Skopoi could be roughly translated with a focus as follows:

1) For an adolescent audience, such as in a children's collection, *Märchen der Völker – Band: Indianer Nordamerikas* (Stories of the People: Indians / Indigenes of North America)

2) For ethnologists and cultural-anthropologists, i.e. a specialist audience

For both purposes, or Skopoi, a general rule of thumb says: "Keep as close to the source text as possible, and only as far away as necessary" – i.e., dependence on the communicative function of a translational act.

As soon as the predominant text function aligned with the communicative function as well as its partial translational shifts (dominance in particular exposed text sections or paragraphs) can be assessed then, according to discourse on Jörn Albrecht's translation theory, the invariables can be settled – at least in the approach to functional constancy that tends to be adopted by the majority. Some kind of ranking of the text functions must then be undertaken. As Jörn Albrecht has also shown in his discussion on the concept of equivalence, there are no *per se* equivalents, only equivalents in terms of the identified predominant text functions, which are dependent on an initial analysis of the text (Albrecht 1973). Accordingly, the next step would be to think about whether or not the function recognized as the predominant text function should be maintained, or if – depending on the Skopos – an adaptation should be implemented for the particular target audience's level of previous knowledge on the subject matter.

3 Referential Function and Lakota Flora and Fauna

Dependent upon the text function, there will also be specific areas in need of additional attention on the part of the translator. With regard to the referential function, it is of foremost importance to pay close attention to "*realia*" that in most cases require use of the original, complemented by a paraphrased translation as an appositive or, depending on the text type, by a footnote. Carrying out the referential function requires that the translator intimately understand their own cultural world and its semiotics and that of the source text in order to properly encode meaning. When a discrepancy exists between the source and target readers', or the translator's, knowledge of culturally defined frames of reference (or signals), the referential function cannot be properly implemented.

Moving on, we know that footnotes in literary translations such as novels or fairytales are for obvious reasons frowned upon, while in specialized texts they are an excellent opportunity to offer the target text recipient additional information and background knowledge that might otherwise have led to misunderstandings. In referential texts, glossaries or explanations are acceptable in the foreground, but depending on the Skopos, this must be balanced by how specifically the content needs to be explained in the target language.

For Lakota, precise information about the flora and fauna, as a form of "realia", must be offered. Though one might read in a German travelogue that the travelers were said to have seen some kind of animal from the "deer" family, in Lakota the specific species is almost always mentioned. Though there is a collective term for deer-like animals, (white-tail deer, black-tailed deer, namely *táhca*, (= approx. "nice little, wild deer")), in Lakota, a clear distinction will be given between large elk, *heháka*, and moose, *hebláska*, and reindeer, *wazíyata heháka* (Comparable to the distinction in German between *Reh – Hirsch – Elch –* etc.).

Also, there are indeed collective terms for other animal families and species (not intended here is general hunting terminology), in the kind of *folk genera* described by Lakoff and Johnson[i]. For example, *zintkála* = bird(s), *wamákashkan* = animal(s), *hogán* = fish, *can* = tree / trees, *pejí* = herb(s) and so on, yet it happens much more frequently than in German or

English, that also very specific animal and plant names are given. Take for example the Lakota term, *Tashíyagnunpa hotón*, and five English translation possibilities:

> *A meadowlark sang (This would be an ornithologically correct translation, yet strange for a love song, unless it is being translated for ethnologists or cultural-anthropologists and therefore specialized professionals).*

> *A western meadowlark (Sturnella neglecta) sang (Ornithologically an artful designation, including taxonomic information, genus and species, an appropriate name, in accordance with Linnaeus, for a nature guide, a book about birds of the prairie)*

> *A little bird sang (Unspecific, as would be appropriate for a children's storybook collection).*

> *A lark sang (Factually incorrect because ornithologically it refers to a lark-like species, or a bird that physically resembles a lark. This would however still be appropriate for poetic texts, such as poems, where it would be odd or awkward to say, "a western meadowlark sang").*

> *A songbird sang (Stresses the sweet melody of this feathered singer).*

4   Appellative Functions and a Lakota Pipe Ceremony

Returning to the text functions, we see that a text designated as appellative will mainly serve the operative functions, which should not be watered down or disregarded. Adjectives are especially predestined for an operative function according to the connotations transported by them (the idea of "reading between the lines"). A solid knowledge of pragmatics is imperative to identify implicit operative elements (packaged as rhetorical questions or declarative sentences).

Again, Lakota serves as an excellent example. In Lakota, there is ritualistic calling during the pipe ceremony, *hupákiyuzapi* (=> appellative function) that does not consist of the conventional / traditional imperative, (for male speakers with the imperative sentence markers "hwo!"). Therefore they do not match the ordinary imperative; rather the phrases

are archaic, though their pragmatic function in the setting of the ceremony is clear. There are then several translation possibilities. (Suggestions which are inappropriate are marked with *):

Hohi! - Ku!

Take it! – Thanks! (Pure functional equivalents of the appellative function without the solemn and archaic tone of the ceremony).

So, take this pipe! – Thank you! (Takes account of the solemn tone and explains the connection with the pipe ceremony).

Hohí! - Ku! (Left with the original tone of the ″realia″ or ″pipe ceremony″ without explanatory additions; this is only possible with savvy insider audiences, and / or with a pre-ceremony statement by the translator, an explicative insert in the preface, or as a footnote. The retained foreign language enclaves in the resulting patchwork of the translation should be highlighted, e.g. in italics or boldface).

Hohí! – so take it! – Ku – yes, thank you! (Embedded translation with minimal explication, while preserving the original phrases as "local color" plus paraphrastic explanations of the phrases).

**There! – Okay! / *Here! – Give it to me!* or something similar (Not stylistically adequate due to the religious tone not being appropriate; therefore does not represent an equivalent because it is too colloquial - flippant).*

5   Expressive Function

If however, the expressive function of a text steps into the foreground, altering the sentence length is prohibited, as sentence length and rhythm are interdependent variables. Rather, in this case, it is imperative to respect the characteristic style of the source text author, such as in an elegiac sentence length expressing melancholy or sorrow, or the gripping yet laconic sentence length found in a suspense thriller. The idiosyncratic elements of such texts can only be determined after the invariable function of expression has been addressed. Also, traditional text conventions must be adhered to (e.g. the structure of a sonnet, or a fairytale

as a literary genre, etc.). These text conventions can deviate considerably between the source and target text languages. As a navigational aid during the translation process, relevant translation theory, such as the Skopos theory, is once again the criterion to be drawn upon.

In light of shifting genres, lyrics for example, of a popular Lakota love song not only require consideration of the content, but also its structure, while transferring the expressive function. Sound elements will most likely "fall to the wayside" because the languages in question sound so different. Humboldt would concur with this, considering the inevitable gap in his translation of Aeschylus, about which he openly aired his grievances. Even so, many formal elements can be transferred through shifted equivalents, such as puns, or, "plays on words", that are not congruent with both the source and target text, since they do not work in the target language. The simplest transfer is when the formal structure of the text can be adopted, such as with the structure of verses, and rhythm. This can usually be easily transferred into the target language.

The best-case scenario would be when a specific literary genre from the source language does not exist in the target language, as is the case with Japanese haiku with regard to European literature. However, if a translation introduces Japanese haiku and makes its lyrical triplets known in the target culture, for example, through imitation by native authors, then it could, as a pioneering achievement, even become an established form in the target culture. In the case of Lakota, discrepancies arise with regard to literary genres, such as replacing the familiar European distinction between myths (usually creation myths, among others, as explanations of the world) and legends (mostly entertaining and morally instructive), which appear as mythical legends in Lakota culture (referred to as: Native myths and legends in English). This means that for the Lakota one literary genre seamlessly covers both categories, uniting them as a single genre.

A Lakota Love Song

In the following example of a Lakota love-song, attention must not only be given to expressive functional units such as rhythm, and folksy and allusive language references, but also the ability to sing a folk / popular song.

Lakótiya:

Ínkpata nawájin

na shiná cicóze.

Ma eyá, ma eyá,

léci kuwá na!

English translation:

I stand on a hill

And wave my shawl at you.

Oh say! Oh say!

Won't you come back over here?

German translation:

Auf einem Hügel stehe ich,

Und wink' dir mit dem Schal zu,

Oh, sag! Oh, sag!

Du kommst zu mir zurück?!

I am standing on a hill

waving my shawl at you

Oh say! Oh say!

Please come back over here!

(The German and English translations fit the rhythm of the song and thereby satisfy the criterion surrounding how it is to be sung. Both would work nicely as synchronized versions for a film).

The above noted version is taken from Rood and Taylor (Rood and Taylor 1969 / 2002). The German and English translations, by Rebecca Netzel, were taken from a similar version received from a family living on the Pine Ridge Reservation. In this version instead of "*ma eyá*!", which means "sag mir!" or "tell me!", it included, "*mayá*", which means "du>mir" or "you>me", or as a play on words, "*Flussbank, Sandbank*", "riverbank". Whether this was simply another version or if this variance could be traced back to an orthographically corrupt version (misprint?) could not be established because written transcriptions of Lakota do not follow any official orthography, and in spoken language often sounds are softened or

completely elided. Also, the Lakota language stylistically tends to laconic brevity as illustrated well with the words of Sitting Bull (*Tatánka Íyotake*), *"Wówicake un iyápi kta ca, wicóiye óta únpi shni!"* (It takes few words to tell the truth). Enquiries into variance then prompt the friendly but cliché and moderately insecure response, "Well, uh, just the way I've written it down – just like that". In this case, a slightly different translation may come about, as *"ínkpata"* means "at the top", but depending on the context can also mean both "on a hill" (at the peak) or "upstream" (up river). *"Maya"* would, in this case, be an ambiguous form intended as a play on words, meaning both "to me" and "sand bank on the river", therefore, the resulting "zu mir, zu mir, auf die Sandbank hin komme doch!". This translation addresses the former custom of Lakota couples meeting at the river, where the women went to fetch water. Here, the dense vegetation along the riverbanks protected the timid advances of the couple from prying eyes. The wide-open prairie obviously did not offer such fleeting moments of privacy. By contrast, the above variant positions the courtship on a widely visible hilltop, which would be, in its public exposure, incompatible with the traditional shy manner of wooing. Needless to say, on the Pine Ridge Reservation this song is extremely popular.

6   Metaphors and Other Elements of the Expressive Function

Another element of the expressive function are ambiguous puns that are often the result of homophonies, allusions, or similar, and they remain bound to the source language. In this situation, creativity is demanded of the translator to either achieve an ingenious re-creation or, if possible, in another appropriate place, to apply a similar stylistic effect by using a shifted equivalent. This can include a delayed pun insertion later in the text, when it is not possible to transfer meaning at the same exact point in the source and target texts. With attentive reading, a translator can get a feeling for places in the text where rhyme, metaphor and simile can be substituted as formal equivalents and contribute to retention of the aesthetic intensity of the translation as a whole.

One particular difficulty posed in this context is the translation of figurative speech. Metaphors can have universal meaning through commonly shared experience, as when

people interact with their environment and from this springs a relational cognitive association. This then fits into the category of basic cognition of humans (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). But metaphors do not have to be universal and can be very language and culture specific.

From the spontaneous comprehension level on the one hand and the expressive function of metaphors on the other, (as with deliberately chosen images as opposed to stereotyped images, or images embedded in literary texts), an appropriate translation is dependent on finding similar metaphors in the target language. This can include anything from translation of the source text metaphor (with or without an accompanying explanation), to ignoring the imagery and paraphrasing the metaphor (rendering the metaphor in non-figurative speech), depending on the preset Skopos (Netzel forthcoming 2011).

A metaphor illustrating this well is the Lakota sentence,

Átaya onágu pte kin aú weló.

German: *Ganz und gar ein Prärierfeuer, so kommen die Büffel daher*.

English: Completely a prairie fire, the buffalo are coming.

 (These literal translations would be incomprehensible in German and English but could be useful for educational textbooks aiming to teach the Lakota language)

German: Einem Präriefeuer gleich kommen die Büffel. (d. h. alles ist schwarz vor Büffeln) (= explanatory translation)

English: Just like a prairie fire, the buffalo are coming. (i.e. everything is black because of the buffalo herd).

German: Die Büffel kommen, (es sieht aus) wie verbrannte Erde (nach einem Präriefeuer, so schwarz ist alles voller Büffeln) (= appropriate, analogous rendition: paraphrased translation)

English: The buffalo are coming, it looks like scorched earth (scorched as after a prairie fire, the plains are so covered with buffalo that the earth looks black).

This buffalo metaphor can be found in the Buechel dictionary (entry: *onágu*) (Buechel and Manhart 2002).

Once a function has been established as predominant, functional constancy allows invariables to be set so the translation process can be determined and maintained in order to begin the search for equivalents and aim toward an adequate translation. The finished translation requires a final reading, as a means of quality control by the translator, before turning in the final product. Also in this step of the translation process students should always keep in mind that too often many of their "finished" products give the impression that no self-corrections have been made.

7   Functional Change

So far, more or less implicitly, functional constancy has been assumed. This will mostly be the case in practice as well. However, a deviation of the target text from the source text, by shifting the focus of the function, is often necessary. Such a deviation requires a functional change in relation to the translation brief and the target audience. This would become relevant if, for example, a translation of Lakota mythical legends, *ohúnkakan,* were to be edited for a children's book collection, with the intention of converting it into pure entertainment. This would require minimal use, if any, of encyclopedic explication and the stripping of religious and sacred foundations, thereby reducing it to an exciting adventure story featuring the experiences of, for example, Iktomi the Spiderman, Stone Boy or a famous warrior. Footnotes must be omitted, as they would distract the reader from the

action-packed content, though a preface could be sensible depending on the target age group.

A translation for ethnologists, anthropologists and students of Native American studies would naturally, due to prior knowledge and interest, be totally different. In this case, footnotes would not constitute a cardinal sin, but be helpful in reinforcing meaning. Cultural realities would be kept as original expressions from the source text language, supplemented by accompanying paraphrasing, either as apposition in the body of the text (possibly even very detailed), in footnotes, or in the translator's preface. Even a glossary or comparative commentary would be allowable to promote the ethnologists' comprehension of the source text's key words (important religious terms and concepts). As such, *wakínyan*, which means thunderbird, could be added as "realia" with an encyclopedic background, as the target recipients cannot be required to implicitly understand semantic or encyclopedic features spontaneously evoked by the source text recipients.

Neither translation option (for children or specialists) is an equivalent to the narrative style of the source text that originated in an oral narrative tradition, and follows its own principles and rules. Both options would of course still be technically translatable, but for the average reader the lexical relations and types of text conventions would seem strange and tiring. Translations are then only acceptable by those with a specific, relevant interest in the culture.

Almost every sentence in Lakota oral narrative ends with a sentence marker such as, *shke*, which means, "so they say / it is reported", which communicates a certain rhythm and simultaneous emphasis of the narrative character. In the case of a transcription, to most readers, after a few sentences this kind of repetition is too monotonous. A corresponding adaptation to the target text conventions and narrative standards evens out the source language peculiarities, since the descriptive elements of vibrant oral performances (as with

"changing voices with the different characters"[3]) are difficult to reproduce and end up completely omitted in written form. When such illustrative and interpretive components are taken out, naturally this entails a certain loss of intended meaning from the source culture. It is simply not possible for the written word alone to transfer these additional features.

Even so, such a change in Skopos is to some extent more the rule than the exception (even partial adaptations are possible). Translation, in everyday practice, becomes less a question of either/or, in relation to loyalty or free treatment, but a pragmatic, sliding scale of "as close to the original as possible and only as far away as necessary". The position in the scale is in need of new adjustment in accordance with the translation brief. The degree of fidelity is juggled to fit the different possible Skopoi. Target language conditions (such as lexical conventions) outweigh source language conditions though they can also retain greater importance when the instructions of the translation brief, for the target language, say to reconstruct the particularities and peculiarities of the source text. In any case, such translations are aimed at professionals (language teachers, specialists).

Diller and Kornelius (1978) point to the relevance of generative semantics as a valuable tool for the translator in identifying sentence subtleties in the form of tree graphs, which illustrate the logical relationship of individual sentence components. Beyond the limits of sentence structure, text linguistic points of view must be analyzed, such as the framework of the theme-rheme structure (what is being talked about and what is being said). These are important factors especially when translating from Native American languages because, for example, in Lakota both the syntax and textualization (the linking devices) follow different rules.

Some mythic legends of indigenous people seem erratic to European readers because underlying, intrinsic logic of the narrative's universe is assumed and not explicitly explained. Familiar mythic figures loaded with relevance and symbolism that appear in Native

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[3] In *This Path we Travel,* Arthur Amiotte has said, "my cousins and I enjoyed the days and were lulled to sleep at night by the storytelling of elders. As soon as it was dark and the cows were in, my grandparents would lie in their beds and tell stories, changing voices with the different characters."

narratives are one such case. Why else would the characters in a tale of Spider Man Iktomi act shocked and appalled when they recognize him? For the characters, in the story as well as those privy to the oral rendition of it, already know he is an evil trickster, who is up to no good. This requires an explanation in a German or English target text translation, even when it has not been provided in the source language text. This in turn guarantees that the reaction of the characters in the plot is understood.

8   Instrumentation of Text Linguistics and Translation Equivalents

With the instrumentation of text linguistics, the translator is required to analyze the coherence, cohesion, intentionality, acceptability, flow of information, and intertextuality as an indispensable basis for text analysis before beginning any translation. Doing so leads to awareness of, for example, allusions to other narratives that are again assumed to be common knowledge of the audience. Deficiencies in target audience knowledge must be compensated for. Then, just with the mention of the name Iktomi, a whole dazzling array of traits (demonic to smart, and not always bad) attached this mythical figure (the trickster) are acknowledged. In order to comprehend the full depth of trickster figure characters, and how they, regardless of the physical form they take (most are shape shifters) and traits they embody, are a representation of all human characteristics from bad to good, would require additional research for the translator.

The advantages of text linguistics as a translation method are that, according to the principles of modern translation study, it works across languages and constitutes an impartial language concept that can be applied to the translation of all languages. This allows a faster, more focused, Skopos compliant, translation, which sets the foundation for an academic, thoroughly reflected translation.

In the following selected translation examples, the challenges faced by a Lakota translator while translating into European target languages will be illustrated. Even very short samples of the Lakota text suffice to show what a tremendous variety of translation possibilities exist that seem simple, harmless, and unproblematic to translate. However, the problems of a large number of equivalents also arise, which are not only caused by the source text but

clearly also by peculiarities of the target language. Though rather obvious, it remains important to note that Lakota is not solely responsible for the abundance of translation variants. These are found among English and German as well. Additionally, it is not difficult to find various other examples in which the translation of "realia" is relevant and necessary, and Skopos dependent, and will lead to very different translation possibilities, similar to those explored here. Thus, the examples in 1-3 are set to source-text related difficulties and by contrast, example 4 is problematic due to the linguistic conditions of the target text.

1. *Wakínyan hotónpi.*

Deutsch:	English:
Es donnert.	It thunders.
(der Donner)	(The) thunder
Die Donnervögel rufen.	The Thunderbirds call.
Die Donnervögel brüllen.	The Thunderbirds roar.
Die Thunderbirds rufen.	The Thunderbirds call.
Die Thunderbirds brüllen.	The Thunderbirds roar.
Die so genannten Donnervögel /	The so-called Thunderbirds
Thunderbirds rufen / brüllen.	call / roar.
Es donnert	It thunders
(wörtlich: Die Donnervögel / Thunderbirds)	(*literally:* The Thunderbirds
rufen / brüllen).	call / roar).
Es donnerte	It thundered.
Die Donnervögel riefen / brüllten.	The Thunderbirds called / roared.

Die Thunderbirds riefen / brüllten.	The Thunderbirds called / roared.

Of the above translation possibilities, which one is adequate is not decipherable according to isolated words or phrases. Only in a larger more contextual framework is clarification possible, into which one can embed the translation (Skopos). Additional encyclopedic explanations of the "realia" can be included (in this example: What are thunderbirds?) – depending on the text type, as a footnote, or integrated into the body of the text. This already demonstrates how the options multiply when translation potentialities are combined.

2. *Iktómi héca.*

Deutsch:	English:
Das / Dies ist eine Spinne.	That / This is a spider.
(In this sense, in Lakota it would read as	
Lé iktómi héca, (= + Dem. Pron.)	
Es ist eine Spinne.	It is a spider.
Er ist eine Spinne.	He is a spider.
Er ist Iktómi.	He is Iktómi.
Er ist Iktómi, der Spinnemann.	He is Iktómi, the spider man.
Er ist Iktómi, der Trickster.	He is Iktómi, the trickster.
Er ist Iktómi, der Trickster (eine mythologische Figur).	He is Iktómi, the trickster (a mythological figure).

Er verhält sich wie Iktómi, der Trickster.	He behaves like Iktómi, the trickster.
Er verhält sich wie Iktómi.	He behaves like Iktómi.
Er ist ein Trickster.	He is a trickster.
Er ist der reinste Trickster.	He is sheer trickster / a real trickster.
Er ist ein Betrüger / ganz Gerissener / Scharlatan (wie Iktómi…)	He is a cheat / totally crafty or cunning / charlatan (as Iktómi the trickster)

Here too it is clear that whether a great deal of additional information should be provided, in order to insure a successful transfer of culture, is dependent on prior knowledge of the target audience as well as their level of interest. As the Lakota myths belong to an oral narrative tradition, the target text type requires that the oral narrative be adapted to written conventions and text patterns for European audiences. Caution is however advised, as direct transfer of an Iktómi myth beginning with "Once upon a time…", which has very culturally specific connotations, would only be counterproductive when the desired goal is to open up new cultural horizons. It would be more appropriate, to combine translation potentialities by, for example, using a standard Lakota mythical legends introduction, either the more common phrase, *Ehánni ohúnkakan*, which equates with "a long time ago, it is said", or as in this specific case, *Iktómi kákena ya na*, which means, "Iktomi once went somewhere and…" (met another character from the story).

3. *Pejúta wicásha, (or pejúta wínyela) kin pejúta táku nic'u hwo*?

Deutsch: *Welche Medizin hat dir der Medizinmann gegeben?*

English: What medicine did the medicine man give you?

Welche Medizin hat dir der Schamane gegeben?

What medicine did the shaman give you?

Welche Medizin hat dir der Doktor gegeben?

What medicine did the doctor give you?

Welche Medizinkräuter hat dir der (traditionelle) Doktor gegeben?

What herbal medicine did the traditional doctor give you?

Welche Medizin (im spirituellen Sinne) hat dir der Doktor gegeben?

What medicine (in a spiritual sense) did the traditional doctor give you?

Welche Medizin (im spirituellen Sinne) hat dir der Schamane / Medizinmann gegeben?

What medicine (in a spiritual sense) did the shaman / medicine man give you?

The corresponding definition of *pejúta wicásha* must be distinctly offered here according to the textual and situational contexts, as this is an ambiguous term and can refer to everything from a traditional medicine man (healer) to a conventional doctor (*washícu wakán*). In this

context, "white doctor" is generally covered in the term *washícu wakán* meaning, "powerful white man / white man with healing powers". This being the case, *pejúta wícasha* sounds rather humorous in Lakota, as if the whites, among themselves, would say that they went to see a medicine man when they mean a conventional doctor.

The term shaman has, in German as well as in English, an anthropological or ethnological connotation, so it is unpopular among the Lakota, who would never refer to their own medicine men as a shaman. Instead they designate self-proclaimed, esoteric whites as miracle healers or plastic shamans, to express that they regard their behavior as charlatanism and cultural exploitation. Yet with German as the target language, *Shamane* sounds somewhat positive, as shamanism has been favorably received in the German media.

4. *Táhca kin nakpá yuhómnimni.*

Deutsch:	English:
Der Hirsch drehte seine Ohren.	The deer turned its ears.
Der Hirsch wendete seine Ohren.	The deer turned its ears.

*Das Reh drehte / wendete seine Ohren. (weniger geeignet: In America gibt es keine Rehe, indes reh-ähnliche Kleinhirsche) (Less apt: there are no roe deer in America, but small, roe-like red deer or elk).

The deer turned its ears.

Der Virginiahirsch / Weißwedelhirsch / Maultierhirsch drehte seine Ohren.

The Virginia deer / white-tailed deer / mule deer turned its ears.

Der Virginiahirsch / Weißwedelhirsch / usw. wendete seine Ohren.

The Virginia deer / white-tailed deer, etc. turned its ears.

Der Hirsch spielte mit seinen Ohren. (weniger geeignet: potentielle Stilblüte: "spielen mit" kann im eigentlichen Sinne verstanden werden)

The stag / deer played with his ears. (stylistic blunder as "play with" could be understood literally)

Der Hirsch ließ seine Lauscher spielen (gut geeignet: Übernahme der dt. Jägersprache; berücksichtigt zudem die Reduplikation des Lakota-Verbs: reiteratives Moment) (An apt solution: makes use of hunters' jargon; moreover, it takes the reduplication of the Lakota verb into consideration, with its reiterative force).

The deer / stag turned its ears in every direction.

It might give the impression, thus far, that the great variability of potential translation equivalents is an exclusive phenomenon of translations from Lakota into European languages (German, English, Spanish, etc.). This must be put into perspective because, of course, for one language pair there is also variability in the opposite direction, which is already recognized when translating between the various European languages. So, let's have a look at a translation from English into Lakota.

English: Lakota:

This is a house.   *Le típi héca.*

                                              Le típi héca yeló / kshto. (+ Gender ending m / f)

Le otí héca. (This building / one like this)

Le otí héca yeló / kshto. (+ Gender ending m / f)

Le washícu típi héca. (This white peoples' house / one like this = to live like the whites, in houses constructed like theirs)

Le washícu típi héca yeló / kshto. (+ Gender ending m / f)

Let's now have a look at a translation between three European languages: English to German and Spanish.

This is a house.

German:

Dies ist ein Haus.

Dies ist ein Gebäude.

Das ist ein Haus.

Das ist ein Gebäude.

Spanish:

Ésta es una casa.

Es una casa.

Éste es un edificio.

Es un edificio.

Èsa es una casa / un edificio.

The last example in Spanish very much resembles Lakota, which also distinguishes more exactly between ranges or distances than German or English. Whereas Germanic languages are content with everyday language such as, this-here, that-there, or, as in German, *dies-hier, das-da*, Spanish is more precise depending on the distance from the speaker, *este-aquí / ese-ahí / aquel-allí,* which is similar to Lakota*, le-léciya / he-héciya / ka-kákiya.*

Translating from Lakota into European languages may appear, at first glance, to be different, as individuals with European language and cultural backgrounds are accustomed to translating within that linguistic space. So much so, in fact, that both the semantic and morphosyntactic aspects of translation coincide, yet linguistically and culturally these language communities are dissimilar. Take, for example, the sentence structure of an English sentence:

This is a house.   Demonstrative pronoun + copula + indefinite article + noun

Dies ist ein Haus.   Demonstrative pronoun + copula + indefinite article + noun

Ésta es una casa.   Demonstrative pronoun + copula + indefinite article + noun
Lé típi héca. Demonstrative pronoun + noun + stative verb (qualifier: such a = classification) There is no copula in Lakota. Instead stative verbs are used and, as such, even adjectives are conjugated (as much as one can speak of conjugation agglutinating languages with unalterable verbs – in a functional sense it applies). Languages with true conjugation are on a sliding scale, as the remains of suffix conjugation outline personal affixes.

The similarities of Indo-European languages, on the one hand, and the dissimilarity of Native American language systems on the other, may at first suggest a *prima facie* "otherness" of the Lakota or other Native languages. However, as is well known, even within the European languages, considerable linguistic and cultural discrepancies exist.

9   Conclusion

In conclusion, it has been established that there are no Lakota-specific translation problems, rather the usual difficulties that arise when translating "realia" especially with increasing mutual distance of the source and target cultures. Grammatical problems, such as the necessary interpretation of the general tense in Lakota, which includes present tense and

past tense, can easily be interpreted according to context. This will take the progressive, mutual determination of the elements of a given text to the point of sufficient disambiguation (for instance, through the extensive use of time adverbs, which make the time references clear).

Additionally, what is illustrated indirectly is the uncompromising importance of translation theory complemented by cultural knowledge and exposure for the translation practitioner, as application of the aforementioned procedures is not attainable without both. Without prior knowledge of Iktómi, or other trickster figures, explanations to the multiplicity of this mythical character fall to the wayside, as does an adequate translation. For some types of texts, additional study of poetics and literature would be warranted to insure proper translation. Let us not forget that the aforementioned thoughtful translations are heavily guided by years of direct contact with Lakota culture and comprehension of Lakota language systems, i.e., savvy insider knowledge, which will rarely be the case for translators, who do not originate from the source culture, approaching translation of Native American narratives. However, this knowledge base would be a wise aim to strive for.

Undeniably, without text linguistics, translation theory would not have developed beyond theories of equivalence. However, translation, as a means of cultural transfer, goes beyond text linguistics. When translation is naively posited as universally possible, much will undoubtedly be repressed and reduced which may have been as relevant to the text's meaning as its thematized content (Gentzler, 2001). Translation is, of course, a communicative act, with interplay between extracting meaning from one cultural base, retaining this meaning yet, where necessary, adapting it to another culture and language, hopefully with some degree of integrity. The service provided by translation is, after all, to bridge a cultural gap through transfer of diachronic and synchronic elements. However, understanding the bond between language and culture and the intimate expression thereof is also vital. Culture is as crucial to translation as language systems and translation theory.

Nida argues that, "what people of various cultures have in common is far greater than what separates them" (Nida, 1982:9; qtd. by Gentzler, 2001: 66). Emphasis should then not be so

much on the differences between the languages and cultures, whatever they may be, but on the similarities. While translating, the main attention should be given to the observed universal level of basic human cognitive structures. For each translation stage, from decoding to re-encoding, there is an intermediate phase of "mentalese", to use Pinker's terminology (Pinker 1998:72). In this phase, the information is no longer in the source language and not yet in the target language, rather it is in a nonverbal dimension. There, the concepts such as basic categories, vectors, mental images, memories, and emotional hues, etc. are simultaneously co-present in a holistic way. The existence of this ephemeral intermediate dimension can be shown through the so-called "tip-of-the-tongue" phenomenon, that is, in situations where the speaker knows what he wants to say, but temporarily cannot find the fitting words. This is a situation of desired verbalization, which every translator has experienced, while struggling, during the translation process, for the appropriate words.

Translators conduct a partly non-verbal pattern-matching analysis of the semantic and syntactic features of both the source and target languages, and then begin processing on a pre-verbal level. In addition, encyclopedic characteristics and individual experiences and memories flow in, i.e., tangential factors far beyond the language systems. Translational competence is located at various mental levels, though the linguistic universals, in the form of basic cognitive patterns, are the foundation for every translational act. We should, therefore, be grateful for the universal dimension of mental processes, which actually bridge the thought transference (translation) of a given source language into a target language, placing translation within the realms of possibility.

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