**2.3.2.2 Strategies used by professional translators**

***(a) Translation by a more general word (superordinate)***

This is one of the commonest strategies for dealing with many types of non-equivalence, particularly in the area of propositional meaning. It works equally well in most, if not all, languages, since the hierarchical structure of semantic fields is not language-specific.

**Example A**

Source text (Kolestral Super- leaflet accompanying a hair-conditioning

product):

The rich and creamy KOLESTRAL-SUPER is easy to **apply** and has a pleasant fragrance.

Target text (Arabic):

كولسترال سوبر غني و مكثف في تركيبته التي تمنح مستحضرا يشبه الكريما ، مما يجعله في منتهى السهولة **لوضعه** على الشعر…

Kolestral super is rich and concentrated in its make-up which gives a product that resembles cream, making it extremely easy to put on the hair.

**Example B**  
Source text (Cloistral Super):

**Shampoo** the hair with a mild WELLA-SHAMPOO and lightly towel dry.

Target text 1 (Spanish):

**Lavar** el cabello con un champú suave de WELLA y frotar igera  
mente con una toalla.

**Wash** hair with a mild WELLA shampoo and rub lightly with a towel.

Target text 2 (Arabic):

**يغسل الشعر بشامبو من "ويللا" على ان يكون من نوع الشمبو الملطف….**

The hair is **washed** with 'wella' shampoo, provided that it is a mild  
shampoo...

**Example C**  
Source text (A Brief History of Time -Hawking 1988:1)

A well-known scientist (some say it was Bertrand Russell) once gave a public lecture on astronomy. He described how the earth **orbits** around the sun and how the sun, in turn, orbits around the center of a vast collection of stars called our galaxy

Target text (Spanish)

Un conocido científico (algunos dicen que fue Bertrand Russell) daba una vez una conferencia sobre astronomía. En ella describía cómo la Tierra **giraba** alrededor del Sol y cómo éste, a su vez, giraba alrededor del centro de una vasta colección de estrellas concida como nuestra galaxia.

A well-known scientist (some say that it was Bertrand Russell) once gave a lecture on astronomy. In it he described how the Earth **revolved** around the Sun and how the latter in its turn revolved around the center of a vast collection of stars known as our galaxy.

The above examples illustrate the use of a general word (superordinate) to overcome a relative lack of specificity in the target language compared to the source language. **‘Shampooing’** can be seen as a type of **'washing'** since it is more restricted in use: you can wash lots of things but you can only shampoo hair. Similarly, 'orbiting' is a type of revolving' because, unlike 'revolving', it only applies to a smaller object revolving around a larger one in space. What the translators of the above extracts have done is go up a level in a given semantic field to find a more general word that covers the core propositional meaning of the missing hyponym in the target language.

***(b) Translation by a more neutral/less expressive word***

**Example A**

Source text: (Morgan Matroc- ceramics company brochure:

Today people are aware that modern ceramic materials offer unrivalled properties for many of our most demanding industrial applications. So is this brochure necessary, isn't the ceramic market already over-bombarded with technical literature; why should Matroc add more?

Because someone **mumbles**, 'Our competitors do it.' But. Why should we imitate our competitors when Matroc probably supplies a greater range of ceramic materials for more applications than any other manufacturer.

Target text: (Italian)

Qualcuno **suggerisce**: 'i nostri concorrenti lo fanno.

Someone **suggests**: 'Our competitors do it.'

There is a noticeable difference in the expressive meaning of mumble and its  
nearest Italian equivalent, mugugnare. The English verb mumble suggests confusion  
disorientation or embarrassment, as can be seen in the following examples:

‘Sorry,’ she managed to mumble incoherently.

I was doing a three-point-turn manoeuvre to get us back onto the road when he woke up, lifted his hat and mumbled: 'Where are we?' I didn't mean to disturb you,' I mumbled apologetically  
I'm in your hands,' I mumbled and didn't quite know why I said it. Presented with a hard question, she'll blush, stare at her feet and finally mumble her answer.

The Italian near equivalent, *mugugnare*, on the other hand, tends to suggest dissatisfaction rather than embarrassment or confusion. Possibly to avoid conveying the wrong expressive meaning, the Italian translator opted for a more general word, suggerisce (suggest).

***(c) Translation by cultural substitution***

This strategy involves replacing a culture-specific item or expression with a target-  
language item which does not have the same propositional meaning but is likely to  
have a similar impact on the target reader, for instance by evoking a similar context  
in the target culture. The main advantage of using this strategy is that it gives the  
reader a concept with which he or she can identify, something familiar and appealing.  
On an individual level, the translator's decision to use this strategy will largely  
depend on **(a)** how much licence is given to him or her by those who commission the  
translation; **(b)** the purpose of the translation, and **(c)** the translator's own judgement  
of the desirability or otherwise of obscuring the cultural specificity of the source text.  
On a more general level, the decision will also reflect, to some extent, the norms of  
translation prevailing in a given community. Tolerance of strategies that involve significant departure from the propositional meaning of the text varies considerably  
across different communities and temporal locations.

**Example B**

Source text (The Patrick Collection - a leaflet produced by a privately owned museum of classic cars):

The Patrick Collection has restaurant facilities to suit every taste from the discerning gourmet, to the Cream Tea expert.

Target text (talian)

.. .di soddisfare tutti i gusti: da quelli del gastronomo esigente a queli dell'esperto di **pasticceria.**

to satisfy all tastes: from those of the demanding gastronomist to those of the expert in **pastry.**

in Britain, cream tea is 'an afternoon meal consisting of tea to drink and scones with  
jam and clotted cream to eat. It can also include sandwiches and cakes'.1 Cream  
tea has no equivalent in other cultures. The Italian translator replaced it with ‘pastry'  
which does not have the same meaning (for one thing, cream tea is a meal in Britain,  
whereas 'pastry' is only a type of food). However, 'pastry' is familiar to the Italian  
reader and therefore provides a good cultural substitute.

***(d) Translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation***

This strategy is particularly common in dealing with culture-specific items, modern concepts and buzz words. Following the loan word with an explanation is very useful when the word in question is repeated several times in the text. Once explained, the loan word can then be used on its own; the reader can understand it and is not distracted by further lengthy explanations.

**Example A**  
Source text (The Patrick Collection):

The Patrick Collection has restaurant facilities to suit every taste from the discerning gourmet, to the **Cream Tea** expert.

Target text (German):

vom anspruchsvollen Feinschmecker bis zum 'Cream-Tea' Experten.

… from demanding gourmets to 'Cream-Tea-experts.

The Patrick Collection leaflet is translated for the benefit of tourists visiting this privately owned motor museum in the United Kingdom. As mentioned above, the English cream-tea custom is culture-specific; Germans have coffee and cakes. The German translator could have used the strategy of cultural substitution. 'Coffee and cakes' could have replaced cream tea (cf. the Italian version of the same text in (c) above), but the translator seems to have decided that the kind of educated German who has access to this type of literature will know of the English cream-tea custom. This also explains the use of the loan word on its own, without an explanation. Note that the transferred English expression is, as is often the case with loan words in translation, in inverted commas. In addition, compounding is much more common in German than it is in English. 'Tea expert' would normally be one word in German (as would, presumably, 'cream tea expert if such a person existed). The use of a loan word has restricted the German translator, however, since combining a loan word, cream tea, with a German word, the equivalent of 'experts', would confuse the reader. Likewise, combining two English words, cream and tea, would conflict with normal English usage. The use of hyphens is a compromise between the norms of the two languages.

**example C**

source text (kolestral super):

for maximum effect, cover the hair with a plastic **cap** or towel.

Target text (Arabic):

للحصول على فعالية مطلقة ، يغطى الشعر بواسطة "**كاب**" ( اي قبعة بلاستيكية تُغطى الشعر، او بواسطة منشفة.)

For obtaining maximum 'effectiveness, the hair is covered by means of a **'cap'**, that is a plastic hat which covers the hair, or by means of a towel.

Note that the explanation which follows the loan word is based on modifying a superordinate/general word, namely the equivalent of 'hat'. Note also the use of inverted commas as in the German translation quoted above (rom The Patrick Collection).

***(e) translation by paraphrase using a related word***

This strategy tends to be used when the concept expressed by the source item is lexicalized in the target language but in a different form, and when the frequency with which a certain form is used in the source text is significantly higher than would be natural in the target language.

**Example A**  
Source text (The Patrick Collection):

Hot and cold food and drinks can be found in the Homet's Nest, **overlooking** the Alexick Hall.

Target text (German):

Im Hornet's Nest, das die Alexick-Halle überblickt, bekommen Sie warme und kalte Speisen und Getränke.

In the Homet's Nest, **which overlooks** the Alexick-Hall, you can have hot and cold meals and drinks.

**Example B**  
Source text (Kolestral Super):

The rich and **creamy** KOLESTRAL-SUPER is easy to apply and has a pleasant fragrance.

Target text (Arabic):

كولسترال سوبر غني و مكثف في تركيبته التي تمنح مستحضرا يشبه الكريما …

Kolestral-super is rich and concentrated in its make-up which gives a product that **resembles cream**.

The paraphrase in the Arabic text uses comparison, a strategy which can be used to deal with other types of non-equivalence.

**Example D**

Source text (The Patrick Collection):

As well as our enviable location, other facilities include an excellent

Conference and Arts Centre, gourmet restaurant, and beautiful

terraced gardens.

Target text (French):

Outre une situation enviable, le Musée prévoit également un Centre de Conférence et des Arts, un restaurant gourmand et de magnifiques jardins implantés **en terrasse**.

Besides its enviable location, the museum equally provides a Conference and Arts Centre, a gourmet restaurant and magnificent gardens **created in a terrace**.

***(f) Translation by paraphrase using unrelated words***

If the concept expressed by the source item is not lexicalized at all in the target language, the paraphrase strategy can still be used in some contexts. Instead of a related word, the paraphrase may be based on modifying a superordinate or simply on unpacking the meaning of the source item, particularly if the item in question is semantically complex.

**Example A**

Source text ('A Secret Best Seller, the Independent, November 1988):

In the words of a Lonrho **affidavit** dated 2 November 1988, the allegations …

Target text (Arabic):

و حسب النص الوارد **في إفادة كتابية مشفوعة بيمين** قدمتها مؤسسة لونرو بتاريخ 2 نوفمبر 1988 ، فإن الإدعاءات …

According to the text of a written communication supported by an oath presented by the Lonrho organization and dated 2 November 1988, the allegations …

**Example C**  
Source text (Brintons - press release issued by carpet manufacturer,  
1986):

They have a totally **integrated** operation from the preparation of the yarn through to the weaving process.

Target text (Arabic):

هذا و تقوم الشركة بتنفيذ جميع خطوات الإنتاج بمصانعها ، من إعداد الخيوط الى نسجها …

The company **carries out all steps of production in its factories**, from preparing the yarn to weaving it …

**Example D**  
Source text (The Patrick Collection):

You can even dine 'alfresco’ in the summer on our open air **terrace**.

Target text (German):

Im Sommer können Sie auch auf der Terrasse im Freien sitzen und essen.

In the summer you can also sit and eat on the **terrace** in the open.

Alfresco, 'in the open air', is a loan word in English. Its meaning is unpacked in the  
German translation. The two expressions, alfresco and 'in the open', have the same  
'propositional' meaning, but the German expression lacks the 'evoked' meaning of  
alfresco, which is perhaps inevitable in this case. Note that the loan word is placed  
in inverted commas in the source text.

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The main advantage of the paraphrase strategy is that it achieves a high level of precision in specifying propositional meaning. One of its disadvantages is that a paraphrase does not have the status of a lexical item and therefore cannot convey expressive, evoked or any kind of associative meaning. Expressive and evoked meanings are associated only with stable lexical items which have a history of recurrence in specific contexts. A second disadvantage of this strategy is that it is cumbersome and awkward to use because it involves filling a one-tem slot with an explanation consisting of several items. In certain types of environment, such as subtitling and the translation of advertising and packaging material, there are often  
severe restrictions on space that preclude the use of any strategy that involves this  
type of expansion. Similarly, a paraphrase is not normally practicable to use in book  
or film titles, which need to be sharp and snappy. The main title of Brian Whitaker's  
(2006) book about homosexuality in the Arab World, Unspeakable Love, inevitably  
loses something of its propositional and expressive meanings when translated into  
Arabic as Al-Hubb Al-Mamnu'(literally: Forbidden Love). But Arabic has no equivalent for unspeakable, and a paraphrase would render the title unwieldy and unattractive.

***(g) Translation by omission***

This strategy may sound rather drastic, but in fact it does no harm to omit translating a word or expression in some contexts. If the meaning conveyed by a particular item or expression is not vital enough to the development of the text to justify distracting the reader with lengthy explanations, translators can and often do simply omit translating the word or expression in question.

**Example A**  
Source text (The Patrick Collection):

This is your chance to remember the way things were, and for younger visitors to see in real-life detail the way their parents, and their parents before them lived and travelled.

Target text (French):

Voici l'occasion de retrouver votre jeunesse (qui sait?) et pour les plus jeunes de voir comment leurs parents et grands-parents vivaient et voyageaient.

Here is the chance to rediscover your youth (who knows?) and for the younger ones to see how their parents and grandparents used to live and travel.

**Example C**Source text (Brintons):

The recently introduced New Tradition Axminster range is already creating great interest and will be on display at the Exhibition.

Target text (Arabic):

أثارت مجموعة "نيو تراديشين اكسمنستر" درجة عاليى من الأهتمام منذ أن قامت الشركة بتقديمها حديثا، و هي من ضمن انواع السجاد التي سيتم عرضها بالمعرض.

The 'New Tradition Axminster’ collection has aroused a high degree of interest since the company introduced it recently, and it is among the types of carpets which will be displayed in the exhibition.

There is inevitably some loss of meaning when words and expressions are omitted in a translation. For instance, already in the last example conveys the idea that the New Tradition Axminster range is creating great interest 'earlier than anticipated', and this is lost in the translation. It is therefore advisable to use this strategy only as a last resort, when the advantages of producing a smooth, readable translation clearly outweigh the value of rendering a particular meaning accurately in a given context.