

ON THE TRANSLATION OF ENGLISH THERE-SENTENCES INTO NORWEGIAN AND PORTUGUESE. WHAT DOES A TRANSLA- TION CORPUS TELL US?

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this article is to give examples of uses of translation corpora. A translation corpus is an ideal tool in contrastive studies, in translation studies, and more generally in grammar teaching. We focus here on the first of these applications, and study how English there-sentences are translated into Norwegian and Portuguese. Our findings show how translators translating into different languages resort to similar translation strategies. The differences found in the translations are partly due to grammatical restrictions in the target languages, but we cannot rule out that there may be different approaches to the translating process as well.

KEYWORDS: translation; corpora; there-sentences; det-sentences; haver-constructions; English, Norwegian, Portuguese; translation strategies.

RESUMO: Este artigo propõe-se oferecer ilustrações do uso de corpus de tradução. Um corpus de tradução constitui uma ferramenta ideal para estudos contrastivos, para estudos tradutológicos e, mais genericamente, para o ensino de gramática. No presente trabalho, a ênfase maior se dá sobre a primeira dessas vertentes, analisando de que modo as orações iniciadas por there em inglês se traduzem para o norueguês e

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para o português. As observações indicam de que modo os tradutores que trabalham com idiomas diferentes recorrem a estratégias tradutórias similares. As diferenças observadas nas traduções devem-se em parte a restrições gramaticais da língua alvo, mas não se pode excluir a possibilidade de estarem sendo adotadas abordagens diferentes do processo tradutório.

UNITERMOS: tradução; córpus; construções com there, det e haver; inglês, norueguês, português; estratégias tradutórias.

1. Introduction

By English *there*-sentences¹ we understand sentences with the empty or formal subject *there*, a form of *be* or another intransitive verb of existence or appearance, and a noun phrase. The noun phrase, which is usually in postverbal position, is sometimes referred to as the notional subject (Quirk *et al*, 1985, p. 1403). Quite often an adverbial, usually a locative element, follows the notional subject. An example is:

- (1) There are rumblings in Congress

There-sentences should not be confused with structures where *there* functions as an adverbial, e.g. *no-one is there*.

We shall use the term translation corpus (Schmied, 1994) to mean a corpus containing original texts in one language and translations of the texts into one or several other languages. A translation corpus can have several applications, e.g. reveal characteristics of translated text, highlight differences between translated and original texts, and it can be used for language learning and teaching purposes. We shall focus on the first of these applications, and by having translations into more than one language we hope to reveal characteristics of translated text across languages. We shall also comment on differences between the Portuguese and the Norwegian versions as regards certain aspects

(1) We shall stick to the traditional name *there*-sentence for this structure though it belongs to the clause rather than to the sentence (Brevik, 1990).

of English *there*-sentences. We start by giving a brief introduction to the corpus itself.

2. The corpus²

Our material consists of extracts from six novels in English, approx. 80,000 words, and their translations into Portuguese and Norwegian (see Appendix I). Four of the Portuguese translations are into Brazilian Portuguese and two are into European Portuguese. All the Norwegian translations are into *Bokmål*.³

The English originals have been aligned with their Portuguese and Norwegian translations. Alignment means that a sentence in the original points to or is linked to the corresponding sentence or sentences in the translations:

- (2) <s id=AH1.1.s10 corresp='AH1T.1.s10 AH1TP.1.s10'> Remember there have been deaths.</s>
 <s id=AH1T.1.s10 corresp=AH1.1.s10> Det har forekommet dødsfall, får du huske.</s>
 <s id=AH1TP.1.s10 corresp=AH1.1.s10> Não se esqueça que houve mortes.</s>

In example (2), the English original sentence has a unique text code (id=AH1.1.s10),⁴ and it points to two other text codes (corresp='AH1T.1.s10 AH1TP.1.s10'). These are also unique, and identify the corresponding sentences in the Norwegian and Portuguese translations, respectively. In this manner, a computer program can easily retrieve corresponding text chunks in the translations, taking the original text as its starting point.

The alignment process is carried out automatically, followed by a proof-reading stage. The texts are stored in a database, making it possible to search for words and expressions in the original text as well as in the translations.

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- (2) The corpus material is part of the English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus (Johansson and Ebeling 1996) which is now being extended to other languages as well.
 (3) *Bokmål* is one of the official forms of written Norwegian.
 (4) AH1.1.s10 is the code for author AH, text 1, chapter 1, sentence number 10.

3. *There*-sentences

Before presenting the results of the investigation, we shall take a closer look at the structure of *there*-sentences, and their discourse function.

(3) There are rumblings in Congress

Sentence (3) is an example of a prototypical *there*-sentence, starting with the formal subject *there*, followed by a form of *be*, the notional subject, and finally an adverbial of space in the form of a prepositional phrase. In spoken language, *be* is virtually the only verb in *there*-sentences, and in most written genres, more than 90% of the instances have *be* as the main verb (Johansson, 1997).

As a rule, the noun phrase functioning as the notional subject is indefinite in form, and has non-unique reference. However, the noun phrase can be definite, and the notional subject can then have unique reference, as in example (4). *All the complaints* refers back to the previously introduced 'complaints'. The second mention of 'complaints' occurs several hundred sentences after the first one.

(4) She stood by the desk of a man at the end of the room, and came back to say, "There have been a lot of complaints about the state of the houses.

...

We can clear it up, easy enough, but to keep it clean, we need the Council. There 's been all the complaints."

Although English almost invariably operates with *be* as the main verb in *there*-sentences, other verbs do occur, e.g. *stand*, *come*, *remain*, *pass*, to mention a few. These are all intransitive verbs, and according to Quirk *et al* (1985) the verb must be of a general presentative meaning denoting motion, stance, or inception.

(5) There stood beside the white overseer a toothless grinning face with a family resemblance

There-sentences rarely contain *there+be+noun* only. Very often the noun is the head of a complex phrase including post-modifying *-ing* and *-ed* clauses.

(6) There were two dozen chimps scoffing Malabar's free bananas

(7) There was the skeleton of a fledgling caught by the fire

The main function of *there*-sentences is to introduce or reintroduce an idea, person, or entity into the discourse. *There* itself acts as a presentative signal (Breivik, 1990), and the new information is contained in the postverbal noun phrase. The verb is said to add little to the meaning of the structure. When used to reintroduce something, the construction functions as a reminder, as in (4), or sometimes as a concluding statement, e.g. *we had looked everywhere, but there was no-one there*.

This short introduction to English *there*-sentences is first and foremost meant as a background against which our data can be evaluated, but some points regarding structure will be discussed when we compare Portuguese and Norwegian translations.

3.1 Norwegian *det*-sentences and Portuguese *haver*-constructions

Norwegian has an almost identical structure to the English *there*-sentence, with the formal subject *det*. A typical Norwegian example is:

(8) Det er mange begravelserbyråer i Oslo
'There are many undertakers in Oslo'

This construction is at least as common as *there*-sentences in English. Norwegian *det*-sentences can accommodate many more types of verbs than English *there*-sentences, including verbs in the passive. This gives the translator the possibility of introducing verbs other than *være/finnes* ('be') when translating *there*-sentences. It is an open question whether Norwegian allows the notional subject to be unique. In contrast to English, non-finite postmodifiers are rare in the postverbal NP of Norwegian *det*-sentences.

A common way of expressing existence in Portuguese is to use an impersonal sentence with the verb *haver*. The *haver*-construction has no overt formal subject.

Haver is considered a transitive verb in existential constructions, the following noun phrase being the direct object (Cunha and Cintra, 1984).

- (9) Há trovoadas em toda a parte
 'There are thunderstorms everywhere'

In Brazilian Portuguese, and in particular in informal language, the verb *ter* 'have' is used in the same impersonal manner as *haver*:

- (10) Hoje tem festa na praia
 'Today there is a party on the beach'

Haver (and *ter*) do not agree in number and person with the following noun phrase, but are always in the third person singular, as can be seen in example (9). By contrast, the verb in English requires concord with the following noun phrase, at least in written English; see example (1) above.

To our knowledge, few, if any, Portuguese grammars indicate that the postverbal NP of *haver*-constructions needs to be indefinite. As regards non-finite modifiers as part of the postverbal NP, Portuguese has *-ndo* forms and past participle forms that correspond to English *-ing* and *-ed* forms in general.

Below, we shall see how Portuguese/Brazilian and Norwegian translators cope with definite postverbal NPs and non-finite postmodifiers.

4. The translation of *there*-sentences into Norwegian and Portuguese

Our material contains a total of 212 *there*-sentences. In order to obtain as homogeneous material as possible, we discarded sentences with verbs other than *be* (5 sentences), as well as *there*-sentences where the postverbal noun phrase was left out (8 sentences). Examples of discarded sentences are:

- (11) There stood beside the white overseer a toothless grinning face with a family resemblance
 (12) My *full* name: that's all there is to it.
 (13) Isn't there?

We were left with 199 sentences. The translation of these sentences into Norwegian and Portuguese is presented in 4.1 and 4.2.

4.1 Norwegian translations

Table 1a.

The translation of there-sentences into Norwegian

<i>Det</i> -sentence with <i>være/finnes</i>	85 (43%)
<i>Det</i> -sentence with other verbs	17 (8%)
Alternative constructions	95 (48%)
Not translated	2 (1%)
Total	199 (100%)

Examples (14) - (16) show how *there*-sentences are translated by *det+være*, *det+other verb*, as well as by other constructions. We return to these 'alternative' constructions in section 7.

- (14) If there were unanswered questions, she sought answers in libraries.

Hvis det var ubesvarte spørsmål, lette hun etter svarene på biblioteket.

Lit.: If there were unanswered questions, sought she after the answers in the library.

- (15) There was a dead bird on the floor.

Det lå en død fugl der også.

Lit.: There lay a dead bird there as well.

- (16) She said, "There must be a mistake."

Hun sa: "De må ha gjort en feil et sted."

Lit.: She said: "You must have made a mistake somewhere."

When translating English *there*-sentences into Norwegian, the most frequently used construction is a *det*-sentence. The two constructions are close both in form and function.

The category '*Det*-sentence with other verbs' is not surprising, given the fact that Norwegian accepts a broader set of verbs in *det*-sentences than English does, including verbs in the passive. The following verbs occurred in the Norwegian translations: *arrangere* (passive) ('arrange'), *befinne seg* ('find oneself'), *begå* (passive) ('commit'), *bli* ('become'), *eksistere* ('exist'), *forekomme* ('be'), *gjelde* ('concern'), *komme* ('come'), *ligge* ('lie'), *skje* ('happen').

4.2 Portuguese translations

Table 1b.

The translation of there-sentences into Portuguese

Impersonal sentence with <i>haver</i>	134 (67%)
Impersonal sentence with <i>ter</i>	3 (1,5%)
Sentence with reflexive <i>se</i>	5 (2,5%)
Sentence with 'inacusativos'	9 (5%)
Alternative constructions	46 (23%)
Not translated	2 (1%)
Total	199 (100%)

Examples (17) - (21) show the different constructions of Table 1b.

- (17) There aren't too many certainties in this great big world of ours, but that's one of them.

Não há muitas certezas neste nosso grande mundo, mas esta é uma delas.

Lit.: Not exists many certainties in this our great world, but that is one of them.

- (18) Wherever you turn nowadays there are people who insist on spilling out their lives at you.

Hoje em dia, para onde quer que você se vire, tem uma pessoa querendo cuspir sua vida na cara da gente.

Lit.: Nowadays, wherever you turn yourself exists a person wanting to spit his life straight in our face.

- (19) It was already dark outside; occasionally there were rumblings from a storm and it was raining heavily.

Já estava escuro lá fora, ocasionalmente se ouvia os estrondos das trovoadas, chovia forte.

Lit.: Already was dark outside, occasionally was heard the rumblings of the thunderstorms, raining heavily.

- (20) But as the book was in its final stages there had been a mystifying schism in the chimpanzee tribe that Mallabar had documented so thoroughly.

Quando o livro estava nos estágios finais, porém, ocorreu um intrigante cisma na tribo dos chimpanzés que Mallabar registrava de modo tão completo.

Lit.: When the book was in the final stages, however, happened an intriguing schism in the tribe of the chimpanzees that Mallabar registered in a manner so complete.

- (21) Suddenly, about thirty yards ahead of her, there was a woman.

Subitamente, uns trinta metros adiante, viu uma mulher.

Lit.: Suddenly, some thirty meters ahead, (she) saw a woman.

The most common translation of *there*-sentences into Portuguese is an impersonal sentence with *haver*. In this use, *haver* has the meaning of 'exist'. *Haver* originally has the meaning of 'have' (lat. *habēre*), but is never used with this meaning in modern Portuguese. In Brazilian Portuguese, *haver* has increasingly been replaced by *ter* (lat. *tenēre*). It is therefore interesting to note that *ter* in Brazilian Portuguese is used in the same impersonal manner as *haver* in some of the translations.

Sentences with the reflexive *se*-construction and sentences with 'inacusativos', or ergative verbs, are also found as translations of *there*-sentences.

We have decided to treat sentences with reflexive *se* and 'inacusativos' as separate categories and not as part of the 'alternative constructions' because of their semantic similarity with *haver/ter*-constructions. They are all impersonal constructions with no agentive argument.

In the reflexive *se*-construction, we find transitive verbs, but with no agentive participant, which gives the construction an impersonal reading. The reflexive construction follows the same principles as an *haver*-construction, by having the new information (given in the noun phrase) to the right of the verb. Additionally, it could be said that the verbs in such reflexive presentatives add a stronger semantic content than is the case in an *haver*-sentence or a *there*-sentence with *be*. One could argue that these constructions may best be compared to passive constructions in English, as in example (19).

Sentences with 'inacusativos' where the notional subject follows the verb have an impersonal reading in Portuguese (Mateus *et al.* 1989, p. 214-5).⁵ These sentences are also similar

(5) What we refer to here as the notional subject, Mateus *et al.* (1989) call the internal NP argument of the impersonal 'inacusativo'.

to *haver*-constructions in terms of function, introducing the new information late in the clause.

In 68.5% of the Portuguese instances, an English *there*-sentence has been translated by either an *haver*- or a *ter*-construction. If we add reflexive *se*-constructions and sentences with 'inacusativos', this accounts for 76% of the translations. In the Norwegian translations, only 51% of the original *there*-sentences have been translated by a Norwegian *det*-sentence. So, despite the structural similarities between English and Norwegian, it seems as if the Portuguese translators more often make use of *haver*-constructions as translations of *there*-sentences than Norwegian translators use *det*-sentences. However, Norwegian translators could, in our opinion, have used *det*-sentences in quite a few of the instances where they have chosen another construction.

Before we examine the 'alternative' constructions, we will have a brief look at what happens in the translations when the noun phrase in the original is definite in form and when the postverbal noun phrase in the original contains a non-finite clause.

5. Definite noun phrases in postverbal position

The notional subject of English *there*-clauses is usually an indefinite noun phrase, but the phrase can, as we have seen, be definite and have unique reference:

(22) There's been all the complaints

On this point, there seems to be a difference between English and Portuguese on the one hand and Norwegian on the other. In example (23), the Norwegian translator has chosen an indefinite form, *kjøttrester* (lit.: 'meat leftovers'), while the Portuguese translator has the definite form *a carne* (lit.: 'the meat').⁶

(23) First, there was the meat in Clovis's faeces.

For det første hadde det vært kjøttrester i Clovis' avføring.
(indefinite)

(6) The Norwegian translator has used a different verb form as well, past perfect, which makes a definite NP sound even more out of place.

Primeiro, havia a carne nas fezes de Clovis. (definite)

The material contains 15 clauses where the noun phrase is definite. Of these, only two have been translated into equivalent Norwegian structures, while 11 of the Portuguese translations have *haver* followed by a definite noun phrase.

On the basis of such a small material, it is difficult to speculate on why definite postverbal NPs should be more acceptable in English and Portuguese than in Norwegian. To ascertain whether there is a systematic difference between the languages, it is necessary to examine original Portuguese and Norwegian texts.

6. Non-finite postmodifiers

As we pointed out above, English can have non-finite *-ing* and *-ed* clauses functioning as postmodifiers in the NPs constituting the notional subject of *there*-clauses. How are these postmodifiers translated into Norwegian and Portuguese?

Again, the Portuguese translators follow the originals more closely, and we get Portuguese *-ndo* forms for English *-ing* forms, and Portuguese past perfect forms for English *-ed* forms:

(24) ..., and from the volume of pant-hoots, barks and screams it sounded as if there were two dozen chimps scoffing Mallabar's free bananas.

..., e pelo volume de arquejos, latidos e gritos, parecia haver duas dúzias de chimpanzés esnobando as bananas grátis de Mallabar.

Lit.:..., and from the volume of pant-hoots, barks and screams seemed to exist two dozens of chimpanzees scoffing the bananas free of Mallabar.

(25) There was the skeleton of a fledgling caught by the fire,
 Havia o esqueleto de uma avezinha surpreendida pelo fogo, ...
 Lit.: Existed the skeleton of a small bird surprised by the fire, ...

None of the Norwegian translations has a corresponding participle form. Again, it is difficult to know whether this is a systematic difference between Norwegian on the one hand and

English and Portuguese on the other. What we can say is that we have been able to establish that Portuguese and Brazilian translators choose an *haver*-construction more often than Norwegian translators choose a *det*-construction when translating *there*-clauses. We have also seen that Portuguese and Brazilian translations are closer to the original when it comes to non-finite postmodifiers and even more so in the translation of definite noun phrases. The reasons for this elude us at present. However, for us as linguists, the primary objective must be to look for linguistic reasons for the differences, but if translations are to be used as sources, we must also know something about each country's translation traditions and EFL teaching strategies.

We shall now turn to the 'alternative' constructions of Tables 1a and 1b, to see what other constructions are used when translating English *there*-constructions.

7. Translation strategies: explicitation and simplification

Table 1a showed that a little more than half (51%) of the *there*-constructions in the material have been translated by Norwegian *det*-constructions. This means that nearly as many have been translated by other, "non-parallel", constructions. As regards the Portuguese translations, 23% or 43 instances are so-called 'alternative' constructions. What constructions do we then find as alternatives to the *det*-construction in Norwegian and to the first four Portuguese constructions of Table 1b?

It is not always easy to find a distinct pattern in translations. There are almost always several ways of translating a specific construction, and the context often allows the translator to express a meaning in various ways. We should also keep in mind that our material is fairly small. So, what we present here is more in the nature of thoughts on translation strategies than a fixed set of constructions that can be used when translating English *there*-constructions into Norwegian and Portuguese. We start with the 95 Norwegian 'alternative' constructions.

7.1 Norwegian 'alternative' constructions

Table 2a.
Translation strategies

Personal constructions	35 (37%)
Making (part of) the original postverbal noun phrase the subject proper	17 (18%)
Noun/Prepositional phrases	16 (17%)
Other	27 (28%)
Total	95 (100%)

In his doctoral thesis from 1996, Andreas Sveen argues that Norwegian *det*-constructions should be called impersonal active constructions parallel to impersonal passive constructions, that is, constructions with the empty subject *det* and the verb in the passive, e.g. *Det bygges et nytt hus nede i veien*. (lit.: There is being built a new house down the road). Both types of impersonal construction have the empty or formal grammatical subject *det*, and they have an indefinite postverbal noun phrase which is the only direct argument of the verb. Hence, by personal constructions, we mean constructions where there is no empty, formal subject, but a non-empty subject referring to persons or entities in the text. In using personal constructions, the notional subject of the English original remains in postverbal position in the translation, and becomes the direct object.

(26) Her bottle was wrapped in tissue but when she presented her ten pound note **it was discovered that there wasn't sufficient change.**

Flasken hennes ble pakket inn, men da hun la frem tipundseddelen, **oppdaget kassadamen at hun ikke hadde nok vekslepenger.**

Lit.: Her bottle was wrapped (in), but when she put (forward) the ten pound note, discovered the cashier that she not had enough change.

In the original of example (26), we have two impersonal constructions, a passive clause (*it was discovered*) and a *there*-clause (*there wasn't sufficient change*). In the Norwegian translation, both clauses are in the active and have personal subjects,

oppdaget kassadamen ('discovered the cashier') and *hun ikke hadde nok vekslere* ('she didn't have enough change'). This way of introducing an agent from the context is a very common strategy when translating English *there*-constructions into Norwegian. Two more examples are:

- (27) Suddenly, about thirty yards ahead of her, there was a woman.

Omtrent tredve meter foran seg fikk hun plutselig se en kvinne.

Lit.: About thirty meters ahead of herself, got she suddenly to see a woman.

- (28) "Really, Stuart, I know it's not everyone who's descended from King Zog of Albania, but there's no need to blab the whole story."

"Ærlig talt, Stuart, jeg vet det ikke er alle som nedstammer fra kong Zog av Albania, men du trengte da ikke å plapre ut om alt sammen."

Lit: Honestly speaking Stuart, I know it not is everybody that descend from King Zog of Albania, but you needed not to blab (out) about everything.

Introducing an agent (or an entity) from the context is the most frequent strategy among our 'alternative' constructions.

Another common strategy, which is used in 18% of the cases, is making all or part of the postverbal noun phrase, i.e. the notional subject, the subject proper of the translation.

- (29) There was an open roll-top desk facing one of the wide windows and, to its right, a stable door, the top half open, gave a view of the paved courtyard.

En sjalusipult stod rett imot et av de store vinduene, og til høyre for den var det en halvdør ut til den steinlagte gårdsplassen.

Lit.: An open roll-top desk stood facing one of the big windows, and to the right of it there was a stable door out to the paved yard.

- (30) "There's tremendous public interest in you, – particularly after that last case, the Berowne murder."

"Interessen for deg er kolossal, især etter den siste saken, Berowne-mordet."

Lit.: The interest in you is colossal, especially after the last case, the Berowne murder.

Example (30) shows that the noun phrase which makes up the subject of the translation is often definite. This makes it easier to have it as a subject since we typically start a clause with (presumably) known information. This strategy is common when the postverbal noun phrase of the original contains premodifiers in the form of adjectives, and manifests a semantic similarity in the meaning of *there*-constructions and copular constructions. What can be said to be lost in the translation is the presentative signal of the introductory *det*.

Almost equally common (17%) as a strategy in our material is the use of a verbless phrase only in the translation. The empty subject *there* and the verb is left out in the translation, and we are left with the translation of the postverbal noun phrase only. Again, the presentative signal is lost.

(31) "And you're not as stern and fierce as yesterday." There was a pause before he said, "You heard?"

"Og De virker ikke så firkantet som i går." En liten pause, før han spurte om hun hadde hørt det.

Lit.: A short pause, before he asked if she had heard it.

(32) She stood back into the shelter of the bushes, exchanging one fear for another. There was a surge of sound and the cat's-eyes momentarily gleamed before, in a rush of wind, the car passed.

Hun stilte seg i ly av buskene, grepet av en ny skrekk. Et brus av lyd, kattøyene i veidekket lyste opp, bilen suste forbi med et vindgufs.

Lit.: A surge of sound, the cat's-eyes in the road lit up, the car sped by in a sudden rush of air.

What are the reasons for choosing any of the strategies presented, when a Norwegian *det*-construction, in many cases, is equally felicitous? A possible explanation is to view the three strategies presented in light of Mona Baker's (1993) 'universal features of translation'. These are features that are said to be characteristic of all translation. One such feature is explicitation, another is simplification. The two last strategies presented above, moving (part of) the original postverbal NP to subject position,

and making do with just a verbless phrase, could perhaps both be seen as ways of simplifying the text structurally. At least, transforming a finite clause into a verbless phrase leads to textual simplification. Simplification has been defined as “[a] process and/or result of making do with less words” (Blum-Kulka and Levenston, 1993). Perhaps is it a form of explicitation as well, in the sense that the phrase is set out in the text, either as a separate unit, or as an initial structure of the sentence.

The personal construction seems to be a clear case of explicitation, in that properties and things are attached directly to persons or entities in the text. Implicit connections and relationships become explicit.

7.2 Portuguese ‘alternative’ constructions

Table 2b.
Translation strategies

Personal constructions	28 (61%)
Other	18 (39%)
Total	46 (100%)

As for Norwegian, the personal construction is the most common strategy in Portuguese when translating English *there*-constructions if we disregard the more obvious choices presented in Table 1b. This suggests that explicitation is a common feature in Portuguese translation.

- (33) Anthony had on a dressing-gown, and there was a book in his hand.

Anthony estava de roupão e tinha um livro na mão.

Lit.: Anthony was in dressing-gown and (he) had a book in the hand.

- (34) Suddenly, about thirty yards ahead of her, there was a woman.

Subitamente, uns trinta metros adiante, viu uma mulher.

Lit.: Suddenly, some thirty meters ahead (she) saw a woman.

Simplification also occurs, although not as frequently as in the Norwegian translations. The ‘Other’ category of Table 2b consists of several different construction types, but only two or

three instances of each type. This is most probably due to the size of the material. We can, however, mention that one possible sub-category is parallel to the category 'Making (part of) the original postverbal noun phrase the subject proper' which we had for Norwegian.

(35) There was a dead bird on the floor.

Um pássaro morto jazia no chão.

Lit.: A dead bird lay on the floor.

We also found some examples of the use of impersonal *ser* ('be') in translating *there*-constructions. These are included in the 'Other' category as well.

(36) There was no need for notices spelling it out; there were only a few of these in the town, on public benches, for example.

Não era preciso falar disso, só havia uns poucos deles na cidade, em bancos públicos, por exemplo.

Lit.: Not was necessary to talk about it, only there was a few of them in the town, in benches public, for example.

8. Conclusion

On the basis of the 12 translations (6 Norwegian and 6 Portuguese), we can hypothesise that Portuguese and Brazilian translators endeavour to follow the original more closely than their Norwegian colleagues. This may indicate that Norwegian translators perhaps feel freer in relation to the original. When it comes to choosing strategies for alternative constructions, however, the two groups of translators seem to resort to the same strategies. This supports the theory of 'universal features of translation'.

We hope we have been able to show the usefulness of a translation corpus, and some ways in which it can be used. However, we cannot stress enough the need to compare translations with original texts in the same language in the need to go beyond a comparison of source and target texts. We must also compare original texts in the languages contrasted, and original and translated texts in the same language, if the aim is to deter-

mine how and to what extent languages differ, and to pin down the exact relationships between original and translated text.

Appendix I:

Texts

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Eng. orig. | (JB1) Barnes, Julian: <i>Talking It Over</i> |
| Norw. tran. | (JB1T) Ofstad, Knut: <i>En trekanthistorie</i> |
| Port. tran. | (JP1TP) Grey, Roberto: <i>Em tom de conversa</i> |
| Eng. orig. | (WB1) Boyd, William: <i>Brazzaville Beach</i> |
| Norw. tran. | (WB1T) Aspaas, Stig: <i>Brazzaville Beach</i> |
| Port. tran. | (WB1TP) Santarrita, Marcos: <i>A praia de Brazzaville</i> |
| Eng. orig. | (NG1) Gordimer, Nadine: <i>My Son's Story</i> |
| Norw. tran. | (NG1T) Bang, Karin: <i>Min sønns historie</i> |
| Port. tran. | (NG1TP) Ferraz, Geraldo Galvão: <i>A história do meu filho</i> |
| Eng. orig. | (AH1) Hailey, Arthur: <i>Strong Medicine</i> |
| Norw. tran. | (AH1T) Seeberg, Axel. S.: <i>Sterk medisín</i> |
| Port. tran. | (AH1TP) Distribuidora Record de Serviços de Imprensa: <i>Remédio amargo</i> |
| Eng. orig. | (PDJ3) James, P.D.: <i>Devices and Desires</i> |
| Norw. tran. | (PDJ3T) Greiff, Aud: <i>Intriger og begjær</i> |
| Port. tran. | (PDJ3TP) Vinga, Sophie P.: <i>Crimes e desejos</i> |
| Eng. orig. | (DL2) Lessing, Doris: <i>The Good Terrorist</i> |
| Norw. tran. | (DL2T) Halling, Kia: <i>Den gode terroristen</i> |
| Port. tran. | (DL2TP) Leite, Bernardette P.: <i>A boa terrorista</i> |

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