An Assessment Of The Influence Of Syntagm And Context On Lexical Semantics In Translation Studies

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Abstract: The Aim Of This Paper Is To Show That Words Only Have Meaning In Context. Dictionary Definitions Can Be Misleading Because In A Dictionary Words Are Listed In Isolation. However, To Contribute Meaning, Words Need To Be Used In Sentences Where They Contract Syntagmatic Relations With Other Words. Further, The Context In Which A Word Is Used Can Change Its Meaning. Different Contexts Can Activate Different Word Meanings. The Verb ‘Consider’, For Example, Has Taken Ten Different Meanings In The Examples Provided Below. As A Result, Word Meaning Is In The Field.

Keywords: Syntagm, Context, Lexicology, Lexical Semantics, Consider

I. INTRODUCTION


Lexicological Works In Europe Started Towards The End Of The 15th Century. Dictionaries Were Developed To Promote Education And Literary Languages. The Development Of Dictionaries In The Modern European Context Was Associated With The Spread Of Education And The Promotion Of Emerging National Literary Languages. From About 1450 Onwards Bilingual Dictionaries Were Being Produced For Use In Schools, At First For Learning Latin (Latin-German, Latin-English, Etc.), But Soon Afterwards Also For The Modern Languages Of Europe. (Ibid)

With The Development Of Computers And Icts, Lexicological Work Has Assumed A New Dimension. This Paper Attempts To Demonstrate Through The Lexical Items ‘Consider’, ‘Demand’ And ‘Industrial’ That Word Meaning Is Determined By The Context In Which The Word Is Used. It Is Not Possible To Predict All The Meanings That A Word May Have Because It Is Only In A Context That Word Meaning Is Activated. Examples Of The Relationship Between Syntagm And Semantics Are Found In The TAUM/AVIATION Theory Developed By A Team Of Translators Of The University Of Montreal, Canada. The Point This Paper Is Making Is That The Idea That Words Have Specific Meanings Does Not Hold Water. When We Look Up A Word In A Dictionary, We Find That Its Senses Are Listed. However, This Listing Can Be Misleading Because Words Have Uses; They Do Not Have Meanings. A Mere Syntagm Can Influence The Meaning Of A Verb In A Sentence. In Much The Same Way, The Contextual Relations That A Verb Or A Noun Contracts With Other Words In A Sentence Can Also Influence Its Meaning. Therefore, The Belief That Words Have Meanings And That Dictionaries Contain The List Of The Various Senses Of Words Cannot Take Us Far. The Context In Which A Word Is Used Plays A Major Role In Determining Its Meaning.

II. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PAPER

This Paper Relies On Halliday To Recall The History Of Lexicology. Then, The Theories Developed By Patrick Hanks, Cruse, Trier, Monique Chevalier, Pierre Isabelle, François Labelle And Claude Lainé Are Used In This Paper On The Relationship Between Syntagm, Context And Semantics. Patrick Hanks Says That After Writing Dictionary Definitions For Over Thirty Years, He Has Come To Realise That Words Do Not Have Meanings. This Realisation Has Come About Thanks To The Development Of Corpora Available In Soft Copies. Cruse Also Contributes To The Debate By Highlighting The Role Of Context In Lexical Semantics. Words Contracts Contextual Relations With Other Words In A Sentence And Contribute New Meanings. Trier Says That Meaning Is In The Field. Monique Chevalier, Pierre Isabelle, François Labelle And Claude Lainé
III. DEFINITIONS

III.1 What Is A Context?


It Emerges From This Quotation That The Various Senses Of A Lexical Item Are Reflected In Various Situations. Each Situation Sheds Light On A Particular Aspect Of A Word Meaning. Lexical Items Have Semantic Properties That Are Reflected In Contexts. Various Sentences Can Present Various Aspects Of The Meaning Of A Word. Sometimes Some Particular Words Refer To Extra-Linguistic Realities. However, These Realities Can Be Reflected And Revealed In Linguistic Contexts.


To Buttress These Ideas, The Following Sentence Is Given: ‘I Went To The Bank.’ There Is No Indication In This Sentence As To Whether Bank Refers To A Financial Institution Or To A River. Only The Context In Which This Sentence Is Uttered Can Help To Disambiguate It. It Is Worth Pointing Out That In This Era Of Information Technology, Word Meaning Should Be Regarded As Dynamic And Progressive Rather Than Static And Fixed. The Point Is That Every Day Words Are Used In Various Fields As Knowledge About Scientific And Technological Areas Expands. In This Context, It Is An Illusion To Believe That Word Meaning Never Changes.

III.2 Lexical Semantics


If We Are Using The Term ‘Word’ To Mean A Unit Of The Written Language, I.E. ‘That Which (In English) Is Written Between Two Spaces’, Then Ultimately All These Choices Are Expressed As Strings Of Words, Or Words, As In It Always Snows On Top Of The Mountain. But Teachers Of English Have Customarily Distinguished Between Content Words, Like Snow And Mountain, And Function Words, Like It And On And Of And The; And It Is The Notion Of A Content Word That Corresponds To Our Lexical Item. Lexicology Is The Study Of Content Words, Or Lexical Items. This Is An Important Point Because It Makes A Distinction Between Content Words And Function Words. We All Know What A Mountain Is And We Can Describe It. On The Contrary, Function Words Have No Content That Can Be Described. However, It May Be A Hasty Conclusion To Say That Lexicology Is Only About The Study Of Content Words. The Relationship Between Function Words And Lexicology Is Not Non-Existential. Examples Of Relationship Between Function Words And Lexical Semantics Are Given In The TAUM/AVIATION Algorithm That Will Be Shown At A Later Stage.

III.3 What Is Lexicology? As Indicated Above, Halliday (Ibid, 3-4) Says That Lexicology Is The Study Of Content Words. However, The Line Between Content Words And Function Words Is Not A Sharp One. Rather, The Two Form A Continuum Or Cline, And Words Like Always And Top Lie Somewhere Along The Middle Of The Cline. “Thus There Is No Exact Point Where The Lexicologist Stops And The Grammarian Takes Over; Each One Can Readily Enter Into The Territory Of The Other.” The Author Explains That There Are Two Principal Methods For Describing Words, Though The Two Can Also Be Combined In Various Ways. One Method Is By Writing A Dictionary; The Other Is By Writing A Thesaurus. The Difference Between A

Preparing The Computer For The Translation Process:
The Following Sentence Is To Be Translated Into French:

Le Verbe ‘Service’ Peut Se Traduire Par « Remplir » Ou Par « Faire L’entretien De » Selon Que Son Objet Direct Désigne Ou Non Un Contenant. (Ibid, 37)

The Instructions Proceed As Follows:
S’il Y A Un Objet Indirect Introduit Par With, Traduire Service Par Mettre.
Ex: A) Service Tank With One Gallon Of Oil.
B) Mettre Un Gallon D’huile Dans Le Réservoir. (Ibid, 39)

Further Instructions Given To The Machine Lead To The Following Translations: (Table 1)

| (6) Consider The Damage As Extending To The Wing Tip. | (6F) Supposer Que Les Dommages S’étendent Jusqu’au Saumon D’aile. |
| (7) Accuracy Is Considered As The Most Important Criterion. | (7F) La Précision Est Considérée Comme Le Critère Le Plus Important. |
| (8) Consider These Areas For Repair. | (8F) Envisager La Réparation De Ces Zones. |
| (9) Consider Whether The Damage Is Negligible. | (9) Déterminer Si Les Dommages Sont Négligeables. |
| (10) Consider Cleaning The Filter. | (10F) Penser A Nettoyer Le Filtre. |
| (12) Consider The Damage To Extend To The Wing Tip. | (12F) Supposer Que Les Dommages S’étendent Jusqu’au Saumon D’aile. |
| (13) Consider That Any Increase In Turbine RPM Results In Overtemperature. | (13F) Supposer Que Toute Augmentation Dans Le Régime De La Turbine Entraîne Une Surchauffe. |

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1 This term was coined by B. Harris in « La traductologie, la traduction naturelle, la traduction automatique et la sémantique », in Cahier de linguistique n° 2 Les Presses de l’Université du Québec, Montreal, 1973.

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The Word "Industrial" Means Connected With equivalents in the past, make you tired, worried, etc. Flying makes enormous demands on pilots. The preposition with.


Below are some of the instructions:

1. Si l'objet indirect de consider est une proposition gérondive introduite par as, traduire consider par "supposer que" et transformer l'objet direct de consider (damage) en sujet de la gérondive (extend).

   (6A) Consider the damage as extending to the wing tip.
   (6F) Supposer que les dommages s'étendent jusqu'au saumon d'aile.

2. Si l'objet indirect est un groupe nominal, il peut être introduit par as ou for:

   (a) si le groupe nominal est introduit par as, traduire consider par « considérer »:
   (7A) Accuracy is considered as the most important criterion.
   (7F) La précision est considérée comme le critère le plus important.

   (b) si le groupe nominal est introduit par for, traduire par « envisager », effacer for; transformer l'objet direct (areas) en complément de l'objet indirect (repair): enfin, déplacer l'objet indirect en objet direct:

   (8A) Consider these areas for repair.
   (8F) Envisager la réparation de ces zones. (Op. Cit.: 41)

On the basis of this algorythm (series of instructions) the meaning of the verb 'consider' has changed ten times. The team of canadian translators says that the various uses of the verb 'consider' have been found in the maintenance manuals.

Cette formalisation du verbe consider représente les différents usages de ce mot que nous avons recensés dans les manuels d'hydraulique. Les phrases (6) à (15) font donc partie de la classe de phrases décrites par la complémentation du verbe consider. (Ibid, 40)

In the above-mentioned algorythm, the following instruction is given and shows that the meaning of the verb 'consider' is influenced by the preposition with. "S'il y a un objet indirect introduit par with, traduire service par mettre.

Just like the verb 'consider', the lexical items 'demand' and 'industrial' take several meanings in the various contexts in which they are used in the materials upon which this study has been carried out. They illustrate the point that the meaning of a word is based on the context in which it appears.

IV.2 a study of various occurrences of the words 'demand' and 'industrial' let us now look up the words 'industrial' and 'demand' in a modern english language dictionary before any attempt to study the various occurrences of the same in the corpus (made up of trade union literature).

What do the words 'industrial' and 'demand' mean?


The dictionary also contains entries such as industrial action, industrial archeology, industrial arts, industrial estate, industrial relations, industrial revolution and industrial tribunal.

The word 'demand' means [1] a very firm request for something; something that somebody needs: a demand for higher pay [2] demands (pl.) – (of sb) – (on sb) things that sb/sf makes you do, especially things that are difficult, make you tired, worried, etc. flying makes enormous demands on pilots. [3] – (for sb/sf) the desire or need of customers for goods or services which they want to buy or use: to meet the demand for a product. the occurrences of these words and their equivalents in the french language have been found in different contexts in the trade union literature. a few examples are given below: (table 2)

| (14) Consider the direction of prevailing winds. | (14F) Tenir compte de la direction des vents dominants. |
| (15) Consider each cylinder to make sure scratches are negligible. (Op. cit., 40) | (15F) Examiner chaque cylindre pour s'assurer que les éraflures sont négligeables. |

We continue to collect evidence of violations against workers' rights and to demand accountability from abusive governments and employers. (P.9) Nous continuons de recueillir des informations sur les violations contre les droits des travailleurs et d'exiger que les gouvernements et les employeurs aux
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<td>La Situation A Atteint Un Point Critique Le 4 Novembre 2014, Avec La Résiliation Des Contrats De 19 Employés Affiliés Au Syndicat, Des Membres Fondateurs Pour La Plupart. Motifs Invoqués : ≪ Restructuration Et Baisse De La Demande Durant La Saison D’hiver ≫. (P.88-89)</td>
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It Is Important To Stress That The Verb ‘To Demand’ Is Quite Often Translated Into French By Most Of The Verbs (Demander, Réclamer, Revendiquer, Exiger) Used In The French Text, Except For Faire Valoir And Défendre. Collins Robert French Dictionary Explains The Verb ‘To Demand’ As Follows: Money, Explanation, Help Exiger, Réclamer (From, Of De) ; Higher Pay Etc Revendiquer, Réclamer. To Demand To Do Exiger De Faire, Demander Expressément À Faire. A Question/Situation That Demands Our Attention Une
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Question/Une Situation Qui Réclame Notre Attention. It Is Clear That There Is A Good Number Of Equivalents Of The Verb ‘To Demand’ In The Various Contexts In Which It Is Used In The Table Above. Faire Valoir And Défendre May Find Their Way Into A Bilingual Dictionary As Equivalents Of The Verb ‘To Demand’ If They Are Used Again And Again By Translators. Lexicological Work Focuses On The Various Uses Of Lexical Items In Various Contexts. In The Table Above, Two Senses Of The Lexical Item ‘Demand’ Are Used. The Allusions To "Workers Demanding Their Rights And Fair Working Conditions" Refer To One Sense Of The Verb, Whereas The Reference To "Lower Demand During The Winter" Is Another Sense Of The Word. There Is Another Aspect Of Lexicology In The Translation Of The Word ‘Demand’. The Following Is A Context In Which The Word Is Used: “… To Demand Payment Of Salaries” : Demander Le Paiement Des Salaires. Not All The French Verbs Used In The Table To Translate The Verb ‘To Demand’ Are Interchangeable. For Example, We Cannot Say ‘Faire Valoir Le Paiement Des Salaires’ But ‘Réclamer Le Paiement Des Salaires’ Is Acceptable; ‘Exiger Le Paiement Des Salaires’ Is Also Acceptable. The Partial Conclusion That Can Be Drawn Is That Faire Valoir Is An Equivalent Of The Verb To Demand In Some Specific Contexts. It Shares Some Semantic Properties With The Verb ‘To Demand’.

The Following Syntagm Is Another Context In Which The Word ‘Demand’ Is Used: ‘To Demand Fair Working Conditions” : Réclamer Des Conditions De Travail Equitables. It Is Not Acceptable To Say: Défendre Des Conditions De Travail Equitables. In This Particular Context, Réclamer And Défendre Are Not Interchangeable. However, They May Be Interchangeable In Other Contexts. This Possibility Cannot Be Ruled Out. In Conclusion, Though The Verb ‘To Demand’ Is Translated Into French By Five Equivalents In The Table Above, Not All The Equivalents Are Interchangeable. Consequently, Only The Context Determines Which Equivalent Is Suitable. This Confirms The Idea That It Is Only In Context That Words Have Meanings. This Conclusion Is Now Going To Be Tested With Another Lexical Item (I.E. ‘Industrial’) That Is Quite Often Found In Documents Related To Labour. The Word Is Used In The Contexts Presented In The Table Below.

Table Below. Table 3

| In Malaysia, The Industrial Court Was Left Vacant In August 2014 when Four Judges Retired At The Same Time, Further Restricting The Already Limited Access To Justice For Workers. (P.8) | En Malaisie, Par Exemple, Le Tribunal Du Travail Est Reste Vacant En Aout 2014, Car Quatre Juges Ont Pris Leur Retraite En Même Temps, Ce Qui A Limite Un Accès A La Justice Déjà Restreint Pour Les Travailleurs. (P.8) |
| Leader In The International Solidarity Campaign To Protect Aviation Standards In South America, His Detention Was Made While He Was Distributing Information In The Jorge Chavez Airport In Lima And Answering Questions From Passengers About The Upcoming Industrial Actions And Strikes In LAN And TAM Airlines. (P.65) | Dirigeant De La Campagne De Solidarité Internationale Pour Protéger Les Normes De L’aviation En Amérique Du Sud, Il A Été Arrêté Alors Qu’il Distribuait Des Brochures D’information A L’aéroport Jorge Chavez A Lima Et Qu’il Répondait Aux Questions Posées Par Les Passagers Au Sujet Des Prochaines Mobilisations Et Grèves Dans Les Compagnies LAN Et TAM Airlines. (P.68) |
Hazelman, And General-Secretary Of Fiji’s Trade Union Congress, Felix Anthony Signed An Agreement To Use The Employment Relations Promulgation (ERP) As The Primary Basis For Labour Management Relations In The Country.(P.72)


The Protest Was Attended By Industrial Workers, Political And Social Activists As Well As Students. (P.76)

Des Travailleurs/Euses Du Secteur, Des Militant(E)S Politiques Et Sociaux, Ainsi Que Des Etudiant(E)S, Ont Participé A La Manifestation. (P.79)

“There Is Increasing Repression Of Trade Unions Nationwide, Especially Of Unions Who Are Steadfast In Supporting Workers And Unwilling To Bend Their Principles To Submit To Fake “Industrial Peace” Where The Welfare Of Capitalists Are Prioritised Over That Of The Workers,” Said Basilio. (P.77)


Already In 2010 Deva Used A Range Of Union Busting Tactics To Dismantle A 40-Year Industrial Relations System At Plants In The Cercekzy, Kartepe And The Topkapı Area Of Istanbul. (P.84)


In These Contexts, The Word ‘Industrial’ Has Contracted Syntagmatic Relations With Other Words And Has Contributed To The Meanings Of The Syntagms Such As “Industrial Court, Industrial Relations, Industrial Peace, Industrial Relations System, Industrial Workers, Industrial Action, Industrial Company.”

About The Contribution Of Words To The Meanings Of More Complex Units, Cruse (1986: 9) Stresses That:

“As A Matter Of Fact, There Is No Reason Why Language Users Should Be Especially Attuned To The Semantic Properties Of Words. We Do Not Communicate With Isolated Words; Words Are Not The Bearers Of Messages; They Do Not, Of Themselves, ‘Make Sense’; They Cannot, Taken Singly, Be True Or False… Words Contribute, Via Their Own Semantic Properties, To The Meanings Of More Complex Units, But Individually They Do Not Occasion Our Most Vivid And Direct Experiences Of Language.’’

In The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, There Are Entries Such As Industrial Action, Industrial Relations, Industrial Tribunal, Industrial Arts, Industrial Estate. An Industrial Action Is An Action That Workers Take, Especially Stopping Work, To Protest To Their Employers About Something. Industrial Relations Are Relations Between Employers And Employees. An Industrial Tribunal Is A Type Of Court That Can Decide On Disputes Between Employers And Employees.

It Is Obvious That In The Context Of The World Of Work, The Word ‘Industrial’ Refers Not Only To Industries But Also To Workers And Employers. This Second Meaning Is Made Clearer In Most Of The Syntagms In Which The Word ‘Industrial’ Is Found.

IV. CONCLUSION

In A Nutshell There Is Definitely A Relationship Between Syntagm And Semantics On The One Hand And Context And Semantics On The Other Hand. What Does The Verb ‘To Consider’ Mean In The Context Of The Aviation Industry? It Does Not Have Only One Meaning. Its Meaning Depends On The Syntagm To Which It Is Attached. The Context Also Influences Word Meaning. So Far It Has Been Shown That Some Words Are Equivalents Of Other Words But In Other Contexts They Are Not. A Word May Have Five Or More Equivalents But These Are Not Interchangeable In All Situations. In Fact A Word Shares Some Semantic Properties With Other Words. Neither A Dictionary Nor A Thesaurus Can Adequately Present Two Words That Are Equivalent, Their Approach Can Be Misleading Because They Do Not Present Words In Various Contexts. For Example, If I Read In A Dictionary Or A Thesaurus That ‘To Demand’ Is An Equivalent Of ‘Faire Valoir’, How Do I Know That The Equivalence Between These Two Terms Is Limited To One Or Two Contexts, Especially If I Am Learning Either Of The Two Languages? In Fact Demand And Faire Valoir Share Some Semantic Properties But They Are Two Different Concepts. This Realisation Will Pave The Way For Further Explorations In The Fields Of Conceptology And Terminology.

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