

Application of Frames to the Practice of Translation with Reference to News Translation

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1. Introduction

This paper aims to study expectations and experiences, or to speak more precisely, textual expectations modeled upon textual experiences with regard to the activity of translation.

In order to talk about expectations and experiences, the paper borrows the useful concept of frame from such predecessors as Goffman (1967, 1974, 1981), Fillmore (1977, 1982, 1985), and Tannen (1993). These scholars represent some of the pioneers who enlightened us about human experiences and expectations. Building on their works and insights, the present study attempts to explore what experiences tell us about expectations when it comes to text interpretation and text production, two important phases which

constitute the process of translation.

Based on the assumption that different cultures should have different perspectives on and knowledge structure about phenomena, the basic question that is dealt with in the present study is how the idea of frame, both cognitive and interactive, can be applied to the practice of news translation.

2. Frame

Frame in the present study is given a comprehensive and extended meaning, encompassing both 'interactive/interpretive' frame from Goffman (1974) in his discourse analysis and 'cognitive' frame from Fillmore (1982) in his cognitive linguistics. By incorporating these cognitive and interactive functions of frame into a single framework, the present study attempts to demonstrate that the two are inextricably intertwined insofar as they talk about human experiences and expectations.

With regard to cognitive frame, we believe that the exact interpretation of a word requires individuals to activate all the meaning components which form the meaning of the word. While cognitive frame is mostly applied to the lexical level, interactive frame leads us to a more global level in which we concern ourselves with the nature of the interaction or appropriate types of behavior for the interaction at hand. What this implies is that interactive frame motivates individuals to consider with whom and in what situation they are interacting. In the same sense, it leads people to consult past experiences in order to figure out their interactants' expectations as to the interaction at hand.

For example, according to Goffman, a person can frame an activity as a hobby or an occupation, just as he can frame a statement as a joke or an insult. Depending on how he frames things, the person relates to others accordingly. Furthermore, how he defines the situation influences the language he speaks. For instance, a computer expert would vary his language according

to whom he talks with. When he judges his interactant to be highly knowledgeable about computer, he would not hesitate to pepper the conversation with many computer jargons. Conversely, when talking with computer illiterates, the person would try to make his language as clear and simple as possible.

Such language variance according to the situational context, as demonstrated in the above examples, is equally relevant to the practice of translation. Obviously the translational approach to literary novels should be different from news reports or legal documents. This is because the translator *frames* novels differently from the latter types of texts.

Based on these basic understandings, the present study starts with the assumption that the frame, mostly interactive, which was originally established between the original writer and the readers in the English Source Text (hereafter referred to as ST) is differently set up in the Korean Target Text (hereafter referred to as TT). This is, we believe, because the translator induces such modifications in order to accommodate the communicative needs of the target text readers.

2.1. Interactive/Interpretive Frame

The concept of frame grows out of the observation that since social encounters, either face-to-face or mediated contact with other participants, are an indispensable part of human life, individuals tend to define the situation they are located in each time they enter into another's immediate presence. Goffman comes up with the piercing observation that individuals in an interactional situation seek to reach and sustain in a coordinated way a common definition of the situation, more specifically what the situation is about and how participants in it relate to each other.

For Goffman, frames are "schemata of interpretation" (1974, p.21) which allow individuals "to locate, perceive, identify, and label" occurrences, whether

natural or social. In other words, frames are the means by which people experience the situation, figure out appropriate conducts for that situation, and interpret the behavior of others.

The importance of frame, especially in linguistic study, lies in that frame and its change bring out changes in language use. To take an example of Korean honorific system, a professor who calls his student by his first name in a private setting might switch to the full name plus *ssi*, a Korean equivalent of Mr/Ms, in the public environment. This switch in address terms reflects the definition that the participants share about the situation and appropriate behaviors expected of them. Hence, Goffman (1974) suggests that language change signals frame switch.

Since frame is something socially constructed, it is subject to transformation. With regard to this elastic and vulnerable nature of frame, Goffman notes that a frame can be transformed in two important ways: *keying* and *rekeying*. Goffman defines *keying* as a process by which a given activity, one already meaningful in terms of its domain, is transformed into something patterned on this activity but seen by the participants to be something else. *Rekeying* refers to the process of transforming what is keyed. For instance, a story is made into a movie by the process of *keying* and then the movie is rendered into a musical comedy by the process of *rekeying*. He notes that there is no limit on the extent to which a particular form of behavior is rekeyed.

In connection with frame, Goffman makes another important observation that people attempt to define and make sense of the situation based on past experience. What Goffman suggests is that the definition of a social situation by each participant is guided by cultural assumptions that he brings into operation and that the successful interaction presupposes the existence of shared cultural knowledge.

2.2. Cognitive Frame

Fillmore's work on cognitive/cultural frame provides a theoretical framework with which cognitive aspect of frame can be fully explored. The basic premise underlying his idea is that the linguistic material should be discussed with reference to a "structured background of experience, beliefs, or practices, constituting a kind of conceptual prerequisite for understanding the meaning" (Fillmore 1982, p.127).

Borrowing Fillmore's example, the word BREAKFAST can be fully understood when a person understands "the practice of having three meals a day, at more or less conventionally established time of the day, and for one of these meals to be the one which is eaten early in the day, after a period of sleep, and for it to consist of somewhat unique menu" (Fillmore 1982, p.128). Extending the concept of prototype, he further notes that prototypes can serve as the guidelines insofar as they are the reference point by which individuals come to terms with their experiences, textual or non-textual. As such, the concept of prototypes is naturally brought into play when people raise such questions as "what is it that is going on" (Goffman 1974, p.26) or "to what genre a particular text belongs to?" (Swales 1990, p.8).

While Goffman approached the concept from a sociological research tradition, Fillmore came to it by a different course, cognitive tradition of the notion (David 1997). These seemingly disparate perspectives converge at Tannen (1993), among others, who blends them into a single analytic framework to account for how such cognitive concepts as experiences and expectations influence our perception and get manifested in linguistic interaction. What figures as the most important arguments in her works (Tannen 1993) are: (1) frames are structures of expectation based on past experience; (2) these structures are manifested in linguistic expressions; (3) the mismatch of schemas between interactional participants produces frame shift.

To her, frames represent expectations based on past experience. In the

case of cross-cultural communication, she notes, people should be aware that their interactants might have different expectations about the overall aspects of the interaction, largely because such expectations are formed out of dissimilar experiences.

2.3. Application of frame into the practice of translation

The concept of frame, as noted above, is inextricably tied with the notion of genre (Bedrarek 2005). For example, a reader usually knows what newspaper as a genre is like in general and how the news reporter customarily aligns himself in relation with the readers in particular. The interactional pattern in the genre of news might be evidently different from that of narrative, to take an example.¹⁾ Similarly, even in the same genre, due to cultural differences, the interactional alignment - which is established between the writer and the readers - in the English texts might be different from the Korean texts and this assumption, we believe, would bear itself out in the genre of news articles.

We believe that we can apply the concept of frame to the practice of translation in two important ways. First, with regard to cognitive frame, culture-specific frames evoked in the ST might require the translator to employ some translational strategies due to their unavailability to the TT readers. Secondly, as to interactive frame, we can postulate that the

1) The interactive frame governing the genre of narrative should dictate the narrator, among many requirements, to proceed with chronological order, by "matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which actually occurred." (Labov 1999: 225). News, on the other hand, operates on a different interactional frame, since it tends to bind the writer to strategically place at the outset the highlight of the story, which is technically referred to as *headline*, followed by *lead* and *news story*. Besides this structural constraint, the news writer is expected by readers to be, among many things, objective and impartial with the content.

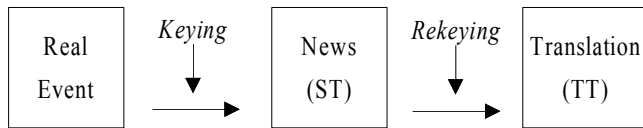
interactional norms which are expected of the participants (writer and readers) in the ST might have a different shape in the TT even in the same genre and such a dissimilarity can be said to motivate the translator to employ translational strategies. With such basic understanding, the paper attempts to come to grips with whether the translated news text is dictated with possibly a different interactive frame from the one governing the production of the ST and, if so, what justifies such a shift.

3. Data

The data used in this paper are mainly drawn from newspaper and magazine articles, such as *Newsweek* (hereafter referred to as NW) and *Korea Herald* (hereafter referred to as KH) and their Korean translations. While *Newsweek* enjoys an international reputation as news media and a global readership, *Korea Herald* is a home-based English newspaper whose readership comprises foreign residents in Korea on the one hand and elite locals with reading ability of the English language on the other. Their respective Korean editions, *Newsweek Korea* and *Korea Herald Translation Service*, are produced by professional translators.

4. Analysis

Following the lead of Goffman, the discussion below is built around the basic assumption that news (ST) constitutes a keyed representation of a real event, while its translation (TT) is a rekeyed representation of the ST, with each representation operating on differing interactional norms. The whole process is schematically presented as follows:



<Figure 1> *Keying* and *Rekeying* in News and Its Translation

The figure above illustrates graphically the point I would like to emphasize: the TT also represents "the interpretation of an interpreted text" (Fairclough 1989, p.17). The translated text, as the interpretation of an interpretation, is produced in accordance with textual norms, which should be different from the ST-related ones.

4.1. Translation of Cognitive Frame

In the following example, the English expression *covered wagon* evokes the image of WESTERN EXPLORATION FRAME, which would activate frame elements such as *gold mining, adversity and immigrants* to name just a representative few. Such a frame, which is readily accessible and transparently meaningful for the ST readers, is not collectively available to the Korean readers. This restraint has forced the translator to replace it with its general meaning, thus paraphrasing it as 'a difficult journey'.

(1) (NW, January 31, 2005)

ST: "Women arrived here in covered wagon. Their contributions were respected from the beginning," says Gregoire.

TT: 그레고아르는 “여성들은 과거 힘난한 여행 끝에 이 땅에 도착했다. 그래서 그들의 공헌은 처음부터 존중을 받았다”고 말했다.

The next example presents another case in which culture-specific

frames are mostly replaced with their explanations.

(2) (KH, March 31, 2003)

ST: The end is nearing for the old Volkswagen Beetle, the much-loved Love Bug which will shortly go the way of the flower power era icons like kaftans and the Doors.

구 폭스바겐 자동차의 종말이 다가오고 있다. 많은 운전자들의 사랑을 받았던 비틀 ‘러브 버그’가 중동의 긴 소매옷인 카프탄과 록 밴드 ‘더도어스’와 같은 히피족 시대의 다른 우상들이 밟았던 전철을 곧 밟을 예정이다.

In example (2), the ST readers, who are supposedly familiar with the hippie era, will be able to invoke a frame, which carries frame elements such as *Kaftan* and *the Doors*. Most Korean readers, however, should not be able to summon into the interpretation process these culture-specific associations, not to mention the knowledge that the *flower power era* refers to *the hippie era*. The extract suggests, thus, that the semantic gap left unfilled between the ST readers and the TT readers is mended by the twin mechanisms: replacement (of *the flower power era* with *the hippie era*) and addition (of information on *kaftan* and *the Doors*).

4. 2. Translation of Interactive Frame

As noted above, the concept of frame goes beyond the level of individual words and it is inseparably related with genre or text types. That is, readers encounter a piece of text with some knowledge about general features that characterize the text. For example, we expect news articles as a genre to be informative, objective, and impartial but understand that these requirements do not constitute the distinctive features with the genre of novels. Now if we

apply the notion of interactive frame, which we have agreed to be established and collectively ratified by the news writer and the readership, to the genre of news articles, we can assume that cultural difference might play as an important factor affecting the pattern and shape of interaction. As a way to pin down such differences, the discussion starts with the analysis of colloquial expressions, expressions regarded as primarily interaction-oriented.

(3) (NW, July 9, 2003)

ST: Its difficult to say exactly how many of 113 million married Americans are too exhausted or too grumpy to get it on but some psychologists estimate that 15 to 20 percent of couples have sex no more than 10 times a year, which is how experts define sexless marriage.

TT: 결혼한 미국인 1억 천 3백만명 가운데 너무 지치거나 서로에게 불만이 많아 섹스를 못하는 사람이 얼마나 되는지 정확히 알 수는 없다. 그러나 일부 심리학자들은 1년에 10회 미만의 성관계를 갖는 부부를 전문가들은 ‘섹스리스 커플(sexless couple)’이라고 부른다.

(4) (NW, July 9, 2003)

ST: Kim Jong Il is strange, all right, but not so flaky that he can't function.

TT: 김 정일이 이상한 것은 사실이지만 그는 자기 역할을 하지 못할 정도로 괴짜는 아니다.

The dialogic expressions *grumpy* and *get it on* in example (3) are replaced with *discontent* and *have sex* respectively, while *all right* in (4) is rendered into the concessive clause headed by the concessive conjunction. The above examples exhibit a consistent and repetitive pattern by which the colorfulness and vigor of the ST, especially with reference to colloquial expressions, is

noticeably subdued in the Korean translation. In order to throw a meaningful light on the phenomena, we tap into the concept of politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987). While the English STs in the above examples seem to put more importance on forging solidarity with the readers (Positive Politeness), by sending the metmessage "I am just one of you" with the use of such informal words as *get it on*, *grumpy*, and *have sex*, the TTs appear to maintain distance from both the subject and readers in (3) and from readers in (4) (Negative Politeness). Put differently, the STs appear to be more mindful of the phatic function of text as "an offer of contact" (Nord 1997, p.44), a function which is not as accentuated in the TT. To continue with this TEXT as OFFER OF CONTACT analogy, such linguistic markers as colloquial and dialogic expressions serve as ice-breakers between the writer and the readers. The same observation is made by Kirk (2001) and Kang (2004), which basically state that colloquial expressions as interactive markers are either replaced or totally dropped over the course of translation. Such a translation shift in terms of involvement is, we believe, generated by differing interactive frames operative in the ST and the TT, or rather the genre to which the TT belongs. Then the question is what has motivated the translator to activate a different interactive frame in the TT.

We find an important clue to the answer in the concept of frame again. I suggest that the Korean translator has obviously modeled his translation after the news texts originally written in Korean. The translator's previous experience of the Korean news texts and familiarity with the characteristic norms of the texts, we believe, has formed NEWS FRAME in his mind, which in turn serves as a touchstone in creating the same text type translated texts in the target language. We, of course, base such an analysis on the assumption that Korean news texts are generally more formal and detached in their register compared with their English counterparts, even though the assumption requires thorough verification in the future study.

The formality and detachment in register, a trait which is generally

assumed to be typical with the genre of Korean news texts, is transplanted into the Korean TTs. Note should be also taken that such frame is collectively shared by the writer and the readers in the same speech community.

What is equally important here is the observation that "such behavior [distance-maintenance] can nonetheless seem quite friendly in interaction with those who expect devices associated with this strategy" (Tannen 1984, p.12). In other words, this strategy of negative politeness can be conducive to making Korean TT readers at ease, because the writer/translator is speaking the language they expect him to use. Hatim and Mason (1997) are of the same opinion, by noting that "the seriousness of the FTA is a cultural variable; it cannot be assumed that the same act would carry the same weight in different socio-cultural settings" (p.81). This leads us to suggest that the incorporation of such expressions as sexually explicit or unbecomingly dialogic in the English STs in (3) and (4) into the Korean TTs can be viewed as norm-defying and expectation-challenging by the Korean target readers, ultimately face-threatening.

We believe that the sense of solidarity between the writer and the readers can be produced by different devices other than dialogic expressions. Such devices might include the use of some collectively shared information in a certain cultural community. Thus making an associational link to the repertory of collective memory/knowledge by the writer and recognizing it by the readers is essentially interactional and mutually reinforcing their membership in the same community. In this sense, idioms and allusions are, we believe, conducive to forging a sense of ingroupness between the writer and readers. (Leppihalme 1997; Dalabastiti 1987). The following fragments show how these associational links used in the English STs are rendered into the Korean translations.

(5) (KH, April 28, 2003)

ST: Starbucks cup half full, analysts say

TT: 분석가들, 스타벅스의 야심 덜 채워졌다고 판단

(6) (NW, February 20, 2003)

ST: The Road Less Traveled

TT: 수렁에 빠진 관광 산업

Apparently, the phrase *cup half full* in the ST is allusive to the biblical line *my cup overflows*²⁾, while *the road less traveled* is allusive to the poem by Robert Frost. It appears that the translator has decided to sacrifice the allusions and replace them with their literal messages. In this regard, the main function of creating solidarity with readers on the basis of such shared cultural knowledge gets noticeably diminished in the Korean TTs.

5. Conclusion

This paper has suggested that English texts, which make frequent use of various rhetorical devices, are not directly transferred to the Korean translations but replaced with frequent summary-presentations. This leads us to claim that the summary-presenting headlines are the prototypical headlines, as far as translated Korean headlines are concerned. We also note that this stylistic difference between the STs and the TTs is grown out of the translators judgment that the conceptual frames evoked by the English originals would not be instantaneously available to the Korean readers.

2) Psalm 23.5 reads that You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil: my cup overflows (emphasis mine).

The stylistic difference between the English STs and their Korean TTs has been attributed to intertextual considerations, which hold between the TTs and the same genre of texts in the target culture. Such intertextual constraints, it has been argued, also exert influence on interactional distance between the text producer and receiver.

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[Abstract]

**Application of Frames to the Practice of Translation
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In this article, I have discussed how a translation must be "coherent" (Vermeer 1996) within the context of the target reader. This coherence is achieved by the "awareness of receivers' assumptions and expectations" (Mason 2000:16).

In order to illustrate this rather nebulous idea of reader assumptions and expectations, we have adopted the useful concept of frames. As to the interactional aspect of frames, I have seen that the interactional distance (Lee 1996) between interactants (that is, the news writer and news readers) is established differently in the ST and TT. While the English source texts, in the present study, make frequent use of solidarity-creating expressions, the Korean target texts resort to distance-maintaining markers. This leads us to suggest that different interactional frames are brought into play in the ST and the TT. Accordingly, the claim has been made that the translator is required to skillfully adjust these varying interactional distances. This claim should constitute the heart of audience design espoused by many scholars including Bell (1991) in the field of the news and Mason (2002) in the branch of translation.

I have also suggested that this variance in interactive frames is closely related to differing textual rituals governing the ST and the TT. These textual rituals are something that have been acquired and reinforced by the text

producer through his or her previous encounters with texts in the same genre and same discourse community. Consequently, the concept of intertextuality is a universal consideration that the translator should pay heed to in the translation of any genre, of which the news genre represents one example.

▶Key Words: news translation, interactive frame, cognitive frame, reader expectation, frame, Intertextuality.

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