

Questions in translations from English into Swedish and Norwegian

There have been many translation/contrastive studies investigating English vs. Swedish (e.g. Aijmer 2017) and Norwegian (e.g. Ebeling & Ebeling 2017), but questions in general have seemingly not been treated except for a restricted pilot study on Norwegian vs. English by Wikberg (1996). There are also previous studies only dealing with tag questions in translations between English and Swedish/Norwegian (Axelsson 2006, 2009). The aim of this study is to establish what happens to questions (here defined as clauses/fragments followed by a question mark) in English fiction texts when they are translated into Swedish and Norwegian (bokmål). The focus is on non-congruent translations (cf. Fredriksson 2016), in particular when there is a change into another question type or into a non-question, e.g. a statement. Swedish and Norwegian are fairly closely related to English: the major question types (*wh*-questions, *yes/no*-questions, alternative questions, declarative questions, tag questions, fragments and indirect questions) are common in all three languages. The default translation is thus a congruent translation. There may be several hypotheses why non-congruent translations are used: 1. differences in the grammatical structures of questions, 2. differences in the preference for particular question types, 3. different conventions for the language of fiction, 4. translators' aim for idiomaticity, and 5. translation universals such as explicitation and normalisation. The data for this study has been retrieved from parts of the *English-Swedish Parallel Corpus* and the *English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus* and comprises 2,026 questions in English originals and their translations into Swedish and Norwegian. Results show that about 5% of phrases/clauses with a question mark in the English originals are translated into Swedish and Norwegian without a question mark. Most of these cases are declarative questions or *wh*-fragments in the English originals.

References

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Corpora

English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus (ENPC). <<http://www.hf.uio.no/ilos/english/services/omc/enpc/>>
English-Swedish Parallel Corpus (ESPC). <<http://www.sol.lu.se/engelska/corpus/corpus/espc.html>>