CORPUS STYLISTICS IN TRANSLATION-ORIENTED TEXT ANALYSIS: APPROACHING THE WORK OF DENTON WELCH FROM A FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE

ESTILÍSTICA DE CORPUS E ANÁLISE TEXTUAL DE RELEVÂNCIA TRADUTÓRIA: UMA ABORDAGEM INICIAL À OBRA DE DENTON WELCH A PARTIR DE UMA PERSPECTIVA FUNCIONALISTA

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This article is an effort towards interpreting the findings of a corpus-based stylistic analysis of the short narrative "Sickert at St Peter's" (1942), written by the English writer and painter Denton Welch (1915–1948), within the larger framework for translation-oriented text analysis presented by Christiane Nord in *Textanalyse und Übersetzen* (2009). The aim is to explore both the theoretical possibilities and the practical applications of a corpus-based approach to the lexical analysis phase of Nord's model from a literary translation perspective, in which style and word choice play a critical role. Once the statistical findings of the corpus-based analysis are presented, the 25 highest-ranking keywords in the text are analyzed in context. Translation briefs and literary translation in general are discussed, and a global pre-translational strategy for translating "Sickert at St Peter's" is presented. By way of conclusion, it is argued that the method described promotes valuable insights for literary interpretation and serves as a practical aid in developing a pre-translational strategy for translating individual texts.

Keywords: Corpus Linguistics. Corpus Stylistics. Literary Translation. Translation Studies. Functionalism. Denton Welch.

O presente artigo propõe-se a interpretar os resultados de uma análise estilística da narrativa breve "Sickert at St Peter's" (1942), do escritor e pintor inglês Denton Welch (1915–1948), feita de acordo com os métodos da linguística de corpus no contexto da análise textual de relevância tradutória apresentada por Christiane Nord em *Textanalyse und Übersetzen* (2009). O objetivo é explorar as possibilidades

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teóricas e as aplicações práticas de uma abordagem de corpus na fase de análise lexical que compõe o modelo de Nord sob a perspectiva da tradução literária, em que o estilo e as escolhas lexicais desempenham um papel fundamental. Após uma apresentação dos resultados da análise, as 25 palavras-chave de maior destaque são analisadas em contexto. Procede-se então a uma discussão sobre as especifica-ções tradutórias e a tradução literária em geral e à apresentação de uma estratégia pré-tradutória global passível de ser aplicada à tradução de "Sickert at St Peter's". O estudo conclui que a metodologia descrita oferece um contributo valioso para a interpretação de textos literários e serve como uma ferramenta prática no desenvol-vimento de estratégias pré-tradutórias aplicáveis a textos literários individualmente considerados.

Palavras-chave: Linguística de corpus. Estilística de corpus. Tradução literária. Estudos de tradução. Funcionalismo. Denton Welch.

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1. Translation-oriented text analysis: An overview

In her book *Textanalyse und Übersetzen* (2009), Christiane Nord proposes a model for translation-oriented text analysis that aims to produce target texts characterized as *functional* – that is, suitable to the Skopos (purpose) to be achieved in the target culture. This functionalist approach recognizes that different translation purposes call for different translation approaches and claims that a thorough analysis of source text features offers valuable insights as to how a given source text works – and by extension as to which should be the optimal translation procedure in each particular case in view of these findings and the translation brief for the translation to be carried out.

According to Nord's model, any text can be analyzed within a frame-work composed by seventeen items. Eight of these are extratextual elements ("sender", "sender's intention", "audience", "medium/channel", "place of com-munication", "time of communication", "motive for communication" and "text function") and eight are intratextual elements ("subject matter", "con-tent", "presuppositions", "text composition", "non-verbal elements", "lexis", "sentence structure" and "suprasegmental features"). Together, these sixteen

textual elements work in order to achieve a given "effect"[1] – at the same time, the seventeenth item to be analyzed and a special category defined as "ein übergreifender Faktor, durch den das Zusammen'spiel' zwischen textexternen und textinternen Faktoren erfasst wird" (Nord 2009, p. 40).[2]

The last three intratextual items in the exhaustive list presented above are described by Nord as the "sprachlich-stylistische Merkmale" (Nord 2009, pp. 89-90)[3] of a text, and as such can be considered as particularly relevant in the translation of literature, given that style and aesthetics have always played a major role in the production and reception of literary texts.[4] The very notion of literary language, regardless of a precise definition of what constitutes literature[5], seems to be substantially dependent on style:

> Whatever stand we take on these questions of definition, literary language is clearly assumed to have a particularly connotative, expressive or aesthetic meaning of its own. (Nord 1997, p. 81)

This article is an effort to explore ways of employing a corpus linguistics approach in the pre-translational stage of a literary translation as part of the broader translation-oriented text analysis framework set forth by Nord.

Once the theoretical possibilities of this approach are discussed, its practical application is demonstrated by means of a case study centered around the short narrative "Sickert at St Peter's" by the English writer and painter Maurice Denton Welch (1915–1948). After a corpus-based lexical analysis of this particular narrative is made against the background of Welch's three full-length novels, the results of the corpus analysis are examined in context, a translation brief for a literary translation of the narrative is defined and a pre-translational global translation strategy is presented.

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1 The English-language terminology, as well as all English translations of Nord's original German text, are henceforth taken without exception from *Text Analysis in Translation,* translated into English by Christiane Nord and Penelope Sparrow.

2 "A global or holistic concept, which comprises the interdependence or interplay of extratextual and intratextual factors" (Nord 2009, p. 42).

3 "Formal-aesthetic characteristics" (Nord 2005, p. 91).

4 See Herrmann, Dalen-Oskam and Schöch (2015) for a comprehensive review of definitions of style at different periods and in different cultures.

5 Nord defines literariness as "first and foremost a pragmatic quality assigned to a particular text in the communicative situation by its users" (Nord 1997, p. 82).

2. Integrating a corpus approach to translation-oriented text analysis

The integration of a corpus approach into the larger framework in which Nord's functionalist model for translation-oriented text analysis works does not present any sort of theoretical restriction, since functionalism explicitly "makes use of descriptive methods" (Nord 1997, p. 2) such as corpus linguistics. When applied specifically to the analysis of literary texts, the corpus linguistics approach has often been called "corpus stylistics".

Several studies of literary language from a corpus stylistics perspective have made interesting contributions to the field[6] by focusing on the computer-assisted generation of a keyword list for the text to be analyzed and a human-made interpretative analysis of the highest-ranked keywords in this keyword list. The initial automated phase is often called quantitative analysis, whereas the later interpretative phase receives the name of qualitative analysis.

Keywords can be defined as words whose frequency in the text under analysis is statistically significant when compared to the frequency of those same words in a reference corpus formed by any number of other texts. In other words, given a text T and a reference corpus RC, a keyword list of T is a list of words whose frequency in T is proportionally higher than would be expected from the frequency observed in RC. During the quantitative analysis phase, there are several different methods to make these calculations (some of which are built into computer programs specifically designed for corpus analysis), but the result is always a numerical keyness value ascribed to each of the words in T. The higher the keyness, the larger the deviation between the expected word frequency based on the statistical data provided by RC and the actual data measured in T. Hence, the top-ranking words in a computer-generated keyword list can and should be treated as likely candidates for further qualitative analysis.

This kind of approach can be applied to Nord's unmodified model for translation-oriented text analysis[7], even though the application of a corpus approach to literary texts presents special problems.

The basic text typology espoused by functionalism relies on three (Vermeer and Reiß 1991) or four (Nord 2014) basic textual functions: the

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6   See the bibliography for the examples cited in this article.

7   See Nord (2009), pp. 124–131 or Nord (2005), pp. 122–129.

informative/referential function, the expressive function, the operative/appellative function and the phatic function (the last being exclusive to Nord). However, this classification serves only as a description of the manner in which the text is intended to work. The subject matter and the formal characteristics of texts are encompassed by the notion of text classes[8], defined as texts "classified according to linguistic characteristics of conventions" (Nord 1997, p. 37).

Several text classes[9] have a more or less predictable form in a given culture – this holds true both in the case of highly codified and topic-specific types with very strict form, such as cooking recipes and weather reports, as well as topic-independent but form-bound types, such as newspaper items. Any text which does not conform to the expected standard can be said to be a deviation (in a neutral sense) from the given text class's norm.

Literary texts, however, seem to pose a special problem to the notion of text classes: though texts can in fact be grouped under the description of "poems", "short stories" or "novels", these do not have a standard form, a standard theme or even a standard style of writing, all of which depend entirely on the particular artistic project of each individual author.[10] As a result, there is absolutely no standard for a piece of literary writing, which can – both in theory and practice – be written in any style, devoted to any topic and as short or as long as the individual author wishes. As pointed out by Nord (2009):

> Im Bereich der literarischen Texte sind konventionelle Merkmale nicht so häufig wie bei den Gebrauchstexten. Gattungsbezeichnungen wie Roman, Kurzgeschichte, Anekdote weisen zwar darauf hin, dass man von den so klassifizierten Texten bestimmte gemeinsame Merkmale erwartet, diese beziehen sich aber meist auf inhaltlich-thematische (z.B. Anekdote vs. Witz), extensionale (z.B. Roman vs. Erzählung) oder epochenspezifische (z.B. Novelle vs. Kurzgeschichte) Aspekte oder bestimmte Stileigenschaften (z.B. *Sturm und Drang*). Im Allgemeinen wird jedoch der literarische Einzeltext als Ergebnis

8 Nord's terminology is unstable with relation to this term, which corresponds to the German *Textsorte*: in Nord (2005)*,* the term has been rendered in English as "text class" (see p. 20), whereas Nord (1997) refers to the same concept as "text genres or varieties" (p. 37).

9 For a thorough discussion of text types (*Texttypen*) and text classes (*Textsorten*), see Nord (2009), pp. 19–21, or Nord (2005), also pp. 19–21.

10 Nord (2009, p. 46; 2005, pp. 47–48) makes a clear distinction between text sender and text producer. The sender is responsible for the communication being carried out, whereas the producer is responsible for producing the text which is to serve as a means of communication. The designation of "author" is employed only when the roles of sender and producer coincide in one and the same person.

eines individuellen Schöpfungsprozesses gesehen, der gerade dadurch seine (künstlerische) Bedeutung erhält, dass er *nicht* vorhandene Muster reproduziert (…), sondern "originell" und damit innovatorisch ist.[11]

The situation described above is not without implications for corpus analyses of literary works, since this kind of approach often relies on reference corpora whose purpose is to serve as a balanced and neutral reference against which the unique features of the corpus being analyzed may be revealed – but, given that not even literary texts within the same text class present a minimally standardized style or a minimally established theme, it is simply not possible to find a balanced and neutral reference corpus to serve as a means of comparison. As a result, the choice of adequate reference corpora for analyzing a literary corpus needs to be made with due attention to the specifics of the task at hand.

In order to cope with the problem described above, scholars involved in corpus stylistics have largely resorted to two different work methods, and often to a combination of the two.

The first method consists in comparing a corpus of works by the author to be studied against a corpus of various works by several contemporary authors. This procedure may be used to prevent the resulting keyword list from including words that are not peculiar to the author in question, but rather common in all literature written at that particular time. Patrick Maiwald (2011) offers a clear illustration of the problem: when comparing George MacDonald's (1824–1905) "fantasy" works to the "imaginative" subset of the 20th century British National Corpus, words such as "light", "shine", "ray" "gleam", "glimmer", "moonlight" and "sunlight" appear as keywords – but, in a comparison of MacDonald's fantasy works with the work of other 19th century writers, they disappear completely from the keyword list, "thus proving that this preoccupation with light and 'visuality' is not particular to MacDonald, but to Victorian writers in general" (Maiwald 2011, p. 73). Jonathan Culpeper offers a similar warning:

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11 (Nord 2009, p. 21). The English translation reads: "In the field of literary texts conventional elements are not so frequent as in the field of non-literary texts. Designations such as "novel", "short story", or "anecdote" may, however, indicate that the texts belonging to one of these genres are expected to possess certain common features. Literary genres are often differentiated by special features of subject matter or content (anecdote vs. joke), extension (novel vs. short story) or by their affiliation to a literary era (novella vs. short story), as well as by certain stylistic properties. Nevertheless, a literary text usually has to be regarded as the result of an individual and creative process. Its (artistic) significance lies precisely in the fact that it does *not* reproduce existing text models (…), but represents an original innovation" (Nord 2005, pp. 21–22).

> In any keyword analysis, the choice of data for comparison (the reference list) is crucial. (...) Clearly, a set of data which has no relationship with the data to be examined is unlikely to reveal interesting results. (Culpeper 2002, p. 15)

When judiciously applied, though, this method offers valuable insights into the general style and themes of a given author.

The second method consists in using a corpus of works by a single author and comparing the individual work to be studied against some of all of the others. This is a rather more specific method than the previous one in that it will not offer insights related to the general writing traits of the author in question, but rather outline what makes the single work – or even component parts of the single work, like chapters or the speech of a single character – unique. This method may lead to unexpected finds that could hardly be gleaned from a stylistic analysis performed without any sort of computer assistance: after preparing separate corpora for six individual characters in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet,* for example, Jonathan Culpeper found that Juliet's most prevalent keyword is "if" – a find described as "striking" because "it does not seem so obviously guessable, partly because it is a grammatical word" (Culpeper 2002, p. 20).

Once a fitting corpus stylistics method is chosen and implemented, the analysis of the resulting keyword list as part of the lexical analysis phase within the larger framework for translation-oriented text analysis can proceed.

3. Case study: A corpus stylistics analysis of Denton Welch's "Sickert at St Peter's"

In order to illustrate the approach outlined above, I would like to present a corpus-based, translation-oriented pre-translational text analysis of the short narrative "Sickert at St Peter's" by the English writer and painter Maurice Denton Welch (1915–1948).

Welch was an art student and an aspiring painter when, at the age of 20, he was hit by a car while riding his bicycle, suffering devastating injuries as a result. His spine was fractured; his kidneys failed; his bladder was paralyzed and he was left partially impotent. However, in spite of an impressive recovery which eventually allowed him to resume walking and even riding a bicycle, for the rest of his life Welch had to deal with severe long-term injuries caused by the accident.

After making a partial recovery, Welch left the hospital for a nursing home, and while living there paid a visit to the English painter Walter Sickert (1860–1942) in 1936. Years later, as Welch became more interested in writing – partly as a kind of post-accident personal therapy –, this episode found a written form and eventually resulted in his first published piece: the short narrative "Sickert at St Peter's", published in the August 1942 issue of the literary magazine *Horizon.* After this first publication, Welch would go on to write poems, journals, around sixty short stories and the three full-length novels for which he is most known, entitled *Maiden Voyage* (1943), *In Youth Is Pleasure* (1944) and the posthumous *A Voice Through a Cloud* (1950). This last work describes in great detail the accident whose consequences finally claimed Welch's life at 33.

It should be noted here that the context provided above is not presented as a mere curiosity; as previously stated, Nord's model for translation-oriented text analysis includes several extratextual items which should be subjected to scrutiny, and among these are "sender", "medium/channel", "place of communication", "time of communication" and "motive for communication", all of which are here accounted for, with the possible exception of "sender".

Literary pieces have an "implicit narrator" which should not be confused with the author.[12] However, as Welch scholar and biographer Michael De-la-Noy notes in several occasions, the works of Denton Welch – described as "an exclusively autobiographical author" (De-la-Noy 1984, p. xi) – tread a very fine line between fiction and autobiography:

> (…) the line between fact and fiction in [Welch's] work is often as narrow as any writer could have drawn it. (De-la-Noy 1987, p. 9)

> Although [Welch] occasionally juggled with events for dramatic purposes, every occasion about which he wrote and every character he wrote about was taken from real life. (De-la-Noy 1984, p. viii)

> (…) no writer has mirrored his life in his work so transparently, nor left us such poignant evidence of this integral connection. (De-la-Noy 1987, p. 10)

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12 As Nord puts it: "In fiktionalen Texten wird (…) ein 'impliziter Erzähler' eingeführt, der nicht mit dem Autor gleichzusetzen ist" (Nord 2009, p. 126). The English translation reads: "In fictional texts, we have to assume an 'implicit narrator' who is not identical with the author" (Nord 2005, p. 124).

In view of the above, it remains unclear to what extent Welch's first-person narrator in "Sickert at St Peter's" should be regarded as the 'same' person as the author of the text, even though this observation has little impact on the lexical analysis being proposed.

3.1. Method

Initially, Welch's three novels were loaded one by one into the corpus analysis software AntConc 3.4.4w and processed to produce an individual, lemmatized[13] word list for each novel by using a slightly modified version of Yasumasa Someya's "lemma_no_hyphen.txt" lemma list[14] for English. In each case, the resulting word list was saved as a separate text file. Next, the short narrative "Sickert at St Peter's" was loaded in AntConc, lemmatized with Someya's lemma list and, with the previously created lemmatized word lists for the three novels set as reference corpora, processed for both positive and negative keyword lists using the log-likelihood method. The resulting keyword list provides data about words which appear unusually often in "Sickert at St Peter's" in relation to the Welch's three full-length novels and about words which, given their frequency in the novels, would also be expected to appear in the short narrative, but do not do so (or do so at a significantly lower rate).

The purpose of this keyword list is to identify what makes "Sickert at St Peter's" different from Welch's novels in terms of constituent lexical items – a procedure which should promote valuable insights into the piece as well as serve as a practical aid in developing a pre-translational strategy for translating this particular text.

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13 Lemmatization is the process by which all the different forms of a given word (plurals, conjugated verbs etc.) are interpreted by the software as being one and the same.

14 A lemma list is a computer-readable series of dictionary-entry word forms and other different forms (regular and irregular plurals, regular and irregular verb conjugations etc.) these words may assume. As long as an inflected form is associated with its corresponding dictionary-entry form in a lemma list, specialized software will recognize the inflected form as being the same as the dictionary-entry form of the word in question. In the case of Yasumasa Someya's "lemma_no_hyphen.txt" lemma list for English, the modification consisted simply in removing two-letter and three-letter acronyms with an apostrophized plural or past form from the lemma list (*e.g.*: "WC's" as the plural of "WC" and "KO'd" as the past of "KO"). Since by default apostrophes are not recognized as characters by AntConc, the presence of these apostrophized forms in the lemma list caused the software to register <'s> and <'d> as forms of "WC" and "KO", respectively. No other changes were made.

3.2. Quantitative Analysis of Keyword List Items

The resulting keyword list for "Sickert at St Peter's", up to the 25th keyword, is as follows:

Table 1. Resulting keyword list for "Sickert at St Peter's"

Rank	Count	Keyness	Keyword
1	38	346.594	sickert
2	9	82.088	raven
3	8	72.967	gerald
4	7	43.287	boot
5	7	35.915	photograph
6	11	33.545	mrs
7	3	22.885	eden
8	2	18.242	anthony
9	2	18.242	beaverbrook
10	9	16.962	picture
11	12	14.800	us
12	2	14.444	hearth
13	2	14.444	original
14	2	14.444	sewer
15	18	13.277	t
16	4	13.210	evidently
17	2	12.739	pit
18	4	11.829	art
19	3	11.813	grunt
20	2	11.575	stringy
21	3	10.516	accident
22	5	10.337	cup
23	2	9.971	famous
24	3	9.719	sofa
25	13	9.226	room

In order to interpret the keyness value of each word in the list, it is necessary to understand how high the keyness value has to be in order to be considered statistically significant. Standard values are presented in the table below[15]:

Table 2. Significant values for keyness analysis

Critical value	Percentile	Error margin
3.84	95%	5%
6.63	99%	1%
10.83	99.9%	0.1%
15.13	99.99%	0.01%

In practice, this means that a word identified as having a keyness of [critical value] has a [percentile] percent chance of being statistically significant, and an [error margin] percent chance of being purely accidental.

As the keyness values in the keyword list for "Sickert at St Peter's" show, all keywords ranked 1 to 25 fall either in the very low 1% (words ranked 21 to 25) or in the even lower 0.1% (words ranked 1 to 20) error margin. Once this has been ascertained, a qualitative analysis of the keywords in the list can be undertaken.

3.3. Qualitative Analysis of Keyword List Items

The keyword list generated during the quantitative analysis evidences potentially rich aspects of the text to be analyzed, but the compiled results should be considered only as the starting point for a full-scale corpus stylistics investigation. As Michaela Mahlberg points out, "quantitative research can only provide valuable insights when it is linked to qualitative analysis" (Mahlberg 2010, p. 292). This claim is endorsed by Dan McIntyre and Brian Walker, who wrote:

> Of course, key comparisons can only be a starting point. In order to fully understand the lists produced by a computer tool, we must return to the text. Quantitative analysis guides qualitative analysis, which might guide further quantitative analysis. (McIntyre & Walker 2010, p. 522)

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15 Adapted from "Log-likelihood and effect size calculator", available at http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html.

Let us then return to the text: on the top of the keyword list we find the name "Sickert", which also appears as the first word in the title as the explicit theme of the narrative and whose importance is therefore apparent.[16] This is not a surprising find at all, even though it should be observed that in many cases "Sickert" refers to Sickert's wife, "Mrs. Sickert" – the only female character in the story, but also undoubtedly an important figure, as the one and only referent to all 11 occurrences of "mrs" (keyness rank: 6).

Apart from the proper nouns "Raven" (keyness rank: 2), "Gerald" (keyness rank: 3), "Anthony Eden" (keyness rank: 8 for "Anthony" and 7 for "Eden") and "Beaverbrook" (keyness rank: 9), whose presence in the keyword list can be accounted for by the simple reason that these are the names of the characters of the story, there is a noticeably high proportion of common nouns related to concrete objects: "boot" (keyness rank: 4), "photograph" (keyness rank: 5), "picture" (keyness rank: 10), "hearth" (keyness rank: 12), "sewer" (keyness rank: 14), "pit" (keyness rank: 17), "sofa" (keyness rank: 24) and "room" (keyness rank: 24) account for a full one-third of the 25 most relevant keywords. This find seems to corroborate the textual impression of Welch's fascination with physical objects, which can be seen in the following examples (henceforth, all keywords in the excerpts quoted shall be underlined):

> My <u>cup</u> was of that white china which is decorated with a gold trefoil in the centre of each piece. <u>Gerald</u>'s was quite different. It was acid-blue, I think, with an unpleasant black handle and stripe; but I noted that both our spoons were flimsy and old. I turned mine over and saw, amongst the other hall-marks, the little head of George III winking up at me.

> I looked at the other things on the table, at the brown enamel teapot, the familiar red and blue Huntley and Palmer's tin, and at the strange loaf which seemed neither bread nor cake.

> We discussed the various objects in the <u>room</u>. She told me that the two glittering monstrances had come from a Russian church. We went up to them and I took one of the sparkling things in my hands. The blue and white paste lustres were backed with tinsel. They were fascinatingly gaudy and I coveted them.

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16 While discussing text composition and text structure, Nord (2009, pp. 112–113) affirms: "Angesichts des besonderen Bedeutung von Textanfang und Textschluss für Verständnis und Interpretation eines Textes müssen bei der Analyse gerade diese Textteile besonders aufmerksam auf ihre rezeptions- und wirkungssteuernde Funktion hin untersucht werden". The English translation (Nord 2005, p. 111) reads: "The special part that the beginning and the end of a text play in its comprehension and interpretation means that these may have to be analysed in detail in order to find out how they guide the reception process and influence the effect of the whole text".

The example below illustrates the point even more poignantly: in a short excerpt which corresponds to a time-frame of probably less than one second, the narrator describes the characteristics of an object even before he understands what it is:

> At last he brought out a rather crumpled, shiny object, and I saw that it was a <u>photograph</u>.

As the first common noun to appear in the keyword list, the word "boot" should be given due attention. It should also be noted that the noun "sewer" appears exclusively as a modifier to "boot" in the compound word "sewer-boot", and that all these occurrences of "boot" refer to the incongruous boots that Sickert wore when he received the narrator and Gerald at home. The narrator is understandably taken by surprise: "from his toes to his thighs reached what I can only describe as <u>sewer</u>-<u>boots</u>". The boots are also mentioned twice when Sickert performs a strange boisterous dance and explained during a scene in which Welch feels embarrassed because of a comment made by Sickert and casts down his eyes, which then rest on the painter's boots. At this point, the text explicitly reads, "I was not thinking of his <u>boots</u>" – but Sickert notices Welch's gaze and goes on to explain the reason for such an unusual piece of footwear while indoors:

> 'Ah, I see that you're staring at my <u>boots</u>! Do you know why I wear them? Well, I'll tell you. Lord <u>Beaverbrook</u> asked me to a party and I was late, so I jumped into a taxi and said: "Drive as fast as you can!" Of course, we had an <u>accident</u> and I was thrown on to my knees and my legs were badly knocked about; so now I wear these as a protection.'

Attention should be here given to the word "accident" (keyness rank: 21), which appears in the opening single-sentence paragraph to "Sickert at St Peter's" [17]:

> I had been in Broadstairs for months, trying to recover some sort of health after a serious road <u>accident</u>.

As mentioned before, the accident in question had resulted in a broken spine which left Welch in bed for months, completely unable to walk. While he was at a nursing home, his doctor – knowing that he was an art student

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17 See previous footnote.

– tried to persuade Sickert to pay him a visit, but Sickert would not hear about it. However, once Welch got back to his feet, Sickert agreed to receive him at home. If these two figures – until then unknown to each other, except for Welch's previous acquaintance with Sickert's works – already had a shared interest in art, at this point Welch discovers that Sickert has also suffered an accident that affected his legs. With this in mind, it becomes possible to argue that the boots are here used as a subjective identification device given a concrete form: just as Sickert's "pictures" (keyness rank: 10) can be interpreted as a physical manifestation of a shared interest in "art" (keyness rank: 18), Sickert's "boots" (keyness rank: 4) can likewise be interpreted as the physical manifestation of a shared fate in the form of an "accident" – a word which, in spite of occupying only the 21st place in the keyword list, could arguably be the object of a qualitative claim for greater relevance due to its presence in the opening sentence-paragraph of the narrative, as well as its direct relation to Welch's life. This interpretation would underline the importance of Welch's accident in the narrative, while at the same time using the accident theme – both on a conceptual and on a purely linguistic level – as an additional means for implying a bond with Sickert, whose eccentric footwear and behavior single him out as an artistic personality from the start. This interpretation seems to be corroborated at a later point in the narrative, when Sickert takes to his boisterous sewer-boots dance for the second time:

> Then, as [Mr. Raven] passed Sickert on his way to the door, he felt in his pocket and with almost incredible courage brought out the crumpled little photograph again.
> (…)
> Sickert gave the same enigmatic grunt. It was somehow quite baffling and insulting.
> Mr. Raven crept unhappily to the door and Mrs. Sickert followed swiftly to put salve on his wounds. Immediately Raven was out of the room Sickert became boisterous. He started to dance again, thumping his great boots on the floor. Gerald and I caught some of his gaiety. We did not mention Raven, but I knew that we were all celebrating his defeat. It was pleasant to feel that Sickert treated us as fellow artists. I wondered how many people each year asked him to paint pictures for love.

The passage above refers to Sickert's final refusal of Mr. Raven's tacitly made request for a free oil portrait of his mother, to be made based on the little "photograph" (keyness rank: 5) he produces. Each one of these

requests is rudely dismissed by Sickert with a "grunt" (keyness rank: 19), which – just as Sickert's sewer-boots – can be read as a manifestation of Sickert's unusual demeanor.

As it should be clear from the last quoted excerpt, the idea of a shared "us" (keyness rank: 11) identity as "fellow artists" ("art" being a word with a keyness rank of 18) is explicitly present in the text just alongside "pictures", which in eight out of nine occurrences is employed as a synonym for "painting". This is even more striking because, in spite of other characters like Mrs. Sickert and Mr. Raven being present and active in the story, all twelve instances of "us" as employed by the narrator refer exclusively to the characters involved with art – at the beginning of the story, the "art student" narrator and Gerald, his "art school friend". But once Sickert appears in the narrative, he too joins the company described as "us", while Mrs. Sickert moves around the house almost as if to leave the scene every time the pronoun is to be used. The narrator's last comment, in which he expresses support for the rude dismissal of yet another painting request "for love", has the additional effect of validating Sickert's previously made apology for having refused a visit to the nursing home where the narrator was recovering from the accident:

> I'm very sorry I didn't come and see you, but I can't go round visiting. (…) You see I have to keep painting all these pictures because I'm so poor.

Here, the high-keyness occurrences of the word "t" (keyness rank: 15), which upon closer inspection is revealed to be the final "t" in contractions of "not", serves to illustrate the kind of discovery which could hardly be made without resource to a corpus approach. Such a high position in the keyword list unequivocally indicates that the tone adopted by Welch in "Sickert at St Peter's" is considerably more informal than his three novels considered as a single corpus.

The presence of the word "evidently" (keyness rank: 16) in the keyword list would require additional research in order to be fully explained, but a preliminary study of the negative keywords in "Sickert at St Peter's" shows the modal verbs "would" and "seem" at rank 3 (keyness value: 4.920) and 4 (keyness value: 3.750) respectively. When considered together, these observations would seem to imply that, whereas "Sickert at St Peter's" is written in a quite direct and straightforward style, Welch's later novels lean towards a more nuanced style. If confirmed, this find would constitute statistical evidence of Welch's evolution as a writer.

The remaining eight words on the keyword list cannot always be clearly interpreted as particularly relevant in the context of "Sickert at St Peter's". "Hearth" is notably challenging from a qualitative point of view, since the two occurrences seem to be almost incidental, even though one of them is related to Sickert's initial bout of boisterous dancing. At first sight, the two instances of "original" might suggest a relation with art, but when read in context it becomes clear that this is hardly the case: the first occurrence is employed as a synonym for "unmodified" in the cluster "original hall", and the second actually refers rather counterintuitively to "an original Punch drawing" whose composition Sickert happened to be using in one of his paintings – in this case, "original" is used in the sense of "model". "Pit" appears exclusively as a word used in the description of one of Sickert's paintings (namely *The Miner,* though the painting is never mentioned by name), and might therefore be explained as an incidental textual item whose presence in the keyword list could be best explained by the specific mention to Sickert's painting and its almost complete absence in Welch's three other novels: the noun appears only once in the completely unrelated cluster "pit of [one's] stomach" in *In Youth Is Pleasure*. "Stringy" appears only three times in Welch's three novels (twice in *Maiden Voyage* in descriptions of people and once in *A Voice Through a Cloud* in the description of a coverlet), so that two occurrences in a text as short as "Sickert at St Peter's" would appear to lend special significance to the term; but the character described as "stringy" is never presented by name, never says a single word to the narrator or his friend and leaves the house as soon as Sickert appears, never to return again. "Famous" may once again suggest a relation to art, but its two occurrences are rather unspecific: the first refers to the narrator's attempted mental guess ("Perhaps she was someone famous") – never confirmed or refuted – as to the identity of a woman in a photograph shown by Sickert; the second is used as a general *ad hoc* synonym for "politicians". The remaining three words – "cup", "sofa" and "room" – are likewise quite unremarkable individually, though "room" could probably be explored further as a means through which Sickert's strong presence is insinuated in sentences such as "he waved his hand round the room", "he shouted out in ringing tones for the whole room to hear" and "he called out across the room" – though it should be noted that some of the occurrences appear in unrelated compound nouns like "dining-room", "drawing room" and "cloak-room".

Having thus accounted for all 25 keywords in the list and offered an interpretation to each one of them in the context of "Sickert at St Peter's", I shall now turn to a discussion of the desired translation brief for "Sickert at St Peter's".

4. Translation Brief

The general top-down approach proposed by Nord regarding translation decisions is as follows:

> (…) a functional translation process should start on the pragmatic level by deciding on the intended function of the translation (documentary vs instrumental[18]). A distinction is then made between those functional elements of the source text that will have to be reproduced 'as such' and the ones that must be adapted to the addressee's background knowledge, expectations, and communicative needs or to such factors as medium restrictions and deixis requirements.
> The translation type then determines whether the translated text should conform to source-culture or target-culture conventions with regard to translation style. (Nord 1997, p. 68)

Since functionalist approaches do not tell one how to translate, but only that one must translate according to the Skopos (purpose) to be achieved by the translation in the target-culture, there are no *a priori* conditions with regard to the characteristics of the target-text to be produced: these depend entirely on a set of parameters known as a translation brief (Übersetzungsauftrag), which "in an ideal case (…) would give as many details as possible about the purpose, explaining the addressees, time, place, occasion and medium of the intended communication and the function the text is intended to have" (Nord 1997, p. 30).

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18 Nord explains the difference between the two basic types of translation – "documentary" and "instrumental": "The first aims at producing in the target language a kind of document of (certain aspects of) a communicative interaction in which a source-culture sender communicates with a source-culture audience via the source text under source-culture conditions. The second aims at producing in the target language an instrument for a new communicative interaction between the source-culture sender and a target-culture audience, using (certain aspects of) the source text as a model. (...) The result of a documentary translation process is a text whose main function is metatextual (...). The target text, in this case, is a text about a text, or about one or more particular aspects of a text. (...) The result of an instrumental translation is a text that may achieve the same range of functions as an original text. If the target-text function is the same as that of the source text we can speak of an equifunctional translation; if there is a difference between source and target text functions we should have a heterofunctional translation; and if the (literary) status of the target text within the target-culture text corpus corresponds to the (literary) status the original has in the source-culture text corpus, we could talk about a homologous translation" (Nord 1997, pp. 47–50). Later, Nord emphasizes the independent and autonomous character of instrumental translations: "In the reception of an instrumental translation, readers are not supposed to know they are reading a translation at all" (p. 52).

4.1. Literary Translation Briefs and "Sickert at St Peter's"

Nord points out that "in the professional practice of intercultural communication, translators rarely start working of their own accord" (Nord 1997, p. 20), but that is precisely what will happen in the present case study. As both the initiator of the communication process and the actual translator, I find myself in the rather unusual position of being able to define all specifications related to the translation of "Sickert at St Peter's", of which the present translation-oriented text analysis constitutes a pre-translational part.

Even though the functionalist approach allows plenty of room for all kinds of translation strategies and approaches, I would here like to address what I shall call the literary translation of literary works. This non-pleonastic phrase refers to translations of literature which can be read as if they were also themselves independent works of literature. The objective is to establish a shorthand to easily differentiate between these particular translations from other non-literary translation processes which literary works may also undergo.

The first binary decision to be taken in Nord's top-down approach is related to the documentary or instrumental function of the translation to be carried out (see note 18). A "document" of a communication carried out by a foreign initiator, sender or author engaged with foreign addressees in the context of a foreign culture seems hardly ideal to engage readers in the target-culture with the artistic, stylistic and not least emotional aspects inherent to a piece of literary writing considered as a work of art. Instrumental translations, as autonomous and independent texts which read as originals and address target-culture readers directly on all levels, are evidently more suitable to this particular task: in addition to producing texts which specifically address the actual intended readership, an instrumental approach also promotes a closing of the subjective distance between the translation and the addressees.

Next comes the desired text function. Downplaying or disregarding the importance of the expressive function in the literary translation of literary works would be completely out of the question, since the use of connotative, expressive and aestheticizing language is a generally accepted major characteristic of literature. As a result, the desired instrumental translation becomes more particularly an equifunctional translation, that is: a translation which strives to keep the function of the original text unaltered. In the literary translation of literary works, this means that the prominent role of the expressive function – which marks the text as a literary – should be maintained in the translation.

Finally we reach the textual level of the translation to be carried out. Here, a corpus-based lexical analysis of the original may provide valuable insights, particularly with regard to style. Given the unwavering importance of style in the reception of literary works, a reenacting of the individual author's style should always be pursued to the highest degree possible in the literary translation of literary works. This particular Skopos was explicitly anticipated by Nord:

> In der Regel ergibt sich aus dem Befund für die einzelnen lexikalischen Einheiten eines Textes ein "Stilzug" für den gesamten Text. Wenn durch die die Translatfunktion die Wahrung solcher Stilzüge als Übersetzungsziel definiert ist, muss die Übersetzung danach ausgerichtet werden, wie in der ZS der betreffende Stilzug herzustellen ist. Die Analyse der einzelnen Einheiten ist demnach in einen globalen Zusammenhang einzuordnen, in den auch etwa die Befunde aus der Analyse von Inhalt, Aufbau, Syntax etc. integriert werden müssen. (Nord 2009, p. 127)[19]

Seen as a three-step decision process with a strong emphasis on the author's style, the scheme outlined above resembles Katharine Reiß's considerations on the "decisive battle" waged by conscious translators:

> Now the *text individual* is placed in the foreground. This analysis is of supreme importance, because the translator's "decisive battle" is fought on the level of the text individual, where strategy and tactics are directed by type and variety. (Reiß 2004, p. 166)

The addressees of the intended translation are here conceived as casual readers, students or scholars of literature who are sufficiently interested in the subject to either know Denton Welch (at least by name) or to welcome the reading of a literary piece from a previously unknown author. The ideal medium/channel to reach these addressees is here envisaged as either a literary magazine or an academic literary journal, where the literary translation of a literary work would most likely be noticed and appreciated by a specialized readership:

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19 "The analysis of various lexical items in a text can often show that a particular stylistic feature is characteristic of the whole text. If the translation skopos requires the preservation of such features, individual translation decisions (in the fields of lexis as well as content, composition, sentence structure, etc.) have to be subordinated to this purpose." (Nord 2005, p. 125)

> Literary texts are primarily addressed to receivers who have specific expectations conditioned by their literary experience, as well as a certain command of the literary codes. (Nord 1997, p. 80)

Once the addressees, the medium of communication, the type and the Skopos of the intended translation have all been established, the translation brief is ready and we can proceed to the aspects regarding the results of the corpus analysis and the impact it may have on the planned translation.

4.2. Corpus-based Translation Strategies for "Sickert at St Peter's"

Based on the previous discussion, the qualitative result of the corpus-based keyword analysis of "Sickert at St Peter's" could be summarized as follows:

- The narrator has a keen interest in physical objects;
- Sickert is portrayed as an eccentric character;
- The idea of a shared artistic identity between Sickert and the narrator is suggested;
- Sickert reacts with a grunt each time Raven makes his tacit request for a free oil painting of his mother;
- The word "pictures" appears prominently in the text and contributes to the suggestion of a pervading artistic environment;
- The dialogue is written in a slightly informal style;
- There is a relative lack of subtlety underlying the narrative.

These observations could be implemented as concrete guidelines in order to produce a literary translation of the narrative if the translator accordingly opts to:

- avoid using hyperonyms in the description of objects;
- make use of vocabulary which does justice to Sickert's eccentricity;
- use first-person plural pronouns whenever possible, so as to suggest the artistic proximity between Sickert and the narrator;
- reproduce the replay effect of Sickert's grunt by consistently employing a single word to translate "grunt" on all occasions;
- possibly translate the word "pictures" for "painting", since this would be perfectly in keeping with the broader artistic perspective in the original text;
- use contractions or other slightly informal devices in the translation of dialogues;
- avoid using modals, since the original is quite straightforward.

These suggestions are not to be read as exhaustive, but in my view offer a clear illustration of how a corpus-based approach to Nord's translation-oriented text analysis could be beneficial and reveal textual features which could otherwise go unnoticed – as well as a concrete working method, should the translator wish to implement a corpus approach in his or her professional practice.

5. Concluding remarks

With this article, I hope to have demonstrated some of the benefits that a corpus approach may bring to the literary translation of literary works and the theoretical reasons why such an approach is not only legitimate, but also useful for providing a more objective understanding of the inner workings of literary texts. As stated above, computer-processed corpus metrics should never be taken at face value, but contextualized interpretations of corpus analyses can and do provide the translator with powerful insights regarding the text to be translated. Since this approach can be integrated into Nord's translation-oriented text analysis without any sort of theoretical conflict, a computer-assisted step in the pre-translational stage leading up to a literary translation becomes a valuable tool capable of revealing critical stylistic features of the text to be translated. The way in which this sort of analysis incorporates actual textual items as part of a text's "information" (as the concept is understood by Vermeer and Reiß, to whom information is not only related to textual meaning, but also to textual form and effect[20]) seems particularly relevant for a literary – and therefore stylistic – approach to literary translation.

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20 See Vermeer & Reiß (1991), pp. 58–67, particularly p. 61 and 66.

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