

Mapping Semantic (and other) Similarities between Source and Target Texts in Singable Song Translation using Fillmore’s Scenes-and-Frames Approach

1. Introduction

Song translation scholars broadly agree that the so-called fidelity of translated lyrics from a source text (ST) to a target text (TT) runs along a scale of very close or similar on the one end, to extremely dissimilar or even completely unrelated on the other.¹ Source-orientedness is not always the goal in song translation, depending among other things on genre and tradition (e.g. Kvam 2018), the various *skopoi* or purposes that the target lyric is expected to fulfil in its context (e.g. Low 2003), and the song translator’s personal and artistic proclivities (e.g. Greenall 2014). But in situations where source-orientedness *is* in fact the aim, the life of the translator of singable² target lyrics is considerably complicated by the need to prioritize a certain degree of “rhythmical equivalence” (Greenall 2015: 314) in order for the TT to work atop the pre-existing melody.³ In such cases, semantic and other forms of similarity have to be sought creatively and may often be achieved in ways which are not immediately obvious. That is, a source and a target lyric that on the surface look quite different may, upon closer scrutiny, be more similar than first assumed. For example, a word likely to be translated quite closely to its source correspondent in a regular prose text might, because of the challenges mentioned, appear in a less close form in a singable

¹ Such fidelity is also known as ‘equivalence’, ‘degree of source text closeness’ and ‘similarity’ (Chesterman 1996). For an extended discussion of this issue, see Franzon (this volume).

² By singable song translations I simply mean translations that are intended to be sung (cf. Franzon 2008). From this point on, whenever I refer to song translation, I mean singable song translation, unless otherwise stated.

³ Sometimes, melodies are changed to fit translated lyrics (see Franzon 2008: 376), but this is a type of case I am not going to be concerned with here.

song translation, and moreover, in a wholly different place in the target text – in a different verse than in the ST, in a bridge, or in the chorus. And here, even though the similarity is less pronounced, there still *is* similarity, which may be subtly perceived by listeners familiar with both versions and thus play a role in the way these listeners experience the song in context. The similarity may be easily overlooked by analysts, however, if the conceptual tools at their disposal are too focused on the surface features of linguistic elements (as is often the case in analyses that focus on what are variously known as translation procedures, methods, techniques or strategies), and if their usual mode of analysis focuses too strongly on only comparing elements within close proximity of each other, such as corresponding lines in the ST and TT lyrics.

In the present chapter I suggest that Charles Fillmore's *scenes-and-frames semantics* (1975, 1977, 1982, 1985) has the potential to unveil such complex relationships of similarity between STs and TTs in general, and singable song translations in particular. Simply explained, this theory holds that linguistic items evoke scenes – organized knowledge structures in recipients' cognitive environments – whose elements are associated with linguistic forms, or frames. The multitude of linguistic items making up a given text all evoke scenes which combine and recombine in the course of the interpretative process to form a holistic impression, in the cognitive environment of a given recipient, of what a given text is about, or, as Snell-Hornby puts it, of the "scene behind the text" (1995: 80). What I show in the following is how this kind of approach to analysing source and target lyrics helps in identifying a deeper level of correspondences between and beyond conventional textual borders (such as the line in a song), and in manifesting the 'about-ness' of both texts, thus enabling comparison on a more overall level. Specifically, I show how it can help make deeper sense of the notoriously underdefined translation procedure known as *compensation*. Compensation is most commonly understood as representing a ST item in a different place in the TT than where it appeared in the ST, and/or using a correspondent that is not the closest existing correspondent to the given ST item (this procedure will be explained in more detail in section 5 below). This translation

procedure is particularly useful to the similarity-seeking song translator struggling to achieve semantic (and/or stylistic) similarity at the same time as ensuring singability, and is thus a staple within this form of translation.

While reviewing Fillmore's scenes-and-frames semantics and its usefulness in translation studies, I also touch on the fact that linguistic items are not the only stimuli that trigger scenes and frames. Music and visual elements do so as well, which further underlines the usefulness of such an approach to song translation, since it allows an analytical focus not just on lyrics but on patterns of similarity across various meaning-generating levels.

Towards the end of the chapter I demonstrate how scenes-and-frames semantics and the notion of compensation can be put to use analytically in a small, illustrative study of one of my own song translations – a similarity-seeking translation of the pop song “A Kind of Christmas Card”, written by Håvard Rem and Morten Harket, into the Nynorsk variant of Norwegian as “Eit lite julebrev” (‘A Little Christmas Letter’). I chose to look at my own translation, partly because this gave me introspective access to the intention behind the production of the TT lyrics: I do not have to guess, because I *know* that source-orientedness was the aim of the translation of the lyrics. This strengthens the claims made regarding the use of compensation in the TT, insofar as we can only truly talk about compensation in situations where the translator would have chosen a correspondent closer to the source if possible (again, this is explained more closely in section 5 below). Finally, I will also make a suggestion as to how the elements of the lyrics interact with musical, visual and other elements in evoking scenes and guiding interpretations in the two versions of the songs.

The provided sample study will hopefully showcase the usefulness of scenes-and-frames semantics in producing a detailed, psychologically realistic and systematic comparison of source and target lyrics, and in providing an account of how the various meaning-levels work together in producing interpretations in listeners.

2. The concept of similarity (between STs and TTs)

First, a couple of words are needed on how to justify analysing any ST–TT relationship these days – even those where similarity is evidently the goal – in terms of a concept that harks back to the notion of translational ‘equivalence’. The latter is a notion long since thoroughly discredited within translation studies for implying that full identity between STs and TTs is possible, for suggesting that the search for as close a relation as possible to the ST is or should always be the goal of translation, and for being impossible to objectively identify in texts. Chesterman (1996, 1998, 2007) has suggested replacing ‘equivalence’, and its associations to ‘sameness’, with the label ‘similarity’. This is what I choose to do here, although the concept does not solve all of the problems outlined above. While it suggests a more realistic goal for translations that aim to be source-oriented (not identity, but approximation), identifying similarities and/or dissimilarities between texts is still a notoriously subjective affair. This is at least most certainly the case if we are talking about *actual* interpretations. Even though we often, as interpreting individuals, loosely agree on interpretations because socialization furnishes our cognitive environments with similar content, we also have unique biographies and perspectives which mean that we never experience the exact same interpretive response to a given stimulus. Also, the communicative situations we find ourselves in when experiencing a given text will differ and give rise to different interpretations. At this level, the analyst’s interpretation is only one of many and is most definitely ‘subjective’ in that respect. There is another option, however, namely to focus on the level of *meaning potentials*, where linguistic items still exist as interpretative resources waiting to be actualized in individual interpretation (Lähteenmäki 2005). This is what I propose to do here – looking for *potentials* for perceiving two texts as similar or different, although it has to be admitted, of course, that my interpretations as an analyst of what these potentials consist in will to a certain extent inevitably be influenced by my actual interpretations of the texts in questions.

A second important point regarding similarity in translation is that it can occur on many different levels. There can be similarity on all the linguistic levels (syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, phonetic), on the stylistic level, and also, when it comes to songs, at meaning-generating levels outside the lyrics, such as music and visuals. The main focus in this chapter is on similarity on the semantic level, although some attention will also be given to meaning-generating levels outside the lyrics.

3. Scenes-and-frames semantics

The idea underlying Fillmore's scenes-and-frames approach (1975, 1977, 1982, 1985) is that verbal and non-verbal stimuli alike evoke *scenes* in our cognitive environment – organized chunks of conceptual and non-conceptual knowledge about the world – that help us make sense of the word/expression or event. A lexical item like 'spade', for example, will evoke an intricate chunk of knowledge depicting the situation or situations in which a spade will normally figure, such as a gardener digging out soil to plant a shrub. It is only if the word 'spade' does evoke such a scene that we can say that it has been properly understood.⁴ Scenes, or parts of scenes, are furthermore associated with abstract linguistic structures which Fillmore calls *frames* (Fillmore 1985: 232). The word 'spade', for example, is part of the frame ARTEFACTS,⁵ which contains elements such as 'creator' (of the artefact),

⁴ If we encounter a linguistic item that we do not have an internalized, readily available scene for, we may *invoke* one or more already existing scenes and frames from our general stock of knowledge to try to make sense of it – a move which may be more or less successful (if it is not, and finding out what the word means is important to us, then we need to seek to expand our stock of knowledge). For reasons of space, however, what I will focus on here is the ability of linguistic items to *evoke* scenes and frames, that is their ability to function as contextualization cues (Gumperz 1992a, 1992b), giving access to various input to and direction in interpretive processes.

⁵ The most tangible legacy of Fillmore's scenes-and-frames theory is the development of a large, electronic lexical database of English called FrameNet, which defines words according to the frames they belong within and which details the elements of each frame: <https://framenet2.icsi.berkeley.edu/fnReports/data/frameIndex.xml?frame=Artifact>.

‘user’, ‘type of use’, ‘material’, and so on, elements that can be slotted into syntactic grids (i.e. parts of speech) to form utterances.

Scenes and frames are interlaced in a never-ending chain of mutual activation (see Snell-Hornby 1995: 79–80): actualized frames (utterances) evoke scenes which are associated with further frames that may be actualized in the communication, thus evoking further scenes. The important thing to bear in mind – because it is sometimes forgotten – is that scenes and frames are not the same thing. A *scene*, as opposed to a frame, is non- or pre-linguistic. Its content is quite concrete, although it can be low or high level, where the difference is one of generality, and that a low-level scene may be encompassed by a higher-level scene. A *frame*, on the other hand, consists of abstract elements, roles and relations that correspond to linguistic structures. For the present purposes I will focus mostly on the notion of scene, among other things because scenes encompass both conceptual and non-conceptual content such as emotions, which is particularly important in an account of song lyric translation, since the communication of emotions, at least in popular song, is an essential function of the lyrics (Warner 1998: 115), in interaction with the music. Fillmore defines scenes in a “maximally general sense”,

to include not only visual scenes but familiar kinds of interpersonal transactions, standard scenarios, familiar layouts, institutional structures, enactive experiences, body image; and in general, any kind of coherent segment, large or small, of human beliefs, actions, experiences, or imaginings. (1977: 63)

Per this definition, emotional content would be seen as just such a coherent segment of human experiences. A classical scene in the context of pop songs would obviously be that of loving someone who does not love you back, with all the emotions associated with it.

Although the theory started out with a focus on how single linguistic items evoke scenes and frames, Fillmore also discussed how the notions of scene and frame can help us understand texts as a whole, which is essential to the type of lyrics analysis I envisage here. From the point of view of the notion of scene, Fillmore explains

how understanding a text depends on the interpreter's creating an "image or scene or picture of the world" and filling it in "between the beginning and the end of the text-interpretation experience" (1977: 61). Later he adds, from the point of view of the notion of frame, that, "the process of understanding a text involves retrieving or perceiving the frames evoked by the text's lexical content and assembling this kind of schematic knowledge (in some way which cannot be easily formalized) into some sort of 'envisionment' of the 'world' of the text" (1982: 122). In both cases, linguistic items are seen to evoke elements that become involved in the interpretational process – non- or pre-linguistic elements in the case of scenes, and linguistic ones in the case of frames – that will combine and create gestalts on a more overarching level. In a later article devoted entirely to the topic, entitled "Frame Semantics for Text Understanding" (2001), Fillmore and co-author Collin Baker go into the issue in somewhat more detail. Here, the authors analyse a short news text on the topic of criminal justice, showing how frames evoked by words and/or expressions early on in the reading will influence which frames will be evoked later in the text. This is especially obvious in cases where a linguistic item that appears later in the text has the potential to evoke several radically different frames (e.g. in the case of polysemous words, or words/expressions that have both literal and metaphorical meanings and uses). In other words, semantic representations of texts grow and adapt dynamically as the reading or listening progresses.

The choice of a linguistic theory as a point of departure for song translation analysis in this chapter reflects, of course, the specific focus on lyrics in the present volume. Scenes-and-frames semantics has, however, several theoretical relatives within other fields of knowledge such as sociology and psychology,⁶ because the phenomenon it describes extends well beyond language, which is something that ought to be emphasized here, since songs are, after all, thoroughly multisemiotic entities. Another linguist, John J. Gumperz, took the idea of perceptual stimuli as evoking –

⁶ See e.g. Tannen 1979, Fillmore 1985: 223, and Cienki 2010, for useful references and closer introductions to scene/frame's various sibling concepts, such as script, scenario, idealized cognitive model and domain.

or *cueing*, in his terminology – cognitive content one step further in this direction, stating that

I use the term ‘contextualization’ to refer to speakers’ and listeners’ use of *verbal and nonverbal signs* to relate what is said at any one time and in any one place to knowledge acquired through past experience, in order to retrieve the presuppositions they must rely on to maintain conversational involvement and assess what is intended. (Gumperz 1992a: 230, my emphasis)

What Gumperz mainly has in mind when referring to “nonverbal signs” is still well within the domain of linguistic production, however, since the examples he gives are of prosodic aspects of speech (intonation, stress, accenting and pitch register shifts) and paralinguistic signs of “tempo, pausing and hesitation, conversational synchrony, including latching or overlapping of speaking turns and other ‘tone of voice’ expressive cues” (Gumperz 1992a: 231). These, together with the verbal cues, trigger chunks of knowledge that provide input to and guide the interpretative process.

It is interesting to note how the concepts used here (tempo, pausing, tone of voice) are concepts that are typically used to describe both language *and* music. The reason for this shared vocabulary lies of course in the fact that the functions of language and music overlap: both are involved in the production of sound. The question then is, if non-verbal, vocal sounds can indeed ‘mean’ something in terms of triggering or cueing chunks of organized knowledge (scenes), can musical elements do the same? There are researchers within musicology that seem to assume that this is the case: Larson (2012: 9–10), for example, describes how listeners learn to associate a certain type of musical pattern (the lamento bass) with a certain type of feeling (sadness): through repetition of the musical pattern in social contexts where an association between that sign and this particular cognitive content is established, the pattern evolves into a trigger for that content in the minds of interpreting individuals.

Another prevalent type of non-verbal stimulus accompanying lyrics and music is visual, such as artist visuals (looks, behaviour) and videos. It is reasonable to assume that these also trigger organized chunks of knowledge in listener-viewers’ minds. Furthermore, DeNora (1986: 91) draws attention to the fact that there are even

further aspects of the context surrounding the musical experience – e.g. performers, venues, ticket prices, programme notes, and so on – that may function as contextualization cues in Gumperz’ sense (‘evoke scenes’ in Fillmorean parlance). All these verbal and non-verbal stimuli and probably more collaborate in producing interpretations and understanding of a given song. Obviously, a fully-fledged analysis of the relationship between a song-lyric ST and its TT will need to take as many of these stimuli as possible into account.

4. Scenes-and-frames semantics and translation

The few studies on scenes-and-frames semantics in the context of translation have looked to this kind of theory in search of new, more promising definitions of equivalence, and they are all in some way and to some extent prescriptive (Neubert/Shreve 1992: 65; Snell-Hornby 1995: 81; Rojo López 2002a, 2002b; Boas 2013). Equivalence has been defined as being achieved in cases where linguistic items in the ST and its TT evoke the same or at least similar scenes and/or frames and the translator’s job has been depicted as always and exclusively being that of achieving this state of affairs, irrespective of for example TT purpose. Here, I take the view that an ST and a TT have the potential to be perceived as similar to some degree or other if the ST and TT correspondents have the potential to evoke similar scenes (or different scenes that share elements), and if similar scenes or elements within and among scenes are likely to be highlighted (more strongly activated) as a result of the interplay of different evoked scenes in the interpretative process. I do not, however, want to posit that translators always aim for the highest degree of similarity, or even similarity at all, as sometimes the TT purpose – or an artistic reason – dictates departure from the ST.

For Boas (2013), the main advantage of the scenes-and-frames way of looking at the relationship between STs and TTs is that frames are “useful structuring devices for expressing subtle differences between translation equivalents” (141). According to Boas, scenes-and-frames analysis helps overcome an overly simplistic view of the

relationship between source and target correspondences by drawing attention to details in the overlaps between ST and TT items. Rojo López (2002a) focuses on how a special type of linguistic item – namely cultural elements in narrative texts – evokes organized cognitive content, while Neubert and Shreve (1992) and Snell-Hornby (1995) underscore the ability of scenes-and-frames semantics to richly and credibly represent the underlying networks of meanings in a ST *as a whole* vis-à-vis its corresponding TT. The latter is also the approach chosen in the sample analysis below. According to Neubert and Shreve (1992), “the text creates an associational structure that is a composite structure comprised of all the frame regions referenced by the text” (63). Snell-Hornby stresses the chain-like character of the process, by which “a particular linguistic form, such as a phrase found in a text, evokes associations which themselves activate other linguistic forms and evoke further associations, whereby every linguistic expression in a text is conditioned by another one” (1995: 80). Without explicitly referring to Fillmore and scenes-and-frames theory, many of the same points are made by Warner in a rare study of how linguistic elements in *song lyric* STs and TTs ‘cue’ cognitive content/context to create if not “localized semantic correspondence”, then at least “equivalent global coherence” (1998: 120). By her own admission, however, Warner’s study does not strictly speaking concern STs and TTs, as it investigates the parallel English and Spanish versions of one of Gloria Estefan’s songs, “Si voy a perderte/Don’t Wanna Lose You”, where it is impossible to say for certain which of the lyrics was produced first (110). Still, a comparison in terms of similarity is of course both interesting and warranted, and such an analysis can easily be compared to ones where the order of the production of the two related texts is clearer. In addition to pointing out that linguistic items can cue context, Warner also, importantly, points out that other, non-linguistic aspects of the versions, such as “[g]esture and affective voice inflection” (113) may do the same.

Being a relatively speaking short type of text, song lyrics are eminently well-suited to demonstrating how underlying textual networks are created and interact in processes of text production and interaction. This is not necessarily to say that the

analysis of this kind of text is an easy undertaking, however, and part of the reason for this is no doubt the frequent use of the translation technique of compensation.

5. The translation procedure of compensation in a scenes-and-frames perspective

Translators who aim for a high degree of similarity to the ST and have to balance this goal up against other requirements such as rhythmical adequacy may find themselves reaching for compensation as a tool. In the present section, I look at how this notion has been conceived of in the translation studies literature.

The label ‘compensation’ has been used in various broad senses that all take as their point of departure the ultimately normative idea that every aspect of the transfer that goes on in translation involves some kind of semantic and/or cultural loss which is compensated for in various ways in the ST (e.g. Nida/Taber 1969; Harvey 1995: 67ff; Venuti 2002). In other words, *everything* that goes on in every translation process is a form of compensation. Obviously, this view of compensation is not very helpful. For a start, it presupposes a view of translation as the search for optimal similarity to the ST, where loss is always a lamentable fact and always needs to be compensated for. Even if we were to accept this premise, however, the notion is simply too broad. In Harvey’s words,

if loss is an inevitable consequence of any attempt to transfer sense from one language to another, and compensation is a response to that loss, then the entire translation process could be accounted for by the twin mechanisms of loss and compensation. Once this happens, of course, the floodgates are open and both loss and compensation get washed away as useful descriptive terms. (1995: 71)

The question is, consequently, if everything that happens in (similarity-seeking) translation is not compensation, then what is? Most of the existing answers to this question involve the idea of a change of location of the TT correspondence relative to its placement in the ST, and most answers also involve some idea of a shift – that is any kind of “change” coming about as a result of the translation process (Halverson 2006: 105) – either co-occurring with physical relocation or occurring as

a separate event. Newmark (1988) and more recently Molina and Albir (2002) define compensation strictly as a matter of movement: compensation is to “introduce a ST element of information or stylistic effect in another place in the TT because it cannot be reflected in the same place as in the ST” (Molina/Albir 2002: 510). Other researchers, such as Baker (1992: 78), Motallebzadeh/Tousi (2011: 11) and Vinay/Darbelnet (1958/1995: 199), seem to express a view that displacement will always involve shifts:

Compensation can . . . be defined as the technique which maintains the tonality of the whole text by introducing, as a stylistic variant in another place of the text, the element which could not be rendered *at the same place by the same means*. This technique permits the conservation of the integrity of the text while leaving the translator complete freedom in producing the translation. (Vinay/Darbelnet 1958/1995: 199, my emphasis)

Yet others appear to regard the two as independent aspects compensation, for instance Zabalbeascoa (2005), who distinguishes between *compensation of place* and *compensation of kind*, where the latter denotes shift, or change. As regards compensation of place, Zabalbeascoa coins two terms that express the relative distance of the compensating item to its placement in the ST. An item which is not in the same place but still relatively close is “contiguous translation” (1995: 82), one that is further removed is a “displaced translation” (1995: 83). For the purposes of the below analysis, I define two corresponding items as being situated in the ‘same place’ when they are situated in the same verse (or chorus) and line (‘textual line’ being defined here as bounded by musical pauses before and after), as ‘contiguous’ if they are situated in the same verse or chorus, and as ‘displaced’ if the distance between the ST and the compensating item is greater than that.

Zabalbeascoa’s idea that there is an independent compensation of kind is problematic, insofar as regarding shifts on their own as compensation seems to bring us back to the idea that everything, or at least nearly everything, that goes on in translation is a form of compensation: ‘true’ literal translations are, after all, a minority occurrence in translated texts; shifts dominate. Harvey (1995: 79–83), who entertains a similar idea, tries to bypass this problem by simply stating that

compensation should not apply to the general realm of linguistic (e.g. semantic) closeness between the ST and TT, only to the stylistic level of the text (e.g. alliteration, metaphor, fixed expressions and so on). But this move does not come across as very successful, for a start simply since movement and shift occur at all levels and not just the stylistic one. Moreover, the problem connected with the idea that shifts on their own can constitute compensations does not go away even if compensation is relegated to the stylistic level: most fixed expressions, for example, will *have to be* rendered by different means in another language, that is by means of a shift, evoking yet again the notion that everything is compensation (in Harvey's scheme, on the level of style).

When it comes to compensation of kind, without displacement, we need a way of distinguishing between compensatory and non-compensatory shifts. One possible solution would be to refer to the prototypical scenario (or scene) underlying the word 'compensation', namely the idea of a desire to choose *a potentially available course of action* that would have been more optimal but that for some reason, *because of some kind of aspect beyond the agent's control* (a constraint of some sort), could not be carried out, meaning that something else had to be done instead – that a second-best course of action would have to be chosen. Applying this reasoning to the notion of translation shifts, so-called obligatory shifts – shifts that are due to the non-existence of a certain concept or word in a target language – are immediately weeded out as candidates for the label 'compensatory shift', as they constitute the *only* available course of action. When it comes to optional shifts, that is a situation where a translation solution that is closer to the ST item *does* exist, a *non-compensatory* shift is one that is simply due to a given translator's taste or preference or shortcomings of imagination: an existing solution closer to the source text could have been chosen but was not, because the translator was unwilling or unable to do 'better' and not because of some external constraint. A compensatory shift on the other hand would arise in a situation where a translation solution that is closer to the ST item exists, but where the translator – whose aim in the given case was clearly a source-oriented translation – was prevented from using this solution because of

various constraints in the translation situation, such as lip sync, time and space constraints in dubbing and subtitling, or rhythmical constraints in song translation.

Scenes-and-frames semantics becomes useful vis-à-vis the notion of compensation because it offers a nice way of answering the question, how do compensations of place and kind actually compensate? When it comes to compensation of place, the answer based off the scenes-and-frames semantics has to do with the idea that text interpretation is emergent, that is it involves a chain of activated scenes (and more abstract frames) where meanings are constructed and re-constructed in the course of the reading or listening process. In this perspective, differing placements of corresponding items in the ST and TT and the exact point in the reading or listening process when the scene is evoked is of less importance: the texts are, in the end, perceived holistically, and even though the surface topography of the lyrics might come across as dissimilar, the end result may still have the potential to convey (some kind and degree of) similarity. Furthermore, as regards compensation of kind, words that are quite dissimilar on the surface may still evoke quite similar scenes and frames. Consider, for example, the English noun ‘love’ as translated into a noun corresponding to ‘embrace’, such as Spanish *abrazo*: both can be said to have the potential to evoke the higher-level scene ‘Romantic Relationships’, and even though the similarity here is not strong, there is nevertheless a certain degree of similarity, and compensation has thus been achieved.

6. A sample analysis

The English ST lyrics of this song, “A Kind of Christmas Card”, were written by the poet Håvard Rem for the 1995 solo album *Wild Seed* by Morten Harket, the lead singer of the well-known Norwegian band A-ha.⁷ The Norwegian version, “Eit lite julebrev” (‘A Little Christmas Letter’), was translated by me, recorded and released in 2019 on an album containing translations into Norwegian of songs written by

⁷ Original and translated lyrics reproduced here with the kind permission of Håvard Rem.

Norwegians in English (Greenall 2019). The ST lyric's protagonist is a 23-year-old woman. The lyrics set up a contrast between a happy, Christian childhood in Norway with evening prayers and a mother's love, and a tortured present: the woman has moved away from her family all the way to Los Angeles, where she has become a prostitute and drug addict, although this is suggested rather than stated explicitly. What seems reasonably clear is that she is not currently doing very well and is facing some sort of breakdown (a 'burnout', see Table 1). The text emerges partly as the woman's internal monologue, partly as a letter from the woman to her family – a Christmas card – where she reminisces about her idyllic past, vents about the horrible state she currently finds herself in, and makes excuses about her situation by reminding her mother that she was young once, too.

In the following, I first map out parts of the general network of scenes evoked by the linguistic items (words and phrases) in the two versions of the lyrics, before looking more closely at some examples of compensation. Towards the end, I add some considerations of musical and visual triggers of scenes and how these interact with the lyrical triggers.

6.1. Mapping semantic relationships between the ST and TT lyrics

Table 1 below presents the lyrics in their entirety, divided into lines. I have underlined certain lexical items, to the exclusion of others, for the reason that these items all take part in triggering some recurrent, higher-level scenes that indicate the main themes of the lyrics ('Time', 'Place', 'Emotions', 'Childhood/Youth', 'Family', 'Drug Use', 'Sex', 'Religion', and 'Secrecy', listed in order of how dominant they are in the lyrics, and colour-coded in the table for easy identification). Now, these items, as always, evoke lower-level scenes, too: for example, *mor og far* ("mother and father") in line 1 in the TT triggers a scene containing knowledge about members of a family that are usually the primary caretakers of a child, but this scene is encompassed by a larger, more general scene, 'Family'. While I also refer in the following to lower-level scenes, the analysis mainly focuses on the higher-level scenes in order to supply a bird's-eye view of the two texts, what Fillmore (1982:

122) calls an “envisionment”. This analysis will show that behind the apparent dissimilarities of the lower-level scenes, the two texts nevertheless show considerable similarity on a higher level.

Table 1: ST, TT and back-translations.

Line number	ST: “A Kind of Christmas Card”	TT: “Eit lite julebrev”	TT back-translation: ‘A Little Christmas Letter’
1	All you folks back home [‘Family’, ‘Place’]	Kjære [‘Emotions’] mor og far [‘Family’]	Dear mother and father
2	I’ll never tell you [‘Secrecy’] this	Velsigna julefred [‘Family’, ‘Religion’, ‘Time’]	Blessed Christmas peace
3	You’re not supposed to know [‘Secrecy’]	De veit ikkje kor eg er [‘Secrecy’, ‘Place’]	You don’t know where I am
4	Where [‘Place’] your daughter [‘Family’, ‘Childhood/Youth’] is	Og bra er vel det	I suppose this is a good thing
5	There are ways of life	Då [‘Time’] de to vaks opp [‘Childhood/Youth’]	When the two of you grew up
6	You never understood	Så bad de blindt til gud [‘Religion’]	You prayed blindly to God
7	It’s right here	Eg drog rakt	I went straight
8	Downtown Hollywood [‘Place’]	Til Downtown Hollywood [‘Place’]	To Downtown Hollywood
9	It’s afternoon [‘Time’] on Sunset Boulevard [‘Place’]	Langt bort frå bygda [‘Place’] med sitt kalde [‘Emotions’] strev	Far away from the country village with its cold toil
10	I’ve got a stolen moment [‘Time’] trying hard [‘Emotions’]	Rart då, kor det kostar og det krev [‘Emotions’]	Funny, then, how much it costs and requires
11	To write a kind of Christmas card [‘Family’, ‘Religion’, ‘Time’]	Å skrive eit lite julebrev [‘Family’, ‘Religion’, ‘Time’]	To write a little Christmas letter
12	But I am burning out [‘Emotions’, ‘Drug Use’] again [‘Time’]	Og no [‘Time’] stormar [‘Emotions’] det igjen [‘Time’]	And now it’s storming again
13	Tonight [‘Time’] there is fever in my veins [‘Emotions’, ‘Drug Use’]	I blodet [‘Drug Use’], og feberer han brenn [‘Emotions’, ‘Drug Use’]	In the blood, and the fever, it burns
14	Mama dear [‘Family’, ‘Childhood/Youth’, ‘Emotions’], all the love [‘Family’, ‘Childhood/Youth’, ‘Emotions’] you gave	Mamma mi [‘Family’, ‘Childhood/Youth’], du var glad i meg [‘Family’, ‘Childhood/Youth’, ‘Emotions’]	Mummy of mine, you loved me

15	I guess there's really nothing, nothing much to say	Eg antar det er lite som kan <u>trøyste</u> [Family, Childhood/Youth, Emotions] deg	I suppose there isn't much that can <u>comfort</u> you
16	<u>This place</u> [Place] is as <u>dirty</u> [Sex] as I feel myself	Sjå deg rundt [Place], alt er dritt som <u>trengjer inn i</u> [Sex] meg	<u>Look around</u> , everything is shit that <u>penetrates me</u>
17	There are still some riches at the <u>Roosevelt</u> [Place]	Mellom <u>reine laken</u> [Family, Childhood/Youth, Sex] på <u>Hotell Roosevelt</u> [Place]	Between <u>clean sheets</u> at <u>Hotel Roosevelt</u>
18	That <u>evening prayer</u> [Family, Childhood/Youth, Religion], those <u>memories</u> [Time]	Du <u>bad med meg</u> [Family, Childhood/Youth, Religion], eg <u>låg på knær</u> [Religion, Sex]	You <u>prayed</u> with me, I <u>lay</u> on my <u>knees</u>
19	In my <u>little bedroom</u> [Childhood/Youth, Place], [Sex], <u>mama</u> [Family], [Childhood/Youth], <u>on my knees</u> [Religion, Sex]	Akkurat, <u>mamma</u> [Family, Childhood/Youth], slik eg gjer det <u>her</u> [Place]	Exactly, <u>mummy</u> , like I do it <u>here</u>
20	That's where I am at [Place] <u>down in Los Angeles</u> [Place]	Som i ein <u>draum</u> [Place] der ein <u>kjem</u> [Sex] og fer	Like <u>in a dream</u> where one <u>comes</u> and goes
21	And I am <u>burning out</u> [Emotions, Drug Use] <u>again</u> [Time]	Og no [Time] <u>stormar</u> [Emotions] det <u>igjen</u> [Time]	And now it's <u>storming</u> <u>again</u>
22	And I must rise above the <u>shame</u> [Emotions, Sex, Drug Use]	Og ho gjer <u>skamma</u> [Emotions, Sex, Drug Use] til sin ven	And she makes <u>the shame</u> her friend
23	<u>Tonight</u> [Time] there is <u>fever</u> in my <u>veins</u> [Emotions, Drug Use]	I <u>blodet</u> [Drug Use] <u>finst feber</u> som <u>brenn</u> [Emotions, Drug Use]	In <u>the blood</u> there's the <u>fever that burns</u>
24	Just think of the <u>girl</u> [Childhood/Youth] I used to be	Åh, eg tenkjer på ho eg var ein <u>gong</u> [Time]	Oh, I'm thinking about her that I <u>once</u> was
25	You were <u>my age</u> [Childhood/Youth] <u>once</u> [Time], <u>mama</u> [Family], [Childhood/Youth], <u>twenty-three</u> [Childhood/Youth]	<u>Mamma</u> [Family, Childhood/Youth], du var som meg <u>som ung</u> [Childhood/Youth], [Time], du <u>lo og song</u> [Emotions]	<u>Mummy</u> , you were like me <u>when you were young</u> , you <u>laughed and sang</u>
26	I can still hear some of the songs you used to play	Du var <u>tjette</u> [Childhood/Youth], og du spilte platene	You were <u>twenty-three</u> and you played the records
27	From that <u>summer of love</u> [Emotions, Time, Sex, Drug Use] <u>in sixty-eight*</u> [Time]	Frå <u>kjærleikens sommar</u> [Emotions, Time, Sex, Drug Use] i <u>sekstisju</u> [Time]	From the <u>summer of love</u> <u>in sixty-seven</u>
28	Seems it's turned into a <u>winter of</u> <u>hate</u> [Emotions, Time]	Åh, kvifor måtte alt <u>snu</u>	Oh, why did everything have to turn around
29	And I am <u>burning out</u> [Emotions, Drug Use] <u>again</u> [Time]	Og no [Time] <u>stormar</u> [Emotions] det <u>igjen</u> [Time]	And now it's <u>storming</u> <u>again</u>
30	<u>Tonight</u> [Time] there is <u>fever</u> in my <u>veins</u> [Emotions, Drug Use]	I <u>blodet</u> [Drug Use], og <u>feber</u> <u>han brenn</u> [Emotions, Drug Use]	In <u>the blood</u> , and <u>the fever</u> , <u>it burns</u>

* After my translation was published, line 27 of the original, which incorrectly assigned the Summer of Love to 1968 rather than 1967, was changed to “From that summer of love up north by Golden Gate” (Håvard Rem, personal communication).

The main takeaway from Table 1 is that although many of the underlined items are not what we would normally think of as ‘equivalents’, there is nevertheless a striking similarity between the ST and the TT in terms of the higher-level scene evoked. Consider the item “tonight” in line 13 (and subsequent choruses), which is very likely to evoke the prominent higher-level scene ‘Time’. The lower-level frame evoked by this item, containing for example knowledge that we are talking about the time of day when the sunlight is either fading or absent and many people go to sleep, lacks a clear correspondent in the TT. Instead, we have a number of items in the TT evoking the same higher-level frame (‘Time’), such as *no* (‘now’, line 12 and subsequent choruses), *igjen* (‘again’, line 12 and subsequent choruses) and (*ein gong* (‘once’, line 24).

Another example is found in line 9 in the ST, the item “Sunset Boulevard”. For those familiar with the city of Los Angeles, either in real life or from films, this item triggers a vivid lower-level scene containing images of palm trees, bright lights and an active nightlife (including prostitution), sensations of warm winds and romantic excitement. While the TT lacks a correspondent for this item as such, a number of items in the TT evoke the same higher-level frame, that is ‘Place’, some of which already have correspondents in the ST, for instance the TT’s *Downtown Hollywood* (line 8) and *Hotell Roosevelt* (line 17), and some that do not, such as *her* (‘here’, line 19) and *i ein draum* (‘in a dream’, line 20). The scenes potentially evoked by these items also contain images and sensations of a life like in the movies.

Likewise, the item “daughter” in line 4 in the ST, which potentially evokes the prominent higher-level scene of ‘Family’, has no direct counterpart in the TT on the lower level. But the same or very similar scene of ‘Family’ is potentially evoked in the TT by items such as *mor og far* (‘mother and father’, line 1), *julebrev* (‘Christmas

letter’, line 11), *trøyste* (‘comfort’, line 15) and *mamma* (‘mummy’, line 25).⁸ In both versions, the lower-level as well as the higher-level ‘Family’ frame contain images and emotions pertaining to childhood, warmth and safety, although the TT adds a line, *Langt bort frå bygda med sitt kalde strev* (‘Far away from the country village with its cold toil’, line 9), which indicates that life in the rural area where the TT protagonist grew up could also be hard: *kalde* (‘cold’) evokes the ‘Emotions’ scene with a negative twist.

Two important and related scenes – ‘Childhood/Youth’ and ‘Religion’ – potentially evoked in the ST by elements such as “my little bedroom” (line 19) and “evening prayer” (line 18) are evoked in the TT by slightly different elements, for instance *reine laken* (‘clean sheets’, line 17), *bad med meg* (‘prayed with me’, line 18) and *låg på knær* (‘lay on my knees’, line 18). The ‘Childhood/Youth’ and ‘Religion’ scenes connect with the temporal past in the lyrics and suggest innocence and purity; these are placed in stark contrast to the scenes ‘Sex’ and ‘Drug Use’, potentially evoked in the ST by items such as “dirty” (line 16, ‘Sex’) and “burning out” (line 12 and subsequent choruses, ‘Drug Use’), and in the TT by items such as *reine laken* (‘clean sheets’, line 17, ‘Sex’) and *blodet* (‘the blood’, line 13 and subsequent choruses). This contrast seemingly contributes to stirring up the strong emotions in the protagonist that ultimately threaten to destroy her.

So far, we have seen some examples of how a lack of an obvious correspondent in the TT – that is a linguistic item that has the potential to evoke the same lower-level scene as the item in the ST – does not preclude similarity between the two versions in terms of the network of higher-level scenes evoked: many seemingly unrelated items can indeed evoke the same higher-level scene, creating a similar pattern of ‘about-ness’ in the two versions. How similar those patterns in fact are can be seen

⁸ Note that some of these items (*julebrev*, *trøyste*) get their potential to evoke scenes that are subsumed under the scene ‘Family’ from the fact that other, surrounding items evoke this scene: if an item has the potential to evoke a number of different scenes, the co-text and its already activated cognitive context will to a great degree govern which scene or scenes get picked.

by looking at the number of items in each of the versions evoking a given scene. As shown in Table 2, there is a very close match between the ST and TT.

Table 2: Number of items in the ST (“A Kind of Christmas Card”) vs. the TT (“Eit lite julebrev”) evoking dominant scenes.

	‘Time’	‘Place’	‘Emotions’	‘Childhood/Youth’	‘Family’	‘Drug Use’	‘Sex’	‘Religion’	‘Secrecy’
Number of ST items	14	14	12	9	8	8	5	3	2
Number of TT items	13	13	14	10	10	8	6	4	1

The two texts differ by more than one item only in regard to ‘Emotions’ and ‘Family’, where the TT has two more items evoking those scenes, something that on the whole seems to be a negligible difference.

The scenes analysis presented in Table 1 also brings our attention to another way in which the two versions, as different as they may appear on an item-by-item, line-by-line basis, are actually very similar. As shown in that table, some single words or expressions may evoke several scenes at the same time: some linguistic items are, for example, associated with both ‘literal’ and ‘metaphorical’ scenes. The ability of certain items to trigger multiple scenes make them especially well-suited for creating poetic tension in the texts. An example here is “fever” and its Nynorsk correspondent *feber* (line 13 and subsequent choruses, both versions), which can trigger scenes involving a medical condition due to drug use on the one hand, and strong, overwhelming emotion on the other. Another example is that of the phrase “on my knees” and its Nynorsk correspondent *låg på knær* (lines 19 and 18, respectively), which in the context of this lyric both have the potential to evoke scenes depicting the childhood routines of saying one’s prayers at night, as well as sexual activity (by virtue of metonymically referring to elements of such scenes). Interestingly, in both versions, words and phrases that have the potential to evoke more than one scene in this way become more frequent as the lyrics proceed, as can be seen in Table 1. This illustrates how in this particular ST-TT pair, the early parts introduce the various

scenes carefully one by one, before setting them to work, accumulating and combining them, until we get a ‘crescendo of scenes’ towards the end, in both lyrics.

6.2. The translation procedure of compensation

So far, we have looked at the overall patterns and established that the semantic networks of the ST and TT are broadly similar. Narrowing the analysis, we can also examine specific incidents of the translation procedure of compensation, since this is especially important in song translation research.

There are some direct transfers and literal translations in Table 1, such as “summer of love” and its Nynorsk correspondent *kjærleikens sommar* (line 27), both of which evoke rich lower-level scenes of the Summer of Love of 1967 and music, sexual liberation and drugs, especially for Americans but also for other listeners. Not surprisingly, however, considering the special nature of song translation, there is considerably more use of other procedures, such as compensation. For the purposes of this analysis, I have chosen some examples of this procedure using *textual-musical salience* as a selection criterion, since this is a factor that determines which scenes are likely to become most strongly activated within readers’ and hearers’ cognitive environments (meaning that these cases hold more significance than others for the overall interpretation of the lyrics). The term ‘textual-musical salience’ refers to the fact that certain linguistic items occur in places within the musical framework that makes them more noticeable than other linguistic items in the same lyric. Some linguistic items in song lyrics are more salient than others because they are repeated frequently, or because they are sung over long notes, or placed in the chorus, and/or in the musical hook. Looking first at repetition as a salience-producing factor, I used automatically generated word clouds to obtain a visual overview of the prevalence of some words over others. Only the content words from the lyrics, that is the verbs,

nouns, adjectives and adverbs, were fed into the word cloud generator,⁹ giving patterns as shown in Figures 1 and 2.



⁹ I used this tool: <https://tagcrowd.com/>, whose creators are more concerned with creating an accurate analytical tool than pleasing users with ‘pretty art’.

“Burning out”, which can be found in line 12 (and in subsequent choruses), whose first element, “burning”, on its own evokes quite a literal scene involving flames, potentially triggers two lower-level scenes, both of them metaphorical. The first is that of someone having felt stressed and frustrated for a long time and who is nearing the point of exhaustion (this scene forms part of the higher-level ‘Emotions’ scene). The other is subsumed by the higher-level scene ‘Drug Use’: someone who is overusing may start showing signs of this kind of life (forgetfulness, slow speech, loss of intelligence) and may slangily become referred to as a ‘burnout’.

Norwegian does have a counterpart to such burnout, namely the noun *utbrenthet* (which only potentially evokes ‘Emotion’ and not ‘Drug Use’). This item cannot, however, be fit into the rhythmical framework of the line in question. This leaves the similarity-seeking translator with no option but to use compensation. At first sight, it might appear that the verb *stormar* (‘storming’, line 12 and subsequent choruses) constitutes a compensation, since it, too, has the potential to evoke the higher-level scene ‘Emotions’. However, while the fact that “burning out” and *stormar* do – by virtue of evoking the same higher-level scene – cause similarity on a general level between the ST and TT (cf. the analysis in 6.1.), we do not want to call this translation compensation, since allowing all elements that evoke higher-level scenes to be compensations of a given item in the ST would bring us dangerously close to the ‘everything is compensation’ fallacy. In order for a translation to be a compensation proper, it needs to display at least some degree of similarity also at the level of lower-level scenes. And when it comes to “burning out” and *stormar* (‘storming’) there is little or no similarity between the potential lower-level scenes (flames vs. movement of air, respectively).

So, if *stormar* is not a compensation for “burning out”, then what is? In line 13 of the TT, and in subsequent choruses, we have *feberen han brenn* (‘the fever, it burns’), where the item *brenn* (‘burns’) in this particular co-text/context has the potential to evoke the same or very similar scenes as “burning out” in the ST, with respect to both the lower-level scenes, containing the idea or image of physical flames, and the higher-level scenes ‘Emotions’ and ‘Drug Use’. This item, *brenn*, is

taken here to be an instance of compensation because of the similarity on the lower level (flames): if the item in question had simply evoked ‘Emotion’ in any old way, for example if the translator had not used *brenn* but rather *kjærleik* (‘love’), then this would not have been an instance of compensation of place as such, but rather a result of the more general balancing act of a translator trying to create a similar kind of ‘about-ness’ in the TT. *Feberen han brenn* can furthermore be characterized as a compensation of place, since the item in question has been moved to a different line (although the item is still within relatively close vicinity of its ST counterpart, cf. Zabalbeascoa’s (1995: 82) “contiguous translation”).

6.2.2. “Tonight”: compensation of both place and kind

The item “tonight” (line 13) which has the potential to evoke another very prominent higher-level scene in the ST, namely ‘Time’, provides an example of simultaneous compensation of both place and kind, that is the same item is both displaced and shifted in the TT. The most obvious correspondent to “tonight” in the TT – *no* (‘now’, line 12) – actually precedes its ST counterpart in the structure of the song, which is not unusual for compensations of place in song lyrics, and does not preclude a compensatory function. More than many other texts, song lyrics are listened to and enjoyed repeatedly, which means that the text interpretation process is even more back-and-forth and/or circular than in the case of reading for instance regular prose texts, giving listeners ample opportunity to respond to linguistic cues wherever they occur in the text and building up understandings of the lyrics incrementally. Both “tonight” and *no* are sung on long, very drawn out notes – the same note, actually, even though they occur in the first and second line of the chorus, respectively, since the melody in these first two lines is identical. This further establishes *no* as a correspondent of *tonight*, and emphasizes the importance of the scene ‘Time’ in both lyrics.

Although the lower-level scenes potentially evoked by “tonight” and *no* are quite similar (both provide information about a point in time close to the present of the speaker), “tonight” potentially evokes a more specific scene than *no*: the latter

triggers a rather open scene that does not contain information about which time of the day the singer is referring to. This shift – from specific to more general – makes this a compensation of kind as well as of place.

6.2.3. “Veins”: compensation of kind

The final example is a compensation of kind only. The item “veins” in line 13 (and subsequent choruses) has, in this particular co-text/context, the potential to evoke the scene ‘Drug Use’. Veins are not mentioned in the TT, even though Norwegian does possess a correspondent, namely *årer*. As no solution presented itself during the translation process that allowed *årer* to be used while at the same time preserving singability, a different although related item was chosen, namely *blodet* (‘the blood’, line 13 and subsequent choruses), which also has the potential – though perhaps slightly more weakly – to evoke the scene ‘Drug Use’ in this particular co-text/context. It could be added that, as with “tonight” and *no*, the vowel *o* in *blodet* is sung on a very long note in a very salient place in the chorus, namely the hook. This has the potential effect of suggesting that there is more to the ‘blood’ than its mere mention, which might encourage the triggering of ‘Drug Use’. Also, the salience of the *sung* word ‘blood’ may have an intensifying effect on the activation of the scene ‘Drug Use’, which may make up for the, relatively speaking, lower number words and phrases in the TT chorus evoking the ‘Drug Use’ scene, making this scene more dominant in the lyrics as a whole than it would otherwise have been.

6.3. Musical and visual triggers of cognitive content

While musical and visual elements arguably do not trigger scenes that are as organized and detailed as words do, they do evoke scenes, many of them particularly packed with emotional content. These scenes interact with the scenes evoked by the items that make up the lyrics, guiding the listener’s attention more towards some scenes (and elements within scenes) rather than others.

While the translation of the lyrics of “A Kind of Christmas Card” into “Eit lite julebrev” aimed for similarity, this was not the case for the cover of the song in its entirety. Both the musical and other types of triggers are very different in the two versions, thus interacting with, and highlighting, different aspects of the scenes evoked by the lyrics. The two versions differ strongly, for example, in terms of musical genre. The source version is carried out in a pop/rock style, with a full band consisting of drums, keyboards, bass guitar and guitar. For the purpose of this particular song, the singer’s voice is genre-definingly raspy (Morten Harket’s use of his voice is normally much more velvety and ethereal), and the singing style tends towards wailing in places. The target version is carried out in a low-key singer-songwriter style with a touch of jazz. The instrumentation is just vocals and guitar, and it is sung in a much tidier, more controlled style. The croaky, strained quality of Harket’s voice in the source version and the desperation it conveys point more strongly to the scene ‘Drug Use’ and the concomitant illness than the style employed in the target version, which has a more objective, narrative quality to it, which possibly avoids steering the listener’s attention in any particular direction, letting the lyrics speak for themselves to a greater degree.

The music video “A Kind of Christmas Card”, uploaded to YouTube on May 10, 2012, is in black and white, showing Morten Harket partly walking around and partly singing in a cityscape with blurred outlines, unsteady cameras and surreal lighting, which again draws attention to the drugs theme. Interspersed are flashes of (cinematic) scenes that highlight the prominent (cognitive) scenes identified above: a mother and a small, innocent daughter in white, flowy dresses, the daughter as a beautiful, young woman (standing at the helm of a boat gliding down a river, possibly bringing the thoughts in the direction of the journey she has made to be where she is today, alternatively, the journey towards collapse), and clips of an old, suit-clad man embracing her, first tenderly, then in a more violent fashion, tugging her about (suggesting sex, harassment and/or prostitution). At the very end, the video turns orange and red in colour, supporting the linguistic items “burning” and “fever” in evoking the ‘Emotions’ scene (and/or vice versa – the lyrics’ references to fever

and burning and the scenes they evoke *cause* such an interpretation of the change of colour). The target version has no official video, so there is nothing that in a similar way supports or re-directs the focus on certain scenes evoked by the lyrics to the exclusion of others.

7. Summary and suggestions for further research

In trying to juggle factors to do with semantic (and stylistic) similarity on the one hand, and a workable degree of rhythmical equivalence on the other, similarity-seeking, singable song translation of lyrics often ends up with a TT which superficially may seem less close to the ST than it actually is. In this chapter I have shown how a scenes-and-frame approach – with an emphasis on scenes – is useful in delving beneath such linguistic surfaces to capture both subtle and not-so-subtle similarities between STs and TTs. Such an approach can be used to chart overall semantic patterns of STs and TTs in order to enable an overall comparison of similarities and differences in general. I have also shown how it can help flesh out and operationalize the procedure of compensation, which, depending as it does on the notion of constraints precluding the similarity-seeking translator from choosing the closest possible option, is of special importance in similarity-seeking, singable translation of song lyrics (exactly how important it is, and in what ways, is an obvious topic for further research). A scenes-and-frame approach is also of particular interest to the analysis of song translation because scene-evoking items (or ‘triggers’ or ‘contextualization cues’) are not only constituted by verbal items, triggers or cues, but also by non-verbal stimuli, which means that the same concepts can be used in analysing all of the semiotic layers of a given song and its cover, including lyrics, music and visual stimuli. Future studies should aim at a more comprehensive, balanced analysis taking non-verbal elements more fully into account than I have undertaken here.

Even though the scenes-and-frames approach helps us escape the narrow confines of words and their dictionary definitions in the analysis of relationships between STs

and TTs, it does, unfortunately, also take us into a realm where there may be even more disagreement about what a given item ‘means’, in the sense of what a lower or higher-level scene may possibly ‘contain’. In a way, this is the price we pay for increased psychological plausibility – the mind is a messy place. The move towards a focus on the potentialities of linguistic items (and other, non-verbal item types) as triggers rather than as actual interpretations, as discussed in section 2, is one step towards making our analyses more grounded. But other solutions may also be possible. What I have in mind are solutions that draw on the concept of *intersubjectivity* of interpretations: as mentioned in section 2, the nature of our cognitive environments is fundamentally socialized, and interpretations are always the result of inner or outer negotiations and dialogue between various voices (Bakhtin 1981). This could be used actively in research. Studies could perhaps be corroborated by asking a number of subjects to provide scene descriptions and scene labels for items and groups of items in a song lyric or song, first individually and then in a group discussion where they compared various solutions and agreed on a common solution that could then be used for analytical purposes.

A particularly underexplored aspect of a scenes-and-frames analysis – one that I did not have the time or space to explore in any depth here, and that might also benefit from such a ‘dialogical approach’, involving research subjects and experiments – concerns how scenes possibly interact in the interpretation process to highlight or suppress each other, or elements within the others. Hypotheses regarding this could potentially be generated using think-aloud protocols, presenting subjects with songs, asking them to think out loud, and after they have offered their thoughts, ask them to respond to the prompt ‘*why* did you think that?’. Answers to this question might indicate, at least to some degree, which triggers, scenes and/or scene elements led to the focus on another scene or other scene elements.

Furthermore, the notion of frames could possibly be used to study a tricky aspect of analysing what Toury (1995) calls *coupled pairs*, or corresponding elements in STs and TTs. Where do such elements begin and end, and what elements in the ST actually correspond to elements in the TT? The notion of frame – being the abstract,

linguistic representation of a scene – might prove helpful in circumscribing the likely boundaries of correspondents as they appear, in the form of linguistic matter, in the texts. The hunt for a way to circumscribe such elements is of course purely an exercise in analytical convenience – psychologically, parts of linguistic structures as well as full structures are all potential cues to scenes, and definite boundaries between items possibly play very little role in actual processing. This would certainly mirror many listeners’ experiences of song lyrics as something that we perceive as fragments, as fleeting impressions, as a word, phrase and a note here, an emotion there, but always, ultimately, as a whole.

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