Frame Semantics And Lexical Translation
The Risk Frame And Its Translation

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1. Introduction

1.1. *Cognitive Linguistics*

Frame Semantics is included in a group of linguistic theories that form what has been called "Cognitive Linguistics". Cognitive Linguistics (C.L.) is not, therefore, a single theory, but rather a group of them, which share basic assumptions about language, its relation to cognition, and the way to study and analyse it. Some of the common features of this movement are the following:

1. Language is fully integrated with the rest of cognitive functions (vision and other perception systems, reasoning, etc); this stands in marked opposition to Chomskyan Linguistics, which believes in the autonomy of language (especially, the autonomy of syntax).

2. There is a strong tendency to favour semantic and/or pragmatic explanations to purely syntactic ones.

3. CL makes wide use of prototypes (in the Roschian sense), instead of "closed" or "Aristotelian" categories. This sets them apart from pure logicist approaches.

4. In CL, meaning is experientially based: this means that humans construct meaning from their interaction with the world. This, in its turn, leads to a subjective view of meaning, since it is built by every individual in his/her mind.

5. They also have a relational view of meaning, where concepts are not explained atomistically but rather in networks.

6. They have «constructions» as linguistic units, which are direct pairings of parameters of form and parameters of meaning. Instead of phrase-structure rules, where syntax is the main source of information, in "constructions" all sorts of information can be made to play a role: morphological, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic information, etc.

7. They share a similar meaning representation, which is called Idealized Cognitive Model (ICM) by Lakoff, Cognitive Representation by Talmy, Cognitive Domain by Langacker, Mental Space by Fauconnier and Frame by Fillmore.

1.2. *Frame Semantics*

Based on this "frame" construct, Fillmore has initiated a semantic theory, which he has called "Frame Semantics". A basic definition of the theory can be found in this quotation from Fillmore (1982):

> The frame idea is this: there are certain schemata or frameworks of concepts or terms which link together as a system, which impose structure or coherence on some aspect of human experience (Fillmore, 1975, p.123).

This means that knowledge is always organized in "chunks", or networks. Human beings have at their disposal a wide inventory of frames, which are applied to all those different situations which can be encountered in order to make sense of them. As a matter of fact, we can make sense of reality inasmuch as we have a "frame" which allows an interpretation.

It is by using frames that speakers are able to conceptualize, to formulate their own messages and understand the messages they receive. Each of these frames is correlated with a set of linguistic options, which can be a single word, a list of words, a syntactic category, an intonation pattern, etc. The genesis of frames is varied: some are innate (and arise from the particularities of our perception system, for example); some are acquired from the observation of the world (for example, from the continued observation of cause-effect relationships in the world); some are cultural, or even social, etc.

Throughout his articles, Fillmore mentions two types of frames:

Interaction Frames. These include frames like the "Saluting frame", where we would, for example, find information on how to use *"Good morning"*. To properly use this phrase, you have to know that it is said just once, before noon, that you normally would expect an answer, etc.

Cognitive frames, which correspond to "traditional" meaning. An example used by Fillmore is the word *Tuesday*: to properly understand *Tuesday* we have to invoke "background" knowledge: it must be known that days come in groups of seven, forming what is called a "week" and that Tuesday is the name of one of these days (the third one in English culture, and the second in Spanish). Another example would be *"breakfast"*, which corresponds to "first meal of the day in a culture that eats three times a day".

2.   The Risk Study

2.1. *Fillmore and Atkins' study*

We were interested in the use of Frame Semantics for lexical translation, particularly for the elaboration of bilingual dictionaries. To this purpose, we took Fillmore and Atkins's analysis of the word "risk" as the starting point for our paper.

Fillmore and Atkins started by analysing the definitions of "risk" offered in ten monolingual dictionaries in order to determine the possible semantic and syntactic problems which may lead to confusion. They also studied about two thousand occurrences of the word "risk" in a corpus. After the analysis, they concluded that the format used in dictionaries was too restricted and could not explain many of the problems they had identified in the corpus. In order to give a wider picture of the word, they claimed, it was necessary to go farther than the simple differentiation of senses offered in dictionaries; it was necessary to discover the frame which underlies the meaning of the word.

Fillmore and Atkins then tried to structure the RISK frame. To this purpose, they proceeded to identify the elements involved in its frame, which were the following:

Protagonist	**[Pr]**	*the central person in the frame*
Bad	**[Ba]**	*the possible bad outcome, or harm*
Decision	**[De]**	*the decision that could trigger this*
Goal	**[Go]**	*the desired outcome*
Setting	**[Se]**	*the situation within which the risk exists*
Source	**[So]**	*something or someone which could cause the harm*
Possession	**[Po]**	*something or someone valued by the Protagonist and endangered in the situation*

With this list of elements that play a role in the RISK frame, they

classified the uses of the word "risk" they found in the corpus. They distinguished three possible senses, or "conceptual schemas", which were characterised by a different configuration of elements:

One schema involves the protagonist and the possession elements of the frame:

1)   **[Pr, Po]**   *He risked his life*

Another one involves the protagonist and the possible bad outcome:

2)   **[Pr, Ba]**   *He risked falling down*
                      He risked death

And the third schema presupposes a protagonist and the decision which triggers the risk:

3)   **[Pr, De]**   *He risked climbing the mountain*
                      He risked a swim

These schemas allow us to account explicitly for the double reading of examples which traditional lexicography had only classified as ambiguous. We are referring to examples such as *He risked a battle*, which can be interpreted as: a) "he ran the risk of being presented with a battle", interpretation which involves a protagonist and the possible bad outcome; b) "he consciously took the risk of presenting a battle", reading which presupposes a protagonist and the decision he takes.

Moreover, Fillmore and Atkins also realised that each scenario requires a different syntactic complementation. Thus, they found that while possession always requires a NP, the possible bad outcome and the decision can be expressed by either a NP or a VP + -ing.

- Possession [Po]

NP	*I risked my life for you*

- Bad [Ba]

VP + -ing	*We risked being killed*
NP	*We risked death to help you*

- Decision [De]

VP + -ing	*He risked swimming in the river*
NP	*He risked a swim*

Syntactic realization of the frame elements (Fillmore and Atkins, 1994)

2.2. *The RISK frame and its translation*

As we outlined before, we were interested in the use of the RISK frame for the translation of the word into Spanish and the elaboration of its entry in a bilingual dictionary.

As Fillmore and Atkins, we started by analysing the entries of RISK offered by three major English-Spanish/Spanish-English bilingual dictionaries in order to locate possible points of confusion.

LAROUSSE

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risk. v.tr. Arriesgar: to risk one's life, arriesgar la vida.// Exponerse a: to risk a defeat, exponerse a una derrota.// Arriesgarse a, correr el riesgo de: you can't risk doing it, no puede arriesgarse a hacerlo; he risked breaking his arm, corrió el riesgo de romperse el brazo.//

COLLINS

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risk. 3 vt arriesgar; atreverse a, exponerse a; I'll ~ it acepto; I can't ~ it no me puedo exponer a eso; shall we ~ it? ¿nos atrevemos?; to ~ defeat correr riesgo de ser derrotado, exponerse a una posible derrota; to ~ + ger arriesgarse a + inf; I can't ~ going alone no puedo arriesgarme a ir solo, no me atrevo a ir solo.

OXFORD

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risk. *vt* **(a)** (put in danger) reputation/health arriesgar*, poner* en peligro; **she's prepared ~ everything** está dispuesta a arriesgarlo todo; **to ~ one's life for sb** arriesgar* *or* poner* en peligro su (*or* mi *etc.*) vida por algn **(b)** (expose oneself to) arriesgarse* a, correr el riesgo de; **we ~ defeat** corremos el riesgo de *or* nos exponemos a una derrota; **are you going to take your umbrella? -no, I think I'll ~ it** ¿vas a llevar el paraguas? -no, creo que me voy a arriesgar; **to ~ -ING** arriesgarse* A *or* correr el riesgo DE + INF; **you ~ being late** te arriesgas a *or* corres el riesgo de llegar tarde

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We found three main obscure points:

    a) We firstly realised that the distinction between the lexical items provided as the Spanish equivalents of *risk* was not clear. The dictionaries registered terms such as "arriesgarse", "exponerse" or "atreverse", but it was not at all clear whether these terms were supposed to be interchangeable or whether their use was restricted in any way.

    b) Secondly, we discovered that the use of the reflexive or non-reflexive form of the equivalents provided was not clear either.

    c) And thirdly, there was also some confusion regarding the syntactic complementation of the lexical entries in Spanish. It was difficult to see when the translation requires the form A + INF and when it does not.

    We then set out to check whether Fillmore and Atkins' frame could help to translate *risk* in a more systematic and functional way.

    To start with, we found out that the three schemas distinguished by Fillmore and Atkins contributed to clarify the confusing points located in the analysis of the dictionary entries:

    a) Regarding the confusion between the lexical equivalents, we observed that the three senses helped discriminate between the different lexical items. Thus, while "arriesgar" can be used in all the three senses, "exponer" can be resorted to as the translation of *risk* only when the possession or possible bad outcome are involved. In the same way, we realised that "atreverse" and "aventurarse" can only translate *risk* when the decision element is involved.

    b) Concerning the use of the reflexive or non-reflexive equivalents, we found out that the RISK frame could also contribute to clarify the matter. We therefore concluded that the non-reflexive form is only possible when the possession element is involved. The reflexive form of the terms is on the other hand possible in the other two senses.

1. [Pr, Po]	***ARRIESGAR, EXPONER***
He risked his life	
ARRIESGÓ SU VIDA	
EXPUSO SU VIDA	

2. [Pr, Ba]	***ARRIESGARSE, EXPONERSE***
he risked falling down	*he risked defeat*
SE ARRIESGABA A CAERSE	SE ARRIESGABA A SER DERROTADO
SE EXPONÍA A UNA CAÍDA	SE EXPONÍA A UNA DERROTA

3. [Pr, De]	***ARRIESGARSE, ATREVERSE, AVENTURARSE***
He risked climbing the mountain	*He risked a swim*
SE ATREVIÓ/ARRIESGÓ A SUBIR LA MONTAÑA	SE ARRIESGÓ A NADAR

The RISK frame schemas and lexical choices

    c) Finally, we also observed that the RISK frame could help determine the syntactic complementation of the translation into Spanish.

We first considered the translation of those cases where *risk* is followed by VP + -ing (which are those involving the bad outcome and the decision elements), and we concluded that in the two possible senses it is possible to translate using the structure A + INF; however only when the bad outcome plays a role in the frame can we use a NP as translation of the English VP+ -ing.

RISK + VP

2. [Pr, Ba]

ENGLISH	VP + -ing	*he risked falling down*
SPANISH	a + INF	SE ARRIESGABA A CAERSE
	NP	SE EXPONÍA A UNA CAIDA

3. [Pr, De]

ENGLISH	VP + -ing	*he risked climbing the mountain*
SPANISH	a + INF	SE ARRIESGÓ A SUBIR LA MONTAÑA

The RISK frame schemas and the translation of syntactic complementation (VP)

We then studied the translation of *risk* when followed by NP, and we also observed differences in the syntactic complementation when translated into Spanish. Thus, while possession is always translated by a NP and decision as A + INF, when the bad outcome is involved it is possible to translate the English NP by another NP or by A + INF.

RISK + NP

1. [Pr, Po]

ENGLISH	NP	*he risked his life*
SPANISH	NP	ARRIESGÓ SU VIDA

2. [Pr, Ba]

ENGLISH	NP	*he risked defeat*
SPANISH	a + INF	SE ARRIESGABA A SER DERROTADO
	NP	SE EXPONÍA A UNA DERROTA

3. [Pr, De]

ENGLISH	NP	*he risked a swim*
SPANISH	a + INF	SE ARRIESGÓ A NADAR

The RISK frame schemas and the translation of syntactic complementation (NP)

3. Conclusion

Summing up, we observed that:

- The three conceptual schemas distinguished by Fillmore and Atkins help clarify lexical choices. In this sense, we found out that when possession is involved, *risk* can be translated as the non-reflexive "arriesgar" or "exponer". In those cases where the bad outcome plays a role in the frame, we must use the reflexive "arriesgarse" or "exponerse" as the translation of *risk*. And in those cases presupposing the protagonist's decision, it is possible to choose between the also reflexive "arriesgarse" o "aventurarse".

THE THREE SENSES HELP CLARIFY LEXICAL CHOICES:

1)	[Pr, Po]	ARRIESGAR/EXPONER
2)	[Pr, Ba]	ARRIESGARSE/EXPONERSE A
3)	[Pr, De]	ARRIESGARSE/AVENTURARSE A

- The RISK frame also helps clarify syntactic complementation problems. Thus, we observed that in Spanish the possession element is always carried out by an NP, the bad outcome can be expressed either by NP or A + INF, and the decision element is always carried out by A + INF.

THE THREE SENSES HELP CLARIFY SYNTACTIC COMPLEMENTATION PROBLEMS:

[Pr, Po]	NP
[Pr, Ba]	NP
	a + INF
[Pr, De]	a + INF

- Moreover, we also noticed that for the translation into Spanish, it is useful to consider an element that Fillmore and Atkins identified in the RISK frame but did not use in the configuration of their three conceptual schemas. We are referring to the "source" element. In fact, we observed that in those cases involving the bad outcome, when the source of the bad event is an external agent, the construction "A QUE" must be used in Spanish.

In this way, whereas an example such as *"He risked death"* can be translated as A + INF because there is no external agent implicit, in examples such as *"He risked a punch"*, when interpreted as the possible bad outcome, it is necessary to consider the presence of an implicit agent of the action (the

person who gives the punch). This agent is reflected in the translation into Spanish in the plural form of the verb and the construction "A QUE": *"Se arriesgaba a que le dieran un puñetazo"*.

We hope that this study will stand as evidence of the greater explanatory capacity of Frame Semantics when compared to traditional lexicography methods. Building the frame that underlies the meaning of a word can contribute to increasing not only the functional capacity of dictionaries but also the translator's ability to account for those uses which do not appear in a dictionary.

However, despite its value, we must also acknowledge its methodological limitations. We are aware of the fact that sometimes it is not easy to identify the elements which may take part in a frame or to differentiate between the different senses or conceptual schemas of a term. Nevertheless, the existing evidence, though still scarce, seems to point to Frame Semantics as a promising direction. And we hope that further research will help to overcome its practical problems.

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About the Author

Ana Mª Rojo López & Javier Valenzuela are both teachers in the Department of English at the University of Murcia. They are mainly concerned with the application of Cognitive Linguistics to translation processes: Lakoff's theory of cognitive metaphor, Fillmore's Frame Semantics, Fillmore and Kay's Construction Grammar and Langacker's Cognitive Grammar. Other additional interests include Stylistics and Translation Theory.

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Abstract

This study deals with the use of Frame Semantics for lexical translation, particularly for the elaboration of bilingual dictionaries. To this purpose, we took Fillmore and Atkins's analysis of the word "risk" as the starting point for our paper. We analyzed the entries of RISK offered by three major English-Spanish/Spanish-English bilingual dictionaries in order to locate possible points of confusion, and found three main obscure points: a) We firstly realised that the distinction between the lexical items provided as the Spanish equivalents of *risk* was not clear. b) Secondly, we discovered that the use of the reflexive or non-reflexive form of the equivalents provided was not clear either. c) And thirdly, there was also some confusion regarding the syntactic complementation of the lexical entries in Spanish.

We then set out to check whether Fillmore and Atkins' frame could help to translate *risk* in a more systematic and functional way. Our analysis showed that the three conceptual schemas distinguished by Fillmore and Atkins helped clarify these three problems. Thus, the greater explanatory capacity of Frame Semantics when compared to traditional lexicography methods is shown. Building the frame that underlies the meaning of a word can contribute to increase not only the functional capacity of dictionaries but also the translator's ability to account for those uses which do not appear in a dictionary.

Résumé

Cet étude porte sur l'emploi de *Frame Semantics* dans la traduction lexicale, surtout dans l'élaboration des dictionnaires bilingues. Dans ce but, on a utilisé l'analyse du mot "risk" faite par Fillmore et Atkins comme notre point de départ. Après avoir analysé des définitions de "risk" trouvées dans trois dictionnaires bilingues importants (ang-esp/esp-ang) pour chercher de points de confusion possibles, nous avons rencontré trois points obscurs principaux.

a) Nous avons constaté que la différence entre les termes lexicaux présentés comme équivalents de "risk" en espagnol n'était pas nette.

b) Nous avons découvert que l'emploi de la forme réflexive, ou non réflexive, des équivalents presentés manquait tout autant de netteté.

c) Il existait une certaine confusion quant à la complémentarité syntactique des définitions

lexicales en espagnol.

    Alors on s'est mis à vérifier si le schéma de Fillmore et Atkins pouvait aider à traduire "risk" d'une façon plus systématique et fonctionnelle. Notre analyse montre que les trois schémas conceptuels distingués par Fillmore et Atkins aident à clarifier ces trois problèmes. Ce qui démontre que la valeur explicative de Frame Semantics est meilleure que celle du méthodes de la lexicographie traditionnelle.

    La construction du schéma sous-jacent au sens d'un mot peut contribuer à augmenter non seulement la capacité fonctionnelle des dictionnaires, mais aussi l'aptitude du traducteur à expliquer les emplois du mot qui n'apparaissent pas dans le dictionnaire.

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Le prologue du livre de Ben Sirach le Sage et la traduction des écrits sacrés

Bruno Rochette

À côté du pseudépigraphe, en réalité anonyme, qu'est la *Lettre d'Aristée à Philocrate*, qui donna naissance à la légende des Septante,[1] et quelques passages de Philon d'Alexandrie,[2] le prologue du livre de Ben Sirach le Sage, appelé aussi l'Ecclésiastique,[3] peut-être un peu plus ancien que le prétendu Aristée, est un des témoignages les plus importants sur les difficultés inhérentes à la traduction d'écrits sacrés. Ce texte constitue un document de première main sur la prise de conscience du caractère impossible et nécessaire d'une ἑρμηνεία, lorsqu'elle concerne des textes inspirés. Voyons d'abord le passage du prologue le plus intéressant pour notre propos.[4]

[15] Παρακέκλησθε οὖν / μετ'εὐνοίας καὶ προσοχῆς / τὴν ἀνάγνωσιν ποιεῖσθαι / καὶ συγγνώμην ἔχειν / ἐφ' οἷς ἂν δοκῶμεν / [20] τῶν κατὰ τὴν ἑρμηνείαν πεφιλοπονημένων τισὶν τῶν / λέξεων ἀδυναμεῖν / οὐ γὰρ ἰσοδυναμεῖ / αὐτὰ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς Εβραϊστὶ λεγόμενα καὶ ὅταν μεταχθῇ / εἰς ἑτέραν γλῶσσαν · / οὐ μόνον δὲ ταῦτα, / ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ νόμος καὶ αἱ προφητεῖαι / [25] καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν βιβλίων / οὐ μικρὰν ἔχει τὴν διαφορὰν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς λεγόμενα. / Ἐν γὰρ τῷ ὀγδόῳ καὶ τριακοστῷ ἔτει ἐπὶ τοῦ Εὐεργέτου / βασιλέως / παραγενηθεὶς εἰς Αἴγυπτον καὶ συγχρονίσας / εὑρὼν οὐ μικρᾶς παιδείας ἀφόμοιον / [30] ἀναγκαιότατον ἐθέμην καὶ αὐτός τινα προσενέγκασθαι σπουδὴν καὶ

Vous êtes donc invités à en faire la lecture avec bienveillance et attention et à montrer de l'indulgence, là où nous semblerions, malgré nos laborieux efforts d'interprétation, rendre mal quelques-unes des expressions. Car elles n'ont pas la même force, les choses dites en hébreu dans ce livre, quand elles sont traduites dans une autre langue.[5] D'ailleurs non seulement ce volume, mais la Loi elle-même, les Prophètes et les autres livres offrent aussi une différence considérable quant à leur contenu. C'est en effet la trente-huitième année du roi Évergète, qu'étant allé en Égypte et y séjournant, je trouvai un exemplaire de cette importante instruction. Je jugeai très nécessaire d'apporter moi-même quelque soin et quelque labeur à traduire ce livre. J'ai donc consacré beaucoup de veilles et