

To Dress and Undress *The Naked Chef* – a Multimodal Translation Analysis

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Artikeln presenterar en multimodal översättningsanalys av The Naked Chef (KT) och Den nakna kocken (MT) av Jamie Oliver. Analysen undersöker huruvida samspelet mellan de semiotiska resurserna text och bild förändras i och med översättningen och vilken betydelse denna eventuella förändring får för hur den nakna kockens s.k. Persona konstrueras inom den svenska kulturen. Teoretisk bygger analysen på Hallidays funktionella grammatik (1994), Kress och van Leeuwens semiotiska bildanalyser (1996) och Tourys normbegrepp (1995) inom Translation Studies. Undersökningen visar att källtexten översatts med en adekvansinriktad översättningsstrategi. Små förändringar i konstruktionen av den nakna kockens persona på svenska kan dock skönjas. Källtextens spjuveraktiga pojaktighet som i den textuella resursen uttrycks via språkliga slanguttryck mildras och feminiseras på svenska.

Keywords: culinary literature, translation, multimodality, functional grammar, persona

1 Introduction

Within the literary category culinary literature approximately 1,5 million books are sold globally each year and Sweden is the nation in the world where the largest amount of cookery books per capita is published (Granqvist 2005: 4). This does not imply that Swedes cook more than other nationalities do. On the contrary, a recent survey of Swedish cooking habits shows that Swedes put less than 15 minutes a day into cooking (Burstedt et al. 2006: 5). ‘The cookery book boom’ often discussed in Swedish magazines and newspapers does not coincide with the fact that we spend more time in our meticulously renovated kitchens. It probably coincides more with the changing functions of this kind of literature – a literature turned into flashy lifestyle books instead of practical manuals for housewives. Some Swedish researchers are even calling this kind of literature food pornography (Josephson & Melander 2003: 132–133). Despite the changing functions, this literature is both globally and nationally in Sweden an important literary genre. Within the Swedish literary system, culinary literature is quantitatively the most important subgenre of non-fiction literature (Granqvist 2005: 4). And

translations within this specific literary field amounts to approximately 15% of all publications during the period 2002–2006 (NB).¹

2 The Project and the Aim of the Study

The study presented in this paper deals with Jamie Oliver's cookery book *The Naked Chef* (1999) and *Den nakna kocken* (2001). This study forms part of a larger project entitled *The Social Practices of Translation, Cookbooks as a Case in Point*.² The source and target texts are chosen from *The A la Carte – Best Chef Book* category of The Swedish Gastronomic Academy³, which cites the definition: Professional cooks writing for non-professional readers (Måltidsakademien 2008: 105).⁴

There are several reasons for studying cookery books: First it's important to study non-fictional texts within Translation Studies in Sweden, since most of the research carried out the last 20 years deals with literary translation (Englund Dimitrova 2007: 21). Second, literature published within the Swedish culinary field is the most important subcategory of non-fiction literature and translations on this field constitute an important percentage of the publishing. It is also well known that approximately 40% of the published translations worldwide use English as source language (Heilbron 1999: 434), and in Sweden 71% of all published non-fiction literature consist of translations from English (NB). Therefore it is very plausible that the total dominance of the English language influence the translation norms of the target culture (Toury 1995: 49).⁵

In order to structure my analysis of *The Naked Chef* I will draw on the Jungian concept *Persona*. To construct a *persona* signifies to emphasize some particular personal traits within a complex personality (Mral 1999: 17). I call the activity in the cookery books

¹The fiction translation rate amounts to approximately 40% during the same period.

² More specifically: *The Social Practices of Translation, Translated Non-Fiction Literature within the Swedish Culture, Culinary Literature, specifically Cookbooks as a Case in Point*.

³ The Yearbook of the Academy of 2008 presents 39 different categories of culinary literature.

⁴ The larger project includes the following books Lawson (2001). *Nigella Bites*. Lawson (2002). *Nigella - Kort och gott*. Oliver (1999). *The Naked Chef*. Oliver (2001). *Den nakna kocken*. Kwong (2003). *Kylie Kwong - hart and soul*. Kwong (2004). *Kylies kök*.

⁵ But Toury dealt with the relation of the Israeli and Russian cultures.

the study concerns *Persona Cooking*, since the construction of a *persona* in this kind of literature is an asset in addressing the intended readership. *Persona* gives authority to a text it would otherwise lack (Hart 1997: 213). The constructed *persona* offers the readership a possibility of identification. The *persona* resembles a dear friend, with whom you can chat by flicking through the book.

The aim of the study is twofold. On the one hand I study the way the *persona* of the Grand chef cookery book category is constructed in the material of the study. On the other hand I study the adopted translation strategy by the Swedish translator in order to find out if/how the translation alters the interplay of textual and visual semiotic resources constructing this *persona* in the Swedish context.

3 The Premises and Outline of the Study

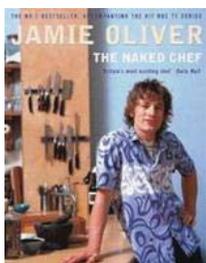
Cookery books are multimodal products, where text, images and design interact to construct meaning. In the analysis of the ST and TT of *The Naked Chef* I start out with examining the front cover of the book by using some of the “tools” for reading images presented by Kress & van Leeuwen (1996). In this kind of analysis the front and back cover are defined as visual spaces/rooms, where different modalities (for instance text and images) in form of organised sets of semiotic resources interact to create meaning. The cookbook is considered as one semiotic room. The cover and the book spread of the cookbook are other semiotic rooms in the analysis. I start with examining the visual resources and then I move on analysing the interaction of image and text, first in the source text and then in the target text. Eventually I examine whether the interaction changes within the modes when the text in the source text is translated.

The theoretical ground for the analysis of the interaction of the visual and textual modes is the metafunction notion from the Systemic Functional Grammar of Halliday (1994). Halliday posits three metafunctions necessary for a semiotic mode to function as a full system of communication: 1) The interpersonal metafunction, which concerns the role of the receiver/spectator in the image or in the text. 2) The textual metafunction, which deals with the form or composition of the image or the text. 3) The ideational

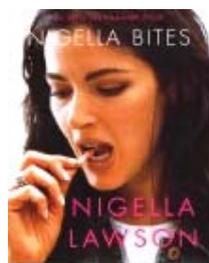
metafunction, which concerns the content and the internal and external relations of that content of the image or the text (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996: 40–42, Halliday 1994). The subcategories of the analysis will be presented and explained as the analysis unfolds.⁶ It is also important to stress that the analysis consists of a 'model reading', and it has no claims to constitute the one and only reading of the meaning of the images and texts (Eco 1984, Björkvall 2009: 25).

4 The Front Cover of *The Naked Chef* / *Den nakna kocken*

Comparing the front covers of *The Naked Chef* the first thing to notice is that they have exactly the same photography and overall layout. The only thing that changes is the translation of the text on the target cover. This identity of layout, photographs and text is also through for the pages within the covers of the book. The overall strategy for these books seems to be to sell a format – a television show and a book to go along, with blanks for the translated text in respective country.



Picture 1. The front cover of *The Naked Chef* and *Den nakna kocken*.



Picture 2. The front cover of *Nigella Bites* and *Nigella – kort och gott*.



4.1 Visual Resources in the Interpersonal Metafunction

The first category starting out analysing the interpersonal metafunction of the visual semiotic resources on the baby blue front cover of the cookery book of Jamie Oliver will be *social distance* as represented by the photograph of Jamie. The producer of the cover has to choose to depict the person on the cover close to or far away from the viewer (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996: 24). The choice of *distance* can suggest different social relations. The range from a close up shot, medium shot and long shot suggest

⁶ I have chosen as similar categories as possible of semantic relations of the two modes in the analysis, despite that no total similarity can be expected, since each semiotic mode has its own way of realizing such relations.

intended symbolic social distance between the person in the picture and the viewer. The photograph on the cover presents Jamie in half figure as a *medium close shot*, which suggests that we are not supposed to feel close to Jamie in this first acquaintance. If we compare this cover with the cover of Nigella's *Nigella – Bites*, which is all about intimacy, the Jamie cover is rather distanced and impersonal in its symbolic distance to the viewer (cf. picture 2). The *angle* of the camera in the photograph underlines the distance since we conceive of Jamie from below. Nevertheless the picture is subjective and including in *perspective*, since Jamie is depicted from the front, slightly turned to the right. However *the gaze* of Jamie looks down on the viewer. Jamie controls the viewer by his requesting gaze. But the photo conveys an offer not a demand. Jamie has taken command in the kitchen and of the viewer.

4.2 Visual Resources in the Textual Metafunction

Jamie leans on the kitchen workbench with one hand and the other hand is placed on his hip. He is relaxed and at ease but still controlled. The position of Jamie is *prominent* in the composition of the photo. His half figure dominates the right side of the cover. At the left side bottom of the cover in focus, not blurry, a bottle containing olive oil, a bulky mortar and a cutting board are clearly in sight. Jamie looks at ease in the baby blue painted kitchen with a panel in beige holding professional knives on wall magnets. This part of the kitchen, blurred in the photograph, looks like a male garage with tools neatly arranged on the wall. The neatly arranged knives convey professionalism.

Compositionally the focus of the front cover of *the Naked Chef* lays on the white/yellow toned text with slight black shadows at the top of the cover "Jamie Oliver" in capital letters and prominent size and in white less prominent size below "*The Naked Chef*". Above the text 'Jamie Oliver' we find a less prominent text: "Accompanying a major BBC TV series". Here Jamie Oliver is presented as *The Naked Chef*. The Swedish cover has exactly the same layout but has a weaker yellow tone in the photograph and the translation of "Accompanying a major BBC TV series" is written in black instead of white as "Boken bakom TV-succén". Our culturally conditioned *reading direction*, which means that we expect to find the most important information on a page at the top

of the left hand corner directs the viewer's attention to the title rather than to the depicted Jamie. The compositional dimensions with *given information to the left and new information to the right* in a picture informs the viewer that the kitchen is dominated by orderly sharpened knives. This is the kitchen of a trendy professional and the new information of the picture is the unknown very young and exciting cook. He is also supposed to be naked, which we conclude must be some kind of metaphorical idiom, since he is well dressed in the photograph.

What differs the source cover from the target cover is that the name of the publishing company is printed in small characters below the middle of the page on the left side. This information is important to the Swedish potential buyer of the book, since the publishing house is one of the most well known in Sweden and functions as a hallmark.

4.3 Visual Resources in the Ideational Metafunction

Within the ideational visual resources Jamie functions as a carrier in conceptual processes on the cover. The clothes Jamie wears and other objects surrounding him function as attributes to construct the *persona* in the photo. There is no narrative processes going on in the cover. It is rather a static presentation. The distant and controlled Jamie is softened by the look on his face – a laddish smile of a “son of a gun”, and this youth trait of his conveyed *persona* is accentuated by his perfectly tousled hair and the badly ironed blue patterned shirt he wears. We can also catch a glimpse of a silver necklace with a badge over the T-shirt under the shirt. He reminds of a Mod from the late sixties.

The interaction of textual and visual resources on the cover of *the Naked Chef* is not as obvious as in the case of the cover of *Nigella bites*, which is an intimate invitation to participate in Nigella's eating (cf. Picture 2). The Jamie cover is more of a presentation of something new in a familiar place. Jamie is in focus on the cover, but the photo of Jamie competes with the title of the cookery book of the viewer's attention. The title contradicts the information of the photograph. They thus form a contrast, an interesting relation of visual and textual messages, which awakes the interest of the viewer. Consequently the metaphorical message of the title is explicitly explained on the back of the

cover. “The title *The Naked Chef* sums up the idea: it’s basically stripping food back to the essentials.”

5 The Textual Resources and the Translation of the Title

The title of a book is a special kind of paratext, which has several functions (Genette 1997: 76). Primarily the function of the title is to identify and name the book. Secondly it is to thematically establish the contents of the book. Another function is to address the potential reader. Due to the multifunctionalism of titles, they are difficult to translate. It is also very probable that different fields of translation have different prevailing norms, different practices, for the translation of titles (Lindqvist 2002: 77).

The interaction of the visual and textual semiotic resources on the cover of *The Naked Chef* does not change when the title is translated. The translator has adopted an adequate translation strategy (Toury 1995: 53–69). The metaphor ‘*The Naked Chef*’ is as new and innovative in English as in Swedish ‘Den nakna kocken’. The translator has kept both the vehicle and the tenor of the metaphor, probably since they convey the core of the cooking philosophy of Jamie Oliver. To be naked means in this context; to avoid cook jargon and complicated time consuming procedures in the cooking process. This is a philosophy dominated by a practicality discourse (Metzger 2005: 166–167), which Jamie shares with for instance Nigella.⁷

This kind of adequate translation strategy of metaphors, called translation *sensu stricto* (Lindqvist 2002: 154–155, 164) works very well in the language pair of English/Swedish. The more recent and innovative the metaphor in the source language, the more likely it will work the same way in the target language. This translation strategy is very common in high prestige literary translation and is somewhat unexpected in the culinary literary field. A very subtle and congenial change in the metaphor due to the

⁷ It’s a striking contradiction though that there are few labour saving devices in *The Naked Chef*. For instance Jamie is a strong advocate for making stock from scratch, which is inconceivable in Nigella’s cookery book *Nigella Bites*.

translation is caused by the form chosen in Swedish of the adjective attribute ‘naked’ as ‘nakna’. A standard solution in the translation would consist in the choice ‘nakne’ with an ‘e’ instead of an ‘a’ at the end of the word to convey a masculine form of the inflected adjective. The choice of the ‘a’ in ‘nakna’ signals a less formal style than the choice of ‘e’ in ‘nakne’.

6 The Interaction of the Visual and Textual Semiotic Resources

In examining the interaction of the visual and textual semiotic resources within a text the classification of the possible relations of Barthes (1976: 118–123) is useful. He discerns five types of relations: 1) Anchorage – the textual specifies the significance of the visual. 2) Illustration – the visual specifies the significance of the textual. 3) Substitution – visual and textual signification complete each other to form new significance on a higher level. 4) ‘Identity’ – the visual and the textual convey the ‘same’ significance. 5) Contrast – the visual and the textual significance contradict each other. The relations of the visual and textual meanings on the cover of *The Naked Chef* are a mixture of an illustration and a contrast relation. An illustration relation is the specifying photograph of the person responding to the proper name Jamie Oliver and a contrast relation in the fact that *The Naked Chef* is not naked in the photograph – a contrast in perception creating an interesting tension in the composition of the cover.

7 Quantifying the Signification of the Visual Resources

In this section of the paper I will examine the interplay of the semiotic resources in constructing the *persona* of *The Naked Chef* inside the covers of the book. Eventually the translation of the textual resources will be examined and conclusions drawn whether the *persona* in the translation changes due to the translation. If the translation strategy adopted by the translator is of an adequate nature, i.e. source oriented, (Toury 1995: 53–69, Lindqvist 2002: 42–45) the change of *persona* is less probable than it is if the strategy is of an acceptable nature, i.e. target oriented.

7.1 Overall Structure and the Significance of Visual Resources in *The Naked Chef*

The Naked Chef by Jamie Oliver counts 250 pages, divided into 14 chapters. Preceding the table of content, there is a photograph in black and white of Jamie covering the complete book spread. The next turn up is all white except for a sign on a signboard of planks, which shows as a frame to the sign. The sign says: “You are now entering a food area”. This kind of sign reminds of signs teenagers put on their doors with the message “keep out” and convey the laddish trait of *The Naked Chef Persona*. An interesting detail in the Swedish translation is that the sign is left in English.

The Naked Chef contains 103 photographs. Of these pictures 53 (51%) are photos of prepared dishes, 14 (13%) are photos of produce, 2 (2%) photos depict decorating details and 13 (13%) show preparation sequences with hands doing the work. One typical photograph of a prepared dish in *The Naked Chef* is surprising because of its framing. Only a part of the dish is shown in the photo and the angle is from a frog’s perspective. Very often big sharpened knives appear in the photos. The framing conveys closeness to the food. It is only a preparation sequence away. The food is comprehensible and tangible, which is shown by the camera angle. To cook should be simple and fun according to *The Naked Chef* and the frog angle underlines the authority of the cookery book. Jamie’s a professional despite his youth. It now rest 21 photos (20%) of the cook himself. There are 5 full turn up photographs of Jamie and 5 (3 black and white) half turn up photos and 11 smaller ones. He is most often depicted at medium distance and in half figure (11 of 21). Not too close and not too far away, and mostly from a frog’s perspective (11 of 21). The majority of the photos show Jamie in half profile (13 of 21), the gaze directed at a corner of the photo or looking down. There are also 2 photos where Jamie turns his back to the viewer, which shows that he trusts them. In the photos Jamie is as often depicted outdoors, for instance at the market, as in his kitchen. When photographed indoors there is always a set of shiny stainless steel knives in view.

7.2 The Significance of Textual Resources in the Introduction of the Source and Target Text

To examine the interplay of the textual and visual resources constructing the persona of Jamie Oliver I now proceed examining the introduction text of *The Naked Chef*. It is very clear from the visual resources that the persona of Jamie Oliver is constructed to appeal to young people, especially young urban males without much experience in the kitchen. This trait of the *Naked Chef Persona* (NCP further on) is also very clearly expressed in the introduction, when examining the form of address and the textual prominence of the text.

Jamie positions himself by using informal and youthful language. Recipes and ingredients are frequently described as ‘pukka’, ‘funky’ and ‘wicked’. The bold words in example 2–3 show the register and the difficulties in the translation to convey this ‘young coolness’. Example 1 and 4 preserve the language level in Swedish and show the overall adequate translation strategy of the Swedish translator.

- (1) [...] I have built up a **foolproof repertoire** of simple, delicious and feisty recipes (1999: 3).
Jag har byggt upp **en idiotsäker repertoar** med enkla, läckra och festliga recept [...] (2001:3).
- (2) It was **wicked!** I loved **every single** part of the course, [...] (1999: 4).
Det var **jättekul!** Jag älskade **varenda** del av utbildningen, [...] (2001: 4).
- (3) They knew their **stuff** (**quite important** when you are picking mushrooms!) (1999: 4).
De visste precis **vad de gjorde** (**rätt så viktigt** när man plockar svamp!) (2001: 5).

However example 2 and 3 make the difficulties in slang translation obvious. The Swedish solutions to translate the slang expression ‘wicked’ as ‘jättekul’ and specifying the hyperonym ‘stuff’ in ‘precis vad de gjorde’ raises the stylistic level of the text. These solutions give the target text a more feminine touché than the laddish source text, which is also true for the translation solution ‘varenda’ for ‘every single’ in example 2.

- (4) Go on, **get stuck in** (1999: 5)!
[...] på det bara, **sätt igång** (2001: 5)!

The introduction in *The Naked Chef* does not address the reader directly as does for instance Nigella in her introductory text. It does not strive for intimacy as she does. The introduction of *The Naked Chef* offers the reader a possibility of identification in circumstances (small first flat) and serves as a presentation of the NCP in narrative chronological form. One of two exceptions from this general text feature is shown in example

4, which concludes the introduction with an imperative in the source text as well as in the target text – an adequate translation strategy.

- (5) When I first moved to London I rented a tiny flat in Hampstead, with **a kitchen the size of a cupboard** (1999: 3).
När jag flyttade till London första gången hyrde jag en lite lägenhet i Hampstead, **med ett kök som inte var större än en garderob** (2001: 3).

Example 5 shows the adequate translation strategy adopted for the few similes in the introduction. The tenor and the vehicle are the same in the source and target texts. A small deviation in form can be detected as the Swedish translator fills out the elliptic clause in the source text with a subordinate relative clause. Example 6 reveals one of the rare occasions of omissions in the overall adequate translation performed by the Swedish translator. The loss of the energetic verb phrase ‘stripping down’ and adjective attribute ‘quit basic’ also contribute to the levelling of style in the target text.

- (6) So, in an effort to re-create some exciting restaurant recipes in a limited kitchen, **I found myself stripping down those recipes to something quit basic. I then** adapted them using what I did have in the cupboard, larder, fridge or garden (1999: 3).
I ett försök att återskapa en del spännande restaurangrecept i ett litet kök satte jag igång att anpassa dem och använde det jag hade hemma på hyllorna, i skafferiet, kylskåpet eller trädgården [...] (2001: 3).

The focus in the introduction text is entirely on the persona of *The Naked Chef*, which most evidently interplays with the focus in the composition of the cover. The NCP’s clothes, his poses and his surroundings (knives in the kitchen) serve as attributes for identification in the visual mode, so do the relaxed language and the slang in the textual mode. He presents himself as an example of the young urban lad, thus offering a new kind of masculinity in a traditionally feminine domain to young male readers.

8 Conclusion

The Naked Chef Persona constructs cooking as a masculine lifestyle activity. Jamie reclaims the kitchen as a sphere of young masculine competence and as a site for the practice of the new lad – a place to have fun. Jamie’s adoption of a mod wardrobe and a corresponding lack of seriousness distinguishes him from domestic feminine cooking (Hollows 2003: 234). Jamie’s project appears to be democratization in which he aims to demystify cooking. While such an approach might suggest that Jamie’s aim is the flattening out of taste cultures, the dispositions towards cooking he promotes are those

associated with the new petit-bourgeoisie, whose life style is based on an ethics that ‘makes it a failure, a threat to self esteem’ not to ‘have fun’ (Bourdieu 1984: 366–367). The adequate translation strategy adopted by the Swedish translator does not change the overall interaction and meaning of the visual and textual semiotic resources in the target text. An elevation of language level and a slight feminine touché due to the translation is however discernable. To conclude *the Naked Chef* is as naked in Swedish as in English.

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