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***Translation universals: the
case of causal connectives in
French and Dutch translations***

a corpus-based study

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Overview

- Problem
- Corpus
- Connectives
- Translation universals
- Results
- Conclusion



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Problem

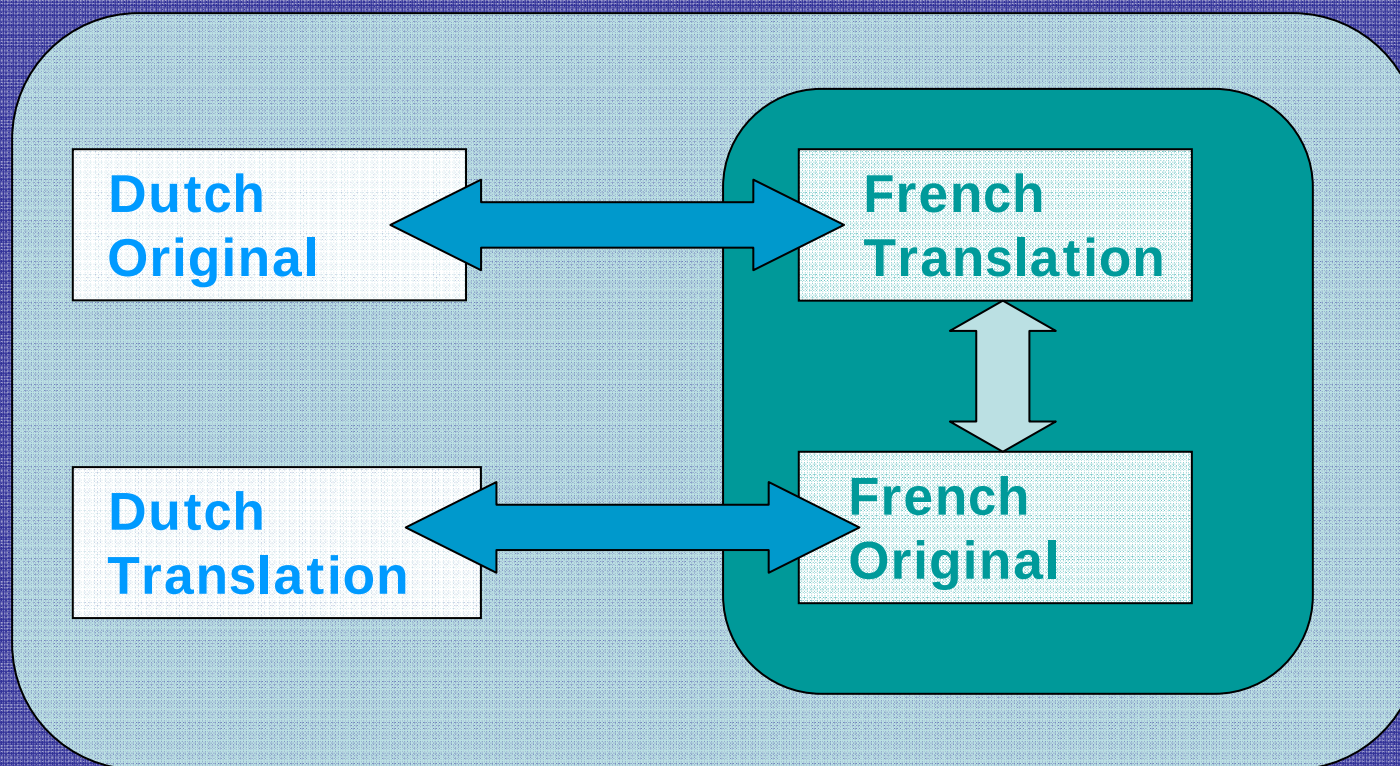
- How does a translator deal with causal connectives?
- French-dutch
- Dutch-French



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Corpus

Parallel and comparable corpus





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Corpus

- Dutch – French: passages of 5 novels in translation, ± 166.000 words
(Claus, Eggels, Verhulst, Dorrestein, Mulisch)
- French – Dutch: passages of 7 novels in translation, ± 155.000 words
(Levy, Curiol, Camus, Duras, Nothomb, Schmitt, Groult)
- Aligned (WinAlign) and annotated (Kwalitan)



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Connectives

- Connectives: “one-word items or fixed combinations that express the relation between clauses, sentences, or utterances in the discourse of a particular speaker” – “it indicates how its host utterance is relevant to the context” (Pander Maat and Sanders 2006)



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Connectives

- Dutch connectives:
 - *Omdat, want, aangezien, doordat*
- French connectives:
 - *Parce que, car, puisque, comme*

Parce que ≈ omdat, doordat (because)

Car ≈ want (because)

Puisque, comme ≈ aangezien (since, as)



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Connectives

Frequency

Parce que	139
Car	44
Comme	18
Puisque	37
Total	238

Omdat	235
Want	155
Aangezien	9
Doordat	13
Total	412



Translational approach

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Translation studies:

- Universal prescriptions
(Dolet, 1540)
- Universal criticisms
- Descriptive universals
 - Third code (Frawley, 1984)
 - Explicitation (Blum-Kulka, 1986)
 - Translation Laws (Toury, 1995)





Research questions

Translation universals

Chesterman, 2004

– S-Universals:

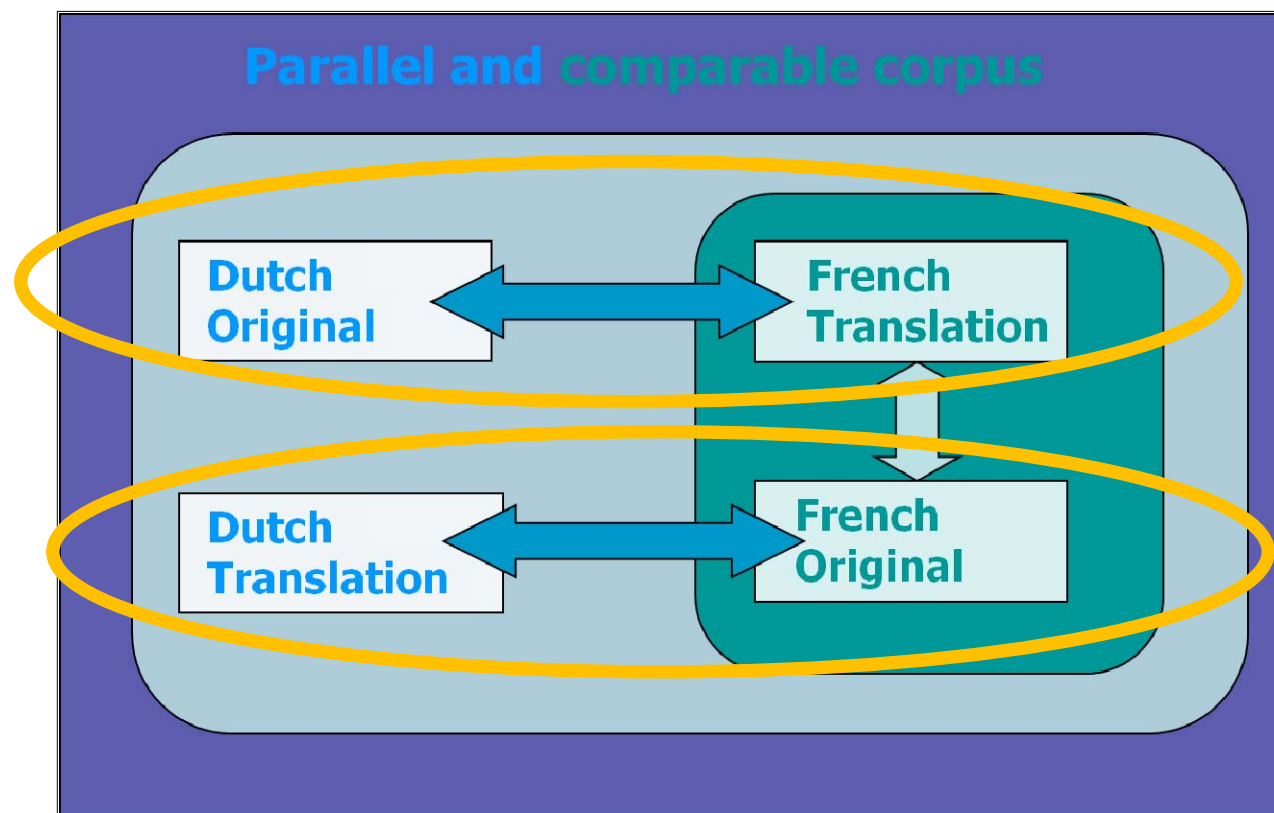
source text – target text

- Lengthening : translations tend to be longer than their source texts (Vinay, 1958)
- The law of interference (Toury, 1995)
- The law of standardization (Toury, 1995)
- The explicitation hypothesis (Blum-Kulka, 1986)
- Reduction of repetition (Baker, 1993)
- ...



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Translation universals





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Translation universals

– T-Universals

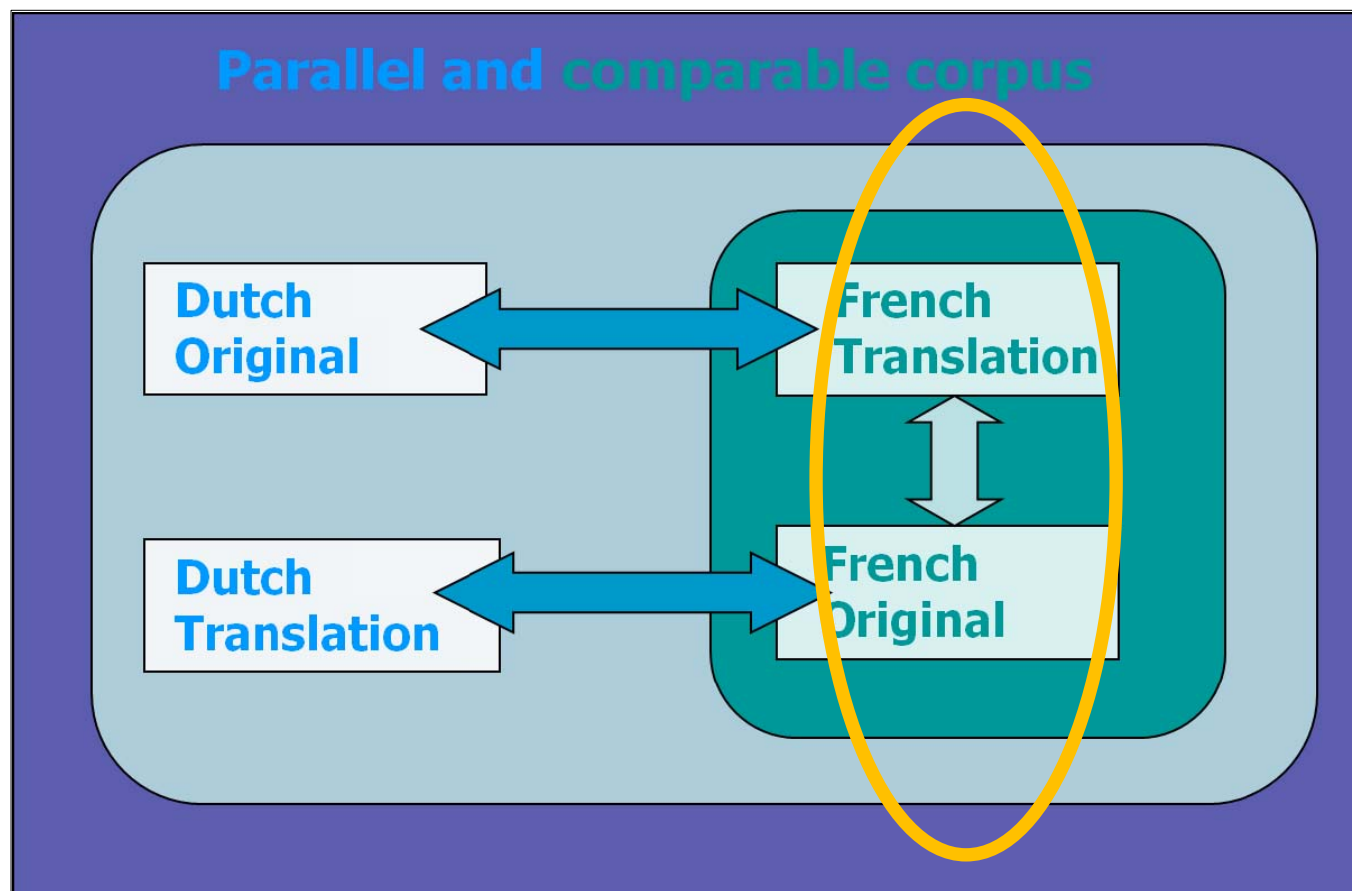
translated texts and non-translated texts

- Simplification (Laviosa-Braithwaite, 1996)
- Conventionalization (Baker, 1993)
- Under-representation of TL-specific items (Tirkkonen-Condit, 2004)
- ...



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Translation universals





Research questions

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- Testing 3 translations universals by means of causal connectives
- Explicitation:
introduction in the target language of information which is only implicit in the source language, but which is retrievable from the context or situation (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958)



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Research questions

- Simplification:

translated texts are likely to be simpler, easier-to-understand:

- less lexical variety
- lower lexical density
- more use of high frequency items

- Standardization:

In translation, textual relations obtaining in the original are often modified, sometimes to the point of being totally ignored, in favour of [more] habitual options offered by a target repertoire. (Toury 1995: 268)



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explicitation

1. Translation of connectors present in the source text

ST: *Il ne voulait pas en parler **parce que** cela lui était douloureux et que cela le rendait triste d'aborder ce sujet.*

TT: *Hij wilde er niet over praten **omdat** hij er verdrietig van werd wanneer het onderwerp werd aangesneden.*

ST: *Zijn kelders stonden barstensvol ingeweekt voedsel **omdat** zijn zuster altijd alles wat ze zelf niet opkonden had ingemaakt.*

TT: *Ses caves regorgeaient de denrées stérilisées, sa sœur **ayant** l'habitude de mettre en conserve tout ce qu'ils ne pouvaient pas manger eux-mêmes.*

ST: *tu n'es pas descendu du bureau en courant, et nous ne sommes pas en train de traverser la ville **parce que** tout à coup tu voulais me parler de Karine Lowenski !*

TT: *je bent niet het kantoor uit komen hollen om samen de hele stad te doorkruisen en **ø** te praten over Karine Lowenski!*



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2. Asyndetic ST sequences: **Mirror technique** (Dyvik, 1998):

ST: **Omdat** die zichzelf moeten verwennen natuurlijk, **aangezien** niemand anders dat doet.

TT: **Parce qu'**ils sont bien obligés de se gâter eux-mêmes, **puisque** personne d'autre ne le fait.

ST: **Toen** God me na één gebed nog niet genoeg had gegeven, zei ik er nog een.

TT: **Comme** Il ne m'en donna pas suffisamment après une prière, j'en récitai une deuxième.

ST: Elle le trouvait d'ailleurs très distrait, **ø** elles étaient posées sur la petite table de l'entrée.

TT: Ze vond hem trouwens erg verstrooid, **want** de sleutels lagen gewoon op het tafeltje in de gang.



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1. Translation of explicit markers

- Connectors = most explicit way to express causality
- Causal verbs, causal prepositions
- Non-causal sentence connectors
- Non-causal prepositions
- Most implicit: No connective or relator word

(Vandepitte, 1990)



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1. Translation of connectives

	Corpus Dutch-French: 412 connectives		Corpus French – Dutch: 238 connectives	
Equivalent causal markers	323	78%	196	82%
Causal verbs, causal prepositions	33	8%	7	3%
Non-causal sentence connectors	7	1%	2	1%
Non-causal prepositions	5	1%	0	0%
Ø	44	11%	33	14%
Total number of implicitations		21%	≈	18%



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2. Mirror technique

	Corpus Dutch-French: 345 connectives		Corpus French – Dutch: 285 connectives	
Equivalent causal markers	313	91%	195	68%
Causal verbs, causal prepositions	0	0%	24	8%
Non-causal sentence connectors	6	2%	5	2%
Non-causal prepositions	0	0%	2	1%
Ø	26	7%	59	21%
Total number of explicitations		9%	<	32%



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C D F
o u r
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p c n
u h c
s - h

Simplification

Code	aangezien	doordat	omdat	want
Adjectief	0	0	1	0
Car	1	1	27	107
Comme	0	1	22	0
Dans la mesure où	0	1	0	0
Du fait que	0	0	1	0
Du seul fait que	0	0	1	0
En l'absence de	0	0	0	1
Etant donné que	2	0	0	0
Factitif	0	0	1	0
Gérondif	0	0	1	0
Grâce à	0	1	0	0
Non que	0	0	2	0
Par + subst	0	0	3	0
Parce que	0	2	129	12
Participe passé	0	0	2	0
Participe présent	1	0	6	0
Pour	0	0	2	0
Pour + inf passé	0	1	3	0
Pour la simple raison que	0	0	1	0
Puisque	3	0	7	1
Snon	0	0	0	4
Sous peine de	0	0	0	1
Tant	0	0	3	0
Venir de	0	3	1	0
Vu que	1	0	2	1
Zéro	1	3	15	24
Alia	0	0	1	0
Relative clause	0	0	4	4



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C F D
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Simplificaton

	Car	Comme	Parce que	Puisque
Aangezien	0	3	1	7
Daar	0	0	0	1
Daarom	0	0	1	0
Daarvoor	0	0	1	0
Doordat	0	0	2	0
Immers	0	0	1	0
Namelijk	2	0	0	0
Omdat	4	11	96	4
Want	31	0	19	14
Zéro	7	3	16	8
Alia	0	0	0	2
Relative clause	0	0	2	0
Temporel	0	1	0	1



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Standardization

- Observations in the source texts:
 - Causal connectives are more frequent in Dutch source texts than in French source texts. (412>238)
 - In French there is more lexical variety in the expression of causal relations than in Dutch.
(participe présent/passé, gérondif, causative verbs, ...)



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Conclusions

- Explicitation:

Tendency to explicitation prevails in the translation direction French – Dutch

- Simplification:

More lexical variety in the French translated texts

- Standardization: tendency to adopt typical features of the target language



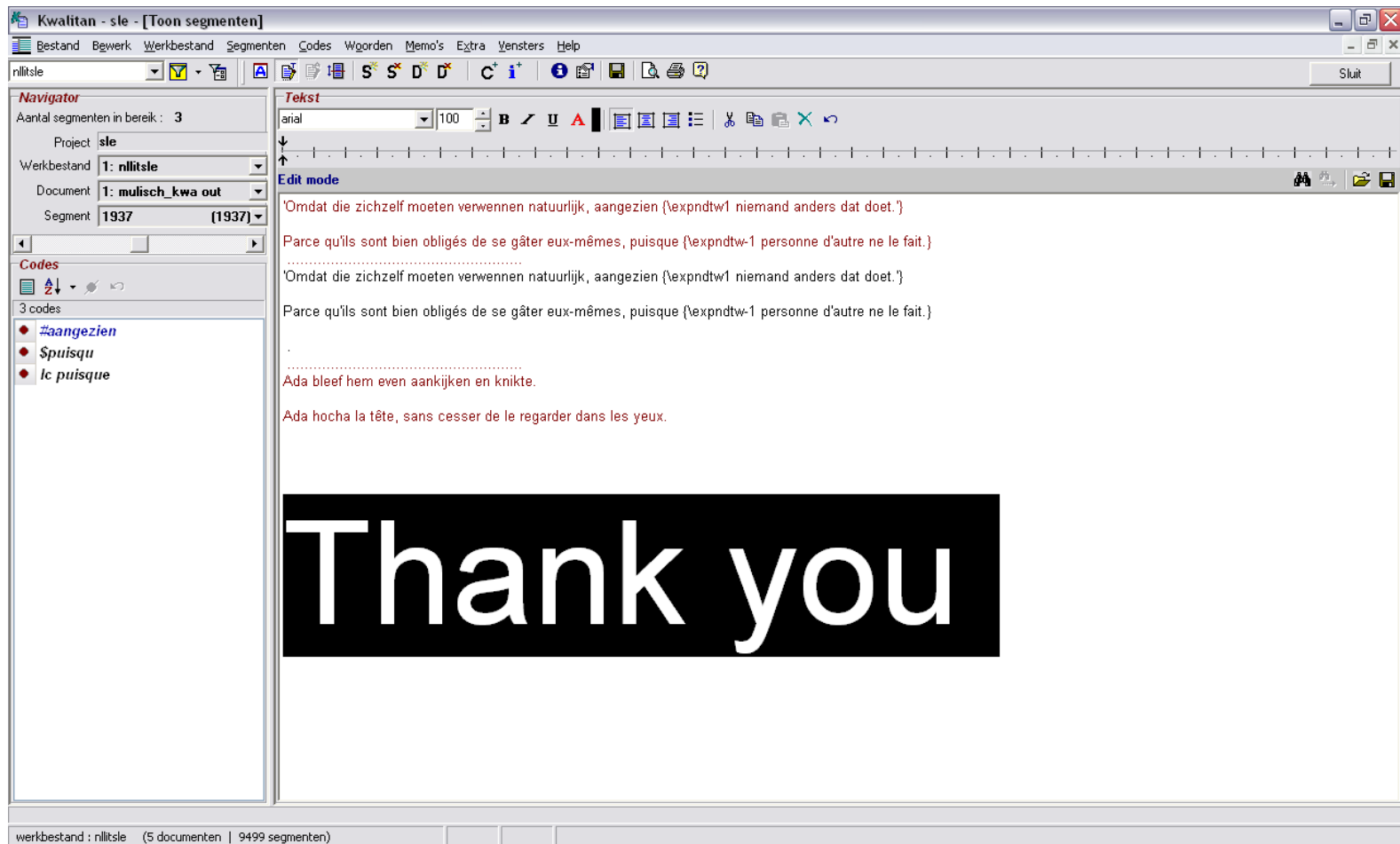
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Further research

- More data (other registers)
- More connectives
- More asyndetic constructions
- More translation universals
 - Use of high frequency terms?
- ...



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Thank you

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