

ABSTRACT

Title: Uno studio contrastivo svedese-italiano sui verbi svedesi *stå*, *sitta* e *ligga*.

Language: Italian

English title: A Swedish-Italian Contrastive Study of the Swedish Verbs *stå*, *sitta* and *ligga*

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The posture verbs *stå*, *sitta* and *ligga* [Eng. equivalents *to stand*, *to sit* and *to lie*] are amongst the commonest verbs in the Swedish language. They are polysemous, and found in various contexts including, of course, descriptions of bodily position. They are also used, for example, as indicators of ongoing activity or to replace *vara* [Eng. equivalent *to be*] in constructions such as *Kalle är tyst – Kalle sitter tyst*. [Eng. equivalents *Carl is quiet*, *Carl is sitting quietly*] The most common use of posture verbs is to describe the position of people, animals and objects. In such cases, the choice of verb is determined by bodily position of a person or by the physical attribute(s) of an object, although complications do arise. Posture verbs are used less commonly in Italian. Thus this study came into being in part because posture verbs are used very differently in the two languages, which makes comparison interesting. An Italian-Swedish parallel corpus (*Corpus parallelo svedese-italiano*) containing both original texts and translations in both languages provides the basis for this contrastive study. The aim of the thesis was to respond to two key questions: What Italian words are used to correspond to the Swedish verbs *stå*, *sitta* and *ligga* when posture verbs are not used? What factors determine the choice of an Italian linguistic element corresponding to *stå*, *sitta* and *ligga*? The thesis has three main parts. Part one deals with Swedish posture verbs and their primary equivalents, i.e. the Italian verbs (or verbal expressions such as *essere seduto* 'to be seated') which are the most frequent translations and/or sources of *stå*, *sitta* and *ligga*. These primary equivalents are found to be virtually identical for all three verbs. Part two discusses the Italian verbs or non-verbal elements which are somewhat less frequent as translations or sources of any of the three Swedish posture verbs in question. Part two also deals with zero equivalence, i.e. when there is no translation or source for the Swedish posture verb. Part three is the synthesis, compiling the finding of my study. The occurrences of the Swedish verbs are analysed, throughout the thesis, from both the syntactic and the semantic perspectives. Special emphasis has been placed on elucidating phenomena typical to translation, such as overuse and underuse. According to my findings, the two Italian posture verbs *sedere* 'sitta'/'to sit' and *giacere* 'ligga'/'to lie' – there is no direct equivalent of the verb *stå* 'to stand' – only correspond to the Swedish verbs in 8% and 5% of cases, respectively (usually when bodily position is in focus). Other occurrences are mainly the Italian equivalents of *vara* 'to be' and *befinna sig* 'to find oneself' (such as *essere e stare*), sometimes followed by positional complements such as *in piedi* 'på fötter'/'on one's feet' or *seduto* 'sittande'/'seated'. In Italian, it is also common, instead of indicating where something is or bodily position, to use the activity that preceded the bodily position (i.e. the Italian equivalents of *ställa*, *sätta*, *lägga sig* [Eng. equivalents *to put*, *to set* and *to lie down*]) or a characteristic registered by an understood observer • the monument does not *stå* 'stand' in the town square, it *reser sig* 'rises' (in someone's view). This often gives Italian texts a more dynamic, vibrant feeling than comparatively more static, descriptive Swedish texts.

Keywords: Swedish, Italian, posture verbs, corpus linguistics, contrastive linguistics, parallel corpus, translation corpus, translationese, overuse, underuse, actionality, grammaticalization

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