

## Chapter 11: Perception verbs in English and Portuguese

In this chapter, I analyse perception verbs<sup>1</sup> in the two languages and how they are related translationally.

One question that can be asked is: Why engage in an investigation on such a small number of verbs? First of all, I agree with Lakoff (1987) and Nakhimowsky (1988) that human characteristics are fundamental in language: there is no objective reality without subject. So, perception plays a fundamental role as our input channel to communication and data acquisition from the external world: the verbs considered describe explicitly the way we interact with it. Perception puzzles have in fact been discussed by many, if not most, philosophers of language, and attempts to cope with them have produced new directions in semantics, cf. e.g. Barwise & Perry (1983).

Then, as e.g. Caenepeel (1989) and Sandström (1993) have shown, perspective is often left implicit in a narrative, but can be made explicit through the appropriate verbs. Thus, to study the way perceived events and/or facts are referred to in language, a subject intricately related to aspect, it is necessary to understand first the way they are used explicitly, i.e., as objects of perception verbs.

Adding to this the facts that these verbs have special properties and generally deserve mention in grammars, and that they are fairly frequent,<sup>2</sup> makes a closer look perfectly justified, in my opinion. In fact, their translation properties attracted my attention as soon as I began analysing real translations:

While performing the clause alignment task, described in Section 9.1.1, I noted that, in translation, verbs expressing perception were frequently omitted, or, conversely, added. I will present this phenomenon in Section 11.1 and deal with it later in Section 11.4.

Another translation issue, already mentioned in Sections 10.3.1.3 and 10.3.2.2 above, was the apparent correlation of the English modal *can* with imperfective aspect in connection with perception verbs, a matter which will be taken up in Section 11.2.

Finally, when analysing sentences involving perception in detail, I decided to treat separately the special use of perception verbs involving perceived events in the two languages, which will be the topic of Section 11.3.

### 11.1 Free addition and omission of perception verbs

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<sup>1</sup> In Palmer (1965:95), these verbs are called "verbs referring to sensations", and classified as one of the two subtypes of "private verbs". In Quirk et al. (1972:96), they are presented as instances of the class of "verbs of inert perception and cognition", one of the two subsets of their "stative verbs".

<sup>2</sup> At least in English: In Hofland & Johansson's (1982) frequency lists, they occur, respectively in the LOB and the Brown corpus, *hear* 148/153, *heard* 239/247, *see* 814/329, *saw* 329/352, *feel* 247/216, *felt* 352/357, *smell* 30/34, and *smelled* 0/19 times.

In Santos (1994a), I have analysed the question of clause misalignment in some detail. One of the most striking kinds of clause mismatches I found was the one exemplified by the following translation pairs:

*They **heard** from the secret gardens the singing of caged birds and **heard** the splash of cooling water on hot flagstones.*

*Desses secretos jardins **vinha** o canto de pássaros engaiolados e o cair da água fresca nas lajes escaldantes.*

'From those secret gardens **came** the singing of caged birds and the falling of cold water on the hot flagstones'

*In the surface of the pearl he **could see** dream forms.*

*Na superfície da grande pérola **havia** formas de sonho.*

'In the surface of the big pearl **there were** dream forms.'

*e a aragem fria que salina **sentia** na boca e nas narinas*

*and the cold breeze that **was** salty to the mouth and nostrils*

'and the cold breeze which salty he felt in the mouth and in the nostrils'

In these first three examples, perception is omitted. In the next five examples, it is added.

*She burst clear of the brush line and stumbled over the little boulders toward the water, and then she heard him coming and she broke into a run.*

***Viu-a** emergir da linha dos arbustos e tropeçar nos calhaus. Mas, como já tinha dado por ele, Juana começou a correr.*

'He **saw** her emerge from the line of the bushes and stumble in the stones. But, as she had already noticed him, Juana had started to run.'

*And there in the pearl Coyotito's face, thick and feverish from the medicine.*

*E, na pérola, **viu** o rosto de Coyotito inchado e febril com o medicamento.*

'And, in the pearl, he **saw** the face of Coyotito swollen and feverish from the medicine'

*He stood aside and let the doctor and his man enter the brush house. Juana stood up from the fire and backed away **as he entered**, and ...*

*Então, afastou-se um pouco e deixou o médico entrar na cabana com o criado.*

***Ao vê-los**, Juana ergueu-se da fofalha e ...*

'Then, he moved a little away and let the doctor enter the hut with the servant. **As she saw them**, Juana raised from the fire and...'

*and his hands and face were wet with sweat.*

*e **sentia** as mãos e a face molhadas de suor.*

'and he **felt** the hands and the face wetted from sweat.'

*Haveis-me entendido, haveis gostado?*

*Have you understood me and have you liked what you **heard**?*

'Have you understood me, have you liked?'

As Caenepeel (1989) has convincingly shown, perspective is a major issue in modern narrative, and one of the ways it is conveyed is intricately mingled with aspect. On the other hand, at least the perspective of events in the real world is done through one's (the characters') senses, so it can be explicitly invoked through verbs of visual or auditory perception.

It is thus not unexpected that, given these two different ways of conveying perspective in language -- namely, through grammatical aspect and through lexical selection of verbs of perception --, two different languages use one or the other device on specific instances, thus producing a seemingly random pattern in the possible use of perception verbs.

It will thus be a concern of this chapter to verify whether the encoding of perception through perception verbs is strongly correlated with a different mechanism in the other language. After investigating the translation of perception verbs in the next two sections, I will look in Section 11.4 into the added perception verbs in the translation.

## 11.2 The modal *could* and the dichotomy Imperfeito / Perfeito

Perception verbs are not only interesting in connection with aspect for the reasons mentioned above. They also have special aspectual properties in English (albeit not in Portuguese), and this brings about an interesting behaviour from the point of view of translation into Portuguese.

Leech states that these verbs are "straightforward cases of verbs inimical to the Progressive Aspect" and he proceeds by stating that "The difference between the variant constructions with and without *could* is that the *could* form denotes a state, whereas the Simple Past form denotes an event" (Leech, 1971:20). However, things are not that simple, as can be seen in Vendler's discussion of seeing. Not only does Vendler explicitly claim that *see* has two different aspectual profiles, namely, "'seeing' [the 'spotting' sense of seeing] is an achievement initiating the generic state of seeing" (Vendler, 1967:118), but also that, in the stative sense, "hear" and "can hear" are interchangeable.<sup>3</sup> Corroborating this claim, Palmer states that "*can* is regularly used with verbs of sensation, without adding anything not implied by the simple verb" (Palmer, 1965:118).

Interpreting Leech's observation in the light of Vendler's analysis, it falls out that perception verbs should not take the progressive, since they belong to precisely the two classes of verbs that, according to Vendler (1967), do not. Furthermore, progressive has been shown to express perspective (cf. Caenepeel (1989:130): "progressives have the capacity to describe a situation as the object of introspection on the part of a subject"). Therefore, it is hardly astonishing that perception itself is outside the scope of perspective.<sup>4</sup>

However, the behaviour with modals is not so obvious. In fact, Leech's explanation amounts to very little, since all events, when modified by *could*, denote a state (cf. *could jump*, *could build*, *could write*). However, the expression with a modal for other events is not synonymous with the non-modalized one.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Vendler mentions "the curious equivalence of *I see* and *I can see it* or even *I saw him all the time* and *I could see him all the time*" (Vendler, 1967:115).

<sup>4</sup> Excepting cases of "private perception", of the kind *I'm seeing things*, which do accept perspectivization and consequently the progressive, as in fact will be pointed out below.

<sup>5</sup> Except for some achievements, cf. Vendler (1967:105): "some achievements also share this feature. Indeed, in some sense, to be able to recognize is to recognize and to be able to spot the plane is to spot the plane". Vendler

On the other hand, as far as I know, perception verbs are not characterized by any grammatical idiosyncrasies in Portuguese. They accept the progressive, and they behave as all other verbs as far as the contrast Imperfeito/Perfeito is concerned. Neither do they especially co-occur with modals.

However, when perception verbs were used in the two languages in the selected texts, one translation regularity seemed to emerge, as far as the verbs *ver* ('see'), *ouvir* ('hear') and *sentir* ('feel') are concerned: the correlation between Imperfeito vs. Perfeito and the presence vs. absence of *could*. In fact, *could* is stative<sup>6</sup> and so is Imperfeito, while the eventive use of the perception verb would, by default, be stated in Perfeito, as any other English clause denoting an event. So, this seemed to constitute a sensible translation rule, even though not yet recorded as far as I knew.

In the remainder of this section, I describe how I assessed this hypothesis in my corpus, first from Portuguese into English, and then in the other direction. Before doing so, though, I should note that translation need not be reversible, i.e., if A and B translate into C and D respectively, this does not imply that C and D necessarily translate into A and B respectively; and, in fact, I hold that it is interesting to study one relation in the two directions because it may show some non-trivial issues in the use of the devices concerned.

### 11.2.1 The translation of Portuguese perception verbs

I checked all occurrences (64) of the verbs *ver*, *ouvir* and *sentir* in Imperfeito and Perfeito, and how they were translated into English. The overall distribution is in Table 11.1 below (in parentheses stand the number of (additional) cases corresponding to VP-objects, which I shall look into more closely in Section 11.3):

Table 11.1

ver	37	20 Perfeito	9 (5) simple past 1 (2) <i>could</i> 2 pres perf 1 past participle
		17 Imperfeito	8 (1) simple past 5 <i>could</i> 1 <i>in sight</i> 1 <i>visible</i> (1) MQP
ouvir	19	14 Perfeito	11 (1) simple past 1 <i>could</i> (1) pres perf
		5 Imperfeito	3 simple past 1 <i>could</i> 1 prog
sentir	20	10 Perfeito	9 simple past 1 pres perf
		10 Imperfeito	8 (1) simple past 1 <i>could</i>

The results are not clearcut, to say the least. Even though there is a slight majority of *could* translations from Imperfeito originals (7 / 32 vs. 4 / 44), it is not even statistically significant. A finer analysis is thus called for.

I will leave the detailed consideration of perception of events to Section 11.3, and will concentrate here only on perception verbs with non-VP objects, which correspond to the vast

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concludes that (in)voluntariness is at stake, but an interesting observation is that his examples also involve perception.

<sup>6</sup> This is a simplification, as will be seen below.

majority of the examples.

The first thing to note is that the three verbs behaved differently: for example, the twenty occurrences of the verb *sentir* ('feel') were translated by means of various verbs, e.g. *feel*, *sense*, and even *experience*, reflecting the several senses in which *sentir* was employed. *Ouvir* ('hear') was, on the other hand, always used in the physical sense, while *ver* ('see') was also most frequently used that way, with only two occurrences of imaginary vision (recollection) and two of understanding through vision ("saw that").

I start by illustrating the expected translation pairs, i.e., those in which Imperfeito was translated by *could*:

*Quase se não **viam** um ao outro*  
*They **could** barely **see** each other*  
'Almost they did not see each other'

*uma noite cerrada em que nada se **via***  
*an overcast night in which nothing **could be seen***

*nada mais **sentia***  
*he **could feel** nothing else*  
'nothing else he felt'

*pelo fogo de que, da sua árvore, ele só **via** o fumo*  
*by the fire of which, from his tree, he **could** see only the smoke*  
'by the fire of which, from his tree, he saw only the smoke'

and Perfeito into simple past:

*só então **ouviu***  
*only then **heard***

*Na confiança que de repente **sentiu**, gritou:*  
*With the confidence that he suddenly **felt**, the genie cried:*

I note as well that expressions like *visible* or *be in sight* are almost synonymous with *could see*, and thus simply emphasize the general character of Imperfeito.

In order to assess the generalization that Imperfeito should be translated by *could* and Perfeito into simple past, however, I have to account for the large number of cases of Imperfeito being translated into simple past, and for the (few) cases of Perfeito being translated with *could*.

Given that Imperfeito has several different meanings in Portuguese (as shown in Chapter 10), a finer analysis of the cases of Imperfeito translated by past simple showed that, when Imperfeito denoted habituality, *could* was never used in the translation. Examples are:

*receosa dos seus olhos de alma penetrantes que **viam** o fundo das coisas*  
*fearful of his penetrating soulful eyes that **saw** into the depths of things*  
'afraid of his penetrating eyes of soul which could see the bottom of things'

*Não eram sonhos as coisas que então **via***  
*They were not dreams, the things that he then **saw***  
'It was not dreams the things he could then see'

*Mas ouvia sem dúvida umas vozes*  
*But without a doubt he **did** hear voices<sup>7</sup>*  
'But he could hear no doubt some voices'

*todos os escriturários se abstinham de o interromper, quando o **viam** curvado*  
*sobre a secretária*  
*all the clerks avoided interrupting him when they **saw** him bent over his desk.*  
'all clerks avoided interrupting him, when they saw him bent over the desk'

*Ele, que **via** almas de brâmanes passarem a cães,*  
*He, who **had seen** Brahmins' souls become dogs'*  
'He, who saw Brahmins' souls turn to dogs'

The remaining cases concern one single occasion of perception, and correspond to more dynamic cases. The first concerns the perception of a complex event, and will be discussed in Section 11.3. The next two cases are obviously durative situations, where the English rendering omits, or leaves at most implicit, the fact that the situation continues:

*Já **via** o quarteirão por detrás do qual repousava o Castanheira*  
*Now he **saw** the section behind which Castanheira lay*  
'He could already see the quarter behind which rested Castanheira'

*lançou-se para o portão, que **via** lá ao fundo*  
*raced for the gate which he **saw** at the back*  
'he aimed at the gate, which he could see there far away'

*Já* with Imperfeito marks the initial phase of a durative situation. Two pieces of information are thus conveyed: that it is a new situation, and that it will continue for a while. The translator chose to focus on the fact that the perspective was new, instead of expressing durativity, which he could do with something like *from now on, he could see*.

In the second example, Imperfeito expresses both durativity and temporal surrounding by the relative clause situation of the one depicted in the main clause. The English translation, on the contrary, allows for the interpretation that the race was a consequence of an achievement seeing, interpretation which is not allowed by the original.

Thus, these cases seem to be instances where not the whole meaning carried by the grammatical form in Portuguese was transmitted, rather than illustrations of a translation regularity.

Then, there were four translations of Perfeito by *could*, two of which will be dealt with in section 11.3. The others were as follows:

*um silêncio se demorou na biblioteca, durante o qual se **ouviram**, abafados, no*  
*crepúsculo que punha sombras pelos cantos, os ruídos domésticos da 'vila'.*  
*in the library there lingered a silence through which **could** be heard [...] the*  
*muffled sounds of domestic life in the villa.*  
'and a silence lasted in the library, during which were heard, muffled, in the

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<sup>7</sup> This is an interesting case, since this is not simple simple past. *Did* is a support verb, and seems to be marking habituality in English.

crepuscule which put shadows in all corners, the domestic sounds of the villa'

*Não viu o sujeito*

*He couldn't see the man.*

'He did not see the fellow'

The first one is an interesting example where Portuguese advances the narrative with the perception of the sounds, while English describes it, erroneously, in my view, as a background property.

In the second example, on the other hand, the use of Imperfeito would convey that "he" was deliberately and continuously looking for the man, Perfeito being the unmarked tense in a negative sentence. Now, in English, the choice of *couldn't*, as opposed to *didn't* or *did not*, may be related to the fact that *did not* would suggest that "the man" was there to be seen, while *couldn't* would not -- *couldn't* is the unmarked case.<sup>8</sup> Cf. the only three examples of *did not* negation of perception verbs in my corpus, where the "unseen" actually exists in all cases:

*and Kino looked down at it and didn't see it*

*Mas Kino olhou para ele sem o ver*

'But Kino looked at him without seeing it'

*Marco Semprônio não o viu sair.*

*Marcus Sempronius did not see him leave.*

-- *Tu não viste nada* --

*"You didn't see a thing"*

'You did not see anything'

In fact, it seems to be much more common to use *couldn't* than *didn't* with perception verbs in English (cf. the examples above). In my corpus, 6 out of the 9 translations by *could* occurred in negative-related sentences.<sup>9</sup> Also, the source of the present perfect translations were always negative sentences in Perfeito, but I will not take up this matter here (see next chapter instead).<sup>10</sup> (Negation is a grammatical and semantic subsystem in which the two languages differ considerably.)

In this connection, yet another translation pair seems relevant:

*Kino could never remember seeing them closed when he awakened*

*Kino não se lembrava de alguma vez os ter visto fechados ao acordar*

'Kino did not remember any time having seen them closed awaking'

This case is similar to the one of the perception verbs, in that *could remember* gets translated by Imperfeito *lembrava*. In addition, it is a negative sentence, which, as we have already noted, is a strong reason to have *could* in English. Finally, what is under the scope of

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<sup>8</sup> Incidentally, the implication that "the thing to be seen" was there seems to be also possible with Imperfeito, cf. *Não via (I) / \* viu (P) o homem, até que o descobriu no telhado* ('He didn't see the man until he found him on the roof').

<sup>9</sup> I am including *still* and *barely* as semantically related to negation.

<sup>10</sup> Recall Partee's famous example *I didn't turn off the stove*. This usage seems to be marked in comparison to both *I haven't turned off the stove* and *I couldn't turn off the stove*, in that it refers to a definite time.

*remember* is a perception verb itself, clearly interpreted as an achievement (inceptive) and not as stative. However, in Portuguese, Imperfeito is obligatory, in order to render (or agree with) the habitual meaning, conveyed by *alguma vez* (any time).

In conclusion, the generalization that Imperfeito of a single situation should be translated by *could* and Perfeito by past simple stood up to scrutiny. The translation of habitual Imperfeito brings the pair Imperfeito to simple past, while negated Imperfeito should be rendered by *couldn't* by default. *Didn't* is employed to express a perception failure.

### 11.2.2 The translation of English perception verbs

Looking at the translation from English into Portuguese, we find again a more complicated picture than simple correspondence between modals and Imperfeito. But the first obvious remark to be made is that the number of perception verbs is significantly higher in the English original text, amounting to 152 occurrences, i.e., more than twice as much as in the Portuguese original. Furthermore, and differing from the Portuguese source, a fair number of cases, namely 40 (26%), corresponds to the perception of events.<sup>11</sup>

In Table 11.2, the translations are summarized ('none' corresponds to either omission of the clause or rephrasing without perception; in parentheses were added those whose object was a VP, thus e.g. 5 (2) adds up to 7 cases):

Table 11.2

see 86	31 <i>could</i>	13 Perf 9 (3) Imp 3 (1) <i>pôde ver</i> 2 none 1 cond 1 <i>pudesse</i>
	54 <i>saw</i>	30 (11) Perf 8 (6) Imp 3 (1) none 1 inf 1 ger 1 MQP 1 PPCconj
hear 43	13 <i>could</i>	6 (1) Imp 3 (1) Perf (2) ger 1 IC 1 <i>ficou a ger</i>
	23 <i>heard</i>	6 (2) Imp 11 (2) Perf 1 <i>começou a ger</i> (1) MQP 1 none
	7 presperf	4 (1) Perf
feel 18	6 <i>could</i>	3 (2) Perf 2 Imp 1 (1) none
	12 <i>felt</i>	6 (2) Perf 2 (1) Imp 2 (1) none
smell 5	3 <i>could</i>	2 Perf 1 Imp
	2 <i>smelled</i>	1 Perf 1 Imp

#### 11.2.2.1 The translation of *could*

Again, we have a fair number of cases of *could* translated into Imperfeito as expected, where the sentences basically describe simple (unattended) perception:

*He could hear the pat of the corn cakes*  
*ouvira o chiar dos bolos de milho*  
 'he heard the sizzle of the corn cakes'

*He could hear Juana whispering the old magic again, and he could hear the evil*

<sup>11</sup> If, in addition, I had counted the cases of *watch* and *listen* as well, I would have had 171 verbs of perception, 49 of which corresponding to perception of events, i.e., 28.6%.

*music of the enemy*

*ouvia Joana a murmurar a velha frase mágica, **ouvia** a maléfica música do inimigo*

'he heard Juana whispering the old magic sentence, heard the maleficent music of the enemy'

*Kino **could** feel the blown sand against his ankles*

***Sentia** com alegria a areia fustigar-lhe os tornozelos*

'Kino felt with joy the sand fustigate his ankles'

*And Kino **could** hear the pad of Juana's feet behind him.*

*E, atrás de si, **ouvia** as passadas de Joana.*

'And, behind him, he heard Juana's footsteps'

*Now they **could** see the little road ahead of them*

*Agora **viam** a estrada debaixo dos olhos*

'Now they saw the road below the eyes'

*And he **could** smell the sharp odor of exposed kelp from the receding tide.*

***Sentia** o cheiro penetrante das algas que a maré vazia deixava na areia.*

'He felt the sharp smell of seaweed which the low water left on the sand'

*She **could** feel his warm breath against her skin*

***Sentia** na pele a quente respiração do filho*

'She felt in the skin the warm breath of the son'

It is nevertheless interesting to note that an English speaker is much more concerned with physical ability (the statement that the physical conditions are such that perception is possible) than a Portuguese speaker, who, if s/he conveys it at all, does it implicitly by stating simply the perception event. The next four examples are good illustrations of this.

*He **could** see the outline of the watcher, but the sleeping men were below his vision.*

***Via** o perfil da sentinela, mas não os dois homens adormecidos.*

'He saw the sentinel's profile, but not the two men asleep.'

*nearly all the brush houses were alike, and all leaked light and air, so that Juana and Kino, sitting in the corner of the brother's house, **could** see the leaping flames through the wall.*

*Quase todas as cabanas eram iguais. Todas deixavam passar a luz e o vento. Por isso Joana e Kino, sentados a um canto da casa do irmão, **viam**, pelas fendas das paredes, as chamas.*

'Almost all huts were equal. All let through the light and the wind. Thus Juana and Kino, sitting at a corner at the brother's house, saw, through the cracks of the walls, the flames.'

*When the trackers came near, Kino **could** see only their legs and only the legs of the horse from under the fallen branch.*

*Quando os batedores já vinham perto, Kino, debaixo do ramo quebrado, já só lhes **via** as pernas e as pernas do cavalo.*

'When the trackers were already near, Kino, under the broken branch, could already only see their legs and the horse legs'

*there where he **could** see, even in the distance, a hint of foliage*  
*Mesmo àquela distância, **via** qualquer coisa de parecido com folhagem.*  
'Even at that distance, he saw something similar to foliage'

*He **could** see the little image of the consecrated candle reflected in the soft surface of the pearl*  
***Via** a imagem da vela benta reflectida na superfície lisa da pérola*  
'He saw the image of the pearl reflected on the smooth surface of the pearl'

In this last example, it is not physical, but mental ability that is referred by means of *could*. This nuance is simply lost in the Portuguese rendering, for lack of a good way to convey it.

The next example is particularly interesting:

*Kino **could** see these things without looking at them*  
*tudo isto Kino **via** sem olhar*  
'all this Kino saw without looking'

because I classified the Portuguese translation as habitual when performing the annotation described in Section 10.2. Looking at the English sentence, on the other hand, it seems very much a straightforward instance of perception at that moment of the plot. On a closer view of the original English sentence, however, it seems that it can also convey a rule/generalization about Kino: there were things he could see without looking at them (not only at that moment, but in general).

So, it seems to me that the two interpretations are there in both languages, and what differs (and strikingly so) is the saliency with which one of them comes to mind (extended present situation, in English, and generalization, in Portuguese).

But the translation of *could* by Imperfeito is certainly not the whole story. In fact, I was able to spot two relevant features in several other instances of *could* rendered by Perfeito which explained their translation. Thus, in the following examples:

*In a few moments Kino **could** see them clustered in the haze*  
*Dentro de momentos, Kino **distinguiu-os** imersos no nevoeiro*  
'In a few moments, Kinos distinguished them immersed in the haze'

*and then he **could** see the face of Coyotito*  
*e então **viu** o rosto de Coyotito*  
'and then he saw the face of Coyotito'

*Far down the slope he **could** see the two trackers*  
*Lá muito em baixo, **avistou** os dois batedores.*  
'There far below, he discerned the two trackers'

*And, looking down, she **could** see the cigarette of the man on watch.*  
*Por baixo da gruta, Joana **viu** o cigarro da sentinela.*  
'Below the cave, Juana saw the cigarette of the sentinel'

*In the moonlight he **could** see the frantic frightened eyes*  
*Ao luar, **viu** ainda uns olhos inquietos e assustados.*

'In the moonlight, he saw still some anxious, frightened eyes'

Perfeito conveys inceptive perception, adding a perspective viewpoint which would be lacking in an Imperfeito translation (even though it must be noted that it may also be absent from the English original). The reason for the choice of the translator can again be traced to the pervasive vagueness of English states between inception and mere holding.

This is, in fact, also the case in the other kind of situation that requires Perfeito, namely, that of *could* interpreted (and possibly meant) as the inception of ability itself (and not only of perception), i.e., when *could* is marking a change of state from physical impossibility to the contrary. In the clear cases, the translator has (correctly, in my view) opted for the corresponding *pôde* ('was able to') in Perfeito:

*until the water cleared and he **could** see*  
*por fim, a água tornou-se clara e **pôde** ver*  
'finally, the water became clear and he was able to see'

*It was an old and ragged moon, but it threw hard light and hard shadow into the mountain cleft, and now Kino **could** see the seated figure of the watcher on the little beach beside the pool.*

*Era uma Lua velha e corroída, mas espalhava uma claridade intensa e sombras duras na garganta da serra. Kino **pôde** então ver a figura sentada do vigia, na estreita praia da lagoa.*

'It was a old corroded moon, but it spread an intense clarity and hard shadows on the defile of the ridge. Kino was able to see then the seated figure of the sentinel, on the narrow beach of the pool.'

It is, however, important to stress that there is no clear border (in English) distinguishing the two cases (inception of perception or of ability), and actually in some cases I would prefer a translation involving *pôde ver* where the translator opted for simple Perfeito, cf.:

*After a moment the big gate opened a few inches. Kino **could** see the green coolness of the garden*

*Pouco depois abriu-se uma greta do portão. Kino **viu** a verde frescura do jardim.*

'Some time after a chink of the gate opened. Kino saw the green freshness of the garden.'

On the other hand, the remaining case of translation of *could* into *pôde* was actually due to a restructuring (ill founded, in my opinion) of the English original, turning the sight of a movement into a "saw that" assertion:

*Even in the distance he **could** see the two on foot moving slowly along*  
*Mesmo àquela distância, **pôde** ver que os que vinham a pé andavam lentamente*  
'Even at such a distance he was able to see that those on foot were walking slowly'

There is an important reason for the choice of Perfeito in the above cases as well, namely the fact that an Imperfeito rendering would not advance the narrative, and would therefore fail to transmit the sequence of events of the original text. Now, Sandström argues, perception events in English do advance the narrative: "Interpreting a state sentence as perspectivized means interpreting it as evaluated (perceived, contemplated, asserted) by a character in the narrative

world [...] The perception, contemplation, or assertion of a proposition is a kind of event, [...] an evaluation event." (Sandström, 1993:169) and further: "Perspectivized state sentences "take time"" (ibidem, 171). This is precisely what the (translations of the) next English sentences do:<sup>12</sup>

*They **could** hear the splashing water*  
*Também ali todos **ouviram** [...] o cair da água*  
'Also there everyone heard [...] water falling'

*And they **could** smell the frying of good bacon*  
*as narinas **encheram-se** lhes do cheiro bom a presunto frito*  
'their nostrils filled with the good smell of fried bacon'

Finally, the eleven cases of "perception that" (a fact, thus) are always rendered by *Perfeito*, irrespective of *could*, simple past or present perfect in the English text, since they correspond to a punctual realization, no matter how extended the situation described in the *that*-clause may be:

*And then Kino **could** see that they were eating*  
*E então Kino **percebeu** que eles estavam a comer*  
'And then Kio realized that they were eating'

*Against the sky in the cave entrance Juana **could** see that Kino was taking off his white clothes*  
*Joana **viu** Kino, à entrada da gruta, esbatido no céu, a tirar o fato branco*  
'Juana saw Kino, at the entrance of the cave, in relief against the sky, taking off the white clothes'

*"I have heard that there are cities in the north."*  
*-- **Ouvi** dizer que há cidades para o norte.*  
'I heard (someone) say that there are cities in the north'

In the following example, though, the translator failed to notice the implicit "that" and thus conveyed a durative situation instead:

*Kino **could** see the house was gone, and he did not question Juana.*  
*Kino **via** a casa desaparecer sem perguntar nada.*  
'Kino saw the house disappear without making questions'

In the next example, on the other hand, the translator added manner (and duration) and got rid of ability brought about by physical conditions, producing a fairly free translation:

*He peered closely at her and he **could** see her large eyes.*  
*Ele olhou-a muito de perto e **contemplou**-lhe os grandes olhos.*  
'he looked at her from very near and contemplated her large eyes'

### 11.2.2.2 The translation of the simple past

Regarding now the translation of bare perception verbs into *Perfeito* or *Imperfeito*, one would at least expect that habitual ones would be translated by *Imperfeito*, while events would be rendered in *Perfeito*. This is true as far as the few habitual occurrences are concerned (or, rather, I should stress, where a habitual interpretation was chosen by the translator):

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<sup>12</sup> Even though I suppose these cases could have been translated by *Imperfeito* as well.

*so that everything they saw or thought or did or heard became a song  
que tudo o que viam, pensavam, faziam ou ouviam se transformava num canto*  
'that everything they saw, thought, did or heard transformed into a song'

*He heard every little sound of the gathering night  
Distinguia o mínimo som da noite envolvente:*  
'He distinguished the least sound of the enveloping night'

*He was uneasy and nervous; he glanced over his shoulder; he lifted the big knife  
and felt its edge.*  
*Estava inquieto e nervoso. Olhava para trás por cima do ombro, pegava na faca  
e experimentava-lhe o fio.*  
'He was anxious and nervous. He looked back over the shoulder, took the knife  
and tried its edge'

*The animals that used the pool came near and smelled men there and drifted  
away again into the darkness.*  
*Os animais da lagoa iam chegando. Mas mal sentiam cheiro de homem  
desapareciam outra vez nas trevas.*  
'The pool animals were arriving. But as soon as they felt man smell they  
disappeared again in the darkness'

The generalization of simple events translated by Perfeito also applies for the vast majority of the examples, e.g.:

*and he raised the blade and looked at it and saw a little line of blood on the steel.*  
*Levantou a lâmina e viu no aço um delgado fio de sangue.*  
'He raised the blade and saw a thin line of blood'

*He smelled the breeze and he listened for any foreign sound of secrecy*  
*Sorveu a brisa e escutou, à espera de qualquer som estranho*  
'He sipped the breeze and listened, waiting for any strange sign'

In fact, the translation was more regular than it looks in Table 11.2 above, because most Imperfeito translations of *saw* came from the description of Kino's visions in the surface of the pearl (the protagonist enters a state of premonition upon observing the invaluable pearl he fished), and, since those sentences describe purely mental states, of a very personal character indeed, it is justified that the translator used the Imperfeito. (Recall that, according to Sten, Imperfeito is used to render "the contents of an observation, a dream, a vision" (Sten, 1973:102, my translation).) Examples are:

*In the pearl he saw how they were dressed*  
*Na pérola, via como iriam vestidos*  
'In the pearl, he saw how they would be dressed'

*All of these things Kino saw in the lucent pearl*  
*Tudo isto Kino via na pérola cintilante.*  
'All this Kino could see in the shining pearl'

*and he looked into the shining surface for his rifle, but he saw only a huddled  
dark body on the ground with shining blood dripping from its throat.*

*Mas procurava a espingarda na superfície luzidia da pérola e só **via** um confuso corpo negro estendido no chão, com um fio de sangue brilhante a gotejar da garganta.*

'But he looked for the rifle on the glittering surface of the pearl and only saw a confused black body lying on the ground, with a line of shining blood dripping from the throat'

But there were some other translations of simple past into Imperfeito that demand a more complex explanation. Consider:

*Juana and Kino, sitting in the corner of the brother's house, could see the leaping flames through the wall. They **saw** the flames tall and furious, they saw the roof fall*

*Joana e Kino, sentados a um canto da casa do irmão, viam, pelas fendas das paredes, as chamas. **Viam** as chamas altas e enfurecidas, viram o tecto cair*

'Juana and Kino, sitting at a corner at the brother's house, saw, through the cracks of the walls, the flames. They could see the high infuriated flames, they saw the roof fall'

In this example, the translator must have chosen Imperfeito to contrast with the immediately following seeing, of a punctual rather than extended nature, or to repeat (and continue) the tense of the previous sentence. Incidentally, I classified it as a translation mistake already during the annotation phase.

However, there were other translations of *heard* by Imperfeito which seemed to speak against the rule "once-only event of perception - Perfeito translation", in that proper justification could be adduced for the use of Imperfeito. For example, the following hearing is somewhat midway between inception (after Kino woke up) and perspective:

*Kino **heard** the little splash of morning waves on the beach. It was very good-- Kino closed his eyes again to listen to his music.*

*Kino **ouvira** o rebentar das ondas matinais na praia. Que bom! Kino fechou os olhos novamente para escutar aquela música.*

'Kino could hear the splash of the morning waves on the beach. How good! Kino closed the eyes again to listen to that music.'

Likewise, in the next example, the graduality of the lexical item chosen by the translator does not exclude Imperfeito as much as if a simple perception verb had been used:

*He could see the little image of the consecrated candle reflected in the soft surface of the pearl, and he **heard** again in his ears the lovely music of the undersea*

*Via a imagem da vela benta reflectida na superfície lisa da pérola e de novo os ouvidos se lhe **enchiam** da maravilhosa música submarina*

'He saw the image of the consecrated candle reflected on the smooth surface of the pearl and again his ears filled with the wonderful submarine music'

Finally, the following case concerns one of those periods describing Kino's state of mind while looking at the pearl:

*And Kino **heard** the music of the pearl, distorted and insane.*

*E Kino **ouvira** a música da pérola, falseada e louca.*

'And Kino could hear the music of the pearl, distorted and mad.'

However, I am not sure whether in all cases a better translation would not use Perfeito,

which diminishes their value as counter examples. Especially in the second case, given the explicit contrast with *could see* in the English sentence, it seems to me that there was strong motivation to use *Perfeito* and not neutralize the contrast.

Consider, then, the following example:

*But Kino had grown tight and hard. He felt the creeping of fate*  
*Mas Kino estava inflexível e duro. Sentia o peso do destino*  
'But Kino was inflexible and hard. He could feel the weight of destiny'

Here, the translation seems impeccable. What is more, *Perfeito* would not be felicitous for this translation. The explanation for this fact may lie in the explanatory nature of the sentence, together with its reference to a (by all means) internal situation. Or it may follow from the fact that, in English, as in Portuguese, the second sentence is not interpretable as a new action or sensation in sequence, but only simultaneous, with the first.

### 11.2.2.3 Summing up

The use of *could* in English with perception verbs can be described as a continuum from mere unintentional ability to perceive to possibility allowed by a definite change in the environment of the perceiving agent. It conveys both the state of visual, auditory, etc. perception and its inception, while the simple past form is used to describe a perception event, i.e., something which is an integral part of the narrative, and has therefore consequences, namely, takes time and is related to other events by response and enablement relations.

This partition is by and large alien to Portuguese, which can express ability due to external means with a corresponding modal, *poder*, but rarely does. Several Portuguese internal considerations are rather at play in the choice between *Imperfeito* and *Perfeito* for both translation of *could* and simple past perception verbs, namely the need for signalling temporal order in the narrative, the need to express habituality, and the need to express perspective.

This explains the seemingly random pattern of translations depicted above.

## 11.3 Perception of events and the aspects

In this section, I deal with the important fact that perception clauses may have complex events as their objects, which are syntactically realized as VPs. In this context, gerundive versus non-gerundive form seems to imply precisely perfective vs. imperfective aspect (conceived as the whole, or one particular moment in the development of a process)<sup>13</sup>. However, the opposition between presence and absence of *could* must still be accounted for, as well as that between *Imperfeito* and *Perfeito*, and this is what I will investigate in the present section.

I should note that these cases have also raised some theoretical discussion. Mourelatos disagreed with Vendler's classification of SEE as a state in precisely those cases: "The force of I saw in these two sentences [I saw him run / cross the street] is not to convey the state of the

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<sup>13</sup> According to Palmer (1965:170), "the distinction is between an incomplete (progressive) and a complete (non-progressive) action".

subject, but to record A SIGHTING or A SEEING, however protracted, of an occurrence, as an individuated something that took place [...], an EVENT" (Mourelatos, 1981:200). This, however, does not in my opinion prove that SEE should be classified as an event, or more specifically an accomplishment, as Mourelatos implies. It proves at best that the resulting aspect (i.e., that of the whole sentence) is an event. In my view, it is the aspect of the embedded VP which passes through.

Interestingly, also from the point of view of translation these cases turned out to be special: at least in the direction Portuguese to English, some of the patterns seemed to be reversed. Let me consider this in some detail.

### 11.3.1 How Portuguese perception of events is translated into English

I have to admit that the number of cases (twelve) is too small to allow for generalization. But the frequency with which examples reverse, so to say, the translation regularities suggested in the previous section is noteworthy.

In fact, English uses *could* when Portuguese uses *Perfeito* in the following two cases:

*Da plataforma, ainda viu o sujeito voltar para trás, e, com as malditas flores, perder-se no meio das pessoas*

*From the platform, he **could** still see the fellow turn around and disappear with the damned flowers into the crowd.*

'From the platform, he still saw the fellow go back, and, with the damned flowers, get lost among the crowd'

*já só lhe viu as plantas dos pés, que, claras, saltavam ao longe, fugindo.*

*he **could** already just make out the light-colored soles of feet leaping in the distance*

'he saw but the foot soles, which, light-coloured, jumped far away, escaping'

The first Portuguese sentence conveys roughly an event (while the tram was going away, he still had the time to see a relatively short event) and thus *Perfeito* is used. In English, the short time caused by the tram's moving away still enabled him to see, and thus *could* is here used to specify physical ability, not mere perception. On the other hand, the definiteness of the perceived event is enough to forbid an imperfective reading of the modalized sentence (of the kind "he could not fail to see"). The second example was again interpreted as seeing in difficult conditions by the English translator, and thus the use of *could*.

Another counterexample to the rules formulated above, it is precisely negation which does not involve a *couldn't* in the translation, in the previously mentioned example:

*Marco Semprônio não o viu sair.*

*Marcus Sempronius **did** not see him leave.*

This example is interesting because it can be logically decomposed into "He<sub>1</sub> left and he<sub>2</sub> didn't see his<sub>1</sub> leaving". Now, if the very marked gerundive form would be used in Portuguese, it would be best translated by *couldn't*, cf. *Eu não o vi a sair, mas o certo é que saiu -> I couldn't see him leave, but he must have.*

The only example of translation into present perfect is also of a negated sentence, but the tense is probably conditioned by *ainda não* ('not yet'):

*Ó Conceição, ainda não ouvi chegar a Cristina.*  
"Conceição, I **haven't** heard Cristina come in yet."  
'Conceição, I haven't yet heard Cristina arrive'

Finally, Imperfeito is translated into simple past, again contrary to the generalizations above, in the following two examples, which have in common the description of internal perception, something inside the mind, classifying the protagonist's state of mind and explaining previously reported thoughts. *Ver* in the first example thus corresponds to remember, imagine, or, even better, recall.

*E via o Castanheira perseverando, o Castanheira subindo todas as manhãs a escadaria do Ministério das Colónias,*  
And he **saw** Castanheira persevering, Castanheira climbing the steps to the Ministry of Colonial Affairs every morning  
'And he could see Castanheira persevering, Castanheira climbing every morning the staircase of the Ministry of the Colonies,'

*Sentia-se descer lentamente, num poço sombrio e húmido, sem fundo.*  
She **felt** herself slowly descending into a dark and humid bottomless pool.  
'She felt she went slowly down, in a dark humid well, without bottom'

The durativity of the situation seems thus to be marked in Portuguese by Imperfeito, while the gerund of a durative situation in English seems to be enough. Note, in fact, that a non-gerundive construction was used in Portuguese in the second example (actually, the gerundive version would be very marked indeed), but the translation into English employed the gerund.

Finally, five other cases do translate Perfeito of a perceived event by past simple, thus conforming to the previous "rules":

*E estava nisto quando viu aproximarem-se os lenhadores,*  
And thus matters stood when he **saw** the woodsmen draw near  
'And he was at this when he saw the woodsmen approach'

*Numa pausa da plácida exposição que lhes fez, o frade ouviu-os roncar.*  
At a pause in his placid exposition, the friar **heard** them snore.  
'At a pause of the placid exposition he did to them, the friar heard them snore'

*eu vi a navalha do outro brilhar e ouvi o baque surdo do corpo no beco*  
I **saw** a man's switchblade gleam and heard the dull thud of the body in the alley

*ele, empoleirado num dos ramos frondosos, viu vir do santuário uma luminosidade.*  
he, perched on one of the leafy branches, **saw** a glow coming from the sanctuary.

*Ele viu, estarecido, as nádegas escuras, e as partes mais escuras que o medo contraía, aproximarem-se da sua ponta.*  
Aghast, the genie **saw** the dark thighs and the darker parts that fear contracted as they came closer to his point.  
'He saw, appalled, the dark thighs, and the darkest parts which the fear contracted,

approach his end'

Interestingly, the two last examples also feature the choice of a gerundive VP and a temporal clause instead of the "natural" infinitive clause, and thus result in the corresponding change in meaning.

I will not discuss these cases in detail, however, because in Portuguese there are at least two more oppositions to account for, and there is an obvious shortage of relevant data in my corpus: One would have to explain the import of:

- subject-verb inversion, as between *viu o homem aproximar-se* and *viu aproximar-se o homem*, where the second rendering is "more imperfective" than the first;
- and of personal/impersonal infinitive, as between *viu os lenhadores aproximar-se* and *viu os lenhadores aproximarem-se*.

Note, in passing, that I assumed throughout the present chapter that *a* + Infinitivo and Gerúndio are equivalent; otherwise one would have a threefold choice.

### 11.3.2 English perception of events and their translation

Let us consider now the opposite direction, from English to Portuguese, summarized in Table 11.3 below (the cases of *watch* appear in parentheses):

Table 11.3

could	VPinf 2	2 Perfeito
	VPger 10	4 (1) Imperfeito 2 ger 2 Perfeito 1 <i>pôde ver</i> 1 omission
simple past	VPinf 14	11 (2) Perfeito 2 (1) Imperfeito 1 omission (1) ger (2) <i>ficou a ger</i>
	VPger 11	5 (1) Perfeito 4 Imperfeito 1 MQP 1 omission (1) ger
presperf	VPinf 3	3 Perfeito

The first obvious observation concerning English is that perception of whole events (i.e., those in a bare infinitive) rarely appears with *could*, while perception of events in progress is more evenly distributed between a simple past and a *could* formulation.

The translation of the perception of whole events is considerably predictable into Perfeito, see e.g.:

*Juana, glancing secretly at him, saw him smile.*  
*Joana olhou-o de lado e viu-o sorrir.*  
 'Juana looked at him sideways and saw him smile'

*and struck again and felt his knife go through cloth*  
*voltou a avançar, sentiu a faca atravessar tecido de fato*  
 'he advanced again, felt the knife pierce through material of cloth'

*in the pale light of the moon that crept through the holes in the brush house Kino saw Juana arise silently from beside him. He saw her move toward the fireplace.*  
*E, à vaga luz da Lua que se infiltrava pelas fendas da cabana, Kino viu, ao seu lado, Joana levantar-se sem ruído e aproximar-se da fomalha.*

'And, in the indistinct moon light which infiltrated through the cracks of the hut, Kino could see, at his side, Juana get up without noise and approach the fireplace.'

even though some cases feature blatant translation mistakes, cf.:

*Juana had turned to look at him and she **saw** his back stiffen.*

*Joana voltou-se e viu as costas imóveis de Kino.*

'Juana turned and saw Kino's back immobile'

There is an interesting example where a sort of imperfectiveness conveyed in English by the partitive preposition *of* is rendered in Portuguese by a corresponding change from infinitive to gerundive VP:

*"I have heard our father tell of it.*

*--Ouvi o nosso pai a falar nisso.*

'I heard our father talking about it.'

One can confidently state that *Perfeito* is the correct translation in this case, because the three cases where *Perfeito* was not used either display considerable restructuring or consist simply of translation mistakes:

*the doctor said, and he **saw** Kino's eyes flick involuntarily to the floor near the side post of the brush house.*

*disse o médico, ao mesmo tempo que seguia os olhos de Kino, irresistivelmente parados no chão ao pé do pilar da cabana.*

'said the doctor, at the same time which he followed Kino's eyes, irresistibly fixed at the ground near the post of the hut'

This example features a large amount of reinterpretation, but I believe it is rather successful as far as the Portuguese rendering is concerned.

*Kino **heard** the baby whimper, and he knew from the muffled sounds that Juana had covered his head with her shawl.*

*Kino **ouvia** o pequeno choramingar, e percebia, pelo som abafado, que Juana lhe tapara a cabeça com o xale.*

'Kino could hear the baby whimper, and could understand, by the muffled sound, that Juana had covered his head with the shawl.'

In this case, it is probably the lexical meaning of *whimper* which does not require the gerundive form, since it denotes an extended atelic activity. But the remainder of the sentence does not make clear whether the muffled sounds are subsequent to the first whimpering, or simultaneous with it (in other words, was it a muffled whimper that Kino heard, or did he hear one, followed by muffled sounds?)

Now, as irrelevant this detail may be for the understanding of the whole story, it must be decided by the translator into Portuguese. The choice above was that the two descriptions concern the same activity, and thus *Imperfeito* was used. Given the weirdness of *Imperfeito* with *perceber* ('understand') in this context, I would however choose *Perfeito* instead; cf. *Kino ouviu o pequeno choramingar e percebeu [...]* ('Kino heard the baby whimper and understood that...').

Finally, the remaining example presents again an unmotivated restructuring (see the gloss), which furthermore produces a marked sentence in Portuguese:

*She looked up at Kino when he came back; she **saw** him examine her ankles, cut*

*and scratched from the stones and brush,  
e olhou para Kino, que voltava e lhe **via** os tornozelos esfolados e feridos das  
pedras e das urzes.*

'and she looked at Kino, who was coming back and could see her ankles,  
scratched and sore from the stones and the heather.'

In fact, it is clear from the English passage that the way Kino looked at her ankles was not unattentively, and possibly not even while coming back, but only after he did. The Portuguese sentence merely conveys that he could see her ankles while coming back. I do not see any principled reason for this rendering, which I would replace by *viu-o a olhar-lhe para os tornozelos esfolados* or by *olhou para Kino e viu que ele lhe examinava os tornozelos*.

Turning now to the two single cases of bare infinitive object modified by *could*, they were also translated by Perfeito, even though a translation into Imperfeito would not sound strange, either:

*In the pale light he **could** see the little waves break over her, and her skirt floated  
about and clung to her legs as the water receded.*

*Na vaga claridade, Kino **viu** as pequeninas ondas quebrarem-se de encontro ao  
corpo dela, as saias enfunarem e colarem-se-lhe às pernas, quando a água  
retrocedia.*

'In the indistinct clarity, Kino saw the little waves break against her body, the  
skirts belly out and stick on to her legs, when the water receded.'

*through the knife he **could** feel the muscle tighten hard  
**sentiu** na faca a resistência do manto.*

'he felt in the knife the resistance of the muscle'

(note that the event is rendered in Portuguese by a noun).

As far as the translation of perception verbs having as objects gerundive clauses is concerned, when both gerundive clause and *could* are used in English, a clear imperfective meaning must be meant, and thus Portuguese must convey it with Imperfeito or gerund:

*He **could** hear Juana whispering the old magic again, and he could hear the evil  
music of the enemy.*

*ouvia Joana a murmurar a velha frase mágica, ouvia a maléfica música do  
inimigo.*

'he heard Juana whispering the old magic sentence, he heard the malevolous  
music of the enemy'

*he **could** feel the dark creeping things waiting for him to go out into the night.*

*Sentia que as coisas sombrias se arrastavam na noite e o esperavam.*

'He felt that the shadowy things dragged themselves in the night and waited for  
him'

*Kino **could** see them in his mind, slipping along the track*

*Kino **imaginava-os** seguindo-lhe na pista*

'Kino imagined them following his track'

*and he **could** hear her quick footsteps going toward the shore*

*ouvindo-lhe os passos apressados a caminho da praia*

'hearing her hurried footsteps in the way to the beach'

*They sat silently all day in the darkness of the house, and they **could** hear the neighbors speaking of them.*

*Ficaram todo o dia em silêncio na obscuridade da casa, **ouvindo**, lá fora, os vizinhos a falar sobre eles.*

'They remained all day in silence in the obscurity of the house, hearing, outside, the neighbours talking about them'

*he **could** see the bottoms of the canoes sticking through it através do qual Kino **via** o fundo dos barcos imóveis*

'through which Kino **saw** the bottoms of the boats immobile'

One possible counter example, involving *pôde ver*, has already been dismissed as a mistranslation in Section 11.2.2.1 above. The remaining counter example to such a rule also presents, I believe, a poor translation, which misses the connotations of extendedness and description of a state of mind, presenting instead the perception of two different events most probably in sequence (first the blood running, then Juana calling):

*Kino **could** feel warm blood running down from his forehead, and he **could** hear Juana calling to him*

*Kino **sentiu** o sangue quente a correr-lhe pela testa abaixo e **ouviu** Joana chamá-lo*

'Kino felt the warm blood running down his forehead and heard Juana call him'

Now, if English uses past simple for the perception verb, and a gerundive clause as its object, things are more complicated. Even though the majority of the translations (5) used *Perfeito*, two corresponded to the restricted class of position verbs, which behave very differently in the two languages:

*The doctor looked past his aged patient and **saw** himself sitting in a restaurant in Paris*

*O médico desviou o olhar da doente idosa que tinha na frente e **viu-se** sentado num restaurante de Paris*

'The doctor deviated the look from the aged patient he had in front and saw himself seated in a restaurant in Paris'

*And in the surface of the pearl he **saw** Coyotito lying in the little cave*

*E, na superfície da pérola, **viu** Coyotito jazendo na gruta*

Three of those translated by *Imperfeito*, incidentally, belonged to that class as well:

*In the pearl he **saw** Juana and Coyotito and himself standing and kneeling at the high altar*

***Via** Joana, Coyotito e a sua própria pessoa de pé, e, de joelhos, diante do altar-mor*

'He could see Juana, Coyotito and himself on foot, and, on knee s, before the high alter'

*And in the pearl Kino **saw** himself and Juana squatting by the little fire in the brush hut while Coyotito read from a great book.*

*E, na pérola, Kino **via-se** já agachado na cabana, ao pé do lume, com Joana ao seu lado, enquanto Coyotito lia um livro enorme.*

'And, in the pearl, Kino could see himself squatted in the hut, near the fire, with Juana beside him, while Coyotito read a huge book.'

*In the pearl he **saw** Coyotito sitting at a little desk in a school*  
*Na pérola, **via** Coyotito na escola, sentado à sua carteira*  
'In the pearl, he could see Coyotito at school, sitting at his desk'

The remaining cases of translation of past simple + gerund into Perfeito are:

*And in the pearl he **saw** Juana with her beaten face crawling home through the night.*

*E, na pérola, **viu** Joana com o rosto cansado arrastando-se para casa na escuridão.*

'And, in the pearl, he could see Juana with a tiring face dragging herself home in the darkness'

*And then he **saw** them moving along.*

*E então **viu-os** avançando.*

'And then he saw them advancing.'

*Behind him he **heard** Juana patting the cakes*

***Ouviu** Joana, nas suas costas, a tender os bolos de milho*

'He heard Juana, behind him, patting the corn cakes'

where the perception is interpreted as taking time in the course of events (which is actually signalled in English in the two first cases by *and* and *and then*).

The case of translation into Mais que perfeito and the one marked simply omission in Table 11.3 are actually both cases of omission, since in the former the form of perception is lost in the translation, and only the simple awareness is preserved (see gloss):

*She burst clear of the brush line and stumbled over the little boulders toward the water, and then she **heard** him coming and she broke into a run.*

*Viu-a emergir da linha dos arbustos e tropeçar nos calhaus. Mas, como já tinha dado por ele, Joana começou a correr.*

'he saw her emerge from the brush line and stumble over the boulders. But, as she had already noticed him, she had started to run.'

*Kino **felt** the rage and hatred melting toward fear.*

*O ódio e a ira de Kino transformaram-se em medo.*

'The hate and the rage of Kino transformed into fear.'

Finally, the remaining example translated into Imperfeito was:

*He **felt** the evil coagulating about him, and he was helpless to protect himself.*

***Sentia** o espírito do mal a coalhar-se à sua volta e não tinha força para se defender.*

'He could feel the spirit of evil coagulating around him and did not have strength to defend himself.'

where I cannot but note that internal feelings are closer to perspective than vision of an external event, and thus are more liable to be always rendered in Imperfeito.

If, for the sake of completeness, one considers now the 9 cases of *watch* an event as well, they fit in nicely, given that the two apparent discrepancies are easily explained away:

In fact, the translation into gerund features a considerable difference in meaning:

*when Coyotito awakened she placed him on the ground in front of her and **watched** him wave his arms and kick his feet, and he smiled and gurgled at her until she smiled too.*

*quando Coyotito acordou, sentou-o no chão na sua frente e, **vendo-o** agitar os braços, mexer os pés, rir, palrar, riu também.*

'when Coyotito awakened, she sat him on the ground in front of here, and, seeing him wave his arms, move his feet, laugh, gurgle, she laughed as well.'

The translation into Imperfeito, in turn, is due to the bare plural subject of the English sentence, which conveys a clear vague plurality:

*Horned toads **watched** the family go by*  
*Os sapos de chifres **viam** passar a família*  
'The horned toads saw the family go by'

Of interest to stress here is the fact that the attentiveness part of the meaning of *watch* is rendered explicitly by the aspectualizer *ficar* a twice, cf.:

*Kino left his foot there and **watched** them move over it.*  
*Kino não se mexeu mais e **ficou** a observar o movimento das formigas.*  
'Kino did not move further and remained watching the movement of the ants.'

*he **watched** the blue shadow of the mountain move out across the brushy desert below until it reached the Gulf*

*Kino **ficou** a ver a sombra azul da montanha deslocar-se, lá em baixo, pelo matagal fora, até atingir o Golfo.*

'Kino went on seeing the blue shadow of the mountain move, below, through the woods, until reaching the Gulf.'

### 11.3.3 Summing up

Summing up, perception of events or activities is commonly used in English, where both physical perception and the description of real events are much more common than in Portuguese.

The grounds on which to choose Imperfeito or Perfeito as translations of English clauses involving the perception of events seem to be related to the narrative purpose of the clause in question: is it depicting a character's thoughts and/or state of mind, or is it depicting an event which takes time as well? When the answer to either question is not clear cut, the translator has free choice.

On the other hand, in English, the absence or presence of *could* is (at least partially) determined by questions of physical ability and lack of attentiveness, matters about which Portuguese is very much unaware in general. (Note, on this subject, the lexically encoded contrast in English between *watch* and *see* and *listen* and *hear*, which has no real counterpart in Portuguese.<sup>14</sup>)

Another interesting observation is that, out of the 25 cases of bare perception verbs

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<sup>14</sup> *Escutar*, the standard translation of *listen*, means rather "straining the ear", not "attend to".

followed by a VP-object, only in 12 cases the same construction was preserved in Portuguese. Apart from the cases of simple omission of any reference to perception, this was mainly due to differences in encoding body position between the two languages, cf. the above cited examples, but the use of relative clauses replacing a VP-object construction was also found in three cases:

*He saw the specks of Gulf clouds flame high in the air.*  
*olhou os fiapos de nuvens do golfo que pairavam nas alturas.*  
'He looked at the specks of clouds of the gulf which flamed in the heights'

*I've heard a coyote pup cry like a baby."*  
*Já ouvi o choro de uma lobazita que era tal qual o duma criancinha.*  
'I have already heard the cry of a coyote pup which was just like that of a baby'

*Standing in the door, he saw two men approach*  
*De pé, à porta, Kino viu dois homens que se aproximavam*  
'Standing, in the door, Kino saw two men who approached'

#### 11.4 Addition of perception reconsidered

After having attempted to disclose some regular pattern among the cases where reference to perception is made in the original text, I analyse in detail the cases of perception addition.

I start by looking into the addition of perception verbs by a translation into Portuguese.

A large number of those do not actually introduce perception out of the blue, they simply translate it with a perception verb while the original had a more elaborate way; cf. e.g.:

*The little light from the stars made out for him the narrow road through the brushy country.*  
*À débil claridade das estrelas **via** o caminho pela charneca fora.*  
'In the weak clarity of the stars he could see the way through the hear'

*He had only a little vision under the fallen limb.*  
*Já pouco **via** por debaixo do ramo caído.*  
'He saw already little from under the fallen branch'

*and the soft murmur of their voices came to him.*  
*e **ouviu** o sussurro das vozes.*  
'and he heard the murmur of the voices.'

In other cases, the verb of perception is used for realization "saw that" and is thus, properly speaking, outside of the subject matter of this chapter.

*looked at the rut and found that the footprints were gone.*  
*examinou os sulcos e **viu** que as suas pegadas já não existiam.*  
'he examined the ruts and saw that their footprints were no longer there.'

Other cases, still, simply have a different choice as far as marking of coordination is concerned:

*She saw that he did not try to erase their tracks in the sand. Instead, he climbed up the brush cliff beside the water*  
*Viu que ele não tentava apagar as pegadas na areia. Ao contrário, **viu-o** escalar a proeminência que se erguia, cheia de arbustos, ao lado da água*

'She saw that he did not try to erase the footprints in the sand. On the contrary, she saw him climb up the prominence which rose, full of bushes, near the water'

In the case of *be afraid*, the form *sentir medo* was consistently chosen instead of *ter medo*, cf.:

*Suddenly Kino was afraid.*  
*Nessa altura, Kino **sentiu** um medo súbito.*  
'At that time, Kino felt a sudden fear.'

*And Kino was afraid.*  
*Kino **sentia** medo.*  
'Kino felt fear.'

What interests me here are those cases where the addition of a perception verb stems from more complex causes. In some cases the translator specified, or even replaced, the original verbs by perception ones:

*and he stared at the woven tules of his sleeping mat until the crossed design danced in his head.*  
*e tanto fixara os cruzamentos entretecidos da esteira que **via** o desenho dançar.*  
'and he had fixed so much the woven crossings of the mat that he saw the design dance'

*She paused, her hands helpless in front of her*  
*Ela **ouviu**-o, com os braços caídos,*  
'She heard him, with the arms down'

*His eyes were entranced, and he could sense the wary, watchful evil outside*  
*Os olhos dele estavam encantados e **viam** o espírito do mal, cuidadoso e atento*  
'His eyes were enchanted and saw the spirit of evil, careful and watchful'

In other cases, finally, he interprets the original text as transmitting the story through a protagonist's eyes, and chooses to make that fact explicit:

*and as I looked they put the fire to the outside.*  
*Ainda os **vi** a pegarem fogo na parte de fora.*  
'I still saw them setting fire to the outside'

*She burst clear of the brush line*  
***Viu**-a emergir da linha dos arbustos*  
'He saw her emerge of the line of the bushes'

*They turned in through the opening of Kino's brush fence and came to his door.*  
***Viu**-os atravessar a sebe que cercava a cabana e caminhar para a entrada.*  
'He saw them cross the fence which surrounded the hut and walk to the entrance.'

*Very deliberately Kino opened his short strong knife.*  
***Viu** Kino abrir a navalha com decisão*  
'She saw Kino open the knife with decision'

Often the original English sentences clearly conveyed perspective, in the sense of representing one or several characters' thoughts:

*But now it was gone, and there was no retrieving it.*

*Mas agora via que tudo estava acabado, sem remédio possível.*  
'But now she saw everything was finished, without possible remedy.'

*Because they were happy and excited they thought everyone shared their joy.*  
*Como se sentiam felizes e encantados, julgavam todos alegres com a sua alegria.*  
'Since they felt happy and delighted, they supposed everyone happy for their joy'

*They had spoken once, but there is not need for speech if it is only a habit anyway.*

*Uma vez, há muito tempo, haviam conversado. Mas não sentiam a necessidade de falar porque o faziam só por hábito.*  
'Once, a long time ago, they had conversed. But they did not feel the need to talk because they would do it only for habit.'

*Kino lifted the flesh, and there it lay, the great pearl, perfect as the moon.*  
*Kino levantou a carne e viu-a. Lá estava ela, a grande pérola, perfeita como a Lua.*  
'Kino lifted the flesh and saw it. There it was, the big pearl, perfect as the moon.'

*Kino held the great pearl in his hand, and it was warm and alive in his hand.*  
*Kino apertou a pérola na mão e sentiu-a quente e viva.*  
'Kino clasped the pearl in the hand and felt it war and alive'

*She knew there was murder in him, and it was all right*  
*Sentia nele uma fúria de assassino e achava-a justa.*  
'She felt in him a fury of murderer and considered it just.'

In this last case, there is a diminishing of force in the story: to know is stronger than to feel, adding the precision of her perspective diminished the strength of the presentation of her intimate persuasions. In the next case, a situation rendered as objective in English is relativized to private sensations:

*Because they were disturbed, the oyster shells were tightly closed.*  
*E as ostras, sentindo-se cobichadas, fechavam-se com firmeza.*  
'And the oysters, feeling coveted, closed firmly.'

In some cases, the sensation is so personal that it must be available only to some characters:

*and their fingertips burned a little*  
*sentiram um ligeiro prurido na ponta dos dedos*  
'they felt a light itching on the fingertips'

In an interesting case, the English description is so concrete visually that the translator opted for expressing vision with a passive with impersonal *se*:

*And on the beach the white and blue canoes that came from Nayarit were drawn up*  
*Na praia viam-se os barcos azuis e brancos vindos de Nayarit*  
'On the beach were seen the blue and white boats come from Nayarit'

In the last case, featuring a poor translation in my view, a rule or generalization in English expressing also a belief of a set of characters is extensionalized: it becomes a description, rather

than a logical consequence.

*if it be a man's function to break down a price, then he must take joy and satisfaction in breaking it as far down as possible*

*E, se a função deles era fazer baixar os preços, **sentiam** todos prazer e alegria quando conseguiam fazê-lo descer o mais possível.*

'and, if their function was breaking down the prices, all felt joy and satisfaction when they managed to break it as far down as possible'

Turning now to the addition of perception on the part of the English translator while rendering in English a text originally written in Portuguese, it was much more rare in my corpus. In fact, most cases turned out to be periphrases of lexical verbs denoting feelings: *feel desire* as translation of *desejar* or *apetecer*, *feel a strange fear* to render *ficou mesmo assustado*, *feel compassion* as rendering of *ter dó*, and *feel respect* for *respeitar*.

Two other cases seem to be plainly idiomatic, and translate *saber de* by *hear*; cf.:

-- *Nunca mais soube de ti...*

*"I never **heard** what became of you...."*

'(Since then) I have not heard of you...'

They are nevertheless symptomatic of the nature of the two languages, since Portuguese describes the result, and English the (most probable) means.

In fact, only two cases seemed to correspond to real addition:

*quando eu achava que nenhuma o era.*

*while I **felt** none was true.*

'when I thought that no one was so'

*Haveis-me entendido, haveis gostado?*

*Have you understood me and have you liked what you **heard**?"*

'Have you understood, have you liked?'

The first case renders an intellectual opinion as a subjective suspicion, and I consider it therefore a translation mistake. The second does not in any way change the meaning of the question, but adds precision.

Finally, the next case explains (in detail) the meaning of *auscultar*, describing how it was actually performed by the protagonist. Possibly, the corresponding technical term was considered out of place in this context.

*curvando-se, auscultou o peito imóvel e rígido.*

*leaned over, placed his ear on the rigid, motionless chest and **listened**.*

'bending himself, auscultated the motionless, rigid chest.'

Now, one may be surprised that so little perception is added by an English version, but, on the other hand, it precisely emphasizes the fact that Portuguese narrative is not about perceivable events most of the time, nor do characters use their senses in a relevant way. Furthermore, if they do, that will have already been stated, and thus not addition, but preservation, of perception description would be at stake.

## 11.5 Discussion

This chapter is somewhat different from the others because it involves a lexicon feature as well. So, matters like syntactic structure, as well as interpretation of lexical items, were a little more systematically taken into account. In addition, I could study the persistence of the use of perception verbs in the two languages across translation. (Because no comparable study for verbs of other classes was performed, it was not possible to know whether the pattern found was special in that respect, though.)

The most important thing about this study, however, was the contrast of two seemingly equivalent sets of verbs in the two languages: I take it that no one would claim that visual or auditory perception, represented by *see* and *ver*, and *hear* and *ouvir*, etc., are different according to the language one speaks.

The interest of the comparison was then that it showed that the language use of such verbs, and what is stated in connection with them, is considerably different:

- in simple frequency
- in the kind of things which were object of perception
- in the classification of perception events (according to ability, attentiveness, temporal duration, etc.)
- in the motivation to employ perception

In fact, it seems fair to say that Portuguese makes more infrequent use of perception verbs, and when it does tends to use them to express sensations. In English texts, on the other hand, description of perception is much more abundant, and perception is frequently classified as to ability and attentiveness. Furthermore, the perception of an event by a protagonist is frequently used in English to explain subsequent action by a character, while it is more Portuguese-like in character to describe an event leaving it implicit that the present characters perceived it.

This impression is confirmed by the following quantitative wrap up, concerning only past occurrences of the verbs in question (thus excluding infinitive, pluperfect, present, future, etc.). The first figure concerns the total number of verbs, the second those which are modified by *could*, and the third how many have a VP as object.

Table 11.4

	English original text	English translated from Portuguese
see + watch	97 - 31 - 21	31 - 5 - 5
hear + listen	43 - 13 - 10	30 - 1 - 6
feel	18 - 6 - 7	24 - 1 - 1
smell	5 - 2 - 0	0

In the next table, displaying the corresponding verbs in Portuguese, the second number concerns perception verbs modified by the modal *poder*.

Table 11.5

	Portuguese original text	Portuguese translated from English
ver	37 - 0 - 9	91 - 3 - 22
ouvir + escutar	18 + 4 - 0 - 2	36 - 0 - 9
sentir	20 - 0 - 1	34 - 0 - 3

Finally, this study confirmed my belief that translation rules are not bidirectional. To illustrate this, I sum up the translations from English to Portuguese in Table 11.6, and the converse in Table 11.7.

Table 11.6

<i>could</i>	Imperfeito	22 / 53
	Perfeito	21 / 53
	<i>pôde</i> inf	4 / 53
simple past	Perfeito	63 / 91
	Imperfeito	26 / 91

Table 11.7

Imperfeito	<i>could</i>	7 / 32
	simple past	21 / 32
Perfeito	<i>could</i>	4 / 43
	simple past	35 / 43

In other words, while *could* is more often than not translated by Imperfeito, Imperfeito is seldom translated by *could*. On the other hand, while Imperfeito is mostly translated by the English simple past, this latter is twice as often translated by Perfeito, which may also be

rendered by, or render, *could*.

In sum, translation rules, or regularities, are always directional, and have to be explained by features that are intimately connected to the task of rendering a text of one language into one of another language.