

already taken place (see *abandonar* e.g.), yet not always in a correct way (see *com deservoltura*)

4. The reversal function

Although with the advent of the reusability-concept (see e.g. Calzolari 1991) the notion of reversibility has also come to the fore (see e.g. P. van der Eijk e.a. 1992), editors which pay attention to this aspect in a non-trivial way are rather scarce or even non-existent. In what follows therefore we will present this function somewhat more in detail.

A fourth function, which makes OMBI more innovative than other editors, is that it can reverse translational relations and directional databases in general. While the editing function is busy creating a bilingual database $X \rightarrow Y$, and as such taking in translations from X to Y, OMBI simultaneously stores the reversed counterparts, thereby building a reverse database $Y \rightarrow X$. The end result is a non-directional bilingual database, from which databases and/or dictionaries in both directions can be automatically derived at a subsequent stage.

In order for the process and outcome of reversal to be non-trivial, the tool should not merely state that if word form x is a translation of word form y, then word form y is a translation of word form x. This is in many cases not only too limited a conclusion, but also a wrong one: only rarely is translation a straightforward symmetrical relation between word forms.

The first, highly important observation about translation relations is that it is not *words* that are translated into other words, but rather *words in a specific meaning*. The English word *horse* is a translation of the Dutch word *paard*, but only in the meaning of the latter as 'certain animal', not in its meaning 'certain chesspiece'. This insight has had a fundamental influence on the architecture of the databases that OMBI builds (see section 2). The database distinguishes between Form Units or FUs (word forms) and Lexical Units or LUs (meanings): every Form Unit (e.g. *horse*) can have one or more meanings (e.g. 1 'certain animal', 2 'certain chesspiece', etc.); only a LU (which always belongs to an accompanying FU) can be translated by a LU into another language.

The second important observation is that translation, and reversal of translation in particular, only holds if certain conditions are met. In OMBI the translation relation is analysed into four relevant parameters that influence reversibility, and which therefore have to be specified and taken into account in 'calculating' whether the reversal of the relation is valid or not. The four parameters are the following:

