

Towards a General Theory of Translational Action

Skopos Theory Explained

Katharina Reiβ / Hans J. Vermeer

Translated from the German by
Christiane Nord

English reviewed by
Marina Dudenhöfer



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LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 1984 by St. Jerome Publishing

Published 2014 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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ISBN 13: 978-1-905763-95-5 (pbk)

Typeset by
Delta Typesetters, Cairo, Egypt

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record of this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Reiss, Katharina, author.

[Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie. English]

Towards a general theory of translational action : skopos theory explained
/ Katharina Reiss and Hans J. Vermeer ; Translated from the German by
Christiane Nord ; English reviewed by Marina Dudenhöfer.

pages cm

“Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie, first published in 1984.”

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-905763-95-5 (pbk : alk. paper)

I. Translating and interpreting. I. Vermeer, Hans J. (Hans Josef), 1930- author.
II. Nord, Christiane, translator. III. Dudenhöfer, Marina, editor of compilation.
IV. Title.

P306.R4313 1984
418'.02--dc23

2012049567

Towards a General Theory of Translational Action

Skopos Theory Explained

Katharina Reiß / Hans J. Vermeer

Translated from the German by Christiane Nord

English reviewed by Marina Dudenhöfer

This is the first English translation of the seminal book by Katharina Reiß and Hans Vermeer, *Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie*, first published in 1984. The **first part** of the book was written by Vermeer and explains the theoretical foundations and basic principles of *skopos* theory as a general theory of translation and interpreting or ‘translational action’, whereas the **second part**, penned by Katharina Reiß, seeks to integrate her text-typological approach, first presented in 1971, as a ‘specific theory’ that focuses on those cases in which the *skopos* requires equivalence of functions between the source and target texts. Almost 30 years after it first appeared, this key publication is now finally accessible to the next generations of translation scholars.

In her translation, Christiane Nord attempts to put *skopos* theory and her own concept of ‘function plus loyalty’ to the test, by producing a comprehensible, acceptable text for a rather heterogeneous audience of English-speaking students and scholars all over the world, at the same time as acting as a loyal intermediary for the authors, to whom she feels deeply indebted as a former student and colleague.

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Translator's preface

The starting point for what is now called the functional approach to translation was a lecture course on a ‘General Theory of Translation’ held by Hans J. Vermeer at the School for Translation and Interpreting Studies in Germersheim, University of Mainz, Germany, in the academic year 1976-1977 (cf. Snell-Hornby 2006: 51). This theory was introduced to a wider audience in an essay published in *Lebende Sprachen* (Vermeer [1978]1983), in which the author proposed a “framework for a general theory of translation”. He called it *skopos* theory (*Skopostheorie*) and suggested that the most important criterion guiding the translator’s decisions should be the *skopos*, i.e. the aim or purpose, of the translation process. Two factors kept this theory from becoming widespread: (a) *Lebende Sprachen* was (and is) a journal for professional translators, whose attitude towards theory has always been rather sceptical, and (b) the German academic style of the paper did little or nothing to make them change their minds. It was not until 1984, when the book in question here was first published, that German translation scholars began to pay attention to this new approach. As translation studies in Germany up to that point had been entirely dominated by linguistic theories based on the fundamental notion of equivalence, the *skopos* theory was harshly criticized for transgressing the limits of “translation proper” and making “the contours of translation, as the object of study [...] steadily vaguer and more difficult to survey” (Koller 1995: 193).

During the decade after Vermeer first published his seminal article, *skopos* theory remained relatively unknown outside the German-speaking world. It is hard to believe that, by the end of the 1980s, less than a handful of articles by Vermeer had been published in English, as well as a longer essay in Portuguese and a Finnish translation of some parts of this book. An (incomplete) Spanish translation appeared as late as 1996. The situation has not changed much since then. Translation scholars all over the world have had all too often to rely on second-hand information, which, sadly, has distorted the facts more than once; a not insignificant factor for this would be the style conventions of German academic writing, which are not easy to process for readers with different cultural backgrounds.

The [first part](#) of this book was written by Vermeer and explains the theoretical foundations and basic principles of *skopos* theory as a general theory of translation and interpreting, whereas the [second part](#), penned by Katharina Reiß, seeks to integrate Reiß’s text-typological approach, first presented in 1971, as a “specific theory” within the general framework of *skopos* theory. This attempt to combine the general with the specific (together with the conventional alphabetical order of the authors’ names) led to the misconception, which is still widely held, in particular by newcomers to translation studies, that Katharina Reiß was the founder of *skopos* theory. What is true, however,

is that, in her first book, in a chapter called 'The limitations of translation criticism', Reiß included a *special function of a translation* as an exception to the overall concept of equivalence she subscribed to (Reiß [1971]2000: 92-101), thus cautiously introducing a functional perspective to translation.

In this translation of Reiß and Vermeer's 1984 book (from the 1991 edition, which provides a list of more recent publications in this area), I have tried to put functional translation theory to the test, whilst striving for both intratextual coherence from the target audience's point of view and intertextual coherence with the source text (↗ 6.2., 6.3.), as well as for loyalty (cf. Nord 1997 and elsewhere) towards *all* of the interactants involved: the authors, the audience addressed by this book, the commissioner, and, last but not least, myself, as a translator and former student and colleague deeply indebted to both Katharina Reiß and Hans Vermeer. Intratextual coherence is based on the previous knowledge which the target audience is expected to possess. This knowledge may include earlier publications in English by Vermeer or Reiß, on the one hand, and publications in English written by other scholars and dealing with *skopos* theory and functionalism. Therefore, I have adopted the terminology used there, whenever I found it appropriate.

However, these publications do not provide a homogeneous terminological system. For example, Andrew Chesterman, the translator of Vermeer's essay on *skopos* and commission in translational action (Vermeer [1989]2004: 227) uses the term *translational action* to refer to Justa Holz-Mänttäri's *Translatorisches Handeln*, a generic concept including not only translation and interpreting but also other forms of intercultural mediation which are not based on a source text, such as cross-cultural technical writing or a consultant's information on a regional political or cultural situation (cf. Holz-Mänttäri 1984). I adopted this translation in an earlier publication (Nord 1997: 12). More recently, Snell-Hornby (2006: 56, similarly Schäffner 1998) translated Holz-Mänttäri's term with *translatorial action*, which makes sense if we understand *translatorial* as an adjective to describe objects or phenomena related to translators (cf. Pym 2009: 46). In this book, I shall therefore use *translatorial action* to translate *Translatorisches Handeln*, and *translational action* as generic term for translation and interpreting (T&I) where the authors use *Translation* in German (↗ 1.1.). Accordingly, translation and interpreting (T&I) studies will be referred to as *translatology* to mark the difference with regard to the more traditional approaches of the time, whereas *translation studies* will be used to translate *Übersetzungswissenschaft*. *Translation science* or *the science of translation*, a term used by Nida (1964) and Wilss ([1977]1982) in the titles of their works, has never made its way into general usage.

But there are other cases: in Reiß ([1981]2004: 173), the translator rendered *Textsorte* as "text variety" because *text type*, the usual term at the time, would have blurred Reiß's distinction between *Textsorte* and *Texttyp*. In this book, I have opted for *genre*, which has become the generally accepted term for what

Reiß refers to in this context (↗ 11.; cf. Hatim 1998: 68).

Examples and sample texts or text segments always raise the most challenging problems in the translation of linguistic and translation-related publications. Wherever possible, I have adapted the examples to the target language and culture(s), unless this would have required rewriting the entire context (cf. Nord 2013). In these latter cases, especially where meta-language was involved, I preferred to add glosses, explanations or analogies in English, or existing English translations where available. For example, the reference to three German translations of Homer's *Odyssey* was replaced by a reference to the English translations by Butler and Murray, which (fortunately) display the same phenomenon criticized by the authors. In one case (the German translation of Genesis 1 by Buber and Rosenzweig, ↗ 3.1., example 1), I decided to abridge the very long German text and to provide a literal translation in order to facilitate comprehension for readers who are not familiar with this language. For the sake of loyalty towards the target audience, such changes are always indicated in the text or in a translator's note.

With regard to quotations, I have replaced the German texts wherever an English original or published translation was available (e.g. Schleiermacher 1838 → [1838]2004; Ortega y Gasset [1933]1947 → [1933]1962; 1957, 1976 → 1992; Reiß 1971 → [1971]2000; Wilss 1977 → [1977]1982; Lyons 1972 → 1968, etc.), changing the bibliographical reference accordingly and including details on the translator. Unless indicated otherwise, the translation of quotations from the German linguistic or T&I literature is mine; the original German, French or Spanish text is provided in a footnote in order to avoid a 'Chinese whispers' effect if readers want to use it in their own research. In the case of certain Latin quotations, which the authors assumed belonged to their audience's general knowledge (which, as many a desperate student has told me, is not always the case), I have added a paraphrase in English.

When the book was first published, inclusive language was not yet an issue in the English-speaking world, let alone in Germany. Today, I do not really feel comfortable myself referring to translators and interpreters as male persons only by using the generic masculine forms preferred by the authors. On the other hand, I know from personal communication with both Vermeer and Reiß that they were always rather sceptical with regard to the (excessive) use of inclusive forms (cf. Reiß 1993, on linguistic feminism in Bible translation). In my translation, I have therefore tried to cautiously follow a middle path, generally reproducing the generic masculine forms found in the source text, but trying to avoid them where this was possible without making the text sound 'too feminist'.

In order to enhance the readability of the text, I have used two strategies, a stylistic and a formal one. With regard to style, it was often impossible to divide the long German sentences into as many chunks as would be necessary to achieve a piece of acceptable academic writing in English. But I have tried

my best. To compensate for the remaining syntactic stumbling blocks, I have opted for a more reader-friendly layout, adding headings to paragraphs where the source text did not provide them, using indentations for quotes, boxes for examples and key points, and italics to stress particular words or phrases.

Allison Beeby (1998: 64) points out that the unmarked use of *translation* to mean “translation into the mother tongue” is so common in English that there is not even a specific term to refer to translation into a foreign language. Having trained generations of young students to translate in both directions, at least in the field of specialized translation, I have often argued that it is a part of translation competence to know the limitations of one’s own abilities. Therefore, the English translation of this seminal book is the result of “split competence” (cf. Nord 2001: 186). I am a native speaker of German familiar with both this book and other publications by the authors, and I was trained as a professional translator. Proceeding according to my “looping model” of the translation process (Nord [1988]2005: 39), I felt competent enough to interpret the translation brief, to analyse and understand the source-language offer of information and to choose the appropriate translation strategies and procedures. However, for the production of a target-language information offer that would meet the expectations of an educated English-speaking audience, I had to resort to somebody else’s linguistic and cultural competence. I am deeply indebted to Marina Dudenhöfer, a professional translator and translation teacher at the Faculty for Translation Studies, Linguistics and Cultural Studies of the University of Mainz at the Germersheim campus, who volunteered to revise my English draft. But her contribution was by no means limited to a mere native speaker’s monolingual review. Her critical feedback, particularly with regard to concepts and terminology, was of immeasurable value to the project. It goes without saying, however, that I have only myself to blame for those inadequacies which are still present in the text.

My thanks go to Prof Dr Katharina Reiß and Dr Manuel Vermeer for entrusting me with the translation of this book, to my dear friend Dr Robert Hodgson for encouraging me to “dare the unthinkable” (as my friend and editor Marina Dudenhöfer put it), and to Ken Baker for unconditionally accepting the manuscript for publication by St. Jerome. As usual, my feelings during the translation process alternated between modest satisfaction and utter despair, but the fascination I felt for this wonderful piece of scholarly work always gained the upper hand.

Heidelberg, September 2012

Christiane Nord

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Foreword to the first edition

This work is the result of many years of extensive reflection on the theory and practice of translation. It builds on several smaller studies (for exact references cf. Vermeer 1983a), which have been revised, made more specific, and extended, and it discusses important, or at least acknowledged, recent publications in the field of translation and interpreting (T&I) studies. Our aim was to lay down the foundations of a general theory of translational action which would allow room for the development and inclusion of coherent subtheories with regard to a particular problem or area. The blueprint for such a comprehensive theory of translational action, as proposed in this book, draws on cultural studies and linguistics, taking both text-linguistic and hermeneutical aspects into account. It has emerged from the numerous discussions of the authors with each other and with many colleagues, to whose generosity and willingness to debate all sorts of issues we are deeply indebted.

The theory set out here is not designed to be an abstract theoretical model; we have made an effort to consider the practice of translation and interpreting at all times. The aim of T&I studies is not just to examine the problems faced in professional practice, but also to offer theoretically founded, reliable guidelines for practising translators and interpreters (cf. Höning and Kußmaul 1982 on practice-orientation).

In this context, we would like to clarify the widespread misconception that theory should have a direct impact on practice. A ‘theory’ consists in the interpretation and correlation of ‘observed data’; it is an object that pursues its own interests, which are not directly linked to practice. This concept of theory is in line with modern epistemology. It would therefore not make sense to expect that theory could immediately contribute to the improvement of practice. To whom would it occur to ask about the practical uses of a theory regarding the origins of the solar system? (We apologise for the example if the analogy seems too pretentious.) However, a subtheory of this theory may interpret and correlate certain aspects of practical activities and this reflection on ‘practice’ can indeed be expected to have some impact on how the activities are carried out.

For example: astronomers analyzing the trajectories of the planets may be asked how a space shuttle can steer clear of Jupiter and Saturn. Moreover, without knowledge of the trajectories of planets and planetoids, the shuttle would not find its way through the universe – and shooting it into space would simply mean wilfully putting at risk the capital invested in it.

This is almost exactly how we would like our theory to be understood.

The authors also offer their reflections in the hope that they can contribute to what should become the rule in all disciplines, that is, to encourage a broad and at the same time profound debate serving to make T&I studies progress further.

Würzburg and Heidelberg, 1984

Katharina Reiß
Hans J. Vermeer

Foreword to the second edition

In today's academia, six years are a long time. Since the first edition of this book was published in 1984, translation and interpreting scholars have done a lot of research, and some progress has been achieved. That this book can still be reprinted unchanged, complemented only by a short list of more recent publications, may be regarded as an indication that our theory has not lost its validity.

However, we would like to clarify a misconception which has sometimes been put forward. Some scholars feel that the first and the *second part* of the book do not fit together. We do not share this opinion. The *second part* assumes that the *skopos* demands invariance of functions between the source and the target texts as a case in point; the *first part* considers this to be a specific case where the difference between source-text and target-text functions is 'zero'. In our opinion, both approaches are legitimate within the framework of a general theory.

Würzburg and Heidelberg, 1991

Katharina Reiß
Hans J. Vermeer

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0. Introduction

0.1 Preliminary remarks

We do not promise a coherent or complete theory. Our aim is to present some aspects in a new light rather than to introduce new viewpoints. “Scientific progress is created where scholars propose theories that are worth debating”,¹ says Sökeland. Our readers may judge whether this holds true for this book. At any rate, “nullumst iam dictum quod non dictum sit prius”; nothing has been said that has not been said before (Terence, *Eunuchus*, line 41).

Individual topics will not be presented in strict sequence. Some topics are broader than others because a complex theory should explain the reasons behind certain phenomena, clarify relationships and look into other disciplines. We shall not try to avoid repetition and we shall allow ourselves the liberty of not striving for completeness or definitiveness (which cannot be achieved anyway!) but shall instead select those aspects of a theory of translational action which seem most interesting and relevant, in part because they have not been dealt with adequately in the literature so far in this area.

0.2 General epistemological considerations

In presenting our theory, we shall constantly emphasize the interdependence of language and culture. However, according to the very definition of translation and in line with traditional viewpoints, the linguistic aspect has always been at the centre of attention and, therefore, we may consider translatology (i.e. translation and interpreting studies) to be a subdiscipline of applied linguistics or, more specifically, pragmalinguistics, which is itself a branch of cultural studies (cf. the diagram in Vermeer 1978: 4, where *semiology* and *ethology* were, at some point of the publication process, mistakenly swapped over).

In our discussion, we shall thus deal with cultural transfer only to the extent that it is relevant for a general theory of translational action focussing on language. In principle, cultural transfer might – and should – be placed on the same level as linguistic transfer. This would mean that translatology would be classified as a culture-specific form of textology or theory of text production. However, these considerations would not add anything *essentially* new to our theory but might indeed increase the risk of misunderstandings. For the time being, we shall therefore refrain from describing translatology from a primarily cultural perspective.

The object of our theory is translational action (for terminology ↗ 1.). We shall describe the process of translating or interpreting, its product (the *translatum*),

¹ Wissenschaftlicher Fortschritt entsteht da, wo Theorien vorgetragen werden, über die es sich zu diskutieren lohnt. (Sökeland 1980: 8)

and the relations between them, i.e. how they are interdependent.

For pedagogical reasons, we shall use the most elementary case as the starting point of our model. We shall assume that a source text, produced by a ‘text producer’ or ‘sender’ (for terminology ≥ 0.4), is being translated/interpreted by a translator/interpreter for a target audience. In order to reduce the complexity of the process, other factors that may also be involved will be excluded, such as a client or commissioner (e.g. a translation agent) mediating between the text producer and the translator/interpreter, an actor in a drama production, or a newsreader in a TV broadcast, who act as secondary senders. We shall also ignore the fact that it may be relevant for the translation strategy whether a translator or interpreter is working for the source or the target side, etc.

Scientific description must be ‘objective’, i.e. supra-individually valid in such a way that the description (both as a process and as a product) will lead to the same result if it is reproduced under the same conditions. These conditions, i.e. any underlying assumptions or rules, must be made clear.

A theory of translational action may be general, i.e. independent of culture and language pairs, or specific, i.e. focussing on a particular pair of cultures and languages. In this book, we are only concerned with a general theory.

A complete theory of translation [...] has three components: specification of function and goal; description and analysis of operations; and critical comment on relationships between goal and operation.
(Kelly 1979: 1)

In general terms, a theory can be broken down into (1) a description of its groundwork, (2) a description of its subject matter, and (3) a set of rules (for more details, ≥ 4). The set of rules for a theory of translational action should include (a) general rules, (b) specific rules and (c) meta-rules.

The general rules set out the conditions under which translational action takes place, regardless of specific languages or texts. The specific rules refer to the conditions prevailing in specific cultures, languages or texts. Meta-rules establish the conditions under which the process of translational action can be described (e.g. defining the concept of translational action on which our theory is based).

0.3 The purpose of T&I studies

What is the purpose of a theory of translational action? One possible answer could be the one given by Isocrates (436–338 B.C.) when speaking about rhetoric. An answer which was aptly reworded by W. Wackernagel in 1837:

The purpose of a theory of poetics or rhetoric can never be to turn somebody who studies it or reads a textbook into a poet or an orator.

A wise and conscientious teacher or textbook writer will merely strive to analyse the poetry and prose that lies before us, in order to discover the principles inherent in them and bring them to light, facilitating their comprehension, heightening the pleasure of reading, sharpening and strengthening the student's judgement. Anyone among the readers or listeners on whom God has bestowed a gift for poetic or rhetorical art will benefit doubly from these lessons because they will also receive practical instruction; the teacher of poetics or rhetoric will enhance their abilities. But neither the teacher nor anybody else will make a poet or orator out of somebody who is not yet a poet or orator.²

The same holds true for translating and interpreting. Isocrates goes on to say, as paraphrased by Kennedy (1980: 32):

one must start with native ability, which training can sharpen, but not create. [...] It is the function of the teacher to explain the principles [...] and also to set an example [...] on which the students can pattern themselves.

0.4 General remarks on terminology

In T&I studies, it is still very common to speak of source and target *language* texts, readers, etc. In this book, however, we shall refer to them as source text, target text, target recipients, etc., and try to emphasize, from the very beginning, that translational action is not only a linguistic but also a cultural transfer.

Cultures – and the languages they encompass – are like paradigms (Kuhn 1970). New paradigms use new terminology, or confer new meaning to existing terminology. Linguacultures³ do not only follow on from each other chronologically, they also exist simultaneously, i.e. in the same manner as paradigms that are at different stages with regard to the perceptibility and perception of

² Der Zweck einer Poetik, einer Rhetorik kann niemals der sein, den, der sie studiert oder ein Lehrbuch liest, zu einem Dichter, einem Redner zu machen. Ist das Bestreben dessen, der sie lehr[t] oder ein Lehrbuch schreibt, vernünftig und gewissenhaft, so geht er nur darauf aus, die Poesie und die prosaische Literatur, wie sie vor uns liegt, auf die Gesetze hin zu betrachten, die in ihnen walten, diese Gesetze zur Anschauung zu bringen und dadurch das Verständnis zu erleichtern, den Genuß zu erhöhen, das Urteil zu schärfen und zu befestigen. Ist dann unter den Lesern oder Hörern jemand, dem Gott Dichter- oder Rednergabe verliehen hat, dem werden dann freilich jene Lehren doppelt zugute kommen, er wird auch praktischen Nutzen davon haben: einen solchen wird der Poetiker, der Rhetoriker weiter ausbilden; aber jemanden zum Dichter oder Redner machen, der es nicht schon ist, das kann weder er, noch sonst ein Mensch. (W. Wackernagel 1906: 409)

³ This neologism, which is used by the American linguistic anthropologists Paul Friedrich and Michael Agar, among others, is intended to stress the interdependence of language and culture. (*Translator's note*)

the ‘world’. Translational action (even between languages with similar surface structures like English, French and German) is impossible unless we understand the paradigms of linguacultures, i.e. their ‘theories’ of world perception (cf. Andersson 1978: 76, although he is referring to a different context).

Where terminological distinctions do not seem to be necessary, we have taken the liberty of using a variety of expressions, borrowing from different sources. For example, we have used synonyms such as *text producer*, *sender*, *author*, *speaker*, *writer*, and *recipient*, *listener*, *reader*, respectively – not through carelessness but in order to avoid a monotonous style. (↗ 0.2.)

A comment should be made here about the term *translation function*. This term can refer to (1) the external function of the process of translational action (e.g. the translator making a living) or (2) the internal function of the process with regard to the *translatum* that is produced (e.g. the text conveying some information). This second meaning is also expressed by *target-text function*. We shall use both terms in this book, i.e. *translation function* when focussing on the process of producing a target text and *target-text function* when focussing on the product once it is finished. If we wanted to be more exact, we would have to say ‘the function of the target text that is being produced’ in the first case, but this is a rather awkward way of putting it. At any rate, we shall allow ourselves – and others – some terminological liberties.

Of course, terms are arbitrary labels that can be changed (J. Wackernagel [1926]2009: 37, calls them “tokens”). Arguing about terminology is futile if we bear in mind that although the selection of terms is arbitrary, they should not convey wrong associations, as Lüllwitz reminds us (cf. 1972: 263, note 28). Thus, our use of terminology in this book is tentative at best.

Part I

Theoretical groundwork

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1. Terminological distinctions

1.1 The need for a generic term

As a generic term to cover both translating and interpreting, we shall adopt the German term *Translation*, pronounced [transla:tsio:n], from the Leipzig School (cf. Kade 1968: 33), which will be rendered as ‘translational action’ (TA) in this book.

$$\boxed{\text{TA} = \text{T} \cup \text{I}}$$

(We shall use these pseudo-formulas as handy short forms and as a mnemonic device.)

A generic term is useful when we want to emphasize the similarities between translating and interpreting and when terminological distinctions are not relevant for a general analysis.

In the [first part](#) of our theoretical discussion, we shall look at translational action, focussing on the common ground and similarities between translating and (simultaneous and consecutive) interpreting. Differences are considered irrelevant here. As Nida (1977: 214) states:

essentially the same basic principles are applicable, and any unified theory of interlingual communication must take into consideration, the essential similarities as well as the differences.

1.2 The advantage of neologisms

Loanwords from Latin and Greek or hybrid neologisms are particularly appropriate for the formation of new technical terms because they lack the connotations typical of everyday language words.

For example: if the form *I am* is classified as present tense, the rule ‘The present tense is occasionally used to indicate future actions (as in *I am travelling to London tomorrow*)’ is acceptable. However, if we use ‘time’ as a technical term, the rule ‘The present time is occasionally used to indicate future actions’ may sound rather incoherent.

Moreover, words of Latin or Greek origin are more readily accepted in international communication because they often permit a formal transfer and do not need to be translated. Latinisms lend themselves to the formation of derivatives or compounds where the vernacular requires complicated paraphrases.

For example (for the following derivatives see Kade 1968: 33): in German, the Latinism *Translation* (from the past participle, *translatum*, of the Latin verb *transferre*) designating an activity, a process, a production, a production process, permits the derivatives *Translator* for the person who produces a *Translation* and *Translat* (*translatum* in English) for the product resulting from the process, as well as compounds like *Translationstheorie*, *translationstheoretisch*, *Translationswissenschaft* and even *Translatologie*, all of which are used as generic terms referring to both written and oral forms of translational action. The only drawback is that there is no verb. The existing verb *transferieren*, belonging to the same Latin root but borrowed from English as a loan translation, is used as an economic term and would be misleading in a T&I context.

The Germanic word *Sprachmittler* ('language mediator'), which was used as a generic term in former East Germany and permits the derivatives *sprachmittlerisch* ('[activity] of a language mediator') and *Sprachmittlung* ('language mediation'), is problematic because the translator does not mediate merely between languages but also between cultures, and is not just a mediator but also an independent and creative text producer. On the contrary, the nominalized verb *Übersetzen* ('translating'), which permits the derivatives *Übersetzung* ('translation' as process and product); *Übersetzer* ('translator'), *Übersetzungswissenschaft*⁴ ('science of translation', 'translation studies'), *Übersetzungstheorie* ('translation theory'), and the nominalized verb *Dolmetschen* ('interpreting'), with the derivatives *Dolmetscher* ('interpreter'), *Dolmetschwissenschaft* ('interpreting studies'), *Verdolmetschung* ('interpretation' as process and product) cannot be used as generic terms.

Hildebrandt (1974: 40) also emphasizes that new technical terms should permit derivatives to be formed; for general terminology problems cf. Vermeer (1971).

1.3 Formal distinctions

For the formal distinction between translating and interpreting, we are indebted to Kade, whose definitions read as follows:⁵

⁴ Fränzel (1914: 206), quoted in Wilss ([1977]1982: 31), attributes the term *Übersetzungswissenschaft* to Schleiermacher.

⁵ The English translation has been adopted from Snell-Hornby, Mary (2006) *The Turns of Translation Studies. New Paradigms or Shifting Viewpoints?* Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins. (*Translator's note*)

By *translating* we understand the rendering of a source-language text that has been preserved (in writing) and is hence permanently available or can be repeated at will, in a target-language text which can be checked any time and can be repeatedly corrected.⁶

By *interpreting* we understand the rendering of a source-language text presented once (usually orally) in a target-language text which can be checked only to a limited extent and which due to lack of time can hardly be corrected.⁷

1.3.1 Translating vs. interpreting

Accordingly, we shall define *translating* as a specific type of translational action in which the complete source text and target text and all parts thereof remain accessible to the translator in such a way that the process as well as its result can be corrected at any time. (Speaking of ‘the’ text is an abbreviated form of expression, cf. Vermeer [1979]1983: 62-88.) This is usually true for situations in which a written source text is translated into a written target text. The *translatum* can be checked, independently or against the source text, and corrected. However, it is not necessary that the source text be fixed in written form; it can also be recorded. In this case, it can be checked by replaying the recording. The *translatum* need not be fixed in written form either; it can be checked and corrected by replaying a voice recorder.

Interpreting, on the other hand, is defined as a specific type of translational action in which the process and its result cannot be corrected by the interpreter, e.g. because the source or the target text, or both, are presented only once in oral form and are not available for checking or correction.

In a personal communication to the authors dated 20 December 1982, Hella Kirchhoff suggests a distinction according to whether or not the translator has a full overview of the text as an alternative to the distinction based on correctability. In translating, the source (and the target) text can be reviewed completely at a glance, which allows an analysis of the macrostructure and determines the strategies for information processing. “In this sense, working from a tape recording would not be translating”, says Kirchhoff, who is obviously thinking of simultaneous interpreting as opposed to translating.

At any rate, the distinction between translating and interpreting is not yet relevant at this early stage of our discussion, nor do we claim to be able to

⁶ Wir verstehen daher unter *Übersetzen* die Translation eines fixierten und demzufolge permanent dargebotenen bzw. beliebig oft wiederholbaren Textes der Ausgangssprache in einen jederzeit kontrollierbaren und wiederholt korrigierbaren Text der Zielsprache. (Kade 1968: 35)

⁷ Unter *Dolmetschen* verstehen wir die Translation eines einmalig (in der Regel mündlich) dargebotenen Textes der Ausgangssprache in einen nur bedingt kontrollierbaren und infolge Zeitmangels kaum korrigierbaren Text der Zielsprache. (*ibid.*)

offer a clear-cut definition which always applies. But there are a few more aspects we would like to address.

1.3.2 Formal criteria

In our formal distinction between translating and interpreting, the following considerations should be taken into account.

- (1) Correctability usually requires the availability of the complete source and target text and all parts thereof (cf. Kirchhoff, ↗ 1.3.1.). Translators in their role as text producers should be able to make the corrections themselves.

For example: let us assume a listener who has recorded a source text (or taken some notes of the source text) and can compare it to its interpretation. This would mean that the source and the target texts, or only the target text, would be accessible to, and could be checked and corrected by, the listener but not by the interpreter himself.

In this case, the target text is not a translation but still an interpretation because the text producer cannot make any corrections. If, however, the listener checks the *translatum* against the source text and corrects it, if necessary, in order to use it again, this form of translational action would be a translation (or, to be more precise, it would be a translation produced on the basis of an interpretation, which actually may be required under certain circumstances).

- (2) Correctability may take one of two possible forms:
 - (2a) the source and the target texts can be compared during the process of translational action, and the target text can be corrected afterwards on the basis of this comparison. This procedure leads to a ‘translation’ in the usual sense of the word;
 - (2b) the target text cannot be compared with the source text but can be checked independently (e.g. on the basis of a previous translation of the source text into another language). This procedure leads to a ‘quasi-translation’. If an interpretation is checked against the source text later on, it will become a translation in the usual sense of the word, provided that the other requirements for a translation (e.g. accuracy of the imitation, ↗ 3.) are met.
- (3) Correctability refers to the possibility of correction, not to the actual fact that a correction has been or will be carried out. For our definition, it is irrelevant whether or not a *translatum* is actually corrected. A translator checking his first draft may find that it is absolutely perfect and does not need to be corrected.
- (4) Instead of a single translator or interpreter, a team may be involved. In this case, at least one member of the team must have the possibility to

- correct the result if we want to speak of a translation.
- (5) Whether or not a text is fixed in written or any other form, or not fixed at all, is not a relevant criterion for the distinction between translating and interpreting. What matters is the possibility of the text being checked and, if necessary, corrected by the producer *at a later moment in time*. This requirement *at a later moment in time* (e.g. after completing a draft) is intended to exclude any *ad hoc* corrections, e.g. of a slip of the tongue by the interpreter during the interpretation process, from the definition. The decisive criterion for the definition of a *translatum* as translation or interpretation is, therefore, the possibility of being checked and corrected after the completion of the whole process of translational action or, in rare cases, of at least a substantial, relatively independent part of it, which, in itself, is more or less a text, e.g. after finishing one topic or one chapter of a book and before proceeding to the next. Translational action always deals with texts, so that smaller units are not of our concern here. Correctability has to be maintained for a while and must be repeatable. This does not mean, for example, that a correction made by the interpreter immediately after finishing the performance would turn the interpretation into a translation. But an interpreter cannot and must not continue making corrections ten times over, or even if it were only three times over, whereas translators may revise their translations as often as they wish.
- (6) It is irrelevant for the definition how much time has elapsed after the completion of the *translatum* before it is checked and possibly corrected, provided that the possibility of being checked and corrected is maintained. If a *translatum* becomes revisable and correctable after ten years, it must be classified as a translation although it may have been regarded as an interpretation before. (Regarding the conditions of imitation, ↗ 3.)

We cannot say that a translatum is a translation or an interpretation, rather, that it becomes a translation or an interpretation provided it meets the requirements outlined above. A translatum is always the result of a process.

A dynamic means of expression is more appropriate for our theory than one fixed in concrete. (Carelessness may easily lead to the latter.)

In a similar vein, although in a different context, Toury comments on the dynamic nature of expressions:

the initial question is not, whether a certain text *is* a translation (according to some preconceived criteria which are extrinsic to the system under study), but whether it is *regarded* as a translation from the intrinsic point of view of the target [...] polysystem. (Toury 1980a: 43)

We replace [...] assertions of the type ‘TT [target text] *is* a translation’ by assertions of the type ‘TT *functions as* a translation’. (*ibid.*: 47)

Our definitions of translating and interpreting are based on *formal* criteria here. We are therefore not concerned with translation strategies and their impact on the *translatum* (probably unlike Kirchhoff, ↗ 1.3.1.).

- (7) For our definition, it is irrelevant at what time the translational action takes place.

For example: a speech may be interpreted the day after it was delivered. In the meantime, the interpreter may have thought about how to express certain ideas or consulted some sources of information (e.g. a dictionary).

The decisive criteria for the *translatum* to be classified as an interpretation are the following: the source text is presented only once, the target text cannot be compared with the source text various times and is not available for later revisions. In the specific case mentioned in the example, it may be an interpretation that is close to a translation, but it still must be regarded as an interpretation.

- (8) According to this definition, ‘sight translation’, as a translational action produced only once and without correctability, is a type of interpreting (despite its name). This means that the kind, or extent, of the memory aid used (whether it consists of the complete source text or just some notes) is irrelevant for the definition of translating and interpreting. Kirchhoff (↗ 1.3.1.) regards sight translation as a form of translating because the translator can see the complete text at a glance. But it may be debatable whether a text presented only once can really be grasped “at a glance” (cf. consecutive interpreting!).
- (9) Spatial distance is also irrelevant for the definition. We can interpret or translate by telephone, send a text around the world, replay it from a recorder and have it interpreted or translated. A translator may be sitting beside an author, rendering the text in another language as it is produced – the *translatum* will still be a translation if it can be checked and corrected. (Even having an overview of the whole text, as Kirchhoff postulates, would be possible in this case, ↗ 1.3.1.)

1.4 Summary

According to the above definition, interpreting means producing, immediately, a *translatum* that must be regarded as final. Translating means to produce a *translatum* that is considered potentially temporary.

This is, again, a dynamic definition: the decisive criterion is not what something *is*, but what can happen to it.

1.5 Other definitions

- (1) Like the German nominalized verb *Übersetzen*, *translating* is sometimes used as a generic term for any kind of translational action: *Übersetzen / translating = translational action* (cf. the bibliographical references in Reiß [1971]2000: 6, and Hornung *et al.* 1974: 13). In this case, *translating* can have two meanings: *translating₁* = translational action; *translating₂* = translating as opposed to interpreting in the sense of the definitions given above (or similar).
- (2) In view of modern methods for producing and reproducing texts, we shall not adopt the traditional but still rather popular simplification that *translating* implies that both source and target texts have been preserved in written form, whereas *interpreting* deals with texts presented in oral form. This traditional view is reflected in Störig's definition:

The oral process of interpreting can be distinguished from the written form of translating. Unless documented in minutes or recorded on tape, the interpreter's rendering is ephemeral and transient, whereas that of the translator is fixed and permanent.⁸

In translating, however, the most common method for fixing a text is still to write it down. This is also reflected in the definition suggested by Reiß (1971: 14),⁹ which is influenced by Störig:

When we speak of translation criticism in this book, we are not referring to the 'broad' concept of translating, which includes all kinds of text transfer from one language into another, but to *written 'translation'* via a text fixed in writing 'from one natural language into another', a process which can be repeated as often as desired.¹⁰ (Emphasis by the author)

We shall not use the words "from one natural language into another [sc. natural language]", which Reiß adopted from Delavenay (1959: 13). Instead, we

⁸ Der mündliche Prozeß des Dolmetschens unterscheidet sich vom schriftlichen des Übersetzens: Die Leistung des Dolmetschers (soweit sie nicht durch Protokoll oder Tonband festgehalten wird) ist flüchtig, vergänglich, die des Übersetzers wird fixiert und bewahrt. (Störig 1963: XV)

⁹ Translated from the German original because the published translation, Reiß [1971]2000: 6, omits the details the authors are emphasizing in the context of this book. (*Translator's note*)

¹⁰ Wenn wir im folgenden von Übersetzungskritik sprechen, meinen wir also nicht den "weiteren" Begriff von Übersetzen, der jegliches Übersetzen von einer in die andere Sprache umfaßt, sondern die (beliebig oft wiederholbare) schriftliche "Übersetzung" eines schriftlich fixierten Textes "aus einer natürlichen Sprache in eine andere." (Reiß 1971: 14)

shall try to place translational action in a larger context, including non-verbal action and artificial languages. Although verbal texts remain at the centre of attention and play a dominant role in the following considerations, it is only for the sake of simplification in order to concentrate on the essential aspects. After all, common definitions of translation focus on verbal texts.

However, we would like to state at this point that translational action is a specific type of cultural transfer.

Koller also refers to Kade's definition (↗ 1.3.), but does not comment on it. He specifies as follows:

By *translation* [sic: not *translating*, as in Kade, C.N.], we understand the written, script-bound rendering of a text presented in written form into another language, whereas *interpreting* starts out from an oral text, which is rendered orally in another language.¹¹

Koller's means of expression often lacks precision. It is unnecessary to paraphrase "written" with the confusing expression "script-bound" because an oral speech read from a manuscript would be "script-bound" as well, and so would be an oral discourse formulated as if read from a written text.

- (3) We should also mention a further distinction between translating and interpreting that led to an unfortunate and misleading opposition between literary and non-literary translation. In everyday language, the German word *Dolmetscher* and its equivalents in Romance languages derived from the Latin word *interpres*, as well as loan words in other languages, also refer to somebody who 'explains' (interprets) a text or 'intercedes' in favour of somebody else. The semantic feature of 'explaining' has played a certain role in some distinctions between translating and interpreting since Friedrich Ernst Daniel Schleiermacher (1768-1834) brought it to the fore in his 1813 lecture 'On the different methods of translating' held at the Academy of Sciences, Berlin. Schleiermacher writes:

The interpreter plies his trade in the area of business, while the translator proper works above all in the areas of science and art. If these definitions appear arbitrary, interpretation being commonly understood to refer more to oral translation and translation proper to the written sort, may we be forgiven for choosing to use them thus out of con-

¹¹ Unter *Übersetzung* wird die schriftliche, schriftgebundene Wiedergabe eines schriftlich vorliegenden Textes in einer anderen Sprache verstanden. *Dolmetschen* dagegen geht aus von einem mündlichen Text, der mündlich in einer anderen Sprache wiederzugeben ist. (Koller 1979: 12)

venience in the present instance, particularly as the two terms are not at all distant from one another. The areas of art and science are best served by the written word, which alone can make their works endure; and interpreting scientific or artistic products aloud would be just as useless as, it seems, impossible. For business transactions, however, writing is only a mechanical means; verbal negotiation is the original mode, and every written interpretation should be seen only as the record of a spoken exchange. (Schleiermacher [1838]2004: 44; trans. S. Bernovsky)

In subsequent paragraphs, Schleiermacher justifies his distinction between translating and interpreting by arguing that the language used in science and art forces the translator to share the author's thoughts and stylistic intentions, while that of business and everyday affairs simply requires a mechanical transfer, as the contents of such transactions are well defined, even concrete.

Yet what is the basis for this important distinction that is visible even in these borderline regions but shines forth most brilliantly at the furthest extremes? Business dealings generally involve a matter of readily apparent, or at least fairly well defined objects: all negotiations are, as it were, arithmetical or geometrical in nature, and notions that, as the ancients already observed, encompass the greater and lesser within themselves and are indicated by a graded series of terms that vary in ordinary usage, making their import uncertain, habit and conventions soon serve to fix the usage of the individual terms. So long as the speaker does not smuggle in hidden vaguenesses with intent to deceive, or err out of carelessness, he will be perfectly comprehensible to anyone with knowledge of both the matter under discussion and the language, and in any given case only slight variations in language use will be encountered. Even so there will be scarcely any doubt that cannot easily be remedied as to which expression in the one language corresponds to any given expression in the other. Thus is translation in this realm little more than a mechanical task which can be performed by anyone who has moderate knowledge of the two languages, with little difference to be found between better and lesser efforts as long as obvious errors are avoided. When, however, scientific and artistic works are to be transplanted from one language to another, two sorts of considerations arise which alter the situation. For if in any two languages each word in the one were to correspond perfectly to a word in the other, expressing the same idea with the same range of meaning; if their declensions displayed the same relationships, and the structures of their periods coincided so that the two languages in fact differed only to the ear: then all translation in the areas of art and science, assuming the sole matter to be communicated was the information contained in an utterance or piece of writing, would be as purely mechanical as in

business transactions; and, setting aside the effects produced by tone and intonation, one might claim of any given translation that it placed the foreign reader in the same relationship to the author and his work as was the reader of the original. [...]

The second matter, however, that makes translation proper a quite different activity from ordinary interpreting is this. Wherever utterances are not bound by readily apparent objects or external circumstances which it is merely their task to name – wherever, in other words, the speaker is engaged in more or less independent thought, that is, self-expression – he stands in a twofold relationship to language, and his works will be understood aright only insofar as this relationship itself is correctly grasped. Every human being is, on the one hand, in the power of the language he speaks; he and all his thoughts are his products. He cannot think with complete certainty anything that lies outside its boundaries; the form of his ideas, the manner in which he combines them, and the limits of these combinations are all preordained by the language in which he was born and raised: both his intellect and his imagination are bound by it. On the other hand, every free-thinking, intellectually independent individual shapes the language in his turn. For how else if not by these influences could it have gained and grown from its raw beginnings to its present, more perfect state of development in the sciences and arts? (*ibid.*: 45-46).

This double perspective on the concept of translation, although not on its formal conditions (↗ 1.), can be traced back to Cicero, who triggered a long series of dichotomies with regard to translation strategies, which have been defined and justified in different ways throughout history.

- (4) The actual translational action (the translational ‘occurrence’, comparable to what linguists call *parole*, i.e. where language ‘occurs’) has not yet been sufficiently distinguished from the potential translational action, i.e. the ‘competence’ for translational action, i.e. for translating or interpreting. This lack of terminological rigour was pointed out by Diller and Kornelius (1978: 6). (We shall not go into detail on the terminology and conceptualization used in linguistics at this point.)
- (5) With regard to the history of translation theories cf., among other specific analyses, Störig (1963) and Kelly (1979). With regard to the history of some terms for translation, cf. Folena (1973).

2. Of worlds and languages

2.1 Framework for a theory of translational action: an overview

We live in a world of mundane transactions, thoughts, traditions and conventions, or rather, in worlds which (for us) may be real or fictitious. Let us assume that in a continuum of ‘possible worlds’, someone says or writes something meaningful in a particular place and at a particular moment in time, producing a text (as a ‘text producer’).

Such a text is produced with a more or less specific purpose in mind. It is an ‘action’ carried out in relation to another person (or other persons) in order to achieve a purpose. By means of such an action, we want to make contact (or ‘interact’), exchanging ideas, etc., with some other person or persons. If the interaction is primarily verbal, we speak of ‘communication’.

It is obvious that every action is determined by the internal and external conditions under which it is carried out. We cannot say or write just anything in a certain place and at a certain time because otherwise we may not be understood or might be exposed to social sanctions (e.g. being regarded as a freak).

Both the producer and the recipient of a text are ‘communication partners’ and, as such, form part of the ‘situation’. Apart from being embedded in a socio-cultural community, both are also individuals with personal ‘histories’. These individual features, in addition to the uniqueness of the time and place of the communicative event, affect the production and reception of the text as well.

The ‘situation’ consists of the following factors: the cultural background, the specific environment in which the interaction takes place, the psychological and social circumstances of the communication partners and the relationship existing between them. One element of culture is language. The factors of this model of communication (which does not claim to be exhaustive) are characterized by individual and supra-individual (i.e. social) features (cf. the model in Vermeer 1972: 136; see more detailed models in Meier 1974).

According to the tradition of some linguistic schools, verbal communication may be described as a complex process involving various deep structures beneath a single surface structure. The deepest structure would be culture and it determines whether something is said or written at all, what is mentioned and how it is said or written (↗ 3.8.). Other deep structures refer to how an utterance is planned, structured and formulated. As we have already mentioned, the conditions are both social and individual. The actual text will then be manifested in the surface structure.

Translational action always involves a previously produced source text and the production of a target text for another culture. A theory of text production is therefore a prerequisite for the development of a theory of translational action.

Text production should be examined along the same lines as text reception, including both the translator's reception of the source text and the target audience's reception of the *translatum*. Like text production, text reception is determined by social and individual factors. A theory of translational action must therefore also be based on a theory of text reception and text effect. Literary studies have developed such theories in recent years.

The process of translational action starts from a given text, which is understood and interpreted by the translator/interpreter. We can say that a text is a piece of information offered to a recipient by a text producer (how the information is offered depends on the circumstances, as we saw above). The translator puts together a target text which, being a text, also offers a piece of information to a recipient. Thus, a *translatum* may be considered a text offering information in a particular way about another offer of information.

As a specific kind of information offer, the *translatum* has certain culture-specific characteristics. (Offers of information can be subdivided further, e.g. a primary information offer, such as the source text in a process of translational action, or other secondary information offers, such as commentaries or reviews.) According to modern concepts of T&I, the unique feature of a *translatum* is that it can be described as an offer of information which 'imitates' another offer of information (↗ 3.).

The above considerations have helped us to briefly outline the position of a theory of translational action within a broader context. The three major areas which have to be dealt with, or at least touched upon, in the following chapters are: a theory of text production, a theory of text reception, and a theory of translational action, which might be called a specific kind of text re-production theory.

2.2 The concept of 'language'

Translational action is mainly concerned with language. But the concept of 'language' is ambiguous. In the following section, we shall roughly outline some meanings of 'language' which should be kept in mind for a complex theory of translational action. For more details, see the literature on general linguistics.

2.2.1 *Language*,

We shall use *language*, as the generic term embracing all the means used by members of a particular community to communicate with each other. These communicative means are signs pointing to something beyond them and forming a 'semiotic system'.

The definition of language as a 'semiotic system' composed of signs refers to three important features of languages:

- (1) Signs are meaningful: something stands for something else.

For example: a broken twig by the wayside is intended to ‘mean’ that someone passed by and left the twig for you to find the way (as in boy scouts games). A young man gives his girlfriend a bouquet of red roses to express his love for her (cf. the ‘language of flowers’ of the Victorian era).

These examples show that this feature includes the metaphorical use of the word *language*. The concept of *language* is therefore not restricted to human verbal language (although this form of language will play a prominent role in our theory of translational action). Verbal and non-verbal languages (e.g. gestures, facial movements) complement each other: a wink from you tells me that you are not serious. Body language may replace verbal language: instead of saying ‘yes’, I can nod. What is expressed by verbal means in one culture may be expressed by a gesture in another culture (cf. putting your hands together instead of saying ‘thank you’ in India).

Human verbal language and its derivatives, such as written texts, are culture-specific forms of communication. Verbal and non-verbal communication (i.e. communication and interaction) complement one another.

- (2) Language is a system. The signs of a specific language are related to one another in a particular way.

- (2.1) Simple signs can be combined to form complex signs (*super-signs*), e.g. words form sentences, and sentences form texts. A sequence of simple signs is not just a collection of signs but a new sign of higher rank.

For example: a sequence of letters, e.g. a-n-g-e-l, is not just a sequence of letters but makes up the word *angel*, which has a specific meaning in the English language.

The formation of super-signs is language-specific. A word in one language can correspond to a phrase or a sentence in another language.

For example: (German) Kommst du mit? – Ja, gern! / (English) Will you come along? – Yes, I’d like to.

- (2.2) Signs delimit, determine, condition and define each other's meanings. Signs form language- and culture-specific 'fields' (cf. Ščur 1977 for the concept of "field").

For example: if the grades on a German school report range from 1 to 6 and those of a Portuguese school report from 20 to 1, the value of the grade '5' is different in the two systems because it is defined by its relation to the other positions on the scale in question.

There are many languages in the sense defined in (2.2.), e.g. architectural styles, English, German, music; think of the necessary alterations when 'translating' a drama into an opera.

- (3) Signs establish communication. For this purpose, a sign must have a function (or various functions) which can be described inter-subjectively. (We do not claim that the functions of each sign must be univocal.)

For example: a person who breaks a twig and puts it by the wayside in order to mark the way for you must assume that you will interpret it as indicating the path to follow (e.g. because this was previously agreed upon).

2.2.2 *Language₂*

Human verbal language (and its derivatives) are a specific form of the concept of language described in 2.2.1.: *language₂* = lect. Written language and sign language for the deaf and hard of hearing, for example, are direct (secondary) derivatives of human verbal language. As Nida puts it:

Writing is itself secondary to speech. (1964: 30, note 1)

Some codes, such as Morse and semaphore, are more strictly speaking 'secondary' or 'dependent' codes, for they are entirely subordinate to language, which is a primary code. (Nida 1964: 30)

Written language can become relatively independent of spoken language over the course of time.

For example: the differences between the spelling and pronunciation of modern English; the aesthetics of the Egyptian hieroglyphic script and the religious value of Arabic calligraphy as a means of representation used in the Qur'an.

Such independence can turn into a translation problem.

For example: the translation of shape or visual poetry (*versus cancellati, carmina figurata* in Renaissance texts) or of concrete poetry (cf. Toury 1980a: 114-15).

We should distinguish these secondary derivatives of human verbal language from tertiary derivatives, e.g. traffic signs.

By *lect*, we not only refer to national languages (e.g. English, Spanish, which we would call *paralects*) but also to subforms on lower ranks, like *dialects*. Types of dialect include regional dialects or *regiolects* (like Broad Yorkshire), social dialects or *sociolects* (the lect of the lower as opposed to the upper classes in Britain, e.g. Cockney). An *idiolect* is the language variety unique to an individual at a particular point in time (e.g. the language of Shakespeare, the language of James Joyce's *Ulysses*). For terminology in German cf. Gerstenkorn (1971), Heger (1969).

Lects can cause translation problems.

For example: in the translation of *My Fair Lady* for the German stage, the English regional sociolect (Cockney) was replaced by a German regiolect because German does not have regional sociolects.

2.2.3 *Language₃*

A third category of language (*language₃*) is indicated by expressions like 'formal language' or 'colloquial language'. Such phenomena are addressed, for example, by a *theory of style*.

Different styles can also cause translation problems.

For example: the style of a scholarly paper presented in English may be far less formal than that of a paper presented in German.

2.3 Forms of transfer

The use of human verbal language and its immediate derivatives will be called 'verbal action', as opposed to 'non-verbal action' (e.g. nodding, waving goodbye, playing football). With regard to the concept of action [*Handlung*], cf. Rehbein (1977), Harras (1978).

One type of action or product may be converted into another, e.g. a painting into music, a football game into a match report, a German poem into English prose, Homer's Greek hexameter into English hexameter. With regard to non-verbal communication, cf. Scherer and Wallbott 1979.

We may distinguish between several varieties of *transfer* (Nida 1964: 184-85, seems to use the term ‘transfer’ as a generic term for any kind of translation), for example:

- (1) action → action (e.g. I see someone point to a piece of paper on the floor and I pick it up);
- (2) non-verbal action → verbal action and vice versa (e.g. I am asked to pick the paper up and I pick it up; I see someone point to the piece of paper and I utter a cry of protest);
- (3) verbal action → verbal action (e.g. transforming an assertion into a question).

Types of action can often not be exactly matched between cultures. This can cause translation problems.

Clearly, translational action belongs primarily to type (3), as it is a specific variety of verbal transfer. (With regard to actional components in T&I cf., for example, 2.2.1.(1).)

Other classifications of transfer are possible, e.g. the one by Jakobson (cf. [1959]2004: 139) with two types:

- (1) The transfer of a set of signs from sign system x into an (equivalent) set of signs for the same sign system (e.g. modifying a piano score for a full orchestra);
- (2) The transfer of a set of signs from sign system x into a set of signs from sign system y (e.g. converting a mathematical formula in decimal system into a sequence of electrical impulses in binary code; playing music from notes on paper).

(1) and (2) have subtypes:

- (1') the transfer of a novel written in language A into a theatre play in the same language, etc.: ‘intralingual translation’;
- (2') the transfer of a text in language A into language B (e.g. translating a novel by T. S. Eliot into German; translating John Hartley’s *Yorkshire Ditties* into standard English: ‘interlingual translation’). Such cases always imply a cultural transfer as well.

2.4 Summary: ‘Transfer’ as a generic concept

Translation, or rather, translational action, is a specific variety of transfer. Jakobson’s term ‘interlingual translation’ is too narrow; ‘intercultural translation’ would be more appropriate.

Specific varieties of translational action: translating and interpreting.
(↗ 1.)

2.5 Language and culture

People see their worlds like refracted light through a prism. The refractions may overlap. There is a refraction shared by all humans which depends on their biological and physiological disposition. It will not be taken into consideration here because it is common to human nature and cannot be regarded as distinctive. It is probably difficult to distinguish between this common human refraction and cultural refraction.

- First refraction: culture-specific conventions (tradition)

Through the process of their socialization ('enculturation'), humans become members of a cultural community and often of other communities as well (e.g. a nation, a religious community, a football club). They may change communities in the course of their lives. When we grow up in a community, we adopt the specific conceptions (ideas, theories) of what the world is like which are shared by the members of this community (e.g. *Italians are noisy; there is an eternal life; my club is the best*). Similarly, people are socialized in a language, or as we might say, a communication community, adopting its specific forms of expression, etc.

- Second refraction: individual attitude (disposition)

Social conventions may be overruled, corrected or confirmed, either temporarily or permanently, by individual views based on specific situations (e.g., *I know three Italians who are very noisy; our trainer is a lame duck*). The same applies to linguistic conventions.

- Third refraction: different realities ('possible worlds')

Certain cultures or some individuals believe that, apart from what is regarded as the real world, there are other possible worlds (e.g. the world of the fairy tales, the world of my daydreams). The borders between these worlds may be drawn differently according to cultural or individual beliefs (e.g. *do angels exist?*).

- Fourth refraction: frozen traditions

Culture-specific and individual views about the worlds are, in a way, 'frozen' in language as a means of communication and thought. Some conventional expressions continue to be in use, although they do not correspond to what we now know about the world (e.g. *the sun rises*). The same is true for evaluative expressions (e.g. *self-murder* as opposed to *suicide*).

- Fifth refraction: value systems

The values assigned to objects and phenomena vary from culture to culture and from individual to individual (e.g. *British cars are better than French cars.*)

All these refractions can cause translation problems.

Scientists try to progress through the refractions of their socialization and their individual disposition in order to reach objective reality in their research. In the humanities, a scholar analysing a particular historical event (e.g. a novel) attempts to discover the conditions of refraction and the distance from an (assumed) objective reality. This distance is regarded as the *truth value* to be determined.

The link between the two attitudes was pointed out by Ortega y Gasset in 1933 ([1933]1962; trans. M. Adams):

An identical material fact may, if inserted into different lives, have the most diverse realities. (Ortega y Gasset [1933]1962: 16)

Science is the interpretation of facts. By themselves, facts do not give us reality; on the contrary, they hide it, which is to say that they present us with the problem of reality. [...] Facts cover up reality [...]. In order to discover reality, we must for a moment lay aside the facts that surge about us, and remain alone with our minds. Then [...] we imagine a reality, or to put it another way, we construct an imaginary reality, a pure invention of our own; then [...] we compare those facts which the imagined reality would produce with the actual facts which surround us. If they mate happily one with another, this means that we have deciphered the hieroglyph, that we have discovered the reality which the facts covered and kept secret. (*ibid.*: 13)

2.5.1 Cultural aspects of translation

A language is part of a culture. Cultures use language as their conventional means of communicating and thinking. Culture encompasses a society's social norms and their expression. Culture is

whatever one has to know, master or feel in order to be able to judge whether a particular form of behaviour shown by members of a community in their various roles conforms to general expectations or not.¹²

With regard to the “language of culture”, cf. Hall (1959); with regard to the validity of norms in communication, see Marten (1972) and Simon (1978).

¹² [Kultur ist all das] was man wissen, beherrschen und empfinden können muß, um beurteilen zu können, wo sich Einheimische in ihren verschiedenen Rollen erwartungskonform oder abweichend verhalten. (Göhring 1978: 10)

The translator (as translator) is not interested in either objective reality or truth values in general but in the value of a historical event as manifested in a text, both in relation to the prevailing norms (culture) and to the specific situation of the text (and/or its author), and in the way this value is affected by translation for a target culture.

Truth values are of interest to a translator when making an (ethical) decision whether or not to accept a translation commission (e.g. the translation of political propaganda material) – but this is not our concern at this point.

Translators must therefore know both the source and the target cultures; they must be bi-cultural. For, in translation, the value of an event, with regard to its nature or its degree or both, may change.

For example: the reception of a German translation of the Qur'an will be determined by different value judgments about Islam, but perhaps also by a similar attitude towards religion. The attitude of Indians towards animals is similar to the love of dogs in German culture, but completely different with regard to the 'value' of a pet. Menander's moral conceptions differ radically from those of modern central European cultures.

Looking at the following quotation, you will find that its form, both with regard to style and to the examples, is 'typically' US American.

[Translation] problems are often as much bicultural as they are bilingual, and bicultural informants [...] are needed to determine when a good translation is not a good adaptation [= cultural transfer] into another culture. This is particularly obvious when one tries to translate questionnaire items into a language for whose speakers the cultural substance may be subtly different or even nonexistent. Imagine trying to use a literally translated statement like 'I would not admit a Negro to my social club' with Bantus or a statement like 'I go to church every Sunday' with Moslems or Buddhists! (Osgood et al. 1975: 17)

Due to their biological and physiological condition, humans cannot perceive 'objective reality', i.e. objects as they 'really' are. What we perceive is only how objects appear to us ('phenomena'); cf. Geoffrey Hellman's introduction in Goodman 1977, IX-XLVII):

there is no such thing as unstructured, absolutely immediate sensory 'data' free from categorisation. All perception is tainted by selection and classification, in turn formed through a complex of inheritance,

habituation, preference, predisposition, and prejudice. Even phenomenal statements purporting to describe the rawest of raw feels are neither free from such formative influences nor incorrigible, in the sense of ‘immune from revision for cause’. Even ‘brown patch now’ may reasonably be revised (without claim of ‘linguistic mistake’!) in the interests of coherence with other judgements, some of which may describe particular experience, some of which may enunciate general principle.

The perception of objects as phenomena (in the above sense) is partly common to human nature (or so we assume) and partly culture-specific (e.g. conditioned by particular language traditions).

For example: words denoting colour do not have exact matches in other languages; they cannot be distinguished from words that do not denote colour in the same way in different languages (cf. the examples in Vermeer 1963).

The perception of objects as phenomena is also partly conditioned by the situation.

For example: when you put your cold feet into warm water, the water will seem warmer than when putting your warm feet into water of the same temperature.

Culture-specific and situation-specific elements can cause translation problems.

For example: in modern European fiction, descriptions of situations are rather common (although they may vary from one culture to another with regard to position, length and frequency compared to narrative passages). In Medieval and, even, in modern Semitic cultures, descriptions of situations are less common (cf. Kindermann 1964: XX-XXI, ↗ 3.1.). As descriptive and narrative passages are traditional structural elements of fictional texts, they are each assigned a specific value within a particular culture. If the text structure is maintained in translation, this value, and consequently its impact on the readers, will be different in the target culture.

Depending on whether a norm refers to the time and place of a source-text production or of a text reception either in the source or in the target culture, its value will be different.

2.5.2 Time and space in translation

Culture and language exist in time and space. Epochs (*Stadien*, ‘stages’, as Lieb 1970 calls them) have to be regarded as different cultures or languages if structural differences between them become ‘relevant’ for a particular kind of scholarly analysis; cf. Old English, Middle English, Modern English.

It is possible to translate (but rarely to interpret) from one linguacultural stage to another.

For example: modernizing the *King James Authorized Version* of the Bible; translating a medieval epic poem into Modern English; translating *I am going to spend a penny* by *I am going to the loo* for a 21st century audience.

2.5.3 Value changes in transfer

So far, translation theory has yet to find an answer to the question of how to evaluate the changes in value of text elements or whole texts which occur when a source text is transferred to the target culture (↗ 2.5.1.). Each transfer inevitably involves changes in value, which can either be accepted as something quite normal in translational action, focussing mainly on the set of realities and cognitive values common to all humans, or treated as a fundamental problem for any translation. The decision depends, among other things, on the type of text or genre we have in mind: fiction or non-fiction, business correspondence, political propaganda, tourist information leaflets, etc.

As we do not tend to say that a text *is* a technical text or a propaganda speech, rather, that it is transmitted/received/translated/interpreted *as* a text of one type or another, our dynamic answer to this question is that the decision depends on the purpose or *skopos* of the translational action (↗ 4.).

There are two opposite ways of looking at this problem: one is the model influenced by Marxist image theory (cf. Jäger 1975), which more or less ignores the problem of value changes, assuming an objective reality as the intercultural *tertium comparationis* for translation, and the other is the relativist model, according to which the value changes produced by a transfer will lead, in any case, to an incomparability of source and target texts; cf. Weisgerber’s theory on the worldview of languages (Weisgerber 1962 and later) and the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (e.g. Carroll 1964, Henle 1975).

A theory must be complex enough to explain as many cases as possible which occur in its field of application. We hold the view that the problem of value change is relevant to our discussion and we shall try to deal with it by developing a functionalist theory.

2.6 What is translated?

We shall conclude this chapter with two examples (cf. Vermeer [1980]1983), which are intended to clarify a few of the points made above.

Example₁: a Welsh travel agency had a large amount of travel literature for Wales on display in their booth at a fair in Germany. An elderly woman, who had looked them over, exclaimed with surprise: ‘Are all your booklets in French?’ The representative of the agency was shocked at the gaffe and replied: ‘That *would* be awful, wouldn’t it?’ (with emphatic stress on *would*).

Let us now assume that the situation (or what was said) described in this example has to be translated or interpreted into German. In line with general practice, there would be two basic types of translation for this exchange (we shall not go into the details of possible variants for each of them):

Type₁: ‘Sind alle Ihre Prospekte auf Französisch?’ – ‘Das wäre ja schrecklich, nicht wahr?’ (= literal translation of the English)

Type₂: ‘Haben Sie denn nur französische Prospekte?’ – ‘Um Gottes Willen! Das darf doch nicht wahr sein!’ (Literally: ‘Do you only have booklets in French?’ – ‘For God’s sake! That just can’t be true!’)

How can we describe these two basic types? On what underlying assumptions about translation are they based?

2.6.1 Translating meaning

Type₁ may be described as follows: the ‘meaning’ (Vermeer 1972: 61-63) of the source text must be encapsulated (‘encoded’) in the target language. The term ‘meaning’ indicates that the specific circumstances in question are not taken into consideration. Meaning is produced at the level of type, not of ‘token’. Note that we refer to the meaning of the text, not of the words.

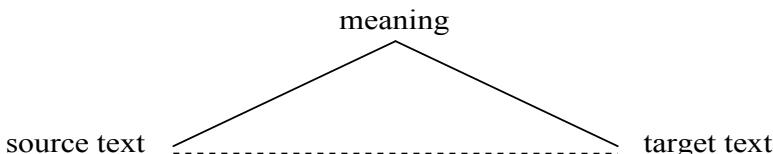
The primary unit of translation is the text. Words are only relevant to the translator insofar as they are elements of the text.

As the translation is supposed to be produced at type level, independent of the specific circumstances, type₁ may comply with an additional requirement: the formal structure of the source text may be reproduced as exactly as possible in the target language. In other words: the source text may be ‘transcoded’ into the target text (↗ 3.2.). This kind of translation procedure is called a ‘two-phase

process of communication including transcoding'. It is typical of this type of translation that the cultural component is ignored to a large extent; the transfer is seen to occur almost exclusively at a linguistic ('verbal') level. It is based on the assumption that meaning is a constant in the translation process.

According to this model, the translator deals with three factors: (1) the source text as a source-language text form, (2) the meaning, which remains the same, and (3) the target text as a target-language text form. This means that the meaning of the source (language) text is identical to the meaning of the target (language) text. As this requirement of identical meaning may be difficult to achieve in practice (!), it is often reduced to the requirement of 'equivalence': the meaning of the target-language text should be 'equivalent' to the meaning of the source-language text.

We shall not go into detail defining 'equivalence' at this point (↗ 10.). Equivalence refers to what we would call, in everyday language, an 'equal value' for each text at type level. The conditions of translation, according to this model, may be represented by a triangle, as in the following diagram (the dotted line means 'equal to' or 'equivalent to').



In translational practice, the meaning is extracted from the given source text and then re-encoded in the target text. What this would mean for theory is: 'Meaning' is the crucial factor and it is supposed to remain unchanged in an interlingual comparison. As no source or target language has been specified, the theory should be equally valid for any pair of languages. In this model, 'meaning' is not bound to a particular language (*lect*). It exists independently of any given language and thus remains the same across all languages (any language can serve as a source or target language); it must therefore be considered a 'universal' (Fisiak 1980). In this case, translation is limited to formal phenomena and only *one* optimum translation process and *translatum* can exist and be found.

If we are not looking for identical meaning but only equivalent meaning, a number of acceptable variants would be possible within a certain range. We would then postulate a constant core of meaning and a relatively fuzzy periphery according to the languages involved. But this would not change the theory in any essential way.

A theory such as the one outlined above may be disputed on certain grounds, but it cannot be accused of being based on the (specific or general) lack of competence of a particular translator or of all translators, although

competence is certainly an important factor in the assessment of a (concrete) translation job. To what extent was the text producer (e.g. the author) able to express his thoughts (to encode his intention)? To what extent was the recipient (e.g. reader) able to interpret the text, i.e. to ‘understand’ the sender’s intention? Did the author express what he wished to say in an appropriate manner? Did the recipient understand adequately/optimally? Does the target recipient understand what the translator wanted to convey as the source text? What are the conditions needed for an optimal transfer? For interpreters, it is important to know how fast they can call upon their linguistic skills and where they may have difficulties in accessing their knowledge (cf. Flechtner 1974-1979, particularly 1979: 273-90, with bibliographical references).

2.6.2 Translating behaviour

Let us look at another example.

Example₂: somebody complains about her neighbour gossiping about other people, which she finds rather embarrassing. *I never encourage her to say more*, she says.

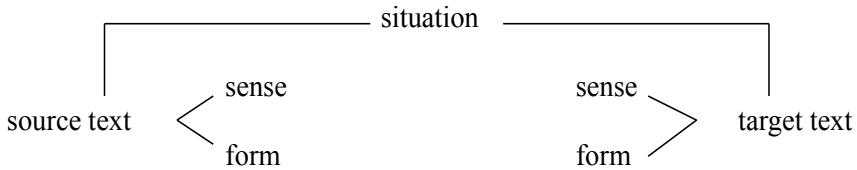
The (literal) translation at type level would be: *Ich ermutige sie nie, mehr zu sagen*.

German native speakers would criticize this *translatum* by saying: “But this is not how we would put it!” The criticism obviously refers to a (real or fictitious) situation, i.e. not to the type but to the token level. How would German native speakers put it? They would say something like *Ich gehe einfach nicht darauf ein* (‘I simply do not react to it’) or *Ich überhöre so etwas einfach* (‘I simply ignore such things’).

If we applied the same procedure to example₁, we would end up with type₂ (or some variant of it). Note that variants really have to be variants of the same lect, and in the case of type₂, a very colloquial expression like ‘You’ve gotta be kidding!’ would not belong to an equivalent lect.

The decisive requirement for a solution like type₂ is that it must be acceptable in a real-life situation of the ‘same’ kind. Again, we may scale down our expectations by requiring acceptability in an ‘equivalent’ situation. For a solution like type₂, the situation is the decisive factor because it is in the situation that the meaning of a text takes form as ‘sense’ (cf. Vermeer 1972: 63-69: intended meaning, ‘what is meant’).

In this model, the translator deals with five factors, with the ‘situation’ remaining unchanged (bearing the above caveats in mind): the source text, with regard to its form and its ‘sense’; the situation; the target text, with regard to its ‘sense’ and its form, as represented in the following diagram.



Again, we can postulate equivalence between the source and target texts. However, as, in this case, the situation is included, equivalence not only refers to verbal but also to any other cultural phenomena, which have to be of ‘equal value’. Here, translation is more than a two-phase communication including transcoding; it is a cultural transfer (↗ 3.).

If we take this seriously, identical situations are simply not possible.

For example: an English-speaking author writes an English novel for an English-speaking audience. The German target text is directed at a German-speaking audience whose ‘situation’ is naturally different from that of the English-speaking audience.

The concept of ‘situation’ must be defined more narrowly. We are looking for equivalent forms of behaviour in equivalent situations. How does speaker T behave in a corresponding situation?

Seen this way, the use of language is a specific form of human behaviour. Under certain circumstances, culture-specific behaviour may be signalled verbally in one culture, and non-verbally in another.

For example: (in Britain) Thank you! / (in India) (depending on the situation) a smile / lifting the present to one’s forehead, etc.

Language is therefore defined as behaviour, or, more precisely, as communicative behaviour, which in turn is a specific form of interaction. From this point of view, a type₂ translation requires a comprehensive knowledge of culture-specific behaviour.

We think that a theory of translational action based on the conditions of type₂ is the more solid theory because it is more complex and more general. This is the theory underlying the considerations in this book.

2.6.3 Types and tokens

Let us return to type₁. For this solution, text meaning had been postulated as a constant. How can this meaning be identified?

For example: how can we ascertain whether *table* in English means ‘Tisch’ in German? How can we find out under which circumstances *table* means ‘Tisch’? The English word *table* can refer to other objects as well: the food served at a meal, the people sitting at a *table*, a printed or written collection of figures, facts, or information arranged in orderly rows across and down a page (e.g. a *timetable*), a multiplication *table*, a diagram or chart (cf. Springer 1969: 1448-49).

The same questions hold for texts: how can we determine the meaning of ‘Are all your booklets in French?’ The answer is simple: we must look at how the words or the texts are used. *How* means ‘in which situations’. From individual examples, we can deduce the ‘typical’ meaning of a word or text, etc., i.e. its meaning in particular types of situation.

Thus, type₁ is based on type₂, from which it has been derived by a process of abstraction. If this is true, then type₁ is, in fact, not the result of a simple two-phase process of communication including transcoding but of a much more complicated process, a specific variant of the process that leads to type₂. This is not immediately obvious because the process of abstraction leading to type₁ is not carried out in each case. Type₁ is reached by a shortcut which is well known and quite common in translation practice.

3. Translational action as an ‘offer of information’ (functional definition) (cf. Vermeer 1982)

3.1 Different translation strategies at work

Translating and interpreting have been the subject of debate for thousands of years now. The etymology of the German word for interpreter, *Dolmetscher*, can be traced back to approximately 1500 BCE, when the form *talami* was first used in the Mesopotamian kingdom of Mitanni (Kluge and Mitzka 1975: 137).

From very early on, translators faced a fundamental problem: translations were considered to do justice to only certain aspects of a source text. If translators try to be faithful to the words on paper, i.e. translating literally, they will produce a text with an awkward style, often unacceptable syntax or, worse, the text may be completely incomprehensible. If, on the other hand, they try to reproduce the ‘sense’ of the text, they will have to change the form of the source-language text; and if they want to achieve the same effect, they may even be forced to opt for a semantically free rendering (↗ 2.6.). Language- and culture-specific conventions for text composition, which may add to this dilemma, have hardly been mentioned so far, let alone discussed. Toury (1980a: 25) is one of the few scholars who has pointed out that “different cultures also have different *textual* traditions or systems” (cf. Reichmann 1983: 20).

This is not the place to discuss the relationship between form and function in greater detail, but it may be a good moment to look at a few examples and observe how different translation strategies work.

A word-oriented or word-for-word translation may be appropriate in contrastive linguistics, for example, so that language structures can be compared with regard to their syntagmatic position or word order. But it is also used for texts whose words (or even sounds) are assigned a magical function.

Example 1:

Buber and Rosenzweig (1954) translated certain parts of the Old Testament into German, trying to stay as close as possible to the sound of the Hebrew original.¹³ The following passage is a literal translation of the German *translatum*, with special emphasis on the sound effects:

¹³The example was shortened. The German text reads as follows: Im Anfang schuf Gott den Himmel und die Erde. / Die Erde aber war Irrsal und Wirrsal. / Finsternis über Urwirbels Antlitz. / Braus Gottes schwingend über dem Antlitz der Wasser. / Gott sprach: Licht werde! Licht ward. / Gott sah das Licht, dass es gut war. / Gott schied zwischen dem Licht und der Finsternis. / Gott rief dem Licht: Tag! und der Finsternis rief er: Nacht! / Abend ward und Morgen ward: Ein Tag. [...] (Genesis 1:1-5; cf. also M. Buber ([1954]1963). (*Translator’s note*)

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
 The earth, however, was muddle and huddle.
 Darkness upon the face of the primal swirl.
 God's boom floating over the face of the waters.
 God said: Light be! Light was.
 Good saw the light, that it was good.
 God parted the light from the darkness.
 God called to the light: Day!
 And he called to the darkness: Night!
 Evening was and morning was: one day. (Trans. C. Nord)

The kind of changes required by a sense-oriented translation can be illustrated with a comparison of the two German translations of Ortega y Gasset's essay *The Misery and Splendour of Translation*. The source text reads as follows:

Example 2:

En una reunión a que asisten profesores del Colegio de Francia, universitarios y personas afines, alguien habla de que es imposible traducir ciertos pensadores alemanes y propone que, generalizando el tema, se haga un estudio sobre qué filósofos se pueden traducir y cuáles no.

Parece esto suponer, con excesiva convicción, que hay filósofos y, más en general, escritores que se pueden, en efecto, traducir. ¿No es esto ilusorio? —me permití insinuar—. ¿No es traducir, sin remedio, un afán utópico? Verdad es que cada día me acuesto más a la opinión de que todo lo que el hombre hace es utópico. (Ortega y Gasset 1957: 9-11 and 1976: 7).

During a colloquium attended by professors and students from the Collège de France and other academic circles, someone spoke of the impossibility of translating certain German philosophers. Carrying the proposition further, he proposed a study that would determine the philosophers who could and those who could not be translated.

“This would be to suppose, with excessive conviction”, I suggested, “that there are philosophers and, more generally speaking, writers who can, in fact, be translated. Isn't that an illusion? Isn't the act of translating necessarily a utopian task? The truth is that I've become more and more convinced that everything Man does is utopian”. (Ortega y Gasset 1992: 93; trans. E. Gamble Miller)

The two German versions, both published in bilingual editions of the essay, were translated by Gustav Kilpper (in Ortega y Gasset 1957) and Katharina Reiβ (in Ortega y Gasset 1976). Kilpper closely imitates the Spanish sentence structure, including the definite article used in Spanish for generalization (*das Übersetzen*).¹⁴

¹⁴ The italics were added to emphasize the structures in question. (*Translator's note*)

He even reproduces the dashes Spanish authors use in dialogues where German authors would use inverted commas:

In einer Gesellschaft, an der Professoren des Collège de France, der Universität und andere diesem Kreise nahestehende Personen teilnahmen, sprach jemand davon, dass es unmöglich sei, gewisse deutsche Denker zu übersetzen, *und schlug, die Frage verallgemeinernd, vor, eine Untersuchung darüber anzustellen*, welche Philosophen übersetzt werden könnten und welche nicht.

Der Vorschlag schien von der Annahme auszugehen, *und zwar aus vollster Überzeugung*, daß es Philosophen, *oder allgemeiner gesagt*, Schriftsteller gäbe, die *wirklich übersetzt werden könnten*. – Ist das nicht eine Täuschung – erlaubte ich mir einzuwerfen –, ist *das Übersetzen nicht ein hoffnungslos utopisches Bemühen?* *Tatsächlich neige ich jeden Tag mehr* zu der Meinung, daß alles, was der Mensch unternimmt, utopisch ist. (Ortega y Gasset 1957: 9-11)

In contrast, Reiß tries to render the sense, adapting both the structures and the punctuation to German norms and conventions (for more details on her translation strategy cf. Reiß [1974]1986, Reiß 1978a and Reiß 1980b):

Auf einer kleinen Gesellschaft, bei der Professoren des Collège de France, der Universität und derlei Persönlichkeiten mehr anwesend sind, kommt jemand darauf zu sprechen, daß es unmöglich sei, gewisse deutsche Denker zu übersetzen, *und er schlägt vor, man solle einmal ganz generell untersuchen*, welche Philosophen übersetzbare seien und welche nicht.

Dieser Vorschlag scheint mir mit allzu fester Überzeugung davon auszugehen, daß es Philosophen und überhaupt Schriftsteller gibt, die tatsächlich übersetzbare sind. „Ist das nicht eine Illusion?“ erlaubte ich mir einzuwerfen. „Ist Übersetzen nicht ein ausweglos utopisches Beginnen? Wirklich, ich neige von Tag zu Tag mehr zu der Ansicht, daß alles, was der Mensch tut, utopisch ist“. (Ortega y Gasset 1976: 7)

The third example deals with effect-oriented translation. According to Nida (1964: 7), faithfulness with regard to text effect means “to reproduce in his [the translator’s] audience something of the same effect which is understood to have existed in the response of the original hearers”. Thierfelder (1953) discusses this strategy when referring to the translation of comedies, which are intended to be put on a modern stage. With regard to his translation of Terence’s *Eunuchus*, he writes:

The aim is to produce an *effect* on today’s spectators or readers, which is as similar as possible to the effect Menander or Terence produced on their contemporaries. This means that the translation has to be

relatively free because in order to be effective certain expressions cannot be reproduced literally. Moreover, as a comic effect is impossible without smooth text comprehension, some expressions have to be expanded in a certain way.¹⁵

In *Eunuchus* (v. 197-206), a courtesan named Thaïs wants to help Pamphile, a free citizen’s daughter who has been kidnapped and sold as slave to a foreign “general” (as Thierfelder translates the generic term *miles*) who, in turn, intends to give her as a present to Thaïs in order to gain her favour. Although Thaïs is actually in love with a young man called Phaedria, she pretends to accept the gift. With regard to Phaedria, she says to herself in Act I, Scene III (according to the English translation “into familiar blank verse” by George Coleman, cf. Terence 1768):

Example 3:

Ah me! I fear that he believes me not,
 And judges of my heart from those of others.
 I in my conscience know, that nothing false
 I have deliver’d, nor to my true heart
 Is any dearer than this Phaedria:
 And whatsoe’er in this affair I’ve done,
 For the girl’s sake I’ve done: for I’m in hopes
 I know her brother, a right noble youth.
 Today I wait him, by his own appointment;
 Wherefore I’ll in, and tarry for his coming.

In his German translation of the play, Thierfelder adds thirteen verses of his own in order to help the modern audience understand the culture-specific background of the plan. In English, these additional verses would read approximately as follows (again in “familiar blank verse”):

If everything works out as I have planned,
 I shall not have to please the general for long.
 It’s true, he thinks and is convinced
 (And even makes it a condition)
 That I, to thank him for the girl he gave me,
 Will love and cherish him, and only him,
 For half a year or six entire months.

¹⁵ Ihr Ziel ist, bei heutigen Zuschauern oder Lesern eine möglichst ähnliche Wirkung hervorzurufen wie Menander oder Terenz bei ihren Zeitgenossen. Diese Absicht bedingt eine gewisse Freiheit des Übersetzens, da manches nicht unmittelbar wörtlich in wirksamer Weise nachgebildet werden kann. Weil ferner komische Wirkung nicht ohne glattes Textverständnis möglich ist, muß im einzelnen mancher Ausdruck etwas verbreitert werden. (Thierfelder 1961: 74)

I feigned to grant this favour when he came
 Last night (and for this reason Phaedria
 Was not let in). But if Pamphile proves
 To be a free-born girl and citizen,
 The general's gift is null and void.
 And I'll be free – for Phaedria, my love.¹⁶ (Trans. C. Nord)

Terence himself emphasized the priority of effect over literal fidelity in the translation of a comedy. In his prologue to *Eunuchus* (v. 7-8), he criticizes a colleague,

qui bene vortendo et easdem scribendo male
 ex Graecis bonis Latinas fecit non bonas,

which Coleman translates as follows:

He, who translating many but not well
 On good Greek fables fram'd poor Latin plays. (Terence 1768)

With regard to culture-specific differences of text composition, cf. Reiß (1972) and Kußmaul (1978). If I remember rightly, it was the German writer, journalist and translator Wilhelm Emanuel Süskind who in a radio discussion many years ago pointed out that the **first chapters** of novels are often composed in different ways according to culture-specific conventions: in the introductory part of a ‘typical’ English novel, the author usually describes the setting of the narrative, while a ‘typical’ German novel starts with an action. As Kindermann writes:

Descriptions are not in the nature of Arabs – or, if I may say so, of ‘Semites’ in general – (which Old Testament scholars have convincingly illustrated by the Genesis legends), maybe because they are too lively and descriptions need calmness and tranquillity. Or, and this seems more probable, it is because they are only aware of themselves and cannot adopt other people’s perspectives or understand that somebody else does not know what they know.¹⁷

¹⁶ Wenn alles sich herausstellt, wie ich wünsche, / werd' ich nicht lang' mehr mit dem General / zu schaffen haben. Freilich bildet er / sich ein und macht es förmlich zur Bedingung, / daß ich, zum Dank für das geschenkte Mädchen, / ein volles halbes Jahr, sechs Monate, / nur ihm und keinem sonst gefällig bin. / Zum Schein mußt' ich drauf eingehn, als er gestern / bei mir erschien und Phädrus deswegen / nicht eingelassen wurde. Wenn jedoch / sich Pamphile als freies Bürgermädchen / erweist, so ist die Schenkung null und nichtig, / und ich bin frei – für meinen Phädrus. (Thierfelder 1961)

¹⁷ Dem Araber – vielleicht darf ich auch allgemein “Semeniten” sagen – liegt das Schildern nicht (die Alttestamentler haben das an den Genesis-Sagen überzeugend gezeigt), vielleicht

(With regard to this attitude, cf. Schatzmann and Strauss 1955). Heusler comments on the Icelandic ‘Song of Rig’:

The song [...] describes static situations, presents genre pictures, which is rather unusual for medieval poets.¹⁸

In his contribution to the radio discussion, Süskind asked whether the translator should, under certain circumstances, adapt such culture-specific features to the target-audience’s conventions (cf. Vermeer 1972: 89).

There is at least one conclusion we can draw from these examples: if a translator emphasizes *one* aspect of the source text, he will have to suppress others. It is therefore not surprising that translation is often regarded as a ‘bungled job’ or that it requires sacrifice. Savory (1969: 50) compiled a list of twelve contradictory requirements for a “proper” translation, the first ten of which were initially mentioned by Jompelt (1961: 19):

1. A translation must give the words of the original.
2. A translation must give the ideas of the original.
3. A translation should read like an original work.
4. A translation should read like a translation.
5. A translation should reflect the style of the original.
6. A translation should possess the style of the translator.
7. A translation should read as a contemporary of the original.
8. A translation should read as a contemporary of the translator.
9. A translation may add to or omit from the original.
10. A translation may never add to or omit from the original.
11. A translation of verse should be in prose.
12. A translation of verse should be in verse.

In theoretical analyses of translations, we frequently observe that terms and concepts are not defined adequately, and this makes the underlying theory ambiguous.

Perhaps it is not the conviction that it is impossible for a translation to faithfully map all aspects of a source text at once that makes us feel uneasy about this kind of comment or consideration. After all, what is ‘mapping’ supposed to mean? Maybe we should ask ourselves whether our uneasiness is rather due to the fact that commonly held views on translation are inadequate and that the concept is not properly defined.

weil sie zu lebhaft sind: zum Schildern gehört Ruhe und Beschaulichkeit; oder – und das ist wahrscheinlicher – weil sie nur sich selbst sehen und sich nicht in das Denken eines anderen versetzen können und überhaupt nicht begreifen, daß andere das nicht kennen sollten, was sie kennen. (Kindermann 1964: xx-xxi)

¹⁸ Das Lied [...] schildert Zuständliches, gibt rührende Sittenbilder: für mittelalterliche Poeten etwas Außergewöhnliches. (Heusler, cited in Genzmer 1981: 96)

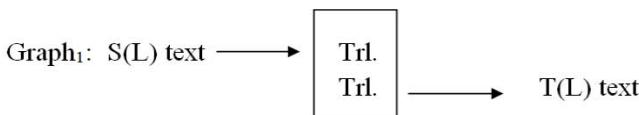
3.2 Translation seen as a two-phase communication process

In our current situation, we are basically confronted with two coexisting terminological definitions of translational action which are partly interlinked and sometimes confused. One definition regards translation as a two-phase communication process and the other (↗ 3.3.) views it as ‘information’ in language B about a source text presented in language A.

The first definition is the more common one. Translation is defined as a two-phase communication process, in which a source-language text is received by a translator, transcoded into a target-language text and forwarded to the target-language recipient (note that the definition only mentions language). Due to the limitations of our knowledge, the process going on in the translator’s mind, like in a ‘black box’, is not yet accessible. Therefore, the terms ‘two-phase process’ and ‘transcoding’ remain rather vague.

This two-phase process has sometimes been described as relatively complex (as in Vermeer [1978]1983: 100-01). But this does not change the basic assumption of a two-phase or double communication process, which simplifies the phenomenon of translational action beyond recognition.

The model can be represented as follows:



S(L) = source-language, T(L) = target-language, Trl. = translator as relay station

It has already been pointed out (e.g. in Vermeer [1979]1983: 70-75) that, with regard to the source text, a distinction has to be made between what is encoded in the text, what the producer(s) or sender(s) intended to say, and what the recipient (here: the translator) understands. The basic model is not affected by these considerations, to which we shall return below. Let us first explain our interpretation of the model.

The translation process has been explicitly characterized as consisting of two phases since the law scholar Karl Salomo Zachariae (1805) pointed out that it implies understanding and passing on this understanding. The apparently natural conclusion to be drawn from this statement is that:

according to its internal structure, translating is, in any case, a *process consisting of two phases*: understanding a text in a foreign language, on the one hand, and reproducing its sense in the target language, on the other.¹⁹

¹⁹ Übersetzen ist also in jedem Falle seiner inneren Struktur nach ein zweistufiger Vorgang: einmal Verstehen eines fremdsprachlichen Textes und zum anderen sinngetreue Wiedergabe desselben in der Zielsprache. (K. Schmidt 1969: 53, cited in Spitzbardt 1972: 15).

For similar views, which were quite common before the 19th century, cf. Kelly 1979: 35, among others.

The two-phase model was particularly popular among scholars of the ‘Leipzig school’, i.e. a group of theoretical and applied linguistics from the University of Leipzig in former East Germany. At that time, Wotjak regarded translating as merely “transcoding” a text, “making use of, and preserving, the equivalence relations existing between elements below sentence level”,²⁰ whereas Neubert defined translation as “the transformation of a source-language text into an equivalent target-language text”.²¹ Georgi considered translation to be “the human activity which enables partners who do not share a common language to exchange information in indirect communication”.²² By “exchange of information”, Georgi was referring to roughly the same phenomenon as Neubert.

Scholars who subscribe to the two-phase model thus take the view that, in the translation process, a source text is received by the translator, who then re-encodes the received sense in the target-language code and conveys it to the target audience. It is obvious that, in such a model, non-linguistic phenomena, such as cultural values, are easily overlooked. Transmitting a message by merely transcoding it – an exclusively formal procedure – does not leave any room for non-linguistic aspects.

Occasionally, some variants are introduced into the theory, which, however, do not alter the basic model. Some authors, for example, make an *a priori* distinction between translating scientific or literary texts, pretending that the two are essentially different and incomparable. However, contrary to the authors’ intention and to the terminology they use, the only result of such distinctions is that they rule out a general theory of translation. Other distinctions have been made according to genre or text function but, in any form of the two-phase model, the translator is viewed as a ‘language mediator’, a mere relay station or interface.

Kloepfer is one of those scholars who want to separate literary translation from the translation of scientific and technical texts. According to him,

[t]he aim of scientific translation is the semantically identical reproduction of one functional or conceptual system by means of another, equivalent, system.²³

²⁰ Umkodierung [...] unter Ausnutzung und Wahrung der zwischen kleineren Einheiten als den Sätzen bestehenden Äquivalenzbeziehungen. (Wotjak 1969: 258)

²¹ Umsetzung eines Textes der Ausgangssprache (AS) in einen äquivalenten Text der Zielsprache (ZS). (Neubert [1967]1970, cited in Spitzbardt 1972: 15)

²² [...] die menschliche Tätigkeit, durch die in der indirekten Kommunikation ein Austausch von Nachrichten zwischen Partnern bewirkt wird, die nicht über die gleiche Sprache verfügen. (Georgi 1972: 33)

²³ Ziel der wissenschaftlichen Übersetzung ist die inhaltlich identische Reproduktion eines Funktionsgefüges (Begriffsgefüges) mit den Mitteln eines anderen, äquivalenten. (Kloepfer 1967: 9)

In contrast, a literary translation would be characterized by what Paul Valéry (1928) claimed for literature in general:

The form of expression possible for the proposed sense is precisely the form in which it was conceived.²⁴

This would mean that authors like Kloepfer could claim, contrary to historical evidence, that literary translation is virtually impossible. It seems rather inconsistent, however, for, in spite of all their rigorous distinctions, the same authors actually do recognize some basic features shared by the two types, as is illustrated, for example, by the use of the term ‘translating’ for both activities.

A very clear formulation of the two-phase transcoding model is provided by Levý ([1963]2011: 23):

Translation is communication. More precisely, translators decode the message contained in the text of the original author and reformulate (encode) it in their own language.

This is probably what Koller (1972: 11) means when he defines translation as an act of communication between speakers with different mother tongues. This is a vague way of putting it; Koller is obviously referring to speakers who do not share a common language (code) (cf. Georgi 1972: 33, as quoted above). Two speakers with different mother tongues could easily communicate without translation in one of the two or a third language, assuming they are masters in it. And the use of a foreign language does not always imply translating or interpreting, “nothing more than lightning translation practiced with great virtuosity and arrived at after long practice” (Kaluza 1902, cited in Fleming 1965: 48).

Wilss ([1977]1982: 17) defines translation as “the establishment of communication between people belonging to different speech communities”. This is also imprecise.

Moreover, only very few scholars subscribing to the two-phase model take non-verbal forms of communication into account. Between communicating persons who do not share a common linguistic code, non-verbal interaction may render translation superfluous, at least in certain situations, or compensate for any deficiencies in verbal interaction.

For Stackelberg (1978: 8), the relationship between the original and target text is crucial for translation quality assessment; he considers fidelity, adequacy – or equivalence – to be a requirement which can be taken for granted today. It is not clear whether Stackelberg regards the three terms

²⁴ Le sens qui se propose trouve pour seule issue, pour seule forme, la forme même de laquelle il procédait. (Valéry 1928, cited in Kloepfer 1967: 9, note 10).

(fidelity, adequacy, equivalence) as synonyms or as alternative criteria (for a critical evaluation of Stackelberg’s theoretical statements cf. Paepcke 1981, particularly p. 33, note 26).

Koller (1979: 106) also defines translating as the process of transforming a written text of one language (SL) into another language (TL).

According to Stein (1980: 67), the translator’s task consists of making the target-language recipient execute the communicative function I, originally intended by the source-language text producer. This definition is not acceptable because of value changes implied in ‘communicative function’, unless we agree to reduce this concept to simple cognitive comprehension, which I think would be rather difficult (cf. ↗ 3.4., example 4).

Toury (1980a: 63) defines “translation in the strict sense” as “the replacement of one message, encoded in one natural language, by an equivalent message, encoded in another language”, with “equivalence” referring to any possible or existing relationship between a source and target text. Toury’s concept of equivalence is, therefore, absolutely fuzzy.

More definitions of translation as a two-phase communication or transcoding process can be found in Jümpelt (1961: 12), Wilss ([1977]1982: 27-50), Koller (1979: 47-88) and Kelly (1979: 35-38), to name but a few scholars.

The three most characteristic features of this theory are: (a) translation is regarded as an almost exclusively linguistic operation; (b) cultural phenomena are regarded, if mentioned at all, as difficulties which prevent translation from being completely successful; (c) there is no consideration of the possibility that source and target text may be intended to achieve different functions.

In contrast, we will argue that culture is the wider phenomenon, embracing language, and that there may be situations where a change of function can be justified. (We would even venture to claim that changes of function are by far the more frequent case, as will be shown in the discussion of the following examples.)

If taken too seriously, the two-phase model will lead us directly to machine translation. If the rules for transcoding are known, machine translation is possible. These rules can be identified if we know the two language ‘systems’ involved. Jäger’s Marxist translation theory (1975) represents such an extreme position. Seen from this angle, the only reason why machine translation has not been developed to perfection would be that the language ‘systems’ have not been fully understood.

Anticipating later considerations, we would like to point out that the assumption that linguistic behaviour can be fully (!) understood is based on the following erroneous presuppositions which have not yet been proved and actually cannot be proved at present:

- (1) Translation is a biunique, reversible mapping process of communication, and

- (2) translation is a process involving language only, and not the entire human being.

We take the view that translating involves certain submolecular brain processes which have yet to be proved to operate according to laws or rules (cf. Flechtner 1976-1979, Hofstadter [1979]1982).

The transition (not in a chronological sense) to ‘functional’ translation theories may be seen in Toury (1980a: 17-18), who claims that translating is more than “the communication of verbal messages across a cultural-linguistic border”, although he does not specify the additional features of “*communication in translated messages*” (Toury 1980a: 18, emphasis in the original). Toury stops just where the work should begin. Van den Broeck (1980) starts from text types. In his distinction of form and function and possible subfunctions of text segments, he comes close to a functional theory without, however, being aware of, let alone developing, such a theory. For him, functions are always linked to text types, conventions and specific circumstances.

3.3 An ‘information’ theory of translation

Apart from the theory of translation as a two-phase transcoding process we have discussed so far, we have also encountered (albeit less frequently) another theory which defines translational action as ‘information’ about a source text in another language.

A precursor of this theory may be found in the views of translation as an ‘interpretation’ of a source text using a target code (cf. for example, Jakobson ([1959]2004: 139 and Kelly 1979: 1 and 25, who seems to agree with Jakobson in principle).

We could also understand Gadamer ([1960]2004: 307) in a similar manner with regard to mediating information (although he himself had something else in mind) when he compares translating to talking to an interpreter who, in turn, talks to the communication partner.

The main representatives of such an ‘information’ theory of translation are Neubert, House and Diller and Kornelius. Their theories, however, only take partial aspects of translation into account. We shall attempt to transform them into a general theory of translational action.

3.3.1 Neubert’s source-text typology (1970)

Neubert distinguishes between four types of source texts:

1. *Source texts not specifically oriented towards the source language* (e.g. user manuals) can easily be detached from their original situation (pragmatics) and adapted to a new target-language setting.

2. *Source texts specifically oriented towards the source language* (e.g. legal texts, local news, etc.) are, by definition, untranslatable because they address a source-language audience and are tailored to their specific expectations, needs and habits. When these texts are translated, they are transferred to a totally new setting, or rather, they reflect a communicative situation which is different from that of the target-language audience and therefore cannot be fully comprehended by them.
3. *Source texts specifically oriented towards the source language but transcending it* (e.g. fiction) originate from a characteristic situation or need of the source-language audience, but may overcome this limitation because they also have a more generally human dimension. We might say that they have two types of pragmatics, one linked to the source-language audience and another one not linked to any specific audience, the latter being of particular relevance for translation.
4. *Source texts specifically oriented towards the target language* (e.g. tourist or business information designed for distribution abroad only) are texts which are produced in the source language but directed at a target audience from the start because they are intended to serve as ‘source texts’ for translation only. They are not linked to any specific situation or place and their pragmatics is purely translational.²⁵

Types 1 and 4 are representative of a two-phase process of communication; in types 2 and 3, a translation informs about a source text (Diller and Kornelius 1978: 4). Neubert’s typology is based on an analysis of text types or genres and on the tacit assumption that each genre *has* its own well-defined function (except perhaps in the case of type 3). What is not taken into consideration is

²⁵ 1. *Nicht spezifisch AS-gerichtete Texte* besitzen eine Pragmatik, die ohne weiteres ablösbar ist und auf einen ZS-Text übertragen werden kann (z.B. Bedienungsanleitungen für eine Maschine). 2. *Spezifisch AS-gerichtete Texte* sind zunächst per definitionem nicht zu übersetzen. Sie sind primär an ein AS-Publikum gerichtet und entsprechend dessen Erwartungen, Bedürfnissen und Gewohnheiten (z.B. Gesetzestexte, Lokalnachrichten u.a.). Werden diese Texte übersetzt, erhalten sie eine ganz neue Pragmatik, bzw. sie widerspiegeln von vornherein eine andere Kommunikationssituation, als sie vom ZS-Hörer oder -Leser voll erfaßt werden kann. Sie sind Information über etwas, was das ZS-Publikum nicht direkt betreffen kann. 3. *Sowohl spezifisch AS-gerichtete als auch nicht spezifisch AS-gerichtete Texte* entspringen wohl einer charakteristischen Situation oder einem charakteristischen Bedürfnis des AS-Publikums. Darüber hinaus transzendentieren sie diese Bedingtheit und erhalten eine allgemein menschliche Dimension (z.B. schöne Literatur). Diese Texte haben insofern eine doppelte Pragmatik. Für die Übersetzung ist insbesondere diese nicht nur auf das AS-Publikum bezogene Pragmatik von Bedeutung. 4. *Spezifisch ZS-gerichtete Texte* sind solche Texte, die zwar in der AS verfaßt, jedoch ausschließlich für die Zwecke der Translation gedacht sind. Man hat dabei von Anfang an ein ZS-Publikum im Auge (z.B. Informationen für das Ausland). Hier dient der AS-Text im Grunde nur als Vorlage für die Übersetzung. Seine Pragmatik ist disloziert. Es handelt sich um eine reine Translationspragmatik. (Neubert 1970, cited in Spitzbardt 1972: 17)

the cultural aspect, i.e. even a user manual may be designed in a culture-specific way or a dictionary may be structured in line with culture-specific conventions. The translation of an advertising brochure (type 4) will be particularly difficult if the text producer is not aware of the advertising habits and interests of the target audience. Moreover, this target audience may be extremely heterogeneous: the translation of a brochure with images of Heidelberg University, for example, may be addressed to French and Japanese readers.

Neubert's typology is based on the analysis of text content. For a translation theory, an analysis of functions would be necessary. A text can be intended to fulfil various functions (cf. Reiß 1971[2000] and 1976a). Therefore, Neubert's approach is too narrow for a general theory of translation.

3.3.2 Overt and covert translation (House [1977]1981)

House ([1977]1981: 185-211) also speaks of two basic translation strategies (with subtypes). An *overt* translation, on the one hand, 'overtly' addresses an audience which is *not* that of the source text. This means that a new function is assigned to the *translatum*. A *covert* translation, on the other hand, is directed at both the target-text and the source-text addressees. In this case, the source-text function is usually preserved, as House ([1977]1981: 25) points out: "The essence of translation lies in the preservation of 'meaning' across two different languages"

Like Neubert, House runs into problems because she combines three defining criteria which should be kept separate and distinguished from one another: the form and the meaning of a source text, and the function of a translational action.

For example: the original meaning of a New Testament parable was to illustrate a moral by means of a memorable story. A translation of a New Testament parable could be intended to teach the moral, to demonstrate the aesthetic composition of the text, to fulfil magical or ritual needs in a worship service, to serve as an example in contrastive linguistics, etc. It depends on the intended function how the translation is done in each case (cf. Kassühlke 1983).

In his review of House's book, Faiß (1981: 79-80) agrees with her claim that the preservation of meaning, in an untenable overgeneralization, is the prime criterion for translation, and therefore he finds it impossible to appreciate the dichotomy of covert and overt translation.

House herself explains her translation typology as follows:

We suggest a basic division into two major translation types: *overt translations* and *covert translations*. We shall deal with the two types in turn:

1. An *overt* translation is one in which the TT [translation text] addressees are quite ‘overtly’ not being directly addressed; thus an overt translation is one which must overtly be a translation, not, as it were, a ‘second original’. In an overt translation, the ST [source text] is tied in a specific way to the source-language community and culture; the ST is specifically directed at source-language addressees but is also pointing beyond the source-language community because ST – independent of its source-language origin – is also of potential general human interest. STs that call for an overt translation have an established worth or value in the source-language community and potentially in other communities. Such STs may be divided into two subgroups:

- overt, historically-linked* STs, i.e., those tied to a specific occasion in which a precisely specified source-language audience is/was being addressed; this case is clearly exemplified by the *Political Speech* and the *Religious Sermon* in our sample texts;
- overt, timeless* STs, i.e., those transcending – as works of art and aesthetic creations – a distinct historical meaning while, of course, always necessarily displaying period (and culture) specificity because of the status of the addresser who is a product of his time and culture. In our corpus of texts, this type is represented by the *Moral Anecdote* and the *Comedy Dialogue*, both of which – although timeless and transmitting a general human message – are culture-specific because of their being marked on the language user dimensions (presence of a particular *état de langue* and geographical dialect respectively) and because of their having independent status in the language community through belonging to the community’s cultural products. [...]

The requirements for this type of translation [...] are the following: a *direct* match of the original function of ST is *not* possible either because of a ST’s being tied to a specific (non-repeatable) historic event in the source language community or because of the unique status (as a fictional text) that a given ST has in the source culture. (House [1977]1981: 188-90).

2. A *covert* translation is a translation which enjoys or enjoyed the status of an original ST in the target culture. The translation is covert because it is not marked pragmatically as a TT of an ST but may, conceivably, have been created in its own right. A covert translation is thus a translation whose ST is not specifically addressed to a target culture audience, i.e., not particularly tied to the source language community and culture. An ST and its covert TT are pragmatically of equal concern for source and target language addressees. Both are, as it were, equally directly addressed. An ST and its covert TT have equivalent purposes: they are based on contemporary, equivalent needs of a comparable audience in the source and target language communities. In the case of covert TTs, it is thus both possible and desirable to keep the function of ST equivalent in TT.

The *Commercial Text*, the *Scientific Text*, the *Journalistic Article*, and the *Tourist Information Booklet* in our sample texts all fall within this category of STs necessitating a covert translation. All of these TTs have direct target language addressees, for whom this TT is as immediately and ‘originally’ relevant as ST is for the source language addressees. (House [1977]1981: 194-95).

The comments on Neubert’s text typology apply to this kind of argumentation as well. However, House goes further than Neubert when she adds the following important specification:

In a covert translation, the translator has to place a *cultural filter* between ST and TT; he has to, as it were, view ST through the glasses of a target culture member. (House [1977]1981: 196-97)

She then continues with the following comments on the functions of texts:

The assumption that a particular text necessitates either a covert or an overt translation – while holding, we believe, in the detailed instances brought forward above – may, however, not hold in every case. Thus, any text may, for specific purposes, require an overt translation, i.e., it may be viewed as a document which ‘has independent status’ and exists in its own right; e.g., our *Commercial Text* might be cited as evidence in a non-English speaking court of law, or its author may, in the course of time, prove to be a distinguished political or literary figure. In these two instances, the texts to be translated would clearly not have an equivalent function in translation, i.e., in both cases an overt translation would be appropriate. Further, there may well be STs for which the choice overt-or-covert translation is a subjective one, e. g., fairy tales may be viewed as folk products of a particular culture, which would predispose a translator to opt for an overt translation, or as non-culture specific texts, anonymously produced, with the general function of entertaining the young, which would suggest a covert translation; or consider the case of the Bible, which may be treated as either a collection of historical literary documents, in which case an overt translation would seem to be called for, or as a collection of human truths directly relevant to Everyman, in which case a covert translation might seem appropriate.

Further, it is clear that the specific purpose for which a ‘translation’ is required will determine whether a covert translation or an overt version should be made. In other words, just as the decision as to whether an overt or a covert translation is appropriate for a particular text may be conditioned by factors such as the changeable status of the text producer, so clearly the initial choice between translating a given ST and producing an overt version of it, cannot be made on the

basis of features of the text, but is conditioned by the arbitrarily determined purpose for which the translation/version is required. (House [1977]1981: 202 and 204).

This is where House shifts from a text-typological to a functional translation theory, the latter being described, as it were, as an exception to the former. But exceptions are always problematic in a theory. It would be simpler (and easier) to start with a functional theory which defines the preservation of function as a case of ‘zero difference’. Then we would have a single theory in which, under specific conditions, a specific factor can be assigned the value \emptyset (zero). On the contrary, if we start from a very specific case, the theory would have to be expanded to include each exception by introducing a new factor, i.e. it would be transformed into a more complex (new) theory.

The point is that House runs into difficulties because she is mainly using static ways of expression; a dynamic form of expression would allow her analysis to achieve its aim more quickly and more comprehensibly. Instead of claiming that a particular translation strategy *is* the appropriate one for a given text, it should be stated that, under certain circumstances, a particular strategy *is chosen* for a text, etc.

It is important to note, however, that House emphasizes the relevance of ‘culture’ for the choice of translation strategies.

3.3.3 Primary and secondary translation (Diller and Kornelius 1978)

Diller and Kornelius adopt Neubert’s text typology as their own, explicitly functional, approach. They distinguish between primary and secondary translation. “Primary” translations are intended to “establish communication between a source-language sender and a target-language recipient”, whereas “secondary” translations are intended to inform a “target-language recipient about a communication between a source-language sender and a source-language recipient”.²⁶ As examples of primary translation, the authors mention interviews on the occasion of a state visit, business correspondence, user manuals, or what they call “silent” translating (and what we do not consider to be a very general phenomenon):

People who do not yet fully master the foreign language will start formulating silently what they want to say in their native tongue before translating it into the foreign language and saying it aloud.²⁷

²⁶ Die “primäre Übersetzung” [soll] eine Kommunikation zwischen einem AS-Sender und einem ZS-Empfänger [herstellen]. Die “sekundäre Übersetzung” [soll] einem ZS-Empfänger eine Kommunikation zwischen AS-Sender und AS-Empfänger [mitteilen]. (Diller and Kornelius 1978: 3)

²⁷ Wer in einem fremden Land der Landessprache noch nicht ganz sicher ist, wird das, was er sagen will, zunächst innerlich in seiner Muttersprache formulieren, ehe er es in die fremde Sprache übersetzt und artikuliert. (Diller and Kornelius 1978: 3)

As examples of where secondary translations would be appropriate, they suggest speeches in election campaigns or parliamentary addresses, fiction and scholarly literature.

It is obvious that this typology coincides largely, although not completely, with Neubert's classification. Again, the examples point to a text-typological approach, but the authors implicitly seem to refer to the translation of a business letter *as* a business letter, an election speech *as* an election speech (and not as teaching material for the foreign language class), etc.

Diller and Kornelius relate their typology to the distinction between alienating and assimilating translation which is usually attributed to Schleiermacher.

Either the translator leaves the author in peace as much as possible and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the writer towards him. (Schleiermacher [1838]2004: 49; cf. Diller and Kornelius 1978: 5).

This dichotomy can actually be traced back to Cicero, who distinguished between a translation intended to inform the recipient and a translation intended as a rhetorical exercise (cf. Cicero [46 B.C.E.]1942a: *De optimo genere oratorum* 5.14 and Cicero [46 B.C.E.]1942b: *De oratore* 1154-55; cf. also Stackelberg 1972: 2-3). There is some doubt, however, regarding whether Cicero's dichotomy can actually be considered an analogy of Schleiermacher's dichotomy (Wilss [1977]1982: 29-30 says it cannot), as Cicero finally rejected the literal translation "ut interpres" in favour of the free translation "ut orator".

Contrary to Diller and Kornelius, we believe that text type, genre, target-text function and translation strategy are four separate factors that do not stand in an equal relationship.

For example: an election campaign speech can be translated as such (if the English-speaking US presidential candidate wants to address Spanish-speaking Puerto Ricans), as a piece of information about a campaign speech (in order to inform Spanish newspaper readers of what the American candidate has to say) or as teaching material for the study of American rhetoric in an English language class; it can also be culturally transferred (e.g. toning down US American sentimentalism for German readers, cf. Beneke 1983), etc. But this cultural transfer is not necessarily conditioned by the informative function of the speech.

Right after presenting their new dichotomy, Diller and Kornelius return to the old two-phase model when they write:

Translation is the reproduction of a source-language text in a target language, in such a way that the *meaning* of the original is preserved in the translation.²⁸

²⁸ Übersetzen ist die Wiedergabe eines Textes der Ausgangssprache (AS) in der Zielsprache

Reiß has reformulated the Diller and Kornelius approach, giving it the dynamic form it lacked:

In the process of reverbalization, the translator has to make one general and many specific decisions. The general decision involves choosing a global strategy for the whole text [...], in the sense that he has to decide (a) whether to reproduce his own comprehension of the entire text in the translation or to ‘process’ his comprehension in some way for the intended readership, which may even imply some adaptation of the source text; and (b) whether to produce a ‘primary’ or a ‘secondary’ translation [...], i.e. whether to establish direct communication between the source-language author and the target-language reader (primary translation) or to inform the target-language audience about the communication going on between the source-text author and his readership. This is a basic decision that may affect a large amount of the presupposed knowledge and the entire historical and socio-cultural environment of the source-language text in the translation process.²⁹

3.4 In search of a consistent theory: five examples

According to Neubert, House and Diller and Kornelius, the theory of translation as a two-phase process of transcoding a source into a target text cannot account for all possible instances of translation, i.e. it cannot provide a theoretical explanation or an empirical description. Moreover, as we have noted above, it is unsatisfactory to work with two basic approaches: one approach that views translation as a two-phase process of communication (involving both a transcoding process and a cultural transfer) and another that regards translation as information.

In the three publications discussed above, both basic approaches are presented alongside one another. We shall now go on to attempt to formulate a consistent theory which can account for all instances of translational action

(ZS) und zwar so, daß die *Bedeutung* des Originals auch in der Übersetzung erhalten bleibt. (Diller and Kornelius 1978: 8, following Albrecht 1973: 16; emphasis by the author)

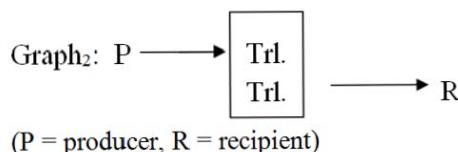
²⁹ [Beim] Reverbalisierungsprozeß steht der Übersetzer vor einer Grundsatz- und vielfältigen Einzelentscheidungen. Die Grundsatzentscheidung besteht darin, daß er für den Gesamttext seine Übersetzungsstrategie festlegt [...]. Es geht darum, (a) ob er sein gesamtes Textverständnis in die Übersetzung einbringen will oder ob er sein Textverständnis für seine potentiellen Leser in irgendeiner Weise “manipulieren” (**im ganz neutralen Sinn**) soll – bis hin zur Anfertigung von sog. Bearbeitungen des AS-Textes; (b) ob er eine “primäre” oder eine “sekundäre” **Übersetzung** [...] anfertigen will, d.h. ob er unmittelbar Kommunikation zwischen AS-Autor und ZS-Leser herstellen will (primäre Ü.) oder ob er dem ZS-Leser den Kommunikationsvorgang zwischen AS-Autor und ZS-Leser mitteilen will. Dies ist eine Grundsatzentscheidung, die weite Teile des Vorwissens und die gesamte historische und sozio-kulturelle Einbettung des AS-Textes beim Übersetzen in Mitleidenschaft zieht. (Reiß 1980a: 36-37)

in a satisfactory manner. In order to avoid a flood of defining characteristics, a consistent theory must be arrived at before it can be applied to genres or individual functions.

Let us begin by discussing a few examples.

Example 1:

Messrs Clarke and Co., Liverpool, write a business letter to the German company A. Schneider und Söhne, Solingen, in English. Somewhere along the line between Clarke and Schneider (or at the premises of one or the other), a translator converts it into a German business letter. In this case, the translator appears to act as a ‘language mediator’, and the process could be described as an instance of two-phase transcoding communication (see graph₂)



Graph₂ looks very similar to graph₁ (↗ 3.2.), taking into account the above comments. In Example 1, all other details are ignored. For example, the addressee of the source text is Schneider und Söhne, the linguistic and cultural implications of which are not taken into consideration by P; the actual recipient of the text is the translator, again a fact P is not aware of. The business interaction described in this example could be seen as an instance of refracted communication; however, it is quite likely that there is more than merely *linguistic* mediation involved. It is the translator’s responsibility to rewrite the letter, which was written in line with the culture-specific requirements of British business correspondence, in such a way that it is acceptable and comprehensible in line with the culture-specific requirements for German business correspondence. When American business letters are translated from English into German, for example, translators often add polite phrases (which they remove when translating from German into English for an American addressee). For details cf. P. A. Schmitt (1986).

Culture-specific features are by no means limited to set phrases: manuals for the maintenance of US weapon systems often specify the type or brand of lubricant required. When translating such manuals, the translators of the German Federal Language Agency replace American lubricant types with equivalent brands which are more readily available in Germany (reported orally). Even with user manuals, simple transcoding is actually not as typical as Neubert claims (↗ 3.3.1.).

The case of advertising brochures used by companies for the promotion of their products is slightly more complicated. If a brochure is translated within

the company itself, good translators will usually aim to achieve maximum effectiveness (only bad translators ‘transcode’). This is not so common if the text is translated within the target-culture company (unless it is needed for product promotion with third parties). Of course, each source text can be assigned a new function through translation, e.g. being used as an example of good advertising in a course for marketing experts (cf. Vermeer [1979]1983: 74-77).

To conclude the discussion of Example 1, let us look at a straightforward example of a translated business letter (from Lentz and Potter 1944: 48; cf. *ibid.*: 51).

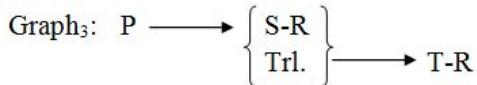
Gentlemen,
 In answer to your enquiry of the 9th of this month, I have to inform you that Messrs. Henry Parker and Son, of this city, enjoy general confidence here. I have no cause to doubt their solvency. The partners are honourable and cautious business men who have hitherto met their engagements promptly.
 I give you this information in strictest confidence and without any responsibility on my part.
 Yours faithfully,
 Alfred Green

Suggested German translation (as business letter, i.e. in line with German genre conventions):

Sehr geehrte Herren!
 Auf Ihre Anfrage vom 9. Oktober 19.. kann ich Ihnen mitteilen, daß es sich bei der Fa. Henry Parker and Son, Liverpool, um eine kapitalkräftige Firma mit gutem Ruf handelt. Die Teilhaber sind angesehene und umsichtige Geschäftsleute, die ihren Verpflichtungen stets pünktlich nachgekommen sind.
 Vorstehende Auskunft ist streng vertraulich und wird ohne Verbindlichkeit erteilt.
 [Variant: Ich bitte, vorstehende Auskunft als streng vertraulich zu behandeln. Sie wird ohne Verbindlichkeit erteilt.]
 Mit bestem Gruß,
 Alfred Green

(The difference in time between 1944 and today will be ignored here.)

Example 2:
 Charles Jervas translates *Don Quixote* by Cervantes. At first glance, the process looks very much like that in Example 1 but, in this case, the translator is one of the set of source-text recipients: Trl. ∈ S-R.



(S-R = source-text recipient(s), T-R = target-text recipient(s))

However, this is not a simple transfer of text meaning.

First of all, the way the translator as recipient interprets the source text is a decisive factor in translation. As Grimm puts it:

The question whether Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus* is read as a coming-of-age novel, an adventure novel, a picaresque novel, a documentary novel, as a realistic, a historical or a critical novel, etc. has a considerable impact on the criteria for processing drawn upon by the recipient.³⁰

The same applies to the way a source text is processed by a translator (cf. Reiß 1978a).

The second important factor in translation is the function chosen by the translator (which must be justifiable): Don Quixote as a masterpiece of world literature, as a book for children or young readers, etc.

Thirdly, it is possible to claim that in the case of cultural distance, i.e. spatial or temporal distance between a literary work and its translation, it is inevitable that the function will change. Cervantes wrote a satire on a certain nostalgia for heroic knights which was addressed to readers of his own time. Modern readers, including modern recipients of the translated work, will enjoy the book as 'information' about a satire on past nostalgia for heroic knights (cf. Example 3). Even when we are considering the translated work of a modern writer, the cultural distance between the source-text and target-text audiences will lead to a difference in function. A North American, a German or a French person – they all read T. S. Eliot in different ways. And it also makes a difference whether we read the source text in the original language from the perspective of another culture or in another language, e.g. our own, through the filter of a translator's interpretation.

A fourth factor could be the decision to preserve the form/effect relationship in the translation of literary (or other) texts, which will not be dealt with in detail here.

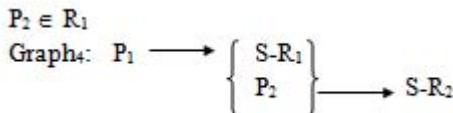
³⁰ Die Frage, ob Grimmelshausens "Simplizissimus" als Entwicklungsroman, als Abenteuerroman, als Schelmenroman, als dokumentarischer Roman, als realistischer, als historischer, als zeitkritischer Roman usw. gelesen wird, verändert entscheidend die Verarbeitungskriterien des Rezipienten. (Grimm 1977: 32)

To summarize what we have discussed so far, we would like to emphasize that a text IS not a text but is received and interpreted, for example by a translator, as a particular kind of text and passed on in specific ways.

In other words: it is impossible to understand translation as a process by which the (or a) meaning (cf. Vermeer 1972: 61-71) of a text is simply transcoded. Translational action presupposes the comprehension, i.e. the interpretation of the "text" as object in a situation. Translational action, therefore, is not only linked to meaning but to sense (= what somebody means to say) (cf. Vermeer 1972: 221), or rather to sense-in-situation.

Example 3:

Cicero's speech *Pro Sexto Roscio* is translated into English. Cicero gave this speech as the final statement for the defence in a law court. Afterwards (!) he dictated it, obviously revising parts of the text, perhaps in light of the impression it made on the audience and their reactions. In this process, we will have to distinguish between Cicero-in-court (P_1) and Cicero dictating at a later moment (P_2). Due to having evaluated the effect of his statement, P_2 's knowledge is different from that of P_1 . The situations in which P_1 and P_2 are trying to communicate are different. P_2 imagines and addresses an audience which is (partially) different from that of P_1 . Therefore, Cicero is represented as two different text producers and, in his role as P_2 , we shall classify him as one of the recipients of the speech he delivered orally in court ($S-R_1$) in order to illustrate the continuity of the process:



The audience of the written version of the speech may include other recipients than the listeners in court, e.g. certain readers today. But even the readers who were also listeners present in the court have different background knowledge because they are familiar with the impact the speech had on the audience, etc. For this reason, the model will also include two types of recipients: the audience in court (R_1) and the readers of the published version (R_2).

In court, Cicero wanted to pursue a particular intention, achieve a particular purpose. His speech was intended to have a number of functions, e.g.

- (1) to inform the court that the accused was not guilty ('informative' function according to Reiß 1976a);
- (2) to persuade the court to acquit the accused ('operative' function according to Reiß 1976a);
- (3) to portray Cicero as a good lawyer and orator ('expressive' function according to Reiß 1976a, combined with operative elements because

the self-portrayal was also intended to enhance his own image). The expressive function was implicit in the speech, marked by formal and stylistic devices ('parafunction').

For a parallel description of the three functions, functions 2 and 3 may be restated as follows:

- (2') to inform the court that they should recognize and take note of the fact that Cicero wishes the accused to be acquitted;
- (3') to inform the audience that they should take note of the fact that Cicero wishes to portray and portrays himself as a good lawyer and orator.

Cf. similar restatement operations in speech act theory. Some speech act scholars can derive a sentence like *I am going to the cinema with you tomorrow*, an utterance implying a promise, from a 'deep structure' like *I promise: I am going to the cinema with you tomorrow*. When wording the statement, the implied promise need not be explicitly verbalized because it can be clearly understood from the utterance and its circumstances (for a systematic approach to this kind of analysis, cf. Sökeland 1980). Using this methodology, we have derived the function (2) 'expression of purpose' from a more explicit statement (2') 'information about an expression of purpose'.

Reiß's functional text typology is based on Bühler's organon model (cf. Reiß [1971]2000: 25; Bühler [1934]1990). Out of the model's three functions (representation, expression and stimulation), Bühler himself gives priority to representation (cf. Jakobson 1971: 281, and Toury 1980a: 95, note 3, who refers to Jakobson.) *Mutatis mutandis*, this view was already held by Aristotle (cf. Vermeer 1972: 26). Cf. also Hörmann (1970: 24 and ch. 8).

No sooner has Cicero dictated his speech once the court session is over, its functions change, at least in part, as described above. This change is inevitable. In the new situation, functions (1) and (2)/(2') are obsolete because the court has already reached its decision; for contemporary readers, function (3)/(3') is bound to gain more importance than it did in court. Why else would Cicero have taken so much effort to publish his speeches? Function (1) loses its immediate relevance, which is replaced by a historical relevance as the trial is definitely over when Cicero revises and edits his speech. In addition, the text gains new informative functions, as it is a kind of 'meta-information'. For example, function (1) and function (2') are replaced by functions (1₂) and (2'₂):

- (1₂) and (2'₂) The recipients should note how things worked at that time and how Cicero acted;
- (4₂) The recipients should note how Cicero and his contemporaries composed and gave court addresses;
- (5₂) The recipients should note which rhetorical devices Cicero or a good lawyer of his time had at their disposal, etc.

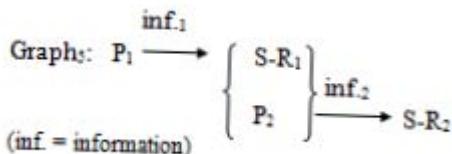
This leads us to the following conclusion: the publication by Cicero of the

speech he delivered in court after the session was over was by no means a two-phase process of communication. The second event (dictating the speech to be published) ‘informs’ about the first, ‘information’ being understood in the sense of functions (2') and (3'): Cicero informs his readers (1₂) that the accused was not guilty, (2'2) that he, Cicero, demanded his acquittal, (3'2) that he delivered a good speech, (4'2) how his speech was composed, (5'2) which rhetorical devices he had at his disposal and put to use. We shall use this concept of ‘information’ in the following sections.

The information contained in Cicero’s published speech is implicit but absolutely clear: if he had failed to win the lawsuit, he would not have written down his speech, or at least not in this form.

‘Information’ is used here as a generic term for speech functions in the sense of a producer communicating (or, to be more precise, wishing to communicate, ↗ 3.5.1.) to an intended audience what he wants the audience to understand and how he wants it to be understood.

Graph₄ could therefore be replaced by Graph₅:



If we look at the reception of Cicero’s speech in another culture, for example a modern one, the functions will again be different. Let us assume that the recipients are members of another cultural community and they are not contemporaries of Cicero. In this case, the information conveyed to the recipients is partly a subset of, and partly different from, the information directed at the contemporary audience of Cicero’s published speech. Their cultural background knowledge, in general, must be different. Modern readers are not only familiar with the result of the lawsuit but also with Cicero’s renown and impact over the centuries; we know how lawsuits and legal procedures in Roman times differ from lawsuits and legal procedures today, etc. It would be quite plausible that the same holds true for the reception of a text in a culture for which it was not intended, even without a time lag.

And the same would apply to translation: culture, and language as a part of culture, *inevitably* change, and they change, as we mentioned before, along with all the values they imply.

Each reception process is limited to some of all the possible ways a text may be understood and interpreted, while others are ignored or associated with different values. This is not a matter of understanding ‘more’ or ‘less’ (let us leave the question of incompetence aside for the time being) but of understanding something ‘different’.

This applies a fortiori to a translational action: it does not achieve less (as long as the translator is competent), rather, something different.

This has a major impact on the translation of our example, as we have shown before (Vermeer [1979]1983: 82-84):

One can attempt to show *how* Cicero, in his particular ‘world’ circumstances, sought and achieved an acquittal, or one can show the impact Cicero’s action had on the society of his ‘world’. In the first case, we may distinguish between two subdecisions: to show how Cicero acted as a *lawyer*, and which juridical strategies he employed, or to show how Cicero acted as a *rhetorician* (in the context of a lawsuit).

In this example, the cultural and linguistic differences between Cicero’s Rome and its Latin, on the one hand, and the modern German language and its ‘world’, on the other, make these functions incompatible. This is because the metafunctional decisions require diverging and often incompatible translation strategies. In the first case, the formal structure of the speech should be reproduced [...], in the second, its effect should be transferred from the original situation to a new environment to allow modern recipients to applaud, just like Cicero’s contemporaries, and cry: “Brilliant! Roscius must be acquitted!” (Do not try both strategies at once – the result would be another largely indigestible translation of a Latin classic, which are readily available in today’s bookstores. [...])

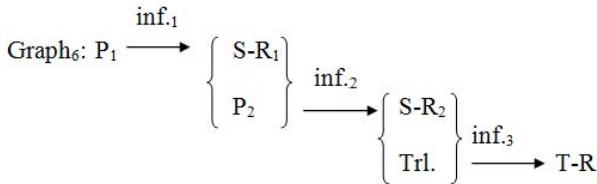
If the translation intends to reproduce the formal structure of the speech, there are some subdecisions which again must be taken, i.e. a reproduction of the juridical structure or rhetorical structure and, for the latter, it may be *ut nunc* (as it would be today) or *ut tunc* (as it was then). The consequences of such decisions may be illustrated by some statistics. Modern German prefers an average of 13-16 words per sentence (Eggers 1973:33 [...]), whereas Cicero uses approximately 30 words per sentence. Traditional translators, to whom nothing is more sacrosanct than the full stop, have used up to 39 words per sentence in the German text! This is an approach which would not do justice to the Latin – let alone the modern German.³¹

³¹ Entweder ist zu zeigen, wie Cicero unter den Umständen seiner “**Welt**” den Freispruch anstrebe und erreichte, oder es ist zu zeigen, wie sich Ciceros Unterfangen auf die Gesellschaft seiner “**Welt**” auswirkte. Im ersten Falle gibt es zwei Subentscheidungen: zu zeigen, wie sich der *Jurist* Cicero verhielt, welcher juristischen Mittel er sich bediente –, oder zu zeigen, wie sich der *Rhetor* Cicero (in einem juristischen Falle) verhielt.

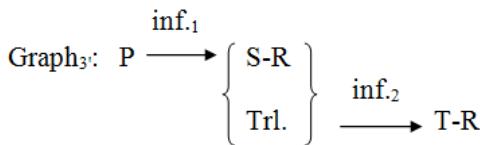
Im genannten Beispiel lassen sich die Funktionen wegen der kulturellen und sprachlichen Differenz zwischen dem damaligen Rom und seinem Latein und dem heutigen Deutsch und seiner Welt nicht vereinen. Die metafunktionalen Entscheidungen bedingen nämlich grundlegend verschiedene und oft inkommensurable Strategien für den Translator: Das eine Mal ist die formale Redestruktur abzubilden [...], das andere Mal die Wirkung aus den

Even for the reception of the source text, one of these aspects will be given prominence. No one can serve two masters at once. A translation brings this problem to the fore.

For translation, Graph₅ should thus be expanded as in Graph₆.



If we now look at example 2 again, in light of these considerations, we will realize that it is not a two-phase process of communication at all. In example 2, the target audience's background knowledge is also different, at least compared with that of the source-text recipients addressed by the author. Moreover, the translator uses verbalization strategies which are different from those used by the original author as the source and target texts differ with regard to structure and culture-specificity. Consequently, Graph₃ should also be redrawn.

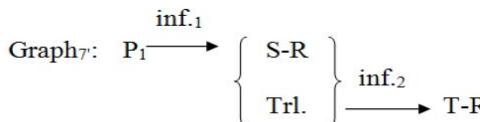


Example 4:

A German politician delivers an election campaign speech, which is then translated for a British newspaper. It is obvious that the source-text information *you should know that I want you to vote for me* cannot be preserved in the target text. In this case, translation cannot be considered the extension of an information process with a different code. It can only inform about the source-text information.

damaligen Umständen in die heutigen zu transferieren, so, daß der jetzige Empfänger wie seine Kollegen damals klatscht: “Brillant! Der Roscius gehört freigesprochen!” – [...] Und man versuche nicht, beide Strategien auf einmal zu verfolgen: das Ergebnis sind die weithin ungenießbaren Übersetzungen lateinischer Klassiker auf dem heutigen Buchmarkt. [...]

Bei Abbildung der formalen Redestruktur stehen übrigens drei Entscheidungen an: juristische Struktur :: rhetorische Struktur, innerhalb der letzteren: ut nunc :: ut tunc. Die Folgen solcher Entscheidung lassen sich statistisch aufzeigen: Das heutige Deutsch zählt maximal 13-16 Wörter pro Satz (Eggers 1973: 33 [...]); Cicero dürfte etwa 30 Wörter pro Satz zählen; traditionelle Übersetzungen, denen nichts heiliger ist als der Punkt, die also Satz für Satz übersetzen, zählen bis zu 39 Wörter pro Satz im deutschen Translat! Das ist eine Verfälschung gegenüber dem Latein – und erst recht gegenüber dem heutigen Deutsch. (Vermeer [1979]1983: 82-84)



(Here, inf.₂ refers to a meta-information about inf.₁.)

The situation would be different if the election speech were to be translated for a minority language group in the same country. A minority would have the possibility to vote for the politician whose speech they had listened to. But, even in this case, the process would bear some similarity to the one described in Graph₇; this minority has different cultural values which may require, for example, that a politician who wants to be able to address this minority directly in their own linguistic and cultural situation would have to compose his speech in a different way to get his intentions across; cf. Hispanic or Native American minorities in the United States.

The examples discussed so far have mainly referred to translating, although interpreting could fall under Example 1 and Example 4. Neubert, House, and Diller and Kornelius also deal with translating only. Would considering interpreting lead to different conclusions? Let us take a brief look at simultaneous interpreting, as it seems to differ more clearly from translating than consecutive interpreting does.

We have stressed several times that translational action is a holistic process in which linguistic signs are not only transcoded, where transcoding does not only affect the linguistic signs. Every translational action also involves reorganizing both the relationship between the situation and its verbalized elements and the relationship between the source-culture and target-culture values. This is also true of interpreting.

For example: the non-verbal gesture expressing gratitude in Indian cultures is verbalized in English, e.g. as *Thanks!*, as the target recipient expects a verbal expression of gratitude and would regard an omission as rudeness. Sometimes gratitude is not expressed (non-verbally) in Indian cultures in situations where English-speaking persons would expect a (verbal) expression of gratitude, so the interpreter adds a word of thanks. In both cases, the interpreter ‘informs’ instead of transcoding (unless we include transcoding from non-verbal to verbal signs).

The Portuguese way of concluding a speech by *disse* (from Latin *dixi*, ‘I have said’) has no verbal equivalent in English, which uses a ‘zero form’. The interpreter does not transcode, she ‘informs’ about the end of the speech by other means, e.g. through her intonation, or by simply ceasing to speak.

For the interpreter in the booth, it would not make sense to ‘interpret’ the speaker’s gestures by using any form of body language

because the audience would not see it anyway; sometimes, such signals may have to be expressed verbally or paraverbally, e.g. with a sigh of resignation or a particular intonation.

Even the consecutive interpreter cannot simply reproduce a gesture but has to ‘interpret’ it because gestures are culture-specific. The interpreter ‘informs’ about the sense and the effect of a source text, he does not transcode blindly across cultural boundaries (‘text’ includes non-verbal phenomena, as the examples clearly show.)

Particularly in interpreting, there may even be occasions when a communication should not be passed on: an aside not intended for the target recipient, an expression of impatience that might put the entire negotiation at risk, an ‘untranslatable’ pun, etc. The interpreter should also take into account the differences with regard to culture-specific background knowledge between the source-culture and target-culture communication partners and explicitate or implicitate information, where necessary. Persons who are not familiar with the foreign culture often feel irritated when they are told something they think they know already.

In all of these cases, a transcoding theory is inadequate. Interpreters are also more than a ‘medium’ or relay station. They participate in the communicative interaction, they gather information and they pass it on (cf. Gadamer [1960]2004: 307; ↗ 3.3. (3)).

3.5 Another short note on terminology

The examples discussed above lead us to a conclusion which is methodologically unsatisfactory or at least vague. It has been shown that attempts to expand a theory of translation (cf. Neubert, House and Diller and Kornelius) have not been very successful to date: we have looked at five examples representing five types of translational action. However, we have already given some hints where to look for a general theory. The concept of ‘information’ seems useful for our search.

But before we can move on to this subject, we have to clarify some concepts.

3.5.1 Information

There were instances where translation was not the extension of a communication using another code but, rather, it was a new communication about a previous communication. In such cases, the term ‘information’ covered the functions of the new communication (↗ 3.4., Example 3). The new communication ‘informs’ about certain aspects of the first, e.g. its sense or effect. A

second communication could also inform about formal aspects of the first, e.g. when hexameters are translated by hexameters.

In order to describe the *function* of the second communication more exactly, it would be better to not simply refer to it as ‘communication’ because this would include certain forms which we shall distinguish from ‘translation’ below (↗ 3.7.). We shall show, however, how the term ‘information’ can already imply references to certain translation strategies and, above all, translation conditions (↗ 3.8.).

This is why we shall not adopt Pätsch’s (1955: 35) suggestion that we subsume all the language functions, combined by Bühler ([1934]1990: 35) in his “organon model”, under the generic term of “communicative function”. Kainz (1941: 28) proposed “information” instead of Bühler’s “representation”, which we regard as an appropriate term for the primary function.

‘Information’, as we see it, implies an intention on the part of the producer, which is not included *per se* in ‘communication’. Even an unintentional gesture (e.g. a tic) may be interpreted as ‘communicative’ if it triggers a (verbal) interaction or reaction on the part of the recipient (*Stop this! Can’t you stop this?!*). Such a tic would not be ‘informative’ as it may be assumed that the communication partner knows it and can predict it.

‘Communication’ as a verbal process may be considered an element or type of ‘interaction’ (which is also non-verbal). Translation is always a non-verbal cultural transfer process which goes beyond the verbal transfer. ‘Information’ can be both verbal and non-verbal.

To sum up, we would like to propose that translation be defined as information about information. (We shall have to explain this, of course. ↗ 3.7.)

More specifically, translation could be described as an offer of information (or information offer, IO) about an offer of information. For an important amendment, see ↗ 3.7.

3.5.2 *Instruction*

Stein (1979, and in more detail in Stein 1980) has tried to make productive use of “instruction linguistics” for translation theory. Instruction linguistics was first introduced by Siegfried J. Schmidt (1976), who reduced it to “instruction semantics” (*ibid.*: XIV), which mainly referred to the semantic properties of lexemes, and thus practically abandoned the instruction approach.

Instruction linguistics regards (or rather, regarded) a text as a structured set of instructions, given to a recipient by a producer who would like the recipient to understand the text and to react to it in a particular way. According to Stein (1980: 52), the set of instructions inherent in a text constitutes its sense. S. J. Schmidt (1976: 56) claims that the lexeme or the word should be considered

to be a rule, an assignment or an “instruction” (the three terms are used as synonyms) which aims to produce a particular form of behaviour in a given situation. Weinrich (1976: 113) generally speaks of “signs” in this context. A text, for example, is a (complex) sign. Schmidt makes a distinction between a “canonical” instruction, referring to the instruction potential inherent in the linguistic sign, and a “situational” instruction, i.e. the instruction as crystallized in a particular situation. (Cf., in contrast, the distinction between “content” [*Inhalt*] and “intention” [*Gemeintes*, referring to the interplay between the utterance and the situation] in Vermeer 1972: 68, who adds “meaning” [*Bedeutung*] as a third category, but referring to the verbalized part only.)

According to S. J. Schmidt (1976: 56), the instruction always depends on the model of reality represented by the “world” to which the instruction refers or is meant to refer.

For example: in a particular situation, the text *Please, close the door!* is meant to be an instruction. This instruction can be understood as follows: the addressee is asked to understand that the speaker wishes the door to be closed *and* that the addressee carries out the corresponding action (*closing the door*). The instruction only works on the basis of a model of reality agreed upon by both communication partners, which implies that both partners share the view that, in the situation at hand, there is a door which can be closed.

To sum up, instruction linguistics claims that

- (1) each text is an instruction, which is
- (2) directed at both the producer and the recipient, obliging them to understand
- (3) and carry out the corresponding action;
- (4) this claim is applicable to each actual *text-in-situation*
- (5) and even to each *possible* text content.

This is not the place to go into details on the debate about possible text contents, which seems to have been stated categorically in (5). But we would like to refer to Marten (1972), who takes the view that, in each communicative interaction, the partners have to agree on the model of reality they want to refer to. This is relevant for a translation theory because the source and target partners do not usually come into direct contact and, therefore, cannot negotiate a common, similar or equivalent model of reality to which they want to refer. Instead, the translator has to negotiate two models – one with the source-text producer and one with the target-text recipient –, and then make them logically and culturally compatible in his (translational) offer of information.

With regard to philosophical, linguistic, terminological, and – most importantly – translational aspects, instruction linguistics raises certain questions, some of which will be dealt with in the following paragraphs.

- (1) Insofar as instruction linguistics is seen to be no more than a theory of semantic properties (S. J. Schmidt 1976: XIV), new terminology seems unnecessary in Lüllwitz's (1972: 263, note 28) terms. Perhaps this is a misunderstanding and, in that case, the following objections would be superfluous.
- (2) As mentioned before, reality is not *per se* the same for all individuals. If this is held to be true, then it cannot be categorically stated that a producer's utterance can meet the recipient's model of reality, or even meet it in a specific way (Hindelang 1983: 11 and 15). Initially, the utterance of a producer refers only to his own situation, including, among other things, the producer's *expectations* concerning the recipient's situation, and not the situation as such. Only the interaction itself can tell us whether or not, and to what extent, the two models of reality are sufficiently equivalent so that any differences are not worth a protest (cf. Vermeer [1978]1983: 55-56), i.e. whether and to what extent an interaction is successful (cf. Löffler 1976; ↗ 6.). This is a very important factor for a theory of translation because it helps us identify some conditions for a successful translation (↗ 3.8.): Translation does not make sense unless common ground can be assumed; translation cannot be successful unless common ground is found. As the 'worlds' of producers and recipients have to be kept separate in a model of communication, the producer cannot give the recipient an 'instruction', but only try to meet him in his reality, i.e. 'offer' him a chance to become involved with the producer. According to S. J. Schmidt,

a recipient understands a text only 'when he observes the decision made by the speaker [in the act of text production (Grimm)] and is able to draw conclusions as to what the speaker may have intended to communicate or bring about'. But this is precisely what the average recipient does not do. He may react according to the producer's intention, but he will not analyse the text to find out what the intention is.³²

Cf. the discussion on the concept of vagueness in linguistics, e.g. Müller (1980: 77-79) and, in the same context, the discussion of communicative interaction in Vermeer (1972: 79-88, particularly p. 80). The translator must also *attempt* to understand.

This objection to instruction linguistics is also supported by findings in psychiatry:

³² [...] versteht ein rezipient erst dann einen text, "wenn er die Entscheidung des Sprechers [bei der textproduktion (Grimm)] realisiert und von dorther auf dessen Mitteilungs- und Wirkungsabsichten rückschliessen kann". Doch genau das tut der durchschnittliche rezipient nicht: zwar mag er im sinne der intention des kommunikators reagieren, aber er befragt den text nicht darauf hin. (cf. Gast 1975: 117, cited in Grimm 1977: 295, note 232).

I cannot claim to understand *you* because I cannot pretend to be able to put myself in your shoes. You remain yourself, a stranger to me. This is how I express my respect for you. But I can relate to your [...] experiences within myself, I can recognize them, not with regard to quantity but to quality. I can share your experiences. [...] We have something in common.³³

- (3) Consequently, a sender (speaker, author) cannot demand a particular form of understanding from the recipient and can only suggest one possibility among many, one that can prove meaningful from a recipient’s point of view in his particular situation (cf. Bülow 1979: 155-56, referring to Kant’s concept of “maturity”). As Iser puts it:

This is tantamount to saying that these acts, though set in motion by the text, defy total control by the text itself, and, indeed, it is the very lack of control that forms the basis of the creative side of reading. (Iser [1976]1980:108; trans. by the author)

A text may be directed at addressee R and yet be overheard by chance recipient C, who may even be the producer’s real addressee (e.g. the audience watching a televised parliamentary debate). Instruction linguistics would only work in this case if a textual instruction could be addressed to both audiences in the same manner. But this would conflict with the condition that texts are defined by their situations. Moreover, each recipient reacts differently to the same text. (↗ 2.3. and 2.5.)

- (4) If there are different ways of understanding the same text, then different actions may follow from it.

For example: for the utterance *Please, close the door!* to be considered sufficiently and reasonably (!) successful, it should be responded to by one of the following possible reactions, e.g. closing the door, promising to close the door as soon as possible by saying *in a minute!*, passing the request on to a third person, ignoring the request and showing that one is not willing to close the door, answering *Then it’s going to be too hot in here!*, answering *Why don’t you do it yourself?*, etc. The range of variants depends on the situation (cf. also Wunderlich 1980: 393).

³³ Ich habe nicht den Anspruch, *Dich* zu verstehen, denn ich kann nicht so tun, als könnte ich an Deine Stelle treten. Du bleibst für Dich, mir fremd. Darin besteht meine Achtung für Dich. Aber Deine [...] Erfahrung finde ich bei mir wieder, kenne ich, nicht im Ausmaß, aber in der Qualität. Ich kann Deine Erfahrung mit Dir teilen. [...] Es gibt Gemeinsames zwischen uns. (Dörner and Plog 1978: 55)

In each case, the reaction shows that the information was received and understood. As all reactions might be linguistically and culturally acceptable in certain situations, the interaction can be regarded as successful in each instance (↗ 6.). Understanding does not involve responding with the reaction expected by the speaker (↗ paragraph 7, below).

(5) As a phenomenon with an aim, an instruction presupposes a particular situation. In translation, this situation is transcended; it is obvious that the *translatum* refers to the target situation, which is different from the source situation. With regard to the source situation, the *translatum* can only inform about it. Cf. Simon (1971, particularly p. 29, note 3), who points out that a source situation can only be regarded as a particular situation if it includes verbal interaction; if this verbal interaction is replaced by another, we have to acknowledge, strictly speaking, that it is not the same situation any more. Any other way of expressing it would be inaccurate but perhaps ‘sufficient’ for a given purpose.

(6) An offer can legitimately be declined. An ‘instruction’, however, must be carried out; otherwise, we must face sanctions (S. J. Schmidt 1976: 85). Refusing an offer is not (necessarily) followed by sanctions (but perhaps by an extension of the debate). At most, the partner in question may be offended if his offer is refused. If an instruction is not carried out, the communication is interrupted, although it may be resumed (perhaps to discuss sanctions). An instruction is normative. In everyday language, instruction indicates an asymmetrical relationship between the communication partners: one of them gives the orders (cf. instructions to soldiers in the barrack yard).

It should be noted that a sanction following a verbal instruction is social, not verbal. Scolding is not a sanction but the expression of a sanction. Verbal actions can only be offers which, under certain circumstances, may or must be interpreted as instructions.

We do not claim that instructions do not exist! What we do claim, however, is that an ‘offer’ is a more general term which includes ‘instruction’ as a subcategory, the offer of an instruction, as it were. This is at least the methodological (!) expression we shall use in our theory. Our arguments do not work the other way round.

Consequently, ‘offer’ linguistics (if we may use the term here) is the more general theory (↗ 3.5.3.). Moreover, we shall again distinguish between the producer’s and the recipient’s perspectives: what may be interpreted as an offer by one side may be interpreted differently by the other, and vice versa. Moreover, we are not speaking here of a text *being* an offer but of *being interpreted* as an offer, etc.

(7) We can see that the methodological distinction between understanding a text and carrying out an action afterwards (as a response to a previous

interaction) must be drawn more sharply than instruction linguistics would allow. Reacting is no longer part of ‘sending’, while understanding is still part of the message because the message would not be a message for the recipient unless it were understood. However, reacting belongs to the same interaction as sending (cf. Vermeer 1972: 134-37, Vermeer [1978]1983: 101). Contrary to general opinion, reacting is irrelevant for the text itself (although not for the interaction).

For this reason, we hesitate to regard translation as a case of “productive reception” (Grimm 1977: 147-48, who mentions Haubrichs 1974: 107, note 30). ‘Receptive production’ would be a more appropriate description of translation (↗ 3.7.). We are concerned here with clear methodological (!) distinctions. In *practice*, the reception of a source text will already be influenced by reflections on the intended translation: reading the source text, the translator may already look for difficult passages or jot down *ad hoc* translations.

However, the methodological distinction we are calling for is not generally recognized. Gadamer ([1960]2004: 329-30), for example, claims that, in an ideal case, an interpreter has to obey a command in order to understand it (this would mean that a kamikaze command is not understood until it is too late). Betti ([1955]1967) argues along the same lines. In contrast, at least some currents of literary studies distinguish between reception and effect (Jauß 1973, particularly p. 33; Jauß 1975, particularly p. 333 and 338), as divided by Lämmert (1973: 165-66) into text potential and audience disposition (Grimm 1977: 23). For a distinction between the immediate effect intended and actually achieved and long-term influence, cf. Grimm (1977: 24-27). A further distinction between expectation, understanding and effect (the latter two being determined by the first) would appear necessary.

(8) Contrary to a producer-oriented instruction theory, an ‘information offer’ theory which is both producer- and recipient-oriented can tell us if, when and how certain texts are actually communicated. In an instruction setting, with its asymmetrical relation between the partners, the producer decides when and how he wants to give an instruction, whereas an information offer is decided (‘negotiated’) by both partners because the producer must have some expectations about the recipient’s information requirements (↗ 3.8.). Note that an instruction also takes the recipient into consideration, but not as an equal partner (who is an essential part of the interaction).

(9) There may already be a gap between what somebody wants to convey and what is actually stated (‘encoded’) in the utterance (e.g. the speaker does not find the right words). The recipient can only reconstruct the intended meaning of an utterance based on the utterance as offered.

(10) To sum up, a text merely “offers ‘schematized aspects’” (Iser [1976]1980: 21, referring to Ingarden 1973: 267-69), allowing the recipient to interpret the

signs transmitted by the producer in various ways and, depending on the situation, to select one interpretation which applies to his own situation (Grimm 1977: 44-46).

(11) Naturally, S. J. Schmidt (1976) is aware of all this. Therefore, it is terminologically more appropriate to replace the ambiguous term ‘instruction’ by the less normative term ‘information offer’. A text is not normative as such. It is offered in line with the prevailing norms of behaviour. We cannot say that a text *is* an instruction, only that it *may be interpreted as* an instruction on the basis of culture-specific norms (i.e. through the selection of one possible offer among others).

(12) The term ‘instruction’, in the sense of a request for action, can be misunderstood in yet another way. Let us assume that *The number of unemployed people rose to 1.3 million in January* is a text. It is pointless to regard this utterance as an ‘instruction to understand the text’ because each text is uttered to be understood or, more precisely, to be understood in a particular way (think of Dadaistic poetry). Taken literally, ‘instruction’ with regard to this text would mean that it should be understood as a request to take measures to reduce the unemployment rate – particularly if an adequate reaction to such a text is assumed to be part of the interaction. Classifying a text as an ‘instruction’, therefore, assigns a primarily operative function (in the terminology of Reiß 1976a) to it. The emphasis given to the ‘informative’ function is easier to justify (↗ 3.4., Example 3). In a given situation, our example *could* be understood to be an instruction, just as *There is a draught!* could be interpreted as a request to close the window. An information offer would be a request to reflect on what could be done to reduce unemployment, whereas an instruction or command would require absolute obedience or risk facing sanctions.

(13) Another example of this:

B (standing at the window and looking out): “It’s raining”.
C: “Oh, the garden chairs are still outside!”
B: “My goodness, I forgot!”

The course of this dialogue shows that B did not have a particular instruction (in the sense of *There is a draught!*) in mind, perhaps not even an instruction at all. Probably B assumed that C knew that it was raining, he may have carried out “phatic” communication (Malinowski 1923), just saying something to break the silence, for example. Nevertheless, B offered some important information, as can be inferred from C’s reaction (cf. Harras 1978: 47-49 against Wunderlich’s classification of “spontaneous” speech acts). That the utterance could be understood as a request to do something about the garden chairs is due to C’s reaction, not to B’s intention. The ‘information’ was offered on two levels: on a meta-level, B ‘informs’ C about his present state of mind and his

appreciation of the situation (*I should say something ...*); the ‘information’ on a referential level (*The garden chairs should be brought in*), which C interpreted from the text, was not intended by B. B’s utterance was meant to be phatic, but was interpreted as ‘informative’ by C. (Cf. Kelly 1979: 11)

(14) There is still another objection to instruction linguistics which is important for a theory of translation. Instruction linguistics claims that a text is a set of instructions indicating that the text should be understood *in a particular way* and reacted to *in a particular way*. This would leave no room for vagueness here, i.e. for translational variants. There are two types of variants:

- (1) Every practitioner knows that, apart from reception variants (cf. Vermeer [1979]1983: 62-88) and the general priority of the *skopos* (↗ 4.), most text elements (and, more generally, texts) can be translated in a variety of ways, and it is often impossible to (objectively) decide which variant should be given priority (what is the difference in meaning between *although* and *though*?). Instruction linguistics would, at least methodologically, require choosing the optimum translation variant which conveys *the* instruction. In fact, however, a translational action is not a biunique reversible process (cf. Wilss [1977]1982: 107).
 - (2) Instruction linguistics can only conceive translation as a two-phase process of communication in which an instruction intended by the source-text producer is passed on through mediation. This leaves no room for functional variants: *Don Quixote* cannot be read as a children’s book or turned into a children’s book in translation, as this would imply a change of function and a falsification of the instruction; the New Testament can only be read as an operative text intended to improve new Christians, etc., not as an expressive text for the aesthetic delight of ‘old’ Christians. If translators regard the source text and the *translatum* as two different (!) offers of information, they may then feel justified in making a responsible and creative decision.
- (15) To conclude, a text *is* not an instruction because it permits the recipients to recognize requests that are conditioned by the situation, to understand them in a particular way and to carry them out, but because it allows them to come to an interpretation that matches their own situation and is, therefore, in part individual.

3.5.3 Information offer

The above terminological and interpretative difficulties in instruction linguistics can be avoided or solved if we regard a text as an ‘offer of information’. This also has advantages for a theory of translation.

For example: we assume that the primary function of a statement like *It's raining!* is the information that (the sender thinks) it is raining and that (the sender considers) this information is supposedly of interest ('new') to the recipient, e.g. because it tells him about a situation of which he is assumed to be ignorant, it indicates the sender's willingness to communicate (phatic communication), it signals that the sender wishes the recipient to take an umbrella with him when he goes out, etc. The question *Is it raining?* would, on the other hand, be interpreted as information that the speaker expects information about the weather, etc.

The diagrams 1-7 will have to be amended accordingly. This applies to both texts and text segments.

3.6 Translation as an IO about another IO

It is essential for our theory as a general theory of translation that each *translatum* (whether translated or interpreted), independent of its function (cf. text types in Reiß [1971]2000 and 1976a) or genre, be considered to be an information offer for a target language and culture (IO_T) about an information offer from a source language and culture (IO_S).

$$\text{Trl.} = \text{IO}_T(\text{IO}_S)$$

The translator (or the commissioner with the translator's agreement or, expressed more generally, the *translatum*) offers some information about the source text which, in turn, is regarded as an offer of information.

Compare the following situation: when translators are asked, in sight translating or in informal interpreting situations, *What does the text say?* or *What did the old lady say?* or even without such an explicit request, they sometimes spontaneously introduce the *translatum* by *It says that ...* or *She said that ...*, i.e. by an explicit piece of information *about* the source text, and not only by an extension of the communication in another code, in which the interpreter only serves as medium or relay station. (This is not the place to speak about the qualitative value of such a strategy.) In such cases, occasionally, a (faulty) transfer of pronouns may occur, in which the first person of the source text is turned into a third person in the target text (*he goes on to write that he will ...* instead of *I will ...*).

Another indication that translating is not simply passing on a communication but offering information about a previous communicative interaction can be found in the fact that, when passing on a communication, the speaker may be asked to repeat the wording (which may have to be recorded on tape). Simple transcoding preserves an exact reproduction (there are some exceptions, e.g. transcoding from Latin into Arabic script often does not retain the quality of

short vowels.) Only in a very few exceptional cases will a translation be a univocal, reversible process; we also believe that a (justified) change of functions with regard to the source text is legitimate.

For example: the following closing formulas for business correspondence are largely interchangeable: *yours faithfully / yours truly / yours respectfully* etc. as well as their German counterparts *mit freundlichen Grüßen / mit bestem Gruß / hochachtungsvoll / mit vorzüglicher Hochachtung* etc.

We are claiming that, for our theory of translation, the following means of expression is meaningful and appropriate: the translation of a business letter (as a business letter) informs about the content of the source letter; the translation of a poem (as a poem) informs, for example, about the interdependence of form and meaning, etc.

In order to avoid pointless concepts and modes of description, we would have to add, with regard to literary texts, that translation also (and sometimes particularly) informs about the ‘expressive’ character of a source text or about the possibilities of going beyond the limits of linguistic and cultural norms and systems (cf. Coseriu 1967 and 1970 on norm and system; detailed bibliographical references in C. Schmitt 1979: 132-33). Paepcke has shown this in his works (cf. especially Paepcke [1981]1986); cf. also Glinz (1973: 23) with regard to ‘information’ as the meaning potential of a text.

Which forms and strategies of information are chosen in a translation does not depend primarily on the source-text genre but on the intended function of the *translatum* (cf. Diller and Kornelius 1978).

For example: the translation of a US American election campaign speech may either call on the audience to vote (e.g. for Hispanic American citizens) or inform about this call to vote (e.g. for newspaper readers in Spain).

Interpreting is also an offer of information (listeners can switch off). Interpreting is absolutely not the mechanical transcoding of an instruction (↗ 3.4., Example 5). Simultaneous interpreting works best the more the interpreter leaves the source text behind, focussing on the information about what was said instead of transcoding (cf. Barik 1974 and the discussion in Albert and Obler 1978, esp. p. 92). The discussion in Albert and Obler (1978: 217-20) would seem to show that an interpretation transferring the essential aspects of the source-text meaning sounds more natural and works better, even without specific training, than a form-focussed code-switching operation which tries to faithfully reproduce the wording and structures of the source text. It must be left to a more specific study to find out whether the model proposed by Kirstein and de Vincenz (1974), which tries to make use of various levels of

deep structure, can account for different translation strategies (cf. also, although in a different context, Albert and Obler 1978: 229).

It should be noted here that the IO approach also resolves the dichotomy between foreignizing and domesticating translation, which has been discussed time and again in translation theory: a foreignizing translation would be a translation that primarily informs about source-text forms, whereas a domesticating translation would primarily inform about text meaning and effect (↗ 2.6.).

Those who wish to relate our theory to earlier terminologies might call it a ‘prospective’ theory, which is primarily oriented towards the *translatum* (cf. Postgate 1922). Toury (1980a: *passim*) gives preferential consideration to such a prospective orientation, compared with a ‘retrospective’, source-text oriented approach. In our theory, prospectivity is linked to the functional perspective (↗ 4.).

There are three potential misunderstandings which could make it difficult to regard translation as an ‘information offer’:

- (1) Our theory is a *general* theory of translational action (↗ 0.). This means that the forms of translating and interpreting common in our Western cultures are conceived of as specific forms of translational action (↗ 3.9.2.) which, due to their ‘imitative’ character, often look very similar to a two-phase transcoding process.
- (2) The description of translation as an information offer is a *methodological* approach which does not directly reflect translation practice. A two-phase communication can also be described as a twofold offer of information but, in our model, the second offer is not a transcoding process. Thus, the ‘information offer’ theory is a more complex model which includes non-verbal cultural phenomena, whereas a theory of translation as a two-phase transcoding communication is a specific subtype in which the non-verbal cultural phenomena are assigned a value of ‘zero’.
- (3) Classification as an ‘offer’ does not exclude the demand for equivalence between source and target text (as the vagueness principle seems to suggest) (↗ 3.9. and 10.).

3.7 Types of ‘information offers’ about texts

There are different types of information offers about other information offers. For our purposes, they can be classified in two overlapping groups: ‘commentaries’ and ‘translations’ (again, terminology is not our concern here).

- (1) ‘Commentaries’ are all those IOs which are explicitly marked as an information offer about another information offer, e.g. by genre-typical explanatory formulas such as *The author claims that ...* or *This may be commented on as follows ...* This means that, in a commentary, we can find a combination of metacommunication and referential communication (the examples are metacommunicative

because they ‘communicate’ about the referential communication).

- (2) In contrast to a commentary, a ‘translational action’ is by definition interlingual and intercultural. A translation is not explicitly marked as a translation in the text itself. (Implicit markers can be seen in borrowings from the source text, cf. Toury 1980a, although a heterocultural origin is not obligatory.) A translation, therefore, is not made recognizable as an IO_T about an IO_S by explicit markers. To be more precise, its secondary character cannot be inferred from the text itself but only from the background knowledge we have about the text, e.g. if we know that a given text is a *translatum* or if we find something like *Translation ... or Translated by ...* on the title page or in the paratext. This kind of supplement is a ‘commentary’ on the text, not part of the text itself.

In spite of being an IO_T , a translatum ‘simulates’ the form and function of an IO_S

As its specific character is not visible at first sight, it is understandable that some scholars have considered translation to be a two-phase transcoding process.

By inverting the formula for translation proposed in 3.6., we can say that:

A text t in language and culture T can be described as a translatum of a text s in language and culture S (if $T \neq S$) if, and insofar as, it can be proved to be an information offer in T which simulates the corresponding information offer in S . (For functional variables in the relationship between the two texts, see Toury 1980a: 68-69, but without the theoretical framework presented there.)

This statement has two consequences:

- (1) The specification ‘insofar as’ and the statement ‘can be proved to be’ are intended to exclude parodies and pseudo-translations (Toury 1980a: 45) from the concept of translation. (Cf. the works of Robert Neumann, 1897-1975, who has been called the founder of literary parody as a critical genre, and the ‘translations’ of Ossian by James McPherson, Toury 1980a: 48, note 4.)
- (2) Parodies and similar text transformations are examples of ‘translation’ in the sense that they presuppose (imaginary) text versions whose structural elements are ‘translated’ like those of a source text. Parodies also provide an offer of information which simulates (imaginary) text structures. (This is why we did not use the static expression that something *is* a translation but that it *can be proved to be* a translation.)

According to Lüdtke, texts from an earlier stage of a language are “not verbal communication themselves but *symptoms* of certain characteristics of verbal

communication”.³⁴ Lüdtke was referring to analyses of changes in language, but his statement can be applied to translation as well because there is usually a time lag between the production of a source text and its translation (we can even observe a minimal time lag in simultaneous interpreting). In this sense, the statement quoted above simply means that a translation must be regarded not as (an extension of) a communicative interaction itself but as a symptom of a past communicative interaction, about which it informs in another code. As the Spanish writer Pío Baroja says: “In one period of time, everything is events; in another, everything is considered to be a commentary on past events”.³⁵

The fact that translations, e.g. in a bilingual edition of a text, can be of assistance to a language learner (as is reported with regard to Heinrich Schliemann, the famous German archaeological discoverer of ancient Troy) can be explained by using our theory: in this case, the translation offers information about the structures of the foreign language (in a word-for-word rendering) or about structural differences between the source and target languages. Or, we could say that the translation has been attributed another function, as it is no longer read as a translation in the sense of our definition but as a different kind of text – just as a grammar book may not be read as an information offer about language structures but for the purpose of enjoying the elegant style of the author. That would at least be a possibility.

The mere imitation of the sounds of a source text by signs in a target language would not be sufficient to meet the demand of offering information about a piece of information. This could not be called a translation, as it is another kind of transfer.

For example (from Toury 1980a: 43-44): Wordsworth: *My heart leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky ... /* The Viennese experimental poet Ernst Jandl: *mai hart lieb sappfen eibe hold er renn bohr in sees kai.* (If this nonsense verse is read with German pronunciation, it sounds very much like the English source text.)

This may be a ‘text’ of some kind but, unlike Toury (1980a: 45), we would not classify it as a *translatum* (in the sense of our definition).

It may be stating the obvious that by offering information_T based on a given information_S, each *translatum* necessarily contains certain elements of the source text (e.g. ‘meanings’). It is in this sense that we should understand Toury’s (1980a: 74-75) claim that each *translatum* shows evidence of an interlanguage between S and T (↗ 3.9.2.). And not only of *interlanguage* – because translation always involves a cultural transfer. (With regard to *interlanguage*,

³⁴ [...] nicht selbst sprachliche Kommunikation, sondern Symptome für Gegebenheiten sprachlicher Kommunikation. (Lüdtke 1980: 184)

³⁵ En una época, todos son acontecimientos; en otra, todos son comentarios a los hechos pasados. (Baroja 1946, Book 3.1: 122)

see Selinker 1972, and the literature on foreign-language teaching and learning based on his seminal work. Incidentally, the transfer from S to T mentioned above need not necessarily be transcultural as S may already have offered information about the target culture.)

3.8 The benefits of our theory

What is the benefit of our concept of translation as an IO_T about an IO_S? Toury (1980a: *passim*) would ask: in what sense is it a ‘theory of translatability’?

The examples discussed above may already provide an answer: if translation is regarded as extension of a specific communication in which an instruction is passed on, it is not possible to tell why something is translated, and why it is translated the way it is translated, at least not in general and independently of specific text types or situations or, incidentally, standard practice. We have already mentioned the possibility of a change of function in translation. A theory which regards translation as an extension of communication as an instruction would not be able to justify such a change of function in a methodologically sound way. This kind of justification would not fit into the theory and, therefore, the theory itself would be incomplete.

Our theory is suited to making a first attempt to define the what, when and how of a translational action. Of course, such an attempt would still remain rather general and vague. But it might provide a useful guideline one day for a pragmatic approach which, in any case, would be interdisciplinary because the definition of the when and what of a translational action would have to be based, amongst other things, on a sociological perspective (for details, cf. the current theory of reception, cf. Grimm 1977, esp. 117-44).

Translational action assumes a given target situation (Toury 1980a, esp. 82-83) or, more specifically, expectations with regard to a target situation (on the part of the translator, or the commissioner in agreement with the translator, whose consent is expressed by accepting the commission). From this target situation, it can be inferred whether and how the translational action should be carried out (e.g. whether it makes sense to produce a translation, which function it should serve, how this function can best be achieved). Unlike Toury, we believe that translation is a phenomenon of both the source and the target culture. It begins in the source culture, and it may even have a direct or indirect impact on the source culture (cf. the effect of the German translations of Hans Christian Andersen’s fairy tales on Danish literature).

Translation as an instruction would depend on the circumstances of the producer’s situation and, therefore, the source culture and language. Translation as an offer of information is primarily dependent on the recipient’s situation (more specifically, the expectations regarding the recipient’s situation) and, therefore, the target culture and language. (It depends on specific conditions, based on the assumption that there are specific conditions regarding the recipi-

ent's situation.) Information is usually not offered unless it is required or seems appropriate under the (expected) circumstances of the recipient's situation.

Along similar lines, Haug and Rammer (1974: 56) quote Herrmann:

It is not the purpose of language [...] to combine particular elements and semantic structures with their own individual meanings according to strict translation rules. Rather, the speaker increasingly chooses words and sentences to match the holistic communicative situation, which includes a partner whose alternative ways of thinking are anticipated and taken into consideration in the verbalization of the semantic structures intended to be conveyed.³⁶

The following example illustrates how much translations consider the (expected) situation of the intended audience mentioned by Grimm:

A further instance is the adaptation of a translation for political reasons. In the German version of Roman Polanski's film *The Fearless Vampire Killers* (originally titled *Dance of the Vampires*), an old vampire grins when his young victim confronts him with a cross. "That doesn't work", he says, "I'm too old". Watching the original English version, the audience has a reason to laugh because the old vampire says the cross is useless because he is a Jew. In all likelihood, the German version was attempting to avoid associations with recent German history.³⁷

With regard to text adaptations in translation, cf. also Wienold (1972: 169-70).

An analysis of the communication in question may be useful to find out about the conditions for an information offer: a person may say *It's raining* if it can be assumed that this is of some interest to the addressee, e.g. to indicate that it may be wise to take an umbrella, to respond to a question about the weather, to bridge a pause in the conversation which is beginning to feel awkward (to speak of an instruction in this case of 'phatic communication' would not make

³⁶ Sprache dient [...] weniger dazu, bestimmte Bedeutungselemente und Bedeutungsstrukturen nach festen Übersetzungsregeln mit ihrer je eigenen Bedeutung zu versehen. Man wählt vielmehr in steigendem Maße die Wörter und Sätze nach der sprachlichen Gesamtsituation, zu der auch ein Partner gehört, dessen "**Denkalternativen**" man antizipiert und bei der sprachlichen Abbildung der zu übermittelnden Bedeutungsstruktur berücksichtigt. (Herrmann 1972: 121)

³⁷ Ein weiteres Phänomen ist die aus politischen Gründen bewußt vorgenommene Änderung eines Textes in der Übersetzung. In der deutschen Version des Polanski-Films *Tanz der Vampire* grinst ein alter Vampir, als sein junges Opfer ihm ein Kreuz entgegenhält: Das nütze bei ihm nichts, er sei dazu zu alt. In der englischen Originalfassung lacht der Zuschauer zu Recht; dort sagt der alte Vampir, das Kreuz nütze nichts, denn er sei Jude. Hier sollte wohl die Synchronisation auf die belastete deutsche Vergangenheit Rücksicht nehmen. (Grimm 1977: 156)

any sense! ↗ 3.5.2.13), etc. By means of a similar analysis of the circumstances of the recipient (according to the sender's expectations), it should be possible to tell when *It's raining* would *not* be an appropriate utterance.

A translation is offered if, under the conditions of the target linguaculture, the translator (or any other interested party) perceives a need for it, i.e. readers who should be informed, or who it is assumed wish to be informed; a publisher who wants to try to sell books if this is common in the target culture (this cannot be decided from the source culture's point of view!), etc.

For example: with regard to the German campaign speech (↗ 3.4., Example 4), there was a need for information in the English-speaking world (or at least this was the assumption made by journalists), whereas for the commentary on Cicero's *De officiis*, written in Latin by the Danish philologist Johan Nicolai Madvig (1804-86), such a need is not perceived to exist; therefore, this commentary has not been translated from Latin into German to date. It is assumed that potential readers know Latin anyway.

These conditions do not apply just to face-to-face communication, they also apply, as shown by the examples, to texts preserved in writing or any other form of indirect communication. In such cases, the producer (or, in our specific case, the translator-as-‘(re-)producer’) is also guided in his action by his expectations regarding a group of recipients and their situation, i.e. not with regard to a specific recipient known by name but with regard to colleagues, an audience of educated readers, people interested in politics, etc. Therefore, Glinz (1973: 17) is wrong when he claims that such “one-way communication” (*ibid.*: 16) can be made with regard to “any kind or any number of recipients, in any situation, and it will produce only a slight feeling of strangeness; [...] the other variables, such as the recipients and their situation, can be chosen at will”.³⁸ Any, really? Why does such a thing as political, or other, censorship exist? Would you read the Bible or the gutter press to a dying person? Could you replace the missal with a collection of jokes? (cf. the example of the Polanski film mentioned above).

Every translational action is directed at an intended audience. The translator/interpreter need not be consciously aware of the recipients and their situation, he may not be able to name them individually – but they are there.

³⁸ [Solche] Einweg-Kommunikation [...] [kann] mit nur minimaler Verfremdung beliebigen und beliebig vielen Rezipienten vorgelegt werden, in beliebig festlegbaren Situationen; [...] es können die anderen Variablen, nämlich die Rezipienten und die Rezeptionssituationen, beliebig gewählt [...] werden. (Glinz 1973: 17)

For example: T. S. Eliot's novel *The Waste Land* is 'intuitively' translated for an educated audience (an analogy of the translator); an article on a specific topic in chemistry is not translated for the illiterate, etc.

The important thing is not the situation itself but the expected situation, as is illustrated by the following example mentioned by Grimm:

Heinrich Böll's satirical short story *Berichte zur Gesinnungslage der Nation* ('Reports on the state of the Nation's thoughts', published in 1975) is a good example of the importance which the expectations regarding the author have on the impact of a work. Despite the topical nature of the subject, this insipid text would not have been successful if it had not been written by a Nobel Prize winner whose name promised publicity.³⁹

A complete theory of translational action would have to (be able to) include rules as to how (expectations about) target situations should be analysed in order to come to a conclusion about the conditions for possible translational actions.

The same applies to how the translational action is carried out: translators/interpreters translate/interpret with regard to form and function in the manner the target culture expects the information to be offered (again, more specifically, in the manner the translator expects the target culture to expect the information to be offered), e.g. as literally as possible, producing a text which is appropriate for the intended audience (in modern German-speaking cultures, Cervantes' *Don Quixote* is read more by children than by adults), with an efficient use of language (the endless repetitions of Buddha's teachings are deleted; cf. Nida 1977: 225 on Hebrew parallelisms), using a conventional style (in German translations of American business letters, polite phrases are added), etc. These translation strategies could not be justified by a theory of translation as an instruction in a two-phase transcoding process; in such a theory, the only translation method which could be permitted would be 'faithful to the source text' (whatever that may mean).

If translation is regarded as an extension of communication, any changes (or lack of changes) to the source text could only be justified by a feeble pragmatic excuse such as 'this is how it is usually done', which is no justification at all. For a *theory* of translation, however, such an attitude is inadmissible. In extended communication, a change of function is not allowed: just imagine

³⁹ Inwieweit die Autorerwartung [gemeint ist: Erwartung über den Autor] beim Erfolg eines Werkes eine Rolle spielt, lässt sich etwa an der Satire Heinrich Bölls *Berichte zur Gesinnungslage der Nation* aufzeigen. Trotz der Aktualität des Themas hätte dieser schale Text wohl kaum Erfolg gehabt, wäre nicht der publicity-trächtige Nobelpreisträger Böll sein Verfasser gewesen. (Grimm 1977: 305, note 267)

Defoe writing a sociocritical novel, and the printer (as a mediator of extended communication) turning it into a children's book, or, you dictate a business letter to your secretary and she turns it into a lyrical love letter.

The above considerations also clarify the translator's role in the process of translational action: he is the one who ultimately decides what is translated or interpreted, when and how, on the basis of his knowledge of the source and target cultures and languages. (Thus, it is also the translator's decision whether he accepts or rejects a particular translation commission (↗ 2.4.1.) because he is more than just a 'language mediator'.)

The most important criterion for any translational decision is the *function* of the *translatum* as an offer of information in the target culture (which has to be justified) (Vermeer [1978]1983: 48-61; ↗ 4.).

So far, most theoretical approaches have classified translation more or less clearly as a two-phase process of communication; only a few show a tendency towards classifying it as an information offer. Seen from the perspective of the source-text producer or a commissioner, or any other observer, translation is a link in a chain of actions which could not be carried out otherwise (cf. Harras 1978: 69-73). We would like to stress, however, that it is not the source-text producer or any other participant who is responsible for extending the communicative interaction in translation, it is the translator who does so independently of the others: he has to take the initiative, or re-activate it, i.e. he decides whether something is translated/interpreted and how to proceed. The decision depends on *his* analysis of the situation regarding whether a translation can be successful, an assessment he can make based on his knowledge of both the source and the target situation and on his bi-cultural competence. (The fact that others may have the same knowledge does not affect our theory.) It is a methodological question regarding where exactly the process of translational action begins, and, if we assume that it begins before any translating occurs, i.e. with the primary information offer IO_S , this will lead to logical difficulties. (Not every IO_S is actually translated/interpreted.) Moreover, we would like to emphasize how important the role of the translator is, as it is often underestimated (cf. Kelly 1979) – even among translators themselves.

If translational action is regarded as an IO_T about an IO_S , translation strategies must then be guided, depending on the purpose of the information, by the rules which allow the expectation that the information will be successful.

For example: a specialized text for experts is supposed to offer clear, objective information, but presupposes good technical knowledge of the topic; children expect language forms adequate for children; business letters are factual and polite (politeness being culture-specific); the translation of a German campaign speech into English aims to inform about the persuasive strategies commonly used in Germany and not to campaign according to the rules of the target culture, etc.

Rules for passing on information are specific to cultures, languages and functions; people in the Middle Ages, for example, had a different concept of translation from the one we have today. The rules for passing on information on information are, in part, different from those guiding direct information (cf. above with reference to the election campaign speech). All this lies beyond our specific interests here. Our point was to present and explain the process of translational action as an offer of information.

3.9 Translation as ‘imitatio’

So far, we have defined translational action in two ways:

- (1) as an IO_T about an IO_S in which
 - (1.1) the *translatum* is not marked as a secondary text within the text itself and
 - (1.2) the *translatum* simulates a primary IO;
- (2) as a phenomenon where the strategy and translation form depend on the purpose of the translational action (the *translatum*, $\geq 0.4.$).

The definition of translational action as a simulation of an IO_S still allows several different translation forms and strategies. (Examples from other cultural areas can be found in Khoury 1971, among others.) This vagueness was intentional, as our aim is a *general* theory of translational action which must not be limited to the strategies most commonly used in one particular culture at one particular moment in time.

In the following chapter, we shall outline a definition of translational action limited to what is common in our cultural area today. This outline is intended to be an example of a *specific* theory of translational action.

3.9.1 Transfer

Within the framework of a general theory, the specific feature of ‘translation’ as an information offer is included in the generic term ‘transfer’.

In general, a ‘transfer’ refers to the transformation of a sign, as an element of a sign system which possesses a potential for form and function, into another sign, as an element of another sign system. The strategy chosen for this transfer depends on the circumstances of the purpose behind the transfer. The strategy includes, for example, the selection of an appropriate sign from the target system, etc. Given that signs are elements of a system and are transferred as such, and not as isolated elements, the transfer may be assumed to possess certain regularities, or, at the very least, arbitrariness may be excluded. The complexity of the signs is not specified (a sign could be, for example, a word, a sentence or a text). Therefore, the rule includes complex signs or sign-systems, such as texts. In real situations, the transfer is subject to

individual circumstances; the transfer of verbal signs is subject to language- and culture-specific conditions of verbalization and its cultural implications, i.e. in the transfer of signs from system S to system T, linguistic and cultural conditions will have to be taken into account, e.g. *thank you* → a smile; *hallo* → *bon soir*; *auf Wiedersehen* → Ø (a zero sign).

Examples of transfer:

Intralingual examples: dramatizing a novel, taking notes of a conversation.

Extralingual examples: filming an action, painting a landscape, transferring the cultural value of a cow (in India) to that of a pet (in Germany) (cf. Fohrbeck and Wiesand 1983: 10-20).

Transfer between extralingual and intralingual examples: reporting an event, recording a conversation. In addition: Mussorgsky composing a piece of music titled *Pictures at an Exhibition*, building a cathedral from a construction plan, building/interpreting a cathedral as an expression of religious faith.

In a transfer, sign elements (e.g. the words of a text) are transferred based on different rules, depending on their function.

For example: in a translational action, pronominal references are not transferred, they are ‘quoted’: wherever the speaker says *I meant ...*, the *translatum* gives the equivalent of *I meant ...*, not of *he meant ...*

To say that a transfer is rule-based means that it can be understood and checked by others and that it is (within certain tolerable limits of vagueness) even reversible (although not biuniquely reversible). Thus, a transfer can be described as a specific form of mapping.

Based on what we have said before, ‘translational action’ can generally be described as an IO_T that maps an IO_S (in a particular way, i.e. simulating it):

$$\text{TA} \subseteq \text{IO}_S \times \text{IO}_T$$

3.9.2 *Translation as simulation*

As we have mentioned already, in our (modern Western) culture, the concept of translation is usually defined more narrowly, as Toury (1980a: 26) critically comments:

the existing theories of translation [...] actually *reduce* ‘translation’ to ‘translatability’ [...] their notions are only *restricted* versions of a general concept of translatability because they always have some specified adequacy conditions which are *postulated* as the only *proper* ones, if not disguised as the only *possible* ones. (Emphasis in the original)

An additional requirement for the standard – i.e. culture-specific – procedures in translational action is that the *translatum* should be, on all levels, functionally and formally as close to the source text as possible in line with the translation purpose. (The fact that there may be even more restrictive requirements is not our concern here, cf., for example, “formal equivalence” in Koller 1979.)

Remember that any reference to ‘the’ source text is actually an abbreviated form of expression. We have pointed out that there is no such thing as ‘the’ authoritative text for all recipients. There is only ‘a’ text in a given situation of reception (cf. Vermeer [1979]1983: 68-88). We have abbreviated the expression to save space and to avoid tiresome repetitions. A ‘text’ can change during the process of interpretation and by being interpreted; interpretation is a dynamic process. We cannot say that something ‘is’ *per se* a text; a text does not exist until it is constituted by its reception – in a particular situation. All this is well known from reader-response theory, particularly in literary criticism (reception aesthetics), as we have mentioned already.

The requirement that the *translatum* should be ‘as close to the source text as possible’ can be described by ‘imitation’, i.e. the imitation of a particular model in a different linguistic *and* cultural code, guided by a given purpose, and, as far as possible, on all formal and semantic levels (i.e. with regard to all text elements, from the text as a whole down to the phoneme/grapheme level, *including* non-verbal cultural aspects).

Compared to its much narrower usage in literary history, the concept of ‘imitation’ has been expanded to include more than just models from the Classics. Stackelberg describes the traditional concept:

By *imitatio*, the old humanists were thinking of the imitation of Latin and Greek models, not of models found in modern national languages.⁴⁰

We prefer a wider concept. According to Dryden, imitation meant “making a working of one’s own out of the original” (Kelly 1979: 42; cf. *ibid.*: 46). Jacques Peletier du Mans, in his *Art poétique* (1555), regarded translation as “the truest form of imitation” (cf. Finsler 1912: 128), and Stackelberg writes:

⁴⁰ [D]ie Theorie des humanistischen Zeitalters meinte, wenn von Imitatio de Rede war, stets die Nachahmung der antiken, also der lateinischen oder griechischen Vorbilder, nicht die Nachahmung von Vorbildern innerhalb der neueren Landessprachen. (Stackelberg 1972: X)

“Imitatio and translation are the most closely related forms of reception”.⁴¹

In the 16th century, *imitatio* was used as a translation of the Aristotelian concept of “mimesis” (Stackelberg 1972: XI). This is also important here because mimesis refers to an act of imitation involving the *whole* person.

We would like to repeat that translational action is a holistic process (where the verbal elements take precedence). Applied to texts-in-situation, translational action is not only verbal, it also involves the whole person and, as a specific form of transfer, includes the possibility of verbal action being transformed into non-verbal action and vice versa. In interpreting, for example, it is the interpreter as a person, his posture and behaviour, his clothing, his voice, etc. that are involved.

Mimesis turns a particular reality into a new reality (Friedrich and Killy 1965: 458), i.e. it turns it into a complete reality, not just a verbal reality, let alone a literary one. This complete reality includes translational action.

To conclude our definition of the concept of imitation, we would like to refer to Nida’s concept of “closest natural equivalent” (Nida and Taber 1969: 12), without adopting Nida’s hierarchy of form and style.

Betti ([1955]1967: 490-599) tried to develop a typology of human actions as imitations. It is important to note that he also does not regard translation as a mere verbal transfer.

There are different degrees and modes of imitation. The degree and mode of imitation (possibly turned into a culture-specific norm in the sense of Co-seriu 1967 and 1970, and pragmatically established) developed for translation determines, among other things, in what respect and to what extent a target text imitates a source text. This is why target texts to a certain degree can deviate from the standard preliminary norms prevailing in original works in the target culture, by keeping close to source norms or even introducing new norms to the target culture (cf. Toury 1980a: 57).

An extreme form of approximation with regard to source norms is Schleiermacher’s ‘alienating’ translation. It is obvious that such (partial) alienation is due to the requirement of imitation in its most rigid form which still has a rather strong influence on our modern concept of translation. The requirement is culture-specific and therefore beyond the scope of a general theory.

When we proceed to present a hierarchy of rules for translational action below, it will become evident that there is no room for Toury’s (1980a: 51-62), or any other, norm typology in our theory. Toury distinguishes between

- (1) an ‘initial norm’ with a logical (p. 54) or chronological (p. 55) priority which determines the choice between foreignizing and assimilating translation, including
- (2) *a priori* ‘preliminary norms’ referring to

⁴¹ Imitatio und Übersetzung sind zunächst-verwandte Rezeptionsformen. (Stackelberg 1972: IX)

- (2.1) the choice of works to be translated, and
- (2.2) the choice between direct and indirect translation; and
- (3) ‘operational’ norms concerning
 - (3.1) textual segmentation (‘matricial norms’) and
 - (3.2) selection of target material for ‘textual norms proper’ (cf. Toury 1980a: 53-55).

In our opinion, this typology of norms lacks a convincing logic.

Diller and Kornelius (1978: 4) came to the conclusion that the decision about whether translation was an IO_T about an IO_S or the two-phase extension of a communicative interaction depended on the translation purpose.

For example: if the *translatum* is intended to convey an ‘impression of what German printed obituaries are like’, the German text with all its elaborate wording would be translated faithfully; if it is intended to notify people of the death of a person, it would be replaced by an obituary in a form more commonly found in Great Britain (cf. Diller and Kornelius 1978: 4).

In the first case, House ([1977]1981: 202-4) speaks of the source text serving as a “document”, which feels particularly appropriate. In translation, texts with a document function are treated like documents, i.e. their formal structure is “documented” and not “replaced” (as Diller and Kornelius would term it). However, replacement would be the appropriate strategy for a text serving as a *medium* (or ‘instrument’) for conveying information.

In keeping with our comprehensive approach, it is possible to provide yet another description of this case. Beyond a particular, culture-specific, point, a given function no longer works as ‘information’, only as a ‘commentary’; it is not an ‘imitation’ any more, it is another mode of information, e.g. ‘adaptation’, ‘paraphrase’, etc. The limits are set first by the translation purpose as the most general criterion and then, depending on the translation purpose, by the culturally prevailing translation practices, e.g. imitation as the standard procedure. Within these limits, individual cases are governed by the rules suggested by Reiß ([1971]2000), which have also proved to be stable within a particular culture from our theoretical point of view.

The above example of the obituary can be ‘explained’ in still another way: as genres are culture-specific, we could classify ‘obituary’ under a universal genre or, rather, under a culture-specific genre such as ‘Christian obituary’ or ‘German obituary’. Beyond a certain degree of differentiation, a translation which imitates the source text will no longer work and the translator will have to use a translation which acts as a simulation in its broadest sense (e.g. substituting it with a similar culture-specific phenomenon). For more examples regarding obituaries cf. Reiß ([1977]78).

3.9.3 Summary

In our discussion, we have mentioned three kinds of transfer, in order of increasing specificity:

- (1) An irreversible, only partially regulated transfer. (A transfer at the level of the translator’s idiolect, for example, is not subject to regulation, – not because it does not follow any rules but because, apart from a very few exceptions, such rules are, to date, unknown to linguists.) With regard to texts, this kind of transfer is often classified as ‘adaptation’, ‘paraphrase’, etc.

For example: the transfer of Luke 1-2 by the Flemish neo-romantic author Felix Timmermans: *Het kindeken Jezus in Vlaanderen* (‘Jesus is born in Flanders’).

- (2) A partially reversible transfer which simulates an original, with regard to texts often classified as ‘free translation’.

For example: Franz Kuhn’s German translations of ancient Chinese novels.

- (3) A transfer which imitates an original (translation according to *our* present culture-specific model).

This list refers primarily to a transfer of form. A transfer of function is subject to the purpose of a particular piece of translating or interpreting (↗ 4.).

4. The priority of purpose (*skopos* theory)

4.1 Introductory remarks

An action aims to achieve a goal and thus to alter the current state of affairs. The motivation for such an action is that the intended goal is estimated to be of greater importance than the current state of affairs. Sometimes, an action is preceded by a chain of motivations: if somebody acts under compulsion, this aim may be estimated to be of lesser value than the current state of affairs but compliance may be less damaging than resistance. An action is always preceded by (conscious or unconscious) expectations about a future situation in comparison to how the current situation has been assessed. By summarizing all the requirements for an action, we are presupposing that it makes sense for an agent to choose one aim from all the possible culture-specific options in a particular situation. Incidentally, a general theory of action need not be explained in detail; see the existing literature on this topic, above all Rehbein (1977) and Harras (1978). With regard to “action”, cf. Harras (1978: 19); with regard to action requirements, cf. Harras (1978: 28-31); with regard to “intention”, cf. Biessner (1982).

We shall now examine the difference between a general theory of action and a general theory of translational action (as a subcategory of the former). A theory of action begins with a specific situation which is assessed by a particular person in a particular way. This person then acts in such a way that his action can be justified by his assessment of the situation (we shall not go into the details). A theory of translational action begins with a situation that always includes a preceding action, i.e. the source text; here, the question is not whether and how somebody acts but whether, how and in what respect the previous action is continued (translated/interpreted). Seen in this light, a theory of translational action is a *complex* theory of action.

Consequently, translational decisions are based on a fundamental rule which not only determines whether something is transferred and what is transferred, but also how it is transferred, i.e. according to which strategy.

A translational action is governed by its purpose.

Each utterance is an expression of the cognitive state and the intentions of the speaker.⁴²

Each discourse is more or less clearly directed at a goal (intentional) and, as such, it is an instrument for pursuing intentions.⁴³

⁴² Jede Äußerung ist Ausdruck des jeweiligen Bewußtseinszustandes und der Absichten eines Sprechers. (Stern 1974: 67)

⁴³ Jede Rede ist mehr oder minder zielgerichtet (intentional), als solche ist sie ein Instrument zur Verfolgung von Absichten. (*ibid.*: 75)

With regard to translation in particular, cf. Nida (1977). Nida and Taber (1969: 1) refer to a subfunction of the general statement made above when they write:

Even the old question *Is this a correct translation?* must be answered in terms of another question, namely, *For whom?*

Cf. also Hirsch (1967: 43-44) with regard to the purpose of an interpretation.

That the purpose takes precedence in each translation is clarified and illustrated by practical examples and exercises in Höning and Kußmaul (1982).

The Greek word *skopós* means ‘purpose’, ‘aim’. For the time being, we shall use the terms *purpose*, *aim*, *function* and *skopos* as synonyms. Cf. also, with different terminology, Betti ([1955]1967: 335), Schenkein (1972: 354-55); Kallmeyer and Schütze (1976: 12 and 25, note 11).

In this book, ‘function’ is used with two different meanings: (1) function = purpose, *skopos* (as above); (2) function (in the mathematical sense) = logical interdependence of values. What is meant in each case will become clear from the co(n)text.

4.2 The priority of functionality

For example: Central Europe, 21st century. B (male) and C (female) meet at work in the morning. B says to C *Good morning!*, tipping his hat, smiling. *Beautiful day, isn't it?* C returns the greeting.

Assumption 1: in the above situation, B *must* act; he is obliged to ‘behave reasonably in line with the norms’. What is ‘reasonable’ under the given circumstances is determined by the prevailing culture-specific norms (even if they are violated!). The norm prevailing in the example is (we assume) that, on their first meeting of the day, colleagues exchange signs of goodwill, a man taking the initiative with regard to a woman.

Assumption 2: B *can* act by choosing from a limited number of options (B can act verbally or non-verbally in a variety of ways). The number of options depends on his assessment of the situation, on the one hand, and on the purpose of the action, on the other. A parliamentary speech cannot be sung, a marriage announcement would not be in the same format as an obituary. The relation between purpose and form of behaviour is culture-specific.

Assumption 3: C *must* react; by her reaction, she establishes an interaction with B (even ignoring B would be a reaction!).

Assumption 4: C *can* react by choosing from a limited number of options (cf. assumption 2).

Norms are accepted because of conventions, i.e. after (explicit or tacit) agreement. Norms can be changed at all levels of society, and they are actually

changed over the course of time (sometimes a reason for ‘intergenerational conflict’). With regard to the acceptance of norms, societies are not one uniform group, i.e. they consist of discrete subgroups.

To explain the acceptance (or not) of norms, we shall use the analogy of games and their rules. As a member of a society, each person must play and they can choose a game from among a number of possible games. The rules of the chosen game must be observed as long as the game lasts. The players determine the duration of the game. A chosen game can be abandoned in favour of another one.

Acting can be described as re-acting (in the broadest sense) to a given situation. Actions are regarded as recurrent when common features can be observed in situational factors. Norms are rules for recurrent behaviour (acting) in specific types of situations. Norms are culture-specific.

Therefore, the type of (assumed) situation is a culture-specific constant in acting. In a particular situation, acting is determined by an assessment of the factors of the situation at hand. Acting is regarded as reasonable if a claim can be made that it is appropriate, in line with the norms of the given culture (!) and the situation, by the person who is in a position to make this claim.

We shall assume that every person wants to act reasonably (i.e. based on reasonable motivating factors) in a given situation, so that they can claim that their behaviour is appropriate for the situation (these claims need not be expressed, or expressible, in well-formed sentences). Acting is ‘intentional’ or ‘purposeful’ in two ways: it is intended to be appropriate to the situation and it is intended to achieve an aim in a given situation, e.g. to adjust oneself to a situation or to change a situation to mould it to one’s own purpose.

Acting may therefore be described as a function of two factors: the assessment of a given situation and the intention (or function/purpose of the action) deriving from it:

$$A = f(\text{sit}, \text{int})$$

Norms are established at the level of type and not of token. In individual situations, there is usually a choice between a limited number of options (in exceptional cases, the number of options may be 1). There is no strict or predictable sequence of individual utterances for a particular situation, but there is a framework for the sequence of utterance types. Kallmeyer and Schütze (1976: 2) confuse type and token when they claim that there is a fixed sequence of utterances in individual situations. They give the following example:

If one person begins a telephone call with the question *What are you doing at the moment?*, the other person *must* respond in order to avoid a ‘severe crisis’. A person who were to answer with another question, e.g. *Why do you want to know?*, would be asking for trouble in this situation (cf. Kallmeyer and Schütze 1976: 24, note 4).

We do not agree with Kallmeyer and Schütze because we believe that the rules regulating interaction are not so strict. (↗ 3.)

Norms stipulate that people should act and how they should act. But they leave a certain margin for choice. What is crucial is that the reaction to a situation be such that it can be interpreted as reasonable (of course, each participant of an interaction may be asked for an independent interpretation, but this is something we shall not go into at this point; cf. Schnelle 1973: 37). How a norm is complied with is less important than the fact that the interaction partners try to comply with it. It is the function of the action which is crucial.

Eykman (1977: 35-42) shows that images or words can be replaced by other images or words without actually changing the text function. Eykman speaks of “modifications” (*Abwandlungen*) instead of variants. For translation, this means that (1) under certain conditions, modifications are legitimate, and (2) the conditions are defined by culture-specific norms, e.g. that in order to be considered adequate, modifications should have the same degree of conventionality as the modified image or word.

What we do is less important than the purpose of the action and its being achieved.

An action is successful if it can be interpreted as adequate or reasonable with regard to the situation. As we have already stated, this interpretation is first required of the agent (producer) himself: he must state what his ‘intention’ was. We have pointed out that not every intention can be (optimally) transformed into an action (you may hit your finger with the hammer before you actually hit the nail). On the other hand, the interaction partner (the recipient) may also try to find an interpretation for the producer’s action. The recipient’s interpretation may differ from that of the producer. Each one tries to anticipate the explanation of the other and will take it into account in his action (‘reflexive co-orientation’). (With regard to the trans-individuality of interpretations cf. Schnelle 1973: 37.) Whether there has been a ‘success’ is therefore declared independently by the producer and the recipient and remains separate for both (and perhaps even for a third party).

Every action can be assigned a value which for the producer depends on its intention (intended function) and for the recipient on its interpretation (interpreted function).

What a theory of interaction primarily needs is not so much a two-value logic theory of truth values as a many-valued (fuzzy) logic theory. It is in the framework of such a many-valued logic theory that we must consider the ‘truth value’ of an action, as the ‘value’ of an action in a given situation depends, among other things, on the relationship between the action and reality (as a phenomenon; cf., for example, an intended/recognized lie or a mistake. With regard to such a truth value theory cf. Marten 1972, among others.)

An action can be considered (completely) successful (for both parties) if the values assigned to it by the sender and the recipient are within the permissible value parameters set for each case so that neither of the two ‘protests’. Based on what they agree to consider an adequate action, both parties will have to negotiate with each other and set the degree of difference which will be regarded as significant in a given situation. When evaluating an action, the recipient must, as we have already noted, take the producer’s intention as an intention-in-the-given-situation-for-the-producer into account (cf. Grice 1957; Alston 1964; Searle 1967; and Marten 1972: 174, note 352, who agrees with all of them.)

In other words, each action, and its interpretation, presupposes a ‘theory’ about the action and its conditions. An action can be regarded as successful if the producer’s theory about the action and the recipient’s theory about the interpretation do not differ significantly.

With regard to the manner of acting, we should make a distinction between (1) how the carrying out of an intention is planned, i.e. what is done in the planning phase (which ‘theme’ is chosen in order to achieve an intention); and (2) how the theme is put into practice, i.e. what is done in the implementation phase (when the ‘theme’ is carried out).

For example: let us assume that the *skopos* of our action is to distract someone else from a pressing anxiety. To achieve this *skopos*, we choose to distract the other’s attention with the ‘theme’ of an interesting phenomenon, a concert. In order to achieve this intention, we suggest attending the concert.

4.3 Summary

In the previous section, we attempted to look at the issues discussed in [chapters 3](#) and [4](#). from a different angle. To sum up, we can say that the *skopos* of an action takes precedence over the mode of action, i.e. the purpose determines whether, how and what is done.

Given that translational action is a specific form of interaction, it is more important that a particular translational purpose be achieved than that the translation process be carried out in a particular way.

For example: let us assume that the *skopos* is ‘Translate Genesis 1 as a magical text’ (cf. Buber and Rosenzweig 1954; ↗ 3.1., Example 1). In this case, it is more important to reproduce the sound of the words as closely as possible than to render their meanings. If the *skopos* is ‘Translate Genesis 1 as an aesthetic text’, it is more important to achieve the aesthetics of the text in line with the standards of the target

culture (!) than to preserve the wording of the source text. If the *skopos* is *Translate the Bible as an informative text*, it is important to convey the meaning of the text (as far as this is possible), either for theologians or for a general audience, etc. (cf. Kassühlke 1983). There is no such thing as ‘the’ translation of a text; the results of the translation process will vary according to their *skopoi*.

4.4 The *skopos* rule

The highest rule of a theory of translational action is the ‘*skopos* rule’: any action is determined by its purpose, i.e. it is a function of its purpose or *skopos*.

$$\text{Trl.} = f(\text{sk})$$

In other words: for translational action, we can say that ‘the end justifies the means’. There may be a number of elements in a set of purposes ($N > 1$), in hierarchical order: Purposes must be justifiable (reasonable).

4.5 The sociological rule

The intended audience (‘addressees’) or recipient may be described as a specific kind or subset of *skopos*. How an interaction is carried out depends, among other things, on the relationship between the parties to an interaction.

For example: different forms of address are used for a professor or a fellow student; the way a man is addressed in his role as professor will differ from the way he is addressed in his role as father.

Consequently, we can arrive at the following sub-rule for the *skopos* rule: the *skopos* can be described as a variable of the intended recipient (sociological rule):

$$\text{Sk} = f(\text{R})$$

In the general theory of translational action that we are aiming for, specific limitations to the above rules are not taken into consideration, e.g. translating under duress.

As Reiß points out, it is “not only the purpose of a particular translation which plays a role but also commissioners or publishers who may have a say

in a translation”⁴⁴ (the influence printers had on the layout of a text in the 16th century is well known.)

In such cases, the general theory will either permit the translator to agree to a *skopos* set by another person, or replace the translator’s own *skopos* by someone else’s, which would require applying the *skopos* rule twice. In either case, the *skopos* rule itself is not affected. Multiple (recursive) applications of a rule may be described as successive or as simultaneous, with either an amplifying or a dampening effect.

4.6 Phases in decision-making

Hella Kirchhoff (in a personal communication dated 6 April 1981) suggests that the different methodological phases within the process of decision-making should be distinguished from one another in order to facilitate their application in translation practice.

(1) Setting the *skopos*

A *skopos* cannot be set unless the target audience can be assessed. If the target audience is not known, it is impossible to decide whether or not a particular function makes sense for them. That any ‘familiarity’ with the target audience can only be relative has been mentioned above (↗ 3.8.).

(2) Redefining the relevance of certain aspects of the source text according to the *skopos* set

Whether such a redefinition is carried out before, during or after the process of translational action may be subject to practical considerations.

For example: certain parts of a cultural history written in Spanish by a Latin American author are rewritten if the translation addresses a wider Central European audience with a different background knowledge.⁴⁵ The adaptations could be made in the source text by a team of specialists before the translation is done, they could be made by a translator who is also a specialist in the discipline during the translation process or they could be made by a specialist after the translation is finished (with regard to necessary linguistic modifications, cf. Reiß 1972).

⁴⁴ [...] nicht nur der Zweck einer jeweiligen Übersetzung spielt [eine Rolle], sondern auch Auftraggeber bzw. Verlage pflegen ein gewichtiges Wort mitzusprechen. (Reiß 1980a: 36-37)

⁴⁵ Katharina Reiß herself translated a book dealing with Latin American history from Spanish into German: *América Latina II. De la independencia a la segunda Guerra mundial*, by Gustavo Beihaut, reprinted as vol. 23 of the *Historia Universal Siglo XXI* (1986), a project initiated by the German publisher Fischer Verlag. Reiß’s translation was published under the title *Süd- und Mittelamerika II. Von der Unabhängigkeit bis zur Krise der Gegenwart* as vol. 23 of the Fischer Weltgeschichte (Frankfurt 1965). (*Translator’s note*)

Travel guides originally written for a non-German audience may have to be rewritten, at least in part, for German readers because they are interested in different aspects of a country (information provided by Helga von Tobel).

(3) Accomplishing the *skopos*

The source text must be transferred functionally, taking the expectations of the target audience into account.

Phases (1) and (2) require a familiarity with the target culture, whereas phase (3) requires an additional competence in the target language.

4.7 *Skopos* hierarchies

Different sections of a source text may be translated for different purposes. There may be a hierarchy of *skopoi* for texts and text sections (cf. Reiß 1976a).

4.8 Source-text *skopos* vs. target-text *skopos*

As we have pointed out several times, the *skopos* of the *translatum* may be different from that of the source text. This can be justified by three arguments:

(1) Translating/interpreting is an action which differs fundamentally from producing a source text. Consequently, a translational action may serve different purposes. It must be emphasized that the preservation of the source-text purpose, which is often taken to be a defining feature of translation, is a culture-specific rule and not a basic requirement of a general theory of translational action.

In a large number of cases, it might even be impossible to fulfil this requirement, for example in a literary translation. Unless we want to limit the function of a novel to the commonplace ‘entertainment’ function, we must assume that the reasons Cervantes’ contemporaries had for reading *Don Quixote* were not the same as those of Spanish-speaking readers today, and an American reader’s reception of the story of the *Seven Brothers* (Finnish title: *Seitsemän veljestä*) by the famous Finnish author Aleksis Kivi will be entirely different from that of a Finnish reader.

(2) We have defined translational action as a kind of information offer (↗ 3.), i.e. information which is offered under the condition that the sender expects it to be of interest (to contain something ‘new’) for the recipient. This ‘novelty’ may consist precisely in the different *skopos* of the offer.

(3) Hirsch (1967, particularly p. 161) claims that the interpretation of a text should identify exactly (and solely) what the implications encompassed by “the purpose and the intention of the work” are, and that a text cannot be fully understood unless these implications have been understood. No more and no less. Even if we left aside the findings of reception history and aesthetics for a moment and accepted the validity of this claim, we would still have to state that translational action is a cultural and linguistic transfer. Cultures and languages constitute independent systems in which the value of each element is defined by its relationship with the other elements of the same system (a system *où tout se tient*, where all elements are connected to each other). In other words, cultures and languages are individual entities and, therefore, texts, as systems consisting of parts of individual cultural and linguistic systems, are individual entities as well. It is obvious that the value of an element of one system that is transferred into another system is bound to change because it is now related to the elements of the new system. It is therefore impossible for the implications contained in the source text to appear in exactly the same form in the target text (Koschmieder 1965, Heger 1971 and Söll 1971 claim that it is possible at least for exclusively cognitive features, but this is a purely methodological claim). Thus, if the result is bound to be a ‘different’ text, we can only demand that it be as close as possible to the source text. This may even be achieved precisely through a change of function.

For example: for Homer’s contemporaries, the *Iliad* was what television soaps are for the general public today. They could identify with the ‘brave heroes’. Which adult would read this classic in such a way today? And if the form is reproduced faithfully, the strange hexameter verses will reduce the suspense in any case.

It has been frequently claimed that a *translatum* should have the ‘same effect’ as the source text; but, for this to be possible, it may be necessary to change the function. For these reasons, we shall not regard invariance of effect as an absolute requirement.

5. Summary of the theoretical groundwork (↗ 3., 4.)

The groundwork behind our general theory of translational action consists of three assumptions which, as we shall see later, are hierarchically linked in the following order:

$$(1) TA = f(\text{sk})$$

A translational action is a function of its *skopos*.

$$(2) TA = IO_T (IO_S)$$

A translational action is an offer of information produced in a target culture and language about an offer of information produced in a source culture and language.

$$(3) TA \subseteq IO_S \times IO_T$$

The target information offer is represented as a transfer which simulates a source information offer. The simulation is not biuniquely reversible. A narrower culture-specific version of this claim is that a target offer of information is a transfer which imitates a source offer of information.

Note that we speak of ‘a’ source offer and ‘a’ target offer, both of which represent only one out of an indefinite number of potential offers. (With regard to the use of these pseudo-formulas ↗ 1.1.)

6. Some further considerations regarding the theoretical groundwork

6.1 Success and protest

(With regard to the concept of success [in German, *Glücken*] cf. Löffler 1976: 386-89; with regard to the assessment of success by the sender, the recipient or a chance listener, see Harras 1978: 66-68.)

Each action provokes feedback, which is then part of the action itself. The recipient (in his role as producer₂) lets the producer₁ (in his role as recipient₂) know that the message has arrived. The kind of feedback that is given indicates how the message arrived and was accepted. The recipient reacts to the message transmitted by the producer.

For example: B meets his colleague C at work in the morning and must (we assume) greet her in line with culture-specific norms, while C must return the greeting, i.e. react, in line with culture-specific norms as well. How C returns the greeting is not that important. She can choose to react using words and/or actions, choosing from a repertoire of options in both cases. If she does not react at all, i.e. if she does not acknowledge B's greeting, this would be interpreted as a negative reaction, which is also a form of reaction. If B realizes that C was not aware of B's presence or greeting, B will repeat his action (usually in a different form). If B thinks that C wished to ignore him on purpose, he may become angry and 'protest' (in one way or another), e.g. not greeting C any more in the morning, asking her whether she is cross with him, etc.

An action is considered to be successful if the feedback does not include a protest and if the producer does not protest in a counter-reaction to the recipient's reaction at a later point. In other words, an action can be considered (!) successful if, and insofar as, no protest is raised in any subsequent action. ('Insofar as' refers both to the duration and to a particular part or aspect of the action, e.g. [you greeted me, but] *why in such an unfriendly tone?*). An action may be successful in part.

A lack of reaction is a form of feedback with protest in the sense of 'the message did not arrive' or 'I don't want to react'.

With regard to the claim that understanding means assuming you have understood something (cf. Glinz 1973: 49), Kallmeyer points out:

Reciprocity exists when the participants assume that their interpretations are sufficiently congruent with one another to accomplish their

immediate practical purposes. These include everything the communication or specific communicative activities are aiming at (cf. also Kallmeyer and Schütze 1975, Cicourel 1975, Schütze 1975).⁴⁶

Along the same lines, Weidmann states:

We consider full understanding to be practically unachievable. [...] The ‘fact’ that people communicate only tells us that their theories regarding the situation are *compatible*.⁴⁷

Cf. also Coseriu (1975: 1144), who maintains that there is no reason why we should take for granted that the other one ‘understands’ the message.

There are three requirements which must be met to make understanding possible: (1) the parties to the interaction must share similar and/or complementary experiences; (2) they must have gone through similar enculturation processes; (3) they must be in a similar frame of mind. For translators, the first two requirements mean that they have to be bicultural. Requirement (1) also implies that a translator need not be able to translate or interpret ‘everything’.

We shall not discuss the problem of understanding any further at this point.

‘Protest’ should be understood in a broad sense here. A reaction like *well, not bad* expresses a protest if the intonation, the particle *well* and the double negation *not bad* imply that something better might have been expected. There can be a time lag between action and reaction, even quite a long one, e.g. a book may be reviewed years after its publication.

An action can be regarded to have been provisionally successful as long as no protest has been made (just as a theory is valid as long as it has not been falsified).

The reaction of a possible or imaginary (virtual) recipient can only exist as an anticipated or imaginary (virtual) reaction. An author may imagine, for example, how the audience whom he has chosen to address might react to a particular statement and behave accordingly.

⁴⁶ Die Wechselseitigkeit besteht darin, daß die Beteiligten davon ausgehen, daß ihre Interpretationen übereinstimmen, und zwar in hinreichender Weise für die Verfolgung ihrer derzeitigen praktischen Zwecke. Die derzeitigen praktischen Zwecke umfassen alles das, was jeweils Ziel ist. (Kallmeyer 1977: 52)

⁴⁷ Vollkommenes Verstehen [...] halten wir für praktisch unerreichbar. [...] Die “Tatsache”, daß Kommunizierende [sich verstndigen], besagt [nur etwas] ber Kompatibilitt der Situationstheorien. (Weidmann 1970: 128)

For example: in *The Bride of Messina*, Friedrich von Schiller uses the chorus as a kind of virtual recipient, anticipating their reactions to the play. He comments on this in the preface entitled ‘On the Use of the Chorus in Tragedy’.

In such cases, reactions or feedback can only take place in the producer’s mind as a kind of ‘self-assessment’. If a reaction is impossible or cannot be received, it will be impossible to decide whether or not the action was successful.

The protest we have been discussing so far refers to two distinct phenomena: (1) the producer’s intention as manifested in, and recognizable through, the text, or as inferred from other circumstances, and (2) the sense of the text, which may differ from the producer’s intention or which for some reason or another disregards the producer’s intention.

This type of protest has to be distinguished from a protest intended or even provoked by the sender, i.e. a protest which is part of the producer’s intention. It must be marked as expected in the text, e.g. by means of an obvious exaggeration (cf. Titzmann 1977). This protest actually proves that the action was successful because there is no protest against the deliberate provocation of protest: the recipients protest exactly as the producer wanted them to protest.

For an action to be successful, it is not necessary that its interpretation correspond to the sender’s intention (↗ 3.5.2.). (With regard to the range of possible interpretations cf. Biessner 1982, also Stackelberg 1978.)

For an action to be regarded as successful, there should be no protest against (1) the transmission (as an event) and the manner of transmission, (2) the information offered as such, and (3) its interpretation (i.e. protest on the part of the producer against the recipient’s reaction). Protest (1) can refer both to the fact that a transmission has occurred in the first place (e.g. a pornographic programme on TV) and to the manner of transmission (protest of the type *why in such an unfriendly tone?*).

To be able to assess the quality of translational action, we have to take a closer look at protest (2). As translational action is a specific form of transfer, the assessment can refer to (a) the transfer as such, and (b) the transfer *skopos*. Thirdly, the protest might refer to the information transferred. If, in our theory, a message is defined as an offer of information and a translational action as an offer of information IO_T about an IO_S , the protest refers to the content, i.e. to the information offered by the source text, and this is irrelevant to an assessment of a translation as a transfer activity. The translational action as such can be successful in spite of this protest, e.g. it may be an adequate translation of a text with whose content we do not agree.

However, the translational action can become the subject of protest if the criticism could be levelled against it that, in a particular *translatum*, an offer of information has been transferred in a particular (non-desired) way. Such a

protest refers to the transfer *skopos* and/or the transfer mode and is, therefore, a protest against the transfer as such, in this case against the translational action (e.g. *this should not have been translated in this way* [for such and such reasons]).

For example: a particular translation of *The Arabian Nights* for children could be criticized because some passages ‘liable to have a harmful influence on minors’ have not been deleted. This criticism not only refers to the information offer as such but also to the translation because the result is not adequate to its purpose.

6.2 Intratextual coherence

A message can be regarded as ‘understood’ if the recipients can interpret it as sufficiently coherent in itself and with their (reception) situation. In plain English, we would say: if it makes sense to the recipients in a given situation (a message cannot make sense in general). This statement refers to the producer’s intention in two ways: the message should be coherent ‘in itself’ and ‘sufficiently’ coherent with the situation in which it is received, the latter aspect being the crucial one. Roughly speaking, we can say that ‘understanding’ means to relate something to one’s own situation and the background knowledge it implies (with regard to ‘relating’ something to something else [*Zuordnung*] cf. Vermeer 1972: 32-33). Understanding is confirmed by feedback. If the feedback can be interpreted by the producer as sufficiently coherent in itself and with *his* action and *his* (producer) situation, it can be said that the producer and the recipient ‘are communicating’, i.e. they are exchanging and, if necessary, adjusting the signals they are using to show that they have understood.

Communicating is more than just confirming understanding; it is a process of interaction. Communicating is stronger than understanding. It means that the producer confirms to the recipient that the latter has understood him correctly. In translation, the translator has to seek communication (‘consultation’ with the author) as far as possible. But understanding is what matters. As Apel aptly puts it:

An interpretation of a poet’s work by the literary scholar cannot be replaced by an interview with the author on his ‘intentions’. ⁴⁸

Coherence is not the same as agreement (in the sense of approval); it is a weaker ‘I believe I have understood’, i.e. ‘this can be interpreted by the re-

⁴⁸ Auch eine Dichterauslegung in der Literaturwissenschaft kann nicht durch ein Interview mit dem Autor über seine sog. Intentionen ersetzt werden. (Apel 1975: 28)

cipient'. With regard to "coherence" cf. Titzmann (1977: 186 and 188-9) and Festinger (1957: 12-3 on "consonance").

Hirsch (1967: 209-14 and 292-3) points out that coherence implies a hermeneutic circle: sections of a text are interpreted on the basis of the assumed sense of the whole text, but the sense of the whole text can only be construed from the sections themselves. The consideration of extratextual factors leads to a "most probable" coherence (Hirsch 1967: 293-4). However,

judgments about probability are necessarily linked only to the evidence on which they are based [with a reference to Keynes 1962: 3-9]. As the reality in question is partly unknown, we may conclude that a judgment about probability can be perfectly correct with regard to known evidence and at the same time completely incorrect with regard to the unknown reality (Hirsch 1967: 222).

Persons interpreting a message are interested in relating it to *their* reality.

For the understanding preceding a translational action, Hirsch's statement means that (1) understanding is merely provisional, and (2) translating/interpreting is not transcoding, as the relationship between known and unknown varies from one culture to another, and the translator has to take this into account.

What we are referring to by coherence is called "truth" (*verdad*) by Unamuno ([1912]2005: 104):

We call a concept true which agrees with the general system of all our concepts; and we call a perception true which does not contradict the system of our perceptions. Truth is coherence. But as regards the whole system, the aggregate, as there is nothing outside of it of which we can have knowledge, we cannot say whether it is true or not.

(With regard to the relativity of the concept of truth cf. Marten 1972).

What we define as 'sufficiently' coherent depends on the individual circumstances. An incoherence intended by the producer must be marked in the text (cf. above, ↗ 6.1., with regard to intended provocation). Such incoherence would have to be preserved in the translational action if it is in line with the translation purpose. In the case of an incoherence produced unintentionally by the author (e.g. a typo), however, it depends on the translation purpose whether or not the incoherence must/may be reproduced in the *translatum*.

For example: Homer writes that Odysseus uses a pointed olive club, whose narrow end he has sharpened to a fine point and, according to the text, hardened in the fire, to blind Polyphemus. (Cf. Fitzgerald's English prose translation, Homer 1963). Of course, a wooden club would have scorched. Such a factual incoherence is usually not removed in

the translation of the *Odyssey* (because it belongs to the character of the epic) if it is translated as a work of art. Even comments by later editors are often deleted (or put in brackets). Cf. also Thierfelder's (1961) remarks on his translation of the *Eunuchus* by Terence.

Paepcke emphasizes how important the kind of coherence we are referring to is for the *translatum*, regardless of the referential content.

For translating, which lies somewhere between following the rules and playing, we may state that a translation which uses the target language in the most idiomatic way provides the translated text with exactly the level of assurance that produces the coherence any text should be allowed to claim for itself from the start.⁴⁹

To illustrate this point, Paepcke ([1981]1986: 129-33) gives us an extensive example taken from Camus, *Le langage d'une morale virile*, German title: *Die Sprache der Zivilcourage*, English title: *Man, Morals and Morale* (trans. Andrew Jenkins).

A failure to achieve coherence in translations may be due to the translator's carelessness (we shall not consider ignorance as a possible reason at this point), but it may also occur if the translator, while sticking to the assumed meaning of a word, loses sight of the sense of the text as a whole. A third cause may be that the translator does not take into account the differences in the background knowledge of the source and target recipients. As we know, coherence is established by linking cultural and factual with linguistic knowledge, i.e. through cultural and linguistic 'competence'. We can find a good example of this in Homer's *Odyssey* (chapter 1.16, verses 439-40):

ἡ μὲν τὸν πτύξασα καὶ ἀσκήσασα χιτῶνα,
πασσάλῳ ἀγκρεμάσασα παρὰ τρητοῖσι λέχεσσι

Murray (Homer 1919) translates this as:

And she folded and smoothed the tunic
and hung it on a peg beside the corded bedstead.

A similar incoherence can be found in Butler's translation (Homer 1898), as well as in various German versions (e.g. Hampe 1977, Schadewaldt 1958 and

⁴⁹ Man kann also für das Übersetzen zwischen Regel und Spiel feststellen, daß die Übersetzung, die sich am sichersten in der Idiomatik der Zielsprache bewegt, dem übersetzten Text eine Orientierungssicherheit gibt, die jene Verständlichkeit erzeugt, die ein Text zunächst für sich beanspruchen darf. (Paepcke [1981]1986: 128)

Voß 1781). It is caused by cultural presuppositions. For us, it would not make sense to fold a dress or a tunic first and hang it on a peg afterwards because then the dress or tunic would unfold immediately! What was Homer referring to? The solution: a tunic can be folded and then hung over a rack that juts out from the side of a wardrobe or, as in this example, a bedstead, just as we may hang a pair of trousers over the back of a chair or as Indian women may fold their saris and hang them over the cross bar of a coat hanger.

An interaction is successful if it is interpreted by the recipients as sufficiently coherent with their situation and if there is no protest, in any form whatsoever, with regard to its transmission, the language used and its sense:

$$M_{\text{trl.p}} \subseteq \text{sit}_R$$

i.e. it must be possible for the message (M) produced by the translator (trl.p), i.e. the *translatum*, to be interpreted coherently (\subseteq) in the situation (sit) of the target recipient (R).

Translational action, therefore, is subject to the same conditions as interaction in general.

The rule has been intentionally worded in a very general and provocative way. It is not possible to demand that a translation be perfect. There is no such thing as ‘the’ optimal translation. All we can do is strive for what seems to be the optimum under the circumstances in question.

The above rule also serves to relativize the frequent demand for ‘objective correctness’ in translation. Many translations are deficient, but some of them have actually been ‘successful’, e.g. in the sense that they have become best-sellers although they were deficient when compared with the source text in light of their *skopos*. Not that we would defend botched work.

For example: a particularly bad example seems to be the German translation of Norman Mailer’s novel *The Naked and the Dead*.

In our assessment of coherence in translation, we are distinguishing between two aspects: firstly, and, perhaps in most cases, primarily, the *translatum* is assessed on its own; secondly, a *translatum* is assessed with regard to the source text. These are two different types of assessment (cf. Reiß [1971]2000 on the distinction between source-text independent and source-text based criticism).

We therefore claim that the assessment of intratextual coherence takes precedence over the assessment of ‘fidelity’ between the source and the target

texts (↗ 6.3.). Toury (1980a: 29) implicitly refers to this hierarchy when he writes:

‘acceptability as a translation’ is *not* necessarily a function of adequacy, or of adequacy alone. In other words, the establishment of a differentiated class of translations is not necessarily done solely on the basis of the *genesis* of these texts [...], but also – maybe even mainly – because of some features *inherent* in them (cf. also Toury 1980a: 29, note 12).

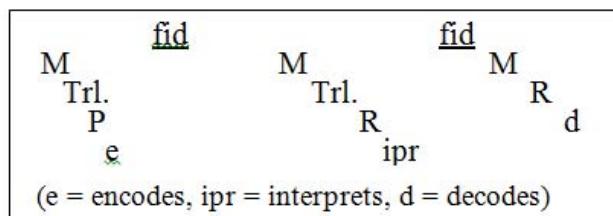
6.3 Intertextual coherence (fidelity)

The following is a general theoretical outline of the relationship between the source and target texts in translation. ‘Imitation’ (↗ 3.9.2.) is a specific form of fidelity.

In a translational action as a specific form of transfer, particularly a transfer which imitates a source text, there is a second aim, along with the coherence-for-the-recipient (intratextual coherence, ↗ 6.2.) described above, i.e. coherence between the source and the target texts (intertextual coherence). This type of coherence is determined by the translator’s understanding of the source text (after consulting the source-text producer, if necessary) and by the *skopos* governing the *translatum*.

This is the traditional ‘objective correctness’, although we have re-interpreted it fundamentally. ‘Correctness’ could at best be introduced as a term with a teleological function. With her theory of the relationship between text type and translation method, Reiß ([1971]2000 and 1976a) went beyond the traditional approach. In our theory, the teleological function of ‘correctness’ is governed by the *translatum*’s *skopos*.

Fidelity rule: a translational action aims for the coherent transfer of a source text.



That is: (1) the message encoded by the producer in the source text as received by the translator, (2) the message as interpreted by the translator as recipient of this message, and (3) the message encoded by the translator as (re-)producer for the target recipient all have to be coherent with one another.

This intertextual coherence is secondary to the intratextual coherence of

the *translatum*. First of all, a *translatum* must be comprehensible (coherent) as a text; only a comprehensible text can be analysed with regard to the circumstances in which it was produced and which, of course, do not include formal extratextual conditions, as in the following example.

For example: although their inscriptions have not been decoded to date, the seals of the Indus Valley Civilizations can be examined with regard to their extralinguistic (physical and anthropological) characteristics.

An incomprehensible *translatum* cannot be analysed as a ‘text’, although it could be analysed as a set of signs. It is important to bear in mind that target recipients would not (normally) compare the target text with the source text. They would receive the *translatum* as an independent piece of work.

The concepts of fidelity and (intratextual) coherence may be explained by means of the concept of ‘mapping’. In a translational action, the *skopos* rule provides the (intended) function of the *translatum*. This serves as a direction to map hierarchically ordered sets of sets in a source text onto a target text as *translatum* in such a way that it serves the intended function. It is obvious that in this process the *translatum* is not biuniquely reversible.

The theory of a text as an information offer (↗ 3.) explains that a change of *skopos* does not violate the fidelity rule but takes precedence over it. The aim is not to pass on a *skopos* but to offer information about a text-as-action under different circumstances.

Within this coherence framework, the rules of precedence are culture-specific (e.g. the rule that metrical verses must rhyme).

6.4 Types of coherence

Here, we shall also add a few comments about culture-specific types of coherence and the interplay of intratextual and intertextual coherence.

For example: a medieval chronicle reports the sighting of a fiery comet. The text describes how the people of the time believed that a comet announced the outbreak of war and how they became frightened and tried to secure all their belongings. Let us further assume that this chronicle has to be translated into modern English. We no longer believe that the appearance of a comet is a bad omen. For us, comets are just some of many astronomical bodies, whose appearance and disappearance can be calculated on the basis of systematic observation. Now, what happens if this chronicle is translated? We assume that a cultural transfer has to occur: a factual report (where the bad omen presented by a comet is taken for a fact and people act accordingly) is transformed into a report on ancient superstitions because we have a different

attitude towards comets today. (The cultural transfer is illustrated by the reactions to such a report: in the source culture, it was terror and anxiety; in the target culture, it would be a supercilious smile and an incredulous shake of the head about such a reaction.)

The type of translation described in the example would be ‘normal’ in our culture today. However, we should bear in mind that, in principle, another strategy is possible. We could try to achieve the *effect* (i.e. terror and anxiety) by other means, e.g. converting the appearance of the comet into a declaration of war by a foreign power. We are not accustomed to doing this; therefore, we would not translate in this way. But we *could*.

If we analyse common practices today, we come to the following conclusion: in many (perhaps even in most) cases, the intertextual linguistic coherence is retained, thus taking precedence over the intratextual cultural coherence. Often, we accept a cultural transfer more easily than a linguistic transfer.

But this is by no means universal, as can be observed in advertising. Brochures promoting products are often culturally adapted in order to achieve the maximum persuasive effect through intratextual coherence, so that intertextual linguistic coherence becomes secondary. We only brought up the example of the comet to shake the reader’s conviction that certain translation types are simply ‘natural’.

Let us look at a second example (provided by Jutta Kerkhoff, Germersheim). In Rudyard Kipling’s *The Jungle Book*, we can find the following passage:

Father Wolf listened, and in the dark valley that ran down to a little river, he heard the dry, angry, snarly, singsong whine of a tiger who has caught nothing and does not care if all the jungle knows it. “The fool!” said Father Wolf. “To begin a night’s work with that noise! Does he think our bucks are like his fat Waingunga bullocks?”

Dagobert von Mikusch (Kipling 1955) translates the passage into German as follows:

Lauschend spitzte Vater Wolf die Ohren. Da vernahm er unten im Tal, das sich zu einem kleinen Bach hinabsenkt, das ärgerliche, schnarrende, näselnde Gewinsel eines Tigers, der nichts geschlagen hat und den es nicht kümmert, daß alles Dschungelvolk sein Mißgeschick erfährt. “Der Narr, der!” knurrte Vater Wolf. “Die Nachtarbeit mit solchem Lärm zu beginnen! Glaubt er etwa, daß unsere Böcke ebenso dumm sind wie seine fetten Ochsen am Waingungafluß?”

We are not going to analyse whether in this translation – between expansions and reductions, generalizations and specifications – all types of coherence

have been achieved in an optimal manner (e.g. *listened* → *spitzte lauschend die Ohren* [= specification], dry → Ø [= omission], heard → *vernahm* [= literary register], caught → *geschlagen* [= technical term]). The tendency to add clarifying expansions (and here we are not referring just to this passage) often reflects the difficulties the translator had with regard to text comprehension and which, as it were, he wants to spare the target audience (the translator as a ‘humanitarian institution’). Nor do we want to discuss the question whether, under the almost naïve surface of the text, we can catch a glimpse of Kipling’s chauvinistic attitude towards the British colonies (Drescher 1979: 252). There is only one aspect we are concerned with at this point (which actually does relate to Kipling’s attitude) and this is the last word of the original passage: *bullocks*. It was translated as *Ochsen*, a word which is a close equivalent of *oxen*.

Looking at the whole passage or the entire book, we can say that this is lexically coherent: like the bullock, an ox is a gelded bull. In current usage (at least in an industrialized country where few people are familiar with farming and cattle breeding), however, *ox* usually refers to male cattle in general, whereas *bulls* are associated with fights in Spanish *corridas*. Metaphorically, a bull represents muscular strength (*as strong as a bull*), whereas the *ox* is considered a dumb animal. Non-metaphorically, we would not put it past an *ox* to be a dangerous animal, always ready to stubbornly attack anything that comes in its way.

Kipling’s story is set in India. Indian *bullocks* (a species different from that of European domestic cattle) are the prototype of the powerful but gentle animal. To kill such a *bullock* is a cowardly act, whereas it takes courage, strength and skill to attack an *ox*.

At the level of coherence between different ‘worlds’, *Ochse* is not an exact match. It is quite likely that there is no word in German which truly reflects all of the Indian connotations (Germany has not had a similar colonial experience). The “nearest connotational equivalent”, to play on Nida’s words, seems to be *Büffel* (cf., at word level, *buffalo* in English). *Büffel*, or perhaps *friedlicher Büffel* (‘peaceful buffalo’), would give a better idea of the massive yet gentle animal referred to by *bullock* in Kipling’s text.

Of course, it could be argued that target recipients would not be aware of these details unless they consulted the original and that, therefore, hardly anything is lost by translating *bullock* by *Ochse*. But perhaps translating/interpreting is also an art ...

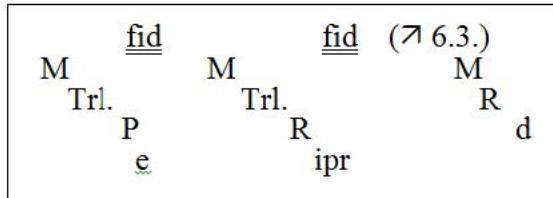
So far, nothing has been said about a hierarchy of verbal (lexical), co(n)textual and cultural phenomena with regard to coherence. But perhaps there could be a kind of ascending scale in our application of coherence rules. Such a scale would itself be culture-specific because reasons for culture-specific rules can only be found in the structure of the culture. Such an analysis goes beyond the scope of this discussion. Therefore, we shall limit ourselves to just one example to show what we mean:

For example: in the Middle Ages, cultural transfer was a very common rule. Paintings of Jesus' birth show the event in a European setting. (In the painting of one particular 16th century painter of the Portuguese school, a shepherd has just brought a basket of eggs to the stable.) Auerbach (1953: 20-22) explains this transfer as a characteristic of medieval culture, where all history, which has been determined by God from time immemorial, was regarded as fixed and embedded in God's omnipresence. Therefore, historical events could be represented in anachronistic ways.

Medieval translations follow similar strategies.

7. General rules for translational action

- (1) A *translatum* is determined by its *skopos*.
 $\text{Trl.} = f(\text{sk})$ ($\triangleright 4.$)
- + (2) A *translatum* is an offer of information in a target culture and language about an offer of information in a source culture and language.
 $\text{Trl.} = \text{IO}_T (\text{IO}_S)$ ($\triangleright 4.$)
- + (3) A *translatum* is a unique, irreversible mapping of a source-culture offer of information.
 $\text{Trl.} \subseteq \text{IO}_T \times \text{IO}_S$ ($\triangleright 3.9.$)
- + (4) A *translatum* must be coherent in itself.
 $M_{\text{Trl.}} \circ S_{\text{IT}}$ ($\triangleright 6.2.$)
- + (5) A *translatum* must be coherent with the source text.



- (6) These rules are interdependent and linked hierarchically in the order set out above.

8. Taxonomy for a theory of translational action

8.1 Preliminary remarks

The rules summarized in 7. are probably the only general rules for translational action. Consequently, all further rules are culture-specific.

In Vermeer ([1978]1983: 48-61), we mentioned only three of them because the definition of translational action as a specific form of information offer – rules 2 and 3 – was not under discussion at that point. In any case, this definition of translational action may be considered more a description than a rule.

8.2 Models of translational action

The source unit of a translational action is always a text. A text is transferred at all levels (from the text level down to the phoneme/grapheme level). A hierarchy of levels is basically set by the fact that the text constitutes the source unit and therefore represents the highest level. This hierarchy can be changed based on the (intended) function of the *translatum* (e.g. obligatory rhymes in metrical discourse).

A text refers to a culture-specific state of affairs. As a translation of a text, a translational action is therefore *per se* a cultural transfer.

On the basis of these considerations, we can construct a model with various levels, each with its own degree of complexity. The degree of complexity chosen for a particular translational action depends, first, on culture-specific concepts of translation, second, on the *skopos*, third, on the text type or genre, etc.

- (1) Translation with a (partial) transfer of the cultural background, i.e. a translation of both the verbal and cultural elements of a text (= most complex model);
- (2) translation of the verbal elements, leaving the cultural background as it is, including, however, at least partly, a transfer of cultural values;
- (3) linguistic transfer at text level, taking formal, syntactic, and stylistic phenomena into account, but disregarding cultural values;
- (4) linguistic transfer of units below text level;
- (5) transfer of basic linguistic units.

In current European translation practice, model (1) is mostly limited to advertising; model (4) is often justified with a need for ‘philological faithfulness’; model (5) is used in the translation of magical texts (think of the glossing techniques in Old High German).

The models may also be mixed according to culture-specific rules.

For example: in modern productions of Shakespeare's plays, actors may wear business suits, but their names are still Julius Caesar (in modern German translations: Julius Cäsar), Marcus Antonius and Brutus.

8.3 Taxonomy

To sum up, we propose a taxonomy for a general theory of translational action.

- (1) Metatheory
 - 1.1 Definition of 'translational action' (↗ 1.)
 - 1.2 Theoretical groundwork, based on the relevant parts of linguistic pragmatics and placing strong emphasis on cultural anthropology (↗ 2., cf. 'intercultural communication' as an action concept).
- (2) Theory
 - 2.1 Introduction of a model of translational action on the basis of a general model of interaction (↗ 3.1.). This model encompasses the following submodels: production theory, reception theory, (re-)production theory (i.e. theory of translational action in the strict sense), transfer theory (Vermeer 1983b).
 - 2.2 Set of rules (↗ 7.)

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Part II

Specific theories

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9. The relationship between source text and target text

The considerations set out in [Part I](#) have led us to the following conclusions:

- The relationship between the source text and the target text is not an exact mapping of text elements. The general principle is that a set X of source values has to be represented by a set Y of target values. This can imply both losses and gains.
- The term ‘value’ is used to clarify that translational action does not focus on linguistic, let alone formal linguistic phenomena alone; rather, translational action is a cultural transfer process *which includes* a linguistic transfer.

It is extremely doubtful whether there is any point in measuring the deficits and surpluses of the target text compared with the value of the source text. The target text (*translatum*) has its own purpose (*skopos*). Translating is not concerned with the uniqueness and comparability of languages (as the title of Wandruszka’s book *Sprachen – vergleichbar und unvergleichlich*⁵⁰ would seem to suggest, although the author himself, at least in part, has something different in mind); nor does it mean sacrificing certain aspects of the source text in favour of others; and it has nothing to do with the *traduttore-traditore* or ‘traitor-translator’ of the Italian saying. A simple reflection can bring things into perspective (it is surprising that this was not recognized as a truism long ago).

A source-text producer offers information to a (real or virtual) set of recipients (in rare cases, the set may be N = 1). This action is governed by the expectations the producer has regarding the recipients and their situation(s). If this source text is then translated, the translator must first ‘receive’ the source text, i.e. he is, if we wish to couch it in complicated scholarly terms, one element of the set of recipients. As a producer of a target text (*translatum*), the translator then informs a (real or virtual) set of target recipients about the source offer of information. According to our assumptions (↗ 3.), the information is passed on in the form of a ‘translation’. This action is governed by the expectations of the translator (and his commissioners) about the target recipients and their situation(s). It is obvious that these expectations, and consequently the information offered to the recipients, are bound to differ from those concerning the first offer with regard to form, content, quantity, values, etc. because the target and source recipients belong to different culture and language communities, and cultures and languages constitute specific systems (↗ 2.). The

⁵⁰ Literal translation: ‘Languages: comparable yet unique’; an English translation of the book is not available. (*Translator’s note*)

essential point is that the information offered to the target recipients is different from that offered to the source recipients. Accordingly, it is not possible for translators to offer the same quality and, as far as possible, the same quantity of information, nor would they attempt to do this (unless they are explicitly asked to do so for purely scientific reasons, which is conceivable, but would definitely lead to a rather surprising result if we think it through). Translators will instead try to do their job as best as they can and, in line with the requirements of the *skopos*, offer as much information as they think is necessary in a form which they consider to be appropriate in view of the expectations of the target recipients *vis-à-vis* the translation of a particular source text.

A translator does not offer more or less information than a source-text producer; a translator offers different information in a different way (cf. Soellner 1980).

Note: in the following chapters, our main focus will be on translating (on terminology ↗ 1.). As our considerations could basically be applied to interpreting as well, we may sometimes use the term ‘translational action’ for the sake of variation.

10. Equivalence and adequacy

10.0 Preliminary remarks

There are few recent publications on the theory and practice of translation that do not use the terms *equivalence/equivalent* and *adequacy/adequate*; however, almost no other concept in translation studies is defined with as little precision and used in as many different ways as these two concept pairs. There seems to be no major disagreement today among translation scholars that ‘equivalence’ refers to a relationship between a source text (element) and a target text (element), but the nature of this relationship still remains somewhat vague. Sometimes, equivalence is equated with adequacy (e.g. by Stackelberg 1978: 8) or is even suggested as a synonym for ‘translation’ (Toury 1980a: 115). More recently, some scholars have rejected the concept as being an ‘idealization’ or too prescriptive and have suggested replacing it with the concept of ‘approximation’, such as Ladmíral:

Thus, we have seen the appearance of translatological models based on ‘idealization’ proposing a paradoxically prescriptive concept of equivalence between the source and the target texts which has little to do with reality. Such a concept seems rather problematic in that it just names the difficulty instead of contributing to its solution. In practice, this concept could be replaced by the idea of *approximation* which is more appropriate when taking the translator’s subjectivity into account [...].⁵¹

We believe that the term ‘equivalence’ should not be abandoned completely. However, we should continue in our attempts to specify what we mean by it and limit its use to appropriate contexts. The terms ‘equivalence’ and ‘adequacy’ will both be dealt with as an example of our struggle to attain more precision in TS terminology in order to make it more productive for theoretical research.

10.1 Towards a definition of equivalence

In theoretical discussions on the concept of equivalence, there have been various attempts to define the relationship to which it refers and to discuss the

⁵¹ C'est ainsi que [...] on a vu apparaître des modèles traductologiques procédant par ‘idéalisation’ et mettant en avant une idée paradoxalement prescriptive d’équivalence, en quelque sorte désincarnée, entre le texte-source et le texte-cible. Un tel concept d’équivalence apparaît bien problématique: il désigne la difficulté beaucoup plus qu'il ne contribue à la résoudre. Dans la pratique, on pourra lui substituer l'idée d'*approximation*, plus explicitement investie par la subjectivité du traducteur [...]. (Ladmíral 1981: 391)

possibility of achieving it, by finding the appropriate terminology. The most detailed accounts of these attempts are given by Wilss ([1977]1982: 134-57) and Koller (1979: 186-91). We shall discuss only a few of these attempts, with a particular focus on their limitations. What is usually called equivalence today is referred to as “achievement-oriented translating” by Göttinger (1963). According to him, the aim of any act of translation (we shall relativize this later, ↗ 10.4.2.) is that the target text must be able to “achieve”, in its communication with the target recipients, what the source text achieved in its communication with the source recipients, i.e. it must convey the same information and have the same effect.

One of Göttinger’s examples, which is often quoted, is the sign *Überschreiten der Geleise verboten* found along German railway tracks. A semantically correct translation into English, says Göttinger, would be *It is forbidden to cross the lines*. It conveys the same information, but it does not have the same effect as it would seem rather strange to an English-speaking person. To have the same effect, the more usual English expression *Don’t cross the lines* would be an appropriate translation.

This example shows that for “achievement-oriented translating”, i.e. in order to accomplish equivalence, it is of – overriding – importance to take the pragmatic dimension of the linguistic signs into account as well.

In contrast, Jakobson ([1959]2004), who according to Wilss ([1977]1982: 138) was the first to apply the concept of equivalence to translation, coined the expression “equivalence in difference”. It is a simple description of the fact that, despite all the “differences” caused by the (different) structures of the target language, translation should aim to establish an overall relation of equivalence between the source and the target texts. That the two texts be identical is not logically possible and, due to the specific characteristics of the two linguacultural systems involved, congruity or an exact match is not a viable relationship either. However, Jakobson does not discuss how this weaker relationship of equivalence can be achieved and what exactly it refers to. Moreover, Jakobson completely ignores pragmatic and cultural divergences in favour of linguistic differences.

When Kade (1968; cf. Wilss [1977]1982: 135) postulates that a translation must achieve “invariance (= no change) at content level”, he overlooks the fact that, apart from content or even ‘sense’, i.e. content-in-situation (for terminology see Vermeer 1972), a text also possesses form and effect. Moreover, if these are radically changed in translation, there can hardly be an “invariance of values” (i.e. “Gleichwertigkeit”, as Jünpelt 1961: 45 still calls it) or a general equivalence relationship between the two texts *per se*.

Koller (1972: 114), on the other hand, demands “invariance of effect”, a

concept which is both too generic and too specific because invariance of effect in different receptions of a text may be difficult to achieve, even within the same language area.

For example: if we read Goethe's *Faust* today, the effect the text has on us will be different from the effect it had on Goethe's contemporaries, even though this may only be due to the fact that we seem to encounter familiar phrases and formulations on almost every page. A student once expressed it like this: "This is just a collection of quotes which does not impress me at all!" Along the same lines, an American girl said about Shakespeare that "he is full of quotations".

As a translation of *Mach die Tür zu!*, the utterance 'Close the door, please' could have the same effect on a recipient as 'There is a terrible draught!', and yet we would not regard the latter as an equivalent of the German phrase because it lacks the "stylistic equivalence" demanded by Popovič (1971; cf. Wilss [1977]1982: 135). However, stylistic equivalence alone would not be sufficient to achieve a generally equivalent target text because style is only one of the many aspects that constitute a text. It may be true that it is the lack of stylistic equivalence which prevents the German translation from being a complete equivalent of the Spanish source text in the following example:

(1) '¡Te he dicho muchas veces que no necesito consejos!' gritó Don Eugenio. (Alarcón: *El Sombrero de Tres Picos* [1874]1971)
 (Literally: I have told you many times that I do not need advice!)

(1a) Ich habe dir schon wiederholt gesagt, daß ich auf deine Ratschläge scheisse! schrie Don Eugenio. (Trans. Draws-Tychsen 1954)
 (Literally: I have told you repeatedly that I shit on your advice!)

But it would be equally true that the following translation, which Stackelberg (1978: 95) regards as adequate (apart from the change of function), does not achieve equivalence because, in spite of being stylistically equivalent, the change of a critical element of its content in one passage leads to a change of all the associations related to it as well.

(2) La Nuit: Sied-il bien à des Dieux de dire qu'ils sont las?
 Mercure: Les Dieux sont-ils de fer? (Molière: *Amphitryon* [Prologue])
 NIGHT: Does it become the Gods to say they are tired?
 MERCURY: Are the Gods made of iron? (Trans. A. R. Waller)

(2a) Die Nacht: sich müd zu nennen, ziemt das einem Gott? (Literally:
 To admit to fatigue, does this befit a God?)

Merkur: Sind Götter denn von Stein? (Literally: Are Gods made of stone?)

(Trans. A. Luther, 1959; the English equivalent of this German idiom would be: *Are Gods made of flint?*)

The question is not whether Gods have no feelings (*are made of stone / flint*) but whether they are allowed to admit that they are exhausted from their work. Another translation renders the same passage as:

(2b) Sind Götter denn von Stahl?
(Literally: Are gods made of steel?)

Again, the content has been changed slightly: iron is not the same thing as steel. However, in everyday language use, both with regard to French and to German, the two idioms are equivalent not only with regard to the associations they are supposed to trigger but also with regard to their metrical qualities (*fer / Stahl*), which is important in this text type.

To conclude, we shall also mention Catford's (1965:49) definition of equivalence because it is often quoted: "In total translation SL [source language] and TL [target language] texts or items are translation equivalents when they are interchangeable in a given situation". Apart from the fact that it does not take linguistic or cultural sign values into account, we believe that this definition exclusively applies to interpreting because it is only here that can we speak of "a given situation" in which both the source and the target texts are simultaneously used for interlingual communication. Any written translation, however, is characterized precisely by the fact that the target text is used for communication in a different situation.

To sum up this short discussion of definitions, we can say that all the conceptualizations suggested by the authors we have mentioned here refer to equivalence as a specific relationship between a source text (or source-text element) and a target text (or target-text element). However, these definitions are either not sufficiently differentiated or they only address particular aspects of textual equivalence.

10.2 Origin of the equivalence concept

Translation scholars have put forward various ideas about the origin of the concept of equivalence. Jäger (1968: 37) claims that it was borrowed from logic terminology because, for him, the discipline of logic is a prerequisite for a theory of bilingual translation. Later, Radó (1979) picked up on this idea, which made him give up the term 'texteme' for the characteristic elements of a text (like Toury 1980a, among others) in favour of 'logeme'.

Wilss, on the other hand, assumes that the concept was adopted from mathematics, where equivalence refers to a binary and reflexive relationship

between the elements of (two) sets (cf. Wilss [1977]1982: 138, who quotes a prestigious German encyclopaedia). This concept of equivalence could only be applied to translation if it were limited to machine translation, where exact correspondences do indeed have to be established for each source-text element. This would make a ‘binary and reflexive’ relationship between source-text and target-text elements possible. Machine translation is (still) a long way from achieving this aim for anything other than highly standardized specialized texts, particularly in the more exact sciences. However, this concept has also been adopted by the theory of human translation, where it is absolutely impossible to postulate exact correspondences as the only standard for equivalence, as Wilss himself admits (1981: 436).

Thus, we believe that neither mathematical equivalence nor logical equivalence, seen as a relationship between two statements “which are completely interchangeable; if one is true, so is the other; if one is false, so is the other”,⁵² can be satisfactorily applied to the relationship between the source and target texts. What appears more promising is borrowing the equivalence concept from electrical engineering, which refers to two circuits of alternating current which, despite the differences in network structures, show the same external electrical behaviour for all frequencies (cf. Thévenin’s theorem, also Helmholtz’s equivalent circuit concept). We do not want to strain the analogy too much, but this definition can indeed be applied to translating and translations. The ‘differences in network structures’ may be compared with the differences in language use for text types, genres and individual texts which are caused by the structural differences of the two languages and differences with regard to situational and cultural conditions. Moreover, the ‘same electrical behaviour’ shown by these different ‘networks’ could be said to correspond to the desired ‘same degree of communicative and functional effect’ of the source and the target texts.

The network metaphor would also be appropriate if we wanted to analyse the details of equivalence concepts used in TS, which must be clearly distinguished from those used in Contrastive Linguistics, as Koller (1979: 176–91) rightly states. The various qualifications which can be found in TS literature for the term ‘equivalence’ (e.g. dynamic, formal, functional, semantic, referential, stylistic, effect-related, etc.) demonstrate that textual equivalence consists of as many different elements as the text itself.

Luhmann understands equivalence in terms of systems theory: “A and B are functionally equivalent if both are capable of solving problem X”.⁵³ This definition may be useful for translation theory because it accounts for *potential* equivalence (cf. Hubig in Hubig and Rahden 1978: 18). We can look at what

⁵² From *Encyclopædia Britannica* (2012) *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, <http://www.britannica.com> [last accessed 6/04/2012]. (Translator’s note)

⁵³ A und B sind funktional äquivalent, sofern beide geeignet sind, das Problem X zu lösen. (Luhmann 1970: 17)

actually happens when we replace X with a simple translational function, e.g. effect or sense, or a complex one, e.g. effect-in-a-given-situation, whether or not the problem in question is ‘solved’. This would be a case of *factual* equivalence. We could thus also make a distinction between equivalence as a theoretical construct and equivalence as achieved in practice.

10.3 On the fuzziness of the equivalence concept

Koller (1979: 187-91) tried to deal with the fuzziness of the equivalence concept by specifying five “frames of reference which are relevant for defining the type of equivalence” (*ibid.*: 187) in a particular translation process:

- “denotative equivalence” (*denotative Äquivalenz*), relating to the content conveyed by the text,
- “connotative equivalence” (*konnotative Äquivalenz*), referring to the connotations caused by the selection of register, social and regional (Koller: “geographical”) dimensions or frequency, etc.,
- “genre equivalence” (*textnormative Äquivalenz*), applicable to certain text types and genres,
- “pragmatic equivalence” (*pragmatische Äquivalenz*), referring to audience orientation (this should include the cultural and situational features which Koller does not mention), and
- “formal equivalence” (*formale Äquivalenz*), referring to the specific features of aesthetic form or individual style.

This differentiation is a step in the right direction, although Königs (1981: 85) is not wrong to criticize some of its limitations and to add two more types of equivalence to the list:

- “intentional equivalence” (*textintendierte Äquivalenz*), related to the intended source-text function, and
- “teleological equivalence” (*finalistische Äquivalenz*), referring to the intended function of the target text.

However, Königs overlooks the fact that the rationale he gives for intentional equivalence (“this function must be retained in the target-language version”) contradicts the rationale for teleological equivalence (“the intended function of the translation has to be taken into account as well”). The latter clearly points to the fact that the translation does not always have to retain the source-text function but may be assigned other functions.

10.4 Defining the scope of the equivalence concept

The contradiction in Königs’ (1981: 85) arguments gives us a good reason to define the equivalence concept more clearly, on the one hand, and to limit its

applicability, on the other.

We believe that the definition of equivalence as a relationship between a linguistic code and a message verbalized using the signs contained in this code cannot apply to a theory of translation, even if we attempt to distinguish between this type of equivalence and a concept of ‘translational equivalence’ with regard to source and target texts. Lehmann’s statement that the “[e]quivalence between a message M and its sign, or the organization of its signs, is a prerequisite for its communication”⁵⁴ postulates a relationship of equal value between entities belonging to different categories, i.e. between a tool (instrument, repertoire of signs, code, at the level of language as a construct, *langue*) and the product it is supposed to produce (the text, at the level of occurrence, *parole*). If, under certain circumstances, such a relationship exists, it would probably be called ‘adequacy’.

In translation studies, equivalence includes both the relationship between the individual linguistic signs of a text pair and the relationship between whole texts. The existence of an equivalence relation between individual elements of a text pair does not automatically imply equivalence at the text level and vice versa: the existence of textual equivalence does not mean that the segments or elements of the two texts are equivalent at other levels. Moreover, in our opinion, textual equivalence is not limited to linguistic aspects: it also includes cultural equivalence.

10.4.1 Discussion of examples

Let us look at a line from Baudelaire’s poem ‘À une passante’ (‘To a Woman Passing By’, from *The Flowers of Evil*):

(3) Moi, je buvais, crispé comme un extravagant. (1977: 185)
 As for me, I drank, twitching like an old roué. (Wagner 1974. Trans. G. Wagner)⁵⁵

(3a) Ich aber trank, im Krampf wie ein Verzückter. (1977: 186, Trans. F. Kemp)

The German translator himself stated that he was not aiming for an equivalent translation (which in this case would imply the creation of a target text of poetic quality, ↗ 10.11.3.), rather, he wanted to provide an aid for comprehension, i.e. he was striving for semantic equivalence only. Stackelberg criticizes this translation as follows:

⁵⁴ Äquivalenz zwischen einer Mitteilung M und ihrem Zeichen bzw. ihrer Zeichenorganisation ist Voraussetzung ihrer Kommunikation. (Lehmann 1981: 289)

⁵⁵ Out of the various English translations of this poem, this is the only one which reproduces the emphasis on *moi*. (Translator’s note)

the simple *moi* of the original is expanded by *aber* ['however'] in the translation, while the rest of the verse is more or less correct but naturally not exactly the same as in the source text.⁵⁶

This negative assessment of the translation (a subjective decision of the critic as opposed to a subjective decision of the translator) can be refuted on the basis of objective arguments. The structural divergence between French and German manifests itself here in the way stress or emphasis is used. French has an additional form for the personal pronoun 'I' (a stressed or disjunctive pronoun, here: *moi*) which is placed before the unstressed pronoun in order to indicate emphasis (*moi, je ...*), whereas German only has one form of the pronoun 'I' (*ich*) but uses modal particles (here: *aber*) to express the same function. Moreover, the translation reproduces the intonation almost perfectly, as well as the metrical qualities of the phrase: *Mói, jè bíváis – Ích àbèr tránk*, which is a characteristic element for a text of the expressive type (↗ 10.11.3.), particularly for a poem. Therefore, this very target-text segment may be regarded not only as a semantic but also as a textual equivalent of the source-text segment (which, of course, does not imply equivalence at text level).

(4) And this is the belief that *moves mountains*. (Webster: *Daddy-Long-Legs*, 1967)

(4a) Und das ist der Glaube, der Berge *bewegt*. (Trans. Boveri 1979, emphasis added)

It would seem that, in this example, the source and the target texts are equivalent at sentence level, but it is only a case of semantic equivalence at word level. A translation which takes into account that the passage draws on a text source (the Bible) shared by the two language communities, each of which is familiar with their specific, normatively fixed equivalents (pragmatic aspect), would read:

(4b) Und das ist der Glaube, der Berge *versetzt*. (In line with Martin Luther's translation of 1 Corinthians 13.2, which has become an idiom in German.)

This translation achieves textual equivalence. The fact that the translator has failed to comply with the demand for pragmatic equivalence in this passage does not affect the equivalence of the translation as a whole, which can be regarded as having been achieved (cf. Reiß 1982).

⁵⁶ [...] dann kommt zum schlichten "moi" des Originals ein "aber" in die Übersetzung, während die Folge ganz korrekt, aber auch da nicht selbstverständlich so lautet, wie sie dasteht. (Stackelberg 1978: 206)

10.4.2 Conclusions

At this point, we need to refute a stance maintained by various authors which we believe to be erroneous. We shall only refer to Königs and Lehmann here as representatives of this view.

The aim of a translation is to achieve equivalence between the source and the target texts [...].⁵⁷

Every translation will claim to be an equivalent of its original.⁵⁸

If the translator is not aiming for textual equivalence, as we saw in example (3), a lack of textual equivalence does not mean that the target text is not a translation. The target text has simply been assigned a different function from that of the source text. Moreover, what Königs calls “teleological equivalence” is not really equivalence at all. If a translation is expected to achieve a function which is different from that of the source text (by the translator or the commissioner), the two texts can no longer be said to be of ‘equal value’. Instead, the translator can only search for (and find) equivalents for certain characteristics of the text. In such cases, the guideline for the translation process will be that of achieving adequacy, i.e. selecting the appropriate linguistic signs for achieving the purpose with regard to the characteristic in question (concerning the definitions of adequacy and equivalence, ↗ 10.6.).

10.5 The concept of adequacy

This distinction is necessary because translating as ‘information about an offer of information’ often aims at providing only partial information about an information offer produced in a source language. It may even be impossible to provide full information about the information offer of the source text if, for example, in the case of old or ancient texts, not all aspects of the original information can be inferred by modern recipients.

10.5.1 Types of translation

This problem can be examined in the context of different types of translation, some of which we shall discuss in the following sections.

10.5.2 Adequacy with regard to partial dimensions of a text

A translational action is governed by its purpose (*skopos*) (↗ 4.1.). The many

⁵⁷ Ziel einer Übersetzung ist die Äquivalenz von Ausgangstext und Zieltext. (Königs 1981: 83; emphasis added by the authors)

⁵⁸ Jede Übersetzung wird beanspruchen, ihrem Original äquivalent zu sein. (Lehmann 1981: 288, emphasis added by the authors)

different translational purposes which are possible imply that there are many possible translation strategies for one text. When studying unknown languages, for example, researchers may draw on word-for-word (interlinear) translations of a text written in the language they want to investigate. This translation type can help them to identify and represent the structural specificities of this language, which may be slightly or completely different from the researcher's own language. This translation type was even used in foreign language text books until well into the 20th century, e.g. in the teaching materials for the Toussaint-Langenscheidt Method, in order to provide the learners with an aid for text comprehension. It was also used for early translations of the Bible, where translators regarded each word, and the order in which words occurred in the text, as 'sacred' and therefore inviolable. The result of this strategy is not an equivalent of the source text, as the original could be used directly for communicative purposes in the source culture, whereas the interlinear version is often incomprehensible for a reader who is not familiar with the source language. However, it is clear that, by providing information about the source-text words and syntax in the target language, this translation type is absolutely appropriate for the aims and purposes of this kind of translation process.

A literal translation which, unlike the interlinear version, observes the norms and rules of the target language system is still being used in foreign language teaching in many parts of the world today (= *grammar translation*). This translation type is intended to demonstrate the language competence of the learners and check whether they have correctly understood the lexical, grammatical and stylistic elements of the foreign language and are able to render their meaning correctly in their own language (and vice versa). In this translation type, adequacy with regard to the (limited) goal is also aimed at.⁵⁹

A philological translation (Güttinger 1963: 28, speaks of a "gelehrte", i.e. scholarly, translation) is in line with Schleiermacher's postulate "to move the reader towards the author". It aims at informing the target reader about how the source-text author communicated with the readers of the source text. In order to achieve this aim, the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic dimensions of the source-text linguistic signs are 'imitated' to such an extent that the target language may seem completely unnatural to the target audience. The resulting text will be adequate or appropriate with regard to the goal set, but it will definitely not be equivalent with regard to the source text, which sounds natural to the source-culture readers and does not foreignize their language. During the long history of translating, this translation type has been regarded as the ideal of translation in general, especially for certain text types, such as philosophical texts or literary works of art (cf. Toury 1980a: 117).

Today, the ideal would seem to be what we call a 'communicative' transla-

⁵⁹ This is the type of translation used for the glosses and back-translations in the examples given in this book. (*Translator's note*)

tion, in which the target-language offer of information ‘imitates’ the source-text offer of information (↗ 3.9.2.). In this translation type, the target text does not feel like a translation, at least not with regard to the language it uses; rather, it is a translation that can achieve the same functions as the original text and can be used directly for (everyday, literary or aesthetic) communication, as it is (as far as is possible) an equivalent of the original text with regard to all of its dimensions (syntax, semantics, pragmatics). The widespread preference for ‘communicative’ translations today (at least if a text permits this type of translation) may be due to the fact that in the international fields of economics, politics, and science, the translation of non-literary or ‘pragmatic’ texts represents a much higher percentage than the translation of literary texts (especially of those considered to be highly artistic). Moreover, even literary translations are read by many more readers today who expect a translation ‘to read like an original’. It is only in this particular case where the adequacy or appropriateness of the selection of linguistic signs is geared towards the achievement of equivalence at text level. Only a translation of this type can legitimately be assessed according to its equivalence relationship with the source text.

Finally, there is the ‘creative’ translation – although such creativity may also be required of the translator from time to time in the communicative translation type. The ‘creative’ translation can be identified as a separate type where certain concepts, ways of thinking, ideas, objects, etc. do not exist in the target culture so that the translator has to create new terms with which to refer to them. This may be the case for certain religious, philosophical and technical texts if there is a difference with regard to cultural or technological developments between the source and the target cultures. When new concepts, ways of thinking, ideas and objects are introduced into the target culture, the potential for new word formation is exploited, often by the initial translator of such texts (for example, in the case of Luther’s translation of the Bible into German). In such cases, the translator must make a great deal of effort to produce an adequate translation; often, adequacy is achieved only after a number of attempts (e.g. the many different translations of the works of James Joyce, Martin Heidegger, and Sigmund Freud). It is logical that an equivalent translation would be impossible in such cases as members of the target culture do not (yet) possess the same background knowledge as members of the source culture; therefore, the *translatum* can hardly achieve the same communicative function as the source text.

10.5.3 Adequacy in ‘adaptations’

The translation types mentioned above can be distinguished from one another based on the partial dimension which takes precedence over the others (from the word level up to the text level), and, in each case, the aim of the process is to produce an adequate translation. Only in the case of ‘creative’ translations is

equivalence at text level required as well. Similar considerations must be taken into account when the text is considered as a whole but it needs to be ‘adapted’ in some way because (a) the audience addressed by the target text does not correspond to that addressed by the source text, (b) the target text is intended to fulfil communicative purposes which are different from those fulfilled by the source text, or (c) one feature of the source text (or several features) is consciously and intentionally changed during the translation process.

a) Translating for a different audience

If a technical text which addresses an audience of experts in the source culture is translated for an audience of experts in the target culture, we can legitimately expect equivalence between the source and the target texts. The target text should have the same communicative value and achieve the same function in a communicative interaction between experts in the field. However, if a specialized text is popularized for a wider audience of non-experts, textual equivalence can no longer be the aim. For laypeople who wish to learn about the subject, this text will be translated in such a way that it will allow them to understand the text although they do not have any specialized knowledge (about the topic and the terminology). The translator will select linguistic signs that are adequate for the intended readership, which differs from the intended audience of the source text in more than just language. Setting aside any other cultural differences, what is relevant here is the difference in the background knowledge between the two audiences with regard to the topic in question.

This would also apply to cases such as a world literature novel written for an adult readership but translated for children or young readers. In this case, the target audience is different from the source-text audience. Consequently, equivalence cannot be achieved or even required; rather, the target text will strive for adequacy, i.e. the selection of linguistic material with regard to syntax, semantics, pragmatics should be appropriate for a different audience.

b) Translating for a different purpose

Translations which are intended to be an aid to comprehension do not strive for equivalence.

For example: in the prose translation of Persian poetry that Goethe commissioned as an ‘information about the source text’ in order to compose his *West-Eastern Divan*, the ‘poetic communication’ of the source text was turned into a simple transmission of content in the target text, cf. example (3).

Furthermore, publishers who commission a short abstract of the contents of a foreign-language novel in order to decide whether or not to publish the book do not expect an equivalent text; rather, they expect an adequate summary

which serves their purpose and inevitably involves a translation process. A final example would be a rough or ‘quick and dirty’ translation, which provides a general idea about the content and the structure of a source text without taking too much time.

c) Change of genre

The Spanish author Pedro Antonio de Alarcón wrote his short novel *El Sombrero de Tres Picos*, as he points out in his foreword, with the purpose of telling a bawdy Andalusian folktale in such a way that it would give no offence to the “ears of sheltered young ladies” ([1871]1974). The translator Draws-Tychsen (↗ example (1)) obviously chose to ignore the author’s intention and, by using a large number of ribald and even vulgar expressions, changed Alarcon’s low-key style to such an extent that the target text actually became a bawdy folktale again (cf. Reiß 1978a). Although the choice of vocabulary alters the genre, the *translatum* remains a translation; there is no equivalence between source and target text, but there is adequacy with regard to the translator’s goal.

Along the same lines, it would be pointless to look for equivalence with the source text if a publisher were to commission a translation of Günter Grass’ novel *The Tin Drum* with the stipulation that the target text should be “readable and fluent” (this actually happened, cf. *Der Übersetzer* 1, 1977: 4). To turn a source text so full of “verbal barbs” (*sprachliche Widerhaken*) into a “readable and fluent” target text would require a translation which consciously alters certain characteristic features of the source text in an appropriate manner in order to comply with the brief. Once again, the main criterion for the translation process (and possibly for translation criticism) should not be equivalence but adequacy. This would also apply to subtitles in films and television programmes, which roughly reproduce the source texts (language, facial movements, gestures); they could be called adapting (intersemiotic) translations.

10.6 Equivalence vs. adequacy

To sum up, we can say so far that, when describing translations (including in the related fields of translation criticism and translator training), we have to make a clear distinction between the concepts of adequacy and equivalence.

With regard to the translation of a source text (or any of its elements), adequacy shall refer to the relationship between a source text and a target text, where consistent attention is paid to the purpose (skopos) of the translation process.

A translation is *adequate* if the choice made of target-language signs is consistently in line with the requirements of the translation purpose. Therefore, we can do without the rather artificial distinction Königs (1979: 53) makes between “linguistic equivalence” (which is independent of the translator’s

level of competence) and “didactic equivalence” (which takes the not yet fully developed competence of language learners into account). What Königs is referring to when he uses the term “didactic equivalence” (i.e. “systematically correct linguistic output with due consideration of the stage of language acquisition”⁶⁰) can only be ‘adequacy’ with regard to the aim of monitoring learning outcomes. Therefore, the terms *adequate* and *adequacy* should only be used to refer to a process. If the aim of the translation process is to produce a target text that is equivalent to the source text, the choice of linguistic signs will also be classified as ‘adequate’. It is only the result, not the process of choosing signs (during translation), which can be called ‘equivalent’ in this case.

On the other hand, *equivalence* refers to the relationship between two factors which have the same value or rank in their respective systems and belong to the same category. This leads us to propose the following definition:

Equivalence is the relationship between a target text and a source text which (can) achieve the same communicative function at the same level in the two cultures involved.

We cannot ‘translate equivalently’. Rather, a target text *can be considered* equivalent (or, as we usually say, *is equivalent*) to a source text. In this sense, *equivalence* and *equivalent* are product-oriented or result-oriented concepts.

In our definition, equivalence is a particular kind of adequacy, i.e. adequacy under the condition that the skopos requires that the source and target texts achieve the same function.

10.7 Equivalence as a dynamic concept

Our definition above does not imply that equivalence is a static concept in translation theory. On the contrary, it is a dynamic concept, due to the very nature of translating and the different views on it over the course of history. A source text is written or published *once*. Translations, however, can be carried out more than once, as well as by different translators, just like a text may be received differently each time by different recipients. Moreover, different translators can interpret the source text, or parts of it, in different ways (the range of different interpretations varies from one text or text type to another). The prevailing taste of a certain era may demand particular characteristics in a translation (cf. Toury 1980a on “translational norms”).

⁶⁰ [...] systemkorrekte sprachliche Äußerung unter Berücksichtigung des Stadiums des Spracherwerbs (Königs 1979: 53).

For example, Martin Luther's translation of the Bible may have been regarded as an equivalent target text in the 16th century, although we would not consider it equivalent for *our* times because of the profound changes the German language has undergone in its use since Luther's times.

To name but two examples, for Luther, the word *Einsamkeit* ('loneliness') meant what we would now call *Zweisamkeit* ('togetherness' [of two people]), and the word *Weib* (which for Luther simply meant 'woman') has acquired a negative connotation (and now means something like 'hag').

For example: the translations of ancient plays, in which, according to the prevailing taste, the text world and the characters were radically adapted to the French environment of the time (the *belles infidèles*, cf. Mounin 1967: 37-39), may have been regarded as equivalent texts in 17th- or 18th-century France. Today, we would probably consider them travesties rather than equivalent target texts.

In his adaptation of August Wilhelm Schlegel's translation of *Romeo and Juliet* for a stage production in Weimar, Goethe wrote in 1812:

My maxim was to bring together and harmonize the interesting aspects of the play because, due to his genius, the times and his audience, Shakespeare could (and even had to) combine all sorts of disharmonious buffoonery in order to please the spirit of his time.⁶¹

Goethe refers to the constraints imposed on him by contemporary taste (cf. Heun 1965: 65-73), thus touching on two interlinked translation problems: the expectations and demands of a given culture with regard to a text, on the one hand, and the diverging views with regard to translation, on the other. Our modern concept of translation is narrower than that which was common at the beginning of the 18th century. A similar case would be the liberties legitimately taken in the performance of musical compositions even today.

Thus, equivalence between source and target texts can only be discussed in light of the conditions under which the translation was produced (including the time factor), i.e. taking the 'translational situation' into account.

⁶¹ Die Maxime, der ich folgte, war das Interessante zu concentriren und in Harmonie zu bringen, da Shakespeare nach seinem Genie, seiner Zeit und seinem Publicum, viele disharmonische Allotria zusammenstellen durfte, ja mußte, um den damals herrschenden Theatergenius zu versöhnen. (Weimar edition of the Collected Works of Goethe in 147 vols., 1887-1919, IV 22.246-7, cited in Heun 1965: 12).

Therefore, we can agree with van den Broeck (1980: 82), who writes:

Optimum translations, then, are such translations as meet communicative demands of a certain society at a certain time in the best possible way.

By “optimum translations”, van den Broeck means exactly what we are referring to as ‘equivalent translation’.

However, it is not only with regard to the past that we must consider equivalence to be a dynamic concept. In his discussion of the problem of translating the rather common German expression *der Klub der fünf Weisen* into English, Newmark (1981: 156-57) explains that

a version such as ‘West Germany’s Committee of top economic experts known as the Club of Five Wise Men’ may lead to a later literal translation.

At that time, the explanatory paraphrase was regarded as equivalent because it only gained communicative value through explicitation, which made it as comprehensible for English readers as the original German expression was for German readers. Once English readers are familiar with this German institution, the explicitation will become obsolete. At this point, *the Club of the Five Wise Men* could be considered an equivalent expression. Thus, we would not speak of “zero equivalence”, as Wilss ([1977]1982: 149) did, if the English expression *floating voter* were to be translated into German by ‘Wechselwähler’. Wilss claims that such phenomena demonstrate “lexical gaps relative to SL [source-language] lexical items requiring adaptational transfer procedures in going from SL to TL [target language]”, i.e. they are examples of 1: \emptyset correspondence at language system level. We could argue, however, that the equivalence concept of *langue*-oriented contrastive linguistics is being confused here with that of *parole*-oriented translation theory. If this expression were to be used in a text, textual equivalence would be achieved through adaptive translating, which is one possibility among various different translation *procedures* or techniques.

10.8 Text and textual equivalence

We shall assume, as explained above, that

- the equivalence relationship in translation refers to equivalence between two *texts* and
- we cannot speak of equivalence unless these two texts achieve functions of equal value within the culture-specific communicative events in which they are used.

Therefore, we must now analyse in detail what textual equivalence is and how it can be produced or identified.

10.8.1 Examples

Let us look at a few examples.

(5) Ein jeder Engel ist schrecklich. (Rilke, *First Duino Elegy*)

(5a) Each single angel is terrible. (Trans. Leishman and Spender, 1939)

At first glance, these two text segments seem to be equivalent, even down to word level. For an informative text (e.g. the translation of a travel guide which describes some badly sculptured statues at the front of a building), this claim can even be sustained. But this is not the case if we look at the context in which this sentence appears. The elegy begins with the following lines:⁶²

Who, if I cried out, would hear me among the angels' hierarchies?
 And even if one of them pressed me suddenly against his heart:
 I would be consumed in that overwhelming existence.
 For beauty is nothing but the beginning of terror [...] (Trans. Stephen Mitchell 1992)

These verses evoke a numinous dimension, to which the mundane English expression *is terrible* does not correspond. (Here, and in the discussion of the following examples, we shall tacitly assume that source and target texts are supposed to achieve the same function.) In comparison, the following translation achieves textual equivalence by taking into account the full context.

(5b) Round every angel is terror. (Trans. Wydenbruck 1948)

Another example:

(6) Is life worth living? – It depends upon the liver!

(6a) La vie, vaut-elle la peine? – C'est une question de foi(e).
 (Literally: Is life worth living? – It is a question of faith / (the) liver.)
 (Cited in Buzzetti 1976: 127)

⁶² Wer, wenn ich schrie, hörte mich denn aus der Engel / Ordnungen? Und gesetzt selbst, es nähme / einer mich plötzlich ans Herz: ich verginge von seinem / stärkeren Dasein. Denn das Schöne ist nichts als des Schrecklichen Anfang [...].

The French translation of the English pun is not equivalent at word level but fully equivalent at text level because it can achieve the same communicative function (that of a more or less witty pun playing on the homophony of *foi*, ‘faith’, and *foie*, ‘liver’) in the French culture as the original achieves in the source culture. It depends on the linguistic structures and the translator’s creativity whether a similar effect can be produced in another language.

(6b) Ist das Leben lebenswert? – Das hängt von den Leberwerten ab. / Das kommt auf die Leberwerte an. / Das ist eine Frage der Leberwerte.
 (Literally: Is life worth living? – It depends on your liver values.)

These solutions can still be regarded as almost equivalent, although the connotations of the medical terminology (*liver values*) are not in the original. But they also function as a pun.

We can draw two conclusions from this example: (a) the possibility of achieving equivalence in a target text may be limited by the structural differences between the two languages involved; (b) it is a matter of judgement whether the result is regarded as equivalent or not, as is shown by the three tentative solutions in (6b), which, among other things, reflect the fact that all natural languages are “variability-oriented” (Wilss [1977]1982: 64). Value judgements – however numerous or objectivity-oriented the arguments are that support them – cannot be avoided, but they should be intersubjectively as plausible as possible (even then, a trace of subjectivity will always remain in them). Cf. also Zimmer, who states:

Here, we must venture into the delicate realms of judging. Judgements are not objectively quantifiable, but they should be able to claim intersubjective validity within a rather narrow range of tolerance.⁶³

Any attempt to eliminate this factor from translation studies would result in depriving the discipline of its specificity as a human, social and hermeneutic science. Such an attempt may be understandable from an epistemological point of view, but it has proved (so far?) to be an illusion (cf. Wilss 1981: 465), even more so as natural scientists have themselves come to doubt the possibility of achieving absolute objectivity and exactness because, in observing an object, the subject doing the observing interferes with the object and causes it to change (cf. von Weizsäcker 1957: 58-59).

⁶³ Hierbei muß der Schritt in den heiklen Bereich der Wertung gewagt werden. Diese Wertung ist nicht objektiv meßbar, sie muß aber innerhalb einer möglichst eng gesetzten Toleranzbreite Anspruch auf intersubjektive Gültigkeit erheben. (Zimmer 1981: 51)

(7) One does not miss what one has never had; but it's awfully hard going without things after one has commenced thinking they are *his-hers* (*English language needs another pronoun*) by natural right. (Webster 1967: 126; emphasis by the authors).

(7a) Was man nie gehabt hat, vermißt man nicht; aber es ist entsetzlich, ohne Dinge zu leben, die *man* für ein natürliches Anrecht hält. (Trans. Boveri 1979: 145; emphasis added).

(Literal back-translation: What one has never had, one does not miss, but it is dreadful to live without the things *one* considers a natural right.)

(7b) Was man nie besaß, das wird man auch nicht vermissen; aber es ist ungemein schwer, im späteren Leben ohne den gewohnten Genuss zu leben, nachdem man sich schon daran gewöhnt hatte zu glauben, *man* besäße diese Dinge von Rechts wegen. (Trans. Boesch-Frutiger 1970: 177-8; emphasis added).

(Literal back-translation: What one never possessed, one will not miss, but it is terribly difficult to live without the habitual pleasures after one has become used to believing that *one* possessed them by right.)

Looking at the highlighted elements of these text fragments, we might come to the conclusion that there is no equivalence between the source and the target texts. Both *his-hers* and *one* have been rendered in the translations by *man*, and the metalinguistic commentary in parenthesis has been omitted. In spite of this, both translations can be regarded as equivalents of the source text. The German language does in fact possess the pronoun which is lacking in English (*they are his-hers* could be translated by ‘dass sie einem gehören’), and therefore, the comment would be absurd. Moreover, the variation between *one* and *his-hers* (instead of *one’s own*) has no communicative value for the recipients of this genre (a novel for young adults). If these elements were part of a passage used in a textbook for English-German contrastive linguistics, whose function was to inform students about the structural differences between the two languages and any lexical ‘gaps’ in English, the translator would have to use another strategy.

(8) At this final level of mental organization we may be dealing with ‘**abstract** kinds of pro-verbs which receive only indirect phonological representation’ (I take pro-verbs to signify potentialities of meaning ‘anterior to’ even the most rudimentary verbal units). (Steiner 1998: 106, emphasis by the author)

The segment *nicht etwa als ‘Sprichwörter’* (‘not as proverbs’) in (8a), which does not even have a corresponding element in the source text, destroys

textual equivalence because German readers would certainly not confound the linguistic term *Pro-Verb* with ‘Sprichwort’ (German for *proverb*). Therefore, the expansion is superfluous and has no communicative value for German readers. In a translation of the passage into Spanish, however, where *pro-verbo* might indeed be mistaken for *proverbio*, the explanation would make sense. This shows that there are no general solutions for textual equivalence but only specific ones, depending on the cultures, languages and situations involved.

We may therefore conclude that equivalence between source-text and target-text elements cannot be determined once and for all; it is also not possible for language pairs. Textual equivalence depends not only on textual phenomena but also on the *skopos* of the translational action.

(9) Je m'adresse aux peuples, aux peuples au pluriel. (Cited in Zellmer 1968: 234)

(Literally: I am addressing the peoples, the peoples in the plural.)

(9a) Ich wende mich an das Volk, die Völker.

(9b) Ich wende mich an die Völker.

Example (9) has been taken from a speech by the French president Charles de Gaulle. In our opinion, both translations can be regarded as equivalents of the source text under certain conditions: (9a) in simultaneous interpreting, and (9b) in translation. Due to the specificities of French phonology, the simultaneous interpreter cannot tell from the **first part** of the sentence that the speaker is using a plural form, which is precisely why de Gaulle repeats it together with the specification *au pluriel*. As in German the plural of *Volk* is *Völker*, the interpreter has to add the plural form. If, however, this speech were to be recorded and later translated, version (9a) would convey false information (*an das Volk* = ‘to the [French] people’ is not part of the source text), whereas the literal translation (see above) would lead to redundancy not present in the source text and which is dysfunctional in the target text because the additional phrase *in the plural* would be regarded either as incomprehensible or, at best, as a case of emphasis which is not present in the source text. Thus, the target text would have characteristics which have no equivalent in the source text.

10.8.2 Conclusions

So far, we have been able to observe that (a) ‘textual equivalence’ is a dynamic concept and (b) it is closely interrelated with the *skopos* of the target text and the relevance of individual elements to the overall meaning of the text, on the one hand, and with the *skopos* of this text in the process of communication, on the other. In this interrelation, the linguistic signs objectively given and materially present in the source text serve as signals which guide us in identifying the *skopos*. The linguistic signs chosen for the target text can be

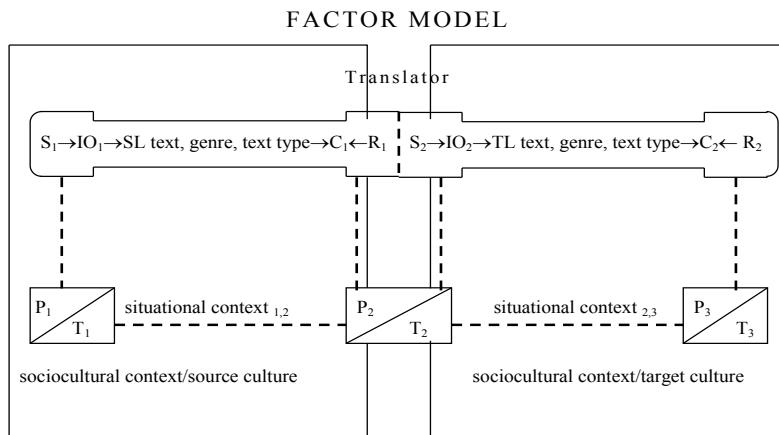
regarded as equivalent if they signal an analogous *skopos*. Seen in this light, what the translator focuses on first and foremost is indeed language as a means of communication, although not in the sense of a simple, one-dimensional use of language, rather, its use as a ‘tool’ that serves to ‘communicate’ everything a culture wishes to express. This is why the equivalence concept is so complex and difficult, which actually does not come as a surprise if we consider a process of language use which Richards (1953: 250) described as “the most complex type of event yet produced in the evolution of the cosmos”.

As we have mentioned before, the linguistic configuration of a text is influenced by various different factors. With regard to the text’s use in the process of communication, the configuration is determined by situational factors. If such a text is translated/interpreted not only into another language but also for another culture, additional factors come into play. It is a mesh of factors: in each and every text, these multiple factors are interconnected in different ways; they determine and influence each other and play different roles. Accordingly, it could be regarded as a “utopian undertaking” (this is what Ortega y Gasset thought of translating) to attempt to find “equivalence criteria which are valid for more than one text” (Wilss 1975: 19). We cannot offer an exhaustive catalogue of the factors relevant to such equivalence; however, we shall try to identify the fundamental factors which could help us to find plausible equivalence criteria based on intersubjective arguments.

10.9 Equivalence criteria

In order to provide a basis for the identification of equivalence criteria relevant for translation, we propose a factor model offering a schematic representation of the conditions that determine the translation process.

This model will be the starting point for our description of the factors which determine the composition of texts and, consequently, are relevant for textual equivalence.



N.B. In this diagram, we are using the abbreviations and acronyms introduced elsewhere, together with a few new ones, without any intention of making a semantic distinction with regard to other terms used earlier in this book or in other works.

The *translator*, as the decisive factor in the whole process, takes the central position. Like all the other factors, the translator is a variable which depends on the following conditions: his individual translation competence (which may have been developed to different degrees, both in general terms and with regard to different genres or individual texts); his individual understanding of the source text (which due to the specific analytical and hermeneutic abilities of one particular translator may be different from that of other translators); his personal views on semantic and formal quality standards; the issue of whether the translator is only a recipient of the source text or, at the same time, part of the audience addressed by the source-text producer, and the choice of a particular translation type (which may be influenced by the commissioner). All these conditions determine, to a greater or lesser degree, the translation process and the *translatum* resulting from the translator's actions (the term 'translator' may also refer to a team of translators).

The *producer* (sender: S₁) of the source text presents the text as an offer of information to a source-culture audience (recipients: R₁). The actual reception of the text starts a *process of communication* (C), which is governed by the specific characteristics of the information offer (IO).

The *text* itself can be considered from two perspectives, as described below. First, it is an individual text. With the exception of completely standardized texts (e.g. a blank form), each text is an individual text in that it represents the individual choice of linguistic signs producers make in order to verbalize their offer of information (the paper it is printed on would therefore be only of peripheral interest for the individuality of a text). Second, each text represents, to a greater or lesser degree, a *genre*, i.e. a class of supra-individual speech or writing acts associated with recurring communicative interactions and which therefore have developed certain conventional linguistic and formal patterns; these may differ considerably from one culture to another. In our opinion, the concept of genre refers not only to pragmatic but also to literary texts. We do not share the elitist view that literary texts are unique, unrepeatable works of art, at least not in this generalizing form. Moreover, no text can be analysed without considering genre conventions (and these are particularly relevant for communicative translating). Even the fact that a particular text is characterized precisely by a creative breach of conventions can only be appreciated against the background of conventional style features.

Furthermore, every text is a more or less successful example of a text type or set of text types in line with the translation-oriented typology we shall discuss in chapter 12. (Cf. Reiß [1971]2000 and 1976a). By *text types*, we are referring to certain basic, perhaps even universal, functions of communication which, as such, are independent of a particular culture, whereas the form in

which they are verbalized is language- and culture-specific.

When planning how to produce a text, i.e. before verbalizing the surface structures, every text producer chooses one out of three basic communicative types. The choice is based on communicative intentions and determines whether the information offer will be primarily geared towards conveying information ('informative text type'), acting as a work of art ('expressive text type'), or trying to persuade the audience of something ('operative text type'). The decision regarding which of these three basic functions takes precedence, and possibly their order of importance, will influence the choice of linguistic signs and force the translator to employ different translation strategies. This is not only true for entire texts but applies also to individual text passages or segments, which, in hybrid text types, may be intended to carry out a function other than the primary one (cf. Reiβ 1978b: 33).

With regard to the textual equivalence aimed at in communicative translating, we have to bear in mind that certain texts form a communicative unit with 'texts' from other sign systems. In such cases, the linguistic signs interact with the signs of other systems.

For example: combinations of text and music, e.g. songs; combinations of text and images, e.g. picture books, advertising material, slides with captions; combinations of text plus sound plus images, e.g. cinema and television films.

As this interaction has to be taken into account in communicative translating, we would suggest a fourth translation-oriented text type ('multimedial text type') which can serve as a framework for the composition of the other three types. Apart from occasional comments on specific examples (cf. Spillner 1980 and Kaemmerling 1982), this text type has not been studied in depth yet, although it might require the development of a translation-oriented media typology (analogous to the differentiation of types of translation strategy), as was suggested by a research team from the Phillips translation department in the Netherlands (cf. also Spillner 1980).

The choice of linguistic signs for the composition of the source text as representative of a certain text type and genre (or of hierarchies of text types and genres) is closely related to the *situational context*. The situational context, in turn, is characterized by various other factors, e.g. the time (T) and place (P) of the communicative event. Unlike face-to-face interaction, communication via written texts (or texts preserved in other forms) is specific in that the producer and recipient(s) do not share the same 'situation of perception'. The time and place of text production and the time and place of text reception may differ to a greater or lesser extent, and so will the influence they have on production and reception respectively. This splitting of situations changes the nature of the communicative process, which will then turn into a 'one-way' communication (Glinz 1973), where the recipients cannot verify their understanding

of the producer's intention by asking direct questions, and where non-verbal aids to comprehension (gestures, facial expressions, prosody, deixis, etc.) will only be reproduced to a very limited extent (e.g. by punctuation, bold face or italics, etc.).

- (10) Have you *read* the text?
- (10a) Have *you* read the text?

In face-to-face communication, the difference in meaning between (10) and (10a) is made clear by intonation. In written communication, the readers' comprehension will rely on the context, which, however, often lacks such clear indications.

Another crucial factor relevant for translation is the socio-cultural context in which the source text is set. Natural languages are not created in test tubes but shaped by the cultures of which they are a part. Lyons (1968: 432) comes to the general conclusion

that the language of a particular society is an integral part of its culture, and that the lexical distinctions drawn by each language will tend to reflect the culturally important features of objects, institutions and activities in the society in which the language operates.

However, the choice of linguistic signs when producing a particular offer of information is not only determined by the material provided by the language system (whether SL or TL) but also by language usage, i.e. the verbalization or non-verbalization of certain parts of communication (most English obituaries, for example, do not explicitly mention the fact that somebody has passed away), the diverse genre conventions which may change through history (Reiß 1977), the knowledge presupposed in the audience, including the knowledge of other texts of either their own or other cultures, which is needed for understanding quotations and allusions, among other things, and the 'background' knowledge of the culture in general, etc.

For example: (a) Presupposed knowledge: the title of a newspaper commentary *Die Botschaft hör ich wohl...* in the prestigious German weekly *DIE ZEIT* can only be fully understood by somebody who recognizes the reference to Goethe's play *Faust*, **Part I**, line 421 ("The message well I hear ...")⁶⁴ and is able to complete the line ("... my faith alone is weak") because it is this **second part** which clarifies the function of the title: the recipient is called upon to understand the scepticism underlying the corresponding text.

⁶⁴ Goethe, J. W. von. (1909-1914) *Faust. Part I*. Trans. Anna Swanwick, Vol. XIX, New York: P.F. Collier & Son. Also available at Bartleby.com (2001) <http://www.bartleby.com/19/1/> [last accessed 23/11/2012] (*Translator's note*)

(b) Background knowledge: in order to understand that it would be quite an unusual event if all students of an American college were to join together in a happy and peaceful Christmas celebration, the reader has to be familiar with the usual rivalry and even enmity between freshmen and sophomores at American colleges. It is only against this background that the reader can appreciate the irony in a concrete text (Jean Webster: *Daddy-Long-Legs*) where the author refers to *all united in amicable accord*. In her German translation of the book, the translator M. Boveri (1979: 85) had to explain the background to the German readers in a footnote.

The various types or kinds of communicative interaction (e.g. scholarly, philosophical, religious, aesthetic or everyday communication) may also be relevant for the communicative value of linguistic signs.

For example: in everyday communication, the German words *Dasein* and *Existenz* or *Wirklichkeit* and *Realität* can be regarded as synonymous translations for ‘existence’ and ‘reality’ respectively. However, in a philosophical text (e.g. in Heidegger’s *Being and Time*), they may even be used as antonyms.

All these factors also affect the translator’s verbalization of the information offer for the *target-text recipient* (R_2), which adds to the complexity of the translation process. The context of the *translatum* is different from that of the source text, and the context of the target-text reception is again different. The socio-cultural setting of the *translatum* is different from that of the source text because, apart from divergences in the respective language systems, the language use with regard to texts, text types and genres, and the general and background knowledge presupposed, will rarely be the same, even for similar audiences in the two cultures.

In their role as recipients of the source text and producers of the target text (R_1 and S_2), translators decide whether or not their information offer should/must/can be assigned to the same text type and genre as the source text, and choose their translation strategy accordingly. If they choose a communicative translation type, the aim of the translation process will be to achieve equivalence between the source and the target texts.

10.10 Achieving textual equivalence in the translation process

The factors shown in the model of the translation process (producer, recipient, text, text type, genre, context, culture, ↗ 10.9.) and their interrelations form the relevant ‘mesh’ which determines the production of both the source text and the target text. The translator is confronted with a (source) text in which

(to expand the metaphor) the knots and weft threads appear in the form of linguistic signs and their relations with one another and with the ‘world’. These linguistic signs guide the readers’ text comprehension, serving – if combined with their world knowledge in a given situation – as indicators of the influence the various factors may have had on the author’s linguistic choices.

10.11 The text

10.11.1 *The individual text*

Apart from their expectations (e.g. preconceptions, prejudices), translators can only draw on the text in front of them to analyse the possible influence of the various factors on the author’s linguistic choices (why did the author choose precisely these signs?) in order to make sense of the text. Semiotically speaking, each source text (like any other text) has a semantic, a syntactic and a pragmatic dimension, which become manifest at different linguistic ‘levels’, from the grapheme or phoneme through morphemes, semantemes, and syntagmemes to the ‘texteme’, and contribute to the sense of the text. In a communicative event, we can distinguish between the content, form and sense of a text.

A text ‘makes sense’ if it can be regarded as having a purpose (i.e. written with an intention, a *skopos*) in a given situation. *Translata* are texts. Even a *translatum* produced for the translator’s own pleasure, by expressing what was said and intended in one language satisfactorily in another language, has a purpose.

At text level, sense takes precedence over content and form.

For example: in an encyclopaedia, the ‘raven’ entry provides semantic and formal details which may not be appropriate for Edgar Allan Poe’s poem *The Raven*. The function of the text in the encyclopaedia is to convey information about a *raven* as a referent or object of communication. The function of *The Raven* is to convey a poetic version of the referent *raven* by means of an aesthetic arrangement of the linguistic signs chosen for this purpose.

‘Form’ refers to the overall composition of the text, including the conventions or norms the author complied with or breached (‘text form’), on the one hand, and its style (‘language form’), including both author-specific and function-specific features, on the other hand. However, content, form and sense are not only manifested in the verbal elements, i.e. in the body of the text, but also in the non-verbal and paraverbal elements, e.g. prosodic features like rhythm or metre. Furthermore, the elements at lower levels, which are common to all texts, have both denotative and connotative features and may also trigger

associations, all of which can contribute to what we call the sense of the text. Denotative (referential) features are largely independent of individual languages; connotative features are, at least in part, supra-individual, whereas associations are predominantly individual. Even punctuation (cf. Newmark 1981: 171-72) and spelling may convey sense.

(11) Mitterand se ha presentado como el político de la resistencia (con y sin mayúscula). (*ABC*, 22 May 1981: ‘Al llegar Mitterand’).

(Literally: Mitterand has presented himself as a politician of the resistance, with and without a capital R.)

A literal translation into German (*als Politiker des Widerstands, mit und ohne Großbuchstabe*) would fail to communicate the sense because German nouns are always capitalized. A paraphrase would be more appropriate in this case:

(11a) [...] als Politiker des Widerstands und der Résistance

because the French word *Résistance* is used in German to refer to a specific form of political resistance followed by the French against the German occupation.

(12) He hoped the Lord might spare him long enough to see it. (D. Sayers: *Have his carcass*, 1960: 342)

In this example, the capital letter in *Lord* indicates the reference to ‘God’ instead of a nobleman of high rank.

It is quite clear, that just replacing or ‘transcoding’ the verbal signs of the source text would only be possible in rare cases, due to the structural differences between the two languages, the different circumstances in which the two texts are used, and the contrast between the two cultures. It is usually necessary to rearrange the relations between the semantic and formal features from a functional perspective in such a way that the target text can achieve the same function in the target culture which is or was achieved by the source text in the source culture. In communicative translating, where textual equivalence is the aim, the ideal case would be to actually achieve functional equivalence between all the elements of the source and the target texts. But such a claim would never be made for this type of translation, even by the most extreme theory. In view of all the linguistic and cultural differences listed above, it would appear necessary to establish a hierarchy of equivalence levels.

In this context, we would like to mention Nida’s concept of “dynamic equivalence”. Dynamic equivalence is achieved by choosing the “closest natural

equivalent, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style" (Nida and Taber 1969: 12). It comes very close to what we have called 'functional equivalence'. It is interesting that Nida proposes this concept in connection with a particular type of Bible translation, which aims to produce a target text which would have the same communicative value for the target culture which the source text has (or had) for the source culture.

10.11.2 *The genre*

A first step towards a hierarchy of levels of equivalence is to classify texts according to the genre or subgenre to which they belong because, in communicative translation, the source-culture norms and conventions observed in the source text must be replaced by corresponding target-culture norms and conventions in the target text (↗ Example 16). Cf. also Soellner (1980), who reports on the professional translation of technical texts from German into French, emphasizing the necessity to consider not only certain linguistic clichés or lexical modules but also the conventions of text composition.

Some genres require including or eliminating certain text elements when designing a hierarchy of levels of equivalence. For example, taking phoneme values into consideration may be necessary in the translation of poetry (↗ example 13) but it is irrelevant in the translation of legal texts. However, classifying a text as representative of a genre is not always sufficient because, due to their individual composition, certain genres may belong to different text types (cf. Reiβ 1981).

10.11.3 *The text type*

Allocating a text to one of the translation-oriented text types makes a further specification of hierarchy criteria possible. In texts of the informative type, referential content elements will receive the highest priority from among all the equivalence criteria; other equivalence requirements (e.g. connotative, associative or aesthetic values) will then take their place at lower levels.

In texts of the expressive type, priority is given to equivalence at aesthetic text-composition level and to form-focused language use. Cf. Zimmer (1981), who convinces in his classification of a particular text from the genre 'detective story' as an expressive text type. The equivalence criteria he focuses on are different from those usually assigned to this kind of light fiction. Thus, it is always the individual source-text itself which provides the ultimate criteria for text-type classification.

In texts of the operative type, equivalence focuses primarily on preserving the persuasive aspects of the text's composition and style. This means that connotative and associative elements are ranked higher than denotative-referential ones. The overall communicative function of a text, therefore, lets

us draw some cautious conclusions with regard to the text elements to which priority must be given because they determine the hierarchy of equivalence requirements for a translation. However, the classification of a particular text representing a particular genre as belonging to one of the functional text types should in any event be intersubjectively justifiable.

Our concept of ‘persuasive’ and ‘appeal-focused’ in the context of the operative text type is not in line with Newmark’s (1981) view. In his analysis of a passage from German legislation, he states: “Being a legal text, it is designed to impress the reader” (Newmark 1981: 163). This would mean that he classifies this legal text as belonging to the operative type. In his discussion of the example, Newmark (1981: 160) inconsistently goes on to say that “this particular phrase is purely informative”. In another context (*ibid.*: 130), he mentions a legal text as an example of “persuasive writing”. We believe, however, that a legal text should always be assigned to the informative type because the sender does not intend to convince, to persuade or to appeal to the recipients to obey the law, rather, they are informed of the content of the law.

10.12 Hierarchies of equivalence requirements

When analysing the source text, the translator tries to identify the text elements which should be given priority with regard to equivalence. As we have seen above, the hierarchy of individual values may differ according to text type, genre, and the individual text.

For example: in order to achieve equivalence between the source and the target texts in translation, priority should be given to:

- the reproduction of the train of thought in a philosophical essay;
- the correct listing of the ingredients and clear instructions for the preparation of the dish in a recipe;
- the contents and genre conventions (e.g. with regard to the opening and closing forms of address) in a business letter;
- the aesthetic composition of the text in poetry;
- the persuasive elements in advertising.

Other equivalence requirements will then be dealt with in line with how the functional equivalence of individual elements can or should contribute to textual equivalence.

10.13 Discussion of examples

In our discussion of examples (1) to (9), we have already demonstrated, although from a different perspective, that, occasionally, a particular feature of the source text must take precedence over the others in order to achieve textual equivalence.

(13) The refrain from the poem we mentioned above, *The Raven* by E. A. Poe, is *nevermore*. According to the author, its dark, doom-portending phoneme /o/ and the rolling phoneme /r/ (cf. Radó 1979: 190) were significant in his choice of the word. Apart from its semantic value, a translation should therefore try to (at least functionally) reproduce the sound value in the target language in order to be a communicative equivalent. But this is not possible in all languages. In the German translation, *nevermore* was rendered as *nimmermehr*, a semantic but not phonetic equivalent because, with the omission of the dark vowel /o/, the associations are lost as well. However, this loss can be compensated for, to a certain extent, by the parallelism of the intonation (*nevermore / nimmermehr*) and the phonetic similarity of the morphemes *-more* and *-mehr*. For the target audience, the associations of doom triggered by the original refrain are replaced by an association of death and peremptoriness. This association is not the same but similar enough to that of the source text; it can therefore be regarded as appropriate with regard to the overall function of the text.

In this sense, we agree with Bausch (1973: 611), who writes about the subjective factors influenced by the translator's personality, but we would add the aspect of different linguistic and cultural structures:

From this viewpoint, the prescriptive, or rather, idealized, concept of equivalence is transformed into a concept of approximation.⁶⁵

Thinking along these lines, it becomes clear why Ladmíral (1981: 393) suggests replacing the concept of equivalence with the concept of 'approximation'. However, his proposal is not acceptable because, at least at text level, equivalence can be achieved not only by approximation but also in absolute terms if the prevailing conditions in a particular language and culture pair permit it. It is essential to distinguish between equivalence at text level and equivalence at text segment level.

(13a) In the French translation of Poe's *Raven*, the refrain has been rendered as *jamais plus*. Here, we can speak of semantic equivalence, but, due to the different structures in English and French, the passage is far from equivalent with regard to phonetics and prosody. In this case, the semantic component is given priority in an attempt to achieve equivalence of sense. However, the lack of phonetic equivalence should then be compensated for by an 'equivalence shift' (Kloepfer 1967: 117 calls it "versetztes Äquivalent"), in an attempt to trigger the phonetic associations in some other line of the poem where the target language permits it.

⁶⁵ Der präskriptive, bzw. idealisierte textuelle Äquivalenzbegriff wird unter diesem Gesichtspunkt zum Annäherungsbegriff verändert. (Bausch 1973: 611)

The principle of equivalence shift is often used in aesthetic and literary texts. This principle is illustrated in Reiß (1981) using an extended example, where the shifts affect the composition of an entire essay.

(13b) The Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa translated Poe's refrain by *nunca mais*. This corresponds to the source text with regard to both semantics and phonetics. Phonetically, the vowel sequence light-dark in *nevermore* is changed to dark-light in *nunca mais*, which may even trigger the association of a cry of despair. We believe that the translation is functionally equivalent.

In some cases, the text itself provides some clues for the hierarchy of equivalence requirements, as can be seen in the following example from Christian Morgenstern's poem 'Das ästhetische Wiesel'.

(14) Das ästhetische Wiesel
 Ein Wiesel
 saß auf einem Kiesel
 inmitten Bachgeriesel. [...] (Morgenstern 1964: 18)

(14a) The Aesthetic Weasel
 A weasel
 perched on an easel
 within a patch of teasel. [...] (Trans. Max Knight, *ibid.*: 19)

Syntactically and pragmatically, and therefore also on a textual level, the *translatum* is an equivalent of the source text, although the translator has changed the semantics of certain lexical elements (in the original, the weasel is sitting on a pebble in the ripple of a brook) in order to bring the text in line with the author's aesthetic intention (i.e. the intended overall function of the text). The underlying principle of the aesthetic composition of the poem is stated by the author himself in the last stanza, which provides the translator with the necessary guidelines regarding the hierarchy of equivalence requirements.

(14b) Das raffinier-
 te Tier
 Tat's um des Reimes willen.

(14c) The sopheres-
 ticated beast
 Did it just for the rhyme. (Trans. Max Knight)

In his discussion of this example, Levý ([1963]2011: 101) mentions five more English versions by Max Knight. Here, the translator introduced different

lexical changes which, however, did not go against the priority of textual equivalence (e.g. *a mink / sipping a drink / in a kitchen sink* or *a hyena / playing a concertina / in an arena*). Therefore, Levý regarded all versions as equivalent – more proof of the fact that textual equivalence is a highly dynamic concept.

(15) Sur les faire-part on avait précisé ‘ni fleurs ni couronnes’ histoire de ne pas mettre les copains dans les frais. (San Antonio: *De ‘A’ jusqu’à ‘Z’*. Spécial-Police, 1967)

Though the notices had been designed to keep the expenses down and had stipulated ‘no flowers, by request’, ... (Trans. Hugh Campbell, 1968, p. 5)

(15a) Auf den Traueranzeigen hatte gestanden ‘weder Blumen noch Kränze’, um die lieben Freunde nicht in Unkosten zu stürzen. (Trans. Roedinger 1973, cited by Zimmer 1981: 150)

The source text quotes the conventional wording of a typical expression found in French obituaries: *ni fleurs ni couronnes* (literally: ‘neither flowers nor wreaths’). The literal translation in German lacks pragmatic equivalence; it would sound somewhat strange to German readers because German obituaries would use a different structure (e.g. *Von Blumen- und Kranzspenden bitten wir abzusehen*). As it would be contrary to their expectations, they would probably find the text rather rude, and this would have a negative impact on communicative equivalence. Such a mistranslation in a novel would hardly destroy the textual equivalence of the whole (↗ example 4), but, if mistranslations occur too frequently, the textual equivalence of the whole text may be at risk.

(16) Der Kompass muss von vorne abgelesen werden, so dass die Richtung eine Linie mit der eingravierten Markierung auf der Innenseite der durchsichtigen Kapsel bildet. Wird der Kompass von oben abgelesen, so weicht das Ergebnis um 180° von der tatsächlichen Richtung ab. Zur Erleichterung der Montage fertigen wir für den Bootskompass zusätzlich eine Klemmvorrichtung. Diese wird mit Schrauben an der gewünschten Stelle des Bootes befestigt und der Kompass einfach eingesteckt. Derselbe kann zum Schutz gegen Diebstahl, Beschädigung oder während der Winterlagerung mit einem Griff wieder abgenommen werden. (Assembly instructions for a boat compass)⁶⁶

⁶⁶ The compass must be read from the front in such a way that the direction indicated is in line with the mark engraved on the interior of the transparent capsule. If the compass is read from above, the result will deviate by 180° from the actual direction. A clamping device (optional equipment), which is screwed to the place where you wish the compass to be fixed, will facilitate mounting the boat compass and its removal to protect it from theft or damage, particularly when the boat is stored in the garage during the winter. (Trans. C. Nord)

(16a) On doit regarder la boussole par devant de manière que la direction soit en ligne avec le marquage sur l'intérieur de la capsule transparente. Si vous lisez la boussole d'en haut, le résultat déviera de 180° de la vraie direction. Dans le but de faciliter le montage de la boussole à bateau un dispositif est livrable comme supplément. Il se laisse fixer à l'aide de vis, à une place quelconque du bateau. A l'emploi de la boussole il n'y a que le mettre dedans. Pour la protéger contre le vol, dommage et les intempéries de l'hiver, la boussole se laisse détacher de la même manière.

(16b) On doit regarder la boussole marine par devant, la marque figurant sur la face intérieure de la capsule transparente tournée vers soi. Si on lit la boussole d'en haut, le résultat déviera de 180° de la vraie direction. Afin de faciliter le montage de la boussole, nous avons conçu un dispositif à crochet, livrable en supplément (livrable sur demande), que l'on fixe par des vis à l'endroit désiré. Lorsqu'on emploie la boussole, on la glisse tout simplement sur le crochet. On peut l'enlever tout aussi facilement si (l')on veut la protéger contre le vol ou la détérioration, notamment lors du séjour au garage (notamment pendant l'hivernage). (Trans. van Damme)

The example is taken from a translation critique published in *Lebende Sprachen* 20 (1975): 151-52. What is of interest to us here is not the number of objective translation errors found by the author van Damme, a native speaker of French, in the French translation (16a) of the German original (16) but the fact that the translation does not comply with French genre conventions. Communicative equivalence in the translation of ‘operating or assembly instructions’ (informative text type) requires that the target text conform to target-culture genre conventions. In this case, it is not a question of formal structures because passive and impersonal constructions are also available in French; moreover, an indefinite pronoun (*on/man*) and infinitive constructions also exist in German. However, they are not used with the same frequency in instructive texts in the two cultures. If the conventions are not observed, French-speaking readers will find the text too formal and clumsy and, therefore, not regard it as a communicative equivalent of the source text (although it would be semantically equivalent, after the translation errors had been corrected).

(17) Der [sic!] rechte Madrider ABC etwa phantasierte:

‘Regis Debray hat Che Guevara unterstützt, und Che Guevara starb durch die Kugel. Regis Debray hat Allende unterstützt, und Allende starb durch die Kugel. Regis Debray unterstützt Mitterrand; möge dieser liebenswürdige, redegewandte und gebildete Bewohner des Elysées gebeichtet haben, wenn er vor den Herrn tritt’. (Essay on the

situation of France under the presidency of Mitterrand, in the German news magazine *Der Spiegel*, 22 June 1981, p. 102)

(Literally: The conservative daily paper *ABC*, of Madrid, was fantasizing: ‘Regis Debray supported Che Guevara, and Che Guevara was shot. Regis Debray supported Allende, and Allende was shot. Regis Debray supports Mitterrand, so *may this kind, eloquent and educated occupant of the Élysée palace have taken confession* when he appears before the Lord’. Emphasis added.)

Anyone familiar with Spanish will immediately guess from the German translation (and its literal translation into English) that the Spanish source text (which is not available) used the idiom *¡que Dios le coja confesado!* (literally: ‘may God catch him confessed!’). The paraphrase used in the German translation gives the passage a humorous-ironic touch and runs contrary to the function of the source text. Therefore, the translation fails to achieve textual equivalence. In German, equivalent idioms would have been *Gott steh ihm bei!* / *dann gnade ihm Gott!* / *Gott sei ihm gnädig!* (in English: *God have mercy on him!* / *God help him!*).

(18) si yo digo que ‘el sol sale por Oriente’ lo que mis palabras [...] propiamente dicen es que un ente de sexo varonil y capaz de actos espontáneos – lo llamado ‘sol’ – ejecuta la acción de ‘salir’. (Ortega y Gasset 1957: 65)

if I say that *el sol* [the sun, masculine] *sale* [comes out or rises] *por oriente* [in the East], what my words [...] are actually saying is that an entity of the masculine sex, capable of spontaneous actions – the so-called sun – executes the action of ‘coming out’. (Trans. Elizabeth Gamble Miller, in Ortega y Gasset 1992: 105)

(18a) wenn ich sage, daß ‘die Sonne im Osten aufgeht’, so sagen meine Worte [...] nach ihrem eigentlichen Sinn, daß ein Wesen männlichen Geschlechts [*Anm. d. Übers.*: im Spanischen] und spontaner Handlungen fähig – der sogenannte ‘Sol’ – die Handlung des ‘Aufgehens’ ausführt. (Trans. Kilpper, in Ortega y Gasset 1957: 65)

(18b) wenn ich sage: ‘die Sonne geht im Orient auf’, dann besagen meine Worte [...] eigentlich, daß ein Wesen weiblichen Geschlechts und spontaner Akte fähig – das, was wir ‘Sonne’ nennen –, die Handlung des ‘Aufgehens’ [...] vollzieht. (Trans. Reiß, in Ortega y Gasset 1976: 52-3)

Kilpper’s rather literal translation (18a) says that the sun is a ‘male’, which would seem strange to German readers for whom the word *sun* (‘die Sonne’)

has feminine gender. Therefore, he explains in a note that this refers to Spanish. This translation can be regarded as an aid for comprehension, whereas Reiß (18b) has chosen a communicative translation.

If the aim is a communicative translation of this passage, the following should be taken into account: communicative equivalence requires that the target-text reader recognize not only content and form but also the function of individual text elements (the highest-ranking equivalence requirement). On the one hand, the target text should belong to the genre ‘essay’; in this respect, the metalinguistic note in (18a) is not in line with the style of an aesthetically composed, intellectually demanding essay, turning it into a scholarly article. On the other hand, the target recipients should be able to grasp the sense of the text as if it had been written for them in the target language. As mentioned above, for the German reader it is rather strange that the author talks about the sun as a ‘male’ creature because, in German, the word for *sun* has a feminine gender (*die Sonne*), and personification would turn it into a female being (the sun is sometimes called *mother sun* in German). Providing additional information (about the Spanish language), the translator’s note diverts the reader’s attention from the real function of this text element. Thus, the sense of the text is distorted. A further aspect should be taken into account: in Greco-Roman mythology, the sun plays an important role as a male being. However, the function of the passage in question in this particular part of this particular text is not a reference to mythological ideas. Rather, it is intended to provide a linguistic example to support Ortega y Gasset’s argument that languages today no longer say what they mean because they originated at a time when people still had different concepts, e.g. when they believed that the sun, the moon, the stars, fire, etc. were living creatures of a particular sex. Therefore, *varonil* (‘male’) was rendered as *weiblich* (‘female’) in (18b). In this manner, priority was given to pragmatic equivalence over semantic equivalence in order to preserve the equivalence of sense by means of an equivalence of function for the expression *un ente de sexo varonil*, thus achieving equivalence at genre level, as well as at (expressive) text type level (cf. Reiß 1981).

Once again, it should be noted that the translator’s decision with regard to textual equivalence would have been different if the same expression had occurred in a different text, e.g. ‘Sagas of Gods and Heroes in Ancient Greece’, where it probably would have served a different function. As we have seen above, equivalence cannot be determined absolutely and once and for all, not even for a particular language pair, but only in relation to the many factors influencing the translation process at different value levels.

(19) It’s the early bird that catches the tub. (Webster: *Daddy-Long-Legs* 1967: 68)

(19a) Nur der frühe Vogel erwischt die Badewanne. (Trans. Boveri 1979: 80)

(19b) Wer zuerst kommt, badet zuerst. (Trans. Boesch-Frutiger 1970: 99)
 (Literal back-translation: *First come, first bathed.*)

There are two different German translations for the ST segment (one published in West Germany, one in Switzerland). The literal translation (19a) is semantically equivalent, but does it achieve textual equivalence as well? At first glance, (19b) does not seem to have much in common with the ST. Is this an arbitrary change? If we look at the (linguistic) co-text and the (situational) context, however, the literal translation does not achieve textual equivalence, although it adequately reproduces the content of the sentence. Unlike the source-text readers, with their specific background knowledge, the target readers will not recognize that the source text modifies a proverb (*it's the early bird that catches the worm*). This stylistic choice is a form-focused element which, in a text of the expressive type, requires a similar procedure to achieve textual equivalence (factor: sociocultural context). If we consider the entire text, it even has an additional function. The way the writer of the letters, Judy, refers to the fact that in college you have to get up early if you want to find a space in the bathroom highlights her witty character, which is not explicitly described but is subtly insinuated by the style of her letters. In order to achieve communicative equivalence, the target text should also provide this indirect characterization (factor: genre 'epistolary novel'). Moreover, the expression *der frühe Vogel* (19a) triggers negative associations with other metaphorical uses of *Vogel* in German (e.g. a suspicious or weird person). The possibility that certain words evoke specific associations must always be taken into consideration, particularly in texts of the expressive type (requirement related to the text type).

The English proverb has a number of counterparts in German, such as *Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund* (meaning: 'if you want your business to thrive, you have to start work early'), which is the equivalent offered by the dictionary, *Wer zuerst kommt, mahlt zuerst* (literally: 'who comes first, mills first'), or, by changing the perspective, *Den Letzten beißen die Hunde* ('the devil takes the hindmost'). In this text, the choice is guided both by the situational context and the structural potential of German to modify the proverb in question. *Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund* does not fit the situation described in the text and cannot be naturally modified in the same way as the English proverb. The functionally relevant semantic elements of the passage are 'to get up early' and 'to be there first without having to wait'. Although *wer zuerst kommt, mahlt zuerst* refers to a different setting (a mill instead of a bathroom), it contains the functionally relevant elements and can be modified to fit the situation (*wer zuerst kommt, badet zuerst*). Therefore, it offers more possibilities for achieving equivalence in the target text. Both syntax and semantics are changed, and yet the translation preserves the sense of the text, the aesthetic organization appropriate to the text type (by means of the proverb), as

well as the text function (implicit description of the character). Therefore, by considering the text elements that take precedence in the hierarchy of values and play the most important role for this source text, version (19b) achieves a higher degree of textual equivalence than version (19a).

In order to show how the mesh of relevant factors must be woven in different ways, and how the priority given to equivalence requirements may have to be changed even within the same text, we shall discuss one last example in detail, again taken from Jean Webster's novel *Daddy-Long-Legs*.

It is well-known that the English pronoun *you* always causes translation problems if the target culture has more than one pronominal form of address (factor: structural differences of cultures and languages). In German, it depends on who addresses whom in which situation whether the informal T-form (*du*) or the more formal V-form (*Sie*) is chosen. Moreover, both forms may have different functions in the communicative interaction (factor: situational context, relationship between sender and recipient). The T-form can either express conventional behaviour (e.g. when used between young people of the same age, when used by an adult addressing a child, or in prayer), a high degree of familiarity (between peers), contempt, intentional disrespect or even an insult (in an asymmetrical relationship such as that between a manager and an employee), etc. It is therefore not irrelevant for textual equivalence whether the English *you*, in its function as form of address (and not as an impersonal pronoun), is translated by *du* or *Sie*.

The two German translators of *Daddy-Long-Legs* chose completely different strategies in this respect. We may ask, therefore, whether, in view of the tendency that all languages have towards variability and in view of all the subjective factors influencing the translation process (individual style preferences, subjectivity of text interpretation, etc.), the two strategies are acceptable and equivalent to the source text, or whether it is possible to find arguments (based on our factor model) for an objective, or at least intersubjective, assessment of the translators' subjective decisions, by judging the degree of equivalence achieved in each case.

As we have already mentioned, the text is an epistolary novel which consists, after a brief sketch of the background, of a series of letters written by Judy, who grew up in an orphanage, to her unknown benefactor, from whom she has received a college scholarship, over a period of four years. In the English text, the sender, the recipient, and the form of address remain the same, although the relationship between the sender and the recipient changes over the course of time. It would make perfect sense to use the V-form from the beginning but then to switch to the T-form in the last letter, after their first personal encounter, in which Judy finds out that she has known and loved her benefactor for quite some time, although under a different name. However, neither of the two translators opts for this solution. In Boesch-Frutiger's translation, Judy changes to the T-form in her first letter from college, whereas in

Boveri's translation, this happens after many letters, a full six months later. In order to assess the degree of equivalence in the two translations, we have to consider not only the sender and the recipient but also both the linguistic co-text and the situational context. In the brief background description preceding the letters, we read that the matron of the orphanage had enjoined Judy to bear in mind that

[t]hese monthly letters are absolutely obligatory on your part: they are the only payment that Mr. Smith requires [...]. I hope that they will always be respectful in tone and will reflect credit on your training. You must remember that you are writing to a Trustee of the John Grier Home. (Webster 1967: 6)

In view of this admonishment (factor: linguistic macro-context), the German reader would be puzzled if the 18-year-old Judy (factor: the sender) were to change from a formal to an informal form of address without any particular reason in the very first letter.

(20) So I've decided to call you Dear Daddy-Long-Legs. I hope you don't mind. (Webster 1967: 9)

(20a) Und somit habe ich mich dazu entschlossen, *Sie* in Zukunft mit 'lieber Daddy-Long-Legs' anzureden. Hoffentlich hast *Du*, liebes Väterchen, nichts dagegen. (Trans. Boesch-Frutiger 1970: 22, emphasis added)

In Boveri's translation, Judy (factor: the sender) does not give up the more formal *Sie* until much later, when during an illness (contrary to the original arrangement) she receives a bouquet of flowers and a get-well message (factor: the situational context), the first and only hand-written personal note from her unknown benefactor.

(21a) Thank you, Daddy, a thousand times. Your flowers make the first real, true present I ever received in my life. [...] Now that I am sure you read my letters, I'll make them much more interesting. (Webster 1967: 25)

(21b) Ich danke, Daddy, tausendmal. *Deine* Blumen sind das erste wirkliche Geschenk, das ich bisher in meinem Leben bekam [...]. Jetzt, da ich sicher bin, daß *Du* meine Briefe auch liest, werde ich sie viel interessanter machen. (Trans. Boveri, 1979: 45, emphasis added)

In her happiness over the unexpected sign of personal sympathy Judy feels confident that addressing the unknown benefactor by *du* would not mean to

disregard the respect she owes him, as he has now become something like a friend. This solution is psychologically much more convincing and achieves textual equivalence with the source text.

10.14 Conclusions

The above examples show that equivalence between the source and target texts can exist at the various levels of a text as a communicative event. Due to the differences between languages and cultures, the individual elements below text level often cannot be kept unchanged or equally equivalent. In such cases, translators must first select the elements of a particular source text which they regard as ‘characteristic’ or functionally relevant (principle of selection) and then decide on the priority which should be assigned to them (principle of hierarchy). They must also identify the cases in which it does not make sense to strive for an equivalent rendering of a particular feature (in the pre-scientific stage, translators called this ‘sacrificing’ a feature, and the corresponding procedure was ‘the art of appropriate sacrifice’), and those in which they have to opt for either a compensation for, or a reproduction of, the feature in question in order to achieve an overall equivalence for the target text, i.e. so that it has an equal value with regard to its function in the communicative situation. Such decisions must always take into consideration the function which individual elements have for the text as a whole (the ability to do this is what we call translation competence with regard to communicative translating). To do this, they draw on the linguistic co-text (examples 14, 18, 20), the situational context (examples 19, 20), the sociocultural context of each text (examples 19, 20), the classification of the text as belonging to a particular text type (examples 5, 13, 14, 18, 19) and genre (examples 7, 15, 16, 18, 19), which highlights the function of a particular text in a communicative event. The decisions are also influenced by the structural differences between the two languages involved (examples 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20).

Thus, equivalence can be proved to be a dynamic concept with regard to the relationship between a source and a target text. For each text (and for each of its elements, with regard to their importance for the sense and the function of the text as a whole), equivalence requires resetting the priority of all the factors influencing the translation process. It is the task of translators to select and prioritize all relevant factors, as well as part of their translational competence, which is more than just proficiency in the languages involved. The inevitable subjectivity of selecting and prioritizing factors is not arbitrary; rather, it is guided by the verbal signs present in the text and any factors which objectively influence the translation process in both the analysis phase and the reveralization phase. This is the reason why a phenomenon like equivalence can be observed and described convincingly by drawing on intersubjective arguments. Thus, the concept of equivalence has plenty of substance. Equivalence

is achieved between the source and target texts if the relationship between content and form in each text plays the same role and has the same function in the construction of meaning at text level.

11. Genre theory

11.0 Introduction

11.0.1 Preliminary remarks

In this chapter, we shall take genre as a case in point to show how the general theory discussed above can be extended for specific purposes. There is usually more than one approach to a theoretical or practical problem. An analysis of the genre phenomenon may shed a new light on the function-orientedness of translation which is at the heart of our theory. This chapter will again begin with cases in which the target text is supposed to achieve the same function as the source text, but the conclusions drawn from these cases will later be relativized by applying them to cases where there is a change of function. It will become clear that the discussion of genre addresses the correlation between translation *skopos* (↗ 4.) and translation strategy (↗ 3.) from a new perspective, leading to an analogous result.

11.0.2 Fundamental concepts of genre theory

The phenomenon of text genre (in German: *Textsorte*), which has been discussed at length in linguistics and literary studies, has not been given much attention in translation studies so far. Koller (1979), for example, does not even list the term in his index, whereas Wilss ([1977]1982) uses it rather frequently, without however discussing the concept in detail, let alone defining it. This may be due to the fact that it cannot be the task of translation studies to develop a genre theory of its own and that linguistics has not yet produced a generally accepted definition of genre.

“The terrible tragedies of science are the horrible murders of beautiful theories by ugly facts”, said W. A. Fowler. In what follows, we shall take care to make our theoretical considerations compatible, as far as possible, with the “ugly facts” of translation practice. On the whole, the phenomenon of genre is too important to be excluded from a theory of translational action and to be left to intuition (cf. Lux 1981: “A part of a text’s identity consists in its belonging to a particular genre”⁶⁷)

The new subdiscipline of text linguistics had hardly become established in modern linguistics when the problem of text classification increasingly shifted to the centre of attention. Starting from the observation that existing text specimens are confusingly variable, although this diversity is obviously not arbitrary, the attempt was and has been made to analyse the patterns in textual

⁶⁷ Ein Teil der Identität eines Textes besteht in seiner Textsortenzugehörigkeit. (Lux 1981: 273)

language use, text composition and the specific characteristics of texts in order to determine whether they could serve as a basis for classifying sets of texts and ultimately developing a systematic approach to the entire ‘cosmos’ of texts. This has proved to be a thorny issue because every effort to describe or define concepts like text, text genre, text class, text type, etc. has been hampered by the unsystematic use of these terms, although (or perhaps even because) a wide range of linguistic subdisciplines dealing with texts and their applications has a vital interest in this phenomenon. This situation (already lamented by Reiß 1976b) has not changed over the past few years. Again and again, we have observed that scholars coming from various fields of text studies, or even from the same field, miss each other’s point, or that studies dealing with text classification are misinterpreted because they use terms which are not defined (or not definable?) in a general way and are therefore understood differently. In order to avoid possible misunderstandings as far as possible, we shall first state in which sense we are going to use some of these terms.

- (1) The expression *text group* will be used for any set of texts which do not share any linguistic characteristic apart from their ‘textuality’ but are grouped together for some purpose or other, e.g. group A, group B, etc. in a collection of texts.
- (2) By *text class*, we mean any set of texts based on a coherent classification.
- (3) *Genre* (German: *Textgattung*) used to be confined to literary studies, where it was the term employed for any category of literary work, such as comedy or science fiction.⁶⁸
- (4) *Text variety* (German: *Textart*) is understood to be a semiotic concept employed to distinguish texts produced within different sign systems, e.g. visual vs. verbal, written vs. oral, text in Morse code or musical scores.
- (5) *Text domain* (German: *Textbereich*) refers to verbal texts sharing at least one characteristic feature, e.g. fiction, prose, pragmatic texts, poetic texts, etc. It does not refer to stylistic classifications based on functions, like expository texts, narrative texts, instructive texts, etc.
- (6) In this book, ‘text type’ is used exclusively in the sense explained above (↗ 10.3.) for a classification based on the fundamental universal forms of textuality in human communication: transmission of content, aesthetically organized transmission of content, persuasively organized transmission of content and (combined with a mixture of text varieties) multimedial transmission of the three basic types, i.e. a classification according to the number and kind of levels at which a text is encoded (cf. Reiß [1971]2000 and 1976a).

⁶⁸ In English, the term *genre* has of late been extended to non-literary texts (in German: *Textsorte*), replacing the term *text type*, which had been used for this text category before (cf. Basil Hatim and Ian Mason (1990) *Discourse and the Translator*, London: Longman). We will therefore use *genre* for both literary and non-literary incidences of text classification. (*Translator’s note*)

- (7) The concepts of genre, genre variant and genre class will be dealt with in detail in the following section.

11.1 The concept of genre

The debate about the concept of genre did not start until text linguistics had been established as a subdiscipline of linguistics which then extended its scope beyond the sentence level and developed into a fully-fledged, pragmatics-oriented text theory. An analysis of genre is not possible without considering its pragmatic aspect. As syntax and semantics are common to all texts, these categories would not be sufficient for a text classification. For genre research, the consideration of the situation (including any references to senders and recipients in communication) became particularly relevant because it provided the only reliable foundations for an in-depth analysis of the patterns of language use in text production, text composition, text analysis, text comprehension, text reception, etc. extending beyond the rules of syntax and semantics. In other words, in order to comprehend the complex sign ‘text’, we need the three sign dimensions postulated by semiotics: syntax, semantics and pragmatics (for a clear survey of this development, cf. Marfurt 1977: 11-22.)

However, a first attempt to give an overview of the state of the art in this field (cf. the anthology edited by Gülich and Raible 1972) reveals an extremely confusing scene. At this time, it obviously still seemed to be appropriate to ask whether there was such a thing as genre (*ibid.*: 175-79), and, under the entry ‘genre’, the index of the book lists items as divergent as expositions, fictional texts, instructions, interviews, literary texts, parodies, advertising, commentaries, translations (*sic!*) and news texts, to list just a few at random. Of course, translations can also be categorized as part of a text classification. If a distinction is made, for example, between a class of ‘primary’ or ‘independent’ texts, on the one hand, and a class of ‘dependent’ or ‘secondary’ texts, on the other, the latter includes adaptations, parodies, translations, etc.

The terms listed above reflect the fairly divergent views of various authors on what each of them regards as genre. No wonder that this state of affairs was immediately criticized, as even the non-linguist would be aware of the fact that, in the case of fictional texts, the shared distinctive criterion is far more abstract than in the case of operating instructions, and that, with regard to categorization, a ‘one-sentence text’ is quite different from an ‘advertising text’. As Sitta pointed out:

This means that the concept ‘genre’ is used (a) referring to a particular *type* of speech act, (b) referring to a particular sender *intention*, and (c) with regard to certain discourse *strategies* that more or less determine some kind of speech act.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Das heißt, der Begriff “Textsorte” wird einmal im Hinblick auf einen bestimmten Sprachhandlungstyp, ein andermal im Hinblick auf bestimmte Sprecherintentionen, ein drittes Mal

In the following years, a number of studies were carried out on the basis of linguistic theories (e.g. Gniffke-Hubrig 1972, using Bühler's organon model, Sandig 1973, drawing on speech act theory, or Marfurt 1977, using tagmemics) in order to describe the characteristic elements and structures of 'intuitively recognized' genres without having first developed a comprehensive genre theory. Genre descriptions focussing on configurations of features like those developed by phonology ('distinctive features'), then adopted by structural grammar ('componential analysis') and now adapted to text analysis reveal, however, that this method yields only rather simplistic differentiations (cf. Sandig 1972: 122). Other studies tried to use structure formulas describing, among other things, the sequence of text components, or the characteristic macrostructure of different genres (cf. particularly Gülich and Raible 1974 and 1975). This showed very clearly that purely linguistic parameters are inadequate for providing appropriate descriptions and differentiations of genres.

Lux (1981) aptly summarizes the state of the art in genre research, trying to outline the basics of an adequate genre theory. By "adequacy", he means what he calls "adequacy acknowledged by competence" (*kompetentielle Adäquatheit*), i.e. the requirement that intuitive genre classifications should be justified linguistically, avoiding "intuitively absurd classifications", e.g. regarding "texts beginning with the letter A" or "texts with more than ten typos" as genres (cf. Lux 1981: 37). Within the framework of communication-oriented genre linguistics, the current consensus is, according to Lux, "that genre descriptions have to consider both 'internal' (linguistic) and 'external' (communicative, situational) features", where "the former are determined by the latter".⁷⁰ Finally, Lux proposes a basic framework for genre classification, whose fundamental dimensions are "referential" (each text maps a segment of the "world", referring to facts, processes or objects), "interpersonal" (each text is part of a communicative interaction, aiming to influence the recipient in a certain way), and "formal" (each text has a "texture" with a particular linguistic structure of its own; cf. Lux 1981: 21). Using this framework, Lux sketches a partial matrix for the description of genres, using additional minimal pairs of features. Although he only takes into account the "referential" dimension and part of the "interpersonal" dimension, leaving the "formal" dimension aside, the matrix yields quite satisfactory results for the text corpus used and deserves further elaboration.

im Hinblick auf bestimmte Sprecherstrategien gebraucht, die einen Sprachhandlungstyp mehr oder weniger prägen. (Sitta 1973: 65)

⁷⁰ [...] daß zur Beschreibung von Textsorten sowohl "innere" (sprachliche) als auch "äußere" (kommunikative, situative) Merkmale" [zu berücksichtigen, jedoch] "die ersten durch die letzten determiniert" [sind]. (Lux 1981: 35-36)

11.2 Genre definitions

As a result of his discussion of register linguistics and other pragmatics-oriented forms of genre studies, Lux (1981) offers a definition in his concluding section “What then are text genres?” Although this definition is rather general, it seems to be appropriate for a “realistic genre linguistics which attempts to encompass everything that is intuitively regarded as genre” (1981: 247). Lux criticizes register linguistics mainly for not making a distinction between text genres and action types. He holds the view that there is a correlation between the two but that they are not identical.

11.2.1 General definition

Lux defines ‘genre’ as follows:

A text genre is a relevant class of coherent verbal texts, acknowledged by competence, whose constitution, range of variation and application within a context and accompanying action types are subject to certain rules. A part of a text’s identity consists in its belonging to a particular genre. Formally, a genre can be described as a combination of features (whose number is defined for each genre separately) belonging to classificatory dimensions which are grouped according to the three fundamental semiotic aspects of a text (mapping of the world, communicative function, individual structure).⁷¹

11.2.2 Expansion of the general definition

As stated above, it cannot be the task of a theory of translational action to develop its own genre theory. We shall therefore adopt Lux’s definition for our considerations because it is the most convincing one at present, adding specifications and expansions where additional arguments from other scholars or our own intuition (another name for linguistic competence) or observations seem to suggest them. Our focus will be on those considerations and results which (in spite of their tentativeness, particularly with regard to genre linguistics) promise useful insights for translators and their work. In line with Pörksen (1974: 219), we therefore regard genres as supra-individual types of speech

⁷¹ Eine Textsorte ist eine im Bereich der kohärenten verbalen Texte liegende kompetentiell anerkannte und relevante Textklasse, deren Konstitution, deren Variationsrahmen und deren Einsatz in Kontext und umgebenden Handlungstypen Regeln unterliegen. Ein Teil der Identität eines Textes besteht in seiner Textsortenzugehörigkeit. Formal lässt sich eine Textsorte beschreiben als Kombination von Merkmalen (deren Zahl für jede Textsorte einzeln festgelegt ist) aus Klassifikationsdimensionen, die nach den drei semiotischen Grundaspekten des Textes (Abbildung von Welt, kommunikative Funktion, Eigenstruktur) gruppiert sind. (Lux 1981: 273)

and writing acts associated with recurring communicative activities in which repeated occurrence has led to the development of characteristic patterns of language use and text composition. (Cf. Lux 1981: 273: “A part of a text’s identity consists in its belonging to a particular genre”. ↗ 11.2.1.)

Cherubim and Henne state that

specific genres, which are defined by the pragmatic conditions of their respective use (‘discourse context’), constitute socially determined communicative and actional schemata, which are learned and internalized in the process of language acquisition.⁷²

What we find most interesting in this statement is that the authors refer to “communicative schemata” and to the acquisition of competence by each speaker (cf. Lux 1981: 273: “text class acknowledged by competence”). We assume, however, that this statement is not valid for all genres and can be applied, in most cases, only to the recognition and not to the independent production of genres.

Early on, Gniffke-Hubrig suggested the following definition which, however, is limited to pragmatic texts:

Linguistics groups texts that have developed as established forms of public and private communication as ‘genres’. [...] Each written use of language is guided by certain rules which have developed historically in accordance with the purpose of the text.⁷³

Glinz points out that “Genres are crystallized forms (patterns) in certain typical constellations of human interaction”.⁷⁴ Similarly, Lux (1981: 273) states that

classes of texts, whose constitution, range of variation and application within a context and accompanying action types are subject to certain rules.⁷⁵

⁷² [...] daß spezifische, jeweils unter pragmatischen verwendungsbedingungen (“Redekonstellationen”) abgegrenzte textsorten gesellschaftlich determinierte kommunikations- und handlungsschemata darstellen, die beim spracherwerb als sozialisationsprozeß jeweils gelernt und internalisiert werden. (Cherubim and Henne 1973: 60-1)

⁷³ Zu “Textsorten” faßt man in der Linguistik Texte zusammen, die sich als feste Formen öffentlicher und privater Kommunikation herausgebildet haben [...] Jeder schriftliche Sprachgebrauch folgt Regeln, die sich dem Zweck des Textes entsprechend historisch ausgebildet haben. (Gniffke-Hubrig 1972: 39)

⁷⁴ Textsorten sind festgewordene Formen (Muster) in gewissen Konstellationen menschlicher Interaktion überhaupt. (Glinz 1973: 83)

⁷⁵ [Eine Textsorte ist eine] Textklasse, deren Konstitution, deren Variationsrahmen und deren Einsatz in Kontext und umgebenden Handlungstypen Regeln unterliegt. (Lux 1981: 273).

However different the scope of these definitions may be (and none of them contradicts the general definition quoted above), they all share the following concepts: *patterns* of language use, communicative *schemata*, *established forms*, and *rules* of language use which have *developed historically* and which are *acknowledged by competence*. This not only means that competent speakers are proficient with regard to vocabulary and the rules of grammar of a language in order to express themselves adequately according to the situation but also that language-use proficiency (i.e. cultural competence) includes the (learned or intuitive) knowledge of genre patterns; and this very fact is the reason why genre is an important phenomenon for any translator. The common ideas about genre proposed by genre linguists which we mentioned above, are so widely accepted that they can be regarded as the only authoritative point of reference for translational considerations. We shall call them ‘conventions’.

Rather than the term ‘norm’, which is used in some publications, we prefer the term ‘convention’ because it seems to refer to the broader concept, taking into account that conventions develop over time, whereas the concept of ‘norm’ emphasizes the prescriptive aspect. Violations of norms are usually sanctioned; obsolete conventions may be replaced by new ones, and more easily than norms can be.

Let us add a comment on genre denominations. It is not unusual to find various synonymous denominations for one genre. These is because they may have originated at different moments in the history of a language community or belong to different traditions, or because the advent of new publication media has led to the creation of a new name for a genre whose traditional denomination still remains in use. Some genres belonging to the genre class ‘notice’ may also be called ‘announcement’ or ‘advert’, ‘advertisement’ or simply ‘ad’, according to where they are published and which additional features they have. Apart from the traditional denomination ‘summary’, we now also use ‘abstract’, and what used to be called a ‘treatise’ would be called ‘essay’ or ‘paper’ today, while ‘treatise’ is still used for medieval scholarly texts. On the other hand, certain traditional genre denominations have been retained although they do no longer correspond to the modern forms, e.g. a *master craftsman’s diploma* is still called *Meisterbrief* in German although it no longer has the form of a *letter* (*Brief*) and belongs to the genre class ‘diploma’.

11.2.3 *Genre specifications and their relevance for applied translation studies*

Before we go into the details of genre conventions, we must consider that not all genres can be judged according to the same standards, and this is particularly relevant for translation pedagogy and translation criticism (as applied branches of translation studies), as well as for translation practice. Just as the average speaker of a language cannot be proficient in the reception and production of all genres and their conventions, such skills cannot be

expected of a translator either. Why should a ‘literary’ translator know the conventions of all kinds of pragmatic texts? Does a comparative analysis of genres that are hardly ever translated in practice have any pedagogical value in the translation classroom? For this kind of decisions, a differentiation of genre categories might be useful.

a) Complex genres

In another context, Lux points out that some genres may be ‘embedded’ in other genres.

The genre ‘novel’, for example, is extremely tolerant with regard to the inclusion of embedded genres, whereas the genre ‘sermon’ is much more restrictive, and genres like ‘recipe’ do not permit any embedding at all.⁷⁶

In other words: a novel may include pragmatic genres such as recipes, obituaries (↗ example 1, below), business letters, etc. as embedded texts. Literary translators who naïvely reproduce the source-culture conventions in the target text because they are not aware of the target-culture conventions will probably produce an inadequate translation.

Genres that are ‘tolerant’ with regard to the inclusion of embedded genres will be called ‘complex genres’. They are not only to be found in literary works, like novels or biographies, but also in diaries, job applications and so on. Complex genres make greater demands on the translator’s competence than genres that do not allow such embedding.

b) Simple genres

Simple genres have been described in the most detail so far. For translator training, where the main focus is on pragmatic texts, the study of simple genres and the comparative analysis of their conventions in different cultures are particularly useful. As mentioned before, no one will expect a translator to master the conventions of all pragmatic texts, but translators should at least know that they exist and that there may be differences between the source and the target culture. Moreover, they should be able to use parallel-text analysis (↗ 11.5.3.b) in order to learn about the converging or diverging conventions of the genres they have not yet dealt with during their training or in professional practice. Trainee translators can be trained successfully in the methods for such comparative analysis using short, simple genres, which are particularly appropriate for the translation classroom even though they may not be typical

⁷⁶ Z.B. die Textsorte “Roman” [ist] in Bezug auf die Möglichkeit, eingebettete Textsorten aufzunehmen, außerordentlich tolerant; die Textsorte “Predigt” ist schon erheblich restriktiver, und Textsorten wie “Rezept” erlauben überhaupt keine Einbettungen. (Lux 1981: 225)

material in professional practice, e.g. wedding announcements (Spillner 1981), obituaries (Reiß [1977]78), weather reports, etc.

c) *Complementary genres*

In the context of translation, we can identify another kind of genre which we shall call ‘complementary genres’ (cf. Reiß 1976a, where they are named “secondary genres”). We shall deal with them in some detail at this point because we do not intend to mention them again.

Complementary genres always require the existence of a particular primary text. Implementing rules, summaries, reviews, parodies, travesties, etc. are examples of complementary genres. An adequate translation of such texts is not really possible unless the translator has access to the primary text; sometimes a translation of the secondary text does not make sense unless the primary text has been translated for the target-text readers as well.

For example: the translation of a summary will probably cause the least difficulties. Its correlative is a primary text which has been summarized, and the general genre conventions (consisting in the rules of composition, exact bibliographical references of the primary text, and exclusion of anything that does not have its origin in the primary text) had already been respected by the author of the source text. In this case, neither the translator nor the target readerships need to be familiar with the primary text.

With a review, the situation is different. A review is the correlative of a primary text which is discussed and assessed. One of the most important conventions for this genre is probably that the reviewer must constantly refer to the primary text, especially for verbatim quotations, and provide an explicit evaluation. In this case, it is helpful for the translator to know the primary text as well (especially for the translation of the quotations) and it is particularly helpful if the primary text is available in translation.

It is unlikely that implementing rules would be translated without a translation of the corresponding primary text (law, decree, etc.) at the same time, and the translation of a parody or travesty without their respective primary texts makes little sense.

A parody is the correlative of a primary text whose form is retained while the content is changed in order to produce a comical, critical or polemical distance. Contrary to a widely accepted view, it is not only aesthetic works of art which serve as primary texts for a parody but also pragmatic texts (legal texts, wills, recipes, etc., for example in political satire). One of the most important conventions for this complementary genre is the reproduction of the specific language use and formal composition of the primary text which are then filled with an inadequate new content. If the target readership is not familiar with the content

and the specific linguistic and formal characteristics of the primary text, they will not be able to recognize the parody in the translation but will mistake the parody for a primary text. This is particularly true for works of art which are well-known in the source culture, whereas the characteristic genre conventions of pragmatic texts may facilitate the identification of the *translatum* as a complementary text.

A travesty is the correlative of a primary text in which the content is retained while the form is changed (e.g. *Little Red Riding Hood* retold in the form of a police report). In this case, one of the fundamental genre conventions consists in the assumption that the primary text can be recognized by its content whereas its verbal composition is governed by the conventions of a different genre. This complementary genre loses its function in the target culture if the recipients are not familiar with the primary text, unless this primary text is also available in translation.

11.3 Genre conventions and genre classes

As we pointed out above, genres are distinguished by the ‘characteristic patterns of language use and composition’ of the texts belonging to a particular genre. Through repeated recurrence, these patterns may become regularities of behaviour in certain communicative situations, which we shall call ‘conventions’ in the sense defined by Lewis (1969: 42, see below).

11.3.1 Definition of ‘convention’

Language can function as a means of human communication only because it is a “social fact” (Saussure 1967: 17: *fait social*) which does not allow for a completely arbitrary use of signs. Within a language community, language use requires a sufficient degree of agreement and a large number of conventions. Lewis (1969: 42) defines convention as follows:

A regularity R in the behavior of members of a population P when they are agents in a recurrent situation S is a convention if and only if in [nearly] any instance of S among members of P (1) [nearly] everyone conforms to R, (2) [nearly] everyone expects [nearly] everyone else to conform to R, (3) [nearly] everyone prefers to conform to R on condition that the others do, since S is a coordination problem and uniform conformity to R is a proper coordination equilibrium in S.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ The addition of *nearly* in square brackets corresponds to the 1975 German translation of the book quoted by Reiβ and Vermeer. The original text by David K. Lewis (1969), which is reproduced here, does not include this relativization. (*Translator’s note*)

Despite the criticisms levelled at it by Wunderlich (1972a) and Schnelle (1973), this definition is adequate for our purposes.

Applied to verbal behaviour, the term ‘convention’ means:

- (1) conventions are not immutable; they may change with the culture in which they are valid;
- (2) conventions affect only part of verbal communication; they do not exclude individual language use but facilitate (↗ 11.4.1.) and guide (↗ 11.4.3.) communication in spite of individual language use;
- (3) conventions are tacit, unwritten rules (Lewis 1969: 100) which, seen in our context, become manifest as shared features in text specimens (as manifestations of genres; cf. Gülich and Raible 1975: 144);
- (4) conventions are less rigid than “the rules of grammar and, to a lesser extent, binding; they leave considerable room for variation of expression” (Pörksen 1974: 220); due to the fact that they are more flexible than norms, they may also reflect changed attitudes in a culture towards the communicative event or object in question.

For example: it seems that we are, at present, experiencing a change in the German conventions of the genre ‘scholarly paper in the humanities’ (cf. Kußmaul 1978). Under the influence of Anglo-Saxon conventions for this genre, the first person singular ('I') has increasingly replaced the traditional impersonal and passive constructions and the first person plural ('we'), which, in German, must be classified as a *pluralis modestiae* and not, as Kußmaul (1978: 55) assumes, as a construction “suggesting a dialogue between author and reader”.

A change of conventions can also be observed in the genre ‘obituary’ in German (Reiß [1977]78). A few decades ago, references to dying and death were more strictly taboo than they are now, when euphemisms like *departed, called home, passed away, resting in peace* have increasingly been replaced by the simple verb *to die*, which is not at all intended to express an unemotional attitude of the survivors towards the deceased.

11.3.2 Conventions at different textual and linguistic levels

All the discussions about the phenomenon so far, as well as our own observations, show that conventions, as defined and explained above, can be effective at all linguistic and textual levels: vocabulary (↗ 11.3.1. with regard to obituaries), grammar (↗ 11.3.1. with regard to scholarly papers, and ↗ below, with regard to weather reports), phraseology (cf. *Once upon a time* in fairy tales), macrostructure (e.g. chapters in novels, division into sections in contracts or paragraphs in laws), content structure (cf. weather reports with their conventional sequence of general weather conditions / short-term forecast / long-term

forecast), aesthetic patterns (cf. rhyme and metre, e.g. in a limerick), and even punctuation (cf. the conventional punctuation following the salutation formula in a letter: a comma in English, a colon in Spanish, an exclamation mark or a comma in German).

11.3.3 Typological and genre-specific conventions

On the one hand, there are genres characterized by an abundance of different conventions, some of which have become ‘fossilized’ to such an extent that we may speak of stereotypes. Examples include standard tenancy agreements (a variant of the genre ‘rental agreement’ belonging to the genre class ‘agreement’) and service instructions (representing the genre class ‘instructions’). On the other hand, there are genres characterized by only very few conventions. Lux (1981: 260-62) has shown, for example, that a limerick (an element of the genre class ‘poetry’) requires no more than its specific pattern of rhyme and metre. Other genres hardly show any conventions at all, e.g. memoirs, essays, novels and appeals (for charitable donations, for voting). It is not an accident that these genres generally belong to the expressive or operative text type. In these genres, the typological features are more important as guiding signals for translational choices than the genre-specific characteristics; they are determined less by their classification as a particular genre than by the individual producer’s intention or the intended reaction of the addressed audience. Although they are not completely devoid of conventions with regard to language use and text configuration, innovation and creativity usually play a more important role in these cases. Here, a further observation may prove even more relevant to translation: as linguistic and structural conventions can be taught and learned (which is why they are essential for applied translation studies), we should take care to avoid too narrow a definition of the genre concept. Otherwise, specific conventions might be generalized unduly. We shall therefore add complexity to the concept of genre with the concepts of genre class and genre variant.

11.3.4 Conventions in genre classes, genres and genre variants

The necessity for this differentiation may best be explained using simple pragmatic texts, which can easily be reduced to single speech acts, although linguistics has abandoned the idea that Searle’s speech act theory can be used as the only distinctive criterion for genre, not only with regard to sentences but also with regard to sections of text and entire texts (cf. Sandig 1973).

For example, the genre ‘notice’ may be defined as a complex act of communication (or the result of a complex act of communication), whose primary communicative intention is expressed by the performative phrasal verb *to give notice*. It is irrelevant whether or not this phrasal verb is explicitly mentioned

in the notice. Each notice, as a whole and in all its parts, can be paraphrased by the formula *I / we hereby give notice of / that ...* According to Wunderlich (1972b: 132), adverbs like *hereby* (in this kind of co-text) are an unmistakable indicator of a performative utterance.

In modern everyday language, *to give notice* and the corresponding noun *notice* refer to a small written or printed personal or public announcement often published in newspapers or magazines, or any other public medium, promoting a product, service or event. This definition, would have to be expanded to include individual printed cards because, for certain variants of the genre ‘notice’ (such as marriage notices or birth notices), an announcement through personal posting is a common, if not the only, form of communication, at least in Germany. The categorization of the notice as a genre class is justified by the fact that, according to the ‘object of reference’ (cf. Lux 1981 on the “referential dimension”), we can identify different genres which, apart from the general conventions applicable to all notices, present their own specific conventions with regard to language and text composition, e.g. marriage notice, birth notice, event notice, sale notice, obituary notice, etc.

If, in addition to this, we find further conventions that vary according to the commissioner (in the case of obituary notices: the family, company or official institution), or the medium (in the case of weather reports: a newspaper, radio or television), we can speak of ‘genre variants’.

A similar distinction can be made in many other pragmatic genres. The term ‘instructions’, for example, refers to a genre class including service instructions, operating instructions, etc. The genre class ‘contract/agreement’ with its general conventions (stating the rights and duties of a minimum of two parties, indicating the place of jurisdiction, usability, etc.) includes genres such as tenancy agreement, purchase contract, employment contract, trade agreement, etc., with their respective specific conventions of language use and text configuration.

The genre class ‘minutes’ also has general conventions (e.g. the exact specification of the time and place of an event, of the persons involved and any witnesses and their statements), whereas the linguistic patterns differ according to the area involved: jurisdiction, industry, academic institutions, etc.

Genre classes (with shared conventions) and the genres they include (with additional specific conventions) cannot only be identified in pragmatic texts and literary non-fiction like memoirs, biographies, letters, editorials, essays, diaries (Belke 1973 speaks of “*literarische Gebrauchsformen*”) but also in aesthetically organized literary texts. This is illustrated by conventional denominations (like ‘novel’ or ‘short story’) which show that, in the production of these genres, authors observe certain conventions of language use and text configuration, and that the competent reader associates more or less exact ideas regarding the content and/or the composition of the texts with these characteristics. Within the limits of what is usually called artistic or poetic license, the

text should fulfil these expectations in order to conform to its denomination. Generally speaking, apart from in cases of innovation and creativity, tradition and conventionality also play a part in literary works of art to the extent that we may observe recurrent linguistic and stylistic choices and certain principles of aesthetic configuration (e.g. stereotypical repetitions in epic poems, dialogue forms in dramas, or canonical patterns of composition in poems like sonnets), which, due to their recurrence and relative stability, deserve the description of genre conventions. As Sowinski points out:

Genres may be described as typical recurrent communicative patterns which correspond to literary tradition, on the one hand, and social norms of verbal behaviour, on the other.⁷⁸

Accordingly, in literary genres, conventions are based on (culture-specific) traditions, whereas, in non-literary genres, they are formed by “communicative usage” (Sowinski 1973: 112: *kommunikativer Usus*).

Novels will therefore form a genre class including the genres ‘historical novel’, ‘science fiction’, ‘suspense fiction’, ‘epistolary novel’, etc. Within the genre of suspense fiction, we can then distinguish between detective novels and crime thrillers.

Accordingly, a comprehensive typology of genre classes, genres and genre variants would be a useful tool for the translator.

11.4 The role of genre in the communicative event

If part of a text’s identity consists in belonging to a genre (↗ 11.2.1.), genre conventions will also play an important role in verbal communication. For the time being, we shall outline three functions for genre conventions: genre conventions can serve (1) as identifying features, (2) as triggers of expectations, and (3) as a guideline for text comprehension.

11.4.1 *Genre conventions as identifying features*

Conventional patterns of textualization (a term we use to refer to the style and composition of a text) allow the competent speaker to recognize a genre (or genre class). The introductory formula *In the name of the people* announces the proclamation of a verdict; the concluding formula *and they lived happily ever after* points to a fairy tale; rhymes indicate a poem; by the sequence of place, date, address, salutation formula and specification of the sender (or perhaps an abbreviation like *PS* for a postscript), we recognize a letter (as a

⁷⁸ Man kann Textsorten als typisch wiederkehrende Kommunikationsmuster beschreiben, die einerseits im Rahmen literarischer Tradition, andererseits nach gesellschaftlichen Sprachverhaltensnormen benutzt werden. (Sowinski 1973: 111)

genre class), even though in old letters the components may appear in a different order (e.g. specifying the sender and the addressee at the beginning, and the place and date at the end); the use of the past tense and the reference to a historical personality, who at the end of a short text pronounces a punch line or a *bon mot*, points to an anecdote (Marfurt 1977: 170). The list of examples is endless.

11.4.2 Genre conventions as triggers of expectations

Once they have recognized a genre (class) by its conventional patterns, expert readers will anticipate certain text features as well. Sometimes, these expectations are limited to a particular register or style, e.g. functional style features in pragmatic texts, a matter-of-fact style in scientific or technical texts for special purposes, lively descriptions in reports; at other times, however, they may even be rather specific (cf. Sanders 1977: 166-67; Reiß 1979, where a comparison of two translations of a Spanish novella shows that, by simply changing the register, one of the translations falls under a different genre from that of the source text.)

In a recipe, readers expect to find an exact list of ingredients and how they have to be used in the preparation of the dish, as well as reliable information about cooking times and temperatures for gas or electric stoves. In an animal fable, they expect an exemplary tale providing a moral, which is not spelled out explicitly but makes it possible to apply the story to everyday life (Beisbart *et al.* 1976: 41-42). In a journalistic ‘gloss’⁷⁹, the reader expects a reference to a recent event, which is commented on in a humorous and/or polemic way.

If the readers’ expectations are not met, they may regard the text as defective; however, such defects may make them stop and think about whether there is some purpose behind the use of ‘inappropriate’ conventions, and this may lead to new interpretations of the text or its parts, or it may fail to achieve the intended communicative result. All these possible consequences have an impact on the translation of the text. In the first case, translators will probably correct the defects if the target text is supposed to achieve the same function as the source text (unless the text is a ‘document’) and if they do not want to be accused of violating the expected conventions themselves. In the second case, they might try to imitate the deviation from the expected conventions interpreted as intentional in order to produce the same effect (perhaps that of ‘alienation’) for the target audience. In the third case, it will be impossible to adequately translate the intended sense.

⁷⁹ A ‘gloss’ (in German: *Glosse*) is a short, pointed column referring to a topical event, distinguished from an editorial or a commentary by its polemic, often satirical, style. Its entertaining effect draws on wordplay, irony, hyperbolic expressions, literary allusions and so on. The column *Streiflicht* published daily on the front page of the prestigious *Süddeutsche Zeitung* is regarded as the most typical example of this genre, which does not have an exact equivalent in English journalism. (*Translator’s note*)

11.4.3 *Genre conventions as a guideline for text comprehension*

The expectations triggered by all sorts of textualization conventions are closely linked to the process of comprehending the text or its components. If the sentence *This is one of the best films to have been produced in Germany in recent years* were to appear in a film review (genre: review; text type: informative), it would not be understood in the same way as if it were part of a cinema advertisement. It would provide “a different degree of semantic information”, as Kapp (1976: 40) puts it. In the advertisement, the readers would not interpret *one of the best films* as reliable information but as part of the persuasion mechanisms typical of operative texts. In the review, they would understand it as a reliable and (subjectively) valid statement about the quality of the film.

It is a reciprocal process: the genre guides the interpretation of a particular text element and particular text elements (conventionally) guide the way a text is assigned to a genre.

If the sentence *He was a good citizen and a gentleman who always kept himself in shape until he was run over by a car* (cf. a similar example in German in Sanders 1977: 54) is pronounced in a funeral eulogy, everyone will understand *kept himself in shape* in its figurative sense. Even a listener who recognizes the involuntary ambiguity of the text element will interpret it as an idiom, at least as far as the speaker’s intention is concerned because stale puns do not belong to the genre conventions of funeral eulogies. In a joke, however, the ambiguity of the expression will be immediately recognized. In a novel (see example 7, ↗ 10.8.1.), the comment that the English language lacks a particular pronoun is understood as a rhetorical move on the part of the author to indirectly characterize her protagonist’s linguistic sensitivity; in a grammar book, the same comment would be regarded as a reliable information about the English language because a textbook is conventionally expected to provide factual information.

The functions of genre conventions in communication, which have been briefly explained above, may influence translators’ behaviour in different ways and to varying degrees by guiding their translational decisions.

11.5 The role of genre in the translation process

As has been mentioned before, genre conventions play an important role for translation studies. Certain qualitative differences between genres, which we are not aware of as long as we only study the genres of one linguaculture, only become visible in textological comparisons across languages and cultures.

If we want to make such comparisons, we first have to make a distinction between (1) universal genres (or genre classes) that probably exist in every literate culture (such as letters, fairy tales, epic poems, agreements,

etc.), (2) supra-cultural genres (or genre classes) which can be observed only in certain cultures (such as sonnets, oratorios, passion plays and *ghazals*), and (3) language-specific genres (or genre classes) which are little known beyond the confines of one culture (such as the *Noh* play or the *haiku* in Japan).

Secondly, we have to take into consideration that genre conventions are further developed through history and may therefore change (which is relevant for the translation of old and ancient texts), and that the conventions of one genre (class) may be the same across cultures or differ in varying degrees from one culture to another.

Genre conventions may even change to such an extent that what was characteristic of one genre in the past may be now typical of another genre.

For example: today, we find rhymes in poetry only, whereas in the Middle Ages, specialized texts were also presented in rhymes.

11.5.1 General considerations

From the discussion of these problems, we can draw some conclusions with regard to how to deal with genre conventions in general and in specific cases.

Preliminary note: by ‘linguistic translation’ (as opposed to ‘communicative translation’), we mean a translation of a source text into a target language without a concomitant cultural transfer. A ‘linguistic translation’ is almost always possible, even if the source text does not make sense. *At night, it is colder than outside* is an example of a nonsense sentence that can be translated into any other language.

11.5.2 Translation strategies

In all of the three groups of genres mentioned above (↗ 11.5.), the translator has to decide (at least where the preservation of the source-text function is the aim of the translation process) whether the conventions of the source culture can be preserved by means of a ‘linguistic translation’ or whether they have to be replaced by target-culture conventions to achieve a communicative translation.

If a source-culture genre is unknown in the target culture, a ‘linguistic translation’ may introduce an innovation into the target culture (i.e. into the target-culture’s “literary polysystem”, as Toury 1980a puts it) and it may sometimes even create a new tradition.

An example of this would be the Arabic *ghazal*, which spread to Persia, India and Turkey.⁸⁰ Its conventional form (3 to 15 couplets, the first ending

⁸⁰ In the English-speaking world, the *ghazal* began to be recognized as a viable closed form in English-language poetry in the first half of the 1990s. Some American poets like

in a rhyme, which is then repeated in every second line of each subsequent couplet, while the first line remains unrhymed: aa-ba-ca-da ...) was adopted by German poets such as August von Platen, Friedrich Rückert and Friedrich von Bodenstedt, but this did not create a new tradition.

In the translation of the third group of genres, the relevance of the source-culture genre conventions for text comprehension is not always recognizable for the target audience and is therefore often explained in additional paratexts, such as notes, commentaries, glossaries, etc.

11.5.3 Conclusions for translation studies

There are only a few comparative studies of genres and their diverging conventions in translation studies so far. Some authors have mentioned genre conventions in passing (e.g. Kapp 1976: 34, with regard to German, French and Italian recipes), others have presented small-scale studies (e.g. Kußmaul 1978 on German and English academic papers; Reiβ [1977]78 on German, Flemish, French, Spanish, English and Egyptian obituaries; Spillner 1981 on French and German wedding announcements; Thiel 1980 on French and German political resolutions; Thome 1980 on French and German recipes). Apart from these studies, which are rather limited in scope, there are hardly any systematic contrastive analyses of frequently translated genres, which would be relevant for translation purposes, or of their conventional features, which are determined by their respective culture systems, the norms of language use and characteristic recurrent ‘patterns’ of expression.⁸¹

a) Systematic studies

The importance of such studies, which could be carried out in the form of translation comparisons or parallel-text analyses, has been emphasized frequently, e.g. by Hartmann (1980) or Spillner (1981). Such work would be of immediate relevance to applied translation studies. Once genre conventions have been recorded systematically, they can be taught and learned; translation classes could become more efficient and translation assessment could be made more objective, with both no longer having to rely mainly on intuition, as is the current practice.

For this kind of systematic studies, both pragmatic genres and literary non-fiction would provide appropriate material for three main reasons: firstly,

John Holland or W. S. Merwin published *ghazals* in English, and the Kashmiri-American poet Agha Shahid Ali edited a volume of “real ghazals in English”. See also <http://www.ghazalpage.net>. (*Translator’s note*)

⁸¹ Since this book was published in 1984, quite a few comparative studies of translation-relevant genres have been carried out both in Germany and elsewhere, e.g. Göpferich’s English-German comparison of genres in natural sciences and technology: Göpferich, Susanne (1995) *Textsorten in Naturwissenschaft und Technik. Pragmatische Typologie – Kontrastierung – Translation*, Tübingen: Narr. (*Translator’s note*)

translator training is geared today towards professional activities in the fields of international economic, political, scientific and diplomatic exchange of information; secondly, pragmatic texts seem to be far more standardized with regard to conventions than literary texts and, thirdly, it is mainly in the area of pragmatic texts where ‘communicative translation’ (↗ 10.5.2.) is the more usual variety, i.e. a translation which is not only adapted to the rules and norms of the target-language system but also to the more or less regulated patterns of functional styles.

An important exception is the ‘documentary’ translation of texts, which is guided by different translational norms (cf. House [1977]1981: 202-04).

b) Translation comparison or parallel-text analysis?

For this kind of study, it is important to consider whether analysts should draw on a comparison of source and target texts (cf. Thiel 1980, Thome 1980) or on an analysis of parallel texts⁸² (cf. Hartmann 1980, Reiß [1977]78, Spillner 1981). If a translation comparison is preferred, the analyst should make sure that only high-quality translations are included in the corpus. The quality would have to be checked beforehand as officially recognized and certified translations are not available for comparison in every case as in Thiel (1980). You only have to think of the plethora of ‘multilingual’ operating instructions, product descriptions and the translations of travel guides or tourist brochures which make the ‘native speaker’s’ hair stand on end.

For example: the following text is taken from an authentic tourist brochure published by the French town of Quimper, Brittany:

QUIMPER, sourire de la Bretagne proclament les lettres postées dans notre ville. Il est difficile de définir aussi justement et en aussi peu de mots, ce que caractérise la Capitale de La Cornouaille [...]

The German translation is almost interlinear:

Quimper, ‘das Lächeln von der Bretagne’ ist die Briefmarke von unserer Stadt. Das ist schwer, eine Stadt zu bestimmen, besonders das Kapital von der Cornouaille [...].

(Literally: Quimper, the smile of Brittany is the postage stamp of

⁸² It should be noted that the concept of *parallel text*, as it is used here, refers to authentic, non-translated texts belonging to the same genre, produced independently in each of the two cultures, and does not, as in corpus-based translation studies, refer to texts and their translations, which is rather referred to as a ‘translation comparison’. This concept of *parallel text* has been used in German translation studies (particularly in translator training) since Hartmann (1980, in English) and Spillner (1981, in German) coined the term in what they called *contrastive textology*, i.e. long before corpus-based translation studies decided to use the term *parallel corpus* for a corpus of translated texts. (*Translator’s note*)

our city. It is difficult to define a city, particularly the assets of the Cornouaille.)

The translator did not even follow the convention that a text should be comprehensible.

But even when the translations are carefully chosen, there is always a risk that they may show traces of being influenced by harmonizing tendencies or interferences from the conventions used in the respective source language and culture communities. Of course, this risk is higher in the case of genres determined by the individual style preferences of their authors, such as essays, editorials, newspaper reports or interviews, which Belke (1973) assigns to the class of “literary non-fiction”. Here, the translator may be tempted to reproduce the author’s personal style in the target language, perhaps even mistaking conventional expressions from the source culture for a specific feature of the source text. This temptation will probably not be as strong in highly conventionalized genres, at least not for experienced translators.

Such phenomena may not be regarded as hampering communication in literary works of art (some translation scholars dealing with literary translation, like Toury 1980b, even demand that translators should be trained to be “non-conformists”) because the violation of traditional translation norms, including the non-observance of genre conventions, may even have an innovating impact. In translations of pragmatic texts, however, such violations are often annoying and may even interfere with successful communication (↗ example 16, 10.13.). This problem would be avoided by a comparison of parallel texts.

In this context, Hartmann (1980: 37-39) distinguishes between three types of parallel text:

- (1) translations as “the result of a full-scale professional translation arrived at by conscious approximation processes in which the original message of the source-language text becomes a target-language text that is appropriate for the situation”. He adds, however: “Whether translation conventions differ from one language or culture to another has to be systematically explored”. And he also mentions that “the target-language text is the result of a directional process”. This is not in line with a narrow concept of ‘parallel texts’;
- (2) parallel texts as the “result of a deliberate adaptation of a message in the respective conventions of two languages for the purpose of conveying an identical message to recipients of sometimes very different cultural background”;
- (3) parallel texts which originated in different cultures in similar communicative situations.

Our use of the term ‘parallel text’ here only includes texts of the second and third type.

Spillner (1981: 242-43) offers a feasible methodology for the contrastive analysis of parallel texts, which, like Hartmann, he regards as part of a “contrastive textology”, as this kind of study has to transcend an analysis of text-linguistic features “in the strict sense”. Such methodologies should be taken up by translation studies because “a comparison of the written rules of textualization codified in different countries can provide interesting clues indicating which genre conventions should be expected” (Spillner 1981: 241). These, in turn, have an immediate impact on translational decisions, as we shall attempt to show with a few examples in the last section of this chapter.

11.5.4 Dealing with genre conventions in translation

We have characterized genre conventions (↗ 11.4.) as identifying features, as triggers of expectations and as guiding signals for text comprehension. Consequently, there are two questions we should ask in every translation process:

- (1) Can these three functions be preserved in the target text? Depending on whether or not the target culture has the same genre conventions as the source culture (↗ 11.2.3.), the translator will opt for reproducing the conventions of the source culture in the target text or for replacing them by target-culture conventions, or even by introducing new conventions in the target text.
- (2) Should the source-culture conventions be preserved in the target text if this is basically possible? The answer depends on the translation purpose and the choice of the most appropriate translation type for this purpose, on the one hand, and on what Toury (1980a) calls ‘translational norms’, i.e. the norms guiding the translator’s behaviour, on the other hand. It seems to be the norm, at least in our (Western) cultures, that, when translating pragmatic texts of the informative or operative type, translators adapt the text to target-culture genre conventions because this is what they are expected to do; this means that, for texts intended for practical communicative purposes, they will choose a translation of the communicative type. It also seems to be the norm that, when translating texts of the expressive type, there is a tendency to reproduce the source-culture conventions, at least as far as genre conventions are concerned, which are not very strict for this type of text in any event. This means that, in this case, translators would opt for a ‘philological translation’ (↗ 10.5.2.). Authors of expressive texts, particularly of literary works of art, tend to avoid the well-trodden paths of conventional style in order to give their text a more individual touch (cf. Spillner 1980: 177). This again involves many interconnected factors which do not really make it easier for the translator to deal with the problem of genre conventions in translation.

a) *Genre conventions, text types, translations*

As we have mentioned above, pragmatic texts are normally translated in order to be used for immediate communication, which, in the target culture, is guided by the conventions with which every recipient is familiar. Therefore, the communicative translation type would be the obvious choice; this means that the source-culture textualization conventions are replaced by those of the target culture. In extreme cases, the translation of informative texts (for which invariance of content is important to retain the functions of the source text) as well as of operative texts (for which it is vital that the intended persuasive effect remains the same) often requires considerable changes to the source text. This is confirmed by a professional translator (cf. Soellner 1980), who writes:

The way in which a scientific and technical topic is presented in a German text is totally different from the French way of looking at it. [...] This entails a shift of perspective, but also a substitution of certain content elements by others because the technical text is expected to correspond, as exactly as possible, to the French readers' horizon of expectations and particularly to what they are ready to expect.⁸³

It would be worthwhile finding out for which genres and language pairs such considerable changes are necessary, or desirable, because conventions differ so greatly. The situation described by Soellner, in which the translator becomes an editor, independently re-verbalizing the source text content and even changing parts of it, calls for further study of the conditions involved (cf. also P. A. Schmitt 1986). In any case, this does not invalidate the demand for an exact reproduction of the content in the translation of informative texts but highlights the fact that the informative function of a text takes precedence over other functions. What is defined as 'content' has to be regarded in relation to culture-specific background knowledge. It would also be interesting to study the extent to which the questions that we are discussing here can be answered directly by drawing on the translation *skopos*: Texts whose *skopos* is 'documentary' usually remain unchanged with regard to their formal composition, whereas other texts are sometimes changed to such an extent that we may speak of a new verbalization of the intended sense (e.g. in the case of advertising texts, where the *skopos* is to achieve an optimum persuasive effect). As we have mentioned several times already, studies of text types and

⁸³ Die Art und Weise, wie ein präzises technisch-wissenschaftliches Thema im Deutschen dargestellt wird, unterscheidet sich grundsätzlich von der französischen Betrachtungsweise. [...] Das bedeutet eine Verschiebung der Perspektive, aber auch Substitution bestimmter Inhalte durch andere, weil der technische Text [...] möglichst genau dem Erwartungshorizont und vor allem der Erwartungsbereitschaft des Empfängers entsprechen soll. (Soellner 1980: 199).

genres are particular subtheories which may offer specific, and therefore more practice-oriented, solutions for a limited number of texts and text functions.

Genre conventions are also taken into consideration where simple pragmatic genres are embedded in complex genres, as in the following example.

(1) Luke passed over the paper, his finger pressed against an entry in the column of deaths. Humbleby. – On June 13, suddenly at his residence, Sandgate, Wychwood-under-Ashe, JOHN EDWARD HUMBLEBY, M. D., beloved husband of JESSIE ROSE HUMBLEBY. Funeral Friday. No flowers, by request. (A. Christie, *Murder is Easy*, 1980a: 18)

(1a) Luke reichte ihm die Zeitung und wies auf eine Notiz unter Todesfällen. Humbleby. Am 13. Mai starb plötzlich in seinem Wohnsitz, Sandgate, Wychwood a. d. Ashe, John Edward Humbleby, unvergeßlicher Gatte von Jessie Rose Humbleby, Begräbnis Freitag. Kranzspenden dankend abgelehnt. (A. Christie, *Das Sterben in Wychwood*, anonymous translator, 1980b: 4)

This (rather literal) translation offers a curious mixture of English and German genre conventions for obituaries. As German newspapers do not usually publish obituaries as classified adverts with running text in columns under the heading ‘Deaths’, the translator opted for *Notiz*, or ‘notice’, instead of *Nachruf*, or ‘obituary’, (a translation that indicates a different genre), adding the verb form *starb* (‘died’), which is not found in conventional English obituaries. The translation does not take into account that, in German obituaries, the name of the widow would not be relegated to an appositional clause and that the literal translation of *no flowers, by request* is almost unheard of in German obituaries, to name but two instances. This produces a text which is rather strange but which clearly does not bother the German reader too much because it is embedded in a novel set in England. Whether translation critics would accept this compromise in their assessment of equivalence in a translation which on the whole can definitely be assigned to the communicative type is a different kettle of fish. The amount of target-culture conventions observed in this translation seems sufficient to fulfil their function as identifying features and as guiding signals for text comprehension, although the expectations with regard to a particular linguistic configuration triggered by the reference to an obituary are largely disappointed.

b) *Genre conventions and equivalence standards*

In their three-fold function, genre conventions may also serve as a frame of reference in the choice of strategies for the translation of individual text segments. We shall return to some examples mentioned earlier.

(2) He was a good citizen and a gentleman who always kept himself in shape until he was run over by a car. (From a funeral eulogy, ↗ 11.4.3.)

In the genre ‘funeral eulogy’, the expression *who kept himself in shape* is understood in its figurative sense because nobody would assume that the author had the intention of producing a bad pun under such grave circumstances. Guided by genre conventions, the translator would, in a target language that does not have homophone equivalents for the two meanings of the expression, choose an equivalent for the figurative meaning, in Spanish perhaps *cuidar su apariencia* (literally: ‘to take care of one’s appearance’). If the same passage occurred in a joke, however, the translator would have to find an ambiguous equivalent because otherwise the text would fail to achieve the communicative function of a joke. In Spanish, this could be *mantenerse en forma*.

(3) One doesn’t miss what one has never had; but it’s awfully hard going without things after one has commenced thinking they are his-hers (the English language needs another pronoun) by natural right.
(↗ Example 7, 10.8.1.)

This example from an English novel for young adults was discussed above from the point of view of equivalence because, in both German translations of the passage, the reference to the English pronouns was omitted. Despite this omission, we regarded the translations of the whole passage as equivalent, as the metalinguistic comment, which made sense in the English original, had no communicative value in this genre (‘young-adult literature’ primarily intended for entertainment).

In spite of this decision based on genre, we still maintain our claim (supported by considerations related to the text type) that the function of this text element is relevant in the framework of the expressive text type because it is intended to implicitly emphasize the linguistic wittiness and sensitivity of the letter writer, and that it should therefore be compensated for by an ‘equivalence shift’ somewhere else in the text.

This same text reference to English pronouns could not be omitted in another genre. If it had been used in a linguistic study as an example of the differences in pronominal structures between English and German, it would have to appear in the target text, either in translation or in the form of a metalinguistic comment. In a novel, the metalinguistic information may be ignored without endangering textual equivalence, but not in a scholarly text expected to convey (linguistic) information.

(4) si yo digo que ‘el sol sale por Oriente’ lo que mis palabras [...] propiamente dicen es que un ente de sexo varonil y capaz de actos espontáneos – lo llamado ‘sol’ – ejecuta la acción de ‘salir’... (↗ Example 18, 10.13.)

For a translation into German, this passage from Ortega y Gasset's famous essay raises the problem that the Spanish word *sol* ('sun') is masculine in gender, whereas the German equivalent *Sonne* is feminine. When the translator of Ortega y Gasset's essay suggested a communicative translation based on the German equivalent of *the sun [is] a creature of the female sex* at a symposium of translation scholars, there was a storm of protest from all the classical philologists present, for whom the idea of the sun as a male figure was a crucial part of ancient mythology. However, the compromise they proposed (*the sun is, in Spanish, a male creature*) does not hold water in a translational analysis. In a translation of the communicative (and not of the philological) type, the function of this passage for the text as a whole and in line with genre conventions is of critical importance for the translator. The German translation is designed for a German-speaking reader (particularly for one who does not know Spanish). This is an obvious observation which, however, disqualifies the compromise solution. As the passage serves as an example of the linguistic anachronisms present in all languages, the readers will be puzzled, asking themselves why the example has been taken from Spanish although it does not apply to German. With regard to the translator's decision to turn the sun into a female being and treat it accordingly in the rest of the text, it is the textual function of the example that counts, all the more so as the genre 'essay', unlike the genre 'scholarly paper', does not permit footnotes. What is relevant for the linguistic example is not whether the sun is male or female but that it is presented as a living creature.

If a similar passage were to appear in another genre, the decision would have to be different. As mentioned above, in a scholarly paper it would be possible to retain the wording of the Spanish text, adding a footnote with an explanation; and the German translator of a saga of heroes and gods might translate *el sol* by 'der Sonnengott' (*the sun god*, masculine gender), thus avoiding the pitfalls of the Spanish-German structural divergences.

There is another cultural point to be made in this example. In the Greco-Roman tradition of the West, grammatical gender is usually identified with the sex of a being: masculine = male, feminine = female. If we take a closer look, we easily discover that this identification does not work, nor has it ever been correct in historical terms. Why is it possible, then, that a German masculine noun like *der Dienstbote* ('servant') often refers to a female person, or what is so female about *die Hand* or *la mano* ('hand')?

11.6 Summary

In view of the fact that research in language and culture studies, and even more so in translation studies, is still rather scarce,⁸⁴ we cannot really make any definitive statements regarding the relationship between genre and translation. In any case, it should have become clear by now that the phenomenon of genre is a factor not to be neglected in translation theory, let alone in professional practice. Drawing on our preliminary findings to date, we can say that genres and genre conventions play an important role in many a decision in the translation process, serving not only as identifying features and triggers of expectations but also as guidelines for text comprehension.

⁸⁴ The authors refer to the situation in 1984, which has changed considerably in the meantime. (*Translator's note*)

12. Text type and translation

12.0 Preliminary remarks

Considering the large variety of texts that have to be translated in professional practice, it seems appropriate to follow the example of text linguistics and elaborate a classification system for the textual ‘cosmos’. Such a classification system could shed light on the behaviour of professional translators, which varies intuitively depending on the texts, and could also provide a theoretical explanation and support for such variations in behaviour. In text linguistics, efforts to construct a typology have increasingly focussed on both the analysis of genre characteristics (which, of course, also play an important role for translation studies, [↗] 11.) and on the possibilities of and conditions for describing them. Translation studies, whose object of study is, among other things, the conditions for and possibilities of translating, is primarily interested in a more general and more abstract taxonomy, which would come before the classification of genres and which would help to explain the different behaviour of translators. It is for this reason that we propose the classification of text types. Thus, in translation theory, the concepts of text type and genre do not compete with each other at the same level, as they do in text linguistics (where, according to Henschelmann 1979: 68, the term ‘genre’ recently seems to be gaining ground over ‘text type’), but refer to different phenomena. The text typology presented in this chapter does not claim to be generally applicable to text linguistics; rather, it is designed to be relevant to translation. Contrary to text linguistics, which deals with one language only, translation studies is not concerned with texts as such but with texts that are being translated, will be translated or have been translated. It is therefore important to gain some insight into the status enjoyed by a particular text (as a prospective source text) in the source culture before deciding about the status this text is intended to (or can) have in the target culture.

12.1 Text status

The general functional translation theory developed in **Part I** of this book facilitates and even demands an analysis not only of the function of translation processes and products but also that of any texts which are being, will be or have been subjected to a translation process. The concept of function is understood here according to the definition given by Klappenbach and Steinitz: “[Function is] the role of being operative or effective in a particular way (within a system)⁸⁵”.

The status of a particular text within a culture largely depends on the func-

⁸⁵ Aufgabe (innerhalb eines Ganzen) in einer bestimmten Weise wirksam, tätig zu sein. (Klappenbach and Steinitz 1971: 1424)

tion its author or authors wish(ed) to be assigned to it on the basis of the specific text configuration features. Due to the intention (understood as purpose, aim or motivation for verbal communication) verbalized by an author in his text, this text (as an information offer, ↗ 3.) is assigned a general communicative function which, in turn, determines its status within a culture community.

12.2 Text function

Drawing on Bühler's ([1934]1990: 35) organon model, in which representation, expression and appeal are presented as the three basic functions of a linguistic sign, we propose three basic functions of texts which are determined by the author's communicative intention (Reiß [1971]2000, 1976a, 1978b) and which we have used as a basis for the classification of three different text types. However, it does not make sense to apply Bühler's model of sign functions directly to entire texts. On the one hand, some scholars have identified additional functions, such as the phatic and the poetic function (cf. Jakobson), which, as far as we can see, seem to operate at a different level; on the other hand, texts are more than (and different from) just the sum of individual signs. What is valid for a sign of a lower level, e.g. a word, cannot simply be transferred to signs of a higher level (e.g. a text); similarly, we have to distinguish between word, sentence and text semantics, which have both similar and distinctive features.

12.3 Text types

Before composing a text, an author will choose one of three basic communicative forms, which are probably common to all culture communities and which is why text types may be described as universal phenomena. These three basic communicative types can be described on the basis of Bühler's organon model. If an author wants the information offer to convey content, i.e. if the text has been composed with the intention of passing on news, knowledge, views, etc. (which can be assigned to the representational function of language), we speak of an informative text type. If the author wants the information offer to convey artistically organized content, consciously verbalizing the content according to aesthetic criteria (an intention which can be assigned to the expressive function of language), we speak of an expressive text type. If an author wants the information offer to convey persuasively organized content in order to encourage the recipient to act in accordance with the intentions of the text sender (or of the commissioner), which can be assigned to the appellative function of language, we speak of an operative text type. In other words: these three types are 'encoded' at different levels. The informative type is encoded at the level of content; the expressive type is encoded at the level of content and aesthetic organization; the operative type is encoded at the level of content and persuasion (to which the level of aesthetic organization is occasionally added). The following table illustrates this hierarchy.

		informative	expressive	operative
E N C L O E D V I E N L G	content (+ aesthetic organization); persuasive configuration			x
	content; aesthetic organization		x	(x)
	content	x	x	x

A few examples may help to clarify this typology.

Operating instructions will convey the necessary information to enable the reader to use an object correctly → this is a text of the informative type (although it may contain certain linguistic signs that, in isolation, would be categorized as appellative in Bühler's model, such as imperatives, which are quite common in this genre).

A poem transmits content based on both the meaning of the individual linguistic signs and on the combination of these signs to form an aesthetic design, as well as from the associations and ideas evoked by these signs → this is a text of the expressive type.

A *propaganda pamphlet* is intended to make the recipients react in exactly the way the sender wants them to react. This is usually not achieved by matter-of-fact, objective information nor by an aesthetically organized piece of communication alone but mainly by the persuasive composition of the text (for details, see Reiß 1976a) → this is a text of the operative type.

In a *satirical novel*, authors also intend to win the readers over to their views, not only to inform them about such views. In such cases, the aesthetic organization of the content (novel = expressive text) is combined with a persuasive composition → this is a text of the operative type with an expressive secondary function or a text of the expressive type with an operative secondary function depending on the level of encoding which predominates.

12.4 Hybrid forms

The last example shows that the three text types do not always occur in a pure form. With regard to their textual function within a communicative event, the first three examples (the operating instructions, the poem and the propaganda pamphlet) can be regarded as pure representatives of their respective types. In practice, however, we can find not only bad texts where, for some reason, the author has failed to achieve the intended text type but also texts that pursue two or more intentions or (longer) texts that include sections or paragraphs belonging to different text types. As the example of the satirical novel shows, multiple

intentions can be put into a hierarchical order (i.e. one function is subordinate to the other) or they can have equal weight, as in the following example.

(1) *i* before *e* except after *c*
or when sounded like *a*
as in *neighbour* or *weigh*.⁸⁶

In this mnemonic verse, we can identify at least three different intentions, i.e. the intention to:

1. convey a rule;
2. facilitate the remembering of the rule by giving the text an aesthetic form (rhyme, metre),
3. make learning more fun with a catchy jingle.

In our opinion, this is a hybrid form which combines the expressive and the informative type. Both functions have to be regarded as carrying equal weight, at least in English. If the text is translated into another language, the translator has to decide which function to retain, unless the target language allows him to retain both (for more on translation relevance, see 12.7.).

The three basic functions may even alternate with one another in the same text, e.g. in the final speech of a defence lawyer in court, who wants to obtain the least heavy sentence or even an acquittal for the accused. Its dominating function classifies the speech as a text of the operative type, which requires appellative language and persuasive strategies of verbalization. However, such a speech will usually also include passages describing the situation in a purely informative way.

12.5 Identifying signals

In their pre-translational source-text analysis, translators may find some semantic and pragmatic guidelines for the classification of the text type, while their world knowledge and text experience may provide additional help. For example, “pre-signals” (Große 1976: 20) like titles or genre specifications can facilitate their analysis. A *law* informs – without any aesthetic organization or persuasive devices – about facts the recipient has to take notice of and consider in order to avoid sanctions. A *contract* informs about the state of particular circumstances and about the duties and rights of the partners who are using this text to fix the terms of their agreement in writing. Both texts can only be classified as belonging to the informative type. However, if a text is referred to as a *novel* or as a *sonnet*, we can expect it to follow the tradition which offers aesthetically organized content; it is therefore categorized as text of the

⁸⁶ The original quotes a similar German mnemotechnical verse which refers to French pronunciation and spelling: “C vor o und u und a spricht man immer wie ein k; soll es wie ein c erklingen, lässt man die Cedille springen.” (*Translator’s note*)

expressive type.

“Metapropositional expressions” (Große 1976: 22) can make the typological classification of texts easier because they are often conventional, particularly in genres where everybody is familiar with their communicative function. *In the name of the People* is a typical introduction for a verdict pronounced in court; *By virtue of this deed I grant* introduces a general power of attorney, etc. (↗ 11.4.1.). What is particularly important, however, is the language and style used in a text. A high frequency of evaluative words and phrases (which are either positive with regard to the addressers, or to the cause to which they have committed themselves, or negative with regard to any obstacle to their commitment), the particular frequency of certain rhetorical devices (e.g. anaphora, alliteration, antithesis, parallelism, hyperbole, leading questions) may point to a text of the operative type. The “feature that individual speech elements can point beyond themselves to the meaning of the whole” (cf. Große 1976: 1127), as well as all the phenomena related to the “principle of linkage” (e.g. rhymes, metaphorical fields, leitmotifs, recurrent lexical and syntactic devices, or rhythm) may lead us to the conclusion that the text belongs to the expressive type.

Some of the linguistic features mentioned so far are shared by both the expressive and the operative text types, but having pragmatic knowledge of the communicative use of the text may still make it possible for us to determine the *function* of the respective text elements.

(2) Sea, sun, sand, seclusion – and Spain. (From a hotel advertisement)

This is an advertising slogan, in which the dominant function of the alliteration is not to achieve an aesthetic organization of the text but (as is typical for operative texts) to make the slogan catchy and to transfer positive associations (*sea, sun ...*) to the advertised product (*Spain*).

(3) Now the news.

Night raids on Five cities. Fires started.

Pressure applied by pincer movement

In threatening thrust. Third Division Enlarges beachhead.

Lucky charm Saves sniper.

Sabotage hinted In steel-mill stoppage. [...] (W. H. Auden, *The Age of Anxiety*, [1947]2011: 10)⁸⁷

⁸⁷ The original quotes the poem “Nachtblume” by the Romantic poet Joseph von Eichendorff (1788-1857): Nacht ist wie ein stilles Meer / Lust und Leid und Liebesklagen / kommen so verworren her / in dem linden Wellenschlagen. English trans. by Emily Ezust: *Night is like a quiet sea: / joy and sorrow and the laments of love / become tangled up / in the gentle throbbing of the waves.* (http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get_text.html?TtextId=5324, last accessed 01/02/2012) (*Translator’s note*)

In contrast, the alliterative verse W. H. Auden (1907-1973) uses in his poem is intended to symbolize the bombing he is describing so that the readers can virtually hear it themselves. It is thus one of the elements of the aesthetic organization of this expressive text. A translation of the two texts aiming at equivalence would have to focus on reproducing the positive associations in (2) and the symbolic potential in (3).

If these characteristics are lacking or occur only as sporadic stylistic elements, the text would be categorized as belonging to the informative type.

(4) We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. (The Declaration of Independence, 1776)

(5) It didn't work as well as you'd expect, and now [Manchester] City are relying on Tevez once again to 'freshen' the squad and help it across the finishing line after recent stumbles have seen [Chelsea] United overtake them in the league. (From a football match report)

(6) FROM RUSSIA WITH GLOVES. Chelsea played their first European away game for years. They won 4-2 on aggregate against Viktoria Zizkov. Russian goalkeeper Dmitri Kharine saved a crucial penalty. (From a football match report)

Neither the tricolon in (4) nor the metaphors in (5) nor the pun in (6) turn these passages into a text of the expressive or operative type. They are only isolated elements of poetic language whose occurrence in texts of the informative type is due to stylistic reasons or to the genre. Match reports often use metaphorical or connotative language; national declarations use rhetorical figures and pathos, etc.

12.6 Amplification of the typology

Although they are presented in the written medium, source texts are often only one component of a complex offer of communication transmitted simultaneously or successively in more than one medium. Thus, it would be advisable to postulate a fourth text type for translation studies. This may not be as obvious from a monolingual standpoint as when we look at texts in their function as material for translation. In interpreting, for example, it is not just the language used but also the facial expressions and gestures which encapsulate the offer of information to be transferred. When translating oral speech (addresses and lectures, text for radio and television, films and theatre plays, etc.), it is important that the *translatum* can be spoken out loud. Written texts which provide a joint information offer that includes images (picture books,

comics, slides and transparencies with text, etc.) or music (songs, musical comedies, etc.) are usually characterized by the mutual dependence of the various media used. These texts cannot be translated without due consideration of this interdependence. They will therefore have to be categorized as a fourth type which (adopting Spillner's suggestion to replace the former term 'audio-medial') we shall call a multimedial text type. This fourth type is a 'hyper-type' which is superimposed over the three other basic types, each of which may occur in the form of a multimedial text.

12.7 The relevance of text types for translation

At this point, we may stop to ask whether, in addition to the classification of genres, we need a classification of text types. Some translation scholars would deny the necessity of such a classification, particularly if they are mainly concerned with modern texts or texts which can be assigned to only one of the types defined above. These scholars prefer to stick to the traditional dichotomy between literary and non-literary texts, which Schleiermacher ([1838]2004) strictly correlated with two very different translation methods. Within the framework of such a dichotomy, they are satisfied with a classification of genres. However, in the practice of translating, genre categories are by no means sufficient to explain, justify and describe different translation strategies, as Kelly (1979) aptly demonstrated in relation to translation functions. What Kelly claims regarding the three possible functions of target texts (based also on Bühler's organon model, without giving separate consideration to the influence of multimedial communication on the conditions of and possibilities for translation), cannot be ignored with regard to the basic functions of source texts. A genre can be verbalized by different text types (although this is not a rule). The function of a begging letter (persuasive) is different from that of a letter telling us about travel experiences (informative) or from that of an aesthetically organized poetic letter (expressive, cf. example 19, ↗ 10.13.).

As translators do not only deal with contemporary texts, we should also take into account that both the functions of texts and the traditions behind the wording may change over time. For example, due to the higher status of rhymed language in the Middle Ages, legal texts were often written in verse (aesthetic organization), which is why we would assign such texts to the expressive type today. Temporal distance may also be a reason for the function intended by the author only being accessible today to experts familiar with the period in question and not to modern readers. For ordinary readers (even if they can read the original), it may not be clear that Jonathan Swift wrote his *Gulliver's Travels* as a satire on contemporary social ills (expressive type with operative secondary function). As they are not able to identify the aim of the satire, they are more likely to read the text as a fantastic adventure story (expressive type), and this is how the book is translated today.

Thus, there are two reasons why we think a classification of source texts

is justified and necessary, not only with regard to genres but also with regard to text types.

12.7.1 Invariance of text type in translation

From the function of the source text and its status in the source culture, we can infer the functional value of individual text components. The translation strategies applied to individual text elements will differ depending on the text type to which a particular source text is assigned because the target text is supposed to represent the same text type as the source text, at least where the aim of the translation process is an invariance of function.

Let us take the well-known dictum attributed to the French king Francis I as an example:

(7) Souvent femme varie, bien fol est qui s'y fie.

If this sentence is mentioned, for example, in a history book (informative text), the content may be rendered as follows:

(7a) Frauen sind wankelmüsig. Ein Narr ist, wer ihnen traut.
Woman is fickle; he who trusts her, a fool.

The same utterance is used in Victor Hugo's drama *Le roi s'amuse* (*The King Amuses Himself*), an expressive text of the multimedial type.⁸⁸ A German translation reads:

(7b) Ein Weib ändert sich jeden Tag,
ein Narr ist, wer ihr trauen mag.

An English translation into blank verse, probably by Frederick L. Slous, reads:

Changeful women, constant never,
He's a fool who trusts her ever.⁸⁹

Translating a text of the expressive type, the translator often has to make some alterations of the source text (e.g. translating *souvent*, 'often', by *jeden Tag*, 'every day', and adding *mag*, 'may', in the German translation; or translating

⁸⁸ The original attributes the quote to Victor Hugo's drama *Marie Tudor*, translated into German by Georg Büchner in 1835. A search in Hugo's original works revealed that it is from *Le roi s'amuse*, which served as a model for Verdi's opera *Rigoletto*. (Translator's note)

⁸⁹ Victor Hugo: *Three Plays: Hernani, The king amuses himself, Ruy Blas*. Washington Square Press 1964.

souvent by *never* and adding *ever* in the English translation), which can be explained and justified precisely by the text type.

The first line of this verse was used in a text promoting a French wine:

(8) Souvent femme varie. Les vins du Postillon ne varient jamais.
(Literally: A woman often changes. Postillon wines never change.)

In German, neither (7a) nor (7b) would meet the requirements of the text type. In this (operative) text, the quote serves as a literary allusion (well-known in France) intended to confer prestige on the promoted product. It is a catchy slogan, appealing to the connoisseur of (French) history, literature and good wine. As the German reader can hardly have the same background knowledge, a literal translation of the content would not achieve this function because it lacks the appellative or persuasive effect.

(8a) Frauenherzen sind trügerisch. Postillon-Weine betrügen dich nie.
(Literally: Women's hearts are deceptive. Postillon wines will never deceive you.)

The historical and literary allusion is replaced by an allusion to a well-known line in the German libretto of Verdi's opera *Rigoletto*.⁹⁰ By directly addressing the reader (*dich*, 'you') and punning on the words *trügerisch* ('deceptive') and *betrügen* ('to deceive'), the somewhat frivolous allusion of the first part leads to the promise of reliability in the second part, which is strengthened by the antithetical construction of the slogan. Thus, the association of reliability can be transferred to the product, unfolding its full persuasive potential.

In order to achieve equivalence (which, of course, is only aimed at in communicative translations, ↗ 10.5.2., where the *skopos* requires that the target text achieve the same function as the source text), it is, therefore, not sufficient to identify the genre because the decisive clue is often provided by the text type. Thus, the translation strategies described here apply not only to individual genres but also to more comprehensive classes of texts, independent of the genre they represent.

12.7.2 Change of text type in translation

It is by no means an *a priori* rule that the target text must, can or should have the same communicative function as the source text. We have illustrated this

⁹⁰ The Italian aria *La donna è mobile / Qual piuma al vento ...* has been translated into German by *O wie so trügerisch / Sind Weiberherzen ...* The English translation of the first two lines would not work as a source for this allusion because the reference to the woman's heart has been shifted to the end of the stanza: *Plume in the summerwind / Waywardly playing [...] Thus heart of womankind / Ev'ry way bendeth.* (Translator's note)

claim by distinguishing between several translation types (↗ 10.5.), which may be determined by historical translation norms differing from those of a communicative translation or by the function of the target text or any of its parts having been intentionally changed in order to produce a target text appropriate for a specific purpose or use. In such cases, the choice of adequate translation procedures depends, among other things, on the function the target text is intended to achieve.

The following example is from the speech Pompidou gave after the death of General de Gaulle. It was broadcast all over the French media and presents all the features of a classical, rhetorically organized funeral address (expressive text type). We base our analysis on Paepcke (1974), although we do not agree with all his arguments concerning the translation. This speech contained the following line:

(9) Le général de Gaulle est mort. La France est veuve.
 (Literally: General de Gaulle is dead. France is a widow.)

How this line is translated depends on the translation type: if the purpose is to translate the entire text in its function as a funeral address characterized by an aesthetic organization (expressive text type), the adequate translation type would be a communicative translation; if the purpose is to inform the target audience about the words used by the French author to formulate this text (expressive text type), a philological translation would be the appropriate type.

(9a) General de Gaulle ist tot. Frankreich ist Witwe.

The German translation would provide the German reader with the desired information, including the metaphor used in the original to express the emotional attachment and grief felt by France. However, a German reader who is not familiar with the fact that *La France* has a feminine gender (contrary to *Frankreich* which like all German names of countries is neuter in gender) may find the female personification (*Witwe*, ‘widow’) inappropriate or even ridiculous, which would destroy the rhetorical effect.

(9b) General de Gaulle ist tot. Frankreich ist verwaist.
 (Literally: General de Gaulle is dead. France is orphaned.)

Now the image is coherent. A content element has been replaced by another one, but the function of referring to France’s grief at having lost a dear relative is retained, although through the use of a different image.

It should have become clear that the eternal question of how ‘free’ or how ‘faithful’ a translation can, must or should be, to which translation scholars

often respond by quoting the rather vague motto ‘as literal as possible but as free as necessary’, can be answered in a more precise way. It depends not only on the genre but also on the text type to which the source text can be assigned and on the purpose which the translation is intended to achieve in the communicative event.

Epilogue

At the beginning of this book, we wrote that we were not planning to offer a complete theory of translational action but, rather, that we would offer parts of a theory in such a way that they can be completed and expanded on by specific partial theories at any moment in time. We have tried to pursue this aim. With hindsight, it has become clear to us that the theory must be developed and completed with regard to the following aspects (Vermeer 1983b):

(1) The first question is why texts (and translations) are produced at all (↗ 3.8.) and how this should be done, taking into account each situation and in line with the intended *skopos* (↗ 4.). Seen from our present viewpoint, a theory of text production could best be developed as a specific action theory (cf., among others, Rehbein 1977, and Harras 1978; for an epistemological basis see Riedel 1978: 165-72). This theory of text production should be complemented by a contrastive culture theory (Vermeer 1977 and 1978; cf. Beneke 1979a, 1979b, 1983) which could study the culture-specific conditions of textualization.

(2) This raises another closely related question: which *skopoi* can be achieved by a translation and under which conditions? Here we are faced with two subordinate problems.

(2a) In many translations, we can assume that invariance of *skopos* (and function) will be the normal case. (Methodologically, however, we shall define invariance of *skopos* as a specific case, where the difference is ‘zero’, whereas change of *skopos* is the general case which is, therefore, the starting point for a general theory of translational action.) Invariance of *skopos* will be most frequently aimed at in the translation of pragmatic texts: operating instructions are usually translated as operating instructions. However, with regard to novels, we may have to make a distinction: light fiction will usually be translated as light fiction, but the *skopos* may change in that certain subfunctions may be different. One of the subfunctions has clearly been changed if, for example, sociocritical light fiction is translated as entertaining social criticism (e.g. Eça de Queirós’ *O crime do Padre Amaro* → *Das Verbrechen des Paters Amaro* in an East-German translation, cf. *The Crime of Father Amaro* in an English translation; cf. also the transformation of the English cockney social dialect in *My Fair Lady* into the regional dialect of Berlin in the German production). The change of function is less obvious when the target recipient reads a novel from another culture in order to learn about this culture: the interests guiding a French reader’s way of reading Queneau’s *Zazie dans le metro* will be different from that of an English recipient of *Zazie in the metro* (in his discussion of the German translation, Albrecht 1981 does not touch upon this point). We claim that this kind of change in *skopos* is the more

typical case in works like these. How far does it determine the translator's strategies? (In the case of *My Fair Lady* the change in strategy is probably obvious.) Starting from the problems mentioned above, the question of *skopos* may be dealt with in relation to text typology and genre classification (cf. Reiß [1971]2000 and 1976a, 7 11. and 12.).

(2b) Let us assume that a marketing agency commissions the translation of an advertising leaflet in order to use it for the promotion of a product. In order to optimize the advertising *skopos* ('operative text type', according to Reiß), the translator may have to reformulate the source text from scratch. The *skopos* is different when a company wishes to use an advertising leaflet in order to gain information about the products of a subcontractor. In this case, it is still an advertising leaflet that is translated, but the goal here is to gain as much information as possible ("informative text type", according to Reiß). Thus, putting it in a different way, the leaflet is converted into a 'document' and any radical revision of it is ruled out. The translation strategy is changed due to the *skopos*, which in turn changes according to whether the translation is commissioned by the text producer or the text recipient (these questions are dealt with in Holz-Mänttäri 1984).

(3) Another question is how actions (and, therefore, texts) can be understood. A theory of understanding would have to explain, with regard to translation, how the conditions of target-text reception differ from those of source-text reception (cf. Vermeer [1979]1983: 62-88).

(4) It will be necessary to develop a theory of coherence (7 6.2. on intratextual coherence), including taking into consideration the different conditions for source and target texts due to different cultural backgrounds.

(5) Finally, we would like to mention one last desideratum. It concerns the study of the formal surface characteristics of a *translatum* which are based both on its dependence on the translation *skopos* (7 4.) and on the conditions for imitating the source text (3.9.). A translation-oriented theory on style may provide some surprising insights into common translation strategies, which might even have to be thoroughly revised as a result of this.

For example: Thomas Carlyle's *History of Friedrich II of Prussia* is written in a Teutonic style, with very long and complex sentences (Oakman 1982). If this book were to be translated into German, the usual strategy to translate sentence by sentence would result in a stylistically unmarked text which perfectly conforms to the German style conventions for this genre. In order to render the specificity of Carlyle's style, the translator would probably have to adapt the text to Kantian ways of expression.

Some of the aspects mentioned above have been developed further in later publications as listed below.⁹¹

Fundamental translation issues are discussed in Reiß (1988) and Reiß (1989). Combining the theory of translational action presented in this book with Justa Holz-Mänttäri's theory of translatorial action, published almost simultaneously (Holz-Mänttäri 1984), we might be able to set out a comprehensive theory as conceptualized in Vermeer (1990b), where a theory of the translation brief or commission complements the *skopos* theory. In the same study (i.e. Vermeer 1990b), the roles in translatorial action discussed by Holz-Mänttäri are further developed by a formula which relates the factors characterizing the actors in each case with each other.

What is transmitted 'from one mind to another' and how is it transmitted? These are the questions dealt with in Vermeer and Witte (1990), where 'scenes-and-frames' theory is combined with 'channel' theory, drawing on Poyatos (1983). Both Höning and Kußmaul (1982) and, later, Ammann (1990a) offer a practical introduction to the state of the art in *skopos* theory which addresses young trainee translators. Cultural aspects are discussed by Witte (1987)⁹² and Löwe (1990).

The following publications deal with particular aspects of translational action: Nord ([1988]2005) develops a model for pre-translational text analysis, Ammann (1990b) discusses a theory of translation criticism, drawing on Reiß's seminal work in this area (Reiß [1971]2000). Reiß (1990) and Vermeer (1990a) discuss the ontological status of texts as seen from the producer's standpoint and texts as seen from the recipient's point of view and the relationship between the two.

Vermeer (1989) attempts to develop a distinction between surface and deep-structure translation which might be useful in machine translation (cf. also Vermeer 1988).

With regard to technical translation, cf., above all, Peter A. Schmitt's publications, particularly Schmitt 1990⁹³, to name but one out of many important studies.

Kistner-Deppert (1988) and Hild-Thomas (1989) deal with culture-sensitive dictionaries. Löwe (1990) and Witte (1989) discuss the application of *skopos* theory in the translation classroom, which Nord ([1990-1991]2001) attempts

⁹¹ This list of publications was first included in the 1991 revised edition of the book. References to later editions or English versions have been added in the bibliography where available. For an overview of recent developments in functional approaches to translation, cf. also Nord 2012. (*Translator's note*)

⁹² In her doctoral dissertation, Witte elaborates her concept of the translator's cultural competence and discusses how it can be trained: Witte, Heidrun (2000) *Die Kulturkompetenz des Translators. Begriffliche Grundlegung und Didaktisierung*, Tübingen: Stauffenburg. (*Translator's note*).

⁹³ In English, cf. P. A. Schmitt 1992. (*Translator's note*)

to put into practice in a student manual for Spanish-German translation. Ammann and Vermeer (1990) demonstrate how *skopos* theory could be applied to the development of a syllabus for translator training.

In this book, interpreting has perhaps not received the attention it deserves. Some studies dealing with this variant of translational action can be found in Albrecht 1990, Poyatos 1987, Salevsky 1990, Seleskovitch and Lederer 1989, among others.⁹⁴

With regard to the possibility of creating a new profession, the ‘cultural consultant’ as an expert on regional studies, cf. Löwe (1990) and others.

⁹⁴ Franz Pöchhacker was the first to apply *skopos* theory to conference interpreting in his 1994 title *Simultandolmetschen als komplexes Handeln* (Tübingen: Narr). In English, cf. also Pöchhacker, F. (1995) ‘Simultaneous Interpreting: A Functional Perspective’, *Hermes. Journal of Linguistics* 14: 31-53). (*Translator’s note*)

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