CHAPTER 7

Pragmatic equivalence

> translating is an act of communication, involving texts as sets of mutually relevant intentions, in which users (including translators) pre-suppose, implicate and infer meaning.
>
> *(Mason 1998:170)*

> All successful translation is premised on the fact that it is addressed within a specific language, and therefore also to a specific set of practices, a specific form of life.
>
> *(Asad 1986/2010:21)*

In this chapter we move our discussion of language and translation forward with a brief look at how a given text comes to 'make sense' to a given readership. In doing this, we will be venturing beyond the textual level of connecting sentences and paragraphs together and identifying various textual features. Here, we will be concerned with the way utterances are used in communicative situations and the way we interpret them in context. This is a highly complex but fascinating area of language study, known as **pragmatics**. Pragmatics is the study of language in use. It is the study of meaning, not as generated by the linguistic system but as conveyed and manipulated by participants in a communicative situation. Of the variety of notions that are central to this particular area of language study, I have chosen two which I believe to be particularly helpful in exploring the question of 'making sense' and in highlighting areas of difficulty in cross-cultural communication. These are **coherence** and **implicature**. Those interested in exploring this area further will find references to other relevant notions in the notes at the end of this chapter.

7.1 COHERENCE

7.1.1 Coherence vs cohesion

Like cohesion, **coherence** is a network of relations which organize and create a text: cohesion is the network of surface relations which link words and expressions to other words and expressions in a text, and coherence is the network of conceptual relations which underlie the surface text. Both concern the way stretches of language are connected to each other. In the case of cohesion, stretches of language are connected to each other by virtue of lexical and grammatical dependencies. In the

case of coherence, they are connected by virtue of conceptual or meaning dependencies as perceived by language users. Hoey (1991:12) sums up the difference between cohesion and coherence as follows:

> We will assume that cohesion is a property of the text and that coherence is a facet of the reader's evaluation of a text. In other words, cohesion is objective, capable in principle of automatic recognition, while coherence is subjective and judgements concerning it may vary from reader to reader.

We could say that cohesion is the surface expression of coherence relations, that it is a device for making conceptual relations explicit. For instance, a conjunction such as *therefore* may express a conceptual notion of reason or consequence. However, if the reader cannot perceive an underlying semantic relation of reason or consequence between the propositions connected by *therefore*, he or she will not be able to make sense of the text in question; in other words, the text will not 'cohere' for this particular reader. Generally speaking, the mere presence of cohesive markers cannot create a coherent text; cohesive markers have to reflect conceptual relations which make sense. Enkvist (1978:110–111) gives an example of a highly cohesive text that is nevertheless incoherent:

> I bought a Ford. The car in which President Wilson rode down the Champs Elysees was black. Black English has been widely discussed. The discussions between the presidents ended last week. A week has seven days. Every day I feed my cat. Cats have four legs. The cat is on the mat. Mat has three letters.

The possibility of creating a semblance of cohesion which is not supported by underlying semantic relations is sometimes exploited in a few restricted genres, for instance in comedy. However, the fact that we cannot normally make sense of stretches of language like the one quoted above, in spite of the presence of a number of cohesive markers, suggests that what actually gives texture to a stretch of language is not the presence of cohesive markers but our ability to recognize underlying semantic relations which establish continuity of sense. The main value of cohesive markers seems to be that they can be used to facilitate and possibly control the interpretation of underlying semantic relations.

7.1.2 Is coherence a feature of text or situation?

> No text is inherently coherent or incoherent. In the end, it all depends on the receiver, and on his ability to interpret the indications present in the discourse so that, finally, he manages to understand it in a way which seems coherent to him – in a way which corresponds with his idea of what it is that makes a series of actions into an integrated whole.
>
> *(Charolles 1983:95)*

The ability to make sense of a stretch of language depends on the hearer's or reader's expectations and experience of the world. Different societies, and indeed different individuals and groups of individuals within the same society, have different experiences of the world and different views on the way events and situations are organized or related to each other. A network of relations which is valid and makes sense in one society may not be valid in another. This is not just a question of agreeing or disagreeing with a certain view of the world but of being able to make sense of it in the first place. Whether a text is judged as acceptable or not does not depend on how closely it corresponds to some state of affairs in the world, but rather on whether the reader finds the presented version of reality believable, homogeneous or relevant.

The coherence of a text is a result of the interaction between knowledge presented in the text and the reader's own knowledge and experience of the world, the latter being influenced by a variety of factors such as age, sex, race, nationality, education, occupation, and political and religious affiliations. Even a simple cohesive relation of co-reference cannot be recognized, and therefore cannot be said to contribute to the coherence of a text, if it does not fit in with a reader's prior knowledge of the world. Consider, for instance, the following extract from *A Hero from Zero* (p. i) where Tiny Rowland gives an account of how he lost control of the House of Fraser:

> The purchasing power of the proposed fifteen hundred shop outlets would have meant excellent price reductions to customers across Britain and the United States. The flagship, Harrods, had never been integrated with the rest and would demerge to retain its particular character and choice.
>
> It's often written, as a handy journalist's tag, that I suffered from an obsession to control the splendid Knightsbridge store. It would be a very static and limited aim, I think. For Lonrho's purpose, it could have been any well-spread stores group. It was chance, and also roulette, that brought Hugh Fraser, the seller, and Lonrho, the buyer, together in 1977.

There is no explicit cohesive relation in the above extract which tells us that *Harrods* and *the splendid Knightsbridge store* refer to the same thing, except perhaps the use of the definite article in *the splendid Knightsbridge store* and the synonymy between *shop outlets* and *store* (but even that depends for its interpretation on recognizing that *Harrods* is a shop or store of some sort). There is no pronominal reference, for instance, or direct repetition. The relation between the two, and therefore the continuity of sense between the two paragraphs, is, of course, perfectly accessible to any British reader as well as to anyone who is familiar with the famous Harrods store and knows that it is located in Knightsbridge. In translating a document like this, however, one cannot take it for granted that the target reader will have the necessary background knowledge to interpret the co-reference successfully, unless, of course, the translation is aimed at expatriate or immigrant communities in Britain. The Arabic translation provides an explicit link through repetition of 'store'. This

makes it clear that Harrods is a store and also establishes continuity of sense in the mind of the target reader by linking *Harrods* in the first paragraph and *the splendid Knightsbridge store* in the second:

Arabic translation:

وكانت القدرة الشرائية المتجمعة لدى 1500 متجر معناها تخفيضات ممتازة فى الأسعار بالنسبة للمشترين فى جميع انحاء بريطانيا والولايات المتحدة. أما **المتجر الرئيسى هارودز** فلم يُضم الى بقية المتاجر واحتفظ به منفصلاً عن المجموعة للإبقاء على طابعه المتميز ومجالات الإختيار المتوفرة فيه.

وكثيرا ما كتب على فى الدوائر الصحفية أننى أعانى من الحاح مرضى يدفعنى دفعا الى محاولة السيطرة على **متجر نايتسبردج الفاخر** . .

The combined purchasing power of 1500 stores meant excellent reductions in prices for buyers in all parts of Britain and the United States. As for the main store Harrods, it was not integrated with the rest of the stores and was kept separate from the rest in order to retain its distinctive character and the areas of choice available in it.

It has often been written about me in journalistic circles that I suffer from a sick obsession which pushes me to try and control the splendid Knightsbridge store ...

We could perhaps say that texts are neither coherent nor incoherent by themselves, that whether a text coheres or not depends on the ability of the reader to make sense of it by relating it to what he or she already knows or to a familiar world, whether this world is real or fictional. A text which coheres for one reader may therefore not cohere for another. Different linguists have different views as to whether this phenomenon implies that meaning is a property of a text or a property of a communicative situation involving participants and settings in addition to a text. Blum-Kulka's definition of coherence as 'a covert potential meaning relationship among parts of a text, made overt by the reader or listener through processes of interpretation' (1986:17) implies that she sees meaning, or coherence, as a property of a text, even though it is only accessible through processes of interpretation. Sinclair (personal communication) similarly states that processes such as 'the recall of past experience and knowledge of the world ... are not part of the meaning of a text, but part of the human apparatus for working out the meaning of a text', which again suggests that meaning exists in texts but can only be accessed through various processes of interpretation on the part of the reader. By contrast, Firth (1964:111) asserts that '"meaning" is a property of the mutually relevant people, things, events in the situation', and Kirsten Malmkjær (personal communication) does not accept the view that meaning is *in* text and suggests instead that 'meanings arise in situations involving language'.

Whether one holds the view that meaning exists in text or in situations involving text in addition to other variables such as participants and settings, one cannot deny that a reader's cultural and intellectual background determine how much sense he or she gets out of a text. In the final analysis, a reader can only make sense of a text by analysing the linguistic elements which constitute it against the backdrop of his or her own knowledge and experience. It therefore seems reasonable to suggest that, regardless of whether meaning is a property of text or situation, coherence is not a feature of text as such but of the judgement made by a reader on a text. As far as translation is concerned, this means that the range and type of difficulties encountered will not so much depend on the source text itself as 'on the significance of the translated text for its readers as members of a certain culture, or of a sub-group within that culture, with the constellation of knowledge, judgement and perception they have developed from it' (Snell-Hornby 1988:42). Even when addressing members of their own linguistic community, writers will word their messages differently depending on the nature of the audience they have in mind, whether it consists of adults or children, specialists or non-specialists, and so on. Like any writer, a translator has to take account of the range of knowledge available to his or her target readers and of the expectations they are likely to have about such things as the organization of the world, the organization of language in general, the organization and conventions of particular text types, the structure of social relations, and the appropriateness or inappropriateness of certain kinds of linguistic and non-linguistic behaviour, among other things. These are all factors which influence the coherence of a text in varying degrees because, as human beings, we can only make sense of new information in terms of our own knowledge, beliefs and previous experience of both linguistic and non-linguistic events.

7.2 COHERENCE AND PROCESSES OF INTERPRETATION: IMPLICATURE

Charolles (1983) suggests that a reader may see a certain continuity of sense between parts of an utterance and still fail to understand it fully (inasmuch as it is possible to understand any stretch of language 'fully'). Consider, for instance, the following stretch of language:

I went to the cinema. The beer was good.

This is a perfectly coherent, if decontextualized, piece of language. Charolles explains that anyone who hears or reads it will reach the following interpretation: the speaker says that he or she went to the cinema, that he or she drank beer at the cinema and that the beer in question was good. Note that we naturally provide the necessary links to render the discourse coherent. There is nothing in the above utterance which tells us explicitly that the speaker drank the beer or that he or she did so at the cinema. Charolles calls this type of minimal coherence **supplemental coherence**. He suggests that there is another type of coherence, which he calls

explanatory coherence, which not only establishes continuity of senses but, unlike supplemental coherence, also *justifies* it. The difference between supplemental interpretations and explanatory interpretations, Charolles suggests (1983:93), is that:

> the former never lead to the explication of a thematic continuity (they indicate that an element is repeated from one segment to another), whereas the latter justify this continuity (they lead to the manifestation of the reason why a certain thing is said supplementally about an element).

Explanatory coherence is achieved when, given the right context and the necessary knowledge of setting and participants, one can reach an interpretation such as this: the speaker says he or she went to the cinema. The film the speaker saw was bad – so bad that the only good thing he or she can find to say about it is that the beer he or she drank there was good. But how does a speaker signal or a hearer interpret this kind of implied meaning? How do we achieve explanatory coherence?

One of the most important notions to have emerged in text studies in relatively recent years is that of **implicature** – the question of how it is that we come to understand more than is actually said. Grice (1975) uses the term **implicature** to refer to what the speaker means or implies rather than what he or she literally says. Implicature is not to be confused with non-literal meaning, for instance with idiomatic meaning. Idiomatic meaning is conventional, and its interpretation depends on a good mastery of the linguistic system in question rather than on a successful interpretation of a particular speaker's intended or implied meaning in a given context. For instance, in the following exchange

> A: Shall we go for a walk?
> B: Could I take a rain check on that?

the successful interpretation of B's response depends on knowing the conventional meaning of *take a rain check* in American English ('to decline to accept an offer or invitation immediately but indicate willingness to accept it at a later date'). No conversational implicature is involved here. Compare this with a similar exchange which does not involve the use of an idiom:

> A: Shall we go for a walk?
> B: It's raining.

How does A, or anyone observing the scene, know how to relate the utterance 'It's raining' – a mere comment on the weather – to the question of going for a walk? Why do we assume that 'It's raining' is meant as an answer to the above question? One answer which has already been suggested is that we do it in order to maintain the assumption of coherence. If we do accept it as an answer, how do we know how to interpret it? Does it mean 'No, we'd better not because it's raining', 'OK, but

we'd better take an umbrella', or perhaps 'Yes – we both like walking in the rain'? Note also that the same utterance *It's raining* can mean something totally different in a different context:

> A: What is Jane up to these days?
> B: It's raining!

Here, Speaker A would probably interpret B's comment on the weather as meaning something like 'I don't want to talk about this subject' or possibly, depending on B's tone of voice and facial expression, 'You're out of line – you shouldn't be asking me this question'.

Grice suggests that a speaker can signal an implied meaning conventionally or non-conventionally. To signal an implied meaning conventionally, a speaker uses the textual resources which are conventionally understood to signal certain relationships between propositions. Conjunctions such as *therefore*, *because* and *in spite of* are one such textual resource. Grammatical structure is another. For instance, in 'It's money that they want' the grammatical structure itself conventionally presupposes what is expressed in the subordinate clause, in this case 'they want something' (see discussion of information structure in Chapter 5, section 5.1.2).[1]

But how does a speaker signal (or a hearer interpret) meaning which is not conventionally coded in the language? Before I proceed to give an account of Grice's answer to this question, I have to point out that Grice is not primarily concerned with written text. In fact, not only does he restrict his comments to spoken exchanges, he restricts them to a very small sub-set of these – namely question/answer sequences. There is no doubt that Grice's preoccupation with speech means that his views are sometimes difficult to relate to written communication. Although speech and writing share many features, they are not the same thing. Having said that, I believe that Grice's views do have important applications in translation. I therefore propose to play down the inadequacy of Grice's theory of implicature in terms of its application to written discourse in order to explore its general relevance to translation.

Grice suggests that discourse has certain important features: for instance, it is connected (i.e. it does not consist of unrelated sequences); it has a purpose; and it is a co-operative effort. These features give rise to a general principle of communication, the **Co-operative Principle**, which participants are expected to observe:

> Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.
>
> *(Grice 1975:45)*

Implied meaning which is not signalled conventially derives from the Co-operative Principle and a number of maxims associated with it: Quantity, Quality, Relevance (Relation) and Manner:

1. Quantity
   (a) Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
   (b) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
2. Quality
   'Try to make your contribution one that is true', specifically:
   (a) Do not say what you believe to be false.
   (b) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
3. Relevance
   Make your contributions relevant to the current exchange.
4. Manner
   Be perspicuous, specifically:
   (a) Avoid obscurity of expression.
   (b) Avoid ambiguity.
   (c) Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
   (d) Be orderly.

The principles outlined above provide points of orientation rather than strict rules which have to be followed by language users. We can and do refuse to adhere to the maxims in some situations: for instance, a participant may try to avoid adhering to one or more of the maxims in order to evade a topic or question. This is often the case in political interviews. In spoken discourse, the other participant can always request that the maxims be adhered to. Blum-Kulka (1983) gives several such examples from political interviews on Israeli television. When an interviewer says to Mr Peres 'Mr Peres, if we can get down to concrete facts …' (*ibid.*:138), he is in effect invoking the maxims of manner and relation by asking Mr Peres to address the point being raised. Grice's maxims thus provide a point of orientation for participants even when they are flouted, so that flouting them is recognized as a way of exploiting the convention in order to convey an intended meaning. This is explained in more detail below. For the moment, it is sufficient to note that conversational maxims and the implicatures that result from observing or flouting them are adapted to serve the purpose of the communication in hand. This purpose will vary according to the situation and participants: it may be conveying information, influencing the opinions or emotions of hearers, directing their actions and so on.

Now, if as language users we recognize and generally abide by something like Grice's Co-operative Principle, then the reason we assume that an utterance which follows a question provides an answer to that question becomes obvious: we assume that both addresser and addressee are operating the Co-operative Principle, and in particular the maxim of Relevance. We will therefore go out of our way to find an interpretation that will connect it to the previous utterance. We attribute relevance to what we hear and read even when it appears, on the surface, to be unrelated to the preceding discourse, and regardless of whether a relation is explicitly signalled. For example, on hearing or seeing the statement

Elizabeth is putting on a lot of weight. She smokes very heavily.

we will naturally strive to relate the two propositions somehow. We may infer that the speaker implies that Elizabeth is putting on a lot of weight *because* she is smoking too heavily, or the other way round: that she is smoking too heavily because she is putting on a lot of weight, perhaps as a way of controlling her appetite. A less likely, but nevertheless feasible, inference is that Elizabeth is putting on a lot of weight *in spite of* the fact that she is smoking too heavily. Yet another possible inference would be that Elizabeth is letting herself go, her health is on the decline, she is not looking after herself as she should do. Pragmatic inferences of this type are essential to maintaining the coherence of discourse. Levinson (1983) overstates the case a little when he suggests that such inferences arise to preserve the assumption of co-operation and that without them many adjacent utterances would appear to be unrelated to each other or to the discourse in hand. Nevertheless, there is a great deal of truth in what he says. Which inferences we do draw will naturally depend on a variety of factors such as our knowledge of the world, of such things as the relationship between smoking, appetite and weight; our knowledge of participants in the discourse, of the speaker, and of Elizabeth; our knowledge of and fluency in the specific language being used, and so on.

Implicatures, then, are pragmatic inferences which allow us to achieve something like Charolles' explanatory coherence. They are aspects of meaning which are over and above the literal and conventional meaning of an utterance and they depend for their interpretation on a recognition of the Co-operative Principle and its maxims. Apart from observing the maxims, a language user can deliberately flout a maxim and in doing so produce what Grice calls a **conversational implicature**. For instance, if used as a genuine question the utterance *Do you know what time it is?* conveys the meaning 'I do not know the time; I wish to know the time'. Levinson (1983) calls this type of meaning a **standard implicature**. If the same utterance is used as a rhetorical question, in the right context and with the appropriate intonation, it could convey a meaning such as 'You are very late'. This is what Grice would call a **conversational implicature**. It is achieved by flouting the maxim of Quality which demands sincerity. Conversational implicature can be conveyed by flouting any or several of the maxims. To use one of Grice's examples: imagine that a professor of philosophy is asked to supply a testimonial for a candidate for a position in the field of philosophy. He or she replies that the candidate's manners are impeccable and his or her handwriting is extremely legible. How does the addressee interpret this testimonial? Knowing that the professor in question is in a position to comment directly on the candidate's strengths and weaknesses in the area of philosophy but apparently refuses to do so, he or she must still assume that the professor is observing the maxims, particularly the maxim of Relevance. According to Grice, what is implicated by the speaker 'would be what he might expect the hearer to suppose him to think in order to preserve the idea that the maxims are, after all, not being violated' (1981:185). The addressee therefore infers that the professor is implying something by his or her reply, in this case that the candidate is no good at philosophy.

The Co-operative Principle and its maxims can account for the fact that we do not abandon contributions such as those described above as irrelevant, but they do not directly explain how we arrive at a particular inference or, in Grice's terms, a conversational implicature.[2] This is a difficult topic which remains largely unresolved. For one thing, conversational implicatures are often indeterminate. For another, an utterance may be open to several possible interpretations. This may or may not be intentional on the part of the speaker. In either case, it complicates the task of the translator who may knowingly or unknowingly eliminate certain possible interpretations of the original from the target text. The translator may even inadvertently give rise to other interpretations which are not derivable from the original text. Both situations can arise because of constraints imposed on the translator by the structure of the target language, the nature of the target audience and the conventions of the target culture.

Indeterminacy aside, Grice details a number of factors which can contribute to our success or failure in working out implicatures. These are:

1. the conventional meaning of the words and structures used (i.e. a mastery of the language system), together with the identity of any references that may be involved;
2. the Co-operative Principle and its maxims;
3. the context, linguistic or otherwise, of the utterance;
4. other items of background knowledge; and
5. the fact (or supposed fact) that all relevant items falling under the previous headings are available to both participants and both participants know or assume this to be the case.

7.3 COHERENCE, IMPLICATURE AND TRANSLATION STRATEGIES

Let us now look at the above factors in some detail. Grice himself suggested them as, in his own words, 'data' on which 'the hearer will reply' in working out whether a particular conversational implicature is present (1975:50). But they also provide a good basis for exploring the whole question of coherence. The following discussion will therefore consider how these factors might relate not only to working out implicatures but to the question of coherence in general and to common problems and strategies in translation.

For an alternative view of inferential processes in communication see Sperber and Wilson (1986) and Gutt (1991/2000, 2005).

7.3.1 The conventional meanings of words and structures and the identity of references

7.3.1.1 The conventional meanings of words and structures

This is an obvious point. If we do not understand the meanings of the words and structures used in a text, we cannot work out its implied meanings. Knowledge of the language system may not be sufficient, but it is essential if one is to understand what is going on in any kind of verbal communication. This means that any mistranslation of words and structures in the source text may well affect the calculability of implicatures in the target text. An example of this was given in Chapter 3, repeated here for convenience. The example is from *A Hero from Zero* (p. 59):

> All this represents only a part of all that Forbes Magazine reported on Fayed in the March issue mentioned before. In 1983, he had approached the industrialist Robert O. Anderson under the cover of a commission agent. The industrialist had been struck by his appearance as someone with modest means. Mr. Anderson was therefore astonished by his sudden acquisition of a considerable fortune.

The mistranslation of the description of Mohamed Fayed's appearance in the Arabic text, where *modest means* was rendered as 'his appearance suggests modesty and simplicity', makes the original implicature quite incalculable. The reader of both source and target texts must assume that the writer's description of Fayed's appearance is relevant and is meant to be as informative as is necessary for the purposes of the communication. The writer cannot be disregarding the maxims of Relevance and Quantity unless the Co-operative Principle is not being adhered to, and there is no reason to suspect that it is not. Therefore, the writer is implying something by describing Fayed's appearance. Given the co-text and context of the above extract and the relevant background knowledge, most readers of the source text will infer that Fayed has come to wealth suddenly and, quite possibly, by dishonest means. This implicature is difficult to calculate in Arabic because of the mistranslation of *modest means*. The Arab reader is left feeling somewhat unsure of how to interpret the favourable description of Fayed as simple and modest in a context which otherwise seems to suggest that he is anything but a 'nice person'.

As well as the conventional meaning of words, each language also employs conventionalized expressions and patterns of conveying implicatures. In other words, in every language there will be conventional associations between certain linguistic patterns and certain inferable meanings. These patterns are identifiable and are sometimes recorded in grammars. They are not necessarily associated with the same range of meanings in other languages. For instance, rhetorical questions such as *Isn't that an ugly building?* (instead of 'This is an ugly building') or *How can you be so cruel?* (instead of 'You are very cruel') are regularly used in English to express a range of emotive meanings such as indignation, shock and amusement (*COBUILD*

English Grammar, Sinclair 1990:205–206). Fixed expressions modelled on rhetorical questions, such as *Haven't you done well?* or *Don't I know it?*, are often ironic.[3] Likewise, far from being a literal request for feedback, the expression *Correct me if I'm wrong* suggests 'I know I'm right' (Duff 1990) and can therefore be quite irritating.

Louw (1993, 2000) and Sinclair (1999) discuss a fascinating feature of language patterning which was first identified, without being named as such, by Sinclair (1987a, 1991). Now known as **semantic prosody**, this feature gives rise to very subtle implicatures which are often processed subliminally, without the speaker or hearer necessarily being conscious of the attitude being expressed by the item in question.[4] Louw (1993:157) defines semantic prosody as 'a consistent aura of meaning with which a form is imbued by its collocates';[5] this 'aura of meaning' can be positive or negative, but more commonly it is negative (Louw 2000). Sinclair (1999) considers it an aspect of 'attitudinal or pragmatic meaning' and gives the example of *happen* in English. Here are some of the concordance lines he uses to demonstrate that despite its standard, attitudinally neutral meaning of 'take place', *happen* is often imbued with negative meaning:

> Something is going to happen to him unless he pulls himself together.
> I knew something terrible would happen.
> Accidents can happen in spite of rules and regulations.
> What I had feared might happen was happening.
> I was worried about what would happen when the public realized this.
> I'm always expecting something calamitous to happen.

Semantic prosody is not restricted to single words such as verbs and nouns. The expression *with/to/by the naked eye*, for example, has a semantic prosody of difficulty (Sinclair 1991), as is evident in the following examples from the *Translational English Corpus*:[6]

> In painting, as in music and literature, what is often termed abstract strikes me as being simply representative of a more delicate and elusive reality which is barely visible to the naked eye. (Source: *Discovering the World*, by Clarice Lispetor; translated from Brazilian Portuguese by Giovanni Pontiero)

> Her eyesight was so strong that she was able to extract a tiny piece of glass, hardly visible to the naked eye, from Aziza's fingertip using a pair of eyebrow tweezers. (Source: *The Golden Chariot*, by Salwa Bakr; translated from Arabic by Dinah Manisty)

> ... the dislocation could not be observed, at this altitude a speed of seven hundred and fifty metres per hour cannot be captured by the naked eye, ... (Source: *The Stone Raft*, by José Saramago; translated from Portuguese by Giovanni Pontiero)

What is particularly interesting about this feature of language patterning is that departure from the typical prosody of an item can generate irony or sarcasm, among other rhetorical effects, as is evident in this example of *with the naked eye*, also from the *Translational English Corpus*:

> I was confronted with bags and boxes of provisions, and my mother tasting a bit of rice and saying, 'They're obviously mean. God help us! You can count the cardamon pods and cumin seeds with the naked eye.' (Source: *Women of Sand and Myrrh*, by Hanan Al-Shaykh; translated from Arabic by Catharine Cobham)

Translators need to be alert to the subtle implicatures conveyed by semantic prosody as well as those communicated when a prosody is exploited for rhetorical effect. Kenny (1998:520) explains why:

> There are instances, for example, where the reader of an original text and its translation may feel that the translation is somehow tamer than the original, or that it paints a less bleak picture of a situation than did the original. It is often difficult, however, to say precisely why one has this feeling. One might be able to put one's finger on particular points in the text where certain passages have been toned down ..., but one may be left with a vague suspicion that there is more to it than that; that there is somehow a different attitude dispersed over the pages of the target text.

Finally, typographic features also play a role in conveying certain implicatures. In English, the use of inverted commas around a word or expression in the body of a text can suggest a range of implied meanings. It can suggest disagreement with the way a word or expression is used, emphasis, irony or tentativeness about the appropriateness or applicability of an expression. Other languages may prefer to convey similar meanings lexically or grammatically. Problems arise in translation when the function of such patterns is not recognized and a literal or near-literal transfer of form distorts the original implicature or conveys a different one. For example, Loveday (1982b:364) explains that in Japanese 'it is generally regarded as unrefined to clearly mark the end of one's utterance, and so the ending is frequently left hanging with a word like "nevertheless"'. A literal translation of this type of pattern into English would no doubt confuse a reader and may encourage him or her to read more into the utterance than might be intended.

7.3.1.2 The identity and import of any references mentioned in the text

The ability to identify references to participants, entities, events and practices is essential for drawing inferences and for maintaining the coherence of a text. A proper name or even a reference to a type of food or gadget which is unknown to the reader can disrupt the continuity of the text and obscure the relevance of any

statement associated with it. Many of the examples discussed under **translation by cultural substitution** in Chapter 2 illustrate the translator's awareness of this problem and offer one type of strategy for overcoming it. A further example is given below, from *A Hero from Zero*. The source language of this particular extract is French. It is the opening paragraph of an article on Mohamed Fayed which appeared in one of Haiti's leading daily newspapers, *Le Matin*. The article is translated into English and incorporated into the English source document. The Arabic version of the article may have been translated from the French original or the English translation:

French source text (p. 51):

> Il y avait nombre d'années qu'on avait pas entendu parler de lui. Et voilà que dans son numéro du 7 Mars 1988. Le Magazine Américain 'forbes' le campe sous son vrai visage. Le qualificatif 'd'aventurier oriental' que lui avait collé un journal Haitien édité par des membres de la diaspora à New-York n'est rien au regard de ce qu'il représente vraiment. En vérité, il ferait pâlir Arsène Lupin.

English translation (p. 57):

> It's been quite a few years since we have heard him mentioned. And then, in its 7th March 1988 issue, the American Forbes Magazine painted his true picture. The description of 'oriental adventurer' given to him by a Haitian paper edited by members of the 'Diaspora' in New York is nothing in relation to what he really is. Indeed, he would frighten even **Arsène Lupin. (A French version of Boris Karloff.)**

Arabic translation (p. 67):

> . . . فالحق أنه شخصية كفيلة بأن تخيف أرسين لوبين نفسه.

> For the truth is that he is a character capable of frightening **Arsène Lupin** himself.

The reference to Arsène Lupin in the above extract may not cause a problem to many Arab readers, or at least the Arab translator does not seem to think it would. Most of Arsène Lupin's stories are translated into Arabic and his name will probably suggest the familiar image of a resourceful and cunning thief. The Arabic translation therefore does not provide an elaboration of the reference.[7] By contrast, Arsène Lupin is virtually unknown to the average English reader. The English translator attempts to bridge the gap between the textual world and the world of the target reader by explaining the unfamiliar (Arsène Lupin) in terms of the familiar (Boris Karloff). The strategy itself is fine, but Arsène Lupin has very little in common with

Boris Karloff. The former is the hero of a series of French detective-type stories: a thief; flamboyant, resourceful and elusive, but nevertheless a thief. The latter is a British actor associated mainly with horror films.

Identifying reference is not just a question of identifying roughly who or what the referent is but, crucially, of knowing enough about the referent to interpret the particular associations it is meant to trigger in our minds in a given context. Referents are not featureless beings and entities; they have specific histories, physical and social features, and are associated with particular contexts. It is the ability to interpret the significance of a given reference and the way it links with other features of the context and co-text that contributes to the continuity of sense or coherence of a text and enables us to draw any intended implicatures. The distinction between identifying reference and other items of background knowledge (7.3.4. below) is perhaps not a useful one to draw.

The ability to identify a referent may also be influenced by one's perspective. In the following example from *China's Panda Reserves*, 'we' is ambiguous in the Chinese translation:

English source text:

> Many of the species growing wild here are familiar to us as plants cultivated in European gardens – species like this exotic lily.

Target text (Chinese):

> 这里野生的许多种类我们很熟悉，是欧洲园林内种植的种类 – 像这 – 奇异的百合花等种类。

> <With> many varieties of the wild life here **we** are very familiar, <they> are the kinds grown in European gardens – varieties like this strange unique lily flower.

The Chinese reader may find it difficult to identify the referent of 'we', particularly since it contrasts with 'European gardens'. It may not be clear whether the text is written from the European or Chinese perspective.

7.3.2 The Co-operative Principle and its maxims

Grice suggests that the Co-operative Principle and its maxims are not arbitrary but are a feature of any rational behaviour, be it linguistic or non-linguistic. He gives examples of non-linguistic events in which all the maxims are seen to apply as they would in any verbal encounter. If someone is assisting you to mend a car and you ask for four screws, you do not expect to be handed two or six (Quantity); if you are mixing ingredients for a cake you do not expect to be handed a good book (Relevance), and so on. This suggests that the Co-operative Principle and its maxims are universal, on the assumption that linguistic behaviour is just one type of rational

behaviour and that all human beings are rational. Levinson (1983) seems to support this suggestion. However, not all linguists would accept it quite so readily, and there is, in fact, some evidence to the contrary. Bible translators who regularly work with languages and cultures considerably different from those at the centre of linguistic and academic enquiry are quicker to voice their suspicion and to consider the possibility that the Co-operative Principle and its maxims are not universal. Thomson (1982:11) considers the possibility that:

> a certain type of implicature, say quality implicature, is never used by the speakers of a particular language, or that the contexts in which a type of implicature will be used will differ from one language community to the next.

Even within the same cultural and linguistic community, there are sometimes special contexts in which one or more of the maxims do not apply. The maxim of Quantity is usually in abeyance in adversarial court questioning (Levinson 1983). Here, it is mutually understood that it is the legal counsel's job to extract damaging statements from the defendant and that the latter's job is to resist that. This is an example of a non-co-operative context in which one participant, the defendant, tries to be as unco-operative as possible.

There is also the question of whether the list of maxims proposed by Grice is exhaustive and whether the maxims have the same value in different cultures. Grice himself conceded that the four maxims do not represent an exhaustive list and suggested that other maxims such as 'Be polite' may be added. In some cultures, 'Be polite' indeed seems to override all other maxims. Loveday (1982b:364) explains that '"No" almost constitutes a term of abuse in Japanese and equivocation, exiting or even lying is preferred to its use'. If this is true, it would suggest that the maxims of Quality and Manner are easily overriden by considerations of politeness in some cultures. At any rate, it certainly seems to cause cross-cultural difficulties, with serious consequences in some cases. When President Nixon expressed his concern about excessive Japanese textile exports to the United States to Premier Sato in 1970, 'Sato answered *zensho shimasu*, a phrase literally translated as "I'll handle it as well as I can". To Nixon, this meant, "I'll take care of it", that is Sato would settle the problem and find some way to curtail the exports. To Sato, however, it was merely a polite way of ending the conversation' (Gibney, quoted in Loveday 1982a:14).

Different cultures have different norms of 'polite' behaviour. They also have different ideas about what is and what is not a 'taboo' area. Sex, religion and defecation are taboo subjects in many societies, but not necessarily to the same degree within similar situations. Whatever the norms of polite behaviour in the target culture, it is important to note that in some translation contexts being polite can be far more important than being accurate. A translator may decide to omit or replace whole stretches of text which violate the reader's expectations of how a taboo subject should be handled – if at all – in order to avoid giving offence. For example, if translated 'accurately' into Arabic, the following extract from *Arab Political Humour* by

Kishtainy would no doubt be very offensive to the average Arab reader, for whom God is not a subject of ridicule and sexual organs are strictly taboo:

> The intricate and delicate configuration of the characters of the Arabic alphabet together with the customary omission of the vowels helped to create endless jibes and jokes which are completely confined to the Arabic reader. You only need a tiny dot, for example, to turn the letter R into Z. With the playful or accidental addition of such a dot the word *rabbi* (my God) can be turned into *zubbi* (my penis)! The door was thus opened for one satirical wit to make his dutiful comment and correct an otherwise unwarranted statement. Some humble person married a rich widow with whose money he built himself an imposing mansion which he piously adorned with the legend, carefully engraved over the door, 'Such are the blessings of my God' (*Hada min fadl rabbi*). The local wit hastened under cover of darkness to put matters right by adding the missing dot to change the hallowed phrase into 'Such are the blessings of my penis'.
>
> *(1985:12–13)*

In the published Arabic translation, all reference to *rabbi* and *zubbi* is omitted. The above example is replaced by a much 'tamer' one[5] where, by adding and omitting dots on various letters, the local wit turns a poem which is originally written in praise of Arabs into one that ridicules them. A similarly offensive extract (p. 14 in the English text), does not appear in the Arabic translation at all:

> The sarcastic misuse of names has not been always as polite or free from resort to the equivalent of the English four-letter words. In the fierce and often bloody strife between the Ba'th Party and the Nasserists and Communists, the opponents of the Ba'th played on the strange name of the founder and leader of the Ba'th Party, Michel Aflaq. One of the latest exercises in this respect was the discovery in Al-Muhit lexicon that Aflaq meant in archaic Arabic 'wide and loose vagina and stupid, sluttish woman'.

The existence of the additional maxim 'Be polite' and the overriding importance it tends to assume in many cultures may explain intelligent decisions taken in the course of translation which could otherwise seem haphazard and irresponsible. For interesting discussions and exemplification of the notion of politeness in the context of translation and interpreting, see Berk-Seligson (1988), Hatim and Mason (1997, Chapter 5), Hickey (2000), Arnáiz (2006) and Glinert (2010).

Going back to the question of whether Grice's proposed maxims have the same value in different cultures, Headland (1981) explains that the Dumagats have great difficulty in understanding the scriptures because of what he calls 'information overload'. By Dumagat standards, the Bible apparently gives far too much information. He illustrates his point through an overstatement of the case (*ibid.*:20):

> A Koine Greek and a Dumagat would both describe the shooting of a duck, but in different ways. The Greek would say, in describing the event, 'A few minutes after dawn, a large and beautifully plumed white female duck flew overhead just south of my hiding place. I quickly fired two shells with number sixteen lead shot, and the duck dropped nicely in front of me just five yards away, at the edge of the lake.' A Dumagat who had had the same experience would say, 'Yesterday I shot a duck.'

If Headland's comments are accurate, then how does the phenomenon of 'information overload' relate to Grice's maxim of Quantity? For one thing, it seems to suggest that the instruction 'do not make your contribution more informative than is required' can be interpreted quite differently by different cultures. Hatim and Mason's comment on this particular maxim is that 'What is "required" for any given communicative purpose within a TL cultural environment is ... a matter for the translator's judgement' (1990:94).

An important factor which seems to override Grice's maxims and support the possibility that they are both language- and culture-specific relates to norms of discourse organization and rhetorical functions in different languages. Clyne (1981) suggests that, unlike English, German discourse is non-linear and favours digressions. In some extreme cases, such as Fritz Schutze's *Sprache soziologisch gesehen*, there are 'not only digressions [*Exkurse*], but also digressions from digressions. Even within the conclusion, there are digressions' (*ibid.*:63). Not only does the maxim of Relevance need to be redefined in view of these comments, but the non-linear organization of German discourse also seems to require a reassessment of another maxim: 'Be brief'. Clyne (*ibid.*) explains how 'every time the author returns to the *main* line of argument, he has to recapitulate up to the point before the last digression, resulting in much repetition'. One wonders how an organizational feature such as this relates to the maxims of Relevance and Manner. Can this apparent violation of the maxims render a German text partially incoherent if it is not adjusted in translation? An English translation of a German book, Norbert Dittmar's *Soziolinguistik*, was apparently felt to be chaotic and lacking in focus and cohesiveness, although the original was considered a landmark in its field by Germans (Clyne 1981).

Arabic is well known to use repetition as a major rhetorical device. This includes repetition of both form and substance, so that the same information is repeated again and again in a variety of ways in an effort to convince by assertion. This style of argumentative prose is seen by non-Arabs as too verbose and certainly anything but brief. The Japanese favourite 'dot-type' pattern in which anecdotes are strung together without an explicit link or conclusion can infuriate western readers who demand relevance of a type familiar to them. Loveday notes that 'westerners often react to this with "so what!!", considering the presentation shallow' (1982b:364). Different rhetorical conventions are therefore seen to apply in different cultures, and they can override a maxim such as 'Be brief' or 'Be relevant'. In fact, these conventions provide a context for interpreting the maxims.

Grice's notion of implicature is extremely useful to anyone engaged in cross-cultural communication, but it cannot be taken at face value. The maxims on which the Co-operative Principle is based have rightly been criticized as vague and ill-defined by various linguists. Sperber and Wilson, for instance, suggest that 'appeals to the "maxim of relation" are no more than dressed-up appeals to intuition' (1986:36). One question which readily comes to mind is this: how does Grice's notion of Relevance relate to the issue of a participant's level of interest in a particular topic and the way this, in turn, relates to the maxim of Quantity? Does 'relevant' imply 'of personal interest' and does it control the interpretation of 'Make your contribution as informative as is required'? This issue is particularly important in any translation activity which involves some form of rewriting, such as editing or summarizing. It raises questions which are not easy to answer because they have to do with how well the maxims transfer from speech to writing, that is, from a context which involves a single receptor to one which often involves an undefined range of receptors. An example from a translation which involves a significant degree of rewriting may help to illustrate the problem.

A well-known Egyptian journalist, Mohammed Heikal, published a book in 1983 about the assassination of the former Egyptian president Anwar Sadat. He wrote the book, *Autumn of Fury*, originally in English and later translated it himself into Arabic. Being in the rather special position of author/translator, Heikal clearly felt free to make whatever changes seemed necessary to appeal to the Arab reader in the translated version. The Arabic version is significantly longer and more detailed than the English original. For instance, the description of Sadat's wounds and his state on arrival at the hospital is done in one paragraph in the English version (see Chapter 5, p.164) but is expanded into four pages in the Arabic version. A chapter entitled 'Organized loot' in the English version describes the systematic looting of Egypt's resources by Sadat's relatives and favourites. The description is far more detailed in the expanded Arabic version (twenty-nine pages compared with seventeen pages in the English version). How do writers/translators such as Heikal balance the two maxims of Relevance and Quantity in renegotiating a text for a different readership?

Weaknesses of definition aside, it is interesting that Grice's maxims seem to reflect notions which are known to be valued in the English-speaking world, for instance sincerity, brevity and relevance. Robinson suggests that they are even more restricted in their applicability, describing them as 'redolent of the white masculine professional middle-class culture of the past hundred-odd years in England and the U.S.' (2003:128). The values they encode do not necessarily have the same resonance or relevance in other cultures, nor should they be expected to represent any ideal basis for communication. Loveday (1982b:363) asserts that 'the highly cherished norm of linguistic precision in Western culture cannot be taken for granted and is not universally sanctioned by every society', and Clyne (1981:65) rightly suggests that the emphasis on relevance 'may impede cross-reference, one of the most important aspects of discourse', and wonders whether it might lead to the suppression of associations. 'Just as there are Anglo-Saxon readers who

dismiss some German academic writings as "chaotic"', he suggests in another article, 'there are German readers who find English-language publications too "narrow" or conclude that they are not saying very much' (1983:43).

We have seen that the suggestion that Grice's maxims are universal is difficult to justify. A more plausible suggestion would be that all discourse, in any language, is essentially co-operative, and that the phenomenon of implicature (rather than the specific maxims suggested by Grice) is universal. In other words, the interpretation of a maxim or the maxims themselves may differ from one linguistic community to another, but the process of conveying intended meaning by means of exploiting whatever maxims are in operation in that community will be the same. This position is much more tenable, particularly since it seems to be a feature of language use in general that it is based partly on adhering to constraints and partly on manipulating constraints to produce special effects.

7.3.3 The context, linguistic or otherwise, of the utterance

The context in which an utterance occurs determines the range of implicatures that may sensibly be derived from it. Sperber and Wilson suggest that 'the context does much more than filter out inappropriate interpretations; it provides premises without which the implicature cannot be inferred at all' (1986:37). Apart from the actual setting and the participants involved in an exchange, the context also includes the co-text and the linguistic conventions of a community in general.

Tse (1988) explains that in translating a text which describes an experiment in which the medical histories of patients were recorded on micro-chip medical record cards, one of the main difficulties resulted from differences in the source and target contexts. The text, 'Patients test micro-chip medical record card' (the *Independent*, 28 April 1988), states:

> Dr. Robert Stevens, whose study in Wales involves one group practice and one pharmacy, said patients' reaction to the cards had been favourable.

In the United Kingdom, a pharmacy is an establishment which dispenses medicine on the basis of prescriptions signed by a doctor. For an English reader, therefore, it makes sense to suggest that both group practices (i.e. groups of doctors working through the same clinic) and pharmacies can be involved in recording the medical histories of patients. Tse explains that 'both in China and in Hong Kong, a patient can receive medical treatment and medicines from a doctor's surgery. A pharmacy is a place where one can buy tablets without prescriptions' (1988:38). It would thus not make sense to a Chinese reader to suggest that pharmacies can or should be involved in an exercise of this sort. If they do not dispense medicine on the basis of prescriptions, how can they be expected to monitor patients' medical histories?

The inability to relate a piece of information to his or her own context can lead the reader to draw the wrong inferences from a text. Rommel (1987) explains that whereas the size of a house or flat is indicated in Britain by the number of

bedrooms, it is normally indicated in Switzerland by the total number of rooms. A German version of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* which was shown in Zurich some time ago drew what Rommel refers to as a 'vulgar snigger' from the audience when Lady Bracknell asked *Wieviel Schlafzimmer* (literally 'How many bedrooms?') instead of adjusting the question to the realities of the Swiss context. The sexual connotations inferred by the Swiss audience were not intended by Oscar Wilde.

In addition to the actual 'realities' of a situation, the context also includes certain strategies that people regularly employ in order to impose some kind of structure on the world around them. When a person describes something, recounts an event or lists a number of items, he or she will normally follow a preferred sequence rather than a random one. For instance, in recounting a series of events, one would normally follow a temporal order, listing events in the order in which they occurred. This temporal order can, of course, be modified or even reversed provided appropriate signals such as tense markers or time adjuncts are used to clarify the alternative ordering. It nevertheless represents a 'preferred' or 'normal' ordering strategy which is regularly employed by most people.

Levinson relates the question of normal ordering of events in the real world to the sub-maxim of Manner, 'Be orderly'. He suggests that it is because we expect participants in a discourse to respect the maxim 'Be orderly' that we expect them to recount events in the order in which they happened (1983:108). This explains why we would find an utterance such as *The lone ranger rode into the sunset and jumped on his horse* odd. Temporal order may be a widespread or universal ordering strategy, but there are other types of preference for ordering strategies which tend to be language- and culture-specific. If we accept that the linguistic conventions of a community can provide a context for interpreting a maxim, then the relation which exists between 'being orderly' and following a 'normal' ordering of events can also be said to exist between 'being orderly' and following whatever ordering strategies are considered normal in relation to such things as the listing of entities and linguistic items.

Brown and Yule suggest that constraints on the ordering of events and entities are usually followed by language users and that when the normal ordering is reversed 'some "special effect" (staging device, implicature) would be being created by the speaker/writer' (1983:146). It is generally conceded that it is impossible to determine exactly what 'natural orders' there are in different types of discourse and in different languages, though one intuitively knows when a deviant order is being used. Part of the problem is that the ordering of events and entities may be adapted to maintain point of view or thematic progression for instance. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that even though an occasional divergence from preferred ordering strategies may not noticeably affect the coherence of a text, repeated minor disturbances of preferred sequences may have a cumulative effect on the ease with which a reader can make sense of a stretch of language. The following examples illustrate adjustments made in the course of translation to fulfil target readers' expectations of normal ordering.

English source text:

> In the Devon study, 8,500 patients will carry the cards, which can be both read and updated by GPs, a pharmacist, a local dentist, and by hospital clinics at Exmouth and the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital.

Back-translation of target text (Chinese):

> 8,500 patients will take part in the Devon experiment, using the medical cards. **Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, Exmouth Hospital clinic<s>, and doctor<s>, pharmacist, and local dentist**, may use a machine reader to read the medical card's content and store new information.

The source text ('Patients test micro-chip medical record card', the *Independent*, 28 April 1988) and its Chinese translation are cited in Tse (1988). Tse explains that the order of the nominal groups underlined in the English text is modified in the Chinese translation to fulfil the expectations of the Chinese reader, who is used to listing entities in order of size, from 'large' to 'small'. In this case, the normal ordering strategy in Chinese would be to start with the larger entities, that is, hospitals. The same strategy is used in listing addresses. An address in Chinese, as well as Russian, would start with the largest entity, the country, and work its way down to county, town, area, street, flat, name and so on. In English, addresses are presented in the reverse order, starting with the name and ending with the country of destination. Any deviation from this normal order would encourage a reader to search for some kind of implicature or to reassess the context in which a text is encountered.

Ordering strategies may also be influenced by physical or emotional factors. It is normal to expect entities which are closer to one's own environment to be mentioned first in a list. Note the different ordering of languages in the following example from the Euralex Circular:

English text:

> Abstracts (approximately 1,000 words) in any of the Congress languages, English, French, German or Russian, should be sent to the Lecture Programme Organizer, ...

German text:

> Abstracts (etwa 1000 Wörter bzw. 80–100 Zeilen) in einer beliebigen Konferenzsprache (**Deutsch, Englisch, Französisch, Russisch**) ...
>
> We request abstracts (about 1,000 words or 80–100 lines) in any conference language (**German, English, French, Russian**) ...

Russian text:

Краткие конспекты рефератов (с объемом до 1000 слов или до 100 строк) просим до 15 ноября 1987 г. на любом из официальных языков конгресса, т.е. на русском, английском, немецком или французском языках, высылать по вышеуказанному адресу главному координатору конгресса Юдит Зигань или научному организатору конгресса д-ру Тамашу Магам. Последующую корреспонденцию просим адресовать гл. редактору Юдит Зигань.

We ask for a short abstract of papers (up to 1,000 words or up to 100 lines) by 15 November 1987, in any of the official languages of the conference, i.e. in **Russian, English, French or German**, ...

Another point which may be subsumed under the vast heading of 'context' is the language user's sense of what is socially and textually appropriate or normal. This does not have much to do with what the reader thinks the world is like, but rather with what he or she is prepared to accept as an appropriate behaviour (linguistic or otherwise) in a given situation. This 'sense of appropriateness' could provide the context for interpreting the additional maxim 'Be polite' discussed earlier. The varied use of pronouns of address in different cultures is a good example (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.3). However, appropriateness is not restricted to the notion of politeness; it covers a multitude of other things. Even something as simple as the use of a particular calendar, where the reader has access to more than one, can be more or less sensitive to readers' expectations in a given context. Note, for instance, the use of the Japanese calendar in the following example:

English source text (*Palace and Politics in Prewar Japan*, Titus 1974:17):

The heads of the ministries created in 1869 were not directly responsible for 'advising and assisting' (hohitsu) the emperor, though they were to become so in 1889. According to the 1871 reorganization of the ministries, for example, the privilege of assisting the throne directly was in theory limited to the Chancellor (Dajo Daijin), Minister of the Left (Sa Daijin), Minister of the Right (U Daijin), and the Councillors (Sangi).

Japanese text (p. 23):

明治二年につくられた諸省の長は、天皇「輔弼」の直接責任者ではない。そうなったのは明治二二年なのである。たとえば、明治四年の官制改革によれば、理論上、天皇を直接補佐する特権は、太政大臣、左大臣、右大臣、それに参議たちに限られていた。

The heads of ministries which were created in **Meiji 2nd** are not directly responsible for 'hohitsu' the emperor. It was in **Meiji 22nd**

> that it became so. For example, according to the government reformation of **the fourth year of Meiji**, theoretically, the privilege of assisting the emperor directly was limited to Dajo Daijin, Sa Daijin, U Daijin, and Sangi.

Because the above text relates directly to Japanese culture, the Japanese reader would expect any reference to dates to be based on the Japanese rather than western calendar. The translation fulfils this expectation and therefore does not convey any unwanted implicatures. Compare the above with the following translation of a more modern text:

> English source text (*The Patrick Collection* – a leaflet produced by a privately owned museum of classic cars):
>
> > In the Mansell Hall – named after Britain's race ace Nigel Mansell, who opened the Hall in 1986 – there's a unique display of eighties supercars.
>
> Japanese text:
>
> > マンセル・ホール（英国のレースのエースであるナイジェル・マンセルにちなんでつけられた名で、かれは１９８６年にこのホールを開館しました。）では、１９８０年代のスーパーカーのユニークな展示が見られます。
>
> In the Mansell Hall (named after Nigel Mansell who is the ace in Britain's race, and he opened this Hall in **1986**) a unique display of super cars of the **1980s** can be seen.

For the Japanese reader, it is acceptable to use the western calendar in texts which relate directly to the western world. However, texts which deal with topics that are closer to home, such as Japanese heritage or history, are expected to use the Japanese calendar.

An interesting area in which a translator needs to be particularly sensitive to the reader's expectations in a given context concerns modes of address. This covers far more than the use of pronouns as discussed in Chapter 4. It includes the use of appropriate personal and occupational titles, various combinations of first names and surnames, title and surname, or title and first name, the use of nicknames, and even the use of terms of affection such as *dear* or *darling*. Certain linguistic items may be used to address certain types of participant in order to convey implicatures which are highly language- and culture-specific. The following widely quoted example first appeared in Ervin-Tripp (1972). It is used by Blum-Kulka (1981:94) in a discussion of the difficulties associated with the translation of indirect speech acts[9] (emphasis added):

The scene takes place on a public street in contemporary U.S.
'What's your name, boy?' the policeman asked.
'Dr. Poussaint, I'm a physician.'
'What's your first name, boy?'
'Alvin.'

As Blum-Kulka explains, anyone familiar with address rules in American English will know that Dr Poussaint is black. They will also realize that by refusing to accept the normal address of occupational title plus surname and by using the term *boy* and requesting Dr Poussaint's first name, the policeman means to insult the doctor. Blum-Kulka rightly suggests that the meaning conveyed by deliberately misusing a socio-cultural rule would be difficult to transfer into another language.

However, not all contexts in which modes of address are used will involve deliberate violation of socio-cultural norms to convey implicatures. As long as the translator is aware that the norms of the target language will not necessarily match those of the source language, an appropriate adjustment in the target text should solve the problem and avoid conveying unintended implicatures. In English, for instance, a common and acceptable form of address in a formal context such as a business letter consists of title plus surname, for example *Mr Brown*, *Mrs Keith*, *Dr Kelly*. This would normally be replaced in Arabic by a combination of title plus first name or title plus full name. Translators often make adjustments in this area to conform to their readers' expectations. Note the adjustment made by the Russian translator of the following text:

English text (Euralex conference circular, 1987):

Ms. Judit Zigany
Akademiai Kiado
1363 Budapest
P.O. Box 24
Hungary

Target text (Russian):

Гл. редактор
Юдит Энгань
Издательство Академии наук ВНР
1363 Будапешт
п/я. 24
Венгрия

Ch. editor
Judit Zigany
Hungarian Academy of Sciences Press
1363 Budapest
P.O. Box 24
Hungary

The equivalent of a title such as *Mr* or *Mrs* in Russian is to use the first name plus the patronymic (middle name derived from the father's name) in formal address to other Russians and people from former socialist countries. Another polite form of address is *tovarishch* (i.e. 'comrade', used for both sexes), but some intellectuals now feel uneasy about it because of its associations with the Marxist era. For foreigners, Russians will typically use the terms of address *gospodin* ('Mr') and *gospozha* ('Mrs'), or the loan words *Mister*, *Missis* and *Miss*. All these, however, suggest 'foreignness'. They would be inappropriate – and even insulting – to use in addressing another Russian or even someone from a socialist country such as Cuba or Hungary.[10] Only foreigners from capitalist countries are normally addressed by these terms, and when they are, the terms are neutral – they simply denote polite address. Since Judit Zigany was a member of a socialist country (Hungary) at the time the Circular was issued, the mode of address in the Russian text appropriately consists of occupational title, followed by full name; no personal titles are used.

7.3.4 Other items of background knowledge

In order to make sense of any piece of information presented in a text, the reader or hearer has to be able to integrate it into some model of the world, whether real or fictional. Text-presented information can only make sense if it can be related to other information we already have. A text may confirm, contradict, modify or extend what we know about the world, as long as it relates to it in some way.

As explained under 7.3.1 above, there is a great deal of overlap between identifying reference and accessing relevant background information. Whether a translator decides to explain a reference or not depends on whether the target reader is assumed to be familiar with it and the extent to which the translator feels inclined to intervene. In the following example, from *A Hero from Zero*, both the French and Arab translators of the English source document must have either assumed that *Clive of India* is familiar to the average French and Arab reader, or decided that it is inappropriate for them as translators to comment directly on the source text. The Sultan referred to in the extract below is the Sultan of Brunei who, according to this document, gave Mohamed Fayed a power of attorney which put a considerable amount of his (the Sultan's) funds under Fayed's control.

English source text (p. 27):

> The incident that destroyed the Sultan's trust in Fayed (which the Sultan discovered later) was Fayed's taking for himself the $86 million from Hirschmann upon the cancellation of the contract for the 747-SP aeroplane. According to Barican, the Sultan never agreed to this and it was this incident that cost Fayed the Sultan's confidence ...
>
> Like Clive of India, Fayed must have stood amazed at his own restraint. According to Barican, the Sultan's funds in Swiss banks

were around five billion dollars at the time, and the power of attorney unlocked the door to all of them.

French text (p. 27):

Tout comme Clive of India, Fayed a dû s'étonner de sa propre retenue.

... Just like Clive of India, Fayed must have been amazed at his own restraint.

Arabic text (p. 40):

وما من شك أن فايد – شأنه فى ذلك شأن كلايف أوف انديا – قد وقف مذهولا أمام قدرته على ضبط النفس.

... There is no doubt that Fayed – like Clive of India – stood amazed at his ability to restrain himself.

Lord Clive, Proconsul of India, was a British soldier and statesman. He is remembered for defeating the nawab of Bengal and for reforming the British administration in India. Following the Bengal famine of 1769–1770, he was accused of famine profiteering, of creating monopolies in cotton and diamonds, and of taking presents from Indian leaders after the Battle of Plassey in 1757. When Clive was questioned about the presents, he made the following remark, to which the above extract alludes:

> Consider the situation in which the victory of Plassey placed me. A great prince dependent on my pleasure; an opulent city lay at my mercy; its richest bankers bid against each other for my smiles; I walked through vaults which were thrown open to me alone, piled on either hand with gold and jewels. Mr Chairman, at this moment *I stand astonished at my own moderation.*
> *(Lawford 1976:393; emphasis added)*

Interestingly enough, I have not yet found an English speaker who could recall any details in connection with Clive of India, except that he was a military leader who secured victory for the British in India. The above supposedly famous remark and the context in which it was uttered are highly unlikely to be recalled by, and may not even be known to, many British readers. I suspect that many will therefore be unable to interpret the relevance of the reference to Clive of India in the above passage. The writer seems to have misjudged the reader's access to details which are needed to establish the relevance of part of what he says to the discourse in hand. This is not uncommon. It is very difficult indeed – for writers and translators alike – to judge what the average reader may or may not have at his or her disposal in terms of back-

ground information. Moreover, in the majority of cases, the translator is likely to be not as knowledgeable as the writer but rather as ignorant as the average reader, so that the translator's judgement is further hampered by his or her own lack of knowledge. The translator should, in theory, be able to do the kind of research that I have done here to access the relevant background knowledge, but this is not always feasible. The quality of research facilities, for example, varies tremendously among different settings, be they countries or institutions.

A second example, with a different assessment of the target reader's access to background information, comes from *Autumn of Fury: The Assassination of Sadat* by Mohamed Heikal (1983:3). Speaking of Sadat, Heikal says:

> While fully conscious of his shortcomings I hoped that the responsibilities of office would strengthen the positive elements in his character and enable him to overcome the weak ones. The example of Truman was always present in my mind. I managed Sadat's campaign ...

Arabic translation (p. 6):

وأظن أيضاً أننى لم أكن غافلاً عن بعض أسباب للقصور فيه، لكننى تصورت أن أعباء المنصب ووقار المسؤلية سوف تقوى كل العناصر الإيجابية فى شخصيته، وسوف تساعده فى التغلب على جوانب الضعف فيها. وكان فى ذهنى باستمرار نموذج الرئيس الأمريكى "هارى ترومان" الذى خلف "فرانكلين روزفلت" فى مقعد الرئاسةالإمريكية قرب نهاية الحرب العالمية الثانية . فقد بدا "ترومان" فى ذلك الوقت – وبعد "روزفلت" – شخصية باهتة ومجهولة لا تستطيع أن تقود الصراع الإنسانى الكبير فى الحرب العالمية الثانية الى نهايته المطلوبة والمحققة، لكن "ترومان" – أمام تحدى التجربة العملية – نما ونضج وأصبح من أبرز الرؤساء الإمريكيين فى العصر الحديث. ولقد تصورت أن نفس الشىء يمكن أن يحدث للسادات ولقد أدرت حملته الإنتخابية . . . . (ص. 6)

I also believe that I was not unaware of some of his shortcomings, but I imagined that the burden of office and responsibility would strengthen all the positive elements in his character and help him to overcome the areas of weakness in it. In my mind there was always the example of **the American President Harry** Truman, **who succeeded Franklin Roosevelt towards the end of World War II. At that time – and after Roosevelt – Truman seemed a rather nondescript/bland and unknown character who could not lead the great human struggle in World War II to its desired and inevitable end. But Truman – faced with the challenge of practical experience – grew and matured and became one of the most prominent American presidents in modern times. I imagined that the same thing could happen to Sadat**. I managed his campaign ...

The additional background knowledge about Truman in the Arabic version is clearly there for the benefit of the Arab reader, who may well know that Truman was a former president of America but is not expected to know enough about him to draw the specific analogy between him and Sadat that the writer wishes him or her to draw. What is largely implied in the English version is spelt out in detail in the Arabic version. Heikal could, of course, have included this information in a footnote rather than in the body of the text. In this respect, it is interesting to note Thomson's advice about what should or should not be relegated to footnotes in translation (1982:30):

> The study of implicature may provide a practical solution to the well known problem of deciding what parts of the original shared context should be built into the text of the translation and what should be provided separately, for example in footnotes. *Information essential to the success of conversational implicatures should be included in the text* if the translation is to be coherent and sensible. It is unrealistic and working against the pragmatic nature of language to put such information into footnotes.

Without necessarily knowing anything about Grice or implicatures, Heikal may well have followed a similar course of reasoning in deciding to include the above information in the body of the text.

As well as expanding a text to provide the necessary background information, a translator may decide to delete information with which the target readership may be assumed to be familiar. In the same text, *Autumn of Fury*, Heikal explains the word *zamzam* in the following extract with a footnote:

> Another example of how the President could over-reach himself in his desire to accommodate his new friends came over his offer of Nile water to Israel. After his visit to Haifa in September 1979 Sadat confided to a group of Israeli editors that he was thinking of diverting some of the Nile waters through Sinai to the Negev: 'Why not? Lots of possibilities, lots of hope.' Jerusalem, he said, was a city sacred to the three faiths. What could be more appropriate in the new climate of peace than to supply all the believers in Jerusalem with a new *zamzam*.
>
> Footnote: The sacred well in the Haram of Mecca whose water is drunk by pilgrims. It was by tradition opened by the Angel Gabriel to prevent Hagar and her son Ismail from dying of thirst in the desert.

This footnote is omitted in the Arabic version. The author/translator rightly assumed that it would be redundant as far as the Arab (predominantly Muslim) reader is concerned.

The following example illustrates what happens when the translator anticipates a serious clash between assumed and actual background knowledge of the reader. What is involved here is the difficulty of dealing with a vast gap between source and

target cultures' versions of the world. It is not, in fact, a translation, but rather a comment on the translation of a whole chunk of text. The source text is Arabic; the target text is English. It is the twelfth 'surah' (verse) of the Qur'an which recounts the story of Joseph. The story of Joseph also appears in the Bible. However, the story presented in the Qur'an is quite different from that presented in the Bible. The translator of the text anticipates the clash with the Christian reader's version of the story and provides the following comment in a separate introduction:

> *Yusuf* takes its name from its subject which is the life-story of Joseph. It differs from all other Surahs in having only one subject. The differences from the Bible narrative are striking. Jacob is here a Prophet, who is not deceived by the story of his son's death, but is distressed because, through a suspension of his clairvoyance, he cannot see what has become of Joseph. The real importance of the narrative, its psychic burden, is emphasized throughout, and the manner of narration, though astonishing to Western readers, is vivid.
>
> (The Holy Qur'an, *translated by Pickthall 1982:51)*

The above comment is clearly meant to warn readers that they are about to encounter a different view of the world. It is important to note that in translation, as in any act of communication, a text does not necessarily have to conform to the expectations of its readership. Readers' versions of reality, their expectations and their preferences can be challenged without affecting the coherence of a text, provided the challenge is motivated and the reader is prepared for it. Like creativity in literature, for example, radically different versions of reality need not result in incoherence. It is well within our capacity as human beings to make sense of versions of reality which differ greatly from our own provided the differences are motivated and adequately signalled.

7.3.5 The availability of all relevant items falling under the previous headings

The final factor on Grice's list of 'data' on which 'the hearer will reply' in working out an implicature is, in his own words, 'the fact (or supposed fact) that all relevant items falling under the previous headings are available to both participants and both participants know or assume this to be the case' (1975:50).

In order to convey an intended meaning, the speaker or writer must be able to assume that the hearer or reader has access to all the necessary background information, features of the context and so on, that is, items 7.3.1–7.3.4 above, and that it is well within his or her competence to work out any intended implicatures. The less the writer assumes that the reader has access to, the more he or she will provide in the way of explanation and detail. As previous examples demonstrate, translators often find themselves in the position of having to reassess what is and

what is not available to target readers to ensure that implicatures can be worked out. Apart from filling gaps in the reader's knowledge (which would cover the availability of relevant items of background knowledge, non-linguistic context, identity of reference, etc.), there is also the question of the reader's expectations. These are part of the 'data' available to the reader under the various headings 7.3.1–7.3.4 above. In translation, anything that is likely to violate the target reader's expectations must be carefully examined and, if necessary, adjusted in order to avoid conveying the wrong implicatures or even failing to make sense altogether.

Among the strongest expectations we bring to bear on any communicative event involving verbal behaviour are expectations concerning the organization of language. Unless motivated,[11] a deviant configuration at any linguistic level (phonological, lexical, syntactic, textual) may block a participant's access to 'the conventional meaning of the words and structures used' – item 7.3.1 above – and can directly affect the coherence of a text. The main function of linguistic elements and patterning is to organize the content of a message so that it is easily accessible to a reader or hearer. Any disturbance to the normal organizational patterns of language must therefore be motivated, otherwise the reader will not be able to make sense of it. To repeat an example which was discussed in Chapter 3, collocations such as 'harmed hair', 'damaged hair' and 'breakable hair' which appear in the Arabic translation of the Kolestral text are so deviant that the Arab reader is unlikely to be able to make any sense of that part of the text. Being both deviant and unmotivated, such unexpected organization of the language tends to render a text incoherent to its readers.

Most professional translators appreciate the need to fulfil a reader's expectations about the organization of the target language in order to maintain the coherence of a text and avoid giving rise to unwanted implicatures. Some of the adjustments that a translator may need to make in order to conform to readers' expectations in this area have been discussed and exemplified in previous chapters. However, there are instances in which deviation from normal patterning is a feature of the source text itself. If deviation is motivated, and especially if it is necessary for working out an intended meaning, the translator may well decide to transfer it to the target text. As discussed above, readers' expectations do not necessarily have to be fulfilled. Writers, and translators, often appeal to their readers to modify their expectations if such modifications are required in a given context. We are normally prepared to accept a great deal of unusual and even bizarre linguistic behaviour provided it can be justified, for instance on the basis of poetic creativity or humour.

The suggestion that deviations from normal patterning have to be motivated implies that they have to occur in a context that is 'interpretable' by the hearer or reader. Blakemore suggests that a speaker or writer who wants his or her utterance to be interpreted in a certain way 'must expect it to be interpreted in a context that yields that interpretation' (1987:27). The following example illustrates a situation where deviation from normal organization of the language seems justified in translation and where the translator has to enlarge the shared context of writer and reader in order to accommodate this feature in such a way that its relevance is made explicit and coherence is therefore maintained. The extract is from a transcript of conver-

sation which is appended to *A Hero from Zero* (p. 143) and translated from English into French and Arabic. The three people taking part in the conversation (Mohamed Fayed, Shri Chandra Swamiji and Kailish Nath Agarwal) are all non-native speakers of English. The conversation is conducted partly in English and partly in Hindi. The speakers, particularly Mohamed Fayed, have a rather poor command of English. Here is an extract from the conversation to illustrate Mohamed Fayed's level of competence in English:

M. Fayed: Sultan, you know, he gets influenced. I can't go sit with him all the time, you know. It's impossible for me, you know. Because he has one terrible, evil man, his aide, Ibnu.

Mamaji: Pardon?

M. Fayed: General Ibnu.

Mamaji: Uh-huh.

M. Fayed: Terrible man. This man takes money from everybody, everybody.

Swamiji: I think girls also.

M. Fayed: Yeah.

Mamaji: Girls?

Swamiji: Girls.

M. Fayed: Girls, everything, everything, everything. He is the big man, but the Sultan don't trust him at all. Bad man. And this Ibnu and Zobel are like that. Build the palace together. Ibnu gives permission to all those people go inside, take pictures of his bedroom, everything, anything. And he's a bad man, you know. But for me, I don't – you know, er I don't need the Sultan. Sultan doesn't need me. But I made so much good for him, you know, with support him with the British Government, you know.

The problem that the Arab translator faces in rendering this text into Arabic is that Mohamed Fayed is Egyptian; his first language is Arabic. To simply transfer the deviant syntax into Arabic without any comment would leave the Arab reader puzzled as to why a native speaker of Arabic should speak in 'broken' Arabic. To adjust Fayed's speech to reflect normal patterns of Arabic would considerably weaken the carefully structured argument put forward by Tiny Rowland, the 'jilted suitor' who wants to show that Fayed is unworthy of the privilege of owning the House of Fraser and incapable of running such a prestigious British concern. After all, Fayed is portrayed here, among other things, as a 'foreigner', not very bright and rather incoherent! The translator decides to compromise by transferring the

deviant organization into Arabic in order to convey something of the 'stupid foreigner' image of Fayed, while at the same time explaining the situation to the reader so that he or she can make sense of it. The following comment is inserted by the translator at the beginning of the transcript of conversation (p. 139):

ملحوظة. يتضح من قراءة النص الانجليزى للمحادثة المسجلة على الشريط أن الأشخاص الثلاثة الذين اشتركوا فيها ليس لديهم إلمام كاف باللغة الإنجليزية، كما يتبين ذلك بكل وضوح من الجمل الركيكة والمفككة التركيب والتى لا تراعى قواعد اللغة. ولذلك فلابد من أن تنعكس نقاط الضعف هذه فى الترجمة العربية حرصاً على مراعاة الدقة، بقدر الإمكان، فى نقل المعنى.

Note: It is clear from reading the English text of the conversation transcribed on the tape that the three people who participated in it do not have sufficient command of the English language. This is also very clear from the use of sub-standard and loosely structured sentences which do not conform to the rules of the language. Therefore, these points of weakness have to be reflected in the Arabic translation in order to maintain accuracy, as far as possible, in the transfer of meaning.

Coherence is a very problematic and elusive notion because of the diversity of factors, linguistic and non-linguistic, that can affect it and the varying degrees of importance a particular factor can assume in a given context. Even a single lexical item, if mistranslated, can have an impact on the way a text coheres. A polysemous item in the source text will rarely have an equivalent with the same range of meanings in the target language. If the source text makes use of two or more meanings of an item and the translation fails, for whatever reason, to convey any of those meanings, whole layers of meaning will be lost, resulting in what Blum-Kulka (1986) refers to as a 'shift in coherence'.

It is impossible to itemize the various factors that can contribute to or detract from the coherence of a text. The variables involved and the processes of interpretation we employ in trying to make sense of a text are far too numerous and often too elusive to be pinned down and described. The fact that many of these factors are language- and culture-specific adds to the complexity of the problem. What most of the examples given in this chapter seem to suggest is that in order to maintain coherence translators often have to minimize discrepancies between the model of the world presented in the source text and that with which the target reader is likely to be familiar. The extent of intervention varies considerably and depends in the final analysis on two main factors. The first is the translator's ability to assess the knowledge and expectations of the target reader – the more the target reader is assumed to know, the less likely that the translator will be inclined to intervene with lengthy explanations. Likewise, the more harmony is assumed to exist between the model of the world presented in the source text and the target culture's version of the world, the more inclined the translator will be to refrain from direct intervention. The second factor is the translator's own view of his or her role and of the whole

question of where his or her loyalties ought to lie – whether they ought to lie with the source text or with the target reader.

I hope that the above discussion will provide the reader with some basis on which to detect and explore areas in which a translation may or may not succeed in making sense to its readers. The main difficulties seem to be concerned with the ability to assess the target readers' range of knowledge and assumptions about various aspects of the world, and to strike a reasonable balance between, on the one hand, fulfilling their expectations and, on the other hand, maintaining their interest in the communication by offering them new or alternative insights. Brown and Yule (1983:67) suggest that:

> the principles of analogy (things will tend to be as they were before) and local interpretation (if there is a change, assume it is minimal) form the basis of the assumption of coherence in our experience of life in general, hence in our experience of discourse as well.

This is true, but we must also remember that readers in general, and readers of translated texts in particular, are prepared to accept a great deal of change and a view of the world which is radically different from their own, provided they have a reason for doing so and are prepared for it. In attempting to fill gaps in their readers' knowledge and fulfil their expectations of what is normal or acceptable, translators should be careful not to 'overdo' things by explaining too much and leaving the reader with nothing to do.

exercises

1. The following is a short essay from J. B. Priestley's *Delight*, a small collection of personal essays:

Giving advice

Giving advice, especially when I am in no position to give it and hardly know what I am talking about. I manage my own affairs with as much care and steady attention and skill as – let us say – a drunken Irish tenor. I swing violently from enthusiasm to disgust. I change policies as a woman changes hats. I am here today and gone tomorrow. When I am doing one job, I wish I were doing another. I base my judgments on anything – or nothing. I have never the least notion what I shall be doing or where I shall be in six months time. Instead of holding one thing steadily, I try to juggle with six. I cannot plan, and if I could I would never stick to the plan. I am a pessimist in the morning and an optimist at night, am defeated on Tuesday and insufferably victorious by Friday. But because I am heavy, have a deep voice and smoke a

exercises

pipe, few people realize that I am a flibbertigibbet on a weathercock. So my advice is asked. And then, for ten minutes or so, I can make Polonius look a trifler. I settle deep in my chair, two hundred pounds of portentousness, and with some first-rate character touches in the voice and business with pipe, I begin: 'Well, I must say that in your place —' And inside I am bubbling with delight.

Try translating the above essay into your target language, paying particular attention to the question of implicature and the whole image that the writer draws of himself. If necessary, consider possible explanations (or other strategies) that could help the target reader draw the right inferences from the author's statements. Consider, for instance, whether an analogy such as changing policies as a woman changes hats is likely to have the same implicature in your target language.

This essay appeared in *Literature in English*, one of the English for Today Series, published by the National Council of Teachers of English (1964), McGraw-Hill. The editors provide the following explanations of key words and expressions in footnote form. You may find these helpful.

drunken Irish tenor: A drunken singer is not in control of himself. Priestley is suggesting that he manages his own affairs badly.
flibbertigibbet on a weathercock: A flibbertigibbet is a frivolous and giddy person. A weathercock is a wooden or metal rooster that turns on top of a building and shows the direction of the wind. The whole expression suggests a very undependable person.
Polonius: a character in Shakespeare's _Hamlet_, noted for giving advice.
two hundred pounds of portentousness ...: In other words, a large man ('two hundred pounds') using an impressive voice and using impressive gestures with his pipe ('some first-rate character touches') gives grave ('portentous') advice. This is a humorous description of the author's pose.

2. The following extract from an article by Vanessa Baird which appeared in the *New Internationalist* (January/February 2010, special issue on population growth) raises similar challenges, but the article does not come with notes and explanations this time. You may therefore need to undertake some research of your own to ensure that you understand the references and relevant implicatures before translating it into your target language. A good starting point would be to visit the *New Internationalist* web site,[17] unless you are already familiar with the magazine, to

exercises

establish what type of publication it is and where the sympathies of its contributors are likely to lie, especially since the author in this case is also one of the editors of the magazine.

> Too many people?
> When she was young, my great aunt – a tiny sprightly woman who painted vast canvasses – had wanted to become a nun. Then she met a Flemish poet and they fell in love. She agreed to marry him on one condition: that they have 12 children. True to the old baking tradition, they made 13.
>
> Her niece, my mother, also briefly flirted with the holy life. Her tryst with celibacy was equally convincing. As the eighth of her brood, I approach the subject of global population with a touch of trepidation. By anyone's standard of reasonable family size I really shouldn't be here.
>
> But then the subject of population – and in particular population growth – is one that seems capable of provoking all kinds of emotions.
>
> ...
>
> Often the cause of concern is the speed at which others – be they people of other races or social classes or religions or political allegiances – are reproducing themselves, threatening, presumably, to disturb the wellbeing of whatever dominant group the commentator belongs to.
>
> This was epitomized recently by Michael Laws, Mayor of Wanganui District in New Zealand, who proposed that in order to tackle the problems of child abuse and murder, members of the 'appalling underclass' should be paid not to have children. 'If we gave $10,000 to certain people and said "we'll voluntarily sterilize you" then all of society would be better off,' he told the *Dominion Post* newspapers.
>
> Most contemporary worries about population are less offensively expressed. For many, the issue is primarily an environmental one. The logic is simple. The more people there are, the more greenhouse gas is emitted, the more damage is done. Any attempts to reduce carbon emissions will be negated by runaway population growth.
>
> This was echoed recently by the *Financial Times* when it called for an international debate on population. A leader column argued: 'World population growth is making it harder to achieve cuts in carbon emissions' and went on to quote a disputed London School of Economics study* maintaining that spending on family planning is 'five times more cost effective at cutting carbon

exercises

dioxide emissions than the conventional low carbon technologies'.

The UK-based Optimum Population Trust goes further, suggesting that to achieve sustainability we should be aiming to reduce global population by at least 1.7 billion people.

...

**** Since found to be the work of a student funded by the Optimum Population Trust.***

Imagine that you have been asked to translate this article for an activist site that is committed to promoting global justice and wishes to make key counter arguments on sensitive issues such as population growth available in a wide range of languages. In this context, it is vital that you convey the attitude of the author to the topic. You therefore need to pay particular attention to linguistic and typographic signals of this attitude, such as *presumably* and the use of scare quotes. Note also the reference to 'work of a student' in the footnote. What implicature might the author be trying to communicate here, and how would you ensure its accessibility to the target reader? Similarly, how would you handle the reference to 'baker's dozen' and the use of 'made' (rather than 'have') at the end of the first paragraph? How do you ensure that the target reader will understand these references and associated implicatures?

3. Here is a particularly challenging extract to translate. It is part of the well-known scene in Shakespeare's *Othello* (Act III, Scene iii), in which Iago deliberately violates Grice's maxims, certainly the maxim of relevance, in order to convey certain implicatures. Othello recognizes the violations and tries to get Iago to spell out what he means.

Iago: **My noble lord –**
Oth: **What dost thou say, Iago?**
Iago: **Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady, Know of your love?**
Oth: **He did, from first to last. Why dost thou ask?**
Iago: **But for a satisfaction of my thought; No further harm.**
Oth: **Why of thy thought, Iago?**
Iago: **I did not think he had been acquainted with her.**
Oth: **O, yes, and went between us very oft.**
Iago: **Indeed?**
Oth: **Indeed? Ay, indeed! Discern'st thou aught in that? Is he not honest?**
Iago: **Honest, my lord?**
Oth: **Honest? Ay, honest.**

exercises

Iago: My lord, for aught I know.
Oth: What dost thou think?
Iago: Think, my lord?
Oth: Think, my lord? By heaven, he echoes me,
As if there were some monster in his thought
Too hideous to be shown. Thou dost mean something.
I heard thee say even now, thou lik'st not that,
When Cassio left my wife. What didst not like?
And when I told thee he was of my counsel
In my whole course of wooing, thou cried'st 'Indeed?'
And didst contract and purse thy brow together,
As if thou hadst shut up in thy brain
Some horrible conceit. If thou dost love me,
Show me thy thought.

Consider how Iago conveys his intended meanings, both conventionally and non-conventionally. What adjustments, if any, do you feel you have to make to the lexis, syntax, or the way in which the maxims are violated in order to convey similar implicatures in your translated version?

4. Stephen Hawking's popular science book, *A Brief History of Time from the Big Bang to Black Holes* (1988) includes a number of appendices, each giving an insight into the life and personality of a famous scientist. This is one of them:

Isaac Newton

Isaac Newton was not a pleasant man. His relations with other academics were notorious, with most of his later life spent embroiled in heated disputes. Following publication of *Principia Mathematica* – surely the most influential book ever written in physics – Newton had risen rapidly into public prominence. He was appointed president of the Royal Society and became the first scientist ever to be knighted.

Newton soon clashed with the Astronomer Royal, John Flamsteed, who had earlier provided Newton with much needed data for *Principia,* but was now withholding information that Newton wanted. Newton would not take no for an answer; he had himself appointed to the governing body of the Royal Observatory and then tried to force immediate publication of the data. Eventually he arranged for Flamsteed's work to be seized and prepared for publication by Flamsteed's mortal enemy, Edmond Halley. But Flamsteed took the case to court and, in the nick of time, won a court order preventing distribution of the stolen work. Newton

exercises

was incensed and sought his revenge by systematically deleting all references to Flamsteed in later editions of *Principia*.

A more serious dispute arose with the German philosopher Gottfried Leibniz. Both Leibniz and Newton had independently developed a branch of mathematics called calculus, which underlies most of modern physics. Although we now know that Newton discovered calculus years before Leibniz, he published his work much later. A major row ensued over who had been first, with scientists vigorously defending both contenders. It is remarkable, however, that most of the articles appearing in defense of Newton were originally written by his own hand – and only published in the name of friends! As the row grew, Leibniz made the mistake of appealing to the Royal Society to resolve the dispute. Newton, as president, appointed an 'impartial' committee to investigate, coincidentally consisting entirely of Newton's friends! But that was not all: Newton then wrote the committee's report himself and had the Royal Society publish it, officially accusing Leibniz of plagiarism. Still unsatisfied, he then wrote an anonymous review of the report in the Royal Society's own periodical. Following the death of Leibniz, Newton is reported to have declared that he had taken great satisfaction in 'breaking Leibniz's heart.'

During the period of these two disputes, Newton had already left Cambridge and academe. He had been active in anti-Catholic politics at Cambridge, and later in Parliament, and was rewarded eventually with the lucrative post of Warden of the Royal Mint. Here he used his talents for deviousness and vitriol in a more socially acceptable way, successfully conducting a major campaign against counterfeiting, even sending several men to their death on the gallows.

Imagine that you have been asked to translate the above appendix into your target language. Your translated version is to be included in a portfolio of light-hearted but factual background material for science students in secondary education, designed to stimulate their interest in the world of science at large.

Comment on the strategies you decide to use to convey Hawking's implied meanings to your target audience. For instance, do you transfer typographic signals such as exclamation marks and the inverted commas around *impartial* (third paragraph), or are there better ways of signalling similar meanings in your target language? Does the text, as it stands, convey the same image of Newton in your target language as it does in English, or do you have to make adjustments to accommodate your target reader's cultural background?

exercises

5. Much of our discussion of pragmatics concerned ways of 'making sense' of a text or interaction and finding ways of communicating our interpretation to the target reader. But some texts deliberately set out to undermine sense – nonsense literature is a good, extreme example. Other texts stretch the limits of 'sense' in less radical ways, using structures and expressions that would normally fail to cohere in less experimental texts but that are part of the message being communicated in this context. With this in mind, try your hand at the following opening paragraph of Robert Young's article 'The Procrastinator' (Young 1999:7):

> **Too close to call, whether I am yet beyond the real deadlines that followed the final deadline because of course with deadlines there is always the possibility of a later insertion, at proof stage or even second proof stage, or even perhaps – No. That is no longer procrastination, that is living dangerously, the very thing the procrastinator wishes to avoid. The procrastinator is no revolutionary, leaping into the future: every procrastinator is at heart a conservative creature, cautious, politic, wishing to live on without the jolt of completion and the rush of emptiness that follows the offering up of a piece of writing no longer just one's own, now exposed to the possibility of being read, ridiculed, rejected – and producing the inevitable question of what is coming next. Publish and perish. Unwilling to become the productive academic *prestigateur*, pulling ever more startlingly innovative writings out of a glamorous top hat, the procrastinator eyes the enfeebled mortar board warily. No key player he.**
>
> **Nor she – though there is something very gendered about procrastination, an inexorable maleness in the spirit of Tristram Shandy, Leopold Bloom or Saleem Sinai. Viagra falls. The procrastinator hangs over the past, furtively stealing time's proferred moments, seeking to retrieve what has already past, to delay what has not been done. He who hesitates is rarely lost. It may never happen. The present must live on into the future, at all costs it must be kept going, not detached from the past, but nurtured and maintained for its familiar comfort, recognisable, known, safe. Let us linger on, procrastinate that act of fulfilment that belongs to tomorrow, meanly measure out our lives as they unroll slowly through the debris of what has long since lapsed and elapsed. Stay with me, delay with me. Hang on a while.**

Consider what Young is trying to achieve by the various structures he opts for. To what extent can you reproduce this effect in your translation, while still producing a coherent text that can make sense to the target readers?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Bednarek, Monika A. (2005) 'Frames Revisited – The Coherence-Inducing Function of Frames', *Journal of Pragmatics* 37: 685–705.

Blum-Kulka, Shoshana (1986) 'Shifts of Cohesion and Coherence in Translation', in Juliane House and Soshana Blum-Kulka (eds) *Interlingual and Intercultural Communication: Discourse and Cognition in Translation and Second Language Acquisition Studies*, Tubingen: Gunter Narr, 17–35; reprinted in Lawrence Venuti (ed.) *The Translation Studies Reader*, London: Routledge, 290–305.

Brown, Gillian and George Yule (1983) *Discourse Analysis*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 7: 'Coherence in the Interpretation of Discourse'.

de Beaugrande, Robert and Wolfgang Dressler (1981) *Introduction to Text Linguistics*, London: Longman. Chapter 5: 'Coherence', and Chapter 6: 'Intentionality and Acceptability'.

Enkvist, N. E. (1985) 'Coherence and Inference', in Ursula Pieper and Gerhard Stickel (eds) *Studia Linguistica Diachronica et Synchronica*, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 233–248.

Hickey, Leo (ed.) (1998) *The Pragmatics of Translation*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Valdés, Cristina and Adrián Fuentes Luque (2008) 'Coherence in Translated Television Commercials', *European Journal of English Studies* 12(2): 133–148.

On politeness

Arnáiz, Carmen (2006) 'Politeness in the Portrayal of Workplace Relationships: Second Person Address Forms in Peninsular Spanish and the Translation of Humour', *Journal of Politeness Research, Language, Behaviour, Culture* 2(1): 123–141.

Berk-Seligson, Susan (1988) 'The Impact of Politeness in Witness Testimony: The Influence of the Court Interpreter', *Multilingua* 7(4): 411–439.

Brown, Penelope and Stephen Levinson (1987/1999) *Politeness. Some Universals in Language Usage*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; excerpted as 'Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage', in Adam Jaworski and Nikolas Coupland (eds) *The Discourse Reader*, London: Routledge, 321–335.

Cambridge, Jan (1999) 'Information Loss in Bilingual Medical Interviews through an Untrained Interpreter', in Ian Mason (ed.) *Dialogue Interpreting*, special issue of *The Translator* 5(2): 201–219.

Glinert, Lewis (2010) 'Apologizing to China: Elastic Apologies and the Meta-discourse of American Diplomats', *Intercultural Pragmatics* 7(1): 47–74.

Hatim, Basil and Ian Mason (1997) *The Translator as Communicator*, London: Routledge. Chapter 5: 'Politeness in Screen Translating'.

Hickey, Leo (2000) 'Politeness in Translation between English and Spanish', *Target* 12(2): 229–240.

House, Juliane (1998) 'Politeness and Translation', in Leo Hickey (ed.) *The Pragmatics of Translation*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 54–71.

On semantic prosody (and attitudinal meaning in general)

Louw, Bill (1993) 'Irony in the Text or Insincerity in the Writer? The Diagnostic Potential of Semantic Prosodies', in Mona Baker, Gill Francis and Elena Tognini-Bonelli (eds) *Text and Technology: In Honour of John Sinclair*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 157–176.

Louw, Bill (2000) 'Contextual Prosodic Theory: Bringing Semantic Prosodies to Life', in Chris Heffer and Helen Sauntson (eds) *Words in Context, A Tribute to John Sinclair on His Retirement*, CDRom. Available at www.revue-texto.net/docannexe/file/124/louw_prosodie.pdf.

Munday, Jeremy (2010) 'Evaluation and Intervention in Translation', in Mona Baker, Maeve Olohan and María Calzada Pérez (eds) *Text and Context: Essays on Translation and Interpreting in Honour of Ian Mason*, Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 77–94.

Stewart, Dominic (2010) *Semantic Prosody: A Critical Evaluation*, London: Routledge.

NOTES

1 Conventionally signalled implicatures are also known as **presuppositions**. Like implicatures, presuppositions are pragmatic inferences. They are based on the linguistic structure of an utterance, though they are still context-sensitive. For a detailed discussion of presupposition, see Levinson (1983, Chapter 4).

2 Grice's notion of conversational implicature and his proposed four maxims overlap with several notions discussed by other linguists, most notably in **speech-act theory**. Speech-act theory complements Grice's approach to meaning. Like Grice, speech-act theorists attempt to go beyond the literal meaning of words and structures by classifying utterances according to their implicit rather than explicit functions. For instance, a speaker may use a declarative/assertive structure to make a request or an interrogative structure to express reproof. The notions of **illocutionary meaning** and **indirect speech acts** in particular highlight an obvious area of overlap. Illocutionary meaning has to do with the speaker's intentions rather than his or her actual words. An indirect speech act is an utterance whose 'literal meaning and/or literal force is conversationally inadequate in the context and must be "repaired" by some inference' (Levinson 1983:270). It is, in fact, the flouting of a maxim such as Quantity or Relevance which results in an utterance having an indirect illocutionary meaning.

There is also some overlap between the maxim of relevance and the principle of **local interpretation** which 'instructs the hearer not to construct a context any larger than he needs to arrive at an interpretation. Thus, if he hears someone say "Shut the door" he will look towards the nearest door available for being shut' (Brown and Yule 1983:59).

Finally, Grice's division of implicature into conventional implicature and conversational implicature also overlaps with Beekman and Callow's distinction between two major types of **implicit information**:

> There is the implicit information conveyed in the written document itself by the vocabulary and grammatical constructions of the language, and there is the implicit information which lies outside the document, in the general situation which gave

> rise to the document, the circumstances of the writer and readers, their relationship, etc.
>
> *(1974:48)*

3 *Haven't you done well?* can also be patronizing, and *Don't I know it?* can be self-recriminating.

4 As defined here and in the work of Sinclair, Louw and others, **semantic prosody** is not the same as 'invoked attitudinal meaning' in appraisal theory (Martin and White 2005, Munday 2010). Munday (2010:85–87) discusses *Victorian arcades* and *cobbled streets* as examples of invoked attitudinal meaning: these items are perceived in a particular communicative context (rather than the language at large) as having positive values; for many people in the English-speaking world, they are associated with tradition, authenticity and quality of life. Semantic prosody is a much more subtle feature of language patterning. It is not dependent on specific communicative contexts and tends to be less subjective in its interpretation.

5 Louw (2000) offers a more extended definition:

> A semantic prosody refers to a form of meaning which is established through the proximity of a consistent series of collocates, often characterisable as positive or negative, and whose primary function is the expression of the attitude of its speaker or writer towards some pragmatic situation. A secondary, although no less important attitudinal function of semantic prosodies is the creation of irony through the deliberate injection of a form which clashes with the prosody's consistent series of collocates.

6 See www.llc.manchester.ac.uk/ctis/research/english-corpus/.

7 For a fascinating discussion of some aspects of the history of Arsène Lupin translations into Arabic, specifically in Egypt, see Selim (2010).

8

قال الشعر مالحا:

مَنْ رام ان يَلْقى تباريح الكَرَبْ
يرى الجمال والجلال والحَسَبْ
اشرفَ أهل الارض عن أمّ وأبْ
لا تَعْرِفُ الاقْدارُ فيهم والرُّتَبْ

من نفسه قلبات أحلاف العَرَبْ
والشعرَ والاوتارَ كيفما انقلبْ
وأسمعَ الناس وأجرى من يَهَبْ
ولا يُبالون بأحـــــراز النشبْ

لكن يغارون على حفظ النسبْ

فقال الظريف هاجيا:

من رامَ أن يَلْقى تباريـحَ الكَرَبْ
يرى الجمال والجلالَ والخشبْ
اسرقَ أهل الارض عن أمٍ وأبْ
لا تَعرِفُ الاقْدارُ فيهم والرتبْ

من نفسه قلبات أحلاف العَرَبْ
والشعر والاوبار كيفما انقلبْ
واسمعَ الناس أخزى من نَهَبْ
ولا يُبالون بأحـــــراز الزهبْ

لكن يغارون على حفظ النشبْ

ر. الفروق بين النصين لا تتجاوز بعض النقاط والحركات. وغنيّ عن البيان أن امثال هذه الفروق لا تنتقل الى لسان آخر.

9 See note 2 above: **an indirect speech act** is an utterance whose 'literal meaning and/or literal force is conversationally inadequate in the context and must be "repaired" by some inference' (Levinson 1983:270).

10 At the time when the Euralex Circular was prepared and circulated, Hungary was still a socialist country.

11 Motivation has to be seen from the point of view of the reader rather than the translator. In a sense, all deviant configurations are 'motivated' from the translator's point of view: they are 'equivalents' that can be slotted in at some point to allow the translator to get on with the rest of the job. This type of motivation, however, does not make a given configuration acceptable from the reader's point of view. To be justified, motivation has to be available to the reader.

12 www.newint.org.