The background of the book cover features a vibrant, abstract painting composed of large, expressive brushstrokes in shades of blue, red, yellow, and white. The composition is dynamic, with overlapping forms creating a sense of depth and movement.

EDITED BY

KIRSTEN

MALMKJÆR

KEVIN

WINDLE

≡ The Oxford Handbook of  
**TRANSLATION  
STUDIES**

## Oxford Handbooks Online

### **Oxford Handbooks in Linguistics**

**The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies**

*Edited by Kirsten Malmkjær and Kevin Windle*

Print Publication Date: Mar 2011 Subject: Linguistics

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Kirsten Malmkær      *University of Leicester*

Kevin Windle      *Australian National University*

*April 2010*

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## Oxford Handbooks Online

### Notes on Contributors

The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies

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## List of Abbreviations

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## List of Abbreviations

AIIC	Association Internationale des Interprètes de Conférence (International Association of Conference Interpreters)
ALPAC	Automated Language Processing Advisory Committee
AUSIT	Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators
AVT	audiovisual translation
B2B	business to business
BSL	British Sign Language
CAT	computer-aided translation
CBI	community-based interpreting
CEN	European Committee for Standardization
CI	consecutive interpreting
CIUTI	Conférence Internationale Permanente d’Instituts Universitaires de Traducteurs et Interprètes
CLIR	cross-language information retrieval

## List of Abbreviations

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CRC	Community Relations Commission
D-CS	demand-control schema
EMCI	European Masters in Conference Interpreting
EPRG	ethnocentric, polycentric, regiocentric, or geocentric
ESIT	Ecole Supérieure d'Interprètes et de Traducteurs
ETI	Ecole de Traduction et d'Interprétation
FAHQT	fully automatic high-quality translation
FIT	Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs
FMRI	functional magnetic resonance imaging
GALA	Globalization and Localization Association
GILT	globalization, internationalization, localization, translation
HTML	Hypertext Mark-up Language
IATE	Interactive Terminology for Europe
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
IDV	individualism (vs. collectivism)
IEV	International Electrotechnical Vocabulary
IR	information retrieval
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
IT	interpretive theory

## List of Abbreviations

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LISA	Localization Industry Standards Association
LSP	Language for Special Purposes
LTO	long-term orientation
MAS	masculinity (vs. femininity)
MLT	music-linked translation
MT	machine translation
NAATI	National Authority for Accreditation of Translators and Interpreters
NAJIT	National Association of Judicial Interpreters and Translators (USA)
NESW	non-English speaking witnesses
NGO	non-government organization
PDI	Power Distance Index
PET	positron emission tomography
PHP	personal homepage tools
PM	project manager
PSI	public service interpreting
PST	public service translation
QA	quality assurance
QC	quality control
RBMT	rule-based machine translation
Sci-Tech	scientific and technical

## List of Abbreviations

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SI	simultaneous interpreting
SL	source language
SLI	signed language interpreting
SMT	statistical machine translation
ST	source text
T&I	translation and interpreting
TAFE	technical and further education
TAP	think-aloud protocol
TAPS	think-aloud protocol studies
TBX	term base exchange
TL	target language
TM	translation memory
TMS	terminology management system
TNP	Thematic Network Project
TSP	translation service provider
TT	target text
UAI	Uncertainty Avoidance Index
UG	Universal Grammar
VRI	video relay interpreting
VRS	video relay service
WASLI	World Association of Sign Language Interpreters

## List of Abbreviations

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XHTML	Extensible Hypertext Markup Language
XML	Extensible Markup Language

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# Oxford Handbooks Online

## Introduction

Kirsten Malmkjær and Kevin Windle

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## Abstract and Keywords

The study of translation is a well-established field of scholarly activity. The discipline has taken its position in academia as a subject of serious research and study. This article is a reference work and practical guide for the benefit of professional translators and interpreters, and for students and researchers in the field of translation and interpreting studies and allied disciplines. Furthermore, the concepts and issues central in the development of the discipline are addressed. In addition, it deals with the translation of written texts of nine major types, and the translation of texts used in advertising and localization. It also covers signed language interpreting. The interaction between humans and technological tools in translational contexts, and its commercial applications are also discussed. Finally, the article focuses on the varied forms of training and education available to prospective translators and interpreters, including the prerequisites for admission to programmes and difficulties associated with assessment.

Keywords: translation, interpreting studies, signed language, translational contexts, training, education

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The central place occupied by translation and interpreting in human culture has long been recognized, and can hardly be overstated. In a globalized world, it is all too easy to take it for granted, and forget that, without these activities, linguistic communities would be condemned to a degree of cultural isolation which is nowadays difficult to imagine. The global hegemony of English does not mean that fluency in it is universal, that it will not at some point be deposed from its privileged position, or that monoglot speakers of it can ignore the achievements of other cultures, which of necessity reach them by way of translation. The ever-increasing volume of international contact and trade, and of text generated by the rise of the Internet, add to the need for translation and a concomitant need for a deeper understanding of the process. Translators and interpreters have served throughout the ages as the conduits by which scientific, cultural, and intellectual exchange takes place when the participants have no common language, and they continue to do so. In the field of literature, few who have given thought to the subject would now regard translation as a subordinate or derivative process in which no creative ability is required. Stock aphorisms, such as Pushkin's about translators being 'the post-horses of enlightenment', remain no less true for being well known.

The study of translation in its manifold forms is now a well-established field of scholarly activity. Once seen as a homeless hybrid at best, and later as an interdisciplinary area best approached through its neighbouring disciplines, (e.g. theoretical and applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, computational linguistics, discourse analysis, literary study, comparative literature), it has now achieved full recognition as a discipline in its own right, to which related disciplines make vital contributions. As the pages that follow remind us, a great deal of intellectual energy has been devoted to the exploration and practice of translation and interpreting for many centuries, although the effort was for long periods sporadic. The greater concentration of research is a much more recent phenomenon, dating from a time when the practices of translation and interpreting themselves began to expand and diversify in the mid-twentieth century. At the time of writing, a decade into the new century, most major publishers feature

## Introduction

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translation and interpreting titles in their catalogues, and conferences proliferate. The discipline has truly come of age and taken its position in academia as a subject of serious research and study. The modern evolution of translation studies may be seen in some of the contributions to this volume.

A similar explosion has occurred in thinking and publishing in the pedagogy of translation. Where once students of languages were deemed to be fully qualified as translators and interpreters on the basis of language study and translation and interpreting practice alone, they are now expected to be familiar with the translation industry and with translation tools and electronic text-transmission. They need the confidence to work both as independent freelancers with sufficient diplomatic skills to manage their clients, and as team-workers for agencies or in the translation office of national or international businesses. They need enough self-awareness to know when to accept and when to decline work and deadlines, and they must conform to the highest of ethical standards. To translator and interpreter training, therefore, must be added education that will support student translators and interpreters in acquiring the requisite skills and personal attributes. Such an education cannot encompass information about the practicalities of the industry and about working practices alone. Translator and interpreter trainees must also acquire a good understanding of the history, theory and culture of the translation and interpreting disciplines, so that they will gain a sense of themselves as professionals practising an ancient profession which has played a central role in the development of peoples, languages and cultures, and which is the subject of a significant body of research. The notion of translation and interpreting as practices divorced from theory is no longer widely accepted. In the modern university curriculum in many countries the theory and practice of the translating and interpreting professions are increasingly integrated.

The present Handbook is intended as a reference work and practical guide to the field, for the benefit of those working professionally as translators and interpreters, and for students and researchers in the field of translation and interpreting studies and allied disciplines. It is hoped that it will serve the interests of translators, interpreters, and specialists who work in individual languages but wish to broaden their knowledge and identify underlying principles of general application, and at the same time serve as a teaching resource. In its design it is intended to cover all major concepts, processes, and theoretical angles, and give an up-to-date account of each topic, while recognizing that in the technical fields, in particular, change is so rapid as to necessitate almost constant revision.

Divisions of disciplines are always to an extent artificial; but a reference work must be organized somehow, and here we have applied a sevenfold categorization, with subdivisions within each part. The history of translation theory, which is the subject of Part I, causes us especial concern; being mindful of the need to go beyond the European tradition, we may have suggested an artificial division in a field that is increasingly open to all comers. Nor is every part of the world given its due in the two chapters on thinking on secular translation, let alone in the single chapter on translation of the sacred. Nonetheless, a significant sum of thinking and reflection on secular and sacred texts is covered in Part I of our volume.

In Part II, our contributors address a number of concepts and issues that have been central in the development of the discipline: language, style, meaning, culture, cognition, and the process of translation. While these are to a large extent medium neutral, each of the three parts that follow is devoted to a particular manifestation of text.

Part III deals with the translation of written texts of nine major types: prose, drama, poetry, song, and children's literature; public service, legal, and scientific (including also technical and medical) translation; and the translation of texts used in advertising and localization. Part IV covers the two major ways of translating speech: simultaneous and consecutive interpreting, and three main interpreting contexts: conference, legal, and public service interpreting, and concludes with a chapter on signed language interpreting.

In Part V, we move beyond the single medium of language to multimedia situations, including subtitling, in which speech is represented in written translation, dubbing, which involves imposing a spoken translation over speech, usually in the context of film or television, and translation for websites, which involves complex forms of interaction between experts in marketing, design, software engineering and in translation (even though more than one of these expertises may of course reside in one individual).

Part VI includes three chapters on the interaction between humans and technological tools in translational contexts, beginning with a chapter on the developments and applications of machine translation. The second chapter in this section focuses especially on commercial applications and free web-based translation providers, while the final chapter covers electronic dictionaries and more specialized termbanks, as well the storage and

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investigation of electronic corpora.

Finally, the two chapters in Part VII focus on the varied forms of training and education available to prospective translators and interpreters, including the prerequisites for admission to programmes and difficulties associated with assessment.

The individual chapters outline the history of their topic, and of research into it, describe the current state of the field and the present state of knowledge and contemporary thought, and where possible plot future directions in their part of the larger discipline.

In a work such as this, in which an expansive field of study is covered in separate chapters on distinctive sub-areas, there will obviously be many connections between chapters. We have indicated by means of cross-references where further information on a subject raised in one chapter is available in another. The attentive reader will also identify a limited amount of repetition of information across chapters, but since our volume is a reference work, we have not sought to eliminate all duplication, since similar material is needed in different contexts, and because we do not assume that our readers will necessarily read the volume from beginning to end.

It is our hope that readers will find the volume informative and that they will derive as much pleasure from it as we, as editors, have derived from reading our authors' contributions.

Kirsten Malmkjær

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### European Thinking on Secular Translation

Kevin Windle and Anthony Pym

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#### Abstract and Keywords

This article gives an overview of the evolution of translation studies and practices. Translation for much of its history has existed as a practice without a theory. The history of translation in the Western world is closely bound with the history of religion and propagation of canonical texts, particularly, the Bible. In the biense'ance period, a milestone in the study of translation in Britain came in 1791, when the essay on the Principles of Translation, was published. In the romanticism period, literal renderings became the preferred method. In the early twentieth century, in Soviet Russia, there was much innovative experimentation in arts and literature, and literary translators played active role in it. In the late twentieth century, the contemporary European translation theories are seen as a series of paradigms that question the concept of equivalence. Since about the 1950s, there has been an increasing interest in making translation theory appear scientific.

Keywords: translation studies, canonical texts, biense'ance period, romanticism period, literary translators, equivalence

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#### 1.1 Introduction

As has often been remarked, translation for much of its long history has existed as a practice without a theory, in the sense of any agreed, prescriptive body of rules governing that practice. Paul Ricoeur wrote in 1998 that 'la pratique de la traduction reste une opération risquée toujours en quête de sa théorie' ('the practice of translation remains a risky operation which is still in search of its theory': Ricoeur 2004: 26). But then, much the same may be said of the practice of writing itself. Theories of literature are a relatively new phenomenon, and theories governing other forms of writing—not classed as 'literature' but no less vital to human communication—have been even more conspicuous by their absence. Just as writers have written, so translators have translated successfully without feeling a need for the guidance of theorists. However, European literary culture can give proof of a substantial body of thought about translation reaching far back into pre-Christian times, and the reflections recorded on the subject may well be termed 'theoretical'. This chapter will provide a necessarily brief historical survey, and an overview of more recent work.

#### 1.2 Early history: faith and 'faithfulness'

Early practitioners in the Western cultural sphere, working from Greek into Latin, conscious of the responsibilities of the translator, identified the dilemmas facing those who were concerned with establishing 'good practice'. Cicero (46 BC) and Horace (c.10 BC) are widely credited with being the first to articulate a fundamental dichotomy: since one-to-one lexical correspondence between languages is uncommon, how is an orator best represented in translation: *verbum verbo* (word for word) or by 'the same themes ... and sentence shapes in words consonant with our conventions' (Cicero, cited in Weissbort and Eysteinsson 2006: 21)? This opposition expresses the balancing act which all translators before and since have had to perform. A close translation is likely to mystify or

mislead the recipient, or generate TL forms of doubtful acceptability, while a version which departs further from the original wording risks being ‘unfaithful’ to the ST in the interests of ‘fluency’ in the TL. Should one’s unit of translation be the word, a group of words, a sentence, or a larger semantic element, perhaps a paragraph? The arguments have been rehearsed many times since, and this is not the sort of question to which theory can provide any definitive answer. The closely related concept of ‘fidelity’ has traditionally implied close adherence, and thus a preference for *verbum verbo*, although the context of Horace’s phrase *fidus interpres* (faithful interpreter) makes clear that he considered *verbum verbo* a procedure to be avoided (Weissbort and Eysteinsson 2006: 23).

The history of translation in the Western world has been closely bound up with the history of religion and the propagation of canonical texts, in particular the Bible (see Chapter 3). Jerome, the Church father who translated the Bible into Latin (AD 405), having given careful consideration to methods and procedures, endorsed the principle of *sensus senso* (sense for sense) rather than *verbum verbo*, but made an exception for the Scriptures, ‘where even the order of the words is of God’s doing’ (Weissbort and Eysteinsson 2006: 30). Like those who came later, Jerome was fully aware of the weight of responsibility that rested on the translators’ shoulders, and of the intense scrutiny to which every word would be subjected. More than a millennium later, before the case for versions in the new vernaculars of Europe was finally won, the very act of tampering with the ‘word of God’ by translating it remained fraught with risk. William Tyndale’s English version of the New Testament (1525) was banned, and in 1536 the translator was put to death for publishing it.

### 1.3 Biblical influences

More surprising, perhaps, than the fate of Tyndale, and no less likely to concentrate a translator’s mind, is the fate of the French scholar Etienne Dolet, hanged and burned as a heretic in 1546, his books incinerated with him. High among his offences was the ‘mistranslation’ not of a Christian text but of Plato’s *Dialogues*. To the sentence *après la mort tu ne sera plus* (after death you will be no more) he had ‘added’ the words *rien du tout* (anything at all), thereby emphasizing a denial of any afterlife. Dolet’s principles of translation include a forthright rejection of literalism (*si aucun le fait, cela luy procède de pauvreté, & default d'esprit*, ‘if someone does that, it is the product of his poverty and lack of wisdom’: Dolet 1972: 13; Weissbort and Eysteinsson 2006: 75), but in the climate of his times even this modest exercise of ‘freedom’ in translation could have dire consequences. If Plato himself was beyond the reach of punishment for denying Christian doctrine *avant la lettre*, his translator could pay the penalty for agreeing with him.

In the view of Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere, the enduring influence of the Bible and the ‘Jerome model’ of translation largely determined much thinking about translation over the centuries. Ideas of ‘faithfulness’ to an immutable, canonical text, and the subservience of the translator, in view of the supposed origins of that text, were bound to extend their reach and influence translators handling material of less exalted origin (Bassnett and Lefevere 1998: 2–3). At the same time, the elasticity of ‘fidelity’, ‘faithful’, and indeed of ‘literal’ and ‘free’, had long been apparent. ‘Fidelity’ and its equivalents in many European languages tend to oversimplify complex matters, while its imprecision and its moral overtones undermine its usefulness. That other moralistic cliché *traduttore traditore* (translator-traitor) and other extensions of the metaphor, all too often taken at face value, are equally unhelpful.

Nevertheless, for want of more precise terms, these remained in common use by specialists, translators, and the reading public alike, and the debate (termed ‘sterile’ and ‘stagnant’ by later scholars: Bassnett and Lefevere 1998: 3; Munday 2001: 33, 53) was not about to conclude. ‘Faithfulness’ often included matching the artistic properties of the original, hence ‘elegance’ of style, important to early Bible translators, figured prominently in unrelated fields. Dolet stressed that it was important to arrange words so sweetly *que non seulement l'âme s'en contente, mes aussi les oreilles en sont toutes ravies*, ‘that not only the soul should be satisfied, but that the ears should also be utterly delighted’: Dolet 1972: 15; Weissbort and Eysteinsson 2006: 75). Another Frenchman, Gaspard de Tende, set down his *règles de la traduction* (rules of translation), of which there were nine, in 1665, placing much emphasis on ‘beauty’, ‘elegance’, and ‘a noble and high style’ (Lefevere 1992a: 123–4).

### 1.4 Bienséance: the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

In this period the metaphor of in/fidelity, coupled with the importance of elegance, underwent a particularly Gallic

development. A manner of translation by which the translated product might bear only a distant resemblance to the original led to such versions being described by later scholars as *belles infidèles* (unfaithful beauties) (Salama-Carr 1998: 411). Their aesthetic qualities as pieces of writing, irrespective of their correspondence to the ST, were held to be of paramount importance. This meant orienting the translation firmly towards the TL and its culture, and modifying the source text as much as necessary to match its new linguistic and cultural context. D'Alembert, writing in 1758, unhesitatingly advocated an editorial role, entitling the translator to remove the 'cold and sometimes gross jokes' in Cicero (Lefevere 1992a: 113). Another well-known example is provided by Antoine Galland's *Les Mille et Une Nuits* (One Thousand and One Nights, 1704–17), which enjoyed great popularity and provided the basis for further translations into other languages, including English, German, Italian, Dutch, Danish, Russian, Polish and Czech. To Galland, *bienséance* (seemliness, decorum) was everything; TL acceptability had to take precedence over the reproduction of the minutiae of the original. If the ST offended against TL *bienséance*, it should be altered. Later translators would treat this text very differently, but it should be noted that Galland was in some sense producing an original, as the *Nights* did not exist as a collection before him, and that, while exercising a right to censor the stories and expunge what he considered to be in poor taste, he was less free in his approach to the remaining material than some other translators of his time.

### 1.5 Alexander Fraser Tytler

A milestone in the study of translation in Britain came in 1791, when the Edinburgh scholar Alexander Fraser Tytler (Lord Woodhouselee) published his *Essay on the Principles of Translation*, a classic of its time, the product of great erudition and extensive knowledge of European languages, literatures, and cultures. While echoing some recommendations of the *belles infidèles* school (he approved of Pope's toning down of 'nauseous images' in Homer (Tytler 1978: 90), he enunciated principles and criteria which met with broad acceptance over a long period:

- I. That the Translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work.
- II. That the style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original.
- III. That the Translation should have all the ease of original composition [*sic*; not, as this is sometimes transcribed, 'of the original composition']. (Tytler 1978: 16)

These 'general laws' may be summed up simply as faithfulness (a word Tytler does not shun), in the sense of conveying the content in full; matching style; and elegance. Fully conscious of the tension between Laws I and III, Tytler tries to strike a balance between the conflicting claims of the SL and TL orientations. Elaborated in a lucid study, with many examples, these principles exerted wide influence over a long period. (They may have provided the basis for reflection on the subject in China, where Yan Fu's pithy dictum of 1897, 'faithfulness, comprehensibility [or 'communicability'], elegance', has become a commonplace.) It is clear that Law III, in particular, is largely a matter of taste, as Tytler is the first to state in his Preface (p. viii), but he did not purport to be practising an exact science. Tytler dealt only with the translation of works of 'high' literature, principally the classics of Greek and Latin verse, an area remote from science. More utilitarian forms of translation did not concern him.

### 1.6 Romanticism; the nineteenth century

The *belles infidèles* school fell out of favour in the heyday of Romanticism. An SL orientation took hold, requiring 'faithful', or close, copies of the original (Salama-Carr 1998: 413). Literal renderings became the preferred method, approved by many, including Goethe in his late period, and in France Chateaubriand upheld the calque as an ideal form of translation, applying it to Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The German philosopher and translator of Plato, Friedrich Schleiermacher, in a famous essay, 'Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens' (1813), recognized differences in text type and the need to have regard for these; and for the translation of literature and philosophy—his main concern—he proposed as a principle *taking the reader to the author*, rather than the reverse (Weissbort and Eysteinsson 2006: 208; Schleiermacher 2002: 74). Like some theorists of a much later period, Schleiermacher was proposing a method which would invite readers to view the translated text in a different way and make an effort to apprehend the foreign culture in its own terms. The product would be different in nature from texts written and received in the same language, and would make additional demands on readers, re-educating them in the process and bringing them to a respect for the difference.

Some of the reasoning by which Schleiermacher arrived at this position has gone largely unremarked but is probably unique among great thinkers. Most translators, he believes, ‘retain a sense of the foreign [*das Gefühl des Fremden*], no matter how fluently they read a foreign language.’ He goes on, ‘How should the translator transfer this feeling—that they have something foreign before them [...]?’ (Weissbort and Eysteinsson 2006: 208; Schleiermacher 2002: 80). This seems to overlook the fact that the ‘foreign’ is in no way foreign to SL readers; if the ST is not a classic of a bygone age, the translator may indeed belong to the SL speech community and therefore not share any ‘sense of the foreign’, and the motivation for relaying this impression—if the translator should be one of those who receives it—is founded solely on a subjective feeling that foreigners have strange ways of expressing themselves.

Schleiermacher gives no examples to illustrate how one should proceed in the attempt ‘to make the tone foreign’. However, if the aim is to preserve a supposedly ‘fresh’ vision found in idiomatic SL expressions (as perceived by a non-native reader), a standard idiom such as Russian *kak grom sredi iasnogo neba* might retain its original semantic components in ‘like thunder amid a clear sky’, whereas a more traditionally minded translator would prefer to treat the phrase as a single unit, equivalent in most contexts to ‘like a bolt from the blue’. Polish *Daj spokój!* would be ‘Give peace!’ rather than ‘Leave [me] alone!’ or ‘Drop that!’ While such phrasing may of course be found as a result of inexpert translation, those translators who, unlike Schleiermacher, bring the author to the reader would deliberately eschew anything that ‘sounds foreign’ or compromises intelligibility. However, Schleiermacher was the first to admit that as a method his principle required much sensitivity in the application.

Something akin to the Schleiermacher school of thought may be seen in action in two renowned—or perhaps notorious—translations of the *Arabian Nights* from the late nineteenth century. Sir Richard Burton’s ‘plain and literal’ (his phrase) *Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night* (1885–6) in many ways exemplifies the views on translation propounded by the Romantics of earlier decades, as does that of Joseph Charles Mardrus, made in 1898–1904. The acculturation, or domestication, favoured by Galland was alien to these translators. Indeed, Burton held that ‘the translator’s glory is to add something to his native tongue’, and to achieve this he had ‘carefully Englished the picturesque turns and novel expressions of the original in all their outlandishness’ (Burton I, xiv). The unusual form of the title, like Mardrus’s *Le Livre des mille nuits et une nuit*, mirrors the Arabic *kitāb alf layla wa layla*—in which, however, this phrasing is standard and in no way picturesque or outlandish. *La littéralité* (literalness), Mardrus claimed, was the only honest and logical method of translation (Mardrus I, xx), while his publishers in their editorial note went a step further, confusing translation with transliteration: *Le lecteur y trouvera le mot à mot pur, inflexible. ‘Le texte arabe a simplement changé de caractères: ici il est en caractères français, voilà tout’* (The reader will find in it pure, inflexible word-for-word [translation]. The Arabic text has simply changed characters: here it is in French characters. That is all) (Mardrus I, ix). In reality the supposed ‘literalism’ of both versions was a confidence trick, as the translators were much given to fanciful insertions and inventions whenever they felt these to be in keeping with the ‘spirit’ of the original. The Mardrus *Nuits* have been described as ‘really more of a loose adaptation’ (Irwin 1994: 37), but were widely admired in their day, and eminent critics such as Jorge Luis Borges have accorded them paradoxical praise (*su infidelidad creadora y feliz*, ‘his creative and felicitous infidelity’: Borges 1953: 132).

### 1.7 The early twentieth century: reiterations, revolutions, and reactions

#### 1.7.1 Walter Benjamin

Walter Benjamin’s preface to his translations of Baudelaire’s verse, ‘Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers’ (1923), with echoes of Schleiermacher and no reference to Baudelaire, has attracted much interest among scholars of a philosophical bent, especially since its publication in English in the 1960s. His provocative ideal of ‘pure language’ released by the act of translation, whose highest form is an interlinear gloss of the Scriptures (Benjamin 1972: 21; Weissbort and Eysteinsson 2006: 307), has commended itself more to theoretical specialists than to practitioners and their clients, since the practical need for this kind of translation tends to be limited.

#### 1.7.2 Translation in Russia

At about the same time in a quite different cultural setting, in Soviet Russia, for a brief period before conformity was strictly enforced, there was much innovative experimentation in the arts and literature, and literary translators

played an active role in it, encouraged by Maxim Gorky. Independently of Benjamin, some adopted similar positions, favouring close versions, often equilinear (Chukovsky 1964: 201) though not usually interlinear à la Benjamin. For other reasons, and for a longer period, the large body of material of many genres translated from Russian into the minority languages of the USSR adhered to the same pattern. Here the motivation had to do with the status of Russian as a kind of ideological elder brother, whose patterns of language and thought could be grafted onto Kirghiz or Uzbek to the benefit, it was supposed, of the latter. Its longer literary tradition also added to its standing in the cultural hierarchy.

Where translation into Russian was concerned, the trend towards literalism did not endure. It is not a feature of the work of the acknowledged masters in the field of poetic translation in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s (e.g. Pasternak, Marshak, Lozinsky), but it did persist sufficiently to provide the leitmotif of Kornei Chukovsky's important work *Vysokoe iskusstvo* (A High Art, 1964), which evolved through various editions over a period of decades. In many respects it represents a return to a classical view, as the title itself suggests, with an uncompromising emphasis on accuracy, elegance, and respect for the original author. Mechanical literalism is rejected as 'imprecise precision', or an illusion of accuracy, and his term *gladkopis* (sometimes rendered as 'blandschrift') has entered the Russian lexicon of the discipline. Chukovsky also has much to say about English translations of Russian works, including his own children's poetry—unrecognizable in many English versions—and dismisses those Russian translations of Goethe in which the poetic form is treated as mere packaging for the ideas, and discarded.

An émigré Russian writer, literary scholar, and translator who has received much attention is Vladimir Nabokov, who as a translator underwent an evolution in the opposite direction to some of those translators who stayed at home. One of his earliest published translations, made in 1923, of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, is a model of what Schleiermacher called 'bringing the foreign text to the reader' and Lawrence Venuti would later call 'domestication'. The heroine acquires a Russian name, Ania, and is transplanted into a thoroughly Russian cultural context: the earls of Mercia and Northumberland are replaced by the history of the princes of Kiev; the Mouse, who 'probably came over with William the Conqueror', is now left behind after Napoleon's Russian campaign of 1812; and instead of Carroll's parodies of English verse the reader finds new but immediately recognizable versions of Pushkin and Lermontov.

Forty years later this same translator, working in the opposite direction on his famous version of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*, in heated polemics with his critics and rival translators, denied the validity of any method except literal 'fidelity'. He had abandoned the attempt to render *Onegin* in English verse, and sacrificed 'everything (elegance, euphony, clarity, good taste, modern usage and even grammar) that the dainty mimic prizes higher than truth' (Pushkin 1964: x). His anger was directed chiefly at those who 'never can and never will read the original', but linguistically competent critics who disagreed did not escape. Of those, few could accept his blanket dismissal of poetic versions or the 'impossibility' of the exercise. Other *Onegins*, especially the later one by Charles Johnston, stand as evidence to the contrary, not to mention many other successful verse translations.

### 1.7.3 Jiří Levý

Jiří Levý's *Umění překladu* (The Art of Translation, 1963), translated (with extensive authorial rewriting) into German and Russian, is a key text. Like Chukovsky's book, it deals exclusively with the translation of literature, as its German title, *Die literarische Übersetzung: Theorie einer Kunstgattung* (1969), makes clear. It has its roots in the work of the Prague linguistics circle and the ideas of the Russian Formalists, and springs from a sense of dissatisfaction, widely felt by translation specialists at the time, with the state of the discipline and its failure to develop principles of universal application. The field abounded, Levý said, in empirical observations, essayistic causeries and aphorisms, and nebulous formulaic advice about 'entering the world of the author' (Levý 1963: 9).

Levý's importance has been widely recognized, but selective quotation and publication may have skewed perceptions of his stated views. For all his attempts to inject a scientific rigour and methodology into the discipline, and despite his 'experiments' with multiple translations and back-translations, performed 'blind', of Karel Čapek, he holds fast to much that precedes Formalism and the Prague circle. In the Russian and German editions, he states that the book is an attempt to construct an 'illusionist' theory of translation, the 'illusionist-translator' being one who, in presenting a translation to the reader, fosters the illusion that the translation is an original (Levi 1974: 47–8). The traditional nature of this approach is apparent from much of its terminology, whether Levý is dealing with the quality of the TL writing ('slavish, uncreative translation', p. 92), 'the sensitive reader', 'dull, colourless, grey'

writing (p. 153), or with the relation of a translation to its original ('distortions', 'accuracy', 'stylistic/lexical impoverishment', pp. 153–4). Nor does he shy away from 'fidelity' (Czech *věrnost*, Russian *vernost'*, German *die Treue*). He does, however, emphasize that the term itself is extremely ill-defined, and illustrates by example wholly antithetical interpretations of the term (Levý 1963: 72). 'Elegance' is still implied as a criterion, and the notion of 'taste' firmly underlies it. Hence we are as far as ever from any science, and the criteria outlined mean that there is little disagreement with Tytler ('complete transcript') and many others. There are no references to Benjamin, and Schleiermacher receives but a single mention, for his 'extreme theory' (Levý 1963: 74). Levý is much closer to Chukovsky, whom he cites, for example, on 'grey translationese' which is less easy to remedy than semantic and stylistic defects (Levý 1963: 94).

## 1.8 Late twentieth century

Contemporary European translation theories can be seen as a series of paradigms that question the once-dominant concept of equivalence. Since about the 1950s, the professional and academic proximity of scientific discourses meant that there was an increasing concern with accuracy, and thus an interest in making translation theory appear as scientific as possible. The first to see all kinds of translation as belonging to the one unified field, with a common concern with language, was probably Fedorov (1953). Equivalence, with its vaguely mathematical heritage, suited that purpose and seemed set to underlie several new sciences of translation. Yet that endeavour has not endured. The newer paradigms have emphasized the translation's *Skopos* or purpose (challenging the dominant role of the source text), historical and cultural relativism (challenging any absolute equivalence equations), indeterminacy (challenging the stability of anything apparently equivalent), and localization (deceptively blurring the divisions between translation and adaptation). Each of those challenges represents a paradigm shift of some kind, enacting conceptual displacements so fundamental that many debates have simply been caused by using the same terms with different meanings. Here we deal with the paradigms in only a loose chronological order, since they have generally developed in parallel, and they all rely on intellectual and technological currents that go back much further.

### 1.8.1 The complexities of equivalence

The first concepts of equivalence (after Vinay and Darbelnet 1958) referred to cultural adaptation of quite an extreme kind, as when the French military has *la soupe* when British soldiers have 'tea' (example from Vinay and Darbelnet 1958: 55). The terms change so that the function remains equivalent. That kind of equivalence might be termed 'natural', since it is assumed to exist before the translator's intervention. Many theorists have thus been concerned with identifying the levels and functions of the source text, since they assume that once you have those, translation is just a mapping operation. Much translation theory has been applied text linguistics: Hatim and Mason in the British tradition, and Koller and Reiss in German.

The concept of equivalence nevertheless broadened out when the American Bible theorist and translator Eugene Nida (1964b) recognized the polarities 'dynamic equivalence' (same function) and 'formal equivalence' (same form, probably with a different function). There were thus different kinds of equivalence that could be established, independently of whatever was 'natural' before the translator entered the scene. The polarities recall the dichotomies formulated by Cicero and Schleiermacher, among many others, and meet up with divisions such as 'semantic' vs. 'communicative' translation (Newmark) or 'adequacy' vs. 'acceptability' (Toury). This is not quite the same thing as Levý's opposition between 'illusory' and 'anti-illusory' translations, where the terms concern the way a translation signifies its source. That second kind of opposition has been pursued by House ('covert' vs. 'overt' translations), Nord ('instrumental' vs. 'documentary') and particularly Gutt ('indirect' vs. 'direct' translations).

Equivalence has thus been used in at least three different ways: to conceptualize cultural adaptation ('dynamic equivalence'), to refer to reproduction of different 'natural' ST levels and functions (where the term recuperates the millennial discourse of 'fidelity'), and to think about the different choices facing the translator. The result is a rich and complex paradigm, often reduced to some of its more naïve formulations. Underlying all these conceptualizations is the common idea that the way one translates depends, in the last instance, on the nature of the ST, since that is what a translation is equivalent to. That is the point on which the late twentieth century challenged the basic concept of equivalence.

### 1.8.2 Theories of purpose (*Skopos*)

In the course of the 1980s German-language work on translation formed a paradigm around the concept of *Skopos*, described as the aim or purpose that a translation is designed to carry out in the situation of reception. For the German theorist Hans Vermeer, 'the dominant factor of each translation is its purpose [Zweck]' (Reiss and Vermeer 1984: 96). That simple principle is presented as 'dethroning' the source text. From this perspective, translations are generally seen as fulfilling functions quite different from those of source texts, since they are for a fundamentally different audience, in a new cultural situation. The same text can therefore be translated in different ways, to suit different purposes. The translator must first decide, in consultation with the client, what the purpose is to be, then act accordingly. This theory does not abolish equivalence by any means—it simply makes equivalence a special case, to be sought in situations where 'functional consistency' is required between the source and target situations.

Those ideas have had repercussions on the way translators are trained, and indeed on the concept of their professional role. For Holz-Mänttäri (1984), translators are experts in cross-cultural communication in general; their 'translatorial actions' can include rewriting of all kinds, the production of a new text (if a given source is unsuitable), and cross-cultural consulting. For the general *Skopos* approach, the translator is no longer a lone figure confronting a foreign document, but an active partner in a complex communication act, where the client's instructions can be more important than the source text.

Recognition of these professional realities has the potential to shift the whole field of translation theory. The paradigm nevertheless stagnated in the 1990s; it has generally been overtaken by alternative approaches.

### 1.8.3 The import of descriptions

A long European tradition, reaching back to Russian Formalism and its antecedents in French Positivism, holds that hidden rules can be revealed through the scientific analysis of cultural products. That tradition ran through the schools of translation theory in Prague and Bratislava, touched work at Leipzig, then flowered in the 1980s in Holland, Flanders, and Israel. A loose network of scholars from those countries produced a paradigm based on finding out what translations actually do as pieces of language in context, as opposed to what countless generations had opined about ideal translation. The general approach was thus 'descriptive', as opposed to the 'prescriptivism' of opinion, and it has come to be known as Descriptive Translation Studies (after Toury 1995). The paradigm, however, has done more than just describe.

For the Israeli scholar Gideon Toury (1980b), the descriptive approach should accept as axiomatic that all translations are equivalent to their sources, so that research can then discover the modes of that equivalence. Thus, at the same time as *Skopos* theory made equivalence a special case, descriptivism made it a banal presupposition.

Less banal, however, was the way this approach theorized what translations can actually do in the world. For the Tel Aviv school founded by Itamar Even-Zohar, the target culture could be seen as a system (in fact a 'polysystem', a system comprising systems). Within that system, translations can be either 'central', where they play an innovative role and help to change the culture, or 'peripheral', where they conform to established patterns and play a reinforcing role. For Even-Zohar (1978a, 1978b), translations are normally in peripheral positions, although they may become central when the target culture feels itself to be inferior to the source culture. This proposed 'law' thus correlates modes of translating with cross-cultural dynamics. Its implicit sociology of translation completely undermines all the prescriptions about how translations should be carried out: if a culture feels inferior, it will tend to prefer literalist translations; if not, then not.

An important modulation of this kind of law is offered by the notion of translation norms (Toury 1995). For Toury, the study of numerous translations reveals that translators behave differently in different cultures and historical settings, and their behaviours may be patterned. Those patterns indicate norms if and when there is some kind of sanction for non-compliance. For example, in the France of *les belles infidèles* the dominant norm was to adapt foreign texts to French culture, and to render foreign verse as French prose. A translator who did not adhere to those norms could expect less success. The notion of norms thus opens a relativist vision of translation practices, and this vision has expanded as scholars have explored many non-Western conceptualizations of translation. The

notion of norms has also been an important step in the rationalization of translator training. Trainees can be asked to render the one text several times, in accordance with different norms. Any negative evaluations by trainers might then be seen as experience-based predictions that a translation will not conform to the norms operative in a particular genre or reception situation (Chesterman 1999).

The Tel Aviv school has also contributed research on the ways translations tend to be different from non-translations. The hypothetical ‘universals of translation’ can be listed as follows:

1. lexical simplification, since translations tend to use a narrower range of different words (Blum-Kulka and Levenston 1983);
2. explication, since translations tend to be more redundant, particularly with respect to cohesion devices (Blum-Kulka (1986/2004);
3. adaptation, since translations tend to adopt the discursive norms of the target culture (Zellermayer 1987); and
4. equalizing, since translations tend to avoid the extremes of discursive ranges, particularly on the oral-literate continuum (Shlesinger 1989b). (See further Chapter 6.)

Descriptive studies have thus produced a highly relativistic vision of translation at the same time as they have spawned ideas about what features might be universal to all translations.

### 1.8.4 Indeterminism

Parallel to the development of *Skopos* theory and descriptive studies, a tradition of critical thought has radically questioned the very possibility of equivalence. In the United States, the most extreme critique was formulated by Quine (1960), who used translation as a thought experiment for the theorization of the relation between language and meaning. Quine envisages a situation of ‘radical translation’, where an ethnographer is attempting to understand the speakers of a hitherto unknown language. Quine demonstrates that there can be no absolute certainty about meaning in such cases, and that this same uncertainty is present, to various degrees, in all communicative situations. That is, our interpretations of a message are not wholly determined by the message, and meaning is therefore indeterminate. Quine’s thought experiment has been of immense importance in the philosophy of language (see Chapter 8), but it has never produced systematic thought about the actual practice of translation. Those connections have been made elsewhere.

In Europe, the intellectual genealogy of indeterminism starts from German hermeneutics, connects with the aesthetics of Modernism, then informs French post-structuralism, from which it has influenced literary and cultural studies all over the world. For most theorists, the (literary or philosophical) ST transcends individual interpretations of it, and this makes translations inferior and transitory. Rather than equivalence (of whatever kind), the best one can hope to achieve is ‘similarity’. This approach inherits the part of hermeneutics that was concerned with the Bible, but its elements can be found in Croce, Benjamin (who notes the ‘fleetingness’ with which meaning attaches to translations), Heidegger (for whom translations are attempts to understand the authentic thought of the past), and through to the French translator and theorist Antoine Berman (who emphasized the need for translations to respect the ‘letter’ of the foreign text). One might also include the French philosopher Jacques Derrida in this list, at least with reference to the way he uses translations and comments on them in his work on Greek and German texts, as well as his later readings of Shakespeare.

Despite this strong tradition, indeterminism can also be applied to STs, making them just one of many possible texts. This can also be found in Benjamin, who sees different languages as complementing each other like ‘fragments of a broken vessel’ (Benjamin 1972: 18; Weissbort and Eysteinsson 2006: 304). According to this view, translators have no great need to respect the letter of the foreign text; they are free to betray the form of expression and to develop their own necessarily creative role. Elements of this second kind of indeterminism can be found in the Brazilian theorist Rosemary Arrojo, as well as in theoretical approaches that borrow from gender studies and postcolonial studies. If seen as liberation, indeterminism allows translation to respond to political agendas rather than to source texts.

The fact that Benjamin can be cited by both kinds of indeterminists might indicate why his essay has been fetishized by literary and cultural theorists, particularly those writing in English.

### 1.8.5 Localization

While *Skopos* theory reduced equivalence to a special case, and descriptive studies were finding it everywhere, and indeterminism was questioning its existence, the translation industry was confronting the more practical problems of economic globalization. In the late 1980s and more especially in the 1990s, the software industry started to talk about 'localization'. The term generally refers to a process in which a source text, perhaps a piece of software, is first stripped of its culture-specific features (and is thus 'internationalized') and is then translated into a number of target languages simultaneously, with each translation team inserting the features appropriate to the specific target 'locale'. This process has since benefited from advances in translation-memory technologies and the integration of machine translation, making the localization industry a significant generator of new concepts of cross-cultural communication (see Chapters 18 and 27). In the context of Western thought, the main paradox of localization is that, although it would appear to promote cultural adaptation, its processes actually rely on very simplistic models of equivalence. When translation memories store paired segments, the assumption is made that the pairing is valid for future reuse. And when translation is conceptualized as only one part of the localization process, this automatic pairing is what translation is assumed to be. The result is a non-functionalist theory of equivalence, far simpler than the theories put forward in the late 1950s. The theories of *Skopos*, descriptive relativism, and indeterminism seem to have had no effect at all on the ideas actually at work in industrial practice.

### 1.8.6 Ideas for the future of translation

The term 'translation' is increasingly used to describe intercultural dynamics that do more than relate two texts to each other. For example, the Indian theorist Homi Bhabha sees 'cultural translation' as a practice in which cultural hybridity is produced, mostly as a result of migrations. For the Indian translator and theorist Gayatri Spivak, 'translation' can be the way a person acquires a culture, be it their first, second, or third. For the French sociologists Callon and Latour, 'translation' is the way social actors interact so that some can later speak 'on behalf of' others (so that translation is at the core of all politics). For the German sociologist Joachim Renn, translation is the way that the groups in fragmented postmodern societies manage to communicate in order to ensure governance, without assuming complete understanding. Many similar instances can be found in literary, cultural, and philosophical theories.

Although these uses of the term 'translation' do not concern translations as such, they are influencing the way the work of translators is perceived in academic circles. The influence is not necessarily negative. Globalization is producing countless situations in which translation now responds to the movements of *people*, not texts. Translation is increasingly necessary *within* our current societies, and not just between them. Translation is thus playing a role in which our *power relations* are enacted, rather than ensuring a stable equivalence between texts. On all these fronts, the extended metaphors of translation can be expected to reframe many of the traditional questions about how, and why, anyone should translate.

If the practice of translation is still waiting for its theory, it may be because the practice itself has been changing.

### Further reading and relevant resources

Weissbort and Eysteinsson (2006) is an invaluable collection of key texts from a wide variety of sources and historical periods. Munday (2001, 2008) and Pym (2010) offer useful surveys of the state of the discipline, maintaining a Western focus. Levý's work, in its various editions and linguistic guises (Levý 1963, 1969, Levi 1974), remains a modern classic. The most complete anthology of Western theories is Robinson (1997), while the reader compiled by Venuti (2000a) gives many key texts, despite the omission of Quine in the 2004 edition. Bassnett and Lefevere (1998) is one of many important contributions by these writers to the ongoing discussion of central issues. Of the more influential schools of thought, *Skopos* theory is explained clearly by Nord (1997), cultural polysystems by Even-Zohar (1978a, 1978b), and Descriptive Translation Studies, with translation norms, by Toury (1995) and Hermans (1999). On the much-discussed opposition between domestication and foreignization, see Venuti (1995).

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## European Thinking on Secular Translation

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## Oxford Handbooks Online

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Judy Wakabayashi

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#### [-] Abstract and Keywords

The focus of this article is the secular translation in the eastern and southern part of the Asian continent. It gives an overview of the history of Asian thinking on translation. Expectations in Asia of what constitutes ‘translation’ have varied over time and space, from the highly to ‘transcreation’, from intralingual translations to intersemiotic translations. The values attached to different practices have also varied cross-culturally. Today, Chinese scholars are paying greater attention to cultural and ideological aspects and drawing on ideas from other disciplines. In Japan, there has long been an acceptance of translational language, leading to the concepts of a ‘third language’ and ‘third literature’, which signifies a special area for translations. With Asia’s growing importance on the world stage and the ‘international turn’ in translation studies, one can expect further ideas to emerge from Asia as well as more nuanced studies of Asian thinking on translation.

Keywords: Asian continent, transcreation, intralingual translations, intersemiotic translations, third literature, Asian thinking

The vastness, complexity, and diversity of the region vaguely defined as Asia and the relative lack of accessible information make it almost impossible to present a comprehensive and balanced overview of historical or contemporary thinking on translation. Central and West Asia are excluded here because their very different contexts deserve separate treatment by those with area expertise. The focus below will be on the languages and cultures of the East and South of the continent.

#### 2.1 The history of Asian thinking on translation

Theorizing on translation is by no means a recent or Western invention, as illustrated by the ideas from ancient China presented in *An Anthology of Chinese Discourse on Translation* (Cheung 2006). Nor is the distinction between secular and non-secular thinking always clear—for example, Tan (2001: 63) argues that this distinction was not made in the Chinese tradition. Theoretical ideas are often not formulated explicitly, so must be inferred from praxis or a close reading of seemingly impressionistic writing and an examination of the metaphors and key words used to describe translation-like practices. At least some Asian cultures have an anti-theoretical tradition,<sup>1</sup> contrasting with the recent Western emphasis on ‘theoretical theory’. Tan (2001: 59) suggests five major contrasts between Chinese and Western thought on translation: ‘pragmaticality vs. science; intuitive vs. postulational thinking; covert understanding vs. overt formalisation; conservatism vs. innovation; and neutralism vs. mysticism’. Some reasons for the relative lack of systematic theorizing in north India in ancient and medieval times are the fact that translation between allied languages such as Sanskrit and Pali posed few problems necessitating theoretical formulations, the belief that ‘translation is not different from original creation’ (Gopinathan 1997: 109), so that linguistic and literary theories sufficed, and the fact that high Sanskrit culture, the traditional site of theoretical formulations, was largely unaffected by translation (Dash and Pattanaik 2007: 164). Despite the dearth of reflective and analytical treatises, local scholarly constructs offer insights. For instance, Cheung (2006: 39–40) suggests that the belief in the lack of absolute correspondence between language and meaning among certain Chinese ancients

'can be taken as the philosophical basis for the viability of translation'. As she remarks (p. 39), 'they could take language as a means to an end, to be put aside once the end has been achieved ... Perhaps it is such an understanding of language that underpins the nature of the enterprise of conveyance, and makes translation possible.'

Just as Chinese thinkers on translation have drawn on the concepts and critical vocabulary of literary and aesthetic discourse, so too have Indian thinkers. Sinha (2002: 252–3) observes: 'in Sanskrit poetics we find great discourses on the complex relationship between word and meaning, or/and language and world, and this may be significant for conceiving a theory of translation.' Examples include the fifth-century philosopher-grammarian Bhartrhari's *sphota* (semantic realization) theory, whereby translation can be regarded as a process of identifying 'equivalent meaning-bearing symbols ... which are capable of bursting forth with the meaning of the source text in the target text' (Gopinathan 2000: 168); Bhartrhari's three levels of language, whereby translation entails 'eliminating the peculiarities of the source language and finding the universal language of the *madhyama-pashyanti* stage, from where one may transform the linguistic details to the target language' (Sinha 2002: 253); the concepts of *auchitya* (propriety in text selection, methodology, and conveying the intended meaning) and *dhvani* (suggestive meaning) (see Gopinathan 2000). The psycho-spiritual theories of Sri Aurobindo (1893–1950) are based on ancient Indian thinking and a belief that text analysis (and hence translation) involves not only linguistic and intellectual processing but also intuitive cognition at the super-conscious level (see Gopinathan 2006).

### 2.1.1 Conceptualizations of 'translation'

Expectations in Asia of what constitutes 'translation' have varied over time and space, from the highly interlinear (e.g. *kanbun kundoku*, the practice of giving Chinese texts a Japanese 'reading'; see Wakabayashi 1998) to 'transcreation' (India), from intralingual translations (e.g. rendering poetic language into vernacular speech in oral performances) to intersemiotic translations.<sup>2</sup> The values attached to different practices have also varied cross-culturally—for example, free translation has generally been regarded in a negative light in Japan, unlike in India.

The metalanguage likewise reflects different conceptualizations. The Sanskrit *anuvad*—one of several equivalents for 'translation' in India—originally meant 'repetition' (a temporal concept), not interlinguistic transfer (a spatial concept) (Trivedi 2006: 111–13). The range of understandings in the Philippines alone is suggested by the Tagalog *pagsasalin*, where the transferred material takes on the shape of its new container (Barbaza 2005: 250), by Cebuano terms that include the concept of 'a sharing in knowledge, of mutual openness' (Mojares 1990: 81), and by Hiligaynon terms connoting invention and discovery (Villareal 1994: 32). Indigenous Japanese terms portrayed translation as softening, breaking down, simplifying, or making proper, but these terms have been partly superseded by Chinese- and Western-derived terms. The result has been to render notions of 'translation' in Japan more complex and multi-layered. In pre-Qin China there was no fixed label for 'translation', so the designations for people performing this task 'assume great theoretical significance' (Cheung 2006: 47).

### 2.1.2 Oral and performative aspects

The Western concern with written translation largely overlooks oral milieux and practices that blur the written/oral distinction (e.g. Amane Nishi's attempts in nineteenth-century Japan to incorporate the foreign sound in his written translations of European texts). The recitations still common in many Asian societies (distinct from the dramatic readings of Europe) are characterized by a public and shared performative dimension with no physical or temporal distance between 'translator' and audience (resulting in more direct engagement), and by features such as an emphasis on aural accessibility and impact, standardized formulations alongside an expectation of linguistic and thematic variation, 'cognate doublets [...] relexicalisations and loan translations; and the blending of phrases from diverse sources through language hybridization and neutralization' (Khushchandani 2002: 48). The result is flexible attitudes towards originality, a non-privileging of the original (which was not definitive and might exist only in the memory), and a regard for the performer as creative interpreter. Such welcoming of difference contrasts with the long-standing Western emphasis on equivalence and the sanctity of the source text.

### 2.1.3 Transcreation

Partly because of its predominantly oral tradition, precolonial India witnessed creative reinterpretations of important

texts for new audiences or times. Reworkings of Sanskrit classics in regional languages ranged from folk versions to presentations of selected episodes or versions from different perspectives, and might entail changes in plot, characterization, and dialogue, and ‘elaboration, interpolation, explaining the cultural value of the original text, image change, image recreation, translative explanation and elucidation’ (Gopinathan 2006: 237). These transcreations were regarded as original works reincarnated by a ‘subsequent author’ (Trivedi 2006: 114). Trivedi observes (pp. 106–7):

why these later versions are not called ‘translations’ when they resemble closely the Sanskrit ‘originals’ in general outline of the plot, most of the episodes, the dramatis personae, and substantially the theme, may seem an obvious question to ask but [...] such a question arises only when we subscribe implicitly and unquestioningly to the assumption that the Western concepts of the ‘original’ and the ‘translation’ are universal. [...] the use of the word ‘originality’ in this kind of context already queers the pitch, by assigning a value to originality which may then be interrogated but not altogether denied.

With these recastings, equivalence was based not on linguistic but cultural, aesthetic, and communicative grounds (Gopinathan 2000: 171). Transcreational practices also occur in the familial relationships centring around core texts in other parts of South Asia and in South-East Asia. Indian classics have been given a Muslim or political framework, for example. (Thus Thailand’s King Rama I reframed the *Ramayana* in terms of ‘the ties between a warrior-king and his soldiers’ (Damrhung 2006: 245) to suit his own ends.)

### 2.1.4 Authorship and creativity

Western/capitalist notions of ‘ownership’ of the text and copyright—deriving partly from the fixedness and authoritativeness imparted by printing (unlike, for example, the impermanence of the palm-leaf manuscripts long used in India and South-East Asia)—are linked to ‘reverence for the written word and a highly developed sense that language expresses the thoughts of individuals’ (Cummings 2005: 196). This differs from traditional notions in South and South-East Asia, where public/private boundaries were less sharply delineated, multiple retellings made authorship (often anonymous) of little interest, and there was ‘creative disrespect’ (Jedamski 2005: 213) for the original. Although imported Western genres introduced the concepts of originality, authorship, and the translator’s subservience to the author, along with closer adherence to the original, traditional attitudes continue to influence contemporary thinking.

With retellings, creativity lay in breathing new life into existing works. Discussing translation in Indonesia, Jedamski (2000: 25) comments:

They could draw on a well-established element in Malay literary traditions in which the copying of foreign models has always been a crucial and highly regarded form of literary endeavour. [...] Consequently, the leading criteria would not be the Western notions of originality and genius, but usefulness within cultural, social, and political discourses.

In Japan *kanbun kundoku*, adaptations and retellings of children’s literature, for instance, have blurred distinctions between author and translator and between original works and reworkings. This might partly explain the relatively high status and visibility of translators there. Conversely, Trivedi (1995: 194–5) comments that ‘nearly all worthwhile Hindi writers of the present generations have translated; translation has been as it were an essential aspect of the realisation of their own creativity’. Phukan (2003: 28) notes that some commentators even regard the act of writing in Indian English as an act of ‘translation’. All this blurs the boundaries between writing and translating.

### 2.1.5 Views on source and target languages/texts

Monolingual societies are the exception in Asia, with Myanmar alone having 107 languages. Devy (1998) maintains that, whereas largely monolingual cultures are aware of translation because it represents the Other’s intrusion, the multilingual cultures of many Third World countries have produced a ‘translating consciousness’ that ‘treats the SL and the TL as parts of a larger and continuous spectrum of various intersecting systems of verbal signs’ (p. 55). Mukherjee (2000: 188) suggests, however, that translation in India today is becoming ‘a more self-conscious act’. This is somewhat similar to developments in eighteenth-century Japan resulting from Sorai Ogyū’s arguments about

the separate ontological status of Chinese and Japanese (see Sakai 1992). The idea of a translating consciousness differs, however, from the concept of Japan as a ‘translation culture’. The latter notion refers to the fact that translations are produced and read in great volume in Japan, and highly valued as a conduit for imported ideas. Indeed, the modernization of the country has been predicated on the innovative force of translation.

Distinctions between source and target languages/texts are rendered problematic by certain practices and attitudes in Asia, where source texts were sometimes produced by educated locals in an elite language not regarded as foreign but requiring translation for a broad readership (e.g. Classical Chinese in Vietnam, Sanskrit in medieval India). Translation's resulting potential to reorganize social hierarchies has led to claims that purely linguistic or textual theories cannot account for such intracultural contexts. In precolonial India, linguistic identities were bound up with religious, social, and literary identities, so translations across these groupings involved more than linguistic factors (e.g. transmission of knowledge associated with particular groups having ‘rightful’ access). Khubchandani (2002: 51) argues that in India, translation involves ‘transferring from one language tradition to another’, covering ‘the entire gamut of cultural and communication ethos, including rhetorical systems’.

### 2.1.6 Motivation for translation

The transfer of ideas has not necessarily always been the impetus behind translation in Asia. Depending on circumstances, the motivation has varied widely—for instance, to obtain foreign knowledge or inspiration from liberation movements elsewhere; to reach foreign audiences and thereby enhance a writer's domestic status; to reach wider or marginalized audiences at home (e.g. through use of the vernacular rather than classical or standard language), ‘thereby both conspiring against and colluding with’ a dominant discourse such as Sanskrit or English (Dash and Pattanaik 2007: 172); to formulate or consolidate a cultural or national identity; or to revive or strengthen the local language and literature through incorporating or domesticating foreign elements. All this reflects different attitudes towards the role of translation.

### 2.1.7 Encounters with the West

European colonization (an experience shared by many parts of Asia) and the advent of European texts from the fifteenth century onwards constituted a watershed for translation in Asia. Contact with European knowledge and technology led to a sense of the need to modernize, and translations played a vital role in this, to the extent that Chinese modernity, for instance, is regarded as ‘translated modernity’ (Liu 1995). Many of the texts translated were utilitarian works, in which preference was given to functional rather than aesthetic priorities.

Nevertheless, literary translation also contributed to modernization through its impact on language and the ideas conveyed by translated works. In Japan, for example, translations were instrumental in bringing the written language closer to speech, while the expansion of modern Chinese vocabulary, idioms, and diction was indebted to Japanese translations of European texts. Early twentieth-century Korean translations of the Bengali writer Tagore's poetry contributed not only to ideas about nationalism and the role of women, but also to debates about translation (e.g. literal vs. free, acceptability of translation by way of a third language) (Hyun 2005). Often the initial focus was on the plot; it was only later that literary translation was elevated to an art and the translation discourse became more influenced by it (as distinct from the translation of religious and utilitarian texts). This discourse included debates about the selection of texts for translation, and how translations might contribute to the domestic canon. The impact of translations on original writing often sparked debate over whether to imitate foreign themes, genres, and models of writing, and whether these constituted an enriching or corrupting influence.

Colonial authorities (both European and Japanese) used translation to impart their own values, while the colonized sometimes criticized translation as ‘blind imitation of the colonizer’ (Jedamski 2005: 239; e.g. in Indonesia in the 1930s and 1940s). One line of thinking in present-day India is linked to the special status of English, whose global prestige means ‘it does not carry the usual connotations of a “receptor” language’ (Kothari 2003: 34) when regional literature is translated into English. Much Indian writing today displays a certain unease about translation into English, the language of the former colonizer. Mathew (2007: 176–8) points out that such translation represents an ‘upward’ aspiration away from Indian languages, which are associated with a lack of education and modernity, but that it excludes 96 per cent of the population and wrongly equates India with English. While admitting that such translations render regional languages ‘less relevant’, Kothari (2003: 33) suggests that they represent an instance of regional languages putting English to use for their own purposes, and in the process

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English itself is being internalized and appropriated.

Despite growing concern (e.g. in India, Japan, and Korea) with representations in other languages, particularly English, the Asian discourse has typically been more concerned with the effect of inward translations, for the domestic audience, than with the images presented by outward translations to the wider world. Different translation directions have affected both the practice of translation and the expectations placed upon it, as demonstrated by the attitudes of the Bengali intelligentsia and reading public towards translations of European works (where creative adaptation is accepted) and translations of Bengali classics (where precision is demanded). Nevertheless, Chaudhuri (2006: 264) suggests that these divergent attitudes within Bengali culture might derive from an identical mindset whereby ‘in both cases, the colonial subject is expressing his urge for assimilation with the hegemonic culture’.

Translations were also important tools in decolonization, and Phukan (2003: 29–30) suggests that a ‘persistent awareness of the post-colonial situation guides Indian theories of translation’—a political edge that contrasts sharply with the Japanese discourse, for instance. The dual role of translation policy is exemplified by the Burmese Translation Society, a government organization that since 1947 has used translation to introduce scientific knowledge and ‘suitable’ works of literature, while discouraging and censoring other translations. Some Asian nations (e.g. Malaysia and the Philippines) have adopted policies of translating foreign texts for use in educational institutions as a means of promoting social goals and better equipping the local language(s) to handle intellectual content—a phenomenon accorded little attention in translation studies.

The extent of the linguistic and cultural differences embodied in European texts frequently necessitated radical adaptation and acculturation. The challenge of coming up with equivalents for very foreign concepts and objects triggered debates on whether to borrow the foreign term (with or without explanation), use existing terms whose meaning overlapped with the foreign term, or coin new terms, as well as discussions about the appropriateness of domesticating foreign works. The dominant approaches differed over space and time (e.g. translators in Edo Japan mainly used transliteration or translation, whereas Meiji-period techniques included coining terms, redefining existing words, and borrowing equivalents from Chinese). To compensate for the ‘inadequacies’ of the Chinese language, in the 1920s and 1930s a wave of Chinese theorists (e.g. Lu Xun, Zhou Zuoren) advocated assimilating European linguistic forms into the Chinese language (Chan 2000: 61). Translations have helped revitalize Asian languages by introducing new words, metaphors and grammatical usages.

### 2.1.8 Intraregional translation

Since the encounter with Europe, Asian discourse has been dominated by thinking about translation from or into European languages, rather than among Asian languages. Hung and Wakabayashi (2005: 8) observe that intra-Asian translations are ‘a largely unexplored but richly promising area, involving ... permutations of cultural power balance beyond the usual “centre-periphery” combination’. For instance, Das (2002: 36) lists six possible relationships when translating Oriya into Hindi. Unequal power relations have played out amongst and within Asian cultures: China’s central position meant that it long lacked interest in translating secular works from elsewhere, while the sharing of Sanskrit (Brahmin) knowledge with other languages and castes through translations ‘meant a shift in social equations’ (Dash and Pattanaik 2007: 157). Mukherjee (1981: 129–30) notes:

Translations from one modern Indian language into another tend to flow from high potential to low potential—that is, through translation some languages transmit far more than what they receive, while other languages (such as Bangla, for instance) are notoriously indifferent to other Indian languages in this regard. This may be a hang-over from some early time when Bengalis used to translate from foreign languages, while other Indian languages translated from Bangla, thus giving the latter a persistent superiority complex.

Behl (2002: 89) suggests that one reason for the lack of attention to translation among Indian languages is uncertainty about the relationship between interlinguistic translation and translation across social/ideological differences (e.g. between Islamic and Hindu contexts). For Gandhi, however, translation was ‘a process that countered the insularity of cultures’ (Kothari 2003: 76).

The channels along which source texts have travelled in Asia have not necessarily acted as conduits for

theoretical ideas on translation, which evolved mainly on the basis of existing practices and local contexts, although Japanese writers, for example, occasionally refer to Yan Fu's principles (see below).

### 2.1.9 Faithfulness

The debates on refined vs. 'unhewn' translation (e.g. use of transliteration, textual omission) that characterized the initial stage of sutra translation in China (see Cheung 2006) spilled over into the secular arena, and Elsie Chan (2001: 232) suggests that the Chinese discourse has focused on 'the debate over form/rhetoric ... vs. content/substance'.<sup>3</sup> Luo Xinzhang (1984, cited in Chan 2002: 62) has traced the evolution of Chinese principles of translation from 'original purport'<sup>4</sup> (Dao'an, fourth-century translator of Buddhist scriptures), via faithfulness (Yan Fu) and 'spiritual resemblance' (Fu Lei, 1908–66), to 'sublime consummation' (Qian Zhongshu, 1910–98).<sup>5</sup> The most influential translation theorist in modern China was Yan Fu, who in 1897 presented a tripartite model—*xin* (faithfulness), *da* (communicability or comprehensibility) and *ya* (elegance or readability)—based on norms already established for Chinese literature. Chan (2002: 71) notes that *xin* could mean either 'sincere writing with true and faithful intention' or 'sincere purpose', which would mean that 'the circumstances dictated a translation strategy of acculturation. This need not translate into mimetic "faithfulness" or reproduction of the full content and form of the original text, as the conventional interpretation of *xin* has it.'<sup>6</sup> There has been criticism of these vague principles (especially *ya*) and debate about their relative weight, and Yan's model has been criticized for oversimplifying the complexity of translation and for its discrepancy with his own practice (Chan 2002: 63). Questions of faithfulness recur repeatedly in the Chinese discourse:

In the 1960s, discourse about translation, under the 'direct leadership of the Party', was dominated by the notion of faithfulness advocated by Lu Xun, an extremely influential leftist writer, especially since Mao Zedong had spoken openly in favour of Lu Xun's strategy of rigid translation and personally championed the importance of 'accuracy' in translation. (Cheung 2002: 155)

In the 1930s the Japanese scholar Toyoichirō Nogami advocated 'colourless' translation, by which he meant producing a 'neutral' translation rather than imparting the wrong tone or a compensatory tone coloured by the translator's own style or emotions. Nogami advocated an approach in which the original text is allowed to shine through the translation, and he argued that translations should sound foreign and that the strength of imported works lies in their freshness of expression and form.

It should also be noted that 'different translator communities have responded variously to the same goal—e.g. novelists and readers in Japan expected translations to reflect the source texts faithfully so that their very difference could stimulate the indigenous literary tradition, while in the Malay context stimulation was sought not in faithful renditions but in creative adaptations' (Hung and Wakabayashi 2005: 12). Several writers (e.g. Devy 1998: 48; Phukan 2003: 29) have observed that the anxieties about faithfulness and equivalence that reach back to the fall of the Tower of Babel and the ensuing 'confounding' of language have long dominated the Western metaphysics of translation but were traditionally of little concern in India, with its belief in transmigration of the soul and ensuing acceptance of change in form, as well as the lack of a notion of a fixed original. Accuracy and faithfulness were, however, valued in scientific works (Paniker 1998: 39) and became more important with the introduction of European norms (especially through translations of the Bible). Trivedi (1995: 35) pinpoints the 1920s as the shift from a norm of 'cross-cultural accommodation and adaptations' in translations into Hindi to a norm of accuracy and fidelity, 'for reasons not yet fully identified or understood', but arguably related to the colonizer's norms. Ramakrishna (2000: 92) suggests that 'modern-day Indian translators and bilingual readers seem [...] to be more concerned with the notion of fidelity, subscribing to the idea of a betrayal syndrome underlying all translation activity'. This in fact runs counter to contemporary post-structuralist moves in the West away from faithfulness and towards the concept of plurality (Bassnett 1993: 147).

## 2.2 The current state of knowledge and thought

### 2.2.1 Indigenous discourse

Traditional views remain influential in Asia today, as L. T. Chan (2001: 162) remarks in a discussion of ten contemporary books published in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.<sup>7</sup> Chinese scholars are, however, paying greater

attention to cultural and ideological aspects and drawing on ideas from other disciplines. The introduction of Western theories has triggered calls for theory grounded in Chinese realities, and Chan (2000: 64) describes how Liu Miqing from the Chinese University of Hong Kong has presented an unprecedented systematic framework that ‘blends traditional Chinese aesthetics with Western approaches to translation in order to rewrite translation theory from a Chinese perspective’. Calls for local theories are also heard in India, for instance. Devy (1998: 48) observes that critics and writers such as A. K. Ramanujan, Dilip Chitre, and Bhalchandra Nemade have made ‘perceptive statements’ on translation, while other contemporary Indian theorists of note include Ganesh Devy himself, Tejaswini Niranjana, Gayatri Spivak, and Harish Trivedi.

One innovative Japanese thinker, Akira Yanabu, argues that there has long been an acceptance of translational language in Japan, leading to the concepts of a ‘third language’ and ‘third literature’—i.e. a special area for translations. Translationese, generally frowned upon in the West, has been regarded positively and had a positive impact in Japan, where writers of original works have even imitated this ‘translational style’, thereby helping to introduce Modernism. Japanese philosophers are also paying increasing attention to questions of translation, and Naoki Sakai (1997) has written a thought-provoking work on translation and subjectivity. Although the profession in contemporary Japan is dominated by women, the discourse remains dominated by men, as elsewhere in Asia.

While uncritical adoption of Western theoretical discourses risks perpetuating power imbalances, an overemphasis on the distinctive features of the Asian discourse risks presenting an imbalanced view. Moreover, such a perspective might be driven by ideological considerations, a possible example being the claim about the ‘history of non-translation’ (Trivedi 2006: 106) into Indian languages before colonization. (This claim has been refuted by other scholars; perhaps the practices that occurred were simply not regarded as ‘translation’.) Adapting the warning by Niranjana (1992: 180), we might also stress the importance of avoiding attempts to show that the Asian discourse on translation is already modern and hence worthy of the West’s attention, or validated only in relation to Western thinking.

Some Asian ideas with Western counterparts might derive from fundamental cross-linguistic/cultural features of translation. He Yuanjian (2001: 180) suggests that universal principles ‘are likely to be identified in the areas of (1) cognition, (2) linguistic processing, and (3) human cultural and social fundamentals’. More specifically, Tan (2001: 64ff.) identifies the following similarities between the Western and Chinese traditions:

1. ‘a high degree of cognitive similarity’ (e.g. the study of ‘principles, methods, procedures, and classifications of translation’);
2. ‘the distinction between ‘literal’ and ‘free’ translation’ (even though ‘Chinese and Western writers have used different ways to express their thoughts on the issue’);
3. ‘the long tradition of centring discussions around the fundamental issue of “fidelity”’;
4. ‘systematization of translation principles and methods’; and
5. ‘concrete matters such as translation skills and techniques’.

Apparent resemblances to Western concepts can, however, be misleading. For instance, the *chokuyaku/iyaku* dichotomy in Japan does not map directly onto the ostensible ‘equivalents’ of literal and free translation, which carry different valences.

Whether nativist or a reasoned rejection of universalism, calls for local theories imply that these theories are difficult to internationalize, while also projecting cultural confidence vis-à-vis Western theorizing, whose occasional claims as to the possibility of a universal theory have been criticized in Asia as homogenizing and hegemonic. Phukan (2003: 29–30) comments that the Indian repudiation of a universal theory ‘serves as a challenge to the hegemony of theory over practice, another peculiar feature of the West’.

### 2.2.2 Application of Western ideas of translation

Since the 1950s Western translation theories have been imported into China, where Nida’s ideas have been particularly influential. Imported ideas have, however, led to a ‘debate about theoretical hegemony, with one side rejecting the “old” as simplistic and ossified, and the other side dismissing the “new” as iconoclastic and irrelevant’ (Chan 2002: 63). Despite their growing influence, cultural theories have met with criticism in China on the grounds of their impracticality and their inapplicability to and inadequacy for Asian contexts of translation, as

well as their 'in the post-colonial sense, strict interpellation' (E. Chan 2001: 235). This has led to calls for an Asian recontextualization or for local theories of translation. In Hong Kong the ideas of scholars such as Newmark, Lambert, and Even-Zohar have been taken up, but L. T. Chan (2001: 168) maintains that despite its colonization Hong Kong has produced little research applying postcolonialist theories to local translation. Foreign postmodern and post-structuralist works have met with somewhat unthinking acceptance in Japan since the late 1970s, but are yet to have much influence on the translation discourse, in contrast to China since the 1990s. Ideas emerging from India have much in common with—and indeed have greatly shaped—postcolonial views on translation. Ideas on translational resistance are of particular interest, although Niranjana (2002: 58–9) argues: 'The post-colonial translator must be wary of essentialist anti-colonial narratives; in fact s/he must attempt to deconstruct them, to show their complicity with the master narrative of imperialism.'

Some work emerging from Asia is innovative in its synthesis of Western and local conceptual bases. For instance, Gopinathan (1997: 111) notes that in 1958 Prabhakar Machve linked the Tantric practice of 'entering another body' to metempsychosis and translation, interpreted as a dual process of transferring the meaning (soul) of the text and replacing the style (body) at various linguistic levels. While recognizing the relevance of postcolonial translation theory to India, Dash and Pattanaik (2007: 154) note that it is particularly problematic to 'impose derivative theoretical frameworks' on ancient and medieval India, and their paper is an attempt to arrive at a more relevant theory. Looking ahead, Merican (2006: 218) suggests that the concepts of 'cannibalism' and manipulation 'could be used to develop a new attitude towards [Malaysian] cultural relationships with present hegemonic powers and in turn develop a more confident attitude towards translating others' works and translating our works into other languages'.

### 2.3 Future directions

With Asia's growing importance on the world stage and the 'international turn' in translation studies, we can expect further ideas to emerge from Asia as well as more nuanced studies of Asian thinking on translation. This will require avoiding the risks of bias and essentialism inherent in both homogenizing and culture-specific claims. Elsie Chan (2001: 229) argues that in order to be 'reciprocal and constructive', mediation between the world-views of the East and West 'must be selective, discriminatory, progressive and multi-dimensional'. She adds: 'with our own tradition, we need consolidation, re-reading. With the West, we need positive engagement, not containment' (p. 239). Scholars are now emerging who bring not only Western insights to bear on translation in Asian cultures, but also Asian insights to bear on Western ideas. For instance, Chan (2000: 54) claims that 'the uniqueness of the Chinese case forces us to revise the parameters within which postcolonial theorizing functions'.

Liu (2000) suggests that Hong Kong's access to developments in China and English-speaking countries, its greater academic freedom, and its focus on both literary and pragmatic translation position it to make a unique contribution to translation studies. One major 'translation culture' that has so far contributed little to the international discourse is Japan, but recent developments suggest this is beginning to change. South-East Asia represents another lacuna, but the fact that scholars in Malaysia, for instance, have access to ideas from the Nusantara area, the Muslim world and the West could produce fresh insights. Much can be learnt from Asian experiences—for example by looking at translation from the viewpoint of the colonized, by abandoning notions of nations as homogeneous translational spaces, by placing greater importance on translation in oral and performing traditions, by examining the impact of social hierarchies on translation (and vice versa), and by experimenting with substituting 'recreation' for the concern with equivalence. Although Asian ontological and epistemological legacies might differ from those in the West, the theoretical insights that can be drawn have transcultural significance.

### Further reading and relevant resources

Vol. 15, no. 2 of *The Translator* (2009) is a special issue on Chinese discourses on translation, and the December 2008 issue of *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* is a thematic issue on 'The Culture of Translation in Modern Japan'. Other recent publications of note include the edited volume by Luo and He (2009) on *Translating China* and the edited volume by Wakabayashi and Kothari (2009), which focuses particularly but not solely on the Indian context.

### Notes:

(1) E.g. Konishi (1994: 8) comments that the Japanese literary establishment clings to Positivism and finds foreign literary theory ‘burdensome’. Japanese writers on translation are more interested in history (the impressive scholarship by Tsutomu Sugimoto is of particular note), mistranslations, and practical and professional aspects (except for translations of rather dated Western theoretical works).

(2) Lindsay (2006: 14–15) provides an insightful treatment of translation involving verbal, visual, musical, and kinetic languages in Asian performative traditions such as Malay verse epics translated from Sanskrit, Arabic, or Persian. These transcend the unidirectional notion of intersemiotic translation proposed by Jakobson (1959: 266) to encompass not only situations of diglossia and polyglossia but also a back-and-forth movement between different sign systems within a single performance.

(3) Leo Tak-hung Chan (2004: 100) suggests: ‘The preference for evaluation, together with the overall de-emphasis of the linguistic approach, and the blurring of the lines of demarcation between theory and criticism, are perhaps the distinguishing hallmarks of a body of translation theory propounded in China in the twentieth century.’

(4) Cheung (2002: 157) renders this as ‘follow the source’.

(5) Discussing this ‘state of total transformation’ proposed by Qian Zhongshu in 1964, Cheung (2002: 159) notes: ‘Even though total and complete transformation is an unattainable ideal, the setting of such a standard has the effect of encouraging the pursuit of excellence in literary translation.’

(6) Chan (2002: 69) also rejects any apparent contradiction between comprehensibility and elegance, because to Yan comprehensibility did not mean plain language for a general audience, but ‘political and ideological accessibility’ to the mandarin elite.

(7) For an overview of Chinese theories, see Zhang and Xu (2002) and Chan (2004).

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## Oxford Handbooks Online

### Translating the Sacred

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### [-] Abstract and Keywords

This article discusses the translation of the Bible, the Qur'an, and Buddhist texts. The Septuagint is a Jewish Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. The Vulgate is a Christian Latin translation of the whole Bible, i.e. Old and New Testaments. Large numbers of new English versions have appeared in the twentieth century, following different theories of translation. Since 1800, the Bible has been translated into versions of widely spoken languages. Muslims have been reluctant to admit that there are any non-Arabic loanwords in the Qur'an, although Western scholars have argued otherwise. In English, the closest to a 'classic' translation of the Qur'an is that of George Sale. Translations of Indian Buddhist texts from Sanskrit into Chinese began about ad 150, and continued until about 1050. Translations into Tibetan began in about the seventh century. Finally, this article gives examples of translation from the Bible and the Qur'an.

Keywords: Bible, Qur'an, Buddhist texts, Septuagint, translation, spoken languages

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### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter will be concerned with the translation of 'sacred' texts from their original language(s). It will discuss translations of the Bible (the sacred book of Judaism and of Christianity) in some detail; then, more briefly, translations of the Qur'an (the sacred book of Islam); and, very briefly, translations of Buddhist texts (in particular from Indian languages into Chinese). The space given to each tradition is intended to reflect, not the relative 'importance' of the texts, but the complexity of the translation process in each case. The chapter will then discuss recent debates about biblical translation, in particular the views of Eugene A. Nida. Finally different translations of one biblical text (Psalm 2), and one Qur'anic text (the 'Light Verse' from Surah 24), will be compared.

As will be seen, translation is a process integral to the very composition of the Bible, as well as to its versions in other languages. As of 2005 the Bible (or part thereof) had been translated into over 2,400 languages (Noss 2007: 24), and many further translations were in progress. In the more commonly spoken languages it exists in many alternative versions. In principle the Bible is therefore accessible to almost the entire human race; it is the most widely translated and disseminated text in history. This situation has come about mainly because Christians believe that the message of the Bible can be presented in any language. Another reason for concentrating here on the Bible is that much modern debate about translation in general has arisen from debate about the principles of biblical translation.

By comparison, while the Qur'an has certainly been translated into many languages, Muslims regard these translations as no more than aids to understanding the original Arabic, which is the only text regarded as inspired. (It may be noted that Jews have traditionally taken a comparable view of the Hebrew text of the Bible.)

In the case of Buddhist texts, the words of the Buddha have long since been lost in their original linguistic form, and

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only translations now exist. These translated texts are conventionally attributed to the Buddha, although critical scholars believe they reflect many stages and changing cultural circumstances in the evolution of the Buddhist religion.

### 3.2 The Hebrew Bible

The books constituting the Hebrew Bible came into existence over a period which can be very roughly defined as the twelfth—second centuries BC. More exact dates are much debated, and many scholars now argue that the books in their present form are essentially a product of the eighth—second centuries BC (cf. Schniedewind 2004).

In Jewish tradition the books are grouped into three divisions: (1) Torah, or the Law, i.e. the Pentateuch, or first five books of the Christian Old Testament (Genesis—Deuteronomy); (2) the Prophets, including both what the Christian Old Testament classifies as ‘Prophets’ (Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc.) and also most of what Christians call ‘historical books’ (Joshua—II Kings); (3) the Writings, comprising the remaining books of the Christian Old Testament (the Psalms, Job, Proverbs, etc.).

Hebrew is usually classified as one of the ‘north-west’ group of Semitic languages. Another member of the group is Aramaic (of which a related dialect is Syriac). Discoveries at Ugarit (modern Ras Shamra) on the Syrian coast have included texts of about the fourteenth century BC in another language which is closely related to Hebrew. More remote linguistic relatives of Hebrew are the ‘east’ Semitic languages, including Akkadian, and the ‘south’ Semitic languages, including Arabic.

With the recovery of much other ancient Near Eastern literature in the last two centuries, it has become clear that Hebrew literature must be seen against the background of a wider cultural world. In some sense it may therefore be regarded as a ‘translation’ of older literary patterns. Many parts of the ‘primeval history’ of the world in Genesis 1–11 have parallels in other Near Eastern literatures. The Ugaritic literature, mentioned above, contains many conceptual and stylistic parallels to the biblical Psalms. Perhaps the closest thing to a direct translation from these literatures that we know of is Proverbs 22.17–24.22, which is related to an older Egyptian text, the ‘Wisdom of Amenemopet’.

Until recently the earliest known manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible dated only from the ninth—eleventh centuries AD, and represented a long tradition of work by the Jewish ‘Massoretes’ to standardize the linguistic form, pronunciation, and text of the biblical books (hence the term ‘Massoretic text’). However the Dead Sea Scrolls (discovered in caves at Qumran in 1947 and later) include about 200 biblical manuscripts dating from the fourth century BC to the first AD. These manuscripts, while mostly fragmentary, indicate that in this period the Hebrew biblical texts still existed in varying forms. However, a few biblical manuscripts (also fragmentary) found at Wadi Murabba’at, and dating from the early second century AD, are more consistently close to the later Massoretic text, which may suggest that the biblical texts had been standardized by the end of the first century.

After the Jewish ‘exile’ in Babylonia in the sixth century BC Hebrew seems to have been largely replaced by Aramaic as the everyday language of Jews in Palestine, and also of such Jews as remained in Babylonia. This explains why a few late parts of the Hebrew Bible are in fact in Aramaic. It also explains why Aramaic ‘targums’, or explanatory translations of the Hebrew Bible, began to appear by about the beginning of the Christian era, and were eventually included in some manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible.

### 3.3 The targums

The surviving Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible cover all books except Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel. In Jewish tradition, a targum ascribed to Onkelos and covering the Pentateuch, and a targum ascribed to Jonathan and covering the ‘Prophets’ (in the sense defined above), are regarded as particularly authoritative. Targum Onkelos and Targum Jonathan are both comparatively literal translations, but they include explanatory expansions of the Hebrew (known as *aggadah*). There also exist two further complete targums of the Pentateuch, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Targum Neofiti (identified only in 1956). Pseudo-Jonathan is very expansive, and about twice the length of the Hebrew. All of these targums include elements and allusions which must have been added in the medieval period. The targums of the ‘Writings’ all seem to be comparatively late in date, and include varying

amounts of expansion; an extreme case is Targum Canticles, which is about five times the length of the Hebrew. In addition to these complete targums, various more fragmentary versions also survive.

References in ancient Jewish literature indicate that it was customary to accompany readings of the Hebrew Bible in synagogues with an Aramaic translation. This was to be recited orally, and by a different person from the one reading from the Hebrew scroll. In this way it was emphasized that the targum was recited only as a help to understanding the Hebrew. In time, however, as Aramaic itself ceased to be a living language, the written targums mentioned above came to be studied mainly by scholars. All aspects of the targums are discussed by Étan Levine (1988).

### 3.4 The Septuagint

The Septuagint is a Jewish Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, but also includes books not found in the Hebrew Bible (although some of these, such as Ben Sira, or Ecclesiasticus, were evidently written in Hebrew, and perhaps others in Aramaic).

According to a tradition contained in the *Letter of Aristeas* the translation was begun in Alexandria in Egypt in the third century BC, when King Ptolemy Philadelphus brought 72 scholars from Palestine to translate the Pentateuch into Greek for the famous Alexandrian Library. This story is usually regarded as apocryphal, but it may indicate that the translation did indeed begin in the third century BC, and in Egypt. However it probably appeared in piecemeal fashion over a longer period, not necessarily entirely in Egypt, and it eventually included the whole Hebrew Bible. In Christian times it became the normal form of the 'Old Testament' for Greek-speaking Christians, and the source from which Christians derived many of their theological concepts.

The true circumstances of the Septuagint's appearance have been much debated. H. St J. Thackeray (1921) and others have suggested that it was made to assist Greek-speaking Jews understand the Hebrew Bible when read in synagogues (just as the targums were made for Aramaic-speaking Jews). Thackeray also distinguished a number of different translators according to their styles. All of this seems plausible. The different books of the Septuagint (and indeed different sections within particular books) vary considerably in their translation techniques, though this may sometimes be due to 'contamination' of the Septuagint manuscripts in the course of transmission. Paul Kahle (1959) went further and argued that originally there were a number of different translations, which were only gradually reduced to what we think of as the 'Septuagint'. However Kahle's views have not been entirely confirmed by later discoveries and studies of Septuagint texts (including papyri going back to the second century BC).

The textual history of the Septuagint is in fact extremely complicated. It has been known since ancient times that the Septuagint was revised by at least three different Jewish scholars, Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, in the second century AD, in order to bring the text closer to the Hebrew. However, it now appears that some of the revision ascribed to Theodotion was in fact carried out early in the first century AD.

The Septuagint was also revised in the third century AD by the Christian scholar Origen, in his famous *Hexapla*, which presented in parallel columns the Hebrew text, the Hebrew text in Greek translation, Aquila's version, Symmachus' version, the Septuagint, and Theodotion's version. Further Christian revisions were carried out by Hesychius and by Lucian of Antioch around AD 300.

The complex textual history of the Septuagint raises many issues of interest for translation studies, but it cannot be pursued here. (For further discussion see Olofsson 1990, Fernández Marcos 2001, and Pietersma and Wright 2007.)

### 3.5 The New Testament

The New Testament is a collection of Greek texts written in c. AD 50–150. Along with the 'Old Testament', usually in its Septuagint form, it eventually came to form the Christian Bible. It includes the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Letters of Paul, the 'Catholic' Letters of other authors, and the Apocalypse, or Book of Revelation. The authorship and exact date of the texts, apart from some of the letters attributed to Paul, is uncertain.

The Gospels include sayings and parables attributed to Jesus, which in many cases seem to be translated from

Semitic, probably Aramaic, originals. (For an attempt to recover some of these originals, see Casey 1998, 2002.) There is however no definite evidence that collections of these sayings in Semitic form were ever written down. How far Jesus was familiar with the Hebrew text of the Bible is uncertain, but in a general sense his whole teaching is based on biblical concepts ('kingdom of God', 'prophet', 'Messiah', etc.).

The writers of the New Testament normally quote the 'Old Testament' in its Septuagint form. They do show some awareness of alternative readings, but this may reflect the complex textual history of the Septuagint referred to above, rather than any direct use of the Hebrew text. Whatever the true situation, the New Testament can be seen as a kind of commentary on the Old—a series of attempts to interpret the events of Jesus' life and death according to Old Testament categories. In this sense the New Testament can be seen as a kind of translation of the Old.

### 3.6 The Vulgate

The Vulgate is a Christian Latin translation of the whole Bible, i.e. Old and New Testaments, mostly made by Jerome around the end of the fourth century AD. Jerome's project began with a revision of the already existing 'Old Latin' versions of the Bible, themselves made from the Greek of the New Testament and the Septuagint version of the Old. (However it seems that the only part of the New Testament he actually revised is the Gospels.) Jerome moved on to translations of the Old Testament from the Septuagint, and finally to translations from the Hebrew.

Jerome's versions were not immediately or universally accepted. Latin Bibles of the early Middle Ages present a very varied mixture of the Old Latin with Jerome's versions. Only in the later Middle Ages did Jerome's versions predominate, and from then on the Vulgate can be called the normal Latin Bible. This was the text which was printed in the famous 'Gutenberg Bible' of about 1455, and which was declared to be the authentic form of the Latin Bible by the (Roman Catholic) Council of Trent in 1546. (For further information, see Smalley 1983.)

The above account of ancient versions of the Bible has had to omit many other examples (translations into Coptic, Armenian, Georgian, Ethiopic, Arabic, etc.). Translations into Syriac are of particular interest, because the standard Syriac translation, the *Peshitta*, evidently takes its Old Testament directly from the Hebrew (cf. Weitzman 1995); and the New Testament is translated into a language closely related to the Aramaic of Jesus and his first disciples.

### 3.7 English Bibles

English translations of parts of the Bible go back to Anglo-Saxon times. These include Anglo-Saxon glosses of the Gospels and Psalms in Latin manuscripts, but also separate translations of some books. However, complete English versions of the Bible (from the Vulgate) only began to circulate in the late fourteenth century in connection with the Lollard and Wycliffite movements. These movements were regarded as heretical by most Church authorities, and their translations were suppressed (cf. Deanesly 1920, Dove 2007).

In the Reformation period William Tyndale published a complete New Testament in 1526 (from the Greek), and then parts of the Old Testament (from the Hebrew). The first complete publication of the Bible in English was that of Miles Coverdale in 1535, which however was only partly translated from the original languages. A series of further Bibles appeared, culminating in the 'Authorized' or 'King James' version of 1611 (for details on the making of the Authorized Version, as recorded by one of the translators, see Allen 1969). This series of Bibles is closely associated with the varying fortunes of the Reformation in England, and much of theological controversy of the period turned on particular questions of biblical translation.

The Authorized Version soon became the standard form of the Bible in most of the English-speaking world down to the twentieth century, and has had a very considerable influence on later English language and literature (see Norton 1993). It was revised in the 'Revised Version' of 1881–5, according to advances in knowledge of the original languages and of textual criticism, but this version failed to replace the original Authorized Version in popular esteem.

In the twentieth century a very large number of new English versions have appeared, following many different theories of translation. Most of these cannot be mentioned here. The best-known recent translations have included: the Revised Standard Version, 1946–52; the New English Bible, 1961–70; Today's English Version/Good News Bible, 1966–76; the New International Version, 1978; the New Jerusalem Bible, 1985; the Revised English Bible, 1989; and

the New Revised Standard Version, 1989 (cf. Bruce 1979 and Daniell 2003).

### 3.8 Other biblical translations

As with the English translations mentioned above, the translation of the Bible into other languages has often deeply influenced the later history of those languages. This was the case, for example, with Martin Luther's German translation of 1522–34, which may be said to have created the first standard form of the German language.

Particularly since 1800 the Bible has been translated into more and more languages, and into more and more versions in the widely spoken languages. This activity owes much to the British and Foreign Bible Society, the American Bible Society, and similar groups, as well as to individual Christian churches. Specialized groups include the Wycliffe Bible Translators (associated with the Summer Institute of Linguistics), which translates the Bible into languages previously lacking any version (and in many cases lacking any written literature, or even any writing system at all). Such work has contributed much to understanding of the languages in question, as well as to the general spread of literacy.

### 3.9 Recent debates on biblical translation

The nature of translation has been debated since antiquity. However, just as there were comparatively few translations of literary works made in the Greek and Roman world, outside the Bible, so there are few surviving discussions of method by other than biblical translators (and in particular Jerome).

In the twentieth century, perhaps the most influential theorist on biblical translation has been Eugene A. Nida (see esp. Nida 1964b, Nida and Taber 1969). Nida has been closely associated with the Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Summer Institute of Linguistics, already mentioned. His views on "dynamic" (as opposed to "formal") equivalence' have stimulated much further debate about translation in general (cf. Munday 2001: 35–56 and *passim*).

Nida explicitly associated his views with recent work in linguistics, and in particular with the theories of generative transformational grammar developed by Noam Chomsky (1957, 1965). Only a very simplified account of either Chomsky's or Nida's views can be given here.

Chomsky believed that sentences can be analysed into several levels, each subject to particular rules. A speaker generates a deep structure, according to phrase structure rules. (S)he can then transform this deep structure by relating it to other structures, according to transformational rules. Finally (s)he can produce a surface structure, according to phonological and morphemic rules. This final surface structure will take the form of one or more idiomatic sentences in the speaker's language. The most basic structures can be called kernel sentences, which are typically active, declarative sentences which need only limited transformation to form idiomatic sentences. Chomsky further claimed that this model applies to all languages.

Nida claimed that Chomsky's model allowed translators first to decode a source text into its basic structure (or kernel sentence), then transfer it to the target language, and finally to encode it into a target text, i.e. an idiomatic text in the target language. The first of these processes, reducing a source text structure to a kernel sentence, can be described as a back-transformation. Nida again relied on generative transformational grammar in proposing that all languages employ only a limited number (between six and twelve) of basic kernel structures, and that these kernel structures of different languages agree more with each other than with the more elaborate surface structures of the languages.

On this grammatical basis Nida proposed his well-known distinction between 'formal equivalence' and 'dynamic equivalence' in translation. With formal equivalence, 'One is concerned that the message in the receptor language should match as closely as possible the different elements in the source language' (Nida 1964b: 159). In other words, the translator focuses on the source text, and as far as possible carries over the surface structure of that text into the target language, without carrying out the process of decoding, transfer, and encoding outlined above.

With dynamic equivalence, however, the translator attempts to create an 'equivalent effect' in the target language: 'the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between

the original receptors and the message' (Nida 1964b: 159). The translator here focuses on the receptor, and aims at a translation which sounds completely natural to the receptor. Ideally, at least, the translator will have carried out the full process of decoding, transfer, and encoding which Nida recommends.

Nida is also well known for the 'compositional analysis' technique. This technique divides words into their semantic components in order to decide on an equivalent translation. One example he gives is 'bachelor', which can be divided into 'male' and 'unmarried'. 'Bachelor' can be translated into a language which does not have a direct equivalent by combining the equivalents for 'male' and 'unmarried'.

As noted, Nida's theories have stimulated much further debate about translation in general, and have also attracted criticism. To begin with, these theories rely on Chomsky's earlier views on transformational grammar—views which Chomsky himself has since very largely disowned, even to the point of discarding his fundamental distinction between deep and surface structures. Chomsky's later views would call into question Nida's claim that source texts can be reduced to 'kernel sentences', which can then be readily transferred into the target language.

Critics have also questioned Nida's whole notion of 'equivalent effect'. How can we know what 'effect' was intended or produced by texts like the Bible, written thousands of years ago, in very varied cultural circumstances, all very different from our own? Is it really possible to separate the 'effect' of a text from the form in which the text is expressed? Edwin Gentzler (1993) has claimed that the actual effect intended by the Nida school of translators is to convert the receptors to Protestant Christianity. Lawrence Venuti suggests that 'equivalent effect' is in fact a manifestation of 'the hegemonic English-language nations and the unequal cultural exchanges in which they engage their global others' (Venuti 1995: 20).

Gentzler and Venuti may misrepresent what Nida means by 'equivalent effect'. However Nida is perhaps a little disingenuous about the extent to which pre-understanding (in the following case theological pre-understanding) may affect a translator's choices. Nida and Taber (1969: 2–3) cite several translations of St Paul's Epistle to the Romans 3: 21–2, and invite their reader to evaluate 'how readily and correctly an ordinary reader or hearer is likely to understand them'. The Authorized (King James) version of 1611 has:

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.

Allowing for any difficulties in reading seventeenth-century English, a modern student would probably allow that this version gives a good 'formal equivalent' of the original Greek. The Today's English Version/Good News Bible (of all recent English translations the one which aims most consistently at 'dynamic equivalence') has:

But now God's way of putting men right with himself has been revealed, and it has nothing to do with the law. The law and the prophets gave their witness to it: God puts men right through their faith in Jesus Christ. God does this to all who believe in Christ.

A reader familiar with the history of Christian theology will probably detect here a somewhat Lutheran understanding of 'the righteousness of God' as 'God's way of putting men right with himself'; and will also note that the translator cuts through the much-debated question whether Paul meant 'faith in Jesus Christ' or 'faith of (i.e. shown by) Jesus Christ'. Nida and Taber quite reasonably ask how 'readily' a modern reader will understand the different versions, but when they ask how 'correctly' (s)he will do so they perhaps betray a theological agendum. Finally, one might question whether any reader in today's secular world will 'readily' understand any version of this text without some prior grasp of the Christian notion of atonement.

### 3.10 The Qur'an

The Qur'an is regarded by Muslims as the deposit of revelations made at various times to the prophet Muhammad in the later part of his life, i.e. from about AD 610 until his death in 632. The present order of the texts is not regarded as chronological. Traditional Muslim scholarship has divided them into those delivered at Mecca and those delivered after Muhammad's 'migration' to Medina in 622, and has attempted to assign them to occasions in Muhammad's life recorded in later biographies of the prophet. Western scholars have attempted to refine this division of the revelations, and are sometimes sceptical of the value of the biographies. Such attempts at division

are made at least partly on stylistic grounds.

How far the revelations were written down during Muhammad's life is a question much debated by both Muslim and Western scholars, but it seems possible that there was at least some such recording. According to tradition the texts were not arranged in their present form until the time of the third caliph (i.e. successor to Muhammad) 'Uthman (644–56). A Western scholar, John Wansbrough, has argued that they were not in fact arranged, or perhaps even written, until the end of the eighth century (Wansbrough 1977). Recent discoveries of fragmentary early manuscripts of the Qur'an would seem to argue against this late dating (Déroche 2005).

The Qur'an itself emphasizes that the revelations have been sent down to Muhammad in an Arabic form. This might be taken to imply that other revelations, made previously to Jewish and Christian prophets in other languages, are also the authentic word of God. However the more usual Muslim understanding has been that only the Qur'an, in its Arabic form, can be so regarded. For similar reasons Muslims have been reluctant to admit that there are any non-Arabic loanwords in the Qur'an, although Western scholars have argued otherwise. The Qur'an also challenges disbelievers to produce 'anything like' the revelations made to Muhammad, and from such passages has been deduced the doctrine of the 'inimitability' of the Qur'an.

There is, therefore, no translation of the Qur'an with any status or influence comparable to, for example, the Authorized Version of the Bible in English, or Martin Luther's version in German. As already noted, Muslims regard only the original Arabic text as inspired. However, it is worth remarking that the Qur'an itself refers to at least some Hebrew scriptures (the Torah and the Psalms), and to some Christian scriptures (the Gospel), as being revelations from God, even if Jews and Christians have misunderstood or corrupted them. In a broader sense, the Qur'an refers to many biblical characters as 'prophets', and cites or alludes to many stories about them, some to be found in the Bible, and some in Jewish and Christian apocryphal texts. However Muslims do not believe that these references indicate any 'translation' or borrowing from the Bible, and they have not normally used biblical texts to interpret the relevant passages of the Qur'an.

Despite the Muslim belief that the Qur'an is inimitable, there have in fact been very many 'translations' of the text into other languages, for a variety of purposes. (A preliminary list is given in Ihsanoglu 1986.)

In English, the closest thing to a 'classic' translation of the Qur'an is that of George Sale (1734), which is still regarded as a remarkably accurate guide to the literal meaning of the text. In modern times the translation of A. J. Arberry (1955) is regarded, at least by non-Muslim scholars, as conveying something of the style of the Arabic original. Probably the best-known Muslim translation is that of N. J. Dawood (1956, and revised several times), which however, while undeniably sounding 'natural' in English, has been criticized as something of a paraphrase. A new Muslim translation by Tarif Khalidi (2008) has received favourable initial reviews as conveying both the style and the traditional theological meaning of the original.

A recent Muslim discussion of translation issues is that of Hussein Abdul-Raof (2001). However, the author begins from the traditional position of the 'inimitability' of the Qur'an, and argues that the Qur'an, as the word of God, is beyond the capacity of human minds to translate. While he refers to some modern translation theory, he does not interact with it. A more promising example of interaction between Western and Muslim scholarly views of the Qur'an may be found in the essays edited by Issa J. Boullata (2002), but these discuss translation only incidentally. Further cooperative work along these lines is much to be desired.

### 3.11 Buddhist texts

As already noted, the words of the Buddha have been lost in their original linguistic form. The Buddha's dates are uncertain, but, according to a commonly accepted interpretation of the records, they may be c.560–c.480 BC. The exact form of Indian language spoken in north-east India, where he taught, is not known. According to Southern (Theravada) Buddhist tradition the earliest Buddhist texts were preserved orally, and only written down in the first century BC. They were translated into Pali (apparently a western Indian language) from the fifth century AD. The Pali Canon (the present canon of Southern Buddhism) eventually included 'three baskets' (*tripitaka*): *Vinayapitaka*, a collection of disciplinary texts mainly relevant to the Buddhist monastic order; *Sutra*, or sermons or sayings attributed to the Buddha; and *Abhidarmapitaka*, a collection of Buddhist dogmatic or philosophical texts. There also existed at one time a larger Sanskrit canon of Buddhist texts, but only some texts of this canon now survive in

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Sanskrit. Others were translated into Chinese.

Translations of Indian Buddhist texts from Sanskrit into Chinese began about AD 150, and continued at intervals until about 1050. The Chinese canon, although also formally organized in a *tripitaka*, is much larger than the Pali canon, and includes texts from many different schools of Buddhism, and in particular the Mahayana school. Translations into Tibetan began in about the seventh century, and eventually produced the Tibetan canon, which, like the Chinese, is much larger than the Pali canon.

The Chinese translations have only recently begun to be studied for their translation technique (Hung and Pollard 1998). This technique evidently developed with time. The earliest translations, after about AD 150, appear to have been word-for-word, or at least as far as the very different grammatical structures of Indian languages and Chinese would allow. At a later stage, associated with the Indian scholar Kumarajiva, the translations were more literary. Finally, at a stage associated with the Chinese scholar Xuan Zang, renewed attention was given to the style of the original Sanskrit texts. There are obviously parallels in this story to Western discussions about translation theory.

For a guide to the whole corpus of Buddhist texts and translations the reader is referred to Reynolds (1981), and for a recent discussion by Buddhist scholars of contemporary translation issues to the essays edited by Tulku (1995).

### 3.12 Examples of translation: the Bible

#### Psalm 2

According to a common critical opinion, Psalm 2 was originally (i.e. during the time of the Israelite monarchy) an enthronement hymn, in which the enemies of Israel, at present subject to it, are said to be rebelling against the God of Israel and his 'messiah', or anointed one (i.e. the new king being enthroned). God, however, has guaranteed to the king that he is now God's son, and can ask anything from God. The enemies of Israel should therefore submit to him.

At a later stage (after the Jewish exile, when the monarchy no longer existed), the Psalm was probably interpreted as referring to 'the Messiah', i.e. a future leader whom God would send to save his people from the oppression of foreign nations. In Christian times, after Jesus' followers had come to believe that Jesus was the Messiah, the Psalm was applied to him, and it is so interpreted in the New Testament (Acts 4: 25–9).

Psalm 2: Authorized (King James) Version (1611) (spelling modernized)

1 *The kingdom of Christ. 10 Kings are exhorted to accept it.*

- 1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?
- 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying,*
- 3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.
- 4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision.
- 5 Then shall he speak to them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.
- 6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.
- 7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my son; this day I have begotten thee.
- 8 Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession.
- 9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.
- 10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth.
- 11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.
- 12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish *from* the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

The Authorized version gives a fairly literal translation of the Hebrew Massoretic text. Like that text, it does not print the psalm according to the form of Hebrew verse. It indicates words added to the original in italics. It follows the Jewish tradition of reading the particular name of the God of Israel (believed to have been *Yahweh*) as 'Adonai' or

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'the Lord'. The preliminary summary note 'The kingdom of Christ' clearly indicates a Christian interpretation of the text.

### Psalm 2: New Revised Standard Version (1989)

1 Why do the nations conspire,  
and the peoples plot in vain?  
2 The kings of the earth set themselves,  
and the rulers take counsel together,  
against the LORD and his anointed, saying  
3 'Let us burst their bonds asunder,  
and cast their cords from us'.  
4 He who sits in the heavens laughs;  
the LORD has them in derision.  
5 Then he will speak to them in his wrath,  
and terrify them in his fury, saying,  
6 'I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill.'  
7 I will tell of the decree of the LORD:  
He said to me, 'You are my son;  
today I have begotten you.  
8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,  
and the ends of the earth your heritage.  
9 You shall break them with a rod of iron,  
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.'  
10 Now therefore, O kings, be wise;  
be warned, O rulers of the earth.  
11 Serve the LORD with fear,  
with trembling  
12 kiss his feet [meaning of Hebrew is uncertain]  
or he will be angry, and you will perish in the way;  
for his wrath is quickly kindled.  
Happy are all who take refuge in him.

The New Revised Standard Version, like its predecessor the Revised Standard Version (1946–57), follows the wording of the Authorized Version as far as is consistent with modern English usage, and modern understanding of the Hebrew text. It is therefore essentially a literal translation, along critical lines. It makes some attempt to reproduce the form of Hebrew verse by printing the lines in stichs. It does not italicize words added to the original to clarify the meaning. It adds notes indicating where the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain, and in verse 12 it follows a common emendation of the text ('kiss his feet' instead of 'kiss the son'), which is not however attested in manuscripts of the Massoretic text.

### Psalm 2: New International Version (1978)

1 Why do the nations rage  
and the peoples plot in vain?  
2 The kings of the earth take their stand  
and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One [Or *anointed one*]  
3 "Let us break their chains," they say,  
"and throw off their fetters."  
4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs;  
the LORD scoffs at them.  
5 Then he rebukes them in his anger  
and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,  
6 "I have installed my King [Or *king*]  
on Zion, my holy hill."

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7 I will proclaim the decrees of the LORD:  
He said to me, "You are my Son [Or *son*; also in verse 12]  
today I have become your father [Or *have begotten you*]  
8 Ask of me,  
and I will make the nations your inheritance,  
the ends of the earth your possession.  
9 You will rule them with an iron sceptre; [Or *will break them with a rod of iron*]  
you will dash them to pieces like pottery."  
10 Therefore, you kings, be wise;  
be warned, you rulers of the earth.  
11 Serve the LORD with fear  
and rejoice with trembling.  
12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry  
and you be destroyed in your way,  
for his wrath can flare up in a moment.  
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

The New International Version was prepared by conservative Christian scholars who objected to the critical principles of the Revised Standard Version, and wished to follow the traditional Hebrew and Greek texts (hence no emendation in verse 12). However, it does add interpretive notes of various kinds. In this Psalm, for example, the alternative upper and lower case printings of 'anointed one', 'king' and 'son' indicate that the text may (but does not have to be) understood of a 'Messianic' individual. In other cases the notes indicate a more literal translation than the periphrastic one given in the text (so either 'I have become your father' or, more literally, 'I have begotten you', etc.). The NIV is probably the best-selling version of the Bible in English today.

### Psalm 2: Today's English Version/Good News Bible (1966–76)

#### God's Chosen King

1 Why do the nations plan rebellion?  
Why do people make their useless plots?  
2 Their kings revolt,  
their rulers plot together against the LORD and against the king he chose.  
3 'Let us free ourselves from their rule', they say;  
'let us throw off their control.'  
4 From his throne in heaven the LORD laughs  
and mocks their feeble plans.  
5 Then he warns them in anger  
and terrifies them with his fury.  
6 'On Zion, my sacred hill,' he says,  
'I have installed my king.'  
7 'I will announce,' says the king, 'what the LORD has declared.  
He said to me: "You are my son;  
today I have become your father.  
8 Ask, and I will give you all the nations;  
the whole earth will be yours.  
9 You will break them with an iron rod;  
you will shatter them in pieces like a clay pot."  
10 Now listen to this warning, you kings;  
learn this lesson, you rulers of the world:  
11 Serve the LORD with fear;  
12 tremble and bow down to him; [*Probable text tremble ... him; Hebrew unclear.*]  
or else his anger will be quickly aroused,  
and you will suddenly die.  
Happy are all who go to him for protection.

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Today's English Version is, of all the translations cited here, the one which aims most consistently at 'dynamic equivalence'. If taken phrase by phrase, it certainly finds equivalents which sound 'natural' to English speakers. However, some readers may feel that, taken as a whole, it lacks the cadences, poetry, and mysteriousness which characterize the Authorized Version, and to some extent also the NRSV and NIV—in other words it sounds 'flat', especially when read aloud. It will be seen that, although a note on verse 12 indicates difficulty with the Hebrew meaning, the translation 'tremble and bow down to him' is something of a compromise between the traditional text 'kiss the son' and the emendation 'kiss his feet'.

### 3.13 Examples of translation: the Qur'an

Qur'an, Surah 24 (Light), 35–8: Sale (1734)

GOD is the light of heaven and earth; the similitude of his light is as a niche in a wall, wherein a lamp *is placed*, and the lamp *inclosed* in a *case of glass*; the glass *appears* as it were a shining star. It is lighted with the *oil of* a blessed tree, an olive neither of the east nor of the west: it wanteth little but that the oil thereof would give light, although no fire touched it. *This is light added unto light.* GOD will direct unto his light whom he pleaseth. GOD propoundeth parables unto men; for GOD knoweth all things. In the houses which GOD hath permitted to be raised, and that his name be commemorated therein! men celebrate his praise in the same, morning and evening, whom neither merchandizing nor selling diverteth from the remembering of GOD, and the observance of prayer, and the giving of alms; fearing the day whereon men's hearts and eyes shall be troubled; that GOD may recompense them according to the utmost merit of what they shall have wrought, and may add unto them of his abundance *a more excellent reward*; for GOD bestoweth on whom he pleaseth without measure.

Sale's fairly literal version gives a good impression of how the Arabic text is understood in traditional Muslim exegesis, as well as in modern Western scholarship. It is a remarkable achievement for its date. (A Muslim translator would, of course, substitute 'Allah' for 'God'.) Sale follows the Authorized Version of the Bible in italicizing words not in the Arabic. His version also brings out some of the syntactic difficulties of the original, which more recent Western scholars often attribute to additional and variant sayings inserted in the main text.

Qur'an, Surah 24 (Light), 35–8: Arberry (1955)

God is the Light of the heavens and the earth;  
the likeness of His Light is as a niche  
wherein is a lamp  
(the lamp in a glass,  
the glass as it were a glittering star)  
kindled from a Blessed Tree,  
an olive that is neither of the East nor of the West  
whose oil wellnigh would shine, even if no fire touched it;  
Light upon Light;  
(God guides to His Light whome He will.)  
(And God strikes similitudes for men,  
and God has knowledge of everything.)  
in temples God has allowed to be raised up,  
and His Name to be commemorated therein;  
therein glorifying Him, in the mornings and the evenings,  
are men whom neither commerce nor trafficking  
diverts from the remembrance of God  
and to perform the prayer, and to pay the alms,  
fearing a day when hearts and eyes shall be turned about,  
that God may recompense them for their fairest works  
and give them increase of His bounty;  
and God provides whomsoever He will, without reckoning.

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Arberry's version has been praised for the elegance of its style, as well as for its faithfulness to the original. It will be noted that Arberry brackets passages which he believes do not belong syntactically to the main text.

*Qur'an, Surah 24 (Light), 35–8: Dawood (4th edn, 1974)*

Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth. His light may be compared to a niche that enshrines a lamp, the lamp within a crystal of star-like brilliance. It is lit from a blessed olive tree neither eastern nor western. Its very oil would almost shine forth, though no fire touched it. Light upon light; Allah guides to His light whom He will.

Allah coins metaphors for men. He has knowledge of all things.

His light is found in temples which Allah has sanctioned to be built for the remembrance of His name. In them morning and evening His praise is sung by men whom neither trade nor profit can divert from remembering Him, from offering prayers, or from giving alms; who dread the day when men's hearts and eyes shall writhen with anguish; who hope that Allah will requite them for their noblest deeds and lavish His grace upon them. Allah gives without measure to whom He will.

Dawood's version has probably been the best-known recent translation by a Muslim among English-speaking readers. It reads smoothly, and includes many striking renderings. However, compared to Sale and Arberry, it rather skates over the syntactic difficulties of the original, and it has been criticized by some Muslims as being unduly periphrastic.

### **Further reading and relevant resources**

A recent cooperative work which discusses almost all aspects of biblical translation relevant to this chapter, with an extensive bibliography, is Noss (2007). Many historical aspects of the Bible and its translations are covered in the older collection Greenslade et al. (1963–70). For the history and influence of the Bible in English, Daniell (2003) is particularly recommended.

#### **Robert Barnes**

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## Oxford Handbooks Online

### Linguistic Approaches to Translation

Kirsten Malmkjær

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#### Abstract and Keywords

This article covers a comprehensive range of translational phenomena that are described and explained in terms of linguistic concepts and categories. The Saussurean approach identifies three levels of language: lexis, syntax, and message. This approach draws a distinction between direct and oblique translation. The systemic functional approach establishes and explains the relationship between translation theory and linguistic theory. The Dynamic approach apart from the linguistics of translational phenomena, also honors anthropology, psychology, psychiatry, philology, and biblical hermeneutics. The Psycholinguistic approach models the translation process in a way that translators have formulated the results of their investigations using linguistic concepts and notions. The cognitive linguistic approach to translation applies to specific translational phenomena such as translation universals and translation shifts. The relevance theoretic approach reflects that translation involves communicating in two different languages, and since languages differ, the two texts involved cannot share all of their properties.

Keywords: translational phenomena, Saussurean approach, systemic functional approach, dynamic approach, psycholinguistic approach, cognitive linguistic approach, relevance theoretic approach

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#### 4.1 Introduction

To speak of an approach to translation implies that the work under discussion expresses and displays a comprehensive understanding of an area of study, and considers translational phenomena in the light of this comprehensive understanding. A linguistic approach to translation is informed by linguistics, and since the origins of linguistics (as opposed to philology and rhetoric) are usually considered to reside in the work of Ferdinand de Saussure in the early twentieth century, this chapter will not deal with any work on translation preceding that time.

Among theorists who have taken a linguistic approach to translation, some are linguists who see translation as a branch of (applied) linguistics (see e.g. Catford 1965); others are translation scholars who consider language to be the raw material of translation (e.g. Baker 1992) and believe that it behoves translators to have 'sound knowledge of the raw material with which they work: to understand what language is and how it comes to function for its users' (Baker 1992: 4). Obviously, a person may be both a linguist and a translation scholar, and may at different times write in either role, or indeed both. For example, Roger Bell writes as a linguist in his book on sociolinguistics (1976) but as a translation scholar in parts of his book on translation (1991). Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1995—all page references to the 1995 English language edition), for their part, undertake the dual task of comparing French and English by way of translational examples in order to achieve a clearer understanding of 'the characteristics and behaviour of each [language]' (p. 8) as well as providing 'a theory of translation ... which is based both on linguistic structures and the psychology of language users' (p. 10). There are also linguists and philosophers who have used translational data and the phenomenon of translation as examples in the furtherance of arguments and theory construction within their own disciplines (see e.g. Sapir 1921, Quine 1959, 1960, Davidson 1973), but this chapter will not discuss their work (see, instead, Chapter 8).

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Obviously, just as there are numerous accounts of what language is and how it functions for its users, each of which has the potential to alter, develop, or fade away over time, there are different linguistic approaches to translation, and these too are subject to variance in popularity. Vinay and Darbelnet provide a comprehensive account of translational examples using concepts and notions drawn from Saussurean structural linguistics, Catford's and Baker's approaches are heavily influenced by Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics, and Nida's (1964b) approach is influenced by early Chomskyan generative grammar. Fillmore's scenes-and-frame semantics (1977) inspired the linguistic side of Snell-Hornby's integrated approach to translation (1988/1995). Cognitive linguistics has captured the imagination of Wilss (1988) and Halverson (2003, 2007), and relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995) underlies Gutt's (1991) attempt to do away with translation theory in favour of relevance theory itself. Some scholars make only occasional or selective use of individual insights from linguistics in developing their work. For instance, Reiss and Vermeer (1984/1991) are sometimes said to be inspired by text linguistics because of their reliance on linguistic functions in developing a text typology (see Švejcer 2004: 237). This chapter will cover only work in which a comprehensive range of translational phenomena are described and explained in terms of linguistic concepts and categories.

## 4.2 Vinay and Darbelnet's Saussurean approach

As the title of Vinay and Darbelnet's work suggests, their interest is in style, and style, as they point out, is about choice (1958/1995: 16). They identify three levels of language: lexis, syntax, and message, pointing out that whereas syntax is a matter of rules, choices are freely available at the other two levels (pp. 16–17), in terms of tonality (basically the vernacular versus poetic, literary language) and functionality (the jargons of different specialized language uses: administrative, legal, scientific, etc.) (p. 18).

The basic linguistic concepts Vinay and Darbelnet employ in their contrastive work on English and French are drawn essentially from Saussurean linguistics. They include *langue* and *parole* (1958/1995: 15), and the linguistic sign in its dual nature of concept ('*signifié*', 'signified') and acoustic or visual image ('*signifiant*', 'signifier') (p. 12), which is used to construct contextually situated messages. Vinay and Darbelnet point out that in some cases one and the same signified corresponds to a word in each of two (or more) languages (as in the case of *couteau de table* and 'table knife'), whereas often, slightly different concepts are invoked by words in two languages which are to an extent interchangeable (as in the case of *pain* and 'bread'); partly for this reason, 'it is dangerous to translate without paying attention to the context' (pp. 11–12). They also adopt Saussure's concept of *valeur*, 'value' to account for the fact that corresponding terms in different languages can have different extensions (pp. 50ff.); for example, *mouton* in French can be used to refer to both sheep and the meat of sheep, whereas in English, 'mutton' is only used for the meat.

Having identified the basic concepts of the linguistic theory underlying their analysis, Vinay and Darbelnet turn their attention to the notion of the translation unit, pointing out that 'the word on its own is unsuitable for consideration as the basis for a unit of translation' (p. 20). Instead, they opt for 'the smallest segment of the utterance whose signs are linked in such a way that they should not be translated individually' (p. 21). This being established, the way is open for them to concentrate on 'the methods translators use' at each of the three linguistic levels previously mentioned (p. 30).

They first draw a distinction between direct and oblique translation. In direct translation the SL message can be transposed element by element into TL because of parallelisms between the two languages. But often there are gaps in TL which have to be filled, and here translators can choose between borrowing a term from SL (*Le coroner prit la parole*, 'The coroner spoke', where 'coroner' is borrowed from English), and calque (*l'homme dans la rue* from English 'the man in the street'). When gaps are not an issue, literal translation can sometimes be used, especially between related languages. However, it is often necessary to employ transposition, 'replacing one word class with another without changing the meaning of the message', or modulation, 'variation of the form of the message, obtained by a change in the point of view [...] justified when, although a literal, or even transposed, translation results in a grammatically correct utterance, it is considered unsuitable, unidiomatic, or awkward in the TL' (1958/1995: 36). For example, 'The time when ...' has to be translated into French as *Le moment où ...* ('the moment when ...'). Both transposition and modulation may be obligatory or optional. To deal with idioms and fixed expressions, Vinay and Darbelnet introduce a special use of the term 'equivalence' to describe the relationship between e.g. 'like a bull in a china shop', and *comme un chien dans un jeu de quilles* ('like a dog in a game of

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bowls') (p. 38). Finally, according to Vinay and Darbelnet (p. 39), adaptation is:

the extreme limit of translation: it is used in those cases where the type of situation being referred to by the SL message is unknown in the TL culture. In such cases translators have to create a new situation that can be considered as being equivalent.

In the remainder of the book, these methods are applied to and copiously illustrated at the three levels of language identified at the beginning: lexis, syntax, and message.

## 4.3 Catford's systemic functional approach

Catford begins his *Essay in Applied Linguistics* (subtitle) by explaining how he understands the relationship between translation theory and linguistic theory (Catford 1965: 1):

Translation is an operation performed on languages: a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another. Clearly, then, any theory of translation must draw upon a theory of language—a general linguistic theory.

He selects the contemporary version of systemic functional grammar (Halliday 1961), and, like Vinay and Darbelnet, he stresses the importance of considering 'how language is related to the human situations in which it operates' (Catford 1965: 1). In 'language-events', certain abstract notions can be established at a series of formal levels: phonology and graphology, grammar, and lexis, which are related to situation via the notion of context (p. 3). At each of these levels, we find the fundamental categories of Hallidayan linguistics as formulated in 1961, namely unit, structure, class, and system. Units at each level form scales of classes of units at different ranks. At the level of grammar, the unit rank-scale goes, from largest to smallest, from sentence to clause to group to word to morpheme, where morphemes structure words, which structure groups, which structure clauses, which structure sentences. Below the morpheme, we find the level of phonology/graphology, and above the sentence, we find discourse, text, or message. Systems are enumerations of a limited number of members of a class, such as 'initial consonants' at the level of phonology, or the number system at the level of grammar (p. 7). In addition, lexis is dealt with in terms of collocation and lexical sets (pp. 10–11):

A collocation is the 'lexical company' that a particular lexical item keeps. [...] We refer to the item under discussion as the *node* [...] and the items with which it collocates as its *collocates*. [...] A *Lexical set* is a group of words which have similar collocational ranges.

These basic concepts having been identified, Catford moves on to their application to translation, beginning by establishing general types of translation, which he defines as (p. 20; italics in the original): '*the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)*'. So equivalence plays a central role in Catford's theory. The types of translation are defined 'in terms of the extent, levels, and ranks of translation' (p. 21).

The extent of translation is full or partial. In a full translation 'the entire text is submitted to the translation process', whereas in partial translation 'some parts of the SL text are left untranslated'. (Catford 1965: 21; cf. Vinay and Darbelnet's notion of borrowing, section 4.2 above)

The level of translation can be total or restricted. Translation is normally 'total': 'translation in which all levels of the SL text are replaced by TL material' (Catford 1965: 22), whereas in restricted translation, replacement of SL textual material by equivalent TL textual material is carried out at only one linguistic level. For example, Catford views speaking with a foreign accent as a form of translation at the level of phonology alone (p. 23).

The rank of translation is related to the linguistic ranks identified earlier. In long texts,

the ranks at which translation equivalence occurs are constantly changing: at one point, the equivalence is sentence-to-sentence at another, group-to-group, at another word-to-word, etc., not to mention formally 'shifted' or 'skewed' equivalences. (p. 24)

This 'unbounded translation', in which equivalences shift freely up and down the rank-scale, is opposed to rank-bound translation, in which equivalents are deliberately confined to one rank only, as when for example a word-for-

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word translation of an ST is used to show how the source language text is composed.

There are two main kinds of shifted equivalences. Level shifts occur between the levels of grammar and lexis, as when for example an English deictic term 'This' in e.g. 'This text is intended for ...' is rendered by the French article + lexical adjective *Le présent* in *Le présent manuel s'adresse à ...* (Catford 1965: 75). Category shifts occur when a unit at one rank in one language is rendered in the other language by a unit at another rank, or when there are differences of structure, class, or terms in systems between an ST and a TT item. The idea of shifts implies, as Catford points out, the notion of formal correspondence, since without it, there would be nothing to shift from; however, formal correspondence does not constitute translation equivalence, as we can see from the fact that it is necessary to depart from it to obtain translation equivalence—which, as we saw above, is definitional of translation in this theory, as it is in Toury's theory (1980b), which derived in part from Catford's.

Catford begins his discussion of translation equivalence by defining a textual translation equivalent as (1965: 27) 'any TL form (text or portion of text) which is observed to be the equivalent of a given SL form (text or portion of text)'. What makes it able to function thus is the relationship between it and the SL form on the one hand, and the contexts in which both can be used on the other (p. 49, *italics original*):

SL and TL texts or items are translation equivalents when they are *interchangeable in a given situation*.

This is why translation equivalence can nearly always be established at sentence-rank—the sentence is the grammatical unit most directly related to speech-function within a situation.

The quality of a translation is therefore related to the number of situational features that the source text relates to, that the translation also relates to, and (p. 94) 'Translation fails—or untranslatability occurs—when it is impossible to build functionally relevant features of the situation into the contextual meaning of the TL text.' This may happen if a formal feature of the SL is functionally relevant in ST but no corresponding feature of the TL is able to fulfil the same function in the TT (linguistic untranslatability), as in the case of puns that rely on either structural or lexical ambiguity. Or it may happen 'when a situational feature, functionally relevant for the SL text, is completely *absent* from the culture of which the TL is a part' (p. 99; *italics original*). This may seem to be a different kind of untranslatability, cultural untranslatability, but Catford insists that this is reducible to collocational difficulties, that is, to linguistic untranslatability. For example, English and American society does not have as a common, indigenous phenomenon the sauna, so common in Finland, and we are prone, therefore, to borrow the term *sauna* when translating, in preference to producing such unlikely collocations as exemplified in the following imaginary translation from Finnish into English (p. 102): 'They lay on the hot upper benches of the *bathroom* inhaling the aromatic scent of the birch twigs.' Catford suggests that we can describe the effect of such a sentence as collocational shock rather than as cultural shock, thus demonstrating his commitment to linguistic explanations for all types of translational phenomena.

### 4.4 Nida's generative 'dynamic' approach

Although, as we saw above (section 4.2), Vinay and Darbelnet make reference to the psychology of language users and to translators' thought processes in their exposition of a theory of translation, it is in Nida's (1964b) work on Bible translation that language users and their concerns are placed at the theoretical centre. Nida pays homage not only to linguistics in his account of translational phenomena, but also to anthropology, psychology, psychiatry, philology, and biblical hermeneutics. Nevertheless, what he terms the 'fundamental thrust' of his book is linguistic, as he says that (1964b: 8) 'it must be in any descriptive analysis of the relationship between corresponding messages in different languages'. Nida, then, shares a contrastive emphasis with Vinay and Darbelnet, even though the linguistic theory on which he draws, Chomsky's (1957) early generative grammar, is about as far removed from contrastive linguistics, and from the notion of description, as it is possible to be. The reason Nida selects this theory is that (Nida 1964b: 60):

A generative grammar is based upon certain fundamental kernel sentences, out of which the language builds up its elaborate structure by various techniques of permutation, replacement, addition, and deletion. For the translator especially, the view of language as a generative device is important, since it provides him first with a technique for analyzing the process of decoding the source text, and secondly with a procedure for describing the generation of the appropriate corresponding expressions in the receptor language.

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The kernel constructions in different languages are ‘not identical’, but far more similar than ‘the more elaborate transforms’ (1964b: 66), and they function for Nida as the stable point behind cross-linguistic variance, rather like formal correspondents do for Catford (see section 4.3 above).

Chomsky's early work famously refrains from dealing with meaning at any length, so Nida is moved to avail himself, in addition, of Katz and Fodor's essentially componential work on semantics (1963a, 1963b), developed to supplement Chomsky's grammar. This is convenient for a translation theorist, since the components that make up the meanings of individual, language-specific terms are considered to be language-independent in Katz and Fodor's theory. Like kernel sentences at the syntactic level, therefore, components can be invoked as the common semantic coin shared between apparently disparate lexical items in different languages (see Nida 1964b: 82–7). However, Nida points out (1964b: 120):

Language consists of more than the meanings of the symbols and the combination of symbols; it is essentially a code [...] functioning for a specific purpose or purposes [cf. Chapter 1 on *functional approaches to translation*]. Thus we must analyze the transmission of a message in terms of a dynamic dimension. This analysis is especially important for translating, since the production of equivalent messages is a process [...] of reproducing the total dynamic character of the communication.

Any act of communication includes five ‘phases’, which Nida develops on the basis of Jakobson's (1960) list of the factors involved in verbal communication: (1) the subject matter, (2) the participants, (3) the linguistic act, (4) the code used, and (5) the message. The participants and the message are especially important, since the many different types of translation that exist ‘can generally be accounted for by three basic factors in translating: (1) the nature of the message, (2) the purpose or purposes of the author and, by proxy, of the translator, and (3) the type of audience’ (1964b: 156).

If the form and content of the message are especially important, a translator may produce a formal-equivalence translation, whereas if it is particularly important that the audience for the translation react to it in the same way that the original audience reacted to the original text, then a translator may produce a dynamic-equivalence translation. In Bible translation, it is possible to live with the otherwise problematic nature of the so-called ‘principle of equivalent effect’, which Nida imports from Rieu and Phillips (1954) and which underlies the notion of dynamic equivalence, because of the idea that some kinds of message are ‘universal’ (Nida 1964b: 182–3):

In a F-E translation, the comprehension of intent must be judged essentially in terms of the context in which the communication was first uttered; in a D-E translation this intent must be understood in terms of the receptor culture. The extent to which intent can be interpreted in a cultural context other than the one in which the message was first given is directly proportional to the universality of the message.

### 4.5 Bell's psycholinguistic approach

A number of scholars have set out to model the translation process by way of empirical investigations of those mental activities that translators are able to self-report either during or soon after translating, and many have formulated the results of their investigations using linguistic concepts and notions (see Chapter 9). What distinguishes Roger Bell's approach from the work discussed in Chapter 9 is that it attempts on the one hand to draw on psycholinguistic research to model those parts of the translating process that translators would be unable to introspect about, while also locating itself firmly ‘within a Systemic model of language’ (Bell 1991: xvi)—a slightly later version of the model that inspired Catford, in concert with whom Bell also positions the theory of translation within applied linguistics ‘broadly defined’. In addition, the book constitutes an attempt to gain an understanding of translation competence, aiming ‘to outline the kinds of knowledge and skill which we believe must underlie the practical abilities of the translator’ (Bell 1991: xvi; see also pp. xviii and 35–6). These include a knowledge base consisting of (contrastive) knowledge of the languages involved and of text types and subject domains in each, an inference mechanism which permits decoding and encoding of texts (1991: 40), and general communicative competence in the languages and cultures involved.

Like Nida, Bell understands the translator's task to be to decode messages transmitted in one language and recode them in another (Bell 1991: 15), and the question he seeks to answer is: ‘how does the translator move from one language to the other in the course of translation?’ (p. 17). To answer this question, Bell believes he needs

recourse both to psycholinguistics and to text- and sociolinguistics, because, while psycholinguistics can help model the processes involved in decoding and encoding the messages, text- and sociolinguistics are needed to model the practices which inform users' selections among the many options for expression offered by the linguistic code (pp. 19–20).

Bell develops a model of the translation process based on work by Harris and Coltheart (1986), Nirenburg (1987), Sperber and Wilson (1986), and Steinberg (1982), which depicts the process whereby a source text is read. A visual word-recognition system converts a graphic stimulus into a string of discrete symbols, which can be recognized and coded as the distinctive features of letters, which form words, which form clauses (etc.), which are the input to a syntactic analyser, a semantic analyser, and a pragmatic analyser, which produce a semantic representation, which in its turn is encoded in the other language using the components of the model in reverse order to produce a TL text (I have simplified the description of the visual model considerably here. For full details see Bell 1991: ch. 2). As a model of translation this is rather disappointing, because however detailed the model is for the processes of reading and composing messages, its only indication of the actual translation process, of moving between the languages, is a box with 'Translate?' written in it. This is hardly illuminating as far as modelling goes. Several sections of the chapter are devoted to 'a record of the procedure used in moving from source to target language text, by one translator' (1991: 61) who is translating a poem from French into English; but this lengthy description of tidied-up and heavily linguistically theorized and formulated introspection provides none of the more finely discriminated detail that would be welcome within the 'Translate?' box. The remainder of the book gives thorough accounts of aspects of linguistics and human information-processing, but not of translation.

### 4.6 Halverson's cognitive linguistic approach

In a number of papers (see e.g. Halverson 2003, 2007, 2010), Sandra Halverson outlines a cognitive linguistic approach to translation, and applies it to specific translational phenomena such as translation universals (2003) and translation shifts (2007). In Halverson (2010) the approach is referred to as 'Cognitive Translation Studies', implying a more encompassing approach; however, Halverson considers it obvious that 'a cognitive theory of translation must build on cognitive theories of language' (2010: 6), so there remains a foundation in linguistics in the later work, which is obviously not negated by the fact that Halverson insists that 'a cognitive theory of translation must integrate a cognitive theory of bilingualism' (2010: 7) as well.

The cognitive linguistic theory underlying Halverson's work is that developed primarily by Langacker (1987, 1991, 1999), which 'provides an account of how broad and general cognitive processes are reflected in human language' (Halverson 2003: 198). Like Halliday, and in sharp contrast to generativists, Langacker believes that grammar, as well as lexis, is meaningful, and that the same cognitive structures and processes underlie both of these aspects of language. Furthermore, he considers the cognitive structures and processes that underlie language to be integrated with other cognitive abilities such as perception, memory, and reasoning (see Dirven 2010: 61), in contrast to generative linguists such as Fodor (1983), who consider the language faculty to be isolated from other mental faculties. Therefore, the basic domains of human experience, and general human cognitive abilities to compare, categorize, abstract, schematize, focus attention, and distinguish figures from grounds (cf. Talmy 1978; 1988) can all be drawn on during the processing of linguistic events (see Halverson 1993: 200).

According to Langacker (1987: 100; Halverson 2003: 199), cognitive events, whether linguistic or not, leave neurochemical traces in the brain which decay if the event is not repeated, but which facilitate recurrence of events of that type. If events of the type in question recur regularly, they become entrenched, and 'An event type is said to have *unit status* when it is sufficiently well entrenched that it is easily evoked as an integrated whole, i.e. when it constitutes an established *routine* that can be carried out more or less automatically once it is initiated' (italics original). The execution of the event is called its activation. As Halverson points out (2003: 200), 'We might conjecture that this same process will pertain to translation events.'

The model shares its notion of activation with work on language representation in the bilingual brain (de Groot 1992), on which Halverson (1993: 210–13) also draws, assuming (p. 215) 'that bilinguals have one knowledge store, with various access routes, either via L1 or L2', although:

there may be particular conceptual configurations, or patterns of activation, in networks of meaning that

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are linked only to phonological representations in one of the two languages, though these may ultimately, in different configurations and through different, less direct routes, be linked to phonological representations in the other language. (p. 215)

Patterns of spreading activation form schematic networks that contain more or less salient nodes, and (Halverson 1993: 218):

in a translation task, a semantic network is activated by lexical and grammatical structures in the ST. Within this activated network, which also includes nodes for TL words and grammatical structures, highly salient structures will exert a gravitational pull, resulting in overrepresentation in translation of the specific TL lexical and grammatical structures that correspond to those salient nodes and configurations in the schematic network.

This notion is called ‘the gravitational pull hypothesis’ (see Halverson 2010: 4), and it is complemented by the notions of “non-overlap” or “distance” between concepts activated in the bilingual translator’s semantic networks’, which account for patterns of underrepresentation of structures in translated texts vis-à-vis non-translated texts. In the 2007 paper, Halverson relates types of translation shift other than Catford’s (see section 4.3 above) to the construal operations identified by Croft and Cruse (2004), and illustrates her argument with examples drawn from the Oslo Multilingual Corpus (OMC). Halverson (2010) employs the theory of bilingualism developed by Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008), which operates with three levels of representation of language: lexeme (word form), lemma (lexical information), and concept (knowledge about the world) (Jarvis and Pavlenko 2008: 82), in the hope that this three-level representational system will allow for ‘the separation of the representational characteristics that may account for the various patterns of translational over- or underrepresentation attested in the translation studies literature’ (Halverson 2010: 23). For more on these patterns, see Chapter 6.

## 4.7 Gutt's relevance theoretic approach

Gutt introduces his research to the translation studies community with the startling announcement that *‘the phenomenon commonly referred to as “translation” can be accounted for naturally within the relevance theory of communication developed by Sperber and Wilson: there is no need for a distinct general theory of translation’* (Gutt 1990, abstract: 135, italics original). He is thus the most radical of our approachers: his approach obliterates the phenomenon approached as a phenomenon separate from the approach itself.

Relevance theory was developed against the background of Grice’s important work on conversation (1975). Here (p. 45), Grice identifies a principle he calls the Cooperative Principle: ‘Make your 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’, and a number of maxims that facilitate adherence to that principle:

**I:** Maxims of quantity

- 1.** Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange.
- 2.** Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

**II:** Maxims of quality: Try to make your contribution one that is true.

- 1.** Do not say what you believe to be false.
- 2.** Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

**III:** Maxim of relation: Be relevant.

**IV:** Maxims of manner: Be perspicuous.

- 1.** Avoid obscurity.
- 2.** Avoid ambiguity.
- 3.** Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)
- 4.** Be orderly.

And there may be others.

These maxims are to be understood as the unwritten background assumptions which shore up conversation. If they are perceived to be not adhered to at the same time as it is clear that the Cooperative Principle itself is in play,

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interactants supply whatever extra information is required to reinstate a given maxim. This system is intended to account for speakers' abilities to use and understand figurative language, understatement, overstatement, irony, sarcasm, discrepancies between speech function and grammatical mood (as when an interrogative such as 'can you pass the salt' is used to make a request)—in fact all manner of indirect language use. It is Sperber and Wilson's contention that a principle of relevance alone will serve this important purpose.

In their cognitively oriented account of communication, relevance is understood as an innate focusing mechanism of the human cognitive system. It is defined in terms of achievement of 'the greatest possible cognitive effect for the smallest possible processing effort' (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995: vii), and any attempt at communicating provides the intended hearer with a 'guarantee of relevance': that whatever the person who has engaged in the behaviour intends to get the other to know will be relevant to them (p. 50): 'It implies such a guarantee because humans automatically turn their attention to what seems most relevant to them.' This principle is sufficient grounds for the hearer to be able to work out what the intention behind the communicative behaviour is: it is the most relevant one to him/her.

What is relevant to a given person depends on their so-called 'cognitive environment', the set of assumptions that they are able to represent mentally (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995: 39). An assumption is composed of a set of concepts arranged in a semantic representation, and any linguistic stimulus a mind receives 'triggers an automatic process of decoding' (Sperber and Wilson 1987: 704), which is what produces the semantic representations in the shape of logical forms. The logical forms do not surface to consciousness, but act as assumption schemata which are made into propositional forms through inferential completion.

When an utterance does not share all of the logical properties of the thought it expresses, a hearer will have to work out its non-literal interpretation (in a literal utterance the thought and the utterance do share all their logical properties). The reason why some utterances do not share the logical properties of the thoughts expressed is that a speaker aiming for optimal relevance, as speakers should, will always leave implicit everything a hearer can be trusted to supply with less effort than would be needed to process the information if it were made explicit (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995: 218).

Sperber and Wilson call literal (assertive) language use 'descriptive' and non-literal language use 'interpretive' (1986/1995: 228–9). But interpretive use also includes all instances of so-called 'non-assertive' language use, including speech and thought report and unattributed representation of assumptions; in fact, 'on a more fundamental level, every utterance is used to represent a thought of the speaker's' (1986/1995: 30; *italics original*) and is therefore interpretive. It is Gutt's (1990: 147) contention that 'since translations are also texts presented in virtue of their resemblance with an original, it seems they fall naturally under the category of interpretive use'.

However, translation involves communicating in two different languages, and since languages differ, the two texts involved cannot share all of their properties. But Gutt (1990: 150) insists that while languages differ 'in their concrete properties, they resemble each other with regard to the clues they are able to provide for the interpretation of an utterance'; he refers to these as 'communicative clues', and devotes some thirty pages to identifying and exemplifying types of communicative clues arising from semantic representations, syntactic properties, phonetic properties, semantic constraints on relevance, formulaic expressions, onomatopoeia, the stylistic value of words, and sound-based poetic properties (Gutt 1991:129–59). The optimal or 'direct' translation would be the one that shared all of the source text's communicative clues. This raises the question of how we can know that interpretive clues in different languages are in fact identical. According to Gutt (1991: 162), we can know this 'by checking whether they give rise to the same interpretation when processed in the same context', and 'this, in turn means that the notion of direct translation is dependent on interpretive use: it relies, in effect, on a relationship of complete interpretive resemblance between the original and its translation.' And since 'both direct and indirect translation are instances of interlingual interpretive use [...] relevance theory offers a unified account of both' (Gutt 1991: 163). The question is whether important aspects of translation theory are not lost in the obliteration of it—a question which readers may determine the answer to for themselves by delving further into the present volume.

### Further reading and relevant sources

The best way to learn more about the work of the authors described in this chapter is to read their work itself;

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Chesterman (1989) and Venuti (2000a) include extracts from Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1995), Catford (1965), and Nida (1964b), but these obviously provide only parts of the fuller picture of the authors' work. Readers wanting to make use of linguistic theories for themselves should explore the linguistic literature directly and there are numerous guides to the work of the linguists discussed in this chapter. See for example Chesterman (1998b) on contrastive analysis, Webster (2009) on the Hallidayan tradition, Radford (2004b) on the Chomskyan tradition, Croft and Cruse (2004) on cognitive linguistics, and Carston and Seiji (1998) on relevance theory. To explore the older theoretical standpoints, consider Halliday (1961) and Chomsky (1957). Contrastive analysis/stylistics is best approached by way of Vinay and Darbelnet's own work. Relevance theory is helpfully préciséd in the second chapter of Gutt (1991) and also by Sperber and Wilson themselves (1987).

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## Oxford Handbooks Online

### Stylistics and Translation

Jean Boase-Beier

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### Abstract and Keywords

This article examines the ways in which a stylistic approach to translation affects the reading of the source text and the writing of the target text. For a literary translator, understanding the style of the source text and being able to recreate similar stylistic effects in the target text are essential. The paradox of stylistics and translation is: while literary translation depends upon knowing not only what a text means in an obvious sense but also what it suggests, the discipline which allows such insights is rarely seen as a necessary part of translation theory. Ill informed views of linguistics and stylistics, and ignorance of the advances made in both subjects, have contributed to the paucity of stylistic studies of translation in the recent past. Finally, this article discusses the nature of the interaction between stylistics as a theoretical discipline and translation as a practical and creative enterprise.

Keywords: stylistic approach, paradox of stylists, translation theory, linguistics, stylistics, stylistic effects

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### 5.1 The strange paradox of stylistics and translation

#### 5.1.1 The nature of the paradox

In its simplest, most intuitive sense, translation can be said to involve the translator conveying across a language (or genre) boundary whatever she or he understands to be essential to the meaning of the text, its function, and the way it achieves its effects (but for many more definitions see Shuttleworth and Cowie 1997: 181–2). Beyond what might be considered the purely referential meaning or content of a text, it is the style that enables it to express attitude and implied meanings, to fulfil particular functions, and to have effects on its readers (Boase-Beier 2006: 4). These two statements taken together suggest this: whenever translation is concerned with how something is said as well as what is said, it involves the translation of style. For Gutt (2000:136), whether style needs to be translated or not rests on the distinction between indirect and direct translation. Indirect translation is concerned to render content, and is appropriate for a weather report or a financial statement, whereas direct translation renders both content and style, and is needed for literary texts or letters. But the distinction between ‘content’ and ‘style’ is not a simple one. Wales (2001: 371) points out that, though the simplest definition of style is ‘the perceived distinctive manner of expression in writing or speaking’, there are various other definitions which are based on geographical or historical situation, degree of formality or personal choice. Yet another way of defining style is to say it carries ‘second-order’ (Dowling 1999: xii) meanings, that is, everything a text means that goes beyond what is strictly determined by its lexical elements and its syntax. The complexity and variation in these definitions suggests that, though there are some texts, such as literary texts, where style clearly matters, and some, such as weather reports, where it does not, there are also many texts, such as news reports, historical accounts, or references, where opinions will differ as to the importance of style.

Variations in opinion and approach, then, as well as in text-type of source- and target-text, will mean that not all

translation is concerned with style to the same degree. Sometimes it is concerned purely with function; in Nord's terms (1997: 50) this is instrumental translation. In such cases style will not matter intrinsically, but only to the extent that it is linked to function. Thus a translated advertisement for a car will need to sell the car, and if a different style of advertising is common in the target culture, the style of the original advertisement will not be preserved. But a great deal of translation is, to pursue Nord's dichotomy, documentary (1997: 47). A car advertisement might be translated not to sell the car in the target country but to see how the advert managed so successfully to sell the car in the country of the source language, or to provide information about the typical style of advertising texts in the source language. In this case its function is documentary. Nord's distinction is particularly interesting for literary translation. On the one hand, it is clear that literary translation always has a documentary element: it cannot ignore whatever made the original text worth translating, including its language and idiom, its special connotations, its use of register and stylistic device, and the particular ways it achieves its effects on its readers. Yet the target text also needs to function as literature, and to that extent the translation is instrumental. One could argue, in fact, that the instrumentality of translated literature resides not just in its being literature, but in belonging to the special category of translated literature and that its instrumentality is thus achieved at least in part through its documentary nature, because only thus is its relationship with the original text preserved. All this presupposes that we know what literary texts are, and it is beyond the scope of this chapter to embark upon a detailed discussion of the issues involved. See Boase-Beier (2006), Fabb (1977), or Pilkington (2000) for some views. I shall, however, make the assumption here that a literary text uses the same linguistic devices as a non-literary text (Simpson 2004: 98–102; Leech and Short 2007: 5), but that in addition it gives stylistic signals, such as the layout on the page, or concentrated use of metaphor, that indicate to the reader that the text is to be read as literary, that is, as a fictional text that demands extensive engagement on the reader's part and that in turn can have profound effects on the way the reader sees the world.

To see the difference between literary and non-literary texts as a difference in the way we read, and to see the latter difference as, in its turn, signalled and driven by style, is to say that any translation, whether aiming to preserve or change the text-type of the original, will need to interact closely with the style of the text. Especially for the literary translator, understanding the style of the source text and being able to recreate similar stylistic effects in the target text are essential.

And yet stylistics—the study of style, and in particular of literary style—has played a surprisingly small role (see Snell-Hornby 1995: 119), at least in explicit terms, in translation theory, whether that theory is descriptive (such as descriptive translation studies; see Toury 1995), or is based on linguistics (such as Malmkjaer 2005) or on pragmatic theory (e.g. Gutt 2000). Discussions of literary translation such as those in Munday (2008) or Baker (2000) have mentioned the role of style—and two, Parks (1998/2007) and Tabakowska (1993), have examined it in more detail—but the first systematic study, at least in English, to integrate stylistic theory was my own (Boase-Beier 2006).

### 5.1.2 The importance of style

Style, then, is what is unique to a text and it relies on choices, made consciously or unconsciously by the author of the source- or target-text, that have gone into the making of the text (Boase-Beier 2006: 50; Simpson 2004: 22–6). These often manifest themselves in noticeable textual elements; such elements, for example a striking use of rhyme in a poem, or the sort of unusual syntax we find in expressions such as

(1) it is we give our life (Thomas 2004: 139)

are often referred to as instances of foregrounding (Stockwell 2002: 14–20; Leech and Short 2007: 23–4). Foregrounding—making something stand out against a background—is a concept that relates to perception, but stylistics allows us to say exactly what is unusual about an expression such as that in (1). In fact this particular expression is unusual because such expressions usually have an object following 'it is', not a subject, as these two examples show:

(2)

- a It is John she loves
- b \*It is John loves her

The structure in (1) uses a subject, as in (2b), and is almost ungrammatical, as the asterisk indicates. Besides such

instances of unusual or poetic syntax, often considered to be grammatically deviant (Leech and Short 2007: ch. 2), further textual elements such as ambiguity or iconicity might characterize the style. Ambiguity can be seen in a phrase such as:

(3) a vacuum he may not abhor (Thomas 1993: 361).

This phrase, taken, like example (1), from the religious poetry of R.S. Thomas, could mean either that he (God) may not enter the vacuum (in 'nature abhors a vacuum' what is meant is that nature rushes in to fill it) or that he may not shun it, meanings which are clearly opposite. One could also argue that such ambiguity in the expression 'to abhor' is an instance of poetic iconicity (see Boase-Beier 2006: 71–108), as the linguistic ambiguity represents the ambiguity in the poet's mind about the nature of God. In all these cases, the subtle stylistic detail of the original text will have to be recreated in the translation if it is to work as a poem. It is important to note that such stylistic detail is not purely linguistic in a narrow sense: 'abhor' is not lexically ambiguous. Its ambiguity arises in English because of the existence of the expression 'nature abhors a vacuum', and will therefore be difficult to convey in a language that lacks this expression. This example shows clearly that the concept of style to be employed when discussing translation cannot be linguistically narrow.

The example just given as (3) is clearly not grammatically deviant, whereas (1) is. Although recent stylistics focuses less on style as deviation from a norm and more on a cognitive view of style as that which influences a reader's perception of the text, the more formal notion of deviation, especially in terms of the frequency of words or collocations, still plays a role in corpus stylistics (see e.g. Stubbs 2005), which can give clear evidence for what stylistic uses are usual or unusual.

But the style of a text also includes those elements which are neither deviant, nor unusual, nor particularly noticeable, and will include such things as sentence length, use of passive or active, and so on. Taken together, all these elements of the way a text means (rather than what it means) have often been referred to rather obliquely by translators as the 'spirit' or the 'fire' of the text (see various extracts e.g. those from Pope and Denham, Schleiermacher, and others in Lefevere 1992a) or, more recently, characterized as its 'energy' (Williams 2002: 8). What such writers—generally poets talking about the translation of poetry—are referring to is something that is felt intuitively to go beyond both the form of the text and its obvious meaning, and is an essential aspect of it; it is something that Paterson rather fancifully calls 'that wholly personal mandala of idea and image and spirit that floats free of the poem' (2006: 75).

Such terms suggest that style is an almost mysterious element of a text, which lies at its very heart, but is hard to pin down. Yet, although as a concept style might be 'slippery' (Fowler 1996: 185), the style of a particular text can, as we have seen, be described in precise detail using the methods of stylistics, which use linguistic terminology, as in the explanation for example (1), to show how a text is constructed and how it achieves its effects. Because modern stylistics, as I have suggested, rarely makes the case for a separate language of literature, and because many non-literary texts also convey more than simple content, some of the notions of what it means to capture the style of a text in translation will apply to all types of text. Yet literary texts allow more freedom of choice on the original writer's part, and translations of literature allow more freedom of choice on the translator's part. The literary translator is in fact often described as performing a creative task: see e.g. Boase-Beier and Holman (1999) or Perteghella and Loffredo (2006). For this reason the most important interaction of stylistics with translation is likely to be in literary translation. For literary translation, stylistics will help explain in addition how the text ensures the reader's engagement (see Boase-Beier 2006: 37–43), what it 'makes readers do' (Iser 2006: 58), and how it gives rise to the multiplicity of meanings typical of literature (Bennett and Royle 2004: 204).

### 5.1.3 The exclusion of stylistics

The paradox of stylistics and translation is, then, this: while translation, especially literary translation, is acknowledged to depend upon knowing not only what a text means in an obvious sense but how it means and what it suggests, the discipline which would allow such insights is rarely seen as a necessary part of translation theory.

One of the main reasons for this paradox is that stylistics depends upon linguistics, and linguistics is often seen as too narrow to describe the functionality of non-literary texts or the complexity of literary texts (see Barry 2002: 204). This view can arise because linguistics is erroneously understood to be something like the structuralist linguistics (e.g. Harris 1951) which was the dominant type in Europe and America between the 1920s and the

1960s. Structuralism focused on the details of language and the relations of similarity and difference between its different elements. The type of stylistics it gave rise to was similarly concerned with equivalence, difference and structure: this was the view that formed the basis for the comparative stylistics of Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1995). Vinay and Darbelnet wrote in some detail about translation and the way it affected and was affected by style, and so the stylistics-translation link has often been associated with comparative study, e.g. by Holmes in 1988 (2004: 187). By today's standards, this type of stylistics, like its linguistic basis, does seem narrow, though one should remember that structuralism as a whole was broad enough to take in many areas of culture and anthropology, and structuralist literary theory, in particular, was able to move away from structures in the text to consider the 'larger, abstract structures which contain them' (Barry 2002: 40). Because structuralism saw language as constructing (rather than merely reflecting) the world, it overlapped with the poststructuralist sense of subjectivity, uncertainty and the creative role of the reader. But structuralist stylistics often followed Culler's view of a precise, scientific, context-limited explanation of literature (1975: 257), and this is the framework within which Vinay and Darbelnet (1988/1995) compare equivalences and differences between French and English. Structuralist linguistics was overtaken in the late 1950s by generative grammar (e.g. Chomsky 1966), and, as the discipline of linguistics grew, it developed in many directions to encompass the performative (e.g. Searle 1969), the functional (e.g. Halliday 1973), the pragmatic (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995), and the cognitive (e.g. Lee 2001). Stylistics left its structuralist beginnings behind, developing in parallel with linguistics, but in addition incorporating insights from literary and cultural theory. Once these developments are understood, stylistics appears much more in tune with contemporary translation theory.

But there is another probable reason for the paradox that translation studies has not embraced stylistics though translation is concerned with style. This is that the integration of a linguistically based discipline into translation studies is hampered by a confusion with linguistically based translation theory itself, such as Catford (1965). The latter is often regarded as formalist in nature (Venuti 1998: 2; Gentzler 2001: 44–59), ignorant of whatever goes beyond language, and thus inimical to a cultural understanding of texts. It is not surprising that translation studies, which has worked hard to integrate theories as diverse as feminism (Santaemilia 2005), postcolonialism (Bassnett and Trivedi 1999), and pragmatics (Gutt 2000) does not want to be limited to the linguistic detail of a text. Yet such fears ignore the historical situation of early linguistic studies of translation such as Catford's, the state of knowledge at the time, and the developments since.

### 5.1.4 Contextualized stylistics

Ill-informed views of both linguistics and stylistics, and ignorance of the advances made in both subjects, have surely contributed to the paucity of stylistic studies of translation in the recent past. But contemporary stylistics is usually contextualized stylistics (Verdonk 2002: 6). This means that, far from concentrating only on formal features of the text, it sees as part of its remit the inclusion of cultural background (Stockwell 2002: 33), mental representations (Gavins 2007), and everything else which makes up the cognitive context (Simpson 2004: 35) of the reader. In this latter sense it is often referred to as cognitive stylistics or cognitive poetics. The broad remit of stylistics today means that the stylistic study of translation will concern itself with questions as diverse as historical context of source- and target-texts, the cognitive state both texts convey, the emotion they express or give rise to in their readers, the way they achieve literary effects, and the ideologies that they reveal or hide.

### 5.2 Contextualized stylistics and the translation context

Before the 1960s, stylistics was virtually unknown as a discipline, though it had forerunners in Russian Formalist criticism and Prague Structuralism in the 1920s (see Boase-Beier 2006: 6–10). This was not only the case in the Western world; in China stylistics is considered to have begun in the late 1970s (Hu and Liu 2004), and in Japan, too, stylistics in the modern sense developed largely from Western influences. Early stylistics in Europe and America, as noted above, was based on structuralism (e.g. Riffaterre 1970) or generative grammar (Freeman 1970), both trends which, though very different in conception, (see Boase-Beier 2006: 8), tended to result in textual analysis that concentrated on formal features. They thus fitted well with a view of translation that placed equivalence in the foreground, such as the theories of Nida (1964b) or Catford (1965). But because recent stylistics has expanded to include the areas mentioned in the previous section, it is now able to express the following ideas, all of which are of central relevance to translation:

- (i) Translation is communication and an act of communication goes beyond what a text actually says to involve inferences made by the reader and the details of the text that encourage and allow such inferences;
- (ii) Texts have effects on their reader and it is part of the translator's task to gauge (and recreate if appropriate) what gives rise to these effects;
- (iii) Readers of the source text and the target text have different cognitive contexts and the style of both texts reflects this difference;
- (iv) The difference between literary and non-literary texts, crucial for the translator, is essentially one of style: the style of a non-literary text generally contains fewer or more controlled ambiguities, gaps and possibilities for the reader's engagement;
- (v) The style of literary texts, on the other hand, encourages creative and interactive reading on the part of the translator, and this is the type of reading which the translation will also aim to make possible;
- (vi) Stylistics presents us with a toolkit for describing texts and their interactions, but the question of its effects on practice is not straightforward.

With these issues in mind, I shall examine, in the next two sections of this chapter, the ways in which a stylistic approach to translation affects the reading of the source text and the writing of the target text, before considering in the final section the nature of the interaction between stylistics as a theoretical discipline and translation as a practical and creative enterprise.

### 5.3 Stylistics and reading for translation

Modern stylistics is often considered to be primarily a study of reading (Stockwell 2002: 1–8). A stylistic approach to translation will therefore involve assessing the style of the source text and its effects, including the inferences it permits (Gutt 2000: 24–5), and the gaps it manifests, through ambiguity, compression, or incompleteness, all of which allow the reader to 'climb aboard' the text (Iser 1974: 275) and become involved in it. But, beyond this, a stylistic approach will need to explain how 'reading for translation' (based on Slobin's 'thinking for translation' 2003:164; see Boase-Beier 2006: 24) takes place. That is, it will need to account for the especially close reading which translation scholars such as Bell (1998: 186) have deemed to be a prerequisite for translation. It will be noted that contemporary stylistics rarely tries to give a new or definitive reading of a text (Stockwell 2002: 7). Instead, it explains how different readings are arrived at. For non-literary texts, this is a much more straightforward process than for literary texts. In an advertisement, for example, it will be relatively easy, using stylistic methods, to see what features make the text persuasive, how a legal text achieves lack of ambiguity, or how a scientific text is able to be precise. But stylistics, especially in England, has been applied largely to literary texts (Leech and Short 2007:10) and it is here that we are likely to find the most interesting interactions with translation. For literary translation, one of the main tasks of stylistics is to consider the kind of dynamic, creative reading that many literary translation scholars, especially those influenced by the poststructuralist view of the reader as 'producer of the text' (Barthes 1970: 11), consider to be essential (cf. Scott 2000:183–5) and to assess how it can be enabled by the linguistic detail of the text. Thus a stylistic study of a poem by Ivor Gurney (1987; see Boase-Beier 2006: 92–4) as preparation for translation considers the importance of the lines

(4) Hide that red wet  
Thing I must somehow forget

in the translation of the poem 'To His Love'. A stylistic reading preparatory to translation notes the semantic chain of particular colour terms ('blue', 'violet', 'purple') earlier in the poem, the syntactic pattern of personal pronouns and possessives ('his', 'he', 'our', 'we', 'you', 'I'), the sound patterns of the *abab* rhyme and the assonance in the phrase itself, the significance of these lines as the 'eye of the poem' (see also Boase-Beier 2006: 93), and also their connotations in the context of war poetry. It should be noted that this type of detailed stylistic analysis for the purposes of translation can be seen as, on the one hand, an evidence-based description of an intuitive reading preparatory to translation or, on the other, as a statement about, or indeed an argument in favour of, a greater knowledge of stylistic theory on the part of the translator. This is a point that will be returned to in the final section of this chapter.

Stylistics in its interaction with non-literary translation is generally less concerned with how the reader's creative involvement with the text is enabled and more with what distinguishes particular text-types linguistically. Newmark

(1995: 151), for example, discusses the typical style of technical texts as 'free from emotive language, connotations, sound effects and original metaphor' and addresses the possibility of finding equivalent styles in other languages. The fact that it is possible to characterize such styles and find equivalents indicates one of the main differences between literary and non-literary translation; because contemporary stylistics rejects the inherent linguistic difference of literary language, stylistic approaches to literary translation focus instead on how such phenomena as mind-style (Boase-Beier 2003), voice (Milkán-Varela 2004b) or ethnicity (Thomson 2004) are to be understood so that it is possible to assess what translations have done or might do.

### 5.4 Stylistics and the writing of translation

A number of recent studies in translation (e.g. Perteghella and Loffredo 2006, Boase-Beier and Holman 1999) have emphasized the creative character of the translator's writing of the target text. It is important that such approaches are seen against the background of discussion, often influenced by poststructuralist insights, on the nature of creativity (e.g. Pope 2005), on criticism as itself creative (see Currie 1998: 48–50), and on translation as a type of criticism (Gaddis Rose 1997). These recent studies represent a further move away from locating translation in equivalence and towards a view of translation as a special type of writing. Stylistics, because it explores key issues of how a text means, how it is made, what choices are implemented, and how these choices affect reading, also provides an important critical tool for the examination of such creative processes in the writing of translations.

If style is a way of expressing choice (Verdonk 2002: 9), then, even within the constraints which the source-text reading might be seen to impose, the target text will give scope for, and be a reflection of, the translator's own choices (see also Malmkær 2005: 15). Thus dialect might be represented in the target text by a target-language dialect, or by explicit commentary such as 'she said in dialect', or by a substitution of social for geographical dialect, or of a different register. The translator might decide to echo the source-text syntax in the target text (as Michael Hamburger did with his Holderlin translations; see Hamburger 1994), to compensate (Harvey 1995) for alliteration or word-play by different phonological or semantic devices, to treat one stylistic aspect or another as the main driving force behind a text. For example, Gutt (2000: 111–119), following Levy (1969), discusses the translation of a poem by Christian Morgenstern, and the assumption that word-play is the most important aspect of the original. If this is the translator's view, then the word-play will be retained. A further example is my use of the stylistic characteristics of a headline, omitting the verb ('Butchers ignorant of slaughter'), in a translation of a poem by von Törne (see Boase-Beier 2004), where the original poem has a missing auxiliary. Here the translation depends upon an analysis of the original poem as being driven by the ambiguity to which the missing auxiliary automatically gives rise, involving the reader in seeing different possibilities. But in fact translation does not always try to reproduce, to echo, or to recreate stylistic effects. Interventionist translation, of which feminist translation is the best-known example (see Wolf 2005), uses the creative freedom of the translator to rewrite the style of the source text. Insights into feminist stylistics and the notion of feminist rewriting (see Threadgold 1997) can help analyse and understand such writing practices in translation.

Though creative translation might seem possible only for literary texts, the translation of many other types of text may be equally creative. Because the audiences of the source- and target-text always have a different cognitive context, that is, a different set of images and cognitive schemata to represent the world, a translator has to find creative ways of taking this difference into account, whether in the translation of Bible stories (see Gutt 2005) or advertisements (Adab and Valdés 2004). But it could be argued that this is creativity understood as a sort of inventiveness, as finding ways to differ from the source text in order to take the target audience context into account. To see translation as creative writing is not just to see it as creating difference from the source text, but as producing a text which can be read as literature, in that it can be creatively engaged with, in the ways discussed in the previous section. Generally speaking, literary texts are far more open-ended in their interpretative possibilities, and literary translation will try to find stylistic means that allow such open-endedness.

### 5.5 Stylistics and translation practice

If stylistics is the detailed study of how texts mean and what they suggest rather than what they mean in a straightforward sense, then an important question arises about its relation to practice: does stylistics just describe how we read source and target texts and how we translate one into the other, or does it also affect the act of translation itself?

For many theorists, any theory can only describe. Thus Gutt (2000) does not generally endorse or suggest particular translations, other than to explain his intuitions, but is more concerned to tell us why the translator made certain choices, and what their effects are.

We can see the descriptive power of stylistic approaches to translation at work in studies of source- and target-text that explain why some translations are viewed in the target culture very differently from the way the original text was seen in the source culture. The removal or addition of complex stylistic nuances might make a novel more or less accessible when translated, or suitable for a different audience (for examples see the articles in Boase-Beier and Holman 1999). Or we might notice, when comparing a translation with its source text, that ambiguities have been lost or created, that iconicity has not been preserved, or that it has been enhanced. For example, earlier in the same poem from which example (1) above is taken, we encounter the following:

(5) No longer the Lamb

but the idea of it.

...

It gave its life

where the 'it' in the third line quoted could refer to 'the Lamb' or 'the idea'.

Perryman's German translation of the same poem uses a neuter pronoun for 'it', thus creating a clear anaphoric reference to the lamb rather than the idea, as the latter is in German feminine (Perryman 2003: 35). A stylistic description of the translation might argue that the ambiguity is essential to the creation of a conceptual blend (see e.g. Turner 1996: 60–1), a concept of Christ which blends elements of the human, the (metaphorical) lamb, and the abstract idea, and that a disambiguating pronoun destroys the blend. Such observations might be as straightforward as the recognition that the ambiguous pronoun in (5) has not been preserved, or they might depend upon the sort of complexities that comparative stylistics brings to light. Thus we might question how, for example, the ambiguity inherent in the German language between 'when' and 'if' (both 'wenn' in German) can be captured in English. A poem by Ausländer uses the word 'wenn' to create this ambiguity, and it is translated by Osers (1977: 55) as 'when' (thus losing the uncertainty) and by Boland (2004: 23) as 'if and when' (thus losing the rhythm). In terms of comparative cognitive stylistics, one might argue that German 'wenn' represents a blend of temporal and conditional, a concept that is not expressed in any English conjunction.

Tabakowska (1993) gives many examples from translations between Polish and English of how linguistic and stylistic differences between the two languages interact with elements deriving from universal experience. The concern of most such studies and theories is essentially to use stylistics to help provide description and explanation of what the translator does, rather than to suggest it might help the translator actually to translate.

There are, however, scholars who suggest other types of interaction between theory and practice. Holmes (2004: 184), originally writing in 1972, speaks of the possible predictive power of theory and Newmark (1995) of its application to practice. Such views are controversial because they suggest that a translator will translate better if she or he has knowledge of theory. But in fact this is no different from the suggestion that a novelist might benefit from knowing how good characterization works or a poet from knowing how metre works. It is of course possible to be a creative writer or a translator without such knowledge, but it is also possible that knowledge of theory will become part of the cognitive context of the writer or translator. Knowledge of stylistic theory is almost certain to lead to greater awareness on the translator's part of such elements as ambiguity and iconicity, or the importance of syntactic choice in the source text. Such 'stylistically-aware analysis' (Boase-Beier 2006:111) can make it easier for the translator to describe and justify her or his stylistic decisions. But we can go further, and argue that knowledge of stylistics will allow the translator to consider how such aspects of meaning as attitude, implication, or cognitive state can be recreated in the target text. It will allow more detailed consideration of the interplay of universal stylistic features such as conceptual metaphor, culturally embedded imagery, and specific linguistic connotation. To take up again the example of the poem quoted in (1) and (5), we can observe that absence is described as 'the vestibule for the arrival/of one who has not yet come' (Thomas 1993: 361). Studies in cognitive stylistics have shown that, universally, abstract notions are mentally represented in spatial terms (cf. Turner 1996: 12–25). In English, in addition, a vestibule has both ecclesiastical and anatomical connotations, and in the latter sense strongly suggests giving birth. The metaphorical representation of absence as a vestibule in this particular poem thus relies on a blend of language-specific connotations with the universal building metaphor, seen in many

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expressions such as 'in my Father's house are many mansions' (John 14:1–2) or 'the house that Jack built' and other similar examples in the idioms, religious texts and folk rhymes of many different cultures. Translation will need to find a way of combining these various elements.

The perception that stylistic knowledge becomes part of the cognitive schema (Stockwell 2002: 75–81) of translation, the organized context of knowledge with which we approach the task, has important consequences for translation practice. And so it can also have consequences for the pedagogy of translation, leading to the integration of stylistics into the training of translators.

### Further reading and relevant resources

A good, short introduction to stylistics (though not with reference to translation) is Verdonk (2002). Simpson (2004) is more detailed. The most accessible introduction to cognitive stylistics is Stockwell (2002). Fowler (1996), though written before cognitive stylistics became so widespread, is still the most readable and comprehensive introduction to issues of stylistics (though Fowler himself disliked the term). Parks (1998/2007) writes interestingly about stylistic deviations of a translation from its original as an aid to literary criticism of the original text. Boase-Beier (2006) is an attempt to show the importance of stylistics for translation.

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## Oxford Handbooks Online

### Translation Universals

Kirsten Malmkjær

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### [-] Abstract and Keywords

According to Gideon Toury, there exists a universal translation theory. Baker suggests that patterns that are found across all such sets of translated versus non-translated corpora would suggest a hypothesis for universal features of translation. Baker reflects that translation universals are cognitive phenomena. However, Toury speaks of universals of translational behaviour. Segmentation is essential in translation and interpreting and it is a kind of segmentation that has no counterpart in unilingual activity. It involves simultaneous suppression and activation of the right features of the linguistic systems at the right time in the right proportions to each other before the translator or interpreter can get started on the conscious parts of the translation process. This can be termed as 'translation unit segmentation'. With the confirmation of predictions arising from these hypothesized universals, new insights into translation studies will be gained.

Keywords: universal translation theory, hypothesis, translational behaviour, segmentation, translation unit segmentation

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### 6.1 Introduction

The two decades around the turn of the twentieth century saw an upsurge of interest in the possibility, raised by Gideon Toury in the 1970s (1977; 1980a: 60, *italics original*), that there might exist '*universals of translational behavior*'. According to Toury, these might include 'an almost general tendency—irrespective of the translator's identity, language, genre, period, and the like—to explicate in the translation information that is only implicit in the original text'. This idea was subsequently explored by Blum-Kulka (1986/2004), according to whose explicitation hypothesis (1986: 19), a translation will be more explicitly cohesive than its source text 'regardless of the increase traceable to differences between the two linguistic and textual systems involved'. 'It follows,' she continues, 'that explicitation is viewed here as inherent in the process of translation.' Blum-Kulka reports on a number of studies of learner English, of learner translations and professional translations, 'for lack of large scale empirical studies' of the latter types of text alone. She concludes (1986: 21) that 'it might be the case that explicitation is a universal strategy inherent in the process of language mediation' in general and not just of translation, a conclusion more recently arrived at also by Gaspari and Bernardini (2010).

By the early 1990s, thanks to enhanced methods and machinery for the electronic collection and analysis of large corpora of texts, it became possible to undertake the kinds of large-scale empirical studies of professional translations that Blum-Kulka missed, and Mona Baker (1993), then working at the university of Birmingham where colleagues were engaged in building and investigating the COBUILD corpus, set about sketching out a machine-aided research programme aimed at testing Blum-Kulka's hypotheses and others of a similar kind. She presented this programme of research, appropriately enough, in a collection of articles published in honour of John Sinclair, under whose direction the COBUILD programme was progressing, and she did it on the basis of a conviction that:

translated texts record genuine communicative events and as such are neither inferior nor superior to

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other communicative events in any language. They are however different, and the nature of this difference needs to be explored and recorded. (Baker 1993: 234)

In order for the differences between translations and non-translations to be adequately explored and recorded, it would be necessary to assemble corpora of translated texts much larger than those that had been explored previously (e.g. Vanderauwera's 1985 corpus of around fifty novels translated from Dutch into English). Such corpora could be searched for evidence for or against hypotheses such as the following (Baker 1993: 244–5):

1. Blum-Kulka's (1986) explicitation hypothesis.
2. 'A tendency towards disambiguation and simplification'. Vanderauwera (1985) had found that where a source text contained ambiguous pronouns, its translation would tend to use pronouns that were unambiguous. She also found that where her corpus of Dutch novels contained complex syntax, the translations tended to use structures that would be simpler to process.
3. 'A strong preference for conventional grammaticality'. Shlesinger (1991) finds that interpreters tend to ignore errors and to produce complete sentences where those of their source speakers are incomplete; and Vanderauwera (1985) finds that the translations in her corpus were generally more conventional in language use than their source texts.
4. 'A tendency to avoid repetitions which occur in source texts, either by omitting them or rewording them' (Shlesinger 1991, Toury 1991b).
5. 'A general tendency to exaggerate features of the target language' (Toury 1980a, Vanderauwera 1985).
6. A tendency to mirror SL features in the translated text, though not exactly as they are used in the SL, resulting in a 'third code' (Frawley 1984:168) 'which is a result of the confrontation of the source and target codes and which distinguishes a translation from both source texts and original target texts [sic] at the same time' (Baker 1993: 245)—a kind of translational interlanguage (cf. Selinker 1972).

Baker proposes the following methodology for testing these hypotheses. Take a corpus of translations into L from a large number of languages. Take a matched, or comparable, corpus of texts originally written in L. Examine the translated corpus for patterns which occur in it but not (or not with the same frequency) in the non-translated corpus. Do this for large numbers of languages. Patterns that are found across all such sets of translated versus non-translated corpora would be 'good candidates for universal features of translation' (Baker 1993: 245).

### 6.2 Investigations and Findings

Many scholars have taken up Baker's challenge, including Baker's Ph.D student Sara Laviosa (then Laviosa-Braithwaite), who was able to benefit from the Translational English Corpus (TEC) designed by Baker and Laviosa at UMIST, where Baker relocated in the mid-1990s. The corpus, now housed along with the Centre for Translation and Intercultural Studies and its staff at the University of Manchester, is freely available to scholars, and contains four types of text translated into English: fiction, biography, news, and in-flight magazines.<sup>1</sup>

Laviosa-Braithwaite (1996) worked with the news and fiction parts of the original corpus (the corpus is being updated constantly) and with a comparable corpus of non-translated texts in English to investigate 'simplification as a universal of translation'.<sup>2</sup> Of course, it is not possible to programme a computer to search for simplification as such; instead, features of text which a computer is able to recognize and which might contribute to the relative simplicity or complexity of texts have to be identified as the focus for the electronic search, and Laviosa-Braithwaite searched for average sentence length, for the proportion in the two corpora of lexical words versus grammatical words and of high-frequency versus low-frequency words, and for 'relatively greater repetition of the most frequent words and less variety in the words most frequently used', on the assumption that texts containing a relatively large proportion of short sentences, relatively few different lexical words, and a high proportion of frequent words would be simpler than texts containing the opposite. She found that the translated texts did indeed seem simpler in these terms than the non-translated texts, except that translated fiction did not have shorter average sentences than non-translated fiction; the opposite was the case.

A second UMIST Ph.D, Kenny (1999b), employed a different electronically aided method. She compared translations with their source texts in a 2 million-word parallel corpus of German literary texts and their translations into English in order to identify normalization, which she understood as a norm (cf. Toury 1980a) or 'tendency in translation to exaggerate features of the target language and to conform to its typical patterns'.<sup>3</sup> She searched her

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corpus for frequent items (as defined in word frequency lists), hapex legomena, and unusual collocations, and she found the norm to be adhered to.

Both comparable (same language) and parallel (TTs and their STs) corpora have subsequently been employed to explore other candidates for universalhood, including Blum-Kulka's explicitation, which Øverås (1998—who remains open-minded about whether it is a norm or a universal; see p. 587) tests in a corpus consisting of the first fifty sentences of forty fragments of novels, twenty each in Norwegian and English and of their translations into the other language. As well as explicitation, Øverås (p. 575) also finds a relatively small number of cases of implicitation: 'instances where explicit ST items are rendered by ambiguous TT items, but where recoverability in the immediate TT environment makes the item implicit rather than ambiguous'. In her corpus (p. 586):

explicitation shifts were found in all texts and [...] 33 out of 40 texts (or 82.22%) contained more explicitation than implicitation [...] Out of the remaining 7 texts, 4 contained an equal number of both types of shift, and in the 3 cases of dominating implicitation the differences were fairly small.

She concludes that explicitation is indeed a characteristic feature of the translation process.

Chesterman (2004) produces the following helpful list of phenomena that some scholars have understood as evidence for translation universals; a number of later studies are available in Mauranen and Kujamäki (2004a):

- Lengthening: translations tend to be longer than their source texts (Berman 1985, Vinay and Darbelnet 1958).
- Interference: the source text necessarily interferes with the target text (Toury 1995).
- Standardization: a translation tends to use more standard language than a ST that exhibits deviance from the standard (Toury 1995; with respect to dialect, see Englund Dimitrova 1997).
- A translation tends to exhibit less complexity of narrative voices than a source text which exhibits this characteristic (Taivalkoski 2002).
- Explicitation (Blum-Kulka 1986/2004, Øverås 1998).
- Sanitization: translations tend to display more usual collocations than their STs (Kenny 1999b).
- Later translations tend to be closer to the ST than earlier translations (see the papers published in *Palimpsestes* 4, 1990).
- There tends to be less repetition in a translation than in its source text (Shlesinger 1991, Toury 1991b, Baker 1993).
- Translated texts are less varied lexically than non-translated texts, less lexically dense, and use more high-frequency terms (Laviosa-Braithwaite 1996).
- Translated texts are more conventional in their language than non-translated texts (Baker 1993).
- Translated texts exhibit a larger quantity of patterns that are untypical of the language than non-translated texts (Mauranen 2000).
- Translated texts underrepresent features that are unique to the language (Tirkkonen-Condit 2000).

### 6.3 But are they universals?

The theme of how universal a universal must be emerged in the era of pre-electronic corpus translation studies. As we saw in section 6.1 above, for Blum-Kulka, universality means just that; she maintains that (1986: 17–18, italics mine): 'the process of translation *necessarily* entails shifts', and she sees explicitation (p. 19, italics mine) 'as *inherent* in the process of translation'. Toury (1980a: 60) is less certain, referring both to universals (though of behaviour) and to 'an almost general tendency—irrespective of the translator's identity, language, genre, period, and the like—to explicate in the translation information that is only implicit in the original text'. Clearly an 'almost general tendency' is not universal, if by 'universal' we mean 'always present'. Toury also contrasts such a tendency with phenomena which are subject to variation with translators, languages, genres, and periods; but lack of variation alone does not guarantee ubiquity, it only guarantees that a phenomenon is invariant where it is found. Baker (1993), too, mentions both universality and typicality. For her, a feature is a translation universal if it is 'linked to the nature of the translation process itself rather than to the confrontation of specific linguistic systems' (p. 243). It should 'typically occur in translated text rather than original utterances and [...] not [be] the result of interference

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from specific linguistic systems'. It must be possible to see it as 'a product of constraints which are inherent in the translation process itself', and it must 'not vary across cultures' (p. 246). She contrasts such features with features that result from the operation of norms. Norms (Toury 1978) are the underlying causes for the prevalence of features that (Baker 1993: 246) 'have been observed to occur consistently in certain types of translation within a particular socio-cultural and historical context'.

There is a strong suggestion in Baker's manner of expression, reminiscent of Blum-Kulka, that translation universals are cognitive phenomena, since the processes of translation that they inhere in are certainly cognitive processes. Toury, in contrast, speaks of universals of translational 'behaviour'. But beyond these remarks, there was little discussion of the nature of translation universals early in the life of the new, electronically driven research paradigm—which was, after all, conceived of as a paradigm within descriptive translation studies rather than in translation process research; the latter at the time tended to concentrate on think-aloud protocol studies (TAPS), and TAPS were looked on as revelatory of strategies that translators were at some level aware of employing, and there were no overt claims to universality.

Even when, in 2001, two major conferences were held at which the universality issue received some attention, scholars did not really address the central issue of the nature of translation universals. The two conferences were the third EST Congress, 'Claims, Changes and Challenges', held in Copenhagen in August-September, and a conference held in Savonlinna in October on the topic, 'Translation Universals: Do They Exist?' Papers presented at the latter were subsequently published as Mauranen and Kujamäki (2004a), which contains three articles in a section headed 'Conceptualising Universals'. Baker attended the former congress, presenting a paper (Baker 2001) in which, according to Mauranen and Kujamäki (2004b: 2), she wondered 'if the term [universal] was felicitous after all'. In his contribution to Mauranen and Kujamäki (2004a), Toury similarly disowns the u-word (Toury 2004: 17, *italics original*):

I did use the word 'universals' [...] in my 1976 dissertation, but dropped it right away and refrained from using it ever since [...] As of the early 1980s, the notion I favored was that of 'laws' [...] because unlike 'universals', this notion has the possibility of exception built into it.

The last of the three papers in the conceptualization section of Mauranen and Kujamäki (2004a), Bernardini and Zanettin (2004: 52), follows suit, and focuses on 'evaluating the adequacy of a corpus in the quest for norms and laws of translational behaviour'. Chesterman (2004: 39) takes the different tack of classifying the various kinds of universal that scholars have claimed to have identified or have gone in search of into two types. The first type, source or S-universals, cause differences 'between translations and their source texts', and are 'characteristics of the way in which translators process the source text'. The second type, T-universals, where 'T' stands for 'target', give rise to differences between translations and comparable non-translated texts, and they arise from the way in which translators use the target language. Chesterman thus finds no overt place for universals arising from the translation process as a whole, and in fact his division can be seen as one between hypotheses that can be tested by each of the two kinds of corpus mentioned in section 6.2 above: corpora of translations and their STs can be searched for evidence of S-universals, and corpora of translated and non-translated texts can be tested for evidence of T-universals. Overall, then, progress on the conceptualization track of research into universals was limited, notwithstanding the wealth of descriptive studies presented in the book of conference papers and elsewhere.

Chesterman (2004: 44) does, however, raise the important issue of causality: 'To claim that a given linguistic feature is universal is one thing. But we would also like to know its cause or causes. Here, we can currently do little more than speculate as rationally as possible.' In a series of iterations of a paper first presented as the annual St Jerome Lecture at the Norwegian Business School in Bergen on 1 October 2004, and subsequently published as Malmkær (2004a, 2008, 2009a), I have tried to speculate in such a way and also to meet the challenge posed by Toury (2004: 22), who says that 'the question facing us is not really whether translation universals *exist* [...] but rather whether recourse to the notion is in a position to offer us any *new insights*'; House (2008: 16) raises the same question. It seems to me, though, that before we can tackle these important questions, we must try to come to terms with the more basic question of what a translation universal is; otherwise, how would we know when we had found one? Since studies in the descriptive tradition have not advanced significantly in this direction, it might make sense to cease sweeping 'at least half a century of linguistic research and theorization [...] attached to the term "universal" [...] under the carpet' (Bernardini and Zanettin 2004: 52) and, instead, see how far we can take a

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parallel between the theoretical linguistic tradition and our own preoccupation with the idea of universals.

It is important to point out, at the outset, that the explanatory power of any given concept is relative to a particular research programme. For example, the explanatory power of Chomsky's notion of competence is, as Hymes (e.g. 1971) famously pointed out, as limited within sociolinguistics as it is extensive in Chomsky's own area of theoretical linguistics. If translation universals are of a similar nature to linguistic universals, then it is very possible that their powers of explanation will reside in the theoretical branch of their parent discipline and not in the descriptive branch. It is similarly the case that even if most of the phenomena that have been taken as evidence of universals are actually evidence of norms, laws, or tendencies, the theoretical power of only a few universals may nonetheless be very great.

Chomskyan universals are closely linked to the notion of linguistic competence, and if translation universals are features of the translation process, then it is very probable that they are related to translation competence, an area of study in which clarification would be of some benefit (see Pym 2003). The link between linguistic universals and linguistic competence is the following: linguistic universals are located in the language-acquisition device. This device begins its life in an initial state called Universal Grammar (UG). In interaction with language input, UG allows for the development of any human language (grammar), but it constrains human grammars through a set of principles that restrict the form of languages, and a set of parameters which define the kinds of (binary) variations that languages display (Chomsky 1981; see further Radford 2004a). Competence is the adult native speaker's implicit knowledge of their language(s) or grammar(s) (Chomsky 1965: 4); it is a mental state that the speaker is not conscious of but which allows the speaker to make judgements about the grammaticality or otherwise of stretches of a native language.

It is difficult to construct a translational parallel to this postulate. Since everyone begins their (pre-) infancy endowed with UG, but not everyone becomes a translator, we need to find a different initial state for translation competence to develop from. This initial state would need to include two or more languages, but it is necessary to allow for the languages not to be native, since many translators have learnt some of their languages formally, and translation universals are supposed to constrain translated texts irrespective of variations among translators. The initial state would also need to be age-independent, since many translators do not begin to translate until adulthood. The input data would need to be translational: seeing translation, doing translation, and receiving feedback on translation, because having more than one language appears not to suffice for a person to be able to translate (see Toury 1984).

To see how universals might fall out from the interaction of such data with the initial state, it will be helpful to consider what the relationships might be between an individual's two or more languages.

According to Paradis (2004: 110), a bilingual has 'two subsets of neural connections, one for each language, within the same cognitive system, namely, the language system' but (p. 112):

awareness of language membership is a product of metalinguistic knowledge. In online processing, language awareness is of the same nature and as unconscious as the process that allows a unilingual speaker to understand (or select) the appropriate word in a given context. The process of selecting a Russian word by a Latvian-Russian bilingual person is the same as the process that allows a unilingual Russian speaker to select among the indefinite, almost unlimited, possibilities for encoding a given message.

Both processes involve relating the selected item to a single, language-independent conceptual component (p. 200):

the conceptual component of verbal communication is not language-specific and there is a single non-linguistic cognitive system, even though speakers group together conceptual features differently in accordance with the lexical semantic constraints of each language. The lexical items are part of the language system, but the concepts are not.

Selection of an appropriate stretch of language is explained in terms of Paradis's Activation Threshold Hypothesis (1987; 1993; 2004: 28–31), which proposes that:

an item is activated when a sufficient amount of positive neural impulses have reached its neural

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substrate. The amount of impulses necessary to activate the item constitutes its activation threshold. [...] after each activation, the threshold is lowered—but it gradually rises again. [...] The selection of a particular item requires that its activation exceed that of any possible alternatives [...] In order to ensure this, its competitors must be inhibited.

The hypothesis is also used to explain the selection of one language over another (Paradis 2004: 115):

When one language is selected for expression, the activation threshold of the other language is raised so as to avoid interference [...] However, it is not raised so high that it could not be activated by an incoming verbal stimulus that impinges on the auditory sensory system and sends impulses to the corresponding representation [...] the unselected language is not *totally* inhibited. Its activation threshold is simply raised high enough to prevent self-activation, but not so high as to preclude comprehension.

What kinds of translation universal would this understanding of the relationships between terms and between languages in a bilingual mind admit, and what sort of evidence might we look for that these universals exist?

One set of findings and argument for universals that might fit the bill would be those published by Tirkkonen-Condit (2000, 2004), whose comparisons of translated and original Finnish show underrepresentation in the translated texts of items that are unique to Finnish. Tirkkonen-Condit proposes two explanations for this textual phenomenon, though she cautiously refers to one of them as no more than 'a (potentially universal) tendency of the translating process to proceed literally to a certain extent' (2004: 183). This has the consequence that when terms in the language being translated *into* do not have linguistic counterparts in the language being translated *from*, these items 'do not appear in the bilingual mental dictionary and there is nothing in the source text that would trigger them off as immediate equivalents' (Tirkkonen-Condit 2004: 183). Let us set aside the idea of a mental dictionary in favour of Paradis's notion of a language system within a more general cognitive store (2004:199):

An individual's cognitive store contains several higher cognitive systems that represent the sum of that person's intellectual abilities. The conceptual system is one of them, the language system another. The conceptual system stores *concepts*. 'Concept', as used here, refers to the mental representation of a thing (object, quality or event) formed by combining all of its characteristics or particulars. A concept can be acquired through experience, by organizing features of perception into coherent wholes. With the acquisition of language, however, its boundaries (i.e. what it encompasses) may be reshaped, and new concepts may be formed. Features of mental representation are then combined in accordance with (language-specific) lexical semantic constraints to form a (language-induced) concept. The concepts evoked by a word and by its translation equivalent will differ to the extent that their lexical semantic organization differs in the two languages. In fact, some concepts may have a label in only one of the languages and hence are not easily accessible through the other language.

Let us also assume that what Tirkkonen-Condit (2004: 183) refers to as 'translating literally' is the translational version of Davidson's idea of literal or first meaning: whatever 'comes first in the order of interpretation' (1986; see also Chapter 8 below), that is, the first translation equivalent that occurs to a translating translator. This seems to be a reasonable candidate for universal status: something has to be the first thing that comes to your mind when you are faced with a linguistic item to translate. It is a phenomenon which is not present in unilingual language events, nor in other bi- or multilingual events such as code-switching, which simply involve a switch of language in response, usually, to a feature of the environment or a switch of topic.

Such a 'first translational response' universal may on the face of it seem rather a tame translation universal; however, studying the responses arising from it—i.e. unedited, 'immediate' translations and possibly also interpretations—might tell us a great deal about the bilingual language store (how items in the two languages are connected) and about translation competence (How much editing is it necessary to perform after the first response? Do some translators' first responses require less editing than those of others?), and about how translational cognitive activity differs from unilingual cognitive activity and from bilingual cognitive activity that is not translational; this is very close to the aim with which Baker set out (see section 6.1 above).

A second translation universal may underlie the phenomenon that Jääskeläinen (1990) refers to as attention units and which Jakobsen (2003) calls segments. No translator is able to work at once with an entire text, so first responses to longer stretches of text will occur in segmented form. Given the very complex relationships between

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any two languages stored in a bilingual's mind, the task of segmentation is far from simple. For example, the Danish concept that the term '*døgn*' is effortlessly used to refer to in Danish is likely to be less clearly defined for English speakers, who are confined to using the terms 'day' (meaning a day with its night) or 'twenty-four hours'. In turn, the term *døgn* and the concept to which it refers are unlikely to be evoked as first responses to the English terms 'day' or 'twenty-four hours', because both can be rendered 'literally' into Danish, using *dag* and *fjortyve timer*. Obviously, where longer stretches of language are concerned, the lexico-conceptual variations are likely to be greater. As Paradis (2004: 199–200) points out:

The mental representations at the (nonlinguistic) cognitive level (i.e. concepts) are organized slightly differently by each language. The greater the typological and/or cultural distance between the two languages, the greater the difference in the organization of the mental representations corresponding to a word or utterance and its translation equivalent. Note that, assuming that a concept comprises all the knowledge that an individual possesses about a thing or event, it is never activated in its entirety at any given time. Only those aspects that are relevant to the particular situation in which it is evoked are activated (Damasio, 1989). Thus, the exact same portion of the relevant neural network is not activated every time a given word is heard or uttered. English and French words may activate exactly the same mental representation when the context focuses on features that overlap but will activate different representations when the context includes in its focus one or more features that are not part of the meaning of both the word and its translation equivalent.

Clearly, segmentation is essential in translation and interpreting and it is a kind of segmentation that has no counterpart in unilingual activity. It involves simultaneous suppression and activation of the right features of the linguistic systems at the right time in the right proportions to each other before the translator or interpreter can get started on the conscious parts of the translation process. We might call what enables this to happen 'translation unit segmentation'. Looking at the pairings of ST and TT that emerge as first translational responses might tell us something about the interlingual relationships, and the linguistic-conceptual relationships that exist in the translating bilingual's mind.

Above, I mentioned Toury's (2004: 22) challenge to establish what new insights we might gain by way of the notion of the translation universal. It seems to me that the two translation universals identified above invite investigation of new hypotheses: (i) that translators will never as a first translational response select a target language term that is unique to the target language; (ii) that the longest stretch of translation that a translator can deal with at once is limited by the amount of paired text a translator can hold in short-term memory; (iii) that this will vary with variation in the language pairs involved; (iv) that there will be limits on how different a first-response translation can be from its ST; it would be interesting to see what these limits are, and to speculate about whether this would help us, for example, to distinguish versions from translations. Were these predictions, arising from the hypothesized universals, to be confirmed, the hypotheses would be strengthened, and we would have gained new insight in translation studies.

### Further reading and relevant sources

Most works on corpus-based translation studies provide an account of the material covered in this chapter (except for that discussed in the final section, 6.3). *Meta* 43.4 (1998) provides a selection of early corpus-based translation research including some directed at the idea of the translation universal. Laviosa (2002) provides an account of the state of the art a little later, and Olohan (2004) contains a chapter on what she calls 'features' of translation. Mauranen and Kujamäki (2004a) and Anderman and Rogers (2008) both contain studies addressing the question of translation universals. Malmkær (2004a, 2008, 2009a, 2009b) deal with issues related to those raised in this chapter.

### Notes:

(1) See <http://www.monabaker.com/tsresources/TranslationalEnglishCorpus.htm> accessed on 25 February 2010.

(2) See <http://www.llc.manchester.ac.uk/ctis/postgraduate/research/phd-theses/Laviosa/> accessed on 25 February 2010.

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(3) See <http://www.llc.manchester.ac.uk/ctis/postgraduate/research/phd-theses/Kenny> accessed on 25 February 2010.

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### The Translator as Cross-Cultural Mediator

Susan Bassnett

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#### Abstract and Keywords

Interest in translation has grown owing to global changes. Translation, nowadays, signifies interchange between cultures. Translation is a communicative activity that involves the transfer of information across linguistic boundaries. Translation has a sociocultural context. Alongside the advent of the term 'cultural mediation', the term 'cultural translation' has also come into being, generally used to refer to transactions that do not explicitly involve linguistic exchange. The development of translation studies as an independent field has not been a linear process, and today there are a number of approaches to the study of translation and the training of translators. The two most significant lines of development have been descriptive translation studies and Skopos theory respectively. The functional approach of Skopos theorists has been useful, and there are huge developments in machine translation, but the task of mediation between cultures, involving negotiating understanding between global and local systems, still requires human agency.

Keywords: interchange, linguistic boundaries, cultural translation, descriptive translator studies, Skopos theory, mediation

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#### 7.1 Introduction

Since the start of the twenty-first century, interest in translation has grown in an unprecedented way. This has been, in part, due to global changes: mass migration, the attacks of 9/11 and the subsequent 'war against terror', conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, the threat of global warming, along with increased anxiety about the interlocking economic systems of nation-states, and in part also due to the expansion of global communication systems. Not only has translation come more into prominence as an instrument—we need translators in order to gain access to languages that we do not know—but the terminology of translation has also come to be used metaphorically, to indicate a shift in ways of thinking about interchange between cultures. Some writers have gone so far as to suggest that translation is a common human condition in the new millennium, with people 'translated' from one culture to another and, through their memories, 'translating' their lives, even as they literally translate between a language learned in childhood and another acquired along the journey through life. It is therefore not surprising that a new field of research, translation studies, that first came into being in the late 1970s, should have flourished around the world in the last decade, with particular emphasis being placed on examining the role of the translator not only as a bilingual interpreter but also as a figure whose role is to mediate between cultures.

#### 7.2 Defining translation

The task of the translator is to render a text written in one language into another, hence making available material that would otherwise be inaccessible. Translation is therefore a communicative activity that involves the transfer of information across linguistic boundaries. Simple assumptions about translation are based on the notion that whatever is written in the source language (SL) can be transferred into the target language (TL). The development

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of the bilingual dictionary was based on this premise.

Theorists of translation, however, have long acknowledged the difficulty of achieving total equivalence between languages and ensuring that what has meaning in one context will have the same meaning in another. From the earliest attempts to formulate theories of translation, distinctions have been made between a translation that closely follows the source text and a translation that diverges. St Jerome acknowledged a debt to Cicero in his Letter to Pammachius, written some time between 405 and 410 AD in distinguishing between word-for-word translation and the alternative, sense-for-sense translation. A literal translation, he argued, 'obscures the sense in the same way as the thriving weeds smother the seeds. [...] Let others stick to syllables, or even to letters, you should try to grasp the sense!' (Lefevere 1992: 48–9). The problems of how a translator might find ways of grasping the sense while diverging from the words themselves are perennial ones for a translator.

This binary distinction has continued to be a focus of attention for translators and translation theorists for centuries. In the latter half of the twentieth century, which saw the advent of the interdisciplinary field known as translation studies, scholars, including J. C. Catford, Anton Popovic, Jiří Levý, and many others, began wrestling with the problem of how adequately to define what constituted equivalence in translation; they also explored the complex question of untranslatability, since not all linguistic items have their counterparts in other languages by any means. The problem of defining equivalence remains central to the field, but the emphasis has shifted away from endeavouring to see equivalence in terms of sameness between languages, and more towards exploring ideas of equivalent effect. Some scholars, such as Eugene Nida, whose starting point was Bible translation and anthropology, have strongly emphasized the importance of context for a translator. As Nida points out, a language cannot be understood 'outside the total framework of the culture, of which the language in question is an integral part' (1964a: 223). The translator is therefore engaged not only with words, but with the context in which those words appear, and any equivalence will have to take into account the two different contexts, that of the source and that of the target. Nida's book *Customs and Cultures* (1964a) begins with the arresting story of Congolese elders rejecting a proposal made by missionaries that women should wear clothing that covered their breasts, on the grounds that they did not want their wives to dress like prostitutes. He goes on to explain that in that part of the Congo, fully dressed women were often prostitutes who had the money to spend on Western clothes; the nakedness perceived by missionaries as undesirable was seen by locals as more modest than being fully clothed. Through this, and many similar examples, Nida argues for the importance of contextual understanding and the need for constant reconsideration of one's own embedded cultural presuppositions. Without this kind of contextual understanding, which necessarily involves rethinking one's own position and mediating between the potential gaps created by fundamental cultural differences, adequate translation will not take place.

In his seminal essay 'On Linguistic Aspects of Translation' (1959), Roman Jakobson distinguished between three types of translation, which he defined as intralingual, or rewording within the same language, interlingual, or what he saw as translation proper, and intersemiotic translation or transmutation. This essay has been much discussed, and still remains important because it sets out so succinctly different aspects of the same activity. What is involved in this, and in all the attempts to distinguish types of translation, is a need to clarify the extent to which a translator can diverge from the source while still claiming to be producing a translation. In short, the debate revolves around the degree of freedom permitted to a translator when recreating a text in another language. Jakobson's 'transmutation' implies a greater degree of divergence from a source than his 'interlingual' translation does, and in this respect is not so different from St Jerome's notion of sense-for-sense translation.

## 7.3 Translation in context

The debate has generated a great deal of discussion around the question of what constitutes faithfulness to a source. Often, this debate has been couched in figurative language. Hence, in the seventeenth century, an age when theories of language and of translation were expanding, the gendered metaphor of the *belles infidèles* became prominent: like women, it was fancifully suggested, translations could be either beautiful and unfaithful, or faithful but ugly. Lori Chamberlain, writing in 1988, offered an important rereading of this metaphor as an example of the double standard inherent historically in both textual and sexual politics, and drew attention to the master/slave metaphor that has also characterized a great deal of post-Renaissance thinking about translation. This kind of figurative language, much used in translators' prefaces, suggests that just as women and slaves must be subordinate to their husbands and masters, so translators must be subordinate to the original writer, hence, a

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translation is de facto an inferior textual product. Chamberlain's important essay goes right to the heart of centuries of writing about translation, and identifies issues about faithfulness that are still being debated today. The Italian adage *traduttore/traditore* (translator/betrayer) is another aspect of this contentious, long-running debate. At what stage, the question may be asked, does a translator diverge from the source so radically that the final product ceases to be perceived as a translation at all? And if the translator does not engage with the text so as to bring his or her own creativity into play, is the resulting translating no more than a slavish subordination to another writer's work?

Catford (1965) makes a distinction between linguistic and cultural untranslatability. Focusing on the question of what is untranslatable, he argues that linguistic untranslatability occurs when there is no lexical or syntactical equivalent in the TL. Cultural untranslatability he saw as more complex and loosely formulated: something is culturally untranslatable when there is no equivalent situational feature in the source language. He cites the idea of a Finnish, Japanese, and English bathroom as an example of cultural untranslatability. A word for 'bathroom' may exist in a dictionary, but the bathroom itself and the way it is used in those three different contexts are not equivalent at all (see also Chapter 4).

Already in formulating his ideas about translation, Catford was anticipating a major shift in thinking about translation that came to fruition with the advent of translation studies in the 1970s. His approach to translation came out of his research in applied linguistics, whereas two decades after his book appeared, translation studies was no longer based in linguistics but had become an interdisciplinary field involving linguistics, literary and cultural studies, history, anthropology, sociology, and political science. Attention shifted from a focus on translation as a linguistic act, to a consideration of the additional elements in the translation process beyond the linguistic. The ground-breaking work of both Catford and Nida began to come together.

Today, the role of the translator has been radically rethought. In his book, aptly entitled *The Translator's Invisibility*, Lawrence Venuti explores the history of translation in the Anglo-American world, arguing that the illusion of fluency—i.e. creating the impression that a text has not actually been translated at all—marginalizes translation and effectively renders translators invisible. He points out that the illusion of transparency 'conceals the numerous conditions under which a translation is made, starting with the translator's crucial intervention in the foreign text' (Venuti 1995: 1–2). The greater the fluency, the more the translator is hidden from view, rendered invisible and marginalized as a result of that invisibility. Venuti's book is a call to arms for translators, proposing that translators should emphasize their presence in a text, and even suggesting some strategies (most notably the idea of 'foreignization') to redress the balance.

Venuti's book was published in 1995. Three years later, Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere published a collection of essays entitled *Constructing Cultures*. This book extended their earlier thinking about the so-called 'cultural turn' in translation studies, and stressed the need for the emerging field to investigate particular questions:

The more the image of one culture is constructed for another by translations, the more important it becomes to know how the process of rewriting develops, and what kinds of rewritings/translations are produced. Why are certain texts rewritten/translated, and not others? What is the agenda behind the production of rewritings/translations? How are the techniques of translating used in the service of a given agenda? Rewriters and translators are the people who really construct cultures on the basic level in our day and age. (Bassnett and Lefevere 1998: 10)

Bassnett and Lefevere acknowledged the growing role of translation in an increasingly globalized world, and stressed the need for greater awareness and understanding of how that role works. The cultural turn raised further important questions about agency, about the circumstances under which translations might be transformative, and about the impact of translation in a given culture at a particular moment in time.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Europe, for example, the translation of literary texts such as the poems of Lord Byron or the plays of William Shakespeare had a huge impact on various revolutionary struggles for independence in the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires. This was on account of the importance of creating and sustaining a national literature, in a national language which, in many cases, had been subordinate to the imperial languages. So the Czech Revival movement involved translation in order to strengthen a literature that was being created in a language that had been marginalized. We can see this pattern in many other contexts also; the translation into Welsh of the Bible in the sixteenth century effectively saved the Welsh language from

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extinction, as English became the dominant language, both politically and socially.

The political role of translation in certain contexts has not always been in the interests of revolutionary change, however. Tejaswini Niranjana and other postcolonial scholars have pointed out that translation tends to take place within an unequal power relationship, where often one culture is in a dominant position. In the case of the colonial period in India, for example, she argues that 'translation reinforce(d) hegemonic versions of the colonised, helping them to acquire the status of what Edward Said calls representation or objects without history' (Niranjana 1992: 176). It is still the case that the power relationships embedded in global economic networks have a major impact on what comes to be translated and how translations are then distributed. The dominance of English as a world language means that for a writer to be a global success, he or she has to be published in that language. The so-called 'boom' of Latin American writing in the 1970s that brought novelists such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Carlos Fuentes to international attention was a direct result of skilled translation into English and good marketing. All had been writing in Spanish to critical acclaim, but it was through translation that they became household names internationally. The market power of the English-speaking world has meant that many Latin American, African, and Indian writers have felt compelled to publish in that language, either by opting for English as their writing language or by having their work translated. This is despite the very small percentage of published translations in English in terms of the overall number of books published. While some markets, particularly those of minority-language cultures, see a high percentage of books in translation, the scale of translation into English remains small. Yet so great is the dominance of English globally that a writer's reputation can increase phenomenally once his or her work starts to appear in English.

The importance of translation in a sociocultural context should not be underestimated. The history of colonialism, for example, is also a history of translation. The case of the Treaty of Waitangi, a document signed in 1840 between a representative of the British crown and several hundred Maori chiefs in what was then the newly established colony of New Zealand, is a fascinating example of the legacy of uncertainty that some translations can leave behind. In its time, the Treaty was an example of enlightened thinking, an attempt to establish a partnership between the British settlers and the local Maori peoples. The document was drawn up in English, and was then translated into Maori by Henry Williams, the head of the Church Missionary Society in New Zealand. In an essay analysing this translation, Sabine Fenton and Paul Moon point out that it was undertaken at high speed, that the technical languages of the English was rendered into very simple Maori terms, that Williams tried to avoid all terms that did not have direct equivalents in Maori, that there were some omissions, and—perhaps most significantly—words and concepts were employed that had come to mean something different to the Maori from the way they were used in the Treaty. So for example,

The key concepts of 'sovereign authority', 'civil government', and 'powers of sovereignty' were all translated by Williams with the same term: *kawanatanga*, 'governance'. The concept of sovereignty in English is complex in legal documents and includes the power of jurisdiction at national as well as international levels, meanings that the term *kawanatanga* did not cover. (Fenton and Moon 2002: 33)

The repercussions of the lack of clarity in the Maori translation continued well into the twentieth century, culminating in the creation of a tribunal to resolve issues of Maori land rights never fully clarified in the original document. For although the Treaty was supposed to protect the Maori people and ensure cooperation between them and the settlers, the vagueness of the wording and the textual ambiguities meant that adherence to the Treaty could be, and was, selective.

While New Zealand today has returned to a re-examination of the Treaty and the implications of Williams's over-hasty translation, in the United States there has been a different movement: from a multilingual point in the earliest years of European settlement to a focus on the importance of having a single, national language, that of the original Constitution. In his book *Translation and Identity in the Americas* (2006), Edwin Gentzler points out that though studies of the United States in terms of class, race, and gender abound, studies of the role played by translation, of language minorities, and the history of the gradual erasure of other languages under the rising dominance of English are few in number. Yet the early years of settlement and colonization necessarily involved multilingualism. Here too, political history is directly linked to the history of translations.

### 7.4 The translator's identity

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In Latin America, the process of colonization followed slightly different paths from the north. Significantly, two now legendary figures have emerged in both contexts, both female and both associated with translation and intercultural communication. In North America, that figure is Pocahontas, daughter of a tribal chief who acts as intermediary and then falls in love with a British officer, Captain John Smith. In Latin America, it is the rather more complex figure of La Malinche, daughter of an Aztec chieftain who became mistress and interpreter for Hernan Cortes in his Mexican campaign. In both cases translation and female sexuality are linked, and in the case of La Malinche in particular, subsequent evaluation of her role in what was to be the conquest of Mexico and destruction of the Aztec empire has tended to see her as a betrayer of her own culture, as someone who persuaded her own people not to resist the incomers, rather than as a facilitator of communication between peoples. The story of La Malinche highlights the ambiguity that often surrounds the translator in a highly charged political context. More recently, the plight of translators and interpreters caught up in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan has been brought to media attention; though vital to the allies in their campaign, such people are often the object of vilification and death threats from their fellow-countrymen. Nor is translation only dangerous in a war zone: in 2000, two Iranian translators involved in a conference held in Berlin organized by the Heinrich Böll Foundation were sentenced to long periods of imprisonment for the crime of 'waging war against God'. Earlier, in 1991, the Japanese translator of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* was stabbed to death, while Rushdie's Italian translator narrowly escaped the same fate. Translation can be an extremely dangerous activity, whether in a war zone or in a context where there are serious threats to freedom of expression. The translator becomes the locus of fantasies of usurpation and betrayal, and in the case of Rushdie's translators, once the fatwa against him had been issued by the Iranian clergy, no distinction was made between the writer and his translators. The case of the murder of Rushdie's Japanese translator highlights the complex question of the separate identities of writer and translator, raising the issue as to when a translator becomes a substitute for another writer, effectively that writer's double.

## 7.5 Mediating between cultures

By the end of the 1980s, massive changes to the political, social, and economic systems globally meant that there was an unprecedented movement of peoples moving between countries, some fleeing from persecution, others seeking new opportunities to build a better life. The collapse of the Soviet Union and China's open door policy had major repercussions on the movement of populations, as did the combination of famine and political instability in the African continent. As more people began to move, so linguistic priorities began to change. In countries across Europe, for example, schools began to tackle the issue of the multilingual classroom, and health services began to employ translators to enable the treatment of patients from countries around the world. It was around this time that the term 'cultural interpreter' began to emerge—a term that highlights the importance of a translation process that involves more than spoken or written language, and encompasses a recognition of cultural difference.

In a study of bilingual and bicultural writing, Azade Seyhan contrasts traditional models equating monolingualism with national identity, against the new plurilingualism of a changing world and argues:

Once we accept the loss of stable communities and the inevitability of exile, then the interdependency of linguistic and cultural experiences both at the local and global level become self-evident. Thus, despite coercively manufactured and enforced national antinomies and fortified borders, history and geography are transfigured in new maps and new types of dialogic links. (Seyhan 2001: 9)

This process of transfiguration involves what has come to be termed 'transnationalism', a way of conceptualizing intercultural transmission beyond national boundaries. It is obvious that such transmission processes will involve interlingual exchange to some extent, hence translation needs to be understood in the broadest sense of the term. In his book *Translating Cultures*, David Katan makes a distinction between the three categories detailed in his subtitle; his book sets out to be an introduction for translators, interpreters, and mediators whilst recognizing that they overlap. He also raises the problem of the extent of the knowledge base of a translator who is effectively a mediator between cultures. In order to be such an effective mediator, does the translator necessarily have to be bicultural to some extent? A variant of this question had long been posed by translation scholars focusing on the analysis of texts and asking whether it was necessary for a translator to be effectively bilingual. Now, alongside bilingualism, biculturalism was taking its place, though definitions of biculturalism remained fuzzy. Katan declares that a cultural mediator is someone who 'facilitates communication, understanding and action between persons or groups who differ with respect to language and culture' (Katan 2004: 17). This is uncontroversial, but then he goes

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on to suggest that this role must also involve interpreting not just the expressions of each cultural group, but also the intentions, perceptions, and expectations, which is much more problematic. The cultural interpreter, by this definition, is expected to go far beyond what is actually expressed and has to endeavour to second-guess the unexpressed. Katan suggests that a cultural interpreter should be to some extent bilingual, but this reduces culture to a homogeneous concept that does not take into account the vast differences between individuals who claim to belong to a certain culture, differences of age, class, gender, race, religion, education, and so forth.

## 7.6 Cultural translation

Alongside the advent of the term 'cultural mediation', the term 'cultural translation' has also come into being, generally used to refer to transactions that do not explicitly involve linguistic exchange. In his book *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha uses the terminology of translation to talk about the transnational. He theorizes in-betweenness, a space implicit in the experience of migrants, and argues that this condition is becoming a new global reality for millions of people. What must be studied and mapped, as he puts it, in this new international space of discontinuous realities is 'the problem of signifying, the interstitial passages and processes of cultural difference that are inscribed in the "in-between"' (Bhabha 1994: 217). Bhabha takes up Walter Benjamin's ideas about translation as after-life, as that which ensures the survival of a text in a new context, and he also faces up to the inherent contradiction in translation, which is that even as a translator seeks to render a text constructed in one context so as to bring it across into another, the very process of attempting to do that brings the translator face to face with those elements of a text that actively resist being translated. In other words, translation involves confronting the untranslatable, and that untranslatability can also be seen as the migrant's inability for whatever reason to assimilate into the new culture. What Bhabha does, therefore, is to use the concept and terminology of translation to talk about the migrant's problems of assimilation and the ways in which writers seek to explore their hybrid linguistic and cultural identities in their work.

The impact of Bhabha's notion of cultural translation on postcolonial literary theory has been far-reaching, and it can be argued that there are now two distinct critical discourses both employing similar terminology but quite distinct in aims and methods. From a postcolonial perspective, translation is employed metaphorically as a device for understanding the plurality of identity issues that come out of a condition of migrancy. From within translation studies, the idea of the cultural turn has been developed to include research into translation and global power relations. In his book *Translation and Globalization*, the Irish translation scholar Michael Cronin examines the expansion of machine translation, the impact of global markets, the increased speed of communication, and the risks posed to minority languages by the domination of English. In a chapter entitled 'New Translation Paradigms', he argues that translation, in what he sees as an increasingly fragile biological and cultural ecosystem is 'more real and more important than ever' (Cronin 2003: 74).

The importance of translation in the twenty-first century is highlighted by Bella Brodzki, in an important study of translation as cultural invigoration. *Can These Bones Live?* is subtitled *Translation, Survival and Cultural Memory*, and in her introduction Brodzki announces that there is what she terms 'a rise in translative consciousness everywhere in the humanities' and proceeds to sketch out the basis of her own understanding of translation (Brodzki 2007: 1). Acknowledging a debt to Walter Benjamin and to Jacques Derrida for opening up the debates around the idea of translation as survival, she also acknowledges the emergence of translation studies as a distinct field and the growing interest in translation within comparative literature. Brodzki's book is important in that she draws together these disparate lines of enquiry which had been at risk of becoming antipathetic, with postmodernist scholars and translation studies scholars each developing their own terminology of translation and failing to recognize the insights of one another. Brodzki states plainly that translations should not be set apart as a different sort of text, since they, like all forms of writing, are embedded in a series of sociopolitical networks. Affirming the arguments of Bassnett and Lefevere from the early 1990s, she asserts that translations are subject to the constraints of the external conditions of the contexts in which they are produced. Then she makes a bold, far-reaching claim for the importance of translation as a transaction that underpins contemporary life and society. Just as we now have to take into account gender as a category for exploring 'authorship, agency, subjectivity, performativity, multiculturalism, postcolonialism, transnationalism, diasporic literacy, and technological literacy', so we also need to take into account translation:

Translation is no longer seen to involve only narrowly circumscribed technical procedures of specialized

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or local interest, but rather to underwrite all cultural transactions, from the most benign to the most venal.  
(Brodzki 2007: 2)

Brodzki's huge claims for the importance of translation reflect a heightened awareness more generally of the importance of intercultural communication in the wake of 9/11. In an essay entitled 'Translation, Ethics and Ideology in a Violent Globalizing World', Maria Tymoczko argues that translators do not occupy a neutral space, since they are 'among the chief mediators between cultures', and stresses the importance of ensuring that ethical and ideological dimensions are included in translator training programmes (Tymoczko 2009: 184).

Yet the increase in demand for translation has not to date been matched by an increase in the status of translators, nor in the level of remuneration for translation. Nevertheless, the rising significance of translation in global communication is undeniable. However, as indicated earlier in this essay, linguistic competence is no longer the prerequisite for a good translator. What matters increasingly is intercultural competence, and significantly some training programmes in business and management studies, for example, focus on teaching intercultural awareness without formal language requirements. Airport bookstalls abound in guides to doing business in other cultures, while travel books such as the Rough Guide or Lonely Planet series provide information on other cultures that includes details of how to behave in certain situations. So, for example, the traveller might be advised that it is offensive to blow one's nose publicly in Japan, or rude to offer one's hostess a bouquet of flowers without first removing the paper the flowers were wrapped in when visiting in Germany. In the guides to intercultural business, information is provided on differences in work ethic, timekeeping, the significance of formal as opposed to informal meetings, dress codes, the use of titles, and so forth.

## 7.7 Translation and the media

The development of translation studies as an independent field has not been a linear process, and today there are a number of different approaches to the study of translation and to the training of translators. The two most significant lines of development, however, have been what have come to be termed descriptive translation studies and Skopos theory respectively. The former has tended to focus more on literary translation, and through the work of pioneering scholars such as Itamar Even-Zohar, Gideon Toury, André Lefevere, and James Holmes, research into translation has expanded to encompass the history of translation, the changing patterns of translation norms, and the reception of translations in the target culture. Indeed, descriptive translation scholars have focused so firmly on the fortunes of a text in the receiving culture that they have triggered a re-investigation of the role played by translation in literary history more generally.

The Skopos research, though similar in that it too sets translation in context and can be broadly said also to be a cultural approach, has been applied to a wider range of texts beyond the literary, and has proved to be particularly useful where translation and mass media are concerned. Skopos theory was developed in the 1980s by the German translation scholars Katharina Reiss and Hans Vermeer. They argued that the objective of a translation would determine how it was translated—in other words the function a translation was intended to have would then play a direct role in the actual process of translating. This meant, at its simplest, that a translation could be highly effective and could fulfil its original purpose and yet could deviate enormously from the source. We need only think of the translation of legal or technical materials, for example, to see why this should be so. A legal document in one language will be constructed according to the norms governing that type of text in that context; to translate it literally would be foolish, since the norms and conventions of the target context are bound to be different. Examples of bad translation abound; everyone has read tourist brochures, hotel information, or restaurant menus that have been translated literally and as a result are either comical or meaningless. The Skopos approach dismisses the idea of literal or even close translation and opts instead for a functional translation strategy, one that will serve the purpose for which the translation is being undertaken. The approach is underpinned by the idea of equivalent effect; hence there is a totally different concept of what constitutes equivalence. The task of the translator who follows this functional method is to read, decode, and then reconstruct a text for a target audience, bearing in mind differences not only of linguistic structure, style, and vocabulary, but also of context, culture, and audience expectation.

In an essay entitled 'Translating Terror' (Bassnett 2005) I examined the ethics of an acculturation translation strategy when translating politically sensitive texts from non-European cultures. I drew attention to the way in which

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political speeches by leaders in the Arab world often retained rhetorical features of the source culture that carry a completely different signification. So, for example, while understatement is a powerful rhetorical tool in English, overstatement may be an equally powerful tool in Arabic. Basil Hatim and Ian Mason (1990) have looked at how genres can be combined and blurred in Arabic and Farsi, so that religious sermonizing and political tirades can be fused together. To do this in an English-language context is to move straight into hyperbole, which casts doubt on the veracity of what is being said. Saddam Hussein's famous phrase 'the mother of all battles' became, translated literally into English, a comic image that was then taken up and used by political cartoonists. The apocalyptic tone of some Arab politicians' speeches, though appropriate in the source context, is exaggerated to the point of becoming ridiculous when translated without regard for the intended function of such rhetorical devices.

The translation of political speeches is a contentious area and one that is starting to receive more critical attention. For translation of these texts is directly linked to media representation, and such has been the acceleration of change in mass communications in recent years that the practice of translation for the media is rapidly becoming an area of study in its own right. Television news networks now aim to bring information to viewers almost instantly, as indicated by the concept of 'breaking news' which we all take for granted today. Christina Schäffner has pointed out that reactions in one country to what is said in another country are 'actually reactions to the information as it was provided in translation' (Schäffner 2004b: 120). This may seem self-evident, but is actually much more problematic, for in media translation the translator is perhaps even more invisible than with the translation of other genres, despite having a significant role to play in the process of shaping the information that is being transmitted.

Schäffner and Bassnett (2010) argue that media translation necessarily involves recontextualization, and always has a powerful ideological dimension. Institutional policies and ideologies play a significant role (the house style and political stance of a newspaper or television channel will affect the translation, for example, as will the censorship regulations determined by a particular nation state), in short:

Mass media enable communication across languages and cultures, but in doing so, they can privilege specific information at the expense of other information, and they can also hinder and prohibit information from being circulated. (Schäffner and Bassnett 2010: 8)

Recontextualization is the most evident of a series of complex processes of interlingual transfer that are involved in the business of global news translation. As information is transferred at high speed from one language to another, it also undergoes various other transformations, which include editing, abridging, and restructuring in accordance with the norms and values of the target medium. So, for example, a long interview conducted by a journalist in one language that, were it to be written up, might consist of tens of thousands of words, can end up as a soundbite in quotation marks in a newspaper in another language, purporting to be a translation of something that has been said but which may only have a scant relationship with the source. This is because that long source text will have had to be summarized, the summary then translated, and that text reshaped to fulfil its new function. Through the internet it is possible now to see at a glance the diversity of reports of the same incident, a diversity that raises intriguing questions about the veracity of what is consumed by the target audience and about the definition of translation itself.

### 7.8 Conclusion

At the start of this essay, the task of the translator was defined as that of rendering a text written in one language into another. The case of news translation and, by extension, other forms of internet translation challenge that definition, since either the source will have undergone a whole series of modifications that go far beyond the binary, or else there may not be a clear source at all and what is presented as a translation may be a kind of collage. In an essay based on her direct experience as a news translator for FTV, the Taiwanese Formosa TV channel, Claire Tsai (2005) recounts how texts are frequently drastically cut and news flows restructured completely to fit the needs of the target viewers. In such circumstances, the role of the translator is very different from that of someone negotiating a linguistic or even a cultural divide, but it still involves a form of textual transfer.

Despite the immense changes in global communications that are happening with increasing speed, St Jerome's old distinction between word-for-word and sense-for-sense translation still resonates. The functional approach advocated by the Skopos theorists has come to be seen as particularly useful, and there are huge developments in machine translation, but the task of mediating between cultures, which involves negotiating understanding

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between global and local systems, is still one that requires human agency.

## **Further reading and relevant sources**

The cultural turn in translation studies is particularly well represented in Bassnett and Lefevere (1990). Niranjana (1992), Tiffin and Lawson (1994), and Bassnett and Trivedi (1999) are good guides to postcolonial translation studies, and Simon (1996) is a standard work on the relationship between gender and translation, an aspect of the cultural turn not covered in this chapter. Mouscen (2008) is an interesting case study of globalization and localization in translation, while Venuti (1995) has become the standard work on translator identity. Bhabha (1994) is the main representative of the cultural translation metaphor, and Schäffner and Bassnett (2010) represents the recent focus on the role of translation in the political and media spheres.

### **Susan Bassnett**

Susan Bassnett was, until her retirement in 2010, Professor of Comparative Literature at Warwick University and Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. She has written extensively on translation, intercultural communication, comparative and world literature, including *Translation in Global News*, with Esperance Bielsa (2009) and an edited volume on translation and political discourse with Christina Schäffner (2010).

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## Meaning and Translation

Kirsten Malmkjær

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### [-] Abstract and Keywords

Translation is an activity that aims at conveying meaning or meanings of a given linguistic discourse from one language to another. Translation can be defined in terms of sameness of meaning across languages. According to some researchers, there can be no absolute correspondence between languages and hence no fully exact translations. Translation at some level is always possible, however, there are times when interlocutors are aware that they do not mean the same by particular phrases. Meaning is formed on each occasion of linguistic interaction and is therefore unique and not replicable. Therefore, a translation can never 'mean' the same as the source text. But this does not matter, because practice ensures that translators 'get away with' translating sufficiently well sufficiently often.

Keywords: meaning, linguistic discourse, interlocutors, linguistic interaction, source text, sameness

### 8.1 Introduction

It is generally agreed that *meaning* is important in translation [...] Indeed translation has often been defined with reference to meaning; a translation is said to 'have the same meaning' as the original. (Catford 1965: 35, italics original)

Catford is here drawing on material in Locke and Booth (1955:124), and is about to distance himself from this easy identification of translation with sameness of meaning; but a swift Google search confirms that the general agreement he refers to persists half a century on: according to Zaky (2000), 'translation is, above all, an activity that aims at conveying meaning or meanings of a given linguistic discourse from one language to another'; the Thesaurus within the free dictionary<sup>1</sup> has as the first sense of 'translation': 'a written communication in a second language having the same meaning as the written communication in a first language'; and even the website of SIL International (formerly the Summer Institute of Linguistics) has it that 'The ideal translation will be accurate as to meaning and natural as to the receptor language forms used.'<sup>2</sup> There seems, then, to be a commonsense view that the relationship between meaning and translation is close, and that translation can be defined in terms of sameness of meaning across languages. This, of course begs the question of what meaning is and how sameness of meaning can be established, a question which especially exercised philosophers of language during the second half of the twentieth century. As Davidson puts it (1973:125):

Kurt utters the words 'Es regnet' and under the right conditions we know that he has said that it is raining. Having identified his utterance as intentional and linguistic, we are able to go on to interpret his words: we can say what his words, on that occasion, meant. What could we know that would enable us to do this? How could we come to know it?

The use in the example of a different language from that of the passage as a whole suggests that the connection

between translation and meaning may not be all one way: perhaps it is not just that translation can be defined in terms of meaning; perhaps if we are to make sense of the concept of meaning, that concept must in turn be connected to the translation phenomenon. Or, lest this argument be deemed circular, perhaps we need to bring in a third concept in terms of which both phenomena, meaning and translation, can be defined. Several types of third concept have been suggested for this purpose, and I will discuss some of them in the course of this chapter.

## 8.2 Meaning in translation theory

Among translation scholars, the view that translation can be defined in terms of sameness of meaning is, in fact, refreshingly rare. In some cases, this is because a particular view of meaning would preclude cross-linguistic meaning identity; in other cases, it is because considerations of meaning tend to be related to questions of equivalence and sameness, while many scholars prefer to see translation in quite other terms than these.

### 8.2.1 How meaning gives way to equivalence

According to Catford (1965: 35; cf. Chapter 4 above), meaning is ‘the total network of relations entered into by any linguistic form’. The relations are of two kinds: formal relations between forms in the linguistic system; and contextual relations between forms and aspects of the context in which the forms are used. But ‘every language is ultimately *sui generis*—its categories being defined in terms of relations holding within the language itself’ (Catford 1965: 27), so it is never possible to establish sameness of formal meaning between a text and its translation; and because formal meaning is part of meaning, there can never be sameness of meaning between a text and its translation: ‘An SL text has an SL meaning, and a TL text has a TL meaning’ (Catford 1965: 35).

For Catford, the next best thing to sameness of meaning is ability to function in the same situations (1965: 49, italics original): ‘The TL text must be relatable to at least *some* of the situational features to which the SL text is relatable.’ When this happens, there is translation equivalence between a translation and its source (p. 50, italics original): ‘*Translation equivalence occurs when an SL and a TL text or item are relatable to (at least some of) the same features of substance.*’ So the relationship between a translation and its source text is equivalence, and equivalence is realized in terms of shared contextual features. Toury’s famous adaptation of this definition introduces a notion of relevance, which is hierarchical and relative to a point of view (Toury 1980c: 37, italics mine): ‘Translation equivalence occurs when a SL and a TL text (or item) are relatable to (at least some of) the same *relevant* features.’ In both approaches, equivalence is taken to be the observable, actual relationship that obtains between items in TT and ST, and Toury draws on observations of regularities of patterns of TT—ST relationships to identify what is relevant from the TT’s point of view, an exercise that helps to establish what the norms are for translations in a given culture. Both approaches also rely on it being possible to establish that (at least some of) the features that the texts relate to are in fact the same—an issue I will return to in section 8.3 below.

### 8.2.2 How equivalence acquires a ‘dynamic dimension’

Nida agrees with Catford that ‘there can be no absolute correspondence between languages’ and hence ‘no fully exact translations’ (1964b: 165). His conception of meaning is broader than Catford’s, which, as we saw above, is expressed concisely as ‘the total network of relations entered into by any linguistic form’ (Catford 1965: 35; cf. Chapter 4), though were these networks to be described in detail, Catford might very well have found his ‘essay’ taking on similar proportions to Nida’s book (1964b), in which three chapters are devoted to meaning. Chapter 3 provides a general introduction to meaning, Chapter 4 is devoted to so-called linguistic meaning, and Chapter 5 to referential and emotive meaning, which, Nida explains (1964b: 57), ‘may be said to “begin where linguistic meaning leaves off”’.

Nida (1964b: ch. 3) draws the same distinction that Catford draws between the relationship in which signs stand to other signs in the system and the relationships between signs and their referents (1964b: 35), a distinction which Nida identifies as one between semantics (symbol to referent) and syntactics (symbol to symbol). However, he is also interested in pragmatics, which he defines as ‘the relation of symbols to behaviour’. He considers this to be especially important because ‘the reactions of people to symbols are fundamental to any analysis of meaning’.

Linguistic meaning, which is the subject of Chapter 4, amounts to the syntactics, or symbol-to-symbol relationships,

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distinguished from semantics in Chapter 3, and it is dealt with largely by way of the concepts and notions of the then current version of transformational grammar (Chomsky 1957). Referential and emotive meaning, discussed in Chapter 5, cover, respectively, ‘the cultural context identified in the utterance’ (roughly, semantics) and ‘the responses of the participants in the communicative act’ (roughly, pragmatics) (Nida 1964b: 70). Referential meaning is dealt with in terms of Katz and Fodor’s (1963a, 1963b) method of componential analysis (cf. Chapter 4 above), central to which is a dissection of our concepts into their atomic parts, called semantic markers, like ADULT, HUMAN, and MALE, for example. These markers are not distributed evenly throughout different languages, and the categories they relate to may be of different levels of importance and hence be variously more or less clearly highlighted in different cultures and their languages. It is, however, tacitly assumed that they stand for universally available categories of human experience—an assumption which is no less problematic than the assumption that Catford’s contextual features are straightforwardly available independently of any individual language. In a passage in which the close relationship between translation and meaning is seen once more, Lewis remarks in this connection:

Semantic markers are *symbols*: items of an artificial language we may call *Semantic Markerese* [...] Translation into Markerese is at best a substitute for real semantics, relying either on our tacit competence (at some future date) as speakers of Markerese or on our ability to do real semantics at least for the one language Markerese. Translation into Latin might serve as well, except insofar as the designers of Markerese may choose to build into it useful features—freedom from ambiguity, grammar based on logic—that might make it easier to do real semantics for Markerese than for Latin. (Lewis 1970: 190, italics original)

I will return to this problem in section 8.3 below.

Nida, meanwhile, turns his attention to emotive meanings, which are also measurable in terms of features rather like the semantic markers from which, however, they differ in that while markers identify dichotomous characteristics of referents (+ vs. –MALE; + vs. –adult, etc.), the ‘dimensions’ characteristic of emotive meanings are mappable onto ‘a complex matrix for each word [which] could include, for example, a ten-point graded series with such dimensions as good-to-bad, pleasant-to-unpleasant’ (1964b: 113).

However, language is, Nida maintains (1964b: 120);

more than the meanings of the symbols and the combination of symbols; it is essentially a code [...] functioning for a specific purpose or purposes. Thus we must analyze the transmission of a message in terms of a dynamic dimension. This analysis is especially important for translating, since the production of equivalent messages is a process [...] of reproducing the total dynamic character of the communication.

In order to do this, a translator needs to pay attention to five ‘phases’: the subject matter, the participants, the act of speaking or writing, the code, and the message (Nida 1964b: 120; cf. Jakobson 1960), and it is important that sender-participants adjust messages to suit receptor-participants, who will obviously differ in their educational and cultural background, particularly when translation is at issue. Nida mentions the American Bible Society’s sponsorship simultaneously of three translations of the Bible into Spanish, one aimed at the Evangelical constituency, one directed at ‘the well-educated but nonchurch constituency’, and one ‘in very simple Spanish, intended especially for the new literate’ (Nida 1964b: 143). Each translation will fulfil a different purpose (a notion to be taken up and developed by, notably, Katarina Reiss, Hans Vermeer, and Justa Holz-Mänttäri; see section 8.2.3 below), which maybe the same purpose that the author intended the source text to fulfil, but which is often different.

The translator may want the reader to be informed not only about the content of the original text but also about its form. The most extreme kind of translation that this may lead to is a “gloss translation”, in which the translator attempts to reproduce as literally and meaningfully as possible the form and content of the original’. In contrast, ‘a translation which attempts to produce a dynamic rather than a formal equivalent’ in which ‘the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message’, will aim ‘at complete naturalness of expression’ (Nida 1964b: 159).

Nida distinguishes between translations that are basically source-oriented (1964b: 165) and translations that are basically oriented ‘towards the receptor response’ (p. 166). The former are formal-equivalence translations, the

latter dynamic-equivalence translations, though these notions are scalar rather than absolute.

The efficiency of a translation has to be judged in terms of three criteria: efficiency of communication, comprehension of the original intent, and equivalence of response (1964b: 182). Efficiency is measured ‘in terms of the maximal reception for the minimum effort of decoding’ (cf. Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995, Gutt 1991, and Chapter 4 of this volume). Comprehension of the original intent covers what is normally understood as accuracy, fidelity, and correctness, but these concepts, Nida insists (1964b: 183), are always relative to receptor comprehension, and so, obviously, is equivalence of response. The latter, though, can be conceived of either as an understanding on the behalf of the new receiver of the original response as it was in its original setting, or as a response that is the same as the original response, though made by the new receiver in the new cultural context.

Clearly, people and their experiences have pride of place in Nida's theory of translation, in which the need always to adjust language to the experience of the participants in the communicative process is strongly emphasized (see esp. 1964b: 239–40), and which takes the potential to promote equivalence of response as one of the most important measures of translation quality. In the theories to be discussed in the following section, the translation audience is similarly borne in mind, but the concepts on the basis of which the theories are constructed are those of text typology and function.

### 8.2.3 How equivalence gives way to text type and purpose

In Catford's and Nida's work, discussed above, translation evaluation is introduced as a by-product of the theories of translation that these scholars are primarily concerned to produce. In contrast, the work (Reiss 1971/2000) which to a considerable extent inspired the seminal work of the movement known as Skopos theory (Vermeer 1978/1983), is presented overtly as an account of the potentials and limits of translation criticism. According to Reiss (1971/2000: 17), ‘the primary factor influencing the translator's choice of a proper translation method’ is text type. In any text, says Reiss (p. 25), one of the three functions of language identified by Karl Bühler (1934/2000: 28/35, *italics original*), ‘expression (*Ausdruck*), appeal (*Appell*) and representation’, will predominate. Where the representative function predominates, the most important aspect of the text will be its content; such texts are content-focused. Where the expressive function predominates, the most important aspect of the text will be its form; such texts are form-focused. Where the appeal function predominates, the most important aspect of the text is its power to persuade; such texts are appeal-focused.

Content-focused texts, which require ‘*invariance in transfer of their content*’ (Reiss 1971/2000: 30, *italics original*), include:

press releases and comments, news reports, commercial correspondence, inventories of merchandise, operating instructions, directions for use, patent specifications, treaties, official documents, educational works, non-fiction books of all sorts, essays, treatises, reports, theses, and specialist literature in the humanities, the natural sciences, and other technical fields. (Reiss 1971/2000: 27)

Because the content of texts of this type is of paramount importance, ‘the linguistic form of the translation [must] be adapted without reservation to the idiom of the target language’ (p. 30).

Form-focused texts, in contrast, must be translated with a clear focus on the form of expression in the source language and on the aesthetic effect which this will have evoked in the original readership. The texts in question include ‘all texts based on formal literary principles, and therefore all texts which express more than they state’ (Reiss 1971/2000: 24, *italics original*).

Appeal-focused texts include predominantly ‘advertising publicity, preaching, propaganda, polemic, demagogic or satire’ (Reiss 1971/2000:39). In translating texts of this type, the linguistic form is secondary to achieving the purpose of the message, which is to provoke a particular reaction in the reader or listener, not so much in aesthetic as in behavioural terms, and ‘this means that the translator has to depart more from the content and form of the original than in other types of text’ (p. 41).

As Höning (1997: 9) puts it, Katarina Reiss's colleague at Mainz/Germersheim, Hans Vermeer, ‘went one decisive step further than Reiss’ on the path leading from equivalence to purpose. According to Vermeer, texts, including translations, are actions (*Handlungen*) undertaken for particular reasons with a particular set of recipients in mind.

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A translator must decide what the purpose (*Skopos*) of a translation is, preferably in cooperation with clients and recipients—an idea also championed by Holz-Mänttäri (1984) and by Höning (1995), and most fully developed by Reiss and Vermeer (1984/1991), described by Höning (1997: 9–10) as:

probably the most influential work in translation studies ever published in Germany, quoted and referred to by both friends and foes of this ‘framework theory of translation’. *Skopos* theory and functionalism focus on the translator, giving him/her both more freedom and more responsibility. S/he can no longer refer to rules of the kind developed by contrastive approaches, and the traditional notion of *equivalence* becomes obsolete to those who have adopted Vermeer’s ideas.

This possibility of obsolescence has been embraced by many outside the inner circle of *Skopos* theory as well; for example, Snell-Hornby (1988/1995) declares equivalence ‘unsuitable as a basic concept in translation theory’ because it ‘presents an illusion of symmetry between languages which hardly exists beyond the level of vague approximations and which distorts the basic problems of translation’. Much discussion could take place here about whether it is helpful to dismiss a concept simply because it may mislead those who do not understand it as a technical term and who are therefore misled by its everyday use; however, an examination of what the basic problems of translation are may be more fruitful.

### 8.3 Translation in the theory of meaning

In the sections above, we observed how the ‘sameness of meaning’ which is often resorted to in everyday definitions of translation tends to be eschewed by translation scholars, who believe that there cannot be sameness of meaning across languages. Instead, the notion of translation equivalence, evidenced in terms of other kinds of sameness relationships between target text and source text (e.g. relating to the same features of context, or relating to the same audience responses), has been used by some theorists, while others have emphasized text purpose as the overriding measure of translation success, where fulfilling a given purpose overrides any relationship of equivalence that may or may not obtain between a translation and its source text.

The three main approaches focused on, however, share a tacit assumption that we do, in fact, comprehend the meanings of texts in several languages: we can see that they are not the same, which must mean that we can understand the meaning of each. Furthermore, Catford assumes that we have unmediated access to the aspects of context that the target and source texts both relate to (otherwise we could not compare the texts with respect to these contextual aspects), and Nida tacitly assumes that the components of componential analysis are language-independent. Each of these assumptions is questioned by twentieth-century philosophers of language, who have resorted to the notion of translation in order to try to ensure that assumptions of sameness do not go unnoticed. As Davidson (1973:125) puts it:

The problem of interpretation is domestic as well as foreign [...] Speakers of the same language can go on the assumption that for them the same expressions are to be interpreted in the same way, but this does not indicate what justifies the assumption.

The major work in this area is by Quine (1957–8, 1959, 1960) and Davidson (1973, 1974, 1986). I shall present Quine’s argument with reference to his most elaborate statement of it, in Quine (1960: ch. 2), and Davidson’s primarily with reference to Davidson (1973).

#### 8.3.1 Rabbits

In his preface, Quine (1960: ix) points out that because language is ‘a social art’, learning it is predicated upon recognition of ‘intersubjectively available cues as to what to say and when’. And, as if with direct reference to Nida’s insistence on the sameness of response as the measure of translation, he continues: ‘Hence, there is no justification for collating linguistic meanings, unless in terms of men’s dispositions to respond overtly to socially observable stimulations.’ But for Quine, this fact constitutes a ‘limitation’ on our ability to collate linguistic meanings, explained by Davidson (1973: 127) in the following helpful terms:

we cannot hope to attach a sense to the attribution of finely discriminated intentions independently of interpreting speech [...] interpreting an agent’s intentions, his beliefs and his words are parts of a single

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project, no part of which can be assumed to be complete before the rest is.

In other words, it is not possible to check what another person's response to a stimulus is without receiving a response in language. And if that is so, then we cannot also use the response as a way of checking that the other person's words mean the same as they would mean for us. The question that exercises Quine and Davidson is, then, how we can break into the circle formed by the relationship between a person's cognitive state and the meaning of the words the person uses to express that cognitive state. They frame the issue in translational terms: according to Quine (1960: ix), 'the enterprise of translation is found to be involved in a certain systematic indeterminacy', which, as we shall see, he thinks of as vicious. According to Davidson, in contrast, it is not vicious (1973:139):

When all the evidence is in, there will remain, as Quine has emphasised, the trade-offs between the beliefs we attribute to a speaker and the interpretations we give his words. But the remaining indeterminacy cannot be so great but that any theory that passes the tests will serve to yield interpretations.

The tests referred to ascertain whether an interpretation of an individual sentence and its parts makes sense of that sentence in the light of interpretations of all of the other sentences of the language that we have come across so far, within the context of the lives of the speakers of the language. A theory that does all this will serve, according to Davidson, to yield interpretations that are as reliable as they can be, which is sufficiently reliable to allow us to interpret the language of other people. The major assumption made here is as follows:

If we cannot find a way to interpret the utterances and other behaviour of a creature as revealing a set of beliefs largely consistent and true by our own standards, we have no reason to count that creature as rational, as having beliefs or as saying anything. (Davidson 1973: 137)

Quine's argument is the following: we acquire all of our knowledge about the world through the relationship between 'surface irritations' (sensory stimuli) and language (1960: 26):

One is taught so to associate words with words and other stimulations that there emerges something recognizable as talk of things, and not to be distinguished from truth about the world.

For each person, this process of language acquisition is going to be unique; therefore:

Different persons growing up in the same language are like different bushes trimmed and trained to take the shape of identical elephants. The anatomical details of twigs and branches will fulfill the elephantine form differently from bush to bush, but the overall outward results are alike. (Quine 1960: 8)

and:

Two men could be just alike in all their dispositions to verbal behavior under all possible sensory stimulations, and yet the meanings or ideas expressed in their identically triggered and identically sounded utterances could diverge radically, for the two men, in a wide range of cases. (p. 26)

The translationally oriented version of this suggestion is that 'manuals for translating one language into another can be set up in divergent ways, all compatible with the totality of speech dispositions, yet incompatible with one another' (p. 27), and Quine sets out to make this point plausible by way of the example of a field linguist engaged in (p. 28, *italics original*) '*radical* translation, i.e. translation of the language of a hitherto untouched people'.

Imagine that a rabbit runs by and the field linguist notes that a member of the relevant speech community says 'Gavagai'. Having established what counts as assent and dissent in the alien language, the linguist can check whether this utterance might mean 'Rabbit' as opposed to 'White animal', 'White', 'Running creature', etc. In other words, the linguist will be able to establish a working hypothesis that 'Gavagai' means 'Rabbit'. But it is important to remember that it is not the rabbit as such which triggers the utterance, 'Gavagai'; it is the stimulus that the speaker experiences when a rabbit is present, and no amount of observation of the context of utterances (à la Catford) will guarantee translation equivalence between the two (1960: 51–2):

For, consider 'Gavagai'. Who knows but that the objects to which this term applies are not rabbits after all, but mere stages, or brief temporal segments, of rabbits. In either event, the stimulus situations that prompt assent to 'Gavagai' would be the same as for 'Rabbit'. Or perhaps the objects to which 'gavagai' applies

are all and sundry undetached parts of rabbits; again the stimulus meaning would register no difference. When from the sameness of stimulus meanings of 'Gavagai' and 'Rabbit' the linguist leaps to the conclusion that a gavagai is a whole enduring rabbit, he is just taking for granted that the native is enough like us to have a brief general term for rabbits and no brief general term for rabbit stages or parts.

The problem is that the hearer attaches a stimulus meaning to the sentence that the speaker uses. But users of sentences may have different ontological commitments: to whole, enduring objects like rabbits, or to rabbit stages, or to time-slices of rabbits, or to parts of rabbits, and so on, and there is no way of checking what this commitment is, because the evidence available to the linguist is the same in every case. In other words, contextual features are potentially fatally contaminated by cognitive factors as guarantors of sameness of meaning as well as of translation equivalence. This contamination would infect the terms used for the components of componential analysis too, of course.

### 8.3.2 Rain and charity

Davidson's way out of this impasse involves the radical step of giving up the notion of meaning in the theory of meaning in favour of the notion of truth. Truth has the advantage of being 'a single property which attaches, or fails to attach, to utterances, while each utterance has its own interpretation' (Davidson 1973: 134). Furthermore, we may feel fairly certain that speakers believe in their own utterances most of the time, whatever the utterances mean, so that this speaker attitude, holding their own utterances true most of the time, affords a way into the circle of belief and meaning. If Kurt generally utters *Es regnet* only when it is raining near him, we cannot perhaps assume that his utterance means 'It is raining'; but we can take it as evidence for the statement, ' "Es regnet" is true-in-German when spoken by  $x$  at time  $t$  if and only if it is raining near  $x$  at  $t'$  (Davidson 1973: 135). Or, to return to Quine's scenario (cf. Hookway 1988: 168), "Gavagai" is true-in-L when spoken by  $x$  at time  $t$  if and only if there is a rabbit near  $x$  at  $t$ '.

Statements of this form have a huge advantage over statements of the form "Gavagai" means "Rabbit": they say what the contextual features are generally like when the quoted sentence is uttered, whereas an " $x$ -means- $y$ " statement only says that the two terms mean the same as each other, which is of no help unless the meaning of one of them is already available to the interpreter/translator. Lewis's (1970: 190) objection to translation into semantic Markerese (see section 8.2.2 above) is directed at this difficulty. Another way of stressing the point is by emphasizing the importance of de-quotation. In the Quine-sentences, 'Gavagai' and 'Rabbit' are both in quotation; in Davidson's sentences, there are no quotation marks around the second clause, indicating that that part is available to the interpreter to use to gain access to the expression in quotation.

But can this be justified? It seems to be exactly what Quine forbids on the grounds of our inability to gain access to speakers' beliefs about circumstances independently of their words: How do we get from the attitude of holding an utterance true in a set of circumstances to a justification for Davidson's assumption that this set of circumstances is not contaminated in the way Quine insists by radically different ontological commitments among speakers?

As partly stated above, Davidson insists (1973:137):

The methodological advice to interpret in a way that optimizes agreement should not be conceived as resting on a charitable assumption about human intelligence that might turn out to be false. If we cannot find a way to interpret the utterances and other behaviour of a creature as revealing a set of beliefs largely consistent and true by our own standards, we have no reason to count that creature as rational, as having beliefs or as saying anything.

According to Quine (1960: 59) there is a 'maxim of translation' that says that 'one's interlocutor's silliness, beyond a certain point, is less likely than bad translation', so that in trying to work out what someone is saying, we follow Wilson's principle of charity (Wilson 1959; quoted in Quine 1960: n. 2): 'We select as designatum that individual which will make the largest possible number of [...] statements true.' But this is for Quine simply a principle we adopt for pragmatic reasons, but which cannot be justified within the theory of meaning. For Davidson, in contrast, it is a principle we could not do without. It is a deeper principle than Sperber and Wilson's (1986) principle of relevance, according to which we know that anyone engaging in ostensive behaviour wants to make us believe something that is relevant to us. According to Davidson (see esp. 1974), recognizing ostensive behaviour is

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tantamount to recognizing that the person in question has a set of beliefs that they wish to convey. But having beliefs is the same as holding something true. So any creature whose noises we bother to interpret is thereby credited with a notion of holding something true. Is it then credible to assume that the creature has a language which expresses what it holds true, but which is not translatable?

Looking at sentences like ‘“Es regnet” is true-in-German when spoken by  $x$  at time  $t$  if and only if it is raining near  $x$  at  $t'$  (Davidson 1973:135), it seems as if truth is now as closely associated with translation as it had been thought that meaning was, because it is difficult to see how the predicate ‘is true’ can be understood except as a predicate that provides, for each sentence of a language, a sentence of the form, “ $S$ ” is true if and only if  $p$ ’, where  $p$  is the translation of  $S$  into the language of the theory (Tarski 1956, Leeds 1978). Here, Tarski assumes that translation is available, and uses it to provide an account of the truth predicate; in a reversal of the order of explanation, Davidson helps himself to the notion of holding an utterance true in order to justify its translation. Either way, the two notions seem non-dissociable, and any language that is used to express its speakers’ beliefs (as any language must) is therefore translatable into any other language. This does not mean, though, that a source text and its translation can ever mean the same, for reasons we will explore in the following section.

### 8.3.3 Why translations can't mean the same as their source texts, and why it doesn't matter

Granted that translation at some level is always possible, there are of course times when interlocutors are aware that they do not mean the same by particular phrases. Often, someone will even be convinced that another person cannot, as we say, mean what they say; and even more frequently, probably, interlocutors understand that what is said is much less than is implied. These are well-rehearsed features of language (see any introductory book on pragmatics), and translators and translation scholars are well aware of their importance (see e.g. Hickey 1998). In analytical philosophy, there has been a tendency to set these phenomena aside, or to leave them to so-called natural-language philosophers such as Austin (e.g. 1962) and Searle (e.g. 1969); but Davidson provides an account which is especially helpful in clarifying the relationship between translation and (sameness of) meaning and which holds that the difference between ‘standard’ and ‘non-standard’ uses of language is in degree not in kind. This is particularly evident in an article on metaphor, another issue that has been much discussed in the translation literature (see e.g. Schäffner 2004a).

Davidson begins, poetically (1978: 245):

Metaphor is the dreamwork of language and, like all dreamwork, its interpretation reflects as much on the interpreter as on the originator. The interpretation of dreams requires collaboration between a dreamer and a waker, even if they be the same person; and the act of interpretation is itself a work of the imagination. So too understanding a metaphor is as much a creative endeavour as making a metaphor, and as little guided by rules.

These remarks do not, except in matters of degree, distinguish metaphor from more routine linguistic transactions: all communication by speech assumes the interplay of inventive construction and inventive construal.

The emphasis here on the creativeness of language, the de-emphasis (rather unusual in the philosophy of language as well as in linguistics) on any reliance on rules, and the assimilation of ‘unusual’ linguistic behaviour, in this case the use of metaphors, within the ‘usual’, are central to the issues raised in the heading of this section. Davidson continues (p. 245), ‘metaphors mean what the words, in their most literal interpretation, mean, and nothing more’; ‘nor does its maker say anything, in using the metaphor, beyond the literal’ (p. 246). This view is in direct contrast to, for example, Searle’s view that ‘a metaphor has, in addition to its literal sense or meaning, another sense or meaning’ (1979: 246). According to Davidson, this position is confusing and misleading, and in ‘A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs’ (1986) he argues for a one-meaning view of utterances by way of rethinking the idea of literalness. It follows from his argument that whatever relationship we see or seek between translations and their source texts, it will not be a relationship of sameness of meaning.

Davidson’s tactic is to remove the notion of literalness from utterances and give it to speakers, in the same way that he removes the notion of truth from sentences and gives it to speakers in the earlier article (1973). This first step is to ‘pry apart what is literal in language from what is conventional or established’ (1986: 159). What is

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conventional or established is recorded in dictionaries and grammars, which describe the use of a language in standard situations. But the conventional meaning may not always be what a hearer understands immediately on hearing the speaker's words. Davidson calls this immediate understanding 'first meaning'. First meaning is, no matter what kind of situation we are in, whether standard or not, whatever comes first 'in the order of interpretation' (1986: 160). For hearers, it is whatever they immediately understand a speaker's words to mean. For speakers, first meaning is what they intend their hearers to understand. Neither of these intended and understood meanings need be what a dictionary would provide for, and clearly a speaker's and a hearer's first meanings need not coincide. But if they do, what makes it possible for them to do so?

For speaker and hearer to coincide on meanings, they need to share knowledge of the language being used, and in most accounts of how language works, this knowledge is thought to guarantee three things (Davidson 1986:162):

1. *First meaning is systematic.* A competent speaker or interpreter is able to interpret utterances, his own or those of others, on the basis of the semantic properties of the parts, or words, in the utterance, and the structure of the utterance. For this to be possible, there must be systematic relations between the meanings of utterances.
2. *First meanings are shared.* For speaker and interpreter to communicate successfully and regularly, they must share a method of interpretation of the sort described in (1).
3. *First meanings are governed by learned conventions or regularities.* The systematic knowledge or competence of the speaker or interpreter is learned in advance of occasions of interpretation and is conventional in character.

Davidson accepts the first and second principles, in a certain sense (1986: 163):

for communication to succeed, a systematic method of interpretation must be shared [...] The sharing comes to this: the interpreter uses his theory to understand the speaker; the speaker uses the same (or an equivalent) theory to guide his speech [...] Obviously this principle does not demand that speaker and interpreter share the same language [...] What must be shared is the interpreter's and the speaker's understanding of the speaker's words.

But he dismisses the third principle, because it cannot account for cases where speakers are understood even though there is a discrepancy between the way in which a speaker uses an expression and the way in which the hearer expects the expression to be used. On such occasions, what happens is the following (1986: 166):

the interpreter comes to the occasion of utterance with a theory that tells him (or so he believes) what an arbitrary utterance of the speaker means. The speaker then says something with the intention that it will be interpreted in a certain way, and the expectation that it will be so interpreted. In fact this way is not provided for by the interpreter's theory. But the speaker is nevertheless understood; the interpreter adjusts his theory so that it yields the speaker's intended interpretation. The speaker has 'gotten away with it'.

This is formalized as follows: speaker and hearer both use (1) a prior theory and (2) a passing theory. The hearer's prior theory is a theory that expresses how the hearer is prepared in advance to interpret the speaker. For the speaker, the prior theory expresses what the speaker believes the hearer's prior theory to be. For each speech encounter, prior theories include what the interlocutors consider a relevant selection from everything they know about each other, about the rest of the world, and about language; this selection will obviously not be identical for both interlocutors, and nor will it be the same for any two encounters. The speaker's passing theory is the theory he or she intends the hearer to use. The hearer's passing theory is the theory he or she actually uses. So when speakers understand one another, they share the same passing theory, not the same prior theory, and neither theory, prior or passing, conforms to the third principle, since neither is learnt in advance of each speech encounter and since neither is regulated by rules (1986:172–3):

What two people need, if they are to understand one another through speech, is the ability to converge on passing theories. Their starting points, however far back we want to take them, will usually be very different—as different as the ways in which they acquired their linguistic skills. So also, then, will the strategies and stratagems that bring about convergence differ [...] A person's ability to interpret or speak to another person [...] is the ability that permits him to construct a correct, that is, convergent, passing

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theory for speech transactions with that person [...] Linguistic ability is the ability to converge on a passing theory from time to time.

And for this, there are no rules, only rough maxims and very general methods. Practice and familiarity will help people get good at constructing prior theories and at adjusting towards converging passing theories, but neither theory matches the standard described in the linguistic literature, and the ways in which we arrive at the theories are not governed by strict rules. Meaning is formed on each occasion of linguistic interaction and is therefore unique and not replicable. Therefore, a translation can never ‘mean’ the same as the source text. But this does not matter, because practice and the principle of charity suffice to ensure that translators ‘get away with’ translating sufficiently well sufficiently often—as the fact of the spread beyond a single language, and regular refinement through re-translation, of texts from everywhere testifies.

### Further reading and relevant sources

Venuti (2000a, 2004a) contains extracts from Nida (1964b), Reiss (1971/2000), Vermeer (1978/1983), and Holz-Mänttäri (1984). Bolinger (1965) is an excellent critique of Katz and Fodor’s theory of componential analysis. For a more extensive account of the application of Davidson (1986) to translation theory, see Malmkjær (1993), and for a broader view of the role of the philosophy of language in translation theory see Malmkjær (2010). Hookway (1988) is an excellent account of the issues raised by both Quine and Davidson, and Christina Schäffner’s (1998) account of Skopos theory is an approachable exposition.

### Notes:

- (1) <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/translation>; accessed 17 January 2010.
- (2) <http://www.sil.org/TRANSLATION/TrTheory.htm>; accessed 17 January 2010.

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### Studying the Translation Process

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#### Abstract and Keywords

This article illustrates the multiplicities of studies of the translation process. It focuses on studies using concurrent and retrospective verbal reports as well as keyboard logging software as data. Studying the process of translation contributes to building better theories and models of translation as well as to developing translator training. Translation process research offers a prime example of the interdisciplinary nature of translation studies. This article elicits the methods of studying translation process. Each of the methods has its own pros and cons, and the choice of a research method depends on the aims of the research as well as its theoretical framework. Many of the qualitative methods risk intentional or unintentional manipulation of the data. In the past twenty-five years, the number of process-oriented studies has steadily increased, new methodologies have been developed and adopted, research designs have become more refined, and the research questions more narrowly defined.

Keywords: translation process, theories of translation, models of translation, research method, qualitative method, manipulation, process-oriented studies

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#### 9.1 Introduction

Understanding what happens in the translation process is one of the central issues in translation studies; studying the process contributes to building better theories and models of translation as well as to developing translator training. Not surprisingly, the translation process has always intrigued both translators and translation scholars, making them reflect upon their own and others' translation principles and solutions. However, the process has rarely held a similar fascination for outsiders, who often seem to be under the impression that there is nothing remarkable about translating; once you know two languages, 'you just translate.' On this basis it could be argued that one of the most significant results of the systematic empirical and experimental research into the translation process which emerged in the early 1980s has been to highlight the cognitive complexity of translating, although this knowledge has yet to reach wider audiences.

Translation process research offers a prime example of the interdisciplinary nature of translation studies. The research questions and hypotheses have arisen within the field of translation, while the methods of data elicitation and analysis as well as the theoretical frameworks come from a variety of fields, such as cognitive psychology and writing research, as well as linguistics and translation studies.

Due to the multiplicity of approaches, process-oriented studies have mapped several corners of the field of translation. Text types have ranged from news texts and advertising to poetry (Jones 2006b) and Bible translation (Ataya 2005). Subjects have been language students, translation students, professional translators, and genuine laymen. The language pairs include most of the languages spoken in Europe and the Americas as well as Chinese (Li and Cheng 2007, Shih 2006b), and the African Kîmîrû (Ataya 2005). Similarly, the research questions have varied from problem-solving and decision-making (see section 9.3.1.) to revision (Shih 2006b), time pressure

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(Jensen 2000), and motivation (Laukkanen 1997). As a result, the map charted by process studies is still, unavoidably and understandably, fragmented and filled with white areas. (For overviews and critical discussion, see e.g. Bernardini 2001, jääskeläinen 2002, Malmkjær 2000, Tirkkonen-Condit 2002, Toury 1991a.)

This chapter aims to illustrate what the multiplicity of studies of the translation process have contributed to translation studies. The focus will be on studies using concurrent (thinking aloud) and retrospective verbal reports as well as keyboard logging software (Translog, ScriptLog) as data. First, a survey of the methodological options available to acquire information about the translation process and their advantages and disadvantages will be offered. Then some research questions covered to date will be summarized as well as some of the main findings. The chapter will conclude by summing up the contribution of process studies to the field of translation studies at large and their potential uses in enhancing the image of translating and translation studies outside the field.

## 9.2 Methods

While the translation process has always figured implicitly or explicitly in translation theory, systematic empirical research into it dates back to the early 1980s. The emergence of process research coincides with the introduction of functional theories of translation, notably Reiss and Vermeer's Skopos theory (1984/1991), which expanded research interests to the target text as well as its producer, the translator. At the time, the research climate seems to have been favourable to focusing research efforts to studying the translation process empirically, as several similar studies emerged virtually simultaneously and were reported at the International Symposium on Discourse and Cognition in Translation and Second Language Acquisition Studies in Hamburg, 13–15 August 1984, and published in 1986 in the volume edited by Juliane House and Shoshana Blum-Kulka. The pioneers using 'thinking aloud' (see below for more details) to elicit data on the translation process include Gerloff (1986), Krings (1986a), and Lörscher (1986), while some other scholars used translation tasks primarily to elicit data on second language learning processes (e.g. Faerch and Kasper 1986). In fact, the methodology was carried over from cognitive psychology into translation studies via second language research.

The first empirical process studies relied primarily on methods known as 'introspective methods' or 'verbal reporting', which include 'concurrent' (i.e. thinking aloud or think-aloud protocols, TAPs) and 'retrospective verbal reports' as well as 'introspection proper'. Thinking aloud and retrospection are essentially methods of eliciting data on cognitive processes, such as translation, not methods of data analysis, whereas introspection proper combines data elicitation and analysis, i.e. the researchers analyse their own thinking. While introspection proper has a long and dubious history in psychology, concurrent and retrospective reporting are methodologically refined versions of it, originally developed for the needs of research into artificial intelligence in the 1950s to study human problem-solving (e.g. chess: Newell and Simon 1972, Ericsson and Simon 1984/1993).

Ericsson and Simon's methodological handbook of verbal reporting spells out the limitations of verbal report procedures and specifies the conditions in which they can yield reliable data on thought process (see also Börsch 1986, jääskeläinen 1999). People are able to verbalize thought processes that are currently active in their working memory, i.e. conscious thinking. Processing which has become automatic due to extensive practice is inaccessible to verbalization. Furthermore, high cognitive load can prevent verbalizing; i.e. with particularly problematic translation tasks or parts of them, verbalization may stop. Consequently, long pauses can be interpreted as symptoms of problems (e.g. Krings 1986b).

Interestingly, the reception of TAPs in the translation studies community reflects the earlier debates in psychology as to the nature of consciousness and the accessibility of thought processes to verbalization, to the point of frequently referring to the mind as a 'black box', which is a behaviourist notion from the early twentieth century used to discredit introspection proper and later abandoned in cognitive psychology in the 1950s. Yet, to my knowledge, verbal reports are routinely used in psychological research to investigate, for example, writing processes (Bereiter and Scardamalia 1987) or expert problem-solving and decision-making (e.g. Groen and Patel 1988, Johnson 1988). Obviously, the stance one takes on verbal reports as data depends on the fundamental ontological questions related to the human mind and consciousness and their accessibility to external analysis (for a more detailed discussion, see jääskeläinen 1999, 2000). In this sense, the accessibility question is an issue on which we have to agree to disagree.

There are of course other means of acquiring information about the translation process. The 'soft' qualitative

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options include diary studies (e.g. Bergen 2009), questionnaire studies (e.g. Youssef 1989), interview studies (e.g. Jänis 1996, Shih 2006a), or dialogue protocols (e.g. House 1988, 2000, Kussmaul 1991, 2007). The ‘hard’ quantitative methods of data collection include keyboard logging (e.g. Translog: see Jakobsen 1999; or ScriptLog: see Englund Dimitrova 2005; see also Tommola 1986), eye-tracking (e.g. Göpferich, Jakobsen, and Mees 2008) and screen recordings. Finally, the oldest method of studying the process is to look at the product, which can also offer insights into the translator’s solutions and strategies and thereby indirectly to the process (e.g. Leppihalme 2007). The most reliable results will be gained by combining different sources; even the early process studies exploited both process data (TAPs) and product data (the translations). The translation process (TRAP) project at the Copenhagen Business School, using the keyboard logging software Translog (Jakobsen 1999) in data elicitation, introduced the idea of triangulation: using several sources of information (e.g. TransLog files, TAPs, and the translations) to obtain a more complete and more reliable picture of the object of research (see Hansen 1999, 2002, Jakobsen 1999, 2003).

Each of the methods has its own pros and cons, and the choice of a research method depends on the aims of the research as well as its theoretical framework. Many of the qualitative methods risk intentional or unintentional manipulation of the data; the more unobserved the situation (questionnaires) and the larger the temporal gap between task and reporting (retrospection), the more likely it is that the reply or report is embellished or rationalized. Thinking aloud is less prone to manipulation, but it may interfere with the task performance. Joint translating or dialogue protocols refer to translating in pairs or small groups, which makes the verbalization of thoughts more natural than thinking aloud on one’s own. Compared to concurrent verbalization, retrospection and dialogue protocols also have the advantage of not interfering with the translation process, as either they take place outside the translation situation or the verbalizations consist of the spontaneous dialogue which occurs during joint work on a translation task. Furthermore, while quantitative data represent unmanipulated statistical data, their analysis relies heavily on the researcher’s interpretation of the data—for example, pauses in typing clearly indicate that something is going on but what exactly needs to be specified by retrospection and process-product comparisons.

Ericsson and Simon (1984/1993) provide a list of safeguards to ensure the reliability of think-aloud data. These include warm-up tasks, minimal intervention by the experimenter, and follow-up interviews or retrospective reporting to supplement the TAPs. (See also Börsch 1986.) After a thorough discussion of the available research evidence, Ericsson and Simon argue that concurrent verbalizing does not have any effect on task performance, except for a slight slowing down of the process. However, many of the cognitive tasks discussed by Ericsson and Simon represent well-defined problems with unambiguously correct answers and predetermined problem-solving procedures, while translation tasks could be characterized as ill-defined problems: there are multiple ways to proceed and to succeed. Therefore the specific limitations with regard to eliciting data on translation processes should be thoroughly examined (Jääskeläinen 2000).

One of the rare studies to address methodological issues is Jakobsen (2003), who reports on a Translog experiment in which some of the subjects were asked to think aloud (TA condition) while others were working silently (non-TA condition). His findings indicate that thinking aloud slows down the translation process considerably, has no significant effect on the amount of revision, and significantly increases the number of text production segments. In effect, thinking aloud ‘forced translators, whether fast or slow, whether expert or not, to chop up target text production into smaller segments’ (2003: 91). The last finding is the one that is a cause for concern: by affecting the segment size, thinking aloud may also affect text coherence, for example. To establish this, we would need a study focusing on identifying potential interference effects on the product, as suggested by Toury (1991a).

In addition to reliability, the validity of the think-aloud data needs to be considered: do they accurately reflect the subjects’ thought processes? Or, more specifically, do the data accurately reflect an authentic translation process? As Jakobsen’s (2003) study showed, thinking aloud may affect processing, but the extent to which this is happening should be studied further. The validity issue concerns thinking aloud vs. joint translating as well; while dialogue protocols offer interesting data on joint translating and its benefits, particularly for the teaching of translation (Kussmaul 2007, House 1988), they may not be valid data in relation to the solo performance.

One aspect of the methodological discussion on TAPs deals with the amount of verbalization produced by the subjects; some researchers find that the subjects produce few verbalizations (e.g. House 1988, Séguinot 1989, Li

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and Cheng 2007), while others seem to obtain a lot of data (e.g. Fraser 1993, Shih 2006b). Lack of verbalization may result from automatized processing (e.g. Séguinot 1989). It may also be the result of motivational or emotional problems, insufficient preparation, intimidating circumstances, or extremely difficult tasks (i.e. high cognitive load: Matrat 1995). Or indeed, the reason might be language-pair-related; perhaps typologically distant languages require more conscious processing, since English-Finnish translation seems to produce a great deal of verbalization? With conflicting evidence from translation between English and Chinese (Li and Cheng 2007, Shih 2006b), one might consider the role of cultural factors, such as social hierarchy and power relations. In fact, in view of the fact that in cognitive psychology the experimental settings are typically monolingual and monocultural, it seems likely that a large-scale methodological study accounting for the role of these factors in the multilingual and multicultural settings of translation process studies would have a great deal to offer to cognitive psychology.

One question that seems to have escaped almost everybody's attention is how much verbalization is actually expected in TAP experiments: could it be that some researchers' glasses are half full, while others' are half empty? The assessment of how much or how fluently subjects verbalize seems to be based on the researchers' or the subjects' (Li and Cheng 2007) subjective evaluations; the amount of verbalization produced is not subjected to objective measurements. In Jääskeläinen (1990) a crude tool was used to relate the number of words in the TAPs to the total time spent on the process (resulting in words verbalized per minute); however, with currently available research software it should not be a problem to make more reliable measurements of pauses vs. verbalization in a TAP.

It seems that the short history and the relatively marginal role of experimental studies in translation research sometimes result in frustration when a piece of research does not provide answers to all questions at once. In contrast, in psychological and psycholinguistic research, it is typical to chop up research questions into small and controllable sub-questions, to be answered one by one. This is rarely done in translation studies; the exceptions include Jakobsen (2003, 2005), who draws on the same experiment from different points of view. Breaking up the research question is not unproblematic either: by dissecting a complex process into small pieces, one jeopardizes ecological validity—is the object of research still the same that we set out to investigate? In fact, ecological validity figures in process research in many ways: are subjects allowed to work in their normal working environment or do they have to give up their computers, dictionaries, and areas of specialization for the sake of research? Making thought processes accessible to research always requires a certain amount of manipulation, and research designs have to find feasible compromises between reliability, validity, and ecological validity.

## 9.3 Research Questions and Findings

The first investigations of the translation process had a fairly general aim: to identify 'what happens in the translation process', as reflected in the title of Hans-Peter Krings' Ph.D thesis (1986b), 'Was in den Köpfen von Übersetzern vorgeht?' On the whole, the 'first-generation studies' (Gerloff 1988, Jääskeläinen 1990, Lörscher 1986, 1991, Séguinot 1989, Tirkkonen-Condit 1989) can be regarded as exploratory investigations, the main purpose of which was to identify variables to be focused on in later research. In the first generation studies, the analyses dealt with problem-solving, the subjects' use of time and dictionaries, etc. The 'second-generation studies', in turn, focus on more narrowly defined sand hypotheses: Tirkkonen-Condit (1993) looks at the translation of the Finnish clitic particle *-kin* into English; Englund Dimitrova (2005) examines explicitation in Russian-Swedish translation; and Shih (2006b) deals with the revision behaviour of Taiwanese translators. As some of the first studies deal with specific questions (e.g. Olshtain 1986 studies noun compounds in English-Hebrew translation), the division into first- and second-generation studies is based on research design rather than chronological order. Arguably, the methodologically refined studies based on triangulation and employing statistical methods in the analysis could be regarded as 'third-generation studies' (e.g. Dragsted 2005, Hansen 2006, Shih 2006a), while the large-scale projects (Barbosa and Neiva 2003, Hansen 1999, 2002, Ehrensberger-Dow and Perrin 2009, PACTE 2003) would perhaps represent 'fourth-generation studies'. These generations overlap as well, as the TRAP project (Hansen 1999, 2002) also developed methodological innovations.

The fact that data elicitation methods were borrowed from cognitive psychology has required TAP scholars to engage in methodological research as well (Krings 1986b, Lörscher 1991, Jääskeläinen 1999, 2000, Norberg 2003, Jakobsen 2003, Hansen 2006). However, a large-scale systematic investigation of the conditions and limitations of thinking aloud in the study of the translation process is still conspicuously missing (see section 9.2).

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Translation process research has pursued a variety of different aims and tackled a multitude of questions. One of the challenges has been, and still is, to form a coherent picture of the research evidence accumulated. The fragmentation can be seen as symptomatic of a field which is expanding rapidly. It also reflects individual researchers' interests and backgrounds, which is typical of research in the humanities. section 9.3.1. presents an overview which summarizes some areas of research on a rather general level. section 9.3.2. focuses on two emerging topics, i.e. research into the acquisition of translation competence and expertise in translation.

## 9.3.1 Overview

Problem-solving and decision-making in translation have been studied since the first process-oriented studies. On the whole, the results have supported the earlier findings based on the analysis of translation products: language learners and other non-experts in translation tend to work on the linguistic surface level, while professional translators and translation students exploit both textual and world knowledge to tackle translation problems (Jääskeläinen 1990, Tirkkonen-Condit 1989, 1992). In addition to offering supportive evidence, which is always important, studying translational problem-solving showed that the notion of the 'translation problem' needs to be elaborated. For Krings (1986b), whose subjects were intermediate-level language students, translation problems resulted from inadequate language or translation skills. In studies with translation students and professional translators (e.g. Gerloff 1988, Jääskeläinen 1987, 1990, Krings 1988, Tirkkonen-Condit 1989), problems appeared as something else: instead of inadequate skills, they seem to reflect a heightened awareness of potential problems. Problems were not necessarily hindrances or obstacles, but something requiring appropriate action. In fact, Gerloff (1988) prefers to talk about 'processing activities', and Jääskeläinen about 'attention units' (1990) or 'marked processing' (1999). The presence of 'problems' may thus reflect professionalism rather than insufficient skills.

Decision-making in translation is part and parcel of problem-solving in translation. Problem-solving entails making decisions about how to solve the problem and which alternative to choose. Decisions are also taken in the absence of problems, as part of strategic planning (see Jääskeläinen 1993, 2007). When choosing between competing variants, professionals tend again to use textual and world knowledge as decision-making criteria (Tirkkonen-Condit 1992). In addition, translation students and professionals use the translation brief and the needs of the assumed readers of the translation in decision-making. For non-experts, the decision criteria are often limited to issues of 'fidelity' ('is this saying the same thing as the source text?') or to picking up variants from dictionaries blindly or on the basis of untenable criteria (e.g. 'always choose the first variant' or 'never choose the first variant').

Problem-solving and decision-making also relate to the notion of automatized processing which results from extensive practice in a task. It was assumed initially that professional translators' processing would be highly automatized and therefore contain few problems and little conscious decision-making (Börsch 1986, Krings 1986b). Séguinot's case study (1989) of a Canadian government translator supported this hypothesis; the translator verbalized very little and seemed simply to type out her translation. However, further research has shown that professional translators often identify more problems and spend more time and resources on solving them than language learners or translation students (Gerloff 1988, Jääskeläinen 1999, Krings 1988, Rothe-Neves 2003). One of the explanations was that while Séguinot's translator was performing a routine task in her own office, in the other studies the professionals were given a non-routine task assigned by the experimenter. On the basis of these findings, it can be hypothesized that language learners are unaware of potential problems in translation, while increasing competence leads to a heightened awareness of problems in the case of translation students (Jääskeläinen and Tirkkonen-Condit 1991). Professional translators, in turn, are able to shift between automatized processing in routine tasks (as in Séguinot 1989) and conscious processing in novel situations (Jääskeläinen 1999, Krings 1988, Laukkanen 1993; see also Dragsted 2005). Issues of automaticity and routineness are also linked to expertise which will be discussed in section 9.3.2.

Like any other human activity, translating is not only about cognition, about handling information; it is also influenced by emotional processes, such as attitudes and motivation. Affective or emotional factors have received less attention in research, partly because cognitive psychological research has tended to focus on the processing of information. However, think-aloud data offers opportunities to study emotion and affect as well. Being personally involved in the translation task may result in higher quality in translation, while a detached attitude might have an adverse effect on quality (Laukkanen 1993, 1997, Jääskeläinen 1999). These findings lend support to the idea of a

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carnivalistic approach to translation (e.g. Oittinen 1995). More importantly, a positive attitude and personal involvement may be related to confidence, which is emerging as a significant factor contributing to success in translation and which is alarmingly often missing from translation students' processes (e.g. Hansen 2003, Livbjerg and Mees 2003). In his study of creative translation, Kussmaul (1991) draws attention to creating a classroom atmosphere conducive to creativity. Creativity in translation is a relatively little researched area, although creative problem-solving is an element of any kind of translating, not just the translation of creative texts in literature (see also Kussmaul 2000, 2007).

The unit of translation has been at the focus of the studies on segmentation, i.e. determining the size of chunks that translators work with while translating. TAP studies show that while all translators, professional, students, or non-expert, use words as a translation unit, professionals also work with larger units, including the whole text. Research software has facilitated the identification of segments, as pauses can be more reliably measured. For example, in Jakobsen (2003) a segment was defined as the processing unit between five-second pauses. As mentioned earlier, Jakobsen's (2003) results show that thinking aloud may change segmentation and make professionals work with smaller segments. Dragsted (2005) looks at segmentation in the translation processes of students and professionals working on easy vs. difficult texts (as determined by Campbell 1999). Her findings indicate that in translating easy texts, professionals work in 'integrated processing mode' characterized by long average segment size, processing at clause/sentence level, few single-word segments, and many exceptionally long segments (Dragsted 2005: 66). With difficult texts, their segmentation pattern resembles students' patterns in translating both easy and difficult texts. Dragsted calls this the 'analytic processing mode', with short average segment size, processing at word/phrase level, and many single-word segments. Englund Dimitrova (2005) observes that both novices' and experts' segments tend to grow longer towards the end of the translation process. Immonen (2006) compares segmentation in translation from English into Finnish and monolingual text production in Finnish. Her findings indicate that, in translation processes, pauses between clauses and smaller units (i.e. phrases, words, etc.) are longer than in writing processes, while pauses between units above clause level are shorter than in writing.

### 9.3.2 Expertise and translation competence

Two emerging, and highly significant, areas of research deal with translation competence. On the one hand, there are projects in progress focusing on the development of translation competence. At the other end of the competence scale, there are studies which focus on the nature of expertise in translation.

Expertise research also originates from psychology (e.g. Chi, Glaser, and Farr 1988, Bereiter and Scardamalia 1993), and offers useful tools as well as an interesting point of comparison to the study of professional translation. In psychology, expertise is understood in at least two ways; as a permanent state of expertise, reached after at least ten years or 10,000 hours of practice, or as a process (Bereiter and Scardamalia 1993). Bereiter and Scardamalia see expertise as a process; furthermore, it entails an element of high quality and depends on what they call the 'growing edge' of expertise, meaning that expertise develops as a result of working at the upper limit of competence, rather than simply practising for 10,000 hours or more. On this basis, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) seek to differentiate between 'experts' and 'experienced non-experts'. Hatano and Inagaki (1992, quoted in Tynjälä 2002: 35, *italics original*) talk about 'routine' and 'adaptive experts':

*Routine experts* are [...] skilful and efficient in applying acquired procedures and in working in familiar situations. *Adaptive experts*, in contrast, do not confine themselves to familiar problems but are also able to solve novel problems and develop new conceptual understanding of their domain.

Similarly, Sirén and Hakkarainen (2002) argue for making a distinction between expertise and professionalism in translation; while all experts are professionals, not all professionals are experts in the sense described by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993). Sirén and Hakkarainen point out that 'the mere fact that a person has worked as a translator leaves open the question about expertise'. They suggest that in research on translation expertise it is not sufficient to choose participants on the basis of work experience only; in addition, 'we need to know about the requirements and quality of their work' (p. 75).

The idea of distinguishing between translation experts (the top professionals) and experienced professionals (rather than non-experts) appears to be useful in explaining some of the contradictory findings in process

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research, provided that the distinction is not used to label first-rate and second-rate translators. It should go without saying that both kinds of translator have their niche in the translation market.

The uncomfortable findings that professional translators do not always produce high-quality translations (e.g. Jääskeläinen 1999) could be attributed, for example, to the experimental condition or to applying a routine approach to a non-routine task. Routineness can be related to expertise research, where it has been established that experts excel in their own domains (Glaser and Chi 1988). Consequently, the experimental translation tasks may have fallen outside the domains of professional subjects. Or, finally, the less successful professionals may have been ‘routine experts’ (Hatano and Inagaki 1992), unable to cope with non-routine tasks.

The process view of expertise also sheds new light on the automaticity question: it is often assumed that novices have to work hard at a task, while for experts everything happens quickly and effortlessly. The much-quoted example of automated processing deals with driving a car, where the novice driver proceeds from painstaking attention to every move to automatic processing. In contrast, based on their research on writing processes, Bereiter and Scardamalia argue (1993: x) that ‘in our research we found consistently that, given the same assignment, experts would work harder and do a great deal more thinking’. This phenomenon has been identified in translation process research as well; Gerloff (1988) dubbed the observation the ‘translation-does-not-get-easier’ phenomenon (see also Krings 1988, Jääskeläinen 1990, 1996, Sirén and Hakkarainen 2002). Re-interpreting the existing research in terms of expertise vs. professionalism might not be feasible if information about the professional subjects’ background is missing; however, in future studies the distinction might prove useful.

In the field of translation, several scholars have looked at translational expertise (although the distinction between expertise and professionalism does not apply to all of them). A group of European process researchers have formed a loosely structured research network called EXPERTISE, coordinated by Antin Fougner Rydning at the University of Oslo. Individual members of the network have published research reports discussing some aspects of expertise (e.g. Englund Dimitrova 2005, Jakobsen 2005, Rydning 2005).

In Künzli’s TAP study (2005) the two subjects are experts in terms of work experience (seven and five years of experience as freelance translators); they are also subject specialists with a background in engineering. The translation task from French to Swedish which they were set in the experiment dealt with technical translation. What emerge as distinguishing factors between the two in terms of translation quality are their linguistic background and specialist domains. The translator who performed poorly was working outside her domain (patent translation); furthermore, she had learned French informally, while the more successful translator had studied French for five years at grammar school (Künzli 2005: 46). Sirén and Hakkarainen’s study (2002) also highlights the relevance of domain in expertise; good medical translators are not good literary translators, and vice versa.

In a Translog study of experts and novices, Jakobsen (2005) is able to identify features of translators’ expertise: experts spend more time on initial orientation and final revision; they are capable of processing longer units or segments; and they have superior speed potential, i.e. they are capable of fast and efficient processing. The realizations of expert translators’ speed potential can be characterized as instances of peak performance. All of these are features of expertise in other fields as well (Glaser and Chi 1988). Jakobsen’s findings also point to domain-specificity: peak performance is possible in the domains in which the translator has specialized.

The projects which deal with the acquisition of translation competence include PACTE (Process in the Acquisition of Translation Competence and Evaluation) at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, which focuses on the development of translation competence (PACTE 2003). The PRONIT project at the Universidade Federal de Rio de Janeiro investigates the translation processes of language students and experienced professional translators in order to design a framework for a translator training programme (Barbosa and Neiva 2003). Hansen (2006) reports on the first stage of a ground-breaking longitudinal study in progress which will describe the development of 47 undergraduate students of translation. The second stage of Hansen’s extensive study will continue to investigate the translation processes of graduates in their work places. Hansen’s ambitious research design offers an opportunity to observe the development of expertise, or experienced professionalism, in translation. The TransComp project at the University of Graz will follow the development of translation competence in undergraduate translation students throughout the course of their studies (see e.g. Göpferich and Jääskeläinen 2009).

## 9.4 Conclusion

In the past 25 years, the number of process-oriented studies has steadily increased, new methodologies have been developed and adopted, research designs have become more refined, and the research questions more narrowly defined. Keyboard logging facilitates organizing large-scale studies with larger numbers of subjects, while the more arduous and time-consuming qualitative methods, such as TAPs, tend to be limited to smaller samples of subjects. Both approaches are needed, however, and should combine to yield a more comprehensive and reliable picture of what goes on in the process. Göpferich (2008) introduces an XML-based system developed for the transcription of TAPs which follows the Guidelines of the TEI (Text Encoding Initiative), an international standard. The system will facilitate research cooperation and the dissemination of process data among researchers.

The results from process studies have supported some old assumptions about translating, but they have also refuted some, such as the assumed automaticity of professional translation. Studying the translation process empirically has also helped refine theoretical constructs, such as translation problems. Yet we have still managed only to scratch the surface of what happens in the translation process, and some basic issues, such as methodology, require further research.

As was mentioned in the introduction, one of the main contributions of process studies has been to highlight the complexity of translating. The gradually emerging evidence of features of expertise in translation (e.g. Jakobsen 2005), which are similar to those identified in the field of medicine or law (Chi et al. 1988), represents a significant breakthrough in relation to the world outside translation studies. These findings establish translating as an expert profession, instead of an automatic by-product of knowing two or more languages and requiring some 'substance', i.e. subject specialization, to make it worth anything. Expertise in translation is substance in its own right.

## Further reading and relevant resources

Overviews of process studies can be found, for example, in Göpferich (2008), Jääskeläinen (2002), and Tirkkonen-Condit (2002). The early stages of process research as well as the theoretical foundation of verbal reports are described in Krings (1986b), Lörscher (1991), and Jääskeläinen (1999).

The idea of triangulation and the application of keyboard logging software are discussed in the articles published in Hansen (1999) and Alves (2003). PACTE (2003) and Hansen (2006) focus on translation competence. Several projects investigating the acquisition of translation competence are also introduced in the special issue 'Process research into translation competence' of *Across Languages and Cultures* (10.2, 2009). For those interested in translational expertise, Englund Dimitrova (2005), Jakobsen (2003), and Shreve (2006) will offer interesting findings.

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## Oxford Handbooks Online

### The Translation of Literary Prose

Charlotte Barslund

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#### Abstract and Keywords

Literary prose translation transfers a story written in one language into another. In doing so the translation seeks to convey the qualities of the original text. Prose translation is a recent arrival in literature. Until 1709 there was no concept of copyright or copyright infringement. Gradually, increase in literacy among readers reassured that the books were accurately translated. In 1791 Alexander Tytler formulated some essential principles in his essay on the principles of translation. Prose translation in the nineteenth century was concerned with what was not published as with what was. In 1946 the Harvill Press was founded to build cultural bridges in Europe following World War II. Prose translation in the twenty-first century involves working with the author. Translators' personal and emotional response is not considered. Published translations are of a very high quality without which, much of the world's literature would be beyond the reach of most readers.

Keywords: literary prose translation, copyright, principles of translation, Harvill Press, published translations, literature

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#### 10.1 Introduction

Literary prose translation transfers a story written in one language into another. In doing so the translation seeks to convey the qualities of the original text to a readership who would otherwise not have access to it. Literary prose translation is thus the communication of stories between two cultures.

I will begin this chapter by providing a brief account of the history of literary prose translation into English. I will consider the factors which affect what was translated, and give an account of the state of literary prose translation today. I will discuss the difficulties of defining what constitutes a 'good' translation, in view of the subjective nature of the novel and the perception held by some that a translation of a novel is an inferior copy of the original. I will also look at prose translation and the commercial conditions under which it is produced, and the level of recognition that prose translation receives. Finally, I will consider major issues and controversies which affect prose translation today.

##### 10.1.1 Origins of prose translation

Prose translation is a comparatively recent arrival to the world of literature because so is the novel. Drama and poetry in various forms have classical formats dating back to Aeschylus (525/524 BC–456/455 BC), and a number of criteria developed with them specifying what they are, how they should be constructed, and how their success or otherwise can be measured. The novel, however, did not appear in England until the early eighteenth century, although some earlier prose work existed, such as Thomas More's *Utopia* and John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Many critics, however, regard the progenitor of the novel to be Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote de la Mancha* (volume 1 published in 1605, volume 2 in 1615; *Don Quixote* first translated from Spanish into English in 1612 and 1620 respectively by Thomas Shelton). In the UK the novel, as a work of fiction written for instruction,

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education, and increasingly, entertainment, is usually regarded as commencing with Henry Fielding and Daniel Defoe. Novels such as Fielding's *Tom Jones* and Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, which have a hero, a plot, a series of events, obstacles, and disclosures culminating in a conclusion, are what most readily spring to mind when we think of literary prose. It is important to bear this in mind because in order to define what literary prose translation is, we need to remember that the translation of a novel clearly could not exist without the novel itself. Therefore it is useful to start by briefly considering the development of the novel itself.

## 10.1.2 The Enlightenment

During the Enlightenment in eighteenth-century Europe, scientific discoveries became the key to understanding the world. Power and knowledge, previously the preserve of the church and the aristocracy, became available to individuals who in turn became concerned with the notion of their own fate. Whereas previously creative writing, that is drama and poetry, had dealt with the lives, loves, triumphs, and tragedies of great rulers and warriors, now the fate of the common man became of interest. The novel was an ideal vehicle for charting and exploring such fates. It was not defined by classical templates and could therefore incorporate new ideas and develop its own structure. The novel was thus the vision of its author; it existed within its own fictitious universe. This universe might be a real location, but it was nevertheless the world as viewed through its author's imagination. This should be kept in mind, because subjectivity is an essential quality of any novel and it affects the translation and the criteria against which a translation is judged—a theme I will return to later in this chapter.

With the Enlightenment's desire to investigate and gain knowledge came an interest in translation; after all, how else could one gain access to ideas and discoveries from other countries? It also embodied a sense of humility: it was an acknowledgment that other countries and cultures had something to offer. This most obviously applied to scientific discoveries and philosophical thought, but also to creative writing. As a result, books by Voltaire and Rousseau were translated into English soon after their publication in France. There was an interest and an audience for them as novels in their own right, rather than a specific market for 'foreign books'. Up to now an educated man would have read Sophocles or Cicero in the original language and had no need for a translation. With the emergence of a reading public for translated books, the need for a prose translator arose. And with this new profession came the need for rules or norms defining what translation was and what constituted a successful translation, and this was a complex matter because of the subjective nature of creative writing.

## 10.1.3 Early principles of prose translation and the introduction of copyright

There had been much debate about the issue of norms before, especially in respect of Bible translation; fiction, however, was a different matter. Until the Statute of Anne in 1709 there was no concept of copyright or what would today be called piracy and copyright infringement. This meant that the novel was at the mercy of its translator: how much or how little the translation reflected the original depended to a great extent on the status of its author as viewed by the translator. In England, John Dryden (1631–1700) may be viewed as the first person in England to define the principles of translation. Dryden considered three approaches: metaphrase (i.e. literal translation), paraphrase, and imitation, and opted for the second 'as the more balanced path' (Bassnett 2002: 64). His principles, although applied mainly to poetry, recognized that a work of art had an essence that might be lost if translators either followed a strict set of rules or were too free in their approach. Translation had hitherto been a scholarly activity, as it usually involved translation from Latin and Greek, and scholars might, perhaps unfairly, be thought of as incapable of or unconcerned with capturing the passion of a piece of creative writing. Translation had therefore been primarily a subject of academic interest.

Dryden in turn influenced Alexander Pope (1688–1744), whose translations of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are considered the most accomplished examples of poetry translation during the period. Although they are not prose, they demonstrate an appreciation of the importance of telling a story well in translation, and are evidence that this is achievable.

## 10.1.4 The changing status of the translator

As literacy levels increased and more men and women had the time as well as the inclination to read for pleasure, the need for books to meet that demand rose. The job of writing, translating, and publishing books became a

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commercial activity in addition to a scholarly activity, and the profession of translator became established. Translators had previously had a somewhat vague status: were they simple workmen for hire or did they form a link in the chain between a book's author and its readers? Translators were not automatically credited with their translation unless they were well-known writers or poets in their own right, and their names could be used to sell the book. A significant development for translators was the introduction of copyright law for translations. Following *Burnett v. Chetwood* (1720), translators legally became creators and owners of the rights to their translations. This had two major consequences: firstly, translators would theoretically be in a position to earn a living from their work in the form of royalties, and secondly, a translation was recognized as a creative work in its own right, legally a separate entity from the original text. This meant that translators gained the right to approve any changes the publisher wanted to make, because the text was now his or her creative work. This gave translators power, but also obligations and responsibilities, since the original text might also be subject to copyright and no longer merely a good story to be moulded according to the wishes and culture of the translator. As for the readers, it went some way to ensure that the book they were reading was a true representation of the original. It also offered some reassurance to the authors that their books were accurately translated, especially if they lacked the language skills to judge the quality of the translation.

## 10.1.5 Further principles of prose translation

In 1791 Alexander Tytler (1747–1813) formulated three basic principles in his *Essay on the Principles in Translation* (see Chapter 1), stating the need for a 'complete transcript', matching style, and 'the ease of original composition'. These principles embody many of the guidelines that still apply to literary translation today, though they were not written solely with the novel in mind. What they do demonstrate is a respect for the original work and an acknowledgement that the original text has a validity that must be honoured. The underlying thinking behind them is openness to creative writing from other countries. In the nineteenth century that would change.

## 10.1.6 Prose translation in the nineteenth century

Prose translation in the nineteenth century is as much concerned with what was *not* published as with what was. The nature of the novel began to change, especially novels written in Europe. They became critical and questioning, highlighting moral issues and social injustice. An important person in this context is the publisher, writer and journalist Henry Vizetelly (1820–94). Vizetelly had travelled extensively in Europe, and on his return to the UK in 1887 he set up a publishing house to promote the works of French and Russian writers. He was particularly interested in the work of Zola, whose books he translated into English and published. The books were, however, considered obscene and Vizetelly was prosecuted for libel, first in 1888, when he was fined £100, and again in 1889, when he was fined £200 and imprisoned for three months. The values of the Victorian era caused the import of foreign novels to slow down because some were regarded as harbouring immoral and corrupting notions from which the reading public had to be protected. However, it was a delay, not a permanent ban, and eventually a number of European authors came to be translated and widely read in the UK. Ironically, many of these books today form part of a canon of world authors who are translated into English on a regular basis.

## 10.2 Prose translation and the publishing industry in the twentieth century

### 10.2.1 The early days

Publishing from the twentieth century onwards is characterized by increasing commercialization as—along with other types of business—it becomes more aware of market conditions, marketing, and its customers. A number of smaller publishing houses were started, flourished, failed, or merged into larger corporations. Publishing houses became more consolidated and structured businesses, and with the introduction of the first paperback by Penguin in 1935, it became cheaper for publishers to produce and for readers to buy novels, including translated fiction.

Prose translation had developed through a symbiotic relationship with the novel, and there had never been systematic initiatives, as with Bible translation for example, to formalize or regulate it. This was probably due to the unpredictable nature of the novel itself: countries seemed to go through cycles of golden ages, when excellent fiction appeared in profusion, and comparatively barren periods. Writers or publishers from one country might

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travel and ‘discover’ a writer abroad, whose work they would decide to champion in their home country. In the twentieth century, foreign fiction became the focus of a more targeted approach by English language publishers.

In Europe there was already a tradition of books being published in translation, and the exchange of literature between countries was regarded as an essential activity. Lambert notes that ‘German Romanticists, among others, have all used translation explicitly as a key instrument in developing German culture on the basis of a systematic interaction between the (more or less French) classical tradition and the new world’ (Lambert 1998: 133). Furthermore, writers and publishers in rare languages, such as Dutch, Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish, knew that wider recognition and commercial success depended on translation into other, major languages. To that end they would travel to promote themselves and their work. Now English publishers began to scout for novels and authors they could introduce to English-speaking readers.

### 10.2.2 The postwar years to the present

In 1946 Manya Harari and Majorie Villiers, who had worked for the British Foreign Office and the BBC, founded Harvill Press to build cultural bridges in Europe following World War II. Harvill's list included Boris Pasternak's *Dr Zhivago*, Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa's *The Leopard*, and Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*. These well-known titles may suggest that in Britain translated novels have since become big business, but this is far from the case, though the UK now has the second largest publishing industry in the EU, surpassed only by Germany. While a number of large publishing houses today have foreign-language lists and a number of excellent smaller specialist publishers exist, the 1993 figures from an EC (now EU) survey revealed that the number of translated books, i.e. fiction and non-fiction, sold in the UK in 1993 accounted for only 3 per cent of the total number of books sold. In Greece the figure was 36 per cent, in Spain 24 per cent, in France 18 per cent, and in Germany 14 per cent. No recent comparative figures exist. These statistics are often seen to indicate a lack of curiosity about translated novels and a sense of insularity. Booksellers argue that in competitive high street stores the books that sell well need to be on display in prime positions, and that they do not always have enough shelf space for translated fiction. However, publishers and booksellers together have recently achieved good results by including translated fiction in promotions such as ‘3 for 2’ offers, where the customer buys two books and gets a third for nothing. This encourages customers to try a new writer without the risk of wasting their money on an unknown quantity. Such initiatives are encouraging, as is the advent of Internet booksellers. These can stock an enormous range of titles, and are able through their search facilities to find books by applying a range of criteria. In addition, sites will often profile their customers and draw their attention to new publications likely to be of interest, on the basis of their previous purchases. So although sales of translated books have not yet reached Continental levels, access to translated novels is improving as new ways of selling books emerge.

### 10.2.3 Promotion, marketing, and awards

It is important to consider the commercial issues associated with translated prose fiction, because practically all translated novels published today are commissioned by a publisher and thus subject to a range of commercial considerations, as well as the creative merits of the book itself. Very few translators are in a position to translate a complete novel as a labour of love, and even if they do, the chances of its being published and thus available to a wider audience are small. This leads to the question of what is being translated today. Although publishing is generally subject to free-market conditions, some initiatives exist to promote translated books. Some countries offer grants towards the cost of the translation in order to promote their writers and bring an awareness of their culture to new readers. There are also competitions and prizes awarded to translated novels, notably the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize, where the award of £10,000 is divided equally between the writer and the translator. There is also the Oxford—Weidenfeld Translation Prize and the John Dryden Translation Competition. The latter is organized by the British Centre for Literary Translation, and is specifically for translations into English that have not been published. The winning entry is subsequently published in the journal of the British Comparative Literature Association. Furthermore, the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award is awarded annually to fiction from all over the world. It nominates novels written originally in English or translated, and recognizes the contribution of both the writer and the translator by allocating a quarter of the 100,000 euro prize money to the translator. There is usually good press coverage of award ceremonies, and even being nominated or shortlisted promotes writers and leads to increased sales of their books.

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Promoting and selling translated fiction alongside non-translated books also lends weight to the argument that a good book is a good book, whatever language it is written in. Among the recent IMPAC nominees, it is not immediately apparent which books were originally written in English and which were translated. This is evidence of a recent and thought-provoking situation: books are published today by writers whose names sound 'foreign', i.e. not English, but who have chosen to write in English. We can no longer assume that writers write in the language their names might suggest, or live in the country their names indicate they might belong to. Writers may be bilingual, have learned several languages, and be at ease writing in all of them, or they may have emigrated, learned the language of their adopted country, and chosen to write in that language. An example is the Afghan-born writer Khaled Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runners*, written in English but set mainly in Afghanistan. The success of this book suggests that customers buy it because they think it sounds promising, rather than because they wonder whether it is a translation, that is, foreign in the negative sense of the word. Would the reader who buys *The Kite Runners* also buy *Snow* by the Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk, which was written in Turkish, set in Turkey, and later translated by Maureen Freely into English? Possibly. If the subject of the book interests the reader, then the question of whether or not it is translated becomes secondary or perhaps even irrelevant, at least to the reader. It is worth mentioning that publications which review translated fiction are not always consistent in crediting the translator. Choosing not to name the translator may be a matter of the individual reviewer's style, but by failing to do so reviewers create the false impression that the work is not a translation at all.

## 10.3 Value and status issues

### 10.3.1 Is comparison possible?

This leads to the debate about whether translated and non-translated books can be compared. Are they equal but separate? Is the non-translated novel a purer work of art than the translation? Is translation associated solely with loss, as in the expression 'lost in translation'? Or is it a case of 'a book is a book is a book' and if it is a great book, it will attract readers both in its original version and in translation? Alan Duff has argued (1981: 123) that 'the reader turns to translation nearly always because he cannot go to the original. He drinks from the water-jar because he cannot go to the fountain, but the water need be none the worse for that. Translation may be a necessary choice, but it is not a necessary evil.' Duff thus acknowledges the difference, but does not see it as detrimental to the enjoyment and the quality of the book.

### 10.3.2 An example of a controversy

A controversy arose over this issue in 2006 when the British Crime Writers' Association decided to exclude translated novels from their Gold Dagger Award, now the annual Duncan Lawrie Award, for the best crime novel. Until then crime novels written in any language, but also available in English, were eligible for consideration. Winners had included writers from the UK and other countries who competed on equal terms, i.e. on merit. The Association felt that it was impossible to determine whether a translated book was successful because of the quality of translation or the original writing, and changed the entry rules for their most prestigious award so that only books written originally in English were eligible. The Association subsequently created a special award for translated crime fiction, the Duncan Lawrie International Dagger. Although it is good that translated crime fiction was not excluded from consideration altogether, the prize money awarded is £6,000 (of which £5,000 goes to the writer and £1,000 goes to the translator), compared to £20,000 for their most prestigious award, the Duncan Lawrie Award. This appears to signal that translated fiction is not regarded as being in the same league as a book in its original language, or that a translated novel loses something in translation and should therefore not be compared to books that have not been translated.

Is this a fair point? Is a translated book any less of a book than a book in its original language? It is worth remembering that books published in their original language will have an editor, who works on the text with the author. The published version will of course have the author's approval. The translator will also work with an editor, who will often act as a sounding board or potential reader of the book. Very few books are the product of one person's unadulterated vision, but the image of the author as a creative genius seems to linger, so that the process of translation must by implication diminish the book. This will clearly be the case if the translation is bad, but the success of many translated novels proves that it is both possible and desirable to convey a story written in one

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language into another. It could also be argued that most people will only have access to a book in translation and will never be in a position to compare, and thus cannot make the distinction between the original and the translation. As Susan Bassnett puts it, 'when we read Thomas Mann or Homer, if we have no German or Ancient Greek, what we are reading is the original through translation, i.e. the translation is our original' (Bassnett 1998b: 25). In addition, if we restricted ourselves to reading only books written in our native language, we would miss the opportunity to have our minds broadened and stimulated, and would end up with a skewed and insular perspective.

## **10.4 Prose translation in the twenty-first century**

### **10.4.1 Selecting a novel for translation**

At this point I wish to consider how a novel comes to be translated today. I will not explore the actual process of prose translation, but will instead focus on how novels are selected and how prose translation differs from other types of translation.

If the original book is still under copyright, the author's permission, or that of the estate, must be obtained. Often the author's agent or publisher will actively be selling foreign-language rights to the book. At the same time, authors frequently feel protective about their work and it can be daunting to hand it over to a translator. It requires blind faith if the novel is about to be translated into a language the author does not speak, as the author will be unable to assess the quality of the translation. In the translator's contract with the publisher, there is normally a clause to the effect that the translator promises 'to deliver a translation which is faithful to the Work and rendered into good accurate and literary English'. The translator must also ensure that he or she does not 'introduce into the Translation any matter of an objectionable or libellous nature which was not present in the Work'. That is usually all that is mentioned in the contract in respect of the quality of the translation. Academics in translation studies across the world have spent much time debating what 'faithful' means, and have come up with a range of suggestions and definitions. It is outside the scope of this chapter to consider this, but it should be noted that 'faithful' is a term open to much interpretation.

### **10.4.2 Working with the author**

Authors may feel more at ease if their work is to be translated into a language they speak or know something of. However, this can create problems for the translator, as the writer may feel in a position to offer suggestions or demand changes to the translation. Authors sometimes prefer more literal translations of their books, because they sound more like their original work, though literal translations often read less well. The translator values communication with the author and the opportunity to discuss the book and ask questions, but the quality of the translation is ultimately the translator's responsibility and area of expertise. The editor will usually have the final say in cases of disputes. It is rare for books to be self-translated by their authors.

Consequently, despite the potential obstacles, most authors want their books translated because it widens their readership. In the case of authors writing in rare languages, it may not only widen their readership, it may lead to the interesting situation where more people have read the book in translation than in the original. A translation from a rare language into a major one may also be used to sell the book to foreign publishers, who are able to read only the translation, and whose decision to buy the rights for their own territory will be based on the translation.

### **10.4.3 The qualities and making of a literary translator**

Having considered prose translation from the author's point of view, I now wish to concentrate on the qualifications of literary translators. Prose translators, in common with other translators, need to master their mother tongue and at least one other language. It is rare for translators to translate from their mother tongue into other languages, but a few do. Prose translators may have grown up in bilingual families, or spent some time abroad, learned the language, and gained extensive knowledge of another culture. Language and translation degrees are also useful tools, but few institutions teach the translation of creative writing as a full-time course, although it sometimes forms part of a translation degree. This is because prose translation is not an activity that can entirely be taught. One can train a translator up to a certain level of language proficiency, but the translation of creative writing requires additional qualities. Creative writing courses for budding authors can stimulate and offer feedback, but they cannot

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make a writer out of someone who has little talent to begin with. The language proficiency of a prose translator must go beyond the purely lexical and grammatical knowledge of two languages. It must also embody an understanding of the culture and history of the language, as well its literature, values, and traditions. Prose translators need to be widely read in the literature of at least two languages, so that they have a sense of where a novel belongs in the literature of its original language as well as that of the language it is being translated into. In *The Translator's Invisibility*, Lawrence Venuti highlights the irony that the better translators do their job, the less they are appreciated and the more their craft undervalued. A successful translation is often described as one that is 'fluent', and an illusion of reading the original is sometimes taken to be evidence of quality.

### 10.4.4 How novels are selected and promoted

Who decides which books should be translated, and what are the criteria for selection? As mentioned earlier, most prose translations are commissioned by publishers. The translator can be freelance or employed by a publisher. Often the translator reads and reviews novels for a publisher who may not be able to read the original. The translator will provide a one- or two-page report which summarizes the plot and assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the book. The translator acts as a literary critic and can recommend or reject the book, but the commercial decision remains with the publisher, who may commission several reports on the same book and may also commission a sample translation. Translated novels are sometimes published with the aid of funding from their countries of origin, in the form of grants towards the translation, while the foreign publisher covers printing and distribution costs. However, the publisher's priority is to find a good book, whatever the language, which will add value and quality to an existing catalogue of publications. It is also vital for publishers to launch a new author with a book that has a high chance of a good critical and commercial reception. Consequently they consider carefully which of an author's books should be translated and when they should be published. At times a promising novel may not be translated because the publisher waits for a stronger book, which shows the writer in full control of his/her powers, in order to secure the most favourable introduction of the writer into another language. Another factor is the fierce competition for space in bookshops and the column space available for the literary review section in various publications. Newspapers receive a large number of books to review, so it may be hard to get a book reviewed if the previous one by the same author was a disappointment. It is in the author's, the translator's, and the publisher's interest to give a book the greatest possible chance of success. Likewise, the fact that a book has been translated can often be regarded as a sign of its merit, evidence that it has undergone considerable scrutiny and that a number of people believe in it both creatively and commercially.

### 10.4.5 The translator's report

A prose translator's report will state whether he or she likes the book. This is, of course, a matter of personal taste, which takes us back to my earlier point: that the appreciation of literature is subjective. A prose translator will read the novel in its original language, but will also consider its appeal in translation and its potential readers. A translator, who should have an extensive knowledge of novels in the two languages, will be able to offer a verdict as a well-informed reader and critic. Palma Zlateva (1990: 31) has come to the conclusion that 'in practice the translator often knows more about the literary tradition the author writes in, but less about his living reality'. Her statement reflects the subjectivity of fiction-writing: the translator can never be inside the author's head, but then again no one can, and it is likely that the translator along with the book's editor will know the book better than anyone—apart from the author.

### 10.4.6 Subjectivity and ease of access

Does the translator have to like the book in order to translate it? The question of subjectivity arises again because it is unlikely that translators can produce successful translations of novels they do not enjoy or understand, even though they may possess the language skills to carry out the translation. In other fields of translation the question of whether the translator likes the text is usually irrelevant. Technical translators will be concerned with lexical accuracy and correct usage of terminology, but their personal and emotional response to the text does not come into consideration, because the texts they translate are factual and objective. Prose translation, however, is subjective and open to interpretation, like the novel itself. The prose translator translates the text, but the text itself may be deliberately vague and ambiguous; indeed, it may well be one of its attractions that it encourages the reader to wonder and to question. Characters in the book may be lying, yet claim to be speaking the truth at the

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same time. The reader may never come to a conclusion, but the translator has to decide what each sentence means in order to be able to translate the text. This casts the translator in the role of reader. In order to do justice to a book and its author, the translator must appreciate its qualities and want to share the book with others. The translator will be aware of potential areas of misunderstanding or confusion, depending on the differences between the languages translated to and from. The Russian writer Vladimir Nabokov (1899–1977) favoured extensive use of footnotes in the translation to inform the reader. This has been experimented with, but has now largely gone out of fashion in literary prose translation because it distracts the reader and disrupts enjoyment of the story. There may also be issues which, although fascinating from the translator's point of view, are not of major concern to the reader. In this case, it is often more helpful to have an introduction to the book written by a critic, so the reader has the option of learning more.

## 10.4.7 Potential obstacles to accessibility and some examples of success

Publishers generally have no wish to publish translations which will seem unintelligible to their readers. The books that end up being translated will thus be those that have the greatest appeal—based on a range of criteria—to potential readers. This can result in a skewed representation of a country's literature. Piotr Kuhuczak argues (1990: 122) that 'the abundance of books and articles on Kafka is counterbalanced by the absence, at least in the English-speaking countries, of encouraging accounts of Hašek, Roth, Broch, Schulz and, to a lesser degree, Gombrowicz'. It is a valid argument, but it is difficult to establish whose (if anyone's) responsibility it is to ensure balanced representation. Most people read novels for pleasure and out of interest and curiosity, and no publisher can stay in business by publishing books for which there are no readers. What is possible, however, is for one author to successfully pioneer the route into a foreign market and awaken interest in the culture and literature of his/her country. The success of the Danish writer Peter Høeg (*Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow*) and the Swedish writer Henning Mankell (the Kurt Wallander crime novels) created a wave of interest in Scandinavian crime fiction which Scandinavian fiction in general has also benefited from. Success abroad is often due to the foreign publisher who spots the potential of a particular book, but one writer's success can open doors for others. Finally, there are also some writers whose books may not 'travel' successfully to another language, even though it is technically possible to translate them. They may be deeply rooted in their own culture, for example, and have little appeal to foreign readers, though highly regarded in their country of origin. Lawrence Venuti, however, suggests we need to look for an 'alternative to fluent that signifies "the foreignness of the foreign text"' (Venuti 1997: 99), in order to avoid translating only those texts that lend themselves to fluent translation, and because we should acknowledge the value of such texts, even if their style is not familiar to us. In a different context, a similar argument was made in *The Linguist* during a debate on whether English should be made the official language of the EU. The argument in favour was that it would reduce the EU's considerable translation costs and speed up the EU's work. The case against, however, called on a deeper issue by challenging the assumption that everything could be said in English. Most people who have knowledge of a second language will know that this is not the case. It may be true much of the time, but there are times when other languages and cultures have terms and concepts for which no English word exists. Finding solutions to those problems and successfully incorporating them into novels is one of the most rewarding and creative features of literary prose translation.

## 10.5 Conclusion

Literary prose translation has sometimes been regarded as an easy option compared to poetry or drama translation because it is the baby of the family. In fact, prose, drama, and poetry translation share many similar problems, and a successful translation of any of them will embody several common techniques and methods. The vast majority of novels published in the UK today are written in English, but book promotions, translation prizes, and Internet booksellers generate interest in foreign fiction and make it easier to find novels in translation. Although a prose translation may be regarded as an inferior copy of the original, it is for many people the only way to gain access to literature outside their own language. Most published translations are of a very high quality and without them a great deal of the world's literature would be beyond the reach of most readers.

## Further Reading and Relevant Resources

Work specifically on prose translation forms a relatively small volume of books on translation studies. Basnett,

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Kuhiwczak, Lefevere, and Zlateva have written extensively on the subject. There is also a useful article on prose translation by Lambert in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (Baker 2001). *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English* is in the process of being produced, with volumes 3 and 4 currently available. Work on translation in general that applies to prose translation includes texts by Newmark, Duff, and Venuti.

### **Charlotte Barslund**

Charlotte Barslund translates Scandinavian novels and plays into English. Her translation of Karin Fossum's *Calling out for You* was nominated for the 2005 Gold Dagger Award. Other translated novels include Peter Adolphsen's *Machine*, nominated for the 2010 IMPAC Award, and Per Petterson's *I Curse the River of Time*. She has a BA in English and drama and an MA in Scandinavian Translation. She is a member of the Chartered Institute of Linguists.

## Oxford Handbooks Online

### The Translation of Drama

Kevin Windle

The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies

Edited by Kirsten Malmkjær and Kevin Windle

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### Abstract and Keywords

The translation of drama has been an important sub-field in the work of literary translators. For translating a drama, the translator must take into account the performance factor. Apart from linguistic competence, the translator should be equipped with additional qualifications for the task, and able to meet the differing criteria of the medium. One of these requires the translator to have some sense of theatre. The special qualifications also include, target-language acceptability, speakability, and adaptability. Comic scenes and the translation of verbal humour on stage have not figured prominently in translation studies to date. Personal names may be difficult for actors to pronounce with conviction, or for audiences to apprehend. The use of expletives is also an area of difficulty. The degree of attention applied to these aspects depends on their prominence in a given text, or rather, on the translator's perception of their prominence.

Keywords: drama, performance factor, sense of theatre, target-language acceptability, speakability, adaptability

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### 11.1 Plays for the page, and for the stage

The translation of drama has been an important sub-field in the work of literary translators over a long period, since, in Western culture at least, theatrical texts constitute a central part of that culture; the theatre as an institution, after all, along with the plays performed in it, predates the novel by a matter of millennia. Translations of classical Greek and Latin drama, as well as Shakespeare, Corneille, and Racine, have a long history in many languages, yet, as Susan Bassnett and Terry Hale, among others, have pointed out, there has been less theoretical investigation of these than of the translation of prose and verse (Bassnett and Lefevere 1998: 90, 107; Hale 2000: 65).

#### 11.1.1 Translation studies and drama

The translation of theatrical works has generally been held to be fundamentally different in nature from the translation of other texts and from other genres such as prose fiction and poetry, just as drama itself differs in self-evident ways from those other genres. As a field, however, drama is not entirely homogeneous. One commonly applied distinction separates plays written primarily for stage performance from those intended as much for readers as for the stage. The German tradition, for example, has its *Lesedramen* by Schiller, Lessing, and Goethe. Other theatre traditions, and indeed more modern drama in German, may display an affinity with the novelist's art and be marked by extended, 'literary' stage directions, à la Dürrenmatt or Bulgakov, whereas French classical drama, for example, kept these to the barest minimum. So striking are the stage directions in Mikhail Bulgakov's *Flight* that in a Moscow production in 1967 they became part of the performance: one of the protagonists was given the additional role of narrator and read out the stage directions at the beginning of each scene (Wright 1978: 131).

It is fair to say, however, that the prototypical play has the stage as its *raison d'être*, that is, the dramatic work is

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conceived and written for the entertainment of an audience of more than one at a time, hearing the lines spoken by actors. The verbal text thus acquires a different status and the written word a new dimension, as but one of several vital components in the theatrical performance. The spoken word and the manner of its delivery combine with movement, gestures, *mimique*, silences, the interplay of the performers, lighting, shadow, sound effects, and everything else that goes to make up the theatrical experience.

## 11.1.2 Translation practice and the spoken word

Just as some original plays may seem better suited to reading, so translations of plays may not be uniform in their purpose. Some scholars (e.g. Johnston 2000a: 416; Rayfield 2000: 600; Kewes 2005: 317) distinguish ‘acting versions’ from scholarly versions, made to be read, for example, by students of foreign languages and literatures. However, since drama is usually thought of as requiring a stage, this chapter will concern itself primarily with the former, in which the translator must wrestle with all the difficulties that may arise in other genres, compounded by the need to take account of the performance factor. The fact of dealing with the spoken word, as part of an auditory performance, cannot but exert a powerful influence on all involved in its production. George Steiner, among others, has emphasized the immense difference between writing for readers and writing for an audience: ‘The relation of text to audience—literally to the listener—is altogether different from that of writer to reader’ (Steiner 2004: 363). The degree of change that occurs in a play script during the transfer from SL text to the stage in its new language as a rule greatly exceeds that visited upon prose works for silent reading, to the extent that the very term ‘translation’ acquires great elasticity of meaning, with some blurring at the edges, and a wide spectrum of correspondence or non-correspondence to the SL text may find a place under that heading. Terry Hale (2000: 65) has spoken of the theatre being ‘subject to a more powerful dynamic of cultural adaptation and change than the novel’, while Joseph Farrell (1996: 54–5) has made the point that a translated novel with characters dropped or refashioned and scenes rewritten or cut would be derided, yet the self-same procedures raise few eyebrows in the theatre. They are acceptable here, of course, since few would question the need to refashion, rewrite, and cut when reshaping prose texts into drama in the same language.

## 11.2 Special qualifications

While it is not generally held that it takes a novelist to produce a successful translation of a novel, it has been widely argued that the special nature and purpose of the theatrical text impose special requirements on the translator. Translators of this material, it is often asserted, need to possess more than mere linguistic competence. They should be equipped with additional qualifications for the task, and able to meet the differing criteria of the medium. One of these requires the translator to have some sense of theatre. Just as it has traditionally been said of the translation of poetry: ‘None but a poet can translate a poet’ (Tytler 1791/1978: 208), echoed in the twentieth century by Edmond Cary,<sup>1</sup> so here a degree of specialization has been declared a prerequisite. Jerzy Zawiejski is one among many who has stressed the need for translators to have ‘a sense of drama and a deeper awareness of the particular features of plays as a separate literary genre’ (1955: 435). In a near-paraphrase of Tytler, Dusty Hughes, the British playwright, has suggested that ‘the best person to stand in for a playwright is another playwright’ (Farrell 1996: 54), and Edmond Cary, referring to Mérimée’s comments on Gogol’s *Inspector General*, emphasizes that there is more to a play than the verbal text: ‘On aura beau traduire la langue, on n’aura pas traduit la pièce’ (Translating the language will not translate the play) (Cary 1985: 53). Michael Frayn, explaining why he was drawn to translate Chekhov’s plays, gives equal weight to his personal experience as a playwright and his qualifications as a Russian linguist (Chekhov 1988: 353).

### 11.2.1 Target-language acceptability

With regard to the aim and the ideal product, there has until recently been a rare degree of unanimity among the parties. In translating modern dramatic works into major world languages, at least, that aim will in all likelihood be a ‘domesticated’ or acculturated version, attuned as nearly as possible to the TL culture and context, and by common consent the versions judged best have been those found to replicate the ST most closely while at the same time functioning successfully as TL play scripts. What Gunilla Anderman has termed the ‘adequacy factor’ is weighed against the ‘acceptability factor’ (Anderman 1998: 71), and when these factors conflict, as they frequently must, pride of place—in English-language theatres at least—has usually gone to ‘acceptability’, since it

is commonly the case that neither reviewers nor audience have a close acquaintance with the SL text. The TL frame of reference creates its own expectations, shared in large measure by actors, audiences, and theatre critics, and those expectations are largely independent of the source text and its culture.

Much of the literature on the subject over a long period, in many languages and theatrical cultures, has been produced by practising translators and theatre directors, and the familiar ‘literal/free’ dichotomy recurs with great regularity, though in somewhat different terms. True literalism has few advocates; indeed, according to Anderman (2005: 28), there is no such thing, since ‘translation always involves choosing one of a number of options’, but the case is sometimes made for allowing foreign playwrights ‘to remain foreign and slightly strange’ (Farrell 1996: 55).

### 11.2.2 ‘Speakability’

The function and purpose of the TL text have determined for many the primary criterion by which the product is appraised, which is encapsulated in the widely applied term ‘speakability’ (*Sprechbarkeit, parlabilité*), a neologism which has come to form part of the accepted terminology of the field. Other ‘-abilities’ have become widespread: ‘playability’ (cf. *Spielbarkeit, jouabilité*), ‘actability’, ‘stageability’ (cf. German *Bühnenwirksamkeit*), and ‘performability’ are favourites, and express closely related ideas, which have much in common with ‘acceptability’. In essence, it is what Zawiejski (1955: 435) had in mind when he spoke of relying on one’s ear, of reading aloud, and of ease and naturalness in dialogue. In a collection of essays from the same period, long upheld as a classic of literary translation studies, Robert W. Corrigan wrote, ‘It is only when the sense of speakability is achieved that we have theater’ (1961: 104). In the same collection, Roger Shattuck (1961: 191, emphasis original) wrote, ‘We still need *performable* and faithful translations of [French] plays of all periods’, and Sidney Monas (1961: 189), a specialist in Russian literature, echoed these sentiments: ‘There is scarcely a single major Russian play that has been adequately rendered into speakable English.’ The validity of these terms was later challenged by Susan Bassnett as ‘resistant to any form of definition’ (Bassnett and Lefevere 1998: 95), but has since reasserted itself forcefully, especially in the work of Fabienne Hörmanseder (2008: 97–111), who distinguishes *Sprechbarkeit* and *Spielbarkeit* and shows how both are vital to the success of a translated play.

### 11.3 Different methods, different schools

The pre-eminence of ‘speakability’ as a criterion and an aim, coupled with the ‘none but a playwright’ view, has meant that, in the theatres of the English-speaking world at least, knowledge of the original language has at times ranked low in the hierarchy of prerequisites for the task. In the processes by which translated play scripts reach the stage, a division may be observed into two broad categories of method and two classes of writers who produce them. On the one hand there is the traditional linguist-translator; on the other a duo comprising a dramatist and a linguist, the latter usually in a subordinate and often unacknowledged role. The lack of acknowledgement has often been cause for resentment among the linguists in such partnerships, but some have reported quite satisfactory working relationships (e.g. Rappaport 2007), and Hörmanseder (2008) strongly recommends such collaboration as the way to achieve optimal results.

#### 11.3.1 Chekhov and his English translators

These differing approaches may be illustrated by the example of the plays of Anton Chekhov, a dramatist so popular and widely performed outside his own country, and especially on the English-speaking stage, that his Russian origins sometimes seem to be almost forgotten. Kenneth Tynan wrote of Chekhov’s plays being ‘remade in our image’ and of the playwright achieving ‘honorary English citizenship’ as long ago as the mid-twentieth century (Tynan, quoted in Gottlieb 1989: 165), and in the twenty-first century the demand for ‘new’ versions continues unabated.

Among the linguist-translators whose names have come to be closely linked with Chekhov are Constance Garnett, Elizaveta Fen, Ronald Hingley, and Michael Frayn. All have produced noteworthy English translations, in the sense in which this word is traditionally understood. Teamwork involving a dramatist and a linguist has given rise to others, not all of them published. In the latter case, theatre companies or directors commission what they term ‘literal’ versions, on which a dramatist, unencumbered by knowledge of the original language or culture, will go to work to produce a ‘speakable’ TL version. In practice, since existing versions are numerous, the services of the

linguist may be dispensed with altogether; the dramatists may compare existing *Seagulls* and *Cherry Orchards* and on that basis produce their new versions.

While the two camps may differ little in their aims, they have tended to exhibit a certain jealous antagonism towards each other: the linguist-translators are scornful of the efforts of those who would ‘translate’ without first-hand SL knowledge and with limited understanding of the accompanying culture. Hingley speaks for many of this group when he opines that translations should remain in the hands of translators and direction in the hands of directors: ‘I think there is a strong case for each of us sticking to his last’ (Chekhov 1964: II, xii). The non-linguists’ standard retort is as seen above, exemplified by Dusty Hughes (in Farrell 1996: 54): knowledge and understanding of the theatre and of play-writing are paramount, and language per se is secondary. This is the position stated by Declan Donnellan (1996: 78): ‘You don’t need to understand the language to understand the sense of the original.’

The gulf dividing the two is bridged, in a sense, by rare translators such as Frayn, who belongs firmly in the camp of the linguist-translators but can claim ample experience, and much success, as a playwright. Frayn has written with some irony about the handling Chekhov has received from non-linguists, and a ‘mysterious inner certainty’—on the part of monolingual English directors—as to Chekhov’s perceived ‘universality’ and his intentions, which some suppose can be divined without any knowledge of Russian (Chekhov 1988: 353).<sup>2</sup> It is significant that expert opinion, applying traditional criteria, has declared Frayn’s versions by far the best. Jacek Laskowski, for example, calls them ‘as close to perfection in the translator’s art as it is possible to get’ (1996: 188), and Donald Rayfield, a noted Chekhov specialist and biographer, endorses this view: ‘the first to be fully actable and true renderings of the original. Only the impecuniousness and egotism of directors prevents them monopolizing the British and American stage’ (Rayfield 2000: 600).

Of interest here is the application and meaning of descriptors such as ‘close to perfection’, ‘actable and true renderings’, and indeed ‘better’ and ‘best’. When Hingley observed in an aside that ‘better translations are becoming available’ (in the 1960s), he was in no doubt: ‘better’ and more ‘speakable’ (his word) were synonymous. ‘Speakable’ was the theatre equivalent of ‘fluent’ and ‘flowing’, and the opposite of ‘translationese’, a pejorative applied more than once: ‘unthinking “translationese” [...] a distinctive, somehow doughy style of its own’ (Chekhov 1964: III, x); ‘dangling in the limbo of “translationese”’ (IX, xiii). Frayn’s practice demonstrates clearly an intention indistinguishable from Hingley’s, though widely judged to be more successful. Frayn states that ‘translating a play is rather like writing one’, and sets forth two basic principles: ‘each line should be what that particular character would have said at that particular moment if he had been a native English-speaker’; ‘every line must be as immediately comprehensible as it was in the original’ (Chekhov 1988: 353). Hingley expects a translator to be faithful to the ‘word and spirit’ of the playwright (Chekhov 1964: II, xii), and in his own work seeks ‘equivalents in natural, unquaint English for the words of an author whose Russian is neither quaint nor unnatural’ (IX, xiii), i.e. striking a proper balance between accurately replicating the Russian and observing TL norms, which in the case of drama include the cultural norms and conventions of TL theatre.

The opposing camp, the monolingual playwrights, mostly purport to be working towards the same ends, and far from striving to impose their individual vision, may wish to get ‘back’ to a ‘truer’ (more ‘faithful’) rendering by means of literality. The seeming freshness of the original wording, provided by the ‘literal’ translator, makes such a profound impression that the conscientious playwright feels a need to adhere to it, and thus produces precisely the quaintness that most translators *sensu stricto* would seek to avoid. Thus David Lan’s Vanya spoke of ‘twenty-five years pouring water from one empty bucket into another’, and a critic hailed this solution as ‘inspirational’ (Rappaport 2007: 72). Such was the novelty of ‘Chekhov’s metaphor’ that Lan and the critic felt it imperative to preserve it, unaware that the stock metaphor *perelivat’ iz pustogo v porozhnee* was well established long before Chekhov’s time and is not perceived to have either the colour or the lack of logic that a direct translation lends it. Kornei Chukovsky’s point about the ‘illusion of precision’ and the imaginary superiority of literalism (Chukovsky 1964: 51–7), leading to a result at odds with Frayn’s second principle (‘Every line must be as immediately comprehensible as it was in the original’) and Fabienne Hörmanseder’s criteria *Fasslichkeit* and *Klarheit* (Hörmanseder 2008: 96; cf. Levý 1963: 118, *srozumitelnost*), is well illustrated here. The ‘foreignizing’ strategy advocated by Berman (2000: 295) and Venuti (1995) requires that SL tropes retain their original terms, even ‘at the expense of intelligibility’ (Mathijssen 2007: 27), and unintelligibility and illogic carry their own inherent risk: the audience may perceive the translator’s strategic decision as a translator’s error. Constance Garnett, whose Vanya spoke succinctly of ‘twenty-five wasted years’ in a version a century earlier, had plainly recognized the idiom for what it was, and opted for ‘domestication’. All parties, however, remain united in their purpose: all would claim to be

doing their best to remain ‘faithful’ to their original.

### 11.3.2 ‘Adaptation’

In maintaining the balance there is clearly a fine line to be trodden, and the much-disputed question of adaptation requires further consideration. The notion of ‘speakability’, so widely taken for granted, goes hand in hand with a degree of ‘domestication’, as Frayn’s principles imply. But at what point does a translation become an ‘adaptation’, and what place in the continuum is occupied by ‘versions’, or even Dryden’s ‘imitations’? To some, including Hingley, who does not, however, attempt a definition, an ‘adaptation’ (Chekhov 1964: II, xii) is a TL text deriving indirectly from the SL, i.e. created by the dramatist-plus-linguist team, or a TL text altered significantly in the production process by directors and actors. Rayfield’s reference to ‘anonymous tamperers’ is likewise aimed at those who ‘ignore Chekhov’s original text’ (Rayfield 2000: 600) and presume to edit and emend the dramatic text without knowing the SL. In the view of Hingley and like-minded translators, the practice is emphatically different from translation and in some sense inferior to it: ‘to adapt Chekhov is to risk doing violence to his work, and it is also to do a grave disservice to the cause of serious translation’ (Chekhov 1964: II, xii).

A particularly flamboyant example of adaptation in this sense may be seen in a version of Chekhov’s *Three Sisters*, by a famous playwright with an agenda of his own, Brian Friel (Friel 1992). The somewhat unusual style of title page (Brian Friel, *Three Sisters: A translation of the play by Anton Chekhov*) is not intended to conceal the fact that the ‘translator’, who does not claim the SL knowledge required to translate, relied on the work of previous linguist-translators. To Friel, Chekhov provides the focus for a sort of Irish rebellion, not against the Russian playwright but rather against his acculturated non-identical twin, the honorary Edwardian Englishman. He sets out to liberate him from the clutches of the Bloomsbury set and ‘make the unique experience of Chekhov more accessible to Irish audiences’ (Friel 1992). Working from six pre-existing English versions, he applies a process akin to triangulation to produce a version designed very specifically for the Irish stage. Thus Anfisa is made to speak of ‘quare bocks’, and Natasha, when startled by Kulygin, exclaims, ‘Jesus Mary and Joseph! You put the heart across me!’ (Friel 1992: 120), where the original had no such Catholic imprecations.

This transplanted Chekhov, the product of a deliberate policy of adaptation by a dramatist, might be deplored by purists for being simply that, but it should be borne in mind that effects which are essentially the same may be produced without the intervention of monolingual ‘tamperers’. A fully competent linguist-translator may well pursue an adaptive policy, and, in Cary’s words, the title ‘adaptation’ is often preferred ‘alors même que l’on se trouve en présence d’une traduction fort honnête et respectueuse de l’original’ (even when a translation is entirely proper and faithful to the original) (Cary 1985: 53). Georges Bastin (Bastin 1998: 8), among others, has pointed to the ‘tenuous nature of the borderline’ between translation and adaptation, and a conversation between David Johnston and David Hare (Hare 1996: 143) brings out the same deficiency in the available vocabulary: we have ‘very little means of distinguishing between translation, adaptation and version’. ‘Version’, after all, is in general use as a synonym for ‘translation’, while ‘adaptation’ has other common uses (‘adapted for television’, ‘adapted for the stage’), and equivalent terms in languages other than English seem to be no more precise. Roger Pulvers, an accomplished linguist and translator, has deplored ‘translations’ by non-linguists, and defended his own *Government Inspector* ‘translated and adapted’ from Gogol’s Russian. Pulvers made free use of anachronism for comic effect in both language and props (including a telephone), yet his aim was no different from that elusive ideal sought by so many others: ‘If Gogol were alive today and writing in English, I would like to think that this is the play he would have written. That is my goal’ (Pulvers n.d.).

Bastin has spoken of adaptation as a ‘legitimate strategy’. Other examples may be found where linguist-translators may be seen adjusting (adapting, localizing) the text to its new environment. Frayn himself made major adjustments to Chekhov’s *Platonov*. Fitzpatrick and Sawczak, while writing of ‘slippage from translation to adaptation’ (1995: 1, my emphasis) in English versions of Dario Fo’s *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, aver that adaptation is a practical necessity, and Farrell (1996: 51) concurs that Fo’s play has to be transported into another culture if it is to make its point. A radical reorientation to the TL context (read ‘adaptation’) may sometimes be the only way to make the play meaningful to the new audience. If the TL audience knows little of Virginia Woolf, the Prague production of Edward Albee’s play, retitled *Who’s Afraid of Franz Kafka?*, provides something for that audience to relate to. Lucienne Hill’s English version of Anouilh’s *Pauvre Bitos* shows cuts and compression on a large scale, based on the assumption that the original demands a more detailed knowledge of the events and personalities of the French revolution than

is common among English-speakers (Anouilh 1987). As Mary Snell-Hornby has pointed out with reference to historical texts, 'The need to adapt the play to changing circumstances applies particularly where [...] specific historic [sic] circumstances or outdated ethical principles are involved' (2007: 113). Again, plays which have over centuries lost their original points of reference may be rewritten or modernized in the same language, although, as in the case of Robert Graves's *Much Ado about Nothing* for the Old Vic, not all audiences and critics approve of the results (Donskoi 1975: 188).

Seen in this light, the freedom to alter a text at many levels of the process should not seem greatly controversial. Pragmatic considerations raised by particular texts, at least, may render far-reaching alterations not only desirable but necessary. Endorsement in principle has come from one who has felt the effects: Dario Fo is reported to have felt that 'actors should themselves be "authors"' (Lorch 2000: 487), and David Attrill claims never to have rehearsed a translated play without some rewording (Attrill 1995: 2). Nor are actors, directors, and translators the only adapters. Playwrights too have been known to undertake 'adaptations' of their own dramatic works for particular purposes or audiences. James Redmond has pointed out that Jean-Paul Sartre's *La Putain respectueuse* (The Respectful Whore) ran successfully as a melodrama in its English-language version in New York, but was rewritten by the author as a 'didactic Communist Party sermon' for translation into Russian for a Moscow audience (Redmond 1989: 80–81). With this in mind, one has to wonder whether a version such as Friel's Chekhov might not be allowed the same latitude. It can of course be objected that it is 'not Chekhov', whereas Sartre in this case remains Sartre, but the same objection may be raised with regard to many other translations which hew more closely to their original than Friel.

As so often in translation studies, where much terminology remains ill-defined, it is legitimate to question whether the term 'adaptation' is useful, and whether the resulting modifications—however produced—are necessarily as undesirable as Hingley and others have maintained. The procedure condoned by Attrill and Fo may not differ greatly from that by which theatre has in the past been produced *without* language transfer, in a kind of collective creative process. Whether it is deemed acceptable may depend largely on the degree to which the original is 'public property', or the extent to which its author claims it as his/her own, rather than on any intrinsic features of the product.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the question of the definition of the term, and of variation from a fixed original, rests on the concept of 'fidelity' to that original, and fidelity—another highly elusive term—has been increasingly challenged in recent times, especially when applied to the translation of drama (Bassnett 2000: 100). If it is to be simply discarded, along with the author's intention (Attrill 1995: 2) and private ownership, the question of adaptation takes on a different aspect, and indeed the distinction between 'versions' and 'adaptations' has been termed by Bassnett-McGuire 'a complete red herring' (Bassnett-McGuire 1985: 93).

## 11.4 Varieties of adaptive intervention

Three areas of difficulty above all may invite some degree of modification by the translator. They are common to much literary translation but particularly troublesome in drama, where the nature of the medium brings out any small deficiency with redoubled clarity in the spoken text: these are humour, personal names, and what may for convenience be broadly termed expletives. In all these areas one may expect to see translators exercising a degree of editorial licence, motivated no doubt by a feeling that they have little choice if they wish to do justice to their original.

### 11.4.1 Stage humour

Comic scenes and the translation of verbal humour on stage have not figured prominently in translation studies to date. Some of the most thoughtful and stimulating reflections on the subject may be found in the work of Stanisław Barańczak (1994), prompted by extensive experience of the translation of poetry and drama from several European languages into Polish. Approaching the question of how to translate Shakespeare's humour, he starts from the most obvious pragmatic point: translate so as to make the audience laugh. If comic effects are present in the original, even if only fleetingly, they are there for a purpose which must be respected, and the translator's aim must be to elicit from the TL audience the response the author sought from the SL audience. Barańczak adds, 'For a translator there is no more humiliating experience than the moment when something that was meant to be funny produces an embarrassed silence, instead of laughter, from the audience' (Barańczak 1994: 197, trans. KW). Barańczak names his four guiding principles as follows, stressing that the order is not hierarchic and that all are of

equal importance: intelligibility, poetry (assuming a poetic ST), 'stageability' (*sceniczność*), and fidelity. However, the injection of humour, he maintains, alters the balance: it immediately assumes the highest priority in the scale of values, displacing the four pillars, and when it comes into conflict with fidelity it is fidelity, in the sense of close adherence to the SL semantics, that must give way. One of the examples illustrating this is the dialogue between Samson and Gregory in the opening scene of *Romeo and Juliet*, in which a witty exchange of word-play is rendered utterly flat in a conscientiously 'literal' version, and fares little better in a classic version by Józef Paszkowski, despite that translator's considerable ingenuity.

Barańczak's proposed solution involves setting aside the ST, while having its intention firmly in mind and responding to that intention in a broad sense (Barańczak 1994: 195), with a maximum of fidelity as long as that fidelity does not stand in the way of the desired comic effect. As an approach this is close to the much earlier dictum of Aleksei Konstantinovich Tolstoi, who translated Goethe, Heine, and Byron into Russian, about making the translation 'hit the same nerves' as the ST (quoted in Salevsky 2002: 436), and accords with Cary's view of 'fidelity': 'le souci est de ne pas trahir l'auteur quant à l'effet produit sur le public' (the concern is to avoid traducing the author with regard to the effect on the audience) (Cary 1985: 52). This may, of course, necessitate a considerable shift, in the name of 'acceptability', away from the literal meaning of the original. Barańczak does not attempt to define any limits.

### 11.4.2 Names

Personal names, if from wholly unfamiliar languages, may be simply too difficult for actors to pronounce with any conviction, or for audiences to apprehend. The policy of the BBC's pronunciation unit, which relies on two key criteria in anglicizing foreign names, is of interest here. The criteria were developed mainly with news and current affairs presenters in mind, but are no less relevant in the theatre or in broadcast drama: 'ease of production' assesses the degree to which a name can be pronounced by an English-speaking broadcaster without extended phonetic training, and 'ease of perception' takes account of the degree to which the audience will be able to grasp that name, again without knowledge of the SL phonetic system. The same factors commonly motivate Chinese speakers, for example, to adopt completely new names in English-speaking contexts. In the theatre, a Polish name such as *Staś* (from Stanisław) may sometimes be replaced by *Stan* (e.g. Iredyński 2002). On the other hand a long-standing tradition, nothing more, has enshrined the perpetuation of 'Uncle Vanya' instead of an anglicized 'Uncle Jack' (see Hingley in Chekhov 1964: III, xii).

A further complication may arise when a playwright resorts to the familiar device of 'speaking names' or charactonyms, such as Alfie Doolittle or Sirius Black. Since these would otherwise be lost on their new audience, a further degree of 'domestication' is commonly applied, as described in detail by Kalashnikov (2006a, 2006b). Thus Witkiewicz's Tarkwiniusz Zalota-Pępkowski becomes in Daniel Gerould's translation Tarquinius Flirtius-Umbilicus (Witkiewicz 2004: 282).

As Hingley has pointed out (Chekhov 1964: III, xiii–xv), on similarly practical grounds there is a strong case to be made for homogenizing SL names when a single character is referred to by a wide range of respectful and/or hypocoristic forms. An English- or French-speaking audience cannot, without a short course of instruction, appreciate the distinctions between Russian modes of address such as Christian name plus patronymic, Christian name plus surname without patronymic, surname alone, or patronymic alone. Nor can the new audience be alert to the emotional nuances that distinguish *Masha*, *Masheńka*, *Mashechka*, *Marusia*, *Mańka*, *Musia*, and *Museńka* (all forms of *Maria*), or necessarily realize that all may refer to the same person. A deliberate decision to reduce the range merely recognizes the fact that the expressive nuances of the SL cannot be preserved, and may create serious difficulties for the target audience.

There may also be potential for undesirable comic effects when an SL name, or near-homonym of one, has its own TL associations. Standard (Library of Congress) transliteration, often preferred by 'academic' translators, when applied to Russian *Маня* and *Семен*, for example, produces *Mania* and *Semen*, which, if unaltered or unexplained to the actors, might seem less like first names than colourful nicknames, and conversely a Ukrainian audience may easily misconstrue a carefully transliterated English *Winifred* as *vinehret* (beetroot salad).

### 11.4.3 Expletives

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An acute practical difficulty, observed in other genres but particularly striking in the theatre and the cinema, occurs when the ST relies heavily on a range of expletives and terms of abuse, varying in their power to offend (see Hingley in Chekhov 1964: II, xi). Here translators are most often guided by their sense of which TL expressions convey a corresponding effect, or of which are acceptable in the target culture, and elicit equivalent response (to use a much-maligned and undefinable term) at a given period. María Jesús Fernández Fernández, using the script of *South Park*, has shown how English dialogue which depends on the expressive and often comic effect of expletives may be handled and mishandled in Spanish (Fernández 2006). Another striking example is provided by Martin Bowman, based on his own work to prepare a stage version of Irvine Welsh's novel *Trainspotting* for a Montreal theatre (le Théâtre de Quat'sous). Broad Edinburgh Scots as spoken by alcoholics and drug addicts is replaced by demotic Québécois. The choice of dialect is not itself the subject of discussion, since a conscious decision was made to 'localize' the play in its new cultural context. Bowman's commentary deals with the eloquent stream of obscenities which constitutes Franco's stage narrative, where the cultural shift designed to produce equivalent effect entails considerable modification of the expletives. Franco's comprehensive command of English 'four-letter' vocabulary in all its richness is given a local twist by the injection of characteristically Québécois oaths, derived from the vocabulary of the Catholic mass: *câlissee*, *hostie*, and *tabarnak*. The result displays a certain shift in register, but is undeniably fluent TL vernacular, set in a roughly analogous social class, though the chosen policy of total linguistic translocation necessarily leaves little trace of Scotland. Anglo-Saxon translators are not the only ones who practise wholesale 'domestication'.

As a general rule in this difficult area, whether the context be drama, fiction, or indeed news reporting, equivalent force and response will be the aim of most translators, who will, however, also be cognisant of the requirements and constraints of the medium. Just as the news media may sanitize the coarser utterances of the French President Nicolas Sarkozy, so translations for the stage will often seek to adjust to the real or perceived requirements of the medium and the audience, which may mean toning down harsh expletives.

At the other end of the expletive spectrum, Constance Garnett's 'My goodness!' for Russian *Bozhe moi!* (lit. 'My God!') in her translations of nineteenth-century classics has drawn criticism for 'taming' the original from at least one commentator (May 1994: 39), who does allow that this is 'inevitable dating', which marks the translation as Edwardian. Indeed it is. Most English readers of Garnett's Victorian and Edwardian times, unlike American teens a century later, were not in the habit of exclaiming 'Oh my God!' One mild expletive of roughly equivalent force to *Bozhe moi* was indeed 'My goodness!', and Garnett understood full well that the temptation of word-for-word—if indeed it was a temptation—was best resisted, in this area above all. Moreover, audiences (and readers) of later times, conscious of the period setting, would hardly find anything jarring in the expression, or in many others whose frequency has declined more noticeably. The available choices do, however, raise the spectre of another old debate: should translators modernize their texts or not, and if so, to what extent? Ned Chaillet has pointed out that translated plays age faster than their originals: 'The shelf-life of an ordinary translation is about ten years' (Anouilh 1987: xxiii).<sup>4</sup> Chaillet would not be alone in rejecting the principle which Garnett upheld and stated categorically: 'The desire to modernise an author arises from ignorance of the past and from bad taste. I have always tried to translate the Russians into the language of the period in which they wrote' (Garnett 2006: 292).<sup>5</sup>

In the field of expletives, of course, translators and directors do not always enjoy complete freedom of action. In many countries, including Anglo-Saxon countries, tight control was long maintained over what was said and shown on the stage. In France, the Sartre title mentioned above, *La Putain respectueuse*, had considerable shock value even with the key word reduced to the initial 'P'. It is only in recent times that the external constraints have been relaxed in the English-speaking theatre. Other countries and cultures, with different traditions or stronger influence from organized religion, continue to keep a closer watch over linguistic and behavioural decorum in the arts.

### 11.5 Variable precision, varying interpretations

The degree of attention applied to the aspects indicated above will depend on their prominence in a given text, or rather, on the translator's perception of their prominence. Here, Levý's 'principle of variable precision' (1969: 158; 1974: 216) is relevant. While making a strong case for accuracy, he adduces notable examples from dramatic texts where literal accuracy might very well be dispensed with and a flexible approach adopted. The resulting general rule has everything to do with the *function* of various components in the dramatic text. The translator's reading and interpretation, inevitably subjective though not necessarily arbitrary, will determine what is of greatest

functional importance at a given moment, and allow priorities to be established and decisions made as to where to apply maximum precision and where greater licence may be in order.

## 11.6 Conclusion

Compared with other forms of literary translation, drama translation is complicated by the added dimension, which involves another class of practitioner. While theorists might like to move beyond ideas of *playability*, *speakability*, and *fidelity*, translators and directors, whether in one person or two, to say nothing of critics, often adhere doggedly to precisely these notions, no doubt variously understood, and hold them to be central to their work. This thinking underlies a 2007 critical study of Arthur Schnitzler's plays on the US stage: 'Too many translations of German dramas [...] are virtually, if not totally unworkable on the American stage: *they just do not play well*' (Cunningham 2007: 1, italics original). Barańczak, whose reflections derive from his wide practical experience, aims at equivalent audience response (above), and to Robert Dessaix, an experienced theatre translator, 'The key word [...] is *equivalence*' (1998: 295), a term that presents its own difficulties (see Chapter 1 above). Some of the theatre directors cited by Rappaport (2007) place a premium on a very traditional notion of *fidelity* (adherence to the original wording, whether or not it makes sense in the TL), while to a great majority intelligibility is a *sine qua non* (e.g. Levý's *srozumitelność*, Hörmanseder's *Fasslichkeit*, Barańczak's *zrozumialość*), assuming an intelligible ST.

The fashioning of any overarching theory of translation for the theatre, if such a thing can be achieved, will have to take account of the widely varying nature of the process of production of the script as well as the relation between that script and its reincarnation on stage, in addition to the linguistic transposition. Authors and their intentions have been held of little account in the literary theory of recent decades. The metaphorical 'death of the author' comes closest to realization in cultural settings where the notion of authorship and 'ownership' is blurred by ongoing modification in the writing or staging. This has not, of course, meant the automatic primacy of 'the text,' since, as has often been noted, no theatre text is fixed for all time, and no stage translation is definitive (e.g. Levý 1963: 111; Attrill 1995: 2). Any 'visibility' that the translator might claim is therefore likely to be short-lived. Some scripts, especially of older provenance, may exist only in an ever-evolving continuum, in the manner of folklore, and widely divergent translations may be equally legitimate representations of their primary source. However, in the more recent dramatic tradition of major Western languages at least, most playwrights expect their wishes and proprietary rights to be recognized and respected, no less than novelists or other creative artists, even if modern thinking proclaims such views outmoded (Bassnett 1998a: 91).<sup>6</sup> Dario Fo, despite his advocacy of 'authorial' rights for actors (see above), is on record as having been appalled at seeing his *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* rendered unrecognizable on the British stage (Farrell 1996: 48). Chekhov's much-quoted wish that he could prevent translations being made at all (Chekhov 1975: IX, xvi) is itself a kind of statement of ownership, as well as an assertion of the essentially monocultural nature, as he saw it, of his work. Most would wish to see the content and the intent of their plays mirrored as closely as possible in the translated product, just as novelists do, while realizing that the image cannot be eidetic. What happens at the next step—the transfer to the stage—will depend largely, though not solely, on the verbal text received from the translator.

As for the imprecision of our terminology, long a cause of frustration to theoretical investigators, it no doubt reflects the status of translation studies as a less than exact science, in spite of the efforts of some scholars such as Levý. Some of its terms, including 'speakability', 'playability' (etc.) ('fidelity' and 'equivalence' must perforce be included) are surely set to remain elusive, and the prospects of Johnston's plea for common definitions of 'translation', 'adaptation', and 'version' being answered are slight (Johnston 1996: 66). But this does not mean they serve no purpose. Nike Pokorn has argued that we should learn to live with fuzzy definitions (Pokorn 2007). 'Speakability' and 'playability' are perhaps best defined by what they are not. Hörmanseder, who sets great store by *Sprechbarkeit* and *Bühnenwirk-samkeit*, stresses that the script must present 'kein Hindernis für das Spiel und den Schauspieler' (no obstacle to the play or the player) (2008: 102). If dialogue of Wildean grace and wit becomes 'literally unspeakable' (Johnston 2000b: 429; Rayfield 2000: 600) in translation, the playwright will have good cause for dissatisfaction, and the play in its new linguistic guise may not proceed beyond the page unless or until further manipulations—whether by dramatists, actors, or 'adapters'—have brought it closer to the perceived norms of the receiving theatrical culture.

## Further reading and relevant resources

Among works of particular importance from the 1990s and the early twenty-first century are Anderman (2005, 2007), Johnston (1996), and Bassnett (2000). The exhaustive treatment of the field by Hörmanseder (2008) looks forward to increased collaboration between specialists in drama and translation studies. Humour in translation, with particular reference to drama, is covered in Maher (2007, 2008). Valuable commentaries by practitioners may often be found in translators' forewords to authoritative editions of classics of world theatre in translation. Hingley in Chekhov (1964) is but one notable example.

### Notes:

- (1) 'Pour traduire les poètes, il faut savoir se montrer poète' (to translate poets it is necessary to be able to show oneself a poet) (Edmond Cary, quoted in Mounin 1963: 14). In the context of the present discussion, it should be noted that neither Tytler nor Cary had in mind a *monolingual* poet, any more than Wilamowitz-Moellendorff with his charming metaphor 'die wahre Übersetzung ist Metempsychose' (true translation is metempsychosis) (Salevsky 2002: 437) meant that the transmigration could be effected without the exercise of linguistic skills.
- (2) The irony is sometimes overlooked. See Bassnett (1998a: 93; 2000: 102). Frayn does not in fact dispute the 'Russianness' of Chekhov or the importance of knowing his language and culture.
- (3) See Bassnett (1998a: 91) on Pirandello and his 'archaic view of the writer as owner of a text'.
- (4) See also Bassnett (2000: 99) on the rate of ageing of spoken language, making new versions necessary 'every 20 years or so'.
- (5) On modernization see Mathijssen (2007: esp. ch. 2).
- (6) On ownership, authorship, intellectual property, and copyright, see also Merrill (2007).

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## Oxford Handbooks Online

### The Translation of Poetry

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### [-] Abstract and Keywords

Poetry translation may be defined as relaying poetry into another language. Poetry's features can be sound-based, syntactic or structural or pragmatic in nature. Apart from transforming text, poetry translation also involves cognition, discourse, and action by and between human and textual actors in a physical and social setting. A poetry translation project usually aims to publicize a poet or poets. Poetry translation is typically overt. Poetry translators are concerned to interpret a source poem's layers of meaning, to relay this interpretation reliably, and/or to 'create a poem in the target language which is readable and enjoyable as an independent, literary text. Poetry translation involves challenges and these are highlighted in this article. Poetry accounts for a tiny proportion of world translation output. Case studies and examples taken from poetry, however, have dominated theory-building in translation studies at the expense of more frequently translated genres.

Keywords: poetry translation, cognition, discourse, poet, interpretation, translation output, theory building

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### 12.1 Introduction

#### 12.1.1 Poetry

Poetry translation may be defined as relaying poetry into another language. Poetry is regarded here as a genre of literary text, and genre as a socially defined cluster of communication acts. These have rules that are largely pre-agreed by communicators (poets, publishers, audiences, say), though they may also be negotiated on the spot (Andrews 1991: 18; Stockwell 2002: 33–4). Some of poetry's rules might specify its typical textual features. For examples, let us look at *Yù jiē yuàn* ('Jade stairs lament') by Tang dynasty Chinese poet Li Po, with modern pronunciation and Ezra Pound's 1915 English version added (Preminger, Brogan, and Terry 1993, Matterson and Jones 2000; texts from Bradbury n.d., Pound 1949):

玉階生白露	yù jiē shēng bái lù	The jewelled steps are already quite white with dew
夜久侵羅襪	yè ju qīn láo wà	It is so late that the dew soaks my gauze stockings
卻下水晶簾	què xià shuǐ-jīng lián	And I let down the crystal curtain
玲瓏望秋月	líng-lóng wàng qīu yuè	And watch the moon through the clear autumn

Some of

poetry's features are sound-based, such as line-length (here, five syllables) or onomatopoeia (*líng-lóng*, meaning 'jade-tinkling' or 'exquisite', sounds like tinkling jade). Some are syntactic or structural, such as the parallel verb—

adjective—noun syntax and high-rise—fall tones of *shēng bái lù* (literally ‘grows white dew’) and *qīn lúo wà* ('invades net stockings'). Others are more pragmatic in nature, such as ambiguity and multiple meaning (does *líng-lóng* here mean ‘jade-tinkling’, ‘exquisite’, or both?), or image and metaphor (e.g. *shuǐ-jīng lián*, ‘quartz-crystal blind’, also refers to the tears of the concubine waiting all night in vain for the emperor). Poetry may deviate from prose norms of syntax or collocation, as with the highly compressed syntax of Tang poetry. Moreover, poems often combine many of these features in a restricted space, making them potentially the ‘most complex of all linguistic structures’, with a ‘special relationship between form and meaning’ (Holmes 1988: 9, Boase-Beier 2009). Some see poetry’s communicative effect as made up of more than denotative meaning: the last two lines, for example, allude to the sound of crystal-bead blinds in the autumn wind, the passing of youth, and more besides. Linked to this is a communicative purpose that is emotive or spiritual, say, rather than just informative or transactional.

No one of these aspects, however, is enough to define a message as a poem, and each may also occur in other genres (literary prose, say, or advertisements), though the more aspects it has, the more ‘poetic’ it is likely to seem. In practice, however, communicators usually agree quickly which genre is operating. Important here are ‘metatextual’ features whose main role is to define genre, such as framing signals announcing the genre (e.g. the word *Poems* on a book cover), or a special tone of voice when speaking or graphic layout when writing.

## 12.1.2 Translating poetry

Seeing genre as communication implies that poetry translation involves not only transforming text but also cognition, discourse, and action by and between human and textual actors in a physical and social setting (Buzelin 2004; 2005: 736–40; Jones 2009). Pound’s translation act above, therefore, involves textual changes (*jade* to *jewelled*, say). Cognitive factors may underlie this change: as Pound read no Chinese, for example, he might not have regarded jade’s connotations of ‘precious, royal’ as self-evident. Interactionally, Mary, widow of Asia scholar Ernest Fenollosa, was a key human actor: she gave Pound access to Ernest’s draft translations (textual actors) because she saw links between Pound’s imagism and Ernest’s ideas on Chinese poetics (Wilson 2004). And socioculturally, Pound’s free-verse renditions were influential for the adoption of free verse as the default form in twentieth-century US poetry.

## 12.2 Translation projects

This chapter focuses on poetry translation projects which serve real-world audiences—visually or audially, via print publications, websites, or streaming audio/ video, live broadcasts, public readings, etc. A project usually aims to produce a ‘text complex’ containing more than one poem—an on-line poetry website, a Chinese poets’ session at a Dutch poetry festival, etc. Translated poems may be part of a multi-genre and/or multi-language complex (a French literary journal combining modern poetry and prose from France and Korea, say), or may form the complex’s main element (such as a Hungarian edition of Shakespeare’s sonnets). The latter may be a target-language edition of a pre-existing complex (as with the Hungarian Shakespeare), or may be specially assembled. If specially assembled, it may be a selection from one poet’s oeuvre, which typically aims to show the ‘best reflections of an individual poet’s genius and specificity’ (Bishop 2000: 61). Or it may be a multi-poet anthology, which may well establish a poetry canon within the receptor culture (Barnaby 2002: 86). Poems maybe presented bilingually, in both source and target versions: if printed, the purpose may be to recognize that the source and target text give different reading experiences. Conversely, if poems are published monolingually (in the target language only) this may reflect the publisher’s or editor’s feeling that translations should not be judged against their source (Peter Jay, Anvil Press: personal communication), though Bishop feels that it risks licensing versions that are adapted towards receptor-culture norms (2000: 62).

A project usually aims to publicize a poet or poets. In countries which publish little translated poetry, projects typically introduce new poets via an established publisher’s ‘brand’ (Sampson 2001: 82). Projects may also aim to construct or validate an image of the wider source culture in the receptor culture or internationally (Lefevere 1975: 106–7). Some projects also promote a certain point of view about the source culture, which may have a political or ideological dimension: for example, Agee (1998) presents Bosnia as a modern European nation rather than a hotbed of warring nationalisms.

## 12.3 Transforming poetic text

The main task of poetry translators is to translate. I first examine this as what might be termed ‘cognitive habitus’ (a cluster of socially defined information-processing practices), then in terms of cognitive challenges and processes, and end by discussing affective (emotional) factors.

### 12.3.1 Cognitive habitus

Here we look at how poetry translating processes are conceptualized within poetry production, translation, and consumption ‘fields’, or loose-knit networks of users, texts and institutions (Inghilleri 2005b: 134–5)—for example, poetry translators within a certain country, or receptor-language poets. As socially mediated concepts vary across time and place, I should point out that my claims may be biased towards recent European practices.

Poetry translation is typically overt. Target readers know they are reading a translator’s interpretation of a source-language poem (Boase-Beier 2004: 25–6). Hence translators may be less free than original poets to ignore their readers’ needs and abilities, and readers may read translated poems more critically than non-translated poems.

Poetry translators are typically concerned to interpret a source poem’s layers of meaning, to relay this interpretation reliably, and/or to ‘create a poem in the target language which is readable and enjoyable in its own right, with merit as an independent, literary text’ (Phillips 2001: 23–4; cf. Boase-Beier 2004: 25–6; Lefevere 1975; Honig 1985: 177; Flynn 2004: 281–2; Jones 2006a). This triple habitus, of course, guides overt translation in all literary genres. In poetry, however, surface semantics and underlying imagery are often so closely and complexly bound with linguistic form that it is notoriously difficult to interpret these relationships and reproduce them in a foreign-language text that meets Phillips’s quality demands. This has inspired a popular discourse of poetry translation as loss. Some lament the loss of source-text reproduction, as in Lefevere’s view that most poetry translations ‘are unsatisfactory renderings of the source text’ because they fail to capture its totality (1975: 99). Others lament the loss of target-text quality, as in Robert Frost’s reputed saying that ‘poetry is what is lost in translation’ (in Untermeyer 1964: 18). In practice, translators face a range of output options (Boase-Beier 2009, Hanson 1992). Prose translations convey only source semantics, usually to help readers read the source (receptor-language poets in collaborative partnerships, say: see below). What might be called re-creative translations aim to convey not just the source’s complex link between imagery and ‘core sense of the words’ (Reynolds 2003: 108) but also its poetic effects, in a viable receptor-culture poem. Rather than trying (and inevitably failing) to find exact ‘equivalents’ for all a source poem’s features, re-creative translators seek ‘counterparts’ and ‘analogues’ (Holmes 1988: 53–4). Self-reports and source—target text comparisons indicate that most translators advocate this approach, even those who see themselves primarily as receptor-language poets (see e.g. Honig 1985; Hughes 1989: 17–18). Some receptor-language poets, however, prefer writing ‘adaptations’ (Mahon 2006, Paterson’s ‘versions’, 2006): poems more loosely based on other-language sources.

Re-creative translating is potentially the most challenging approach, for it demands three expertises of the translator: expert poetry-reading ability in the source language; expert poetry-writing ability in the receptor language; and mediating between the demands of ST loyalty and TT quality (cf. Keeley 2000: 19).

### 12.3.2 Challenges

Here we look more closely at some of the challenges which re-creative poetry translators face, and the solutions they may choose—whether for deliberate poetic effect or because they see no better alternative.

First, reading a source poem can involve recognizing and interpreting a highly complex set of meanings and poetic features. These may even be intentionally obscure—with modernist verse, for example (Bouchard 1993: 149).

According to Boase-Beier, when translating it is crucial to stay true to a source poem’s style (its ‘perceived distinctive manner of expression’: Wales, cited in Boase-Beier 2006: 4), because style encodes the source writer’s attitude towards the content (2004: 28–9). Stylistic loyalty is rarely straightforward, however, as the following paragraphs show.

With poetic form, Holmes sees translators as choosing between three main approaches (1988: 25–7):

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- Mimetic: replicating the original form. This implies openness to the source culture's foreignness (Holmes 1988: 25–6). However, the form may carry different weight in the receptor culture (Hejinian 1998, Raffel 1988)—a five-syllable line feels 'classical' in Chinese, for example, but may seem radically compressed in French.
- Analogical: using a target form with a similar cultural function to the source form (e.g. the English iambic pentameter for the Chinese five-syllable line). This implies a belief that receptor-culture poetics has universal value (Holmes 1988: 26).
- Organic: choosing a form that best suits the translator's 'own authenticity' of response to the source (Scott 1997: 35). This stresses the impossibility of recreating the source form—content link (Holmes 1988: 28).

According to Holmes (1988: 54), finding close correspondence between source and target is easier with 'a poem that leans very close to prose', but the more complex the poem, the bigger the compromises that translators have to make. This may mean that sub-genres of poetry differ in difficulty: narrative verse, say, may give the translator more room for manoeuvre than the more compressed lyric verse (Davis 1996: 31–2).

Some translators, particularly into languages with a strong free-verse tradition, advocate free-verse translations of fixed-form (rhyme and/or rhythm-based) source poems, often on analogical or organic grounds. Others argue that this risks losing crucial stylistic effects. Thus, regarding Hughes's free-verse renderings of Pilinszky's Hungarian verse, Csokits writes: 'without the softening effect of the original metre and rhyme scheme [...] they sound harsher and Pilinszky's view of the world appears grimmer' (1989: 11).

Similarly, attitudes towards ST rhyme range from abandonment to re-creation (users 1998), with partial preservation (replacing full by half-rhyme, say) as a compromise. Key arguments for abandonment are:

- Rhyme may have negative associations (e.g. old-fashioned or trite) for receptor-genre readers.
- Finding rhyme-words is difficult, especially when the receptor language has less flexible word order and/or a greater variety of word-endings than the source (e.g. English relative to German and Italian respectively: Osers 1996; Feldman 1997: 5).
- Seeking rhyme leads to unacceptable semantic shifts—such as having 'to add images that destroy the poem's integrity' (Bly 1983: 44–5).

Those who advocate recreating a source poem's rhyme scheme, whether mimetically or analogically, admit that this requires technical skill, but argue that rhyme is an integral part of the poem's meaning: 'if one disapproves of rhyme in poetry, one should not translate poems that rhyme' (Barnstone 1984:50–51; cf. Moffett 1989, 1999). Moreover, though seeking rhymes may give radical shifts in surface wording, the underlying images can be preserved (Jones 2007).

Source poets may deliberately use 'marked' language varieties: language that, relative to the standard variety, is distinctively archaic or modern, informal or formal, regional, specific to poetry or typical of other genres, or simply idiosyncratic. Alternatively, language varieties that might have seemed unmarked to the poet may appear non-standard to most modern readers. Translators then face a choice between:

- replicating the source variety. This may not always replicate its effect, however: archaisms, for example, may seem original and exciting to modern Serbo-Croat readers but hackneyed to modern English readers (Osers 1996; Jones 2000: 78–9).
- finding an analogy (e.g. Scots for the Herzegovinan dialect of Serbo-Croat: Jones 2000: 81). This, however, may not exactly replicate the source variety's associations.
- shifting to another marked variety, whether along the same axis (e.g. from archaic to hyper-modern: Holmes 1988: 41) or a different axis (e.g. from regional to informal). This almost always changes the variety's associations.
- shifting to standard language. This avoids the risks of the other approaches, but also removes the source variety's effect. When the source poem is 'multi-voiced'—when changes of variety mark out different protagonists or different ideological viewpoints—it removes this structuring effect (Jones 2000: 81–2).

Finally, source-culture-specific associations, references to other works, and the poem's place within its wider poetic culture may be hard to recreate or analogize (Hron 1997: 18–19; Holmes 1988: 47)—especially if a poem's restricted format gives no room for explicitation. Hence published translations often supply this information via an

Introduction and/or Translator's Notes.

### 12.3.3 Cognitive processes

Here I summarize findings from self-reports and think-aloud studies into re-creative poetry translating (Peraldi 1978, Bly 1983, Honig 1985, Born 1993, McEwan 1991, Doce 1997, Hofstadter 1997, Flynn 2004, Jones 1989, 2006a, 2006b).

Translating poetry is relatively time-consuming, painstaking work. Translations tend to take shape via a succession of TT 'versions': typically, the first is semantically literal, with later versions bringing in issues of sound and general poetic effectiveness. Versions are almost always produced over several drafts, or working sessions interspersed by 'rest period[s] in the drawer' (Born 1993: 61). Each session typically involves several runs-through of the poem. Units of translating and revising within a run-through typically correspond to a poem's own subdivision into verses, couplets, lines, and half-lines. Within these units, translators tackle individual problems (lexis, rhyme, etc.) via strategic 'micro-sequences' (Jones 2006b).

Translators read and reread the source poem, target versions, working notes, etc. whilst writing and rewriting versions and notes: after a first reading run-through, there is no evidence of separate reading and writing phases. Translators tend to refer to the source poem at all stages: exclusively TT-oriented runs-through are rare.

Translators are also concerned to reconstruct the poet's intent (about the real-world inspiration for the poem, say), asking the poet where possible. When choosing translation solutions, however, they do not necessarily see this as overruling their direct experience of the text as a reader.

Translators spend most time tackling problems of lexis: words and fixed expressions. They are also strongly concerned with underlying poetic image: exploring the source poem's use of imagery, and attempting to recreate this in the translation. Less translating time is typically spent on sound (rhyme, rhythm, assonance, etc.), unless translators are trying to recreate formal rhyme and rhythm.

After an initial orienting decision to rhyme, say, or re-create the source rhythm, translating decisions seem usually made on the spot, according to poetic micro-context rather than overtly voiced principles. In the Li Po poem, for example, Pound may have weighed up *líng-lóng*'s internal features (its sound features, literal meaning of 'jade-tinkling', combined meaning of 'exquisite', etc.) and its structural links (to the image of a crystal-bead blind, the leitmotif of jade and its connotations of richness, alliteration with the previous word *lián*, etc.), and then decided that *clear* gave the best onomatopoeic, alliterative, and idiomatic link with *crystal curtain*. This also means that final versions rarely fall into one of the archetypes proposed by Lefevere (phonemic, semantic, metrical, prose, rhyming, etc.: 1975), but are usually hybrid in nature.

Poetry translation is popularly seen as 'creative'. If we see creative problem-solving as involving solutions which are both novel and appropriate relative to the source text (Sternberg and Lubart 1999: 3), re-creative translators seem to consider semantically novel solutions only reluctantly and gradually. For example, if the source poem plays on an idiom's literal and figurative senses (e.g. the Dutch *onze handen over ons hart streken*, lit. 'stroked our hands over our heart', figuratively 'showed compassion': Jones 2006a), translators first seek solutions that keep all relevant elements (e.g. *hands + heart + compassion*). If this fails, they consider solutions that reproduce at least some of the elements (e.g. in English, *had a heart*). Only if testing against co-text shows this to be inappropriate do translators consider semantically novel solutions, i.e. solutions with no ST motivation (e.g. *took the plunge*)—though even here, loyalty to underlying intent (in this case, the source poet's explanation that the idiom described relief at moving into a new house) satisfies the appropriateness criterion. If novelty is defined less strictly as any departure from ST structures, however, then any 'adaptive shift' may be seen as creative: transferring rhymes to other words than those which bear the rhyme in the ST, for example. Re-creative translators, however, distinguish quite sharply between semantic novelty (undertaken reluctantly if at all) and adaptive shifts (undertaken as a matter of course).

Finally, interviews and post-translation reports show differences between translators in terms of overall strategic orientation (e.g. preferring to prioritize sound at the expense of semantic equivalence, or vice versa). And different translators' final versions of the same source poem can differ radically—especially, perhaps, if the source poem sets high formal challenges in terms of sound structure, word-play, etc., and thus offers no simple or obvious

solutions. However, the few think-aloud reports available show that translators working on the same poem have similar task management styles, problem-solving processes, and problem hierarchies (most time spent on lexis, closely followed by image, etc.). This also holds for the same translator tackling different poem types (apart from a rise in sound-based micro-sequences for translations from fixed form to fixed form), and from different language types (e.g. Germanic vs. Slavic).

## 12.3.4 Motivation and affective factors

Poetry translation is typically done voluntarily: in a translator's free time, without payment or for fees that rarely compensate for the hours involved. However, publishers exert less deadline pressure than with other genres (Flynn 2004: 277). With little extrinsic motivation from pay or deadlines, translators need intrinsic and self-motivation to keep working over a project's lifetime. Affective factors are crucial here. Thus Flynn's poetry translators (2004: 279) reported that a sense of affinity with their texts was important: they would refuse commissions to translate works they did not like. Once a project is running, support may come from interpersonal networks (see below): other members of the project team, fellow poetry translators, and source-culture enthusiasts for the source poet.

## 12.4 Non-translating tasks

Poetry translators may do other textual tasks besides translating poems. They may act as editors: choosing the poems for a translated selection, say; or even, as with pre-modern texts, establishing a definitive source text (Crisafulli 1999: 83ff.).

Translators may write paratextual material: a critical preface and/or endnotes (or, more rarely, footnotes). These typically supply background information about the source poet, work, and context, though they may also describe translating approach, decisions, and points of source/target difference (Crisafulli 1999; Bishop 2000: 66–7).

Translators may also give public readings from their translations, often with the source poet reading the source poems.

## 12.5 Teams

### 12.5.1 The translator and other players

A poetry translation project involves not just a translator, but a multi-person production team, which may include a print or web publisher, editor, source poet, graphic artist, etc. (Jones 2009). Translators, however, are not always the most powerful actors in terms of making production decisions and recruiting others into the project. Thus a project may be initiated by a publisher or editor, who commissions one or more translators to translate, or who requests existing translations from translators or source poets. This is a typical pattern for multi-poet anthologies (Jones 2009). With works of a single living source poet, the poet may initiate and control the project, especially if s/he lives in the country of publication.

Sometimes, however, translators may initiate a project by seeking a publisher, whether independently (when translating a dead poet) or on the request of a source poet; the latter often happens when the translator lives in the publisher's country and the source poet does not (Jones 2009). The Dutch-native poetry translators interviewed by Flynn (2004: 279) reported that successfully finding a publisher is 'directly proportionate' to the translator's reputation, but also that 'a company's publishing policy is influenced by translators'. And once the project is under way, translators may well liaise with editors or publishers on behalf of the source poet or his/her agents—especially, again, if the translations are appearing in the translator's home country.

When it comes to actual translating decisions, poetry translators are often allowed considerable autonomy by other team players. Flynn's translators report that publishers or editors rarely give translators an explicit translating brief, especially if translators have a high reputation: they assume that translators 'know what should be done', and usually request no more than minor textual decisions (Flynn 2004: 280). After submission, copy-editors make fewer corrections to poetry than to literary-prose translations (p. 278). Some source poets who read the receptor language, however, may insist on approving all textual decisions; and if they disagree with the translator, their

higher social capital may mean that their opinion prevails, even if TT quality suffers (Keeley, in Honig 1985: 148–9; Weissbort 2004).

Poetry translators may well translate from more than one language and national literature—like all of Flynn's interviewees (2004: 276). Restrictions on SL knowledge or reading and writing skills can be overcome by collaborative translating. A typical pattern is where an expert reader of the source language works with a native writer of the receptor language (e.g. Kunitz and Weissbort 1989, Csokits 1989, Hughes 1989). The former may also be the source poet. If the SL reader is primarily a linguist and the TL writer a published poet, however, people outside the team may see the former as of lower status: ‘translators of literals [...] are the pariahs of the realm of letters’ (Csokits 1989: 14). Another common collaborative pattern is where both translators are SL readers and TL writers, but feel that shared expertise or complementary working styles lead to better results (e.g. Keeley 2000: 32–7). Poets may also translate each other (Lesser 1989)—even in the same volume, as in Paz and Tomlinson's Spanish–English poetic correspondence *Airborn/Hijos del Aire* (1981).

‘Multi-agency’, in fact, is a reality of professional poetry translating (Flynn 2004: 277)—perhaps, again, because of the complexity of poetic communication. Even solo translators may consult ST informants about the ST (about unknown words and ‘references’, say: p. 277), and ask target-version readers to advise on output quality (Bly 1983: 42–3). Potential ST informants may be the poet, if living (Kline 1989), or other native readers of the source literature. Potential target-version readers may or may not know the source language (Bishop 2000: 65); some translators argue that not being able to read the source allows readers to focus more clearly on TL draft quality. Fellow translators may play both roles (Flynn 2004: 276–7).

### 12.5.2 Positionality

Positionality indicates where a project player's allegiance lies (Toury 1980, cited in Tymoczko 2003: 184). It may be seen in terms of physical location, but also of affective loyalty (Jones 2009). Poetry translation teams very often have a distributed positionality. In other words, a team's players are typically located in both SL and TL countries, and even third countries; and Internet publication means that readers may be anywhere in the world, especially if the TL is an international lingua franca. The players' loyalty tends to be primarily to the source poet, culture, or point of view they aim to communicate. But as their implicit brief is always to communicate a poetic message to receptor readers, there is also a loyalty towards those readers: this may mean not only making the message comprehensible but also, very often, communicating the project's cultural or ideological aim to readers (see e.g. the introduction to Agee 1998).

### 12.6 Second-order networks

In analysing social interaction, Milroy (1987: 46–7) distinguishes between close-knit ‘first-order networks’ (like the translation project teams just described) and larger, looser ‘second-order networks’. Two of the latter are discussed here: the poetry translation profession and the ‘communities’ (user groups etc.) with an ‘interest’ in a project (Venuti 2000b: 477). As a profession involves a shared sense of identity, institutions, etc., it may also be seen as a Bourdieusian ‘field’. And as communities of interest involve not only people but also the texts they read and write, they may also involve the textual networks known as ‘systems’ (Hermans 1999).

#### 12.6.1 Profession

Though published poetry translators rarely work full-time for full pay, they may in other respects be regarded as professionals: they have a special expertise which is valued and recognized by those who use their services, and which they are usually allowed to use autonomously (cf. Freidson 1994: 210).

Professions tend to be distinguished by their own institutions and habitus (ways of behaving sanctioned by the network: Inghilleri 2005b: 134–5). Institutionally, poetry translators are only weakly professionalized. Professional accreditation of poetry translators, therefore, is almost always informal, by word-of-mouth recommendation and reputation among second-order networks of literary production (publishers, editors, poets, fellow translators, etc.).

As for poetry translators' professional habitus, we have already discussed cognitive aspects. It is, however, worth mentioning status and visibility. Poetic messages are typically seen as: canonical, i.e. highly valued by the

community that uses them; requiring high expertise to create, because of their complex textual features; and requiring autonomous, individualized working practices, because of their special communicative purposes. These, plus an awareness that poetic messages rarely have one-to-one equivalents across languages, mean that poetry translation is also seen by many users as requiring high, autonomously wielded expertise—even impossibly high, as shown in the popular discourse of translation loss. This helps to explain why published poets often translate poetry—as opposed to novels, say, which are rarely translated by published novelists. As a result, poetry translators often enjoy higher status than translators of other genres. With some (such as Robert Bly in the US or Octavio Paz in Mexico), this may derive partially or largely from their reputation as receptor-language poet. If the source poet is internationally known, even ‘non-poet’ translators may acquire some of the source poet’s status by dint of association (Keeley 2000: 104). And if their translations are judged successful, even non-poet translators of previously unknown poets may acquire respect among communities of readers.

This status is recognized and stimulated by two practices common in poetry but unusual in other genres, which give the poetry translator high visibility. One is the prominent display of the translator’s name: on a book cover, say, or beneath poems in multi-translator anthologies. Another, mentioned above, is that poetry translators often write paratextual materials to accompany their translations.

Professional ethics form a key aspect of habitus. Translators’ accounts show a strong ethic of loyal representation among poetry translators: a desire to communicate the ‘essence’ of the source poem to target readers in the most effective means possible (Bly 1983: 30–31; Barnstone 1984: 50). This, of course, underlies not only poetry translation but also professional translation in other genres. Even producers of poetry-to-prose translations and adaptations may be seen as subscribing to this ethic: believing that poetry translation cannot be both semantically reliable and poetically effective, they aim to convey loyally whatever aspect of the source poem they see as most relevant to their communicative purpose (its semantics, or its poetic effect). As befits a non-institutionalized profession, there are few if any qualifications or degree programmes in poetry translation. Training is largely informal and self-driven, with poets or linguists gradually developing an interest and (often, though not always) expertise in poetry translation through practice. Some other-directed training does happen, however. Universities, translators’ and writers’ associations may run poetry translation workshops, and poetry translation modules may be offered within creative writing or translator-training degree programmes and extra-mural courses.

### 12.6.2 Communities of interest and systems

Venuti’s ‘community of interest’ refers to the network of general readers, critics, TL poets, etc. affected by a translation project (2000b: 477). Conditions of translation and reception may affect which texts are offered to a reader community. With English translations of Eastern European poetry during the Cold War, for example, translators tended to select ‘translatable’ poets, constructing a stereotype of ‘Eastern European poetry’ as metaphor-oriented political poetry in free verse, which in turn conditioned the choice of further translations (Jarniewicz 2002b; Sampson 2001: 83). If a project does not fit the receptor culture’s expectations about domestic or translated poetry, by contrast, it may not be accepted by receptor readers and critics, or its reception may not accord with the production team’s aims (Malroux 1997: 20; Flynn 2004: 279). There are similar risks if receptor readers have no knowledge about the source poet(s) or their literary culture (Dutch poetry in the 1980s UK, for instance: Holmes 1988: 12–13)—a knowledge which Introductions typically aim to supply.

Receptor-language poets often see their own output as influenced by translated poetry, whether as translators or readers—Octavio Paz in Mexico or Ted Hughes in the UK, for instance (Dumitrescu 1995; Jarniewicz 2002a: 93). Output may even extend to pseudo-translations (original poems which claim to be translations) and poetry that makes deliberate use of translationese, as with Christopher Reid’s ‘translations’ of the imaginary poet Katerina Brac (1985; cf. Jarniewicz 2002a: 93–5). Such influences may extend to domestic poetry systems as a whole: ‘the translation of foreign poetry can be a means of revitalizing our own poetry’ (Mao [1922]2004). And they can stimulate ‘trans-linguistic’ literary movements (Paz 1973, cited in Dumitrescu 1995: 240).

There are other potential communities of interest: those in the source country who wish to see ‘their’ poet published, for instance. Here, by deciding whether or not to translate, poetry translators may play a gatekeeping role, controlling the poet’s access to a wider community or even (with a globalized TL) a global community of readers. When translation does happen, however, it often confirms or enhances the poet’s status at home.

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Communities of interest might also be trans-national—those within and outside Bosnia supporting the anti-nationalist motives of the *Scar on the Stone* anthology, for instance (Agee 1998). Communities of interest may interact with other communities: *Scar on the Stone*'s reader community, for example, might interact with the wider community of UK poetry readers, and in opposition to communities within and outside Bosnia which support ethno-nationalist models of politics and culture.

## 12.7 Researching poetry translation

Finally, it is worth looking at poetry's role in translation studies research.

Poetry accounts for a tiny proportion of world translation output. Case studies and examples taken from poetry, however, have dominated theory-building in translation studies at the expense of more frequently translated genres—even recently, as with Venuti's domestication/foreignization discussions, which are based largely on his own poetry translation practice (1995). One reason might be the rich variety of problems offered by poetry translation. Another might be that literary translation, including poetry translation, can give rich information about cultural and inter-cultural ideologies and 'interfaces' (Lefevere 1975: 111–20; Tymoczko 1999: 30). There are risks in over-extending theories inspired by poetry translation into genres with very different communicative rules, such as technical translation.

There is room, however, to research poetry translation in its own right, perhaps as part of a wider aim to map novice and expert translation across genres. Our knowledge about poetry translating is, perhaps surprisingly, still fragmentary. Many studies have compared specific source and target texts, and many after-the-event reports about how poetry translators tackled specific works. However, these rarely generalize beyond the individual case, and are hard to compare. There have been no book-length surveys of poetry translation as a whole, at least in English, since the 1970s (Lefevere 1975, De Beaugrande 1978). And the more rigorous research methods that have recently done much to map non-literary translation have hardly been applied to poetry. Few published studies using structured translator interviews or think-alouds look at poetry (apart from, say, Flynn 2004 and Jones 2006b). And I know of no concordance studies into poetry translation, or ethnographic accounts of poetry translation projects (contrast e.g. Buzelin 2006 and Koskinen 2008).

## Further reading and relevant resources

The posthumously published *Translated! Papers on Literary Translation and Translation Studies* (1988) by James Holmes—a poetry translator and a founding father of academic translation studies—remains crucial reading. Weissbort (1989) and Allén (1999) present insightful collections of articles written by both poetry translators and scholars. Honig (1985) provides fascinating reports of interviews with poetry translators, and Bly (1983) describes in detail his own processes of translating and revising a poem. Key overviews of more specific aspects are given by Osers (rhyme and rhythm: 1996, 1998) and Boase-Beier (style and reader cognition: 2004). Flynn (2004) gives a useful survey of poetry translation in its wider professional context, and Jones (2006b) presents a framework for research into poetry translating processes.

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## Oxford Handbooks Online

### The Translation of Song

Charlotte Bosseaux

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### Abstract and Keywords

This article overviews what has been done so far in the study of song translation, and focuses on the specific features, problems, and delights posed by this genre and its complexity. Music translation started to be given emphasis in the 1990s. Holistic approaches were favoured in which the music and the text were treated as a single, indivisible entity. Criteria such as performability, actability, speakability, breathability, and singability should be taken into account for song translation. Rhythm, rhymes, rhetorical figures, and performance all make for difficulties in the translation of operatic texts. There are different types of songs and each individual type requires different translation strategies. ‘Logocentrism’ is ‘a view defending the general dominance of the word in vocal music’, while ‘musicocentrism’ denotes a ‘wordless approach’. The success of a production is the criterion by which to judge the success of a translation.

Keywords: song translation, logocentrism, musicocentrism, performability, actability, speakability, breathability, singability

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### 13.1 Introduction

Song translation has received scant attention in translation studies to date, compared to other genres, having received little prominence in major publications in the field such as Jeremy Munday's *Introducing Translation Studies* (2008), Baker and Saldanha's *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (2009), or Hatim and Munday's *Translation Studies: An Advanced Resource Book* (2004). However, the situation is changing, as shown by the *Companion to Translation Studies* (Kuhiwczak and Littau 2007), which includes information on opera translation and surtitling in its chapters on ‘Theatre and Opera Translation’ and ‘Screen Translation’.

The study of song translation draws upon analyses in literary translation, poetry translation, stage translation, and screen translation. Issues related to creating actable, performable translations for the stage were raised by studies in literary translation in the late 1970s. In the 1980s, theoretical approaches were developed for the analysis and practice of stage translation. These approaches mainly drew on semiotics. They were referred to as holistic approaches with a sociocultural element. Music translation and more specifically opera translation started to be given more emphasis in the 1990s. As with stage translation, holistic approaches were favoured in which the music and the text were treated as a single, indivisible entity, and criteria such as ‘performability’ (also discussed in the context of drama translation: see e.g. Bassnett 1991a, 1998a) or ‘actability’, ‘speakability’, ‘breathability’, and ‘singability’ were brought to bear (Snell-Hornby 2007: 113).

This chapter provides an overview of what has been done so far in the study of song translation, and focuses on the specific features, problems, and delights posed by this specific genre and its complexity. The first part will act as a prelude. It introduces the topic generally by giving a short overview of major contributions in this emerging field. Then we will look into the two major types of song translation: sung or singable versions and translation by surtitles. The last section briefly presents studies looking at song translation from a sociocultural perspective, to

show what they can add to those drawing mainly on linguistics and music.

## 13.2 Prelude

As mentioned previously, there have been very few studies, most of them in the form of articles. One of the major publications is *Song and Significance: Virtues and Vices of Vocal Translation* edited by Dinda L. Gorlée (2005). This volume contains eight essays written by vocal translation practitioners as well as translation-oriented scholars. As such, it testifies to a new interest in the translation of 'singing sign-events'. The essays provide practical advice on the constraints of vocal translation and most of them use theories grounded in semiotics. A variety of languages are investigated: English, French, Saami, German, Swedish, Italian, and, of course, the 'language' of music. More specifically, there are three essays on the translation of opera libretti (Tråvén, Golomb, Apter and Herman). One essay investigates the translation of hymns (Gorlée) and another focuses on the Saami chant form called 'yoik' (Anderson). One author focuses on folksongs (Low), while another investigates popular music and its sociocultural impact (Kaindl). The final chapter, by Franzon, presents an analysis of a stage musical, the Scandinavian translations of *My Fair Lady*.

As will be seen in this chapter, there have been studies prior to the publication of Gorlée's volume, but it was the first of its kind to point to the multiplicity and versatility of song translation and to its rich academic potential. It is also fair to say that until then the bulk of studies had dealt with the translation of opera, and only a few had examined popular music. In fact, before 2005, Hewitt (2000) and Kaindl (2004) were among the few studies to consider popular music.

As mentioned above, song translation is receiving more and more academic coverage. It is the topic of a special issue of *The Translator* (Susam-Sarajevo 2008). This volume 'focuses on a wide range of musical genres and languages (e.g. code-switching in North African rap and rai; the intertextual and intersemiotic translations of Mahler's lieder in Chinese; the appropriation of and after-life of Kurdish folk songs in Turkish; characterization in the dubbed French version of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer's* musical episode; and the emergence of rock'n roll in Russian)'. It aims at giving 'readers an idea about the versatility of the field and the varying approaches within it'.<sup>1</sup>

In what follows I present the various types of song translation, highlighting its specific constraints, and show how practitioners as well as scholars have proposed to tackle this genre. For the sake of clarity I have divided studies in song translation according to the main two translating modes used: sung or singable versions (Low 2002: 100) and surtitles. As the translation of operas has received the most attention in the literature, I first consider the translation of operatic texts.

## 13.3 Singable versions

### 13.3.1 Opera

Opera is a 400-year-old art form conceived as drama in which the role of music is to 'serve and enhance the dramatic elements' (Golomb 2005: 125). Therefore music and words go hand in hand and complement each other. Klaus Kaindl offers a holistic interdisciplinary approach to opera translation, drawing on various disciplines: literary studies, theatre studies, and musicology. He considers the operatic text a 'synthesis of the libretto, music and performance (both vocal and scenic)' (cited in Snell-Hornby 2007: 113). The libretto has been defined as 'a linguistic text which is a pre-existing work of art, but is subordinated to the musical text' (Gorlée 2005: 7). His criteria for performability are 'breathability' and 'singability', themselves composed of various elements such as the interplay of language, music, and vocal performance.

Performance can be defined as 'what the performer does in addition to the actions/functions she or he performs in the plot and the lines she or he is given to say. Performance is how the action/function is done, how the lines are said' (Dyer 1979: 151). From a semiotic perspective, signs in performance are facial expression, voice, gesture, body posture, and body movement. The concept of performance is an important criterion in song translation, as it is in stage translation and film translation.

As early as 1958, Jacob Hieble proposed that foreign stage productions should be translated into English in such a

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way that audiences could ‘enter the spirit of the masterpieces’ (1958: 235). In this article, which is to my knowledge one of the first to address the question of song translation, Hieble explains:

the translation especially of musical operas and concert songs poses its special problems of metre, rime, singability, matching musical notes with corresponding syllables or changing the one or the other, onomatopoetic considerations, or finding a whole series of similar words, where two, three and four persons sing together. But even though the task requires considerable ingenuity, it should be tackled with that much more enthusiasm.

The literature on sung versions of operas has followed Hieble’s lead. All articles remind us constantly of the complexity and heterogeneity of operatic art. The opera translator Ronnie Apter (1985), for example, discusses the difficulties of the task from the viewpoint of a practitioner. In his view, one of the most important duties of a translator is to ‘place the right meaning on the right note’ (p. 309). An opera translator thus ‘needs knowledge of music, vocal technique, of prosody, and of rhyme—plus some knowledge of foreign languages [...] knowledge of playwright and stagecraft also helps’ (p. 318).

To Apter, one of the most difficult problems for translators is to match foreign rhythms. He explains that in any languages ‘rhythm is made of stress and burden’ (‘the time it takes to say a syllable in normal speech’) and that ‘the longer the syllable takes to say, the longer or heavier the burden is said to be. While music sometimes deforms language rhythms, it often follows them.’ Consequently a translator dealing with a ‘rhythm highly different from that of his own language may have trouble finding a natural-sounding line. Each different language presents the translator with a different set of difficulties’ (1985: 316).

Tråvén (2005) also argues that translating opera requires a deep knowledge of musical and rhetorical meaning. She works with Mozart’s operas, and comments that translating his works is like ‘working in a straitjacket’ because ‘little space for movement’ is left in the close relationship between the libretto and the music (p. 118). She identifies a variety of strategies, most of which aim at reducing the linguistic information in order to augment the communication of ‘paralinguistic and extralinguistic features’ (dramaturgical relations, musical additions, the direct and indirect interrelationships between verbal text and music with rhetorical figures such as *gradatio* and *lamento*) that are ‘considered vital’.

Her article is linked to that of Golomb (2005), who discusses the constraints of song translation, which she calls ‘music-linked translation’ (MLT), and its *raison d’être*. Golomb explains that song translation is ‘adequate’ if it:

manages to render the meaning (the semantic component) of the source text as closely as possible, while making it sound as ‘naturally’ as possible (in terms of stress pattern, rhythmical structure, and even sound) when synchronised with the music to which the source text has been set. (p. 124)

If there are any divergences in choice, she emphasizes that ‘music is the absolute ruler [...] dominating the actual outcome of any conflict’ (p. 128). One can use ‘rhythmical inconsistencies, such as the optional use of elisions, oscillating between counting and disregarding certain unstressed syllables, the manipulation of syntax, repetition and word- and phrase-order’ (p. 129).

Apter, Golomb, and Tråvén all show that having to match words with music is a source of difficulty but that there is also room for flexibility. The rhythm of music can be used as an advantage. It can be used, for instance, for non-verbal onomatopoeia; a trill on the word *tremble* can be used to make it tremble (Apter 1985: 311).

It is commonly thought that translating rhymes is a great source of difficulty, but Apter explains that a one-to-one equivalence is not required. This means that if the Source Text (ST) has a rhyming pattern in [ain] in words such as *pain* and *refrain*, the Target Text (TT) does not need to keep this exact rhyming pattern for the translation to be successful. When choosing rhymes, Apter proposes that translators uses ‘rhyme’s cousins’: ‘off-rhyme (*line-time*), weak rhyme (*major-squalor*), half rhyme (*kitty-pitted*) and consonant rhyme (*slat-slit*) to create recognizable stanza forms - alone or in combination with other devices like assonance and alliteration’ (1985: 309–10).

Golomb gives examples of problems posed by Mozart’s operas and their English translations (2005: 142–53), emphasizing that it is ‘essential for an MLT practitioner to identify and nurture these precious operatic moments, where the synchronization of specific words, messages and significations with localised musical events is so vital and crucial for the understanding of an entire opera’ (p. 152). Of course one could object that not all opera-goers

will be aware of the ‘complex devices and messages’ of such composers as Mozart or Wagner, but Golomb claims that composers’ ‘creative investment should be addressed with respect’ and translators ought to ‘realise its potentialities as fully as we can’ (p. 154).

Hence, rhythm, rhymes, rhetorical figures, and performance all make for difficulties in the translation of operatic texts. The emphasis is not on words alone: ‘Words in opera are multimedial in that they are, both as signified and signifiers, part of several interdependent elements necessary to the meaning of the overall lyrical form’ (Desblache 2007: 155). Sung or singable versions are, however, not restricted to operas; they can also be used with other song types.

### 13.3.2 Popular songs

As we have seen with operatic texts, translating songs is not only a matter of translating lyrics; it is necessary to produce lyrics that fit the music. This of course adds a further set of constraints, as translators must take into consideration such factors as rhythm and rhyme. Peter Low lists the complex features of (popular) song translation as ‘rhythms, note values, phrasings and stresses’ (2005: 185). In song translation a ‘clever illusion must be created’, as the ‘TT must give the overall impression that the music has been devised to fit it’. As mentioned previously, there have been very few studies of the translation of popular songs. I will therefore concentrate on one study which presents a methodological approach.

Low (2005) proposes an approach to song translation called the ‘Pentathlon Principle’, inspired by Skopos theory. He proposes five criteria, which need to be balanced: ‘singability, sense, naturalness, rhythm and rhyme’ (p. 185). Low’s method offers the possibility to judge the success of a translation by means of an ‘overall aggregate calculated on all five of the criteria’ (p. 203). In what follows I consider these criteria in turn, with reference to the complex problems of song translation, and indicate how they may help us towards the production of performable TL texts.

When discussing singability (pp. 192–4), Low explains that a singable version requires ‘performability’, i.e. it ‘must function effectively as an oral text delivered at performance speed’ (p. 192). Noting that English is a ‘language [which] has many closed vowels and frequent clusters of consonants at the beginning or end of words’ (p. 193), he argues that sometimes,

[if the] English word or phrase which gives the best semantic solution may be hard to sing—the word ‘strict’, for example, which has five consonants to one vowel—then it is better to incur some semantic loss and use ‘tight’, with two consonants and a nice singable diphthong.

Low also discusses the use of words emphasized by ‘musical means’, concluding that words with a high pitch or which are marked *fortissimo* should ‘ideally be translated at the same location’ (p. 193). This last remark can be compared to Tråvén’s (2005: 118) emphasis on the importance of rhetorical figures in opera. When he discusses sense, Low emphasizes that it is not that ‘meaning ceases to be an important criterion’ (p. 194)—for instance when one decides to choose *strict* over *tight* although they have different connotations—but that the ‘constraints of song-translating necessarily mean some stretching or manipulation of sense’. He thus advocates what he calls ‘acceptable accuracy’. Naturalness (of register and word order), the third criterion, is the ‘translator’s duty to the audience’ (p. 195) because a ‘song-text must communicate effectively on first encounter’. Low is not the only one to emphasize naturalness; Apter (1985: 316) and Golomb (2005: 124) also include it in their discussion of opera translation. When discussing rhythm (2005: 196–8), Low explains that even if ‘an identical syllable count is desirable’, a syllable ‘could be added judiciously’ (e.g. adding a syllable on a melisma or subtracting one on a repeated note). Moreover, if keeping an identical count results in a TT being ‘insolubly, unacceptably clumsy’, then ‘an occasional [...] tweaking may be preferable to a glaring verbal gaffe’ (p. 197). He also emphasises that the syllable count is not the only thing to take into consideration; one must also pay attention to the length of vowels and consonants and rests. Low observes that his fifth criterion, rhyme (pp. 198–9), has been overemphasized: ‘the rigid insistence on a perfect rhyme for “love”, for instance, has too often opened the window to the “turtledove” and the “stars above”.’ He advocates flexibility, and recommends using Apter’s terminology (1985), as mentioned above.

Obviously there are different types of songs and each individual type will require different translation strategies.

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'Logocentrism' is 'a view defending the general dominance of the word in vocal music', while 'musicocentrism' denotes a 'wordless approach' (Gorlée 2005: 8). In 'logocentric' songs, Low would 'favour sense over singability or rhythm because the words (and their author) deserve to receive high priority' (2005: 200). For 'musicocentric' songs, for instance jazz song, Low would choose options that 'score highly on singability at the expense of sense'.

Low takes the example of Georges Brassens, 'a popular French creator of logocentric songs' (2005: 189), whose style he describes as 'allusive, amusing and provocative'. His songs have been translated into English, German, Swedish, Czech, Dutch, and Italian, and their translators speak of strategies including: paraphrase, modulation, transposition, 'replacement metaphors', compensation in place (see below), calques, omission, explicitation, cultural adaptation, superordinates, stylistic equivalence, the suppression of difficult verses, the use of added words to solve rhythmical problems, and the replacement of rhymes with assonances.

Low gives examples from two French *chansons*, one German *Kunstlied* (art song), and a Maori *Waiata* (folksong) (2005: 199–210). He insists on flexibility and pragmatic compromises. Nothing is so sacrosanct as to be 'perfectly retained' if this leads to 'great losses elsewhere' (p. 210). Translators applying his method will have a well-defined Skopos and will balance the five criteria, with emphasis on the overall effect. For instance when translating Jacques Brel's 'Les Filles et les chiens' (Girls and dogs), since the naturalness of the French lyrics was not a 'constant feature', he could 'fool around with the target language, for the purpose of entertainment' (2005: 204). He concludes (p. 204):

My assessment is that although this song is logocentric, the form of the words actually counts more than the detailed meaning. My strategy therefore was to prioritize structure over sense; to insist on good rhythms and frequent punchy rhymes; and to render the overall meaning while permitting flexibility in the semantic detail. This may be called slippage or compromise, but I prefer to view it as compensation or re-creation. Often I use compensation in place—an idea or image appears in one part of the source but in a different location in the TT.

Low claims that his method may also be used for opera translation, with the added criterion of 'dramatic effectiveness', making it a 'hexathlon' (p. 211).

### 13.3.3 Musicals

Studies in this field have been fewer in number than in the case of the genres treated above. In an article on translating the musical *The Fantasticks*, by Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt, into French Canadian, Jeanne de Grandmont compares its libretto to a poem and equates the musical to 'sung poetry' (1978: 98). The translating team was concerned with 'dynamic equivalence': 'que notre traduction produise sur les spectateurs du *Théâtre du Nouveau Monde* le même effet que l'œuvre originale avait eu sur le public du Sullivan Street Playhouse' ('that our translation should produce the same effect on the audience at the *Théâtre du Nouveau Monde* as the original work had on the audience at Sullivan Street Playhouse') (1978: 98). She explains that they endeavoured to translate the lyrics with a vocabulary that would mirror the characters' speech, and at the same time keep the original stress pattern. A case in point is the translation of the theme song 'Try to remember', which Grandmont describes as a painstaking task because *try* is a one-syllable verb and in the chorus the main or tonic stress is placed on this verb, at the beginning of the line. They could not use the direct equivalent *essayer* because it was not compatible with the music, but found an alternative solution with the verb *chercher* in the imperative, as it has the same stress. Thus they translated *Cherche dans ton cœur* as *Search in your heart*, in order to produce a similar rhythm (pp. 101–2). The translation shows many examples of what Grandmont, using the terminology of Vinay and Darbelnet, calls 'modulation libre' as opposed to 'traduction littérale'. (The italics represent the stress patterns):

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I'd like to swim in a <i>clear</i> blue stream	Je veux nager dans une <i>onde</i> pure,
Where the water is icy <i>cold</i> ;	Vêtue de soie et de <i>velours</i>
Then go to town in a <i>golden</i> gown,	Pour connaître la grande aventure
And have my fortune <i>told</i> .	Au <i>pays</i> de l' <i>amour</i> .

This stanza shows that the

translators have changed the point of view but have preserved and respected the character's dreams of *luxe* and *grandeur*. Grandmont's article demonstrates that her team favoured some elements over others depending on the context, sometimes preferring rhyme to meaning and sometimes the reverse, and applying the compensatory technique recommended by Vinay and Darbelnet.

In a more recent article, Johan Franzon (2005) uses a functional approach to translation and singles out various functional units to be taken into consideration when translating a stage musical. Once again emphasis is given to the multimedia message, which comprises the narrative co-text, the staged performance, and the verbally empty rhetorical shape of the music (p. 263). A variety of elements need to be considered at different levels. The multimedia nature of song translation is an important factor, regardless of genre.

In general, a 'song translation must be coherent with the music' (p. 287) and in a staged musical, songs must also be coherent with their theatrical presentation. Franzon analyses three Scandinavian translations of *My Fair Lady* (1956) into Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian. To him, a translated musical is an example of an 'instrumental' rather than a 'documentary translation' (Nord 1991, 1997): the purpose of the translated musical is to be 'an instrument in a new TC communicative action, [...] for which the ST serves as a kind of model' (1991: 72). With this purpose in mind, translators focus on 'what function the properties of the source text may serve in a new communicative situation' (Franzon 2005: 267) and look for functional units in the texts: these functional units 'raise the attention from the textual surface to the level of the intentions of the original author and of the context where it performs a function'. Franzon advocates 'fidelity' and 'format' ('functional design'): the 'recreation of the ST qualities of rhymes, vowel sounds, semantic, stylistic, or narrative content or a little bit of each' (p. 266), to create a TT that 'resembles its ST in respects relevant to its presentation as a staged narrative to music' (p. 267).

The functional units Franzon considers are pronouns, verbal modes, utterances implying emotions or attitudes (interpersonal address), deictic or spatiotemporal references, mentions of props (context), and implied stage activity, including gestures and verbal behaviour (contact, code). In relation to the music, they are the prosodic lines, the structure of similarity and contrast and the perceived impact of the music (pp. 274–5). The translator's role is to negotiate the functional units in creative transposition.

Having considered important matters of function, level, and key points of the narrative, translators will choose one functional aspect over another in an act of 'functional re-interpretation'. Franzon concludes that 'the song translator easily becomes not only a melodic versifier, but also a dramatist and a stager, creating his own text world for the performer to tell' (p. 294). Low's method (2005), which can be extended to opera translation, could also be used for stage musicals.

### 13.3.4 Interlude, sung poetic text

Low (2003) uses Skopos theory to comment on sung poetic texts (poems turned into songs). Since song texts are meant to communicate verbally and musically with their audiences, he favours singable translations. He identifies five categories of texts: a performer's crib, recording insert, programme text, spoken text, and sung text. He also mentions surtitles and subtitles. Depending on the purpose of the translation, the results will differ. He proposes various translation strategies depending on the text type: gloss translation for a crib, semantic translation for a recording text, communicative translation for a programme text, gist translation for a spoken text, and a singable translation for a sung text. The latter is most relevant to our purpose here. To demonstrate his point he uses the beginning of a sonnet by Charles Baudelaire ('La Vie antérieure', 1857), with music by Henri Duparc (Low 2003: 106). Low presents a singable translation of Baudelaire's sonnet that differs from the insert or literary translation

already available to the English audience as it is designed to fit the music: the rhythm is based on the specific music, and the ‘sole purpose of such a TT is to make the song available for singing in the target language’ (p. 108).

Low emphasizes that translating a sung poem is a difficult task because of the constraints imposed by the pre-existing music, the note values, the phrasing or the stresses of the music—even pitch levels might have to be considered. Those working into English must also seek to reduce the number of short vowel sounds and the clustering of consonants. Ideally, the TT must sound as if the music had been written for it, even though it was actually composed to fit the ST (2003: 105). Understandably, translators working under these constraints will be less preoccupied with ‘semantic accuracy’ (p. 100). Low’s statement provides a convenient summary to this first section on sung or singable versions, which, as we have seen, are used in various genres to provide a performable communicative text.

### 13.4 Surtitling

Although sung translations are still popular in many opera houses (e.g. the English National Opera in London and the Volksoper in Vienna), the advent of surtitles has been described as a threat to their survival (Mateo 2007a: 169). One reason is that they are cheaper than singable translations (Mateo 2007b: 141).

Surtitles were first used in 1983 by the Canadian Opera Company (Toronto), and are now very popular with audiences around the world. The New York Metropolitan Opera House first used them in 1995, and they have also been used in Barcelona’s Teatre del Liceu since 2002. Other operas using surtitles are Covent Garden in London and the Teatro Real in Madrid.

Surtitles, which offer a translation of the libretto, have been compared to subtitles (O’Connell 2007: 132). When first introduced, they were projected onto a screen above the stage. Nowadays, the major opera houses display them on LCD screens built into each seat-back. Thus, spectators may choose to switch them on and off, and some even offer a range of languages. Most opera houses use PowerPoint to produce the surtitles, but ‘some operas and subtitling firms have developed their own software systems’ to write subtitles (Mateo 2007b: 142).

Scholars have commented that surtitles are ‘audience friendly’ (Mateo 2007b: 135; Low 2002: 99) and have made opera more accessible to audiences. Indeed, the creation of surtitles stemmed from a desire for accessibility. Desblache comments that surtitles in European houses were created, among other things, to improve the accessibility of opera and ‘in particular the comprehension of the language’ (2007: 164). When the Royal Opera House almost closed down at the end of the twentieth century, the Arts Council of Britain funded it on condition that ‘services to the public would be drastically improved’ (p. 164). The introduction and development of surtitles can thus be seen to enhance the audience’s experience.

It is commonly thought that translations by surtitling are usually informative texts, for which the source text is considered to be the libretto. However, this view has been challenged by Virkkunen (2004), who argues that the complete stage performance, rather than the libretto alone, should be considered the ST because opera translation is an example of multimedia translation: words go hand in hand with the music, they are an ‘inseparable couple’ (2004: 95). When translating a song, whether it is for an opera or a musical, a holistic and multimodal analysis of the ST is required, in which verbal, non-verbal, visual, and auditory signs are viewed together, in their interaction. The text (libretto) and the context (other semiotic modes) must therefore be taken into consideration.

Surtitling needs to be seen in its particular context, that of live performance. Its function is to ‘communicate with other symbolic modes used in the performance for creating meaning’ (Virkkunen 2004: 93). As highlighted previously with reference to singable versions, there are various symbolic modes and signs to choose from, and the various elements of the ST can be emphasized differently in translation. Moreover, there are other constraints to consider, such as the need to time the surtitles according to the tempo and rhythm of the performance.

The constraints of surtitling are very similar to those of subtitling. There are usually two lines per title and on average thirty-two characters per line. In subtitling, the text stays on the screen for about five seconds, but because the libretto is not delivered like natural speech it will take longer to sing, and will appear on screen as a surtitle for an average of ten seconds. There is also a considerable reduction from the libretto to the surtitles, between one third (Virkkunen 2004) and one half (Low 2002: 104). While translating, it is also important in both

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singable versions and surtitling to take account of stage props. There should be no contradiction between what is said or sung and what is shown on stage. Low (2002: 106) recalls that, when he was translating Bizet's *Pêcheurs de perles*, he was told that the fishermen would carry rifles and not swords as in the original. Therefore he had to opt for the superordinate *weapon* to avoid a visual and semantic clash.

According to Low (2002: 109), the best approach when devising surtitles is Skopos-based: 'the specific purpose and function of the TT must govern the decisions taken.' The translator has four priorities:

1. first and foremost, to help the audience follow the plot of the opera;
2. to enhance audience understanding of the predicaments and emotions of fictional characters;
3. also (where possible) to fit in with the concept of a particular opera production;
4. at the same time to remain relatively unobtrusive. Desblache also speaks of the need for invisibility in translation: 'Like interpreters surtitlers aim for an invisibility which enhances the comprehension of the text without taking precedence over other operatic components' (2007: 166).

In Low's view, this overrules 'respect for the semantic and stylistic integrity' (*ibid*).

Mateo (2007a) shows that guidelines given by surtitling companies to translators are centred on 'ease of comprehension, clarity, transparency and agreement with the music and with the production, in different degrees'. The word 'condensation' is usually used to describe the resulting text. As mentioned previously, surtitles have become very popular with audiences and Mateo presents favourable comments from audiences regarding the 'conciseness, clarity', and 'coherence' of the surtitles 'with the production' and also 'well-timed synchronisation' (Mateo 2007a: 173–4).

Whether it is a sung version or a translation by surtitles, we have seen that one of the challenges of song translation is its multimediality. A surtitler of the Royal Opera House, Jonathan Burton, emphasizes the importance of reproducing the 'meaning of what is being sung' over the 'manner' (in Mateo 2007a: 174). He explains that repetitions and interjections will not be included, the punctuation and style will be simplified (again a parallel can be made with subtitles), 'and the plot may need to be clarified'. Transparency or invisibility is also crucial. Low (2002: 101) also presents standard conventions, among which he lists the need to 'avoid ambiguity' and 'omit brief unambiguous utterances, particularly when visible gestures will carry the message'. The principle of economy is important.

Mateo compares the surtitles of Richard Strauss's *Salomé* in English made by four companies (2007a: 175–7): two from Canada, one from the United States, and one from Britain. She investigates four factors: the division and distribution of the libretto into titles, the length of titles, the time of exposure (determined by the musical tempo), punctuation, and layout. Her results show that the four companies used different approaches or strategies. Music seemed to have priority in the Royal Opera House's distribution of the text, whereas SURTITLES, the Canadian company, valued the 'principle of economy' and the 'content as the main criteria in the selection and distribution of the text' (2007a: 176).

### 13.5 Interlude, beyond music and words

Whether we have a sung version or a translation by surtitles, in song translation, the emphasis is on performance and performable texts. The authors use holistic approaches, in which textual parameters are considered in conjunction with musical parameters in a unified performative blend. In this context, the success of a production is the criterion by which to judge the success of a translation. So far this chapter has shown that most works investigating music translation have focused mainly on constraints, techniques, and difficulties, with an emphasis on words and music. However, not all studies of song translation rely solely on linguistic and musical considerations. Some incorporate a broader cultural or historical perspective, placing songs in a sociocultural context. In these studies, the emphasis is not solely on what makes up a song (i.e. the text and the music) but also on its place within the source and target cultures. Drawing on a sociocultural background and going beyond linguistic or musical considerations, these studies remind us of the new turn that audiovisual translation has taken. That turn emphasizes multimodal analysis, in which linguistic elements and other codes from the acoustic and visual channels are considered in the study of the translation process.

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Klaus Kaindl (2005) proposes a ‘socio-semiotic foundation for the translation of popular music’. He uses polysystem theory and adopts the notion of ‘mass media production’ (Lambert 1989, Lambert and Delabastita 1996). Songs are seen as ‘mediated objects’ and the ‘process of mediation is at the centre of the translation analysis’ (Kaindl 2005: 241). The translator is a ‘bricoleur’ (Lévi Strauss 1966: 19–21) who combines the various components (music, language, vocal, style, instrumentation, ideology, culture, etc.) of the multiple text and connects them to ‘form a new unified, signifying system’ (Kaindl 2005: 242), blending elements of the source and target cultures. Taking up Bakhtin’s concept of ‘dialogism’, Kaindl also considers that songs are in dialogue with other texts (musical, verbal, and visual), discourses, genres, and styles of the source culture and the target culture. He uses video clips accompanying pop songs to analyse the ‘multiple relationships between images, lyrics and music’ (2005: 252). He demonstrates ‘the impact of performance’ in various German versions of ‘Les Enfants du Pirée’, a song from the film *Jamais le dimanche* (pp. 246–51). His analysis includes aspects of ‘time, orchestration, voice and the verbal text’ (p. 246). He identifies changes that he calls ‘manipulations’ with the goal of:

domesticating the character presented in the song and the foreign genre by giving the verbal text a new content, by letting the character sing in the typical style of German popular singers of the time and introducing instruments familiar to German traditions of popular music. (Kaindl 2005: 251)

Finally, another study with a cultural perspective is Susam-Sarajevo (2006) who considers songs as ‘a form of intercultural communication’ (p. 255). She examines the representation of *rembetika*, a form of Greek folk music, in Turkey, by looking at the inserts, covers with photos and illustrations, notes on the inserts, titles, and track descriptions, as well as newspaper articles commenting on the CDs, to establish what they evoke, symbolize and represent. In the eight recordings under investigation there are examples of translation, partial translation, and rewriting of the lyrics. Susam-Sarajevo examines the last category in more detail ‘in order to shed some light on the translation and rewriting process and its relevance for the representation of ethnic and national identities’ (2006: 269). She highlights varied motivations but one main goal: the ‘urge to bring together the contemporary Greek and Turkish communities’ (p. 276). She is currently working on a book entitled *The Other Shore: Translation and Music within a Rapprochement Process* in which she develops these issues further.

### 13.6 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the range of choices to be made in song translation is greater than in other genres because of its multimedial aspect. A variety of criteria must be taken into account—for example music, language, voice, performance, singability, rhythm, rhyme, and rhetorical figures. The emphasis is not only on the verbal text but on the musical structure, instrumentation, and performance. *Traducteurs-bricoleurs* juggle with the various elements of the song text and combine them to render a performable communicative text. Many of the studies referred to in this chapter rely on a theoretical background in semiotics, and Skopos theory has been widely applied. In this context, translators are involved in functional re-interpretation choosing one functional aspect over another to produce a performable text.

We have seen that there are two major types of song translation: sung or singable versions and translation by surtitles. In the attempt to produce a singable version, it is necessary to take account of prosody, lyrics which fit the music, rhymes, and stress patterns, to create the illusion that the translation is an original, written for its source music. In surtitling, another set of constraints comes into play, similar to those of subtitling, as we are dealing with the translation of an oral text into a written form.

It will be apparent from this chapter that there are various types of song translation, and that this mode of translation, whether of musicals, operas, sung texts, or popular songs, is a complex endeavour deserving more academic attention.

### Further reading and relevant resources

Most publications take the form of articles in journals or edited volumes. For more on opera translation, see Irwin (2000), on the perspective of a practitioner working into English, and Mateo (2002), on musical texts translated for performance into Spanish. For more detail on surtitling techniques, see Burton (2009), and on the adaptation of opera, Desblache (2009). On musicals, see Bosseaux (2008), which studies performance with an emphasis on

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voice in dubbing. Di Giovanni (2008) examines the translation of Hollywood musicals in Italy and Mateo (2008) investigates Anglo-American musicals sung in Spanish. For more on the translation of popular songs, see Kachru (2006) on the use of English in Hindi popular songs, and Bentahila and Davies (2008), who examine the ways in which translation and code-switching are used in bilingual songs from Western pop to North African rai music. Finally, for more on singability in various genres, see Franzon (2008) and Lindsay's (2006) edited volume on performance.

### Notes:

- (1) I would like to thank Sebnem Susam-Sarajevo for providing me with bibliographical information before it was published in *The Translator*.

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## Oxford Handbooks Online

### The Translation of Literature for Children

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#### [-] Abstract and Keywords

Adaptations of children's texts occur because of assumptions that children lack the knowledge and experience of adults and have only a limited capacity to assimilate the unfamiliar and the foreign. Translators should be aware of the stylistic features and modes of address appropriate for different age groups. In recent decades translators have generally demonstrated a greater faith in children's ability to accommodate difference. Since the youngest children hear stories rather than read them, sound and rhythm play a vital role as they discover the power of language and narrative. Translators address the visual element when rendering captions to line drawings or vignettes, or attempting to preserve the intricate relationship between image and text in the modern picture book. Current developments in research into the translation of children's literature are interdisciplinary and aim to contribute to an understanding of theoretical issues, historical developments, and professional practice in the translation of children's books.

Keywords: adaptations, stylistic features, difference, sound and rhythm, image and text, children's books

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#### 14.1 Introduction

Any discussion of translation for children has to begin with the question of what counts as children's literature. 'Children's literature' encompasses texts intentionally written for children, texts written for adults but subsequently appropriated by children, and texts that are addressed to or read by both children and adults. There is a range of historical reasons—educational, colonial, and postcolonial—for the development of a separate children's literature, with specialized publishing for children as a relatively recent phenomenon in a number of countries and languages. Moreover, the parameters of childhood vary historically and geographically according to economic necessity and changing cultural norms. In the global market of the twenty-first century, concepts of childhood depend increasingly on the marketing initiatives of the fashion, toy, and multi-media publishing industries, with a subdivision of childhood into categories such as 'pre-schooler', 'pre-teen', or 'young adult'.

It is, of course, adults who determine these shifting boundaries, and adults are the writers, publishers, arbiters and indeed the translators of children's reading matter. In her psychoanalytic case study, *The Case of Peter Pan, or, The Impossibility of Children's Fiction*, Jacqueline Rose (1994) refers to the paradox inherent in children's literature because of the gulf that separates the experience and interests of adult writers and child readers, suggesting that an adult's investment in writing for children may arise from a cathartic revisiting of childhood concerns or from the retention of childhood qualities. Adult authors—and adult translators—cannot set aside a lifetime's experience when addressing a child audience; in fact, it can be argued that it is the refraction of adult knowledge through the lens of a child's perspective that produces the best fiction and translations for children.

Developmental factors, too, are significant in the range of publications for the young. Translators should be aware of the stylistic features and modes of address appropriate for different age groups, from the toddler's board book

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with simple captions to the counterpoint of text and image in the modern picture book and information text, or the narrative sophistication of the young adult novel. Experienced children's writers who turn their hands to translation (Riitta Oittinen in Finland, Mirjam Pressler in Germany, or Els Pelgrom in Holland) are well aware of these requirements, but commissions may also go to professionals who lack experience of writing or translating for children. Fortunately, the specific demands of translating for children are now the subject of discussion and debate in both professional and academic circles.

The views of professionals on contemporary translation practices are collected in one of the earliest publications on translation for children, Persson's (1962) edited volume of papers by librarians, editors and translators from the UK, the US, Denmark and Sweden. In the following decade, the third symposium of the newly founded International Research Society for Children's Literature held in Sweden in 1976 was the first, and for many years the only, academic conference devoted to the translation and cross-cultural exchange of children's books. At a time when the study of children's literature was struggling to gain any kind of academic credibility, the conference proceedings (Klingberg, Ørvig, and Amor 1978) drew attention to a surprisingly eclectic range of research projects, from the influence of translations on developments in a number of national children's literatures to the economic circumstances that determined shifts in translation traffic. Stolt (1978) asserted at this symposium that there was little of relevance to children's literature to be found in theoretical work on translation, a claim echoed as late as 1999 by O'Connell, but it was during these latter decades of the twentieth century that translation for children finally began to enjoy the recognition that its social, educational, and literary potential deserved.

Tabbert's (2002) overview of critical and theoretical approaches to the translation of children's literature testifies to this rapidly accelerating interest within both translation and children's literature studies. Since the turn of the millennium a number of international conferences on translation for children, at the University of Las Palmas in 2002 and 2005, at VLEKHO in Brussels in 2004, and at the University of Bologna at Forlì in 2006, have all raised the profile of this branch of translation studies. A dedicated reader on translation for children (Lathey 2006c) summarizes developments in the last thirty years, and the published proceedings of the Brussels conference (Van Coillie and Verschueren 2006) indicate a range of investigations, from debates on the merits of domestication and foreignization (Venuti 1995) to ideological issues, and from the representation of social registers to dual address. These topics are all addressed in this chapter, in addition to the status of children's literature; the role of didacticism in the translation process; adult-child narrative communication; stylistic aspects of translating for a young audience; and the visual and aural qualities of children's texts.

## 14.2 The status of children's literature

Throughout its history, children's literature has existed on the margins of mainstream adult literature. Zohar Shavit (1986), one of the first scholars in the field of translation studies to apply a coherent theoretical position to translations for children, adopts Even-Zohar's (1979) concept of a hierarchical literary polysystem in her analysis of the translation of children's texts. According to Even-Zohar, intersystemic interference is more likely to occur via the peripheral, lower-status systems of popular literature, translated literature, or children's literature, making these strata 'indispensable objects of study' (1979: 303). Shavit takes as case studies of such interference the transfer from the adult canon to children's literature of a number of mid-twentieth-century translations from English into Hebrew of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. The transition of both texts to the children's literature system in the course of translation relocates them on the periphery of Even-Zohar's systemic structure, and thus renders them vulnerable to alteration. Shavit indicates instances of censorship, abridgement, and a loss of irony in the process of translation: *Gulliver's Travels*, for example, is transformed from satire into a combination of fantasy and adventure story in line with existing genres in the children's literature of the target culture. Subsequent investigations into the rewriting and manipulation (Lefevere 1992b) of children's literature, including Desmet's (2007) recent study of radical adaptation in classic and popular fiction for girls translated from English into Dutch, confirm Shavit's hypothesis that editors, publishers, and translators take far greater liberties with children's than with adult texts.

## 14.3 Didacticism and censorship

A central strand to Shavit's historical argument is the assertion that alterations to source texts conform to notions of what is educationally 'good for the child' in the target culture of the period. Since the didactic impetus, at least in

most Western countries, was responsible for the inception of a separate children's literature, both source texts and translations reflect changing ideological perspectives on the formation of the next generation. Children's books, including translated texts, indicate whether children are regarded as innocent or sinful and what rights or duties they have, as well as conveying the tenets of their moral education. The move towards a descriptive approach in translation studies (Toury 1980b, 1985, 1995) is nowhere more significant than in this aspect of the study of translations for children, where the adult investment in children's reading material as an educational and socializing medium has determined both the selection of texts for translation and the nature of the translation process. In an early example, Mary Wollstonecraft translated Christian Gotthilf Salzmann's *Elements of Morality for the Use of Children* from German into English in 1790 because the rationality of Salzmann's approach to childhood behaviour and manners, which she vigorously applauds in the 'Advertisement' to her translation, echoed the purpose and sentiment of the sober moral tales of the day (Lathey 2006b). A century and a half later, an emphasis on conforming to the norms of social decorum and educational expectations is evident in Franz Sester's 1949 translation of *Alice in Wonderland* into German. Sester inserts into Carroll's narrative a detailed recipe for mock turtle soup that includes a reference to Alice as a well-behaved German girl learning English and French vocabulary (O'Sullivan 2000). The selection and adaptation of texts in order to convey the rules of propriety and good behaviour is but one aspect of the didactic impulse, since adaptation may also entail censorship.

In his survey of issues arising from the international dissemination of children's literature, Klingberg (1986) uses the term 'purification' to describe translation practices which aim to bring the target text into line with the values of the parents, teachers, librarians, critics, and all those who regard themselves as responsible for the moral welfare of the young. Purification is most obvious in instances of the censorship of violence and scatological or sexual references. One of the better-known omissions is that of the toe and heel mutilation of the two older sisters in the Grimm Brothers' version of Cinderella, 'Aschenputtel', in many translations and retellings of the tale for children. Sutton (1996) and Dollerup (1999) record many examples of censorship in translations of Grimms' tales into English and Danish respectively. Nor should it be assumed that censorship has ceased in the more liberal era of the late twentieth century. Stolt (1978: 135) cites an American publisher's attempt to censor one of Astrid Lindgren's stories. Young Lotta stands steadfastly on a dung heap, hoping that it will accelerate her growth. When editors of the American edition wanted to replace the dung heap with a pile of withered leaves, Lindgren's caustic observations on American agriculture shamed them into reinstating her natural fertilizer.

Ideological control in the form of censorship is at its most transparent when monolithic, totalitarian regimes seek to indoctrinate the young and subject children's literature, including translations, to varying degrees of manipulation. Fernández López (2006) examines the censorship of translations during the Franco dictatorship in Spain, when references to sex, politics, and religion were removed from children's books. Conservative publishing policies continued into the post-Franco era, and—in an intriguing example of intercultural ideological difference—Fernández López indicates that whereas books by Enid Blyton and Roald Dahl were purified of racist and xenophobic elements in Britain in the 1980s, Spanish translations of the 1990s reverted to first, 'unpurified' editions. At the opposite end of the political spectrum, Thomson-Wohlgemuth's (2009) painstaking investigation of files pertaining to publication permissions for translations for children from English into German during the German Democratic Republic (1949–89) reveals the specious reasoning behind the selection or rejection of proposed translations. Children's publishing was of central importance to a society committed to social engineering in every aspect of life, hence the exceptionally high status enjoyed by children's literature and translators of children's books in the GDR.

## 14.4 Mediation and contextual adaptation

Adaptations of children's texts also occur because of assumptions that children lack the knowledge and experience of adults and have only a limited capacity to assimilate the unfamiliar and the foreign. Klingberg (1986) used the phrase 'cultural context adaptation' when describing the adaptation of local features with the intention of rendering the text easier for children to understand, and 'localization' to describe deliberate changes of location (see Chapter 18 below). To a far greater degree than in fiction for adults, translators and editors localize names, coinage, foodstuffs, intertextual references, or even the settings of children's stories and novels. Instances of all these strategies came to light in a rare opportunity to compare the translations and reception of the work of a single children's author at a symposium at the University of Frankfurt Institut für Jugendliteraturforschung in 1999 to mark the centenary of the birth of Erich Kästner. Transpositions of Kästner's internationally successful *Emil und die*

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*Detektive* (1929/30)—from its essential Berlin setting to the centre of Stockholm in the first Swedish translation (Boëthius 2002), to London in an English playscript (Lathey 2002), or, for historical reasons, of Kästner's *Das doppelte Lottchen* from Germany to Switzerland in the post-Holocaust translation into Hebrew (Shavit 2002)—represent a radical degree of localization that may be thought to compromise the integrity of the source text.

An alternative strategy to contextual adaptation, that of inserting explanations into the narrative as in the case of Sester's recipe for mock turtle soup (O'Sullivan 2000), leads to a delay to narrative momentum and, often, to unwieldy digression. Children may not read footnotes, prefaces, or afterwords, but editors and translators use them to mediate stories from other languages, to inform parents and teachers of their intentions, or to offer historical or social information essential to a full understanding of the text (Lathey 2006b). In two marked instances of extra-textual intervention by a translator and an editor, Anna Barwell's introduction to her translation of Hans Aanrud's *Little Sidsel Longskirt* (1912) presents a reductive image of Norway as a nation of simple and contented peasants to young English readers, while the poet Walter de la Mare's preface to the first British translation of Kästner's *Emil and the Detectives* (1931) gently reassures children that events in the story that take place in Berlin could just as easily have happened to a young boy in London, Manchester, or Glasgow.

Opinion on the adaptation and mediation of children's texts remains divided. Klingberg is prescriptive in rejecting adaptation; he recommends that the source text should enjoy priority and that the localization of children's books should be kept to a minimum. In recent decades translators have generally demonstrated a greater faith in children's ability to accommodate difference, although the adaptation of cultural detail is still evident, for example, in changes made to English food in Spanish, French, and German translations of J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series. Such domestication ignores the developmental factor that children have to digest new concepts and information on a daily basis even within their own localities, and that wholesale adaptation of a foreign milieu removes the challenge and curiosity from children's reading experiences. However, Bell (1985) draws on her extensive experience as a translator for children to suggest that there are occasions when it is important to assess the precise degree of foreignness that is acceptable to a child and to avoid alienating the young reader. Bell translates into the English language, where translations account for only a small fraction of annual publications for children (around 2 per cent in the UK). In such situations, a pragmatic degree of adaptation may be necessary to ensure that children read translations at all.

## 14.5 Narrative communication

Translators have always had to take into account the adult presence in texts written for children, whether as the controlling narrator looking over the child protagonist's shoulder in early didactic literature or in the strand of sophisticated irony intended for the adult reading aloud to a child in A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh*. Although dual address (Wall 1991) is rarely so overt as in Milne's stories, the interplay between adult and child perspectives takes many forms and is characteristic of all children's texts.

Two monographs on translation for children published at the turn of the millennium address this question of narrative communication from different positions (Oittinen 2000 and O'Sullivan 2000). Oittinen, a Finnish children's author, illustrator, and translator, speculates on children's responses to what they read. She claims that in some respects children are sharper and fresher readers than adults, and that the translator should reach out to the children of the target culture by attempting to re-experience the dynamic intensity of childhood. With reference to Bakhtin's concept of the anti-authoritarian freedom of 'carnival', she advocates a child-centred approach to translation that entails an immersion in the anarchic world of the child and privileges the dialogue between adult translator and child reader. Oittinen's idealistic vision of translating for the child underpins her view of translation as a two-stage process. She refers to Louise Rosenblatt's (1978) model of the two aspects of reading, the aesthetic and the efferent, claiming that the translator's initial imaginative and aesthetic response continues to resonate in a dynamic engagement with the closer, analytical, and 'efferent' reading that is essential to the process of translation. Although a refocusing of attention on creativity in translating children's texts and on the child reader's perspective is long overdue, the intensity of Oittinen's focus on the child reader risks moving the translation too far from the source text.

O'Sullivan takes a more detached approach to the child addressee by applying Schiavi's (1996) version of Chatman's (1978) model of narrative communication to the translation of children's texts. She distinguishes

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between the implied child readers inscribed in the source and target texts by citing instances where translators have inserted material or explanations intended for the child reader in the target culture. Such additions also demonstrate a further aspect of O'Sullivan's model, namely the presence of the implied translator whose voice can be detected in the translated text. The translator's voice is heard directly in additions, but may also be responsible for structural alterations, and one of O'Sullivan's most telling examples (2000: 262–4) is the removal of the layer of adult humour from the first German translation of *Winnie-the-Pooh*. A representation of narrative communication in diagrammatic form clarifies the roles and positions of agencies involved in the translation of a children's text, and facilitates analysis of the presence and function of the stakeholders within any given translation (see Figure 14.1).

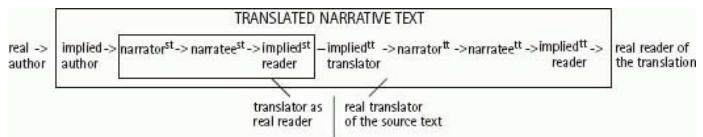


Figure 14.1. **Communicative model of the translated narrative text (st = source text, tt = target text)**

The relationship between translator and implied reader is a particular concern in retranslations of the classics of children's literature, where translators have a choice between producing a scholarly edition for an adult readership, complete with contemporary language and detailed notes, or a version that is adjusted to the modern child reader. Lawson Lucas treads an equivocal path in the preface to her retranslation into English from Italian of Collodi's *Pinocchio* in the Oxford World's Classics series, stating on the one hand that her version is a scholarly one and therefore 'not specifically or exclusively for children' (Collodi 1996: 1) but on the other justifying cultural context adaptation in the interests of child readers. In contrast to this ambivalence, a recent large-format edition translated by Emma Rose and published in 2003 clearly targets a child audience in the flowing, modern English of the text and the vibrant, quirky collage illustrations by Sara Fanelli. In a long-term study of the retranslation of children's classics into Hebrew from the 1920s to the 1990s, Du-Nour (1995) notes a pattern of development. Recent retranslations tend to lower the high literary style of earlier versions to comply with the linguistic norms apparent in indigenous Hebrew children's literature of the late twentieth century. A tendency to move the text towards the young reader in the retranslation of children's classics supports Oittinen's advocacy of child-friendly translation, but nonetheless historical retranslations complete with original illustrations of the type produced by Lawson Lucas are necessary, particularly now that children's literature studies have gained a foothold in academia.

## 14.6 Stylistic issues: tense, syntax, aural qualities, and the representation of dialogue

Writing for children is a delicate art, requiring the ability to express complex ideas with clarity and simplicity; younger readers may be confused by multiple embedded clauses, non-finite constructions, or the use of the passive voice. The Finnish scholar Tiinna Puurtinen (1995) has investigated the stylistic acceptability to child readers and to adults reading the texts aloud of two translations of *The Wizard of Oz* into Finnish. Results generally confirmed an initial hypothesis that the translation with a more fluent, dynamic style would prove to be more acceptable to child readers and listeners than a version with more complex syntactic constructions. Puurtinen did, however, discover a degree of differentiation according to age group and reader expectation that calls for further empirical research into children's responses to differences in written style. Such research should not be misinterpreted. It does not suggest that translators should simplify syntax to the point of monotony in the manner of basal reading schemes, but rather that variation in phrasing and rhythm, indications of emphasis, and verbal rather than nominal constructions are all important factors for both reading aloud and readability. Oittinen (2000) designates the reading aloud of a picture book or children's story as a 'performance', one that includes gesture, varied intonation, rhythm, sound effects, and pauses for interaction with the child listener. A text that inspires such a read-aloud performance requires, as Dollerup (2003) argues, great competence of professional translators.

Equally pertinent to the reading aloud of picture books, and to the internal chronology of longer fictional works for children, is the issue of cultural difference in the use of past or present tense as the dominant narrative mode. Bell (1986) has commented on the common use of the historic present in French and German children's texts, outlining her general practice of abandoning it in favour of the past tense because that is the customary narrative mode in English-language children's fiction. Lathey's (2006a) case study of the effects of a transposition from present to

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past tense in the British translation of De Brunhoff's *The Story of Babar the Little Elephant* (1934) questions the appropriateness of such tense-shifting in relation to the performative act of reading aloud that links pictures and text. The use of the present tense in the picture book effectively activates illustrations, as the present tense creates the illusion of events unfolding before the eyes of young readers and listeners. Further investigation of the role of tense systems in narratives for children may well reveal cultural differences that translators should address.

Since the youngest children *hear* stories rather than read them, sound and rhythm play a vital role as they discover the power of language and narrative. Children are eager imitators of whatever sound systems surround them; they learn the phonology of their native languages naturally through practice and play with the encouragement of their fluent elders. Repetition, rhyme, onomatopoeia, wordplay, and nonsense are therefore all common features of children's texts, and require a linguistic creativity that is a challenge to any translator. Take, for instance, the representation of animal noises that is a common feature of children's rhymes and stories. Translators have to switch from one phonological system to another, transposing the barks, squeals, roars, and neighs of a complete menagerie into the commonly accepted equivalents in their own tongues. An articulated cry such as that of a cockerel does at least maintain its characteristic rhythmic pattern across a number of languages: *cock-a-doodle-doo* in English, *coquerico* in French, *qui-qui-ri-qui* in Spanish, *kukareku* in Russian, and *kikeriki* in German. In such instances a direct transcription of sounds in the source language in a translated text is likely to spark children's interest in alternative representations of familiar animal cries. Lullabies, nursery rhymes, nonsense verse, and poetry, too, rely on creativity in the representation of sound patterns; Kreller's (2007) comprehensive study of the translation of English-language children's verse into German in the twentieth century addresses the particular demands on the translator of this neglected subject.

Finally, the translation of spoken language and the replication of social register are especially significant in a literature that is rich in dialogue. Spoken exchanges are instrumental to characterization and the progress of the plot in most children's fiction; they offer a respite from lengthy descriptive or narrative passages and represent children's voices directly, often in the contemporary vernacular of the source culture. Du-Nour (1995) describes the representation of colloquial language as one of the most difficult issues in the history of translations for the young into modern Hebrew, particularly since children's books have been regarded as a medium for teaching literary style in that language since the beginning of the twentieth century. Although the promotion of Hebrew is a special case, educational policy on the standardization of language and uniform pronunciation has also affected translations into other languages. A change of social register in the representation of spoken language in the English translation of a German modern children's classic, Kästner's *Emil and the Detectives* of 1931, reflects anxieties about the contaminating influence of the vernacular, condemned as the 'evil influence of street language' in a contemporary report on English primary education (HMSO 1921). Kästner's stylized Berlin street slang is transformed into the dialogue of the English boarding school story, with liberal use of the intensifiers *frightfully* and *awfully*, in a telling example of affiliation to models in the target culture. Fortunately, a liberalization of educational policy on spoken language and a new understanding of children's abilities to distinguish between different registers has resulted in a marked increase in the representation of slang and ephemeral street language in children's fiction generally, and fewer shifts in register in translations. Nonetheless, Pascua-Febles (2006) notes slight changes in register in a comparative study of Spanish and English translations of a German young adult novel published in the 1990s, and the rendering of Hagrid's non-standard English in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* as standard French, German, and Spanish demonstrates a lingering reluctance to reproduce colloquial language in a children's book (Jentsch 2002).

### 14.7 Translating the visual

Children's literature has enjoyed the enhancement of illustrations since its inception. Translators address this visual element when rendering captions to line drawings or vignettes, or attempting to preserve the intricate relationship between image and text in the modern picture book. Bell (1985) denotes the image as a third dimension to the translation act between two languages, a dimension to which translators should pay attention in order to avoid a mismatch between text and illustration. Editorial decisions about the placement of illustrations in a translated text may take the matter out of the translator's hands, resulting in inconsistencies between the narrative and repositioned illustrations. Alternatively, the reillustration of a translated text by an artist in the target culture may be more or less successful. Stolt's (1978) analysis of the transition of illustrations to Astrid Lindgren's 'Emil' stories from rural Sweden in the early twentieth century to a bourgeois small-town milieu in the German version reveals what

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she considers a regrettable alteration to the tone of Lindgren's down-to-earth representation of the Swedish country life of the period. On the other hand, Fanelli's illustrations to the English retranslation of *Pinocchio* (Collodi 2003) offer a fresh, alternative visual interpretation of the story.

In the modern picture book, where illustration and written text are interdependent and inseparable, international publication and translation are subject to enormous economic pressures. Because of the expensive colour printing involved, modern picture books are often co-productions between publishing houses in different countries, with text in the appropriate language inserted at the last stage of the printing process. As a result, publishers have on occasions instructed illustrators to avoid obvious cultural markers such as street furniture or police uniforms (O'Sullivan 2000: 292), a development likely to result in an unwelcome homogeneity. For picture books that are not part of a co-production initiative, the high cost of artwork may force a publisher to commission a complete reillustration (Kawabata and Vandergrift 1998). Such radical transformation of a predominantly visual text alters not only cultural content, but also the dynamic between text and image of the source text.

Where picture books are left intact, translators have to engage with a complex orchestration or counterpoint of text and image. Oittinen (2000), keenly aware of this issue in her role as a professional children's author and illustrator, goes so far as to suggest that translating all forms of illustrated literature requires a specialization in translation studies combined with art appreciation. Specialized training is likely to remain an ideal, but examples of both successful and unsuccessful practice highlight the finesse required to translate visual texts. O'Sullivan (2000) reveals what can happen to the integrity of a picture book when a translator is not sensitive to the relationship between text and image. A grandfather's empty chair on the final, textless, double spread of John Burningham's *Granpa* (1984) may or may not signify that he has died, yet the addition of a sentimental reflection on death in the first German translation of the book limits that ambiguity and curtails the intelligent participation of the child reader. Desmet's (2001) discussion of intertextuality and intervisuality, on the other hand, offers a positive example of a Dutch translator's solutions to visual references to English nursery tales and rhymes in the Ahlbergs' *Jolly Postman* series.

In audiovisual translation, too, translators attend to image, text and sound. Younger children are unlikely to be able to read subtitles, or their reading speed may well fall considerably below the average 160 words per minute required for programmes distributed on DVD (Tortoriello 2006: 56). Screen translation for this age group is therefore dominated by dubbing. O'Connell's (2003) study of the dubbing of a German-language animated children's television series into Irish identifies both lexical simplification and the reduction of dual address, thus replicating findings in studies of written texts. Children and young adults also form a significant audience for translated video games. It is ironic that the term 'localization', used by Klingberg to denote a translation practice in children's literature of which he disapproved, now designates the act of translation in this specialized context (see Chapter 18 below). Bernal-Merino's (2006) investigation of video game software based on children's books indicates that the localization of such texts requires considerable technical acumen, since localizers have to translate multiple formats including operating instructions, coded text, and periodic game updates. Translating games for child viewers demands that such expertise be combined with an understanding of the child audience and the role of text and image in games designed for children.

### 14.8 The translator's view

A number of translators have made their voices heard in peritextual material attached to translated children's books or in commentaries on the particular challenges they face. Edgar Taylor's advocacy of the reintroduction of popular and imaginative tales into the reading matter of British children in his preface to the first English translation of the Grimms' tales in 1823 is but one of many instances where translators have engaged with or challenged prevailing attitudes to childhood (Lathey 2006b). Contributions by translators to general discussion of translating for children include those of Oittinen, who brings the insights of a translator of children's texts into Finnish to all her theoretical writings; Bravo-Villasante (1978), who justifies foreignization in her translations of children's literature into Spanish; Bell's 'translator's notebooks' (1980, 1985, 1986), an invaluable resource of reflections on translating children's books from French, Danish, and German into English; and Hirano's (1999) discussion of the subtleties of transposing degrees of politeness indicated by pronoun usage in Japanese when translating young adult fiction into English.

## 14.9 New directions

Current developments in research into the translation of children's literature are interdisciplinary, since comparative literature, translation studies, image studies, and children's literature studies all contribute to an understanding of theoretical issues, historical developments, and professional practice in the translation of children's books.

### 14.9.1 Comparative and historical studies

Ever since the French comparativist Hazard (1932) issued his romantic proclamation that children's literature had been instrumental in establishing a universal republic of childhood, the international dissemination of children's literature through translation has attracted the attention of literary historians and comparativists. Marx (1997) compares translations of classic children's books between Italian and German in a unique study of intercultural dialogue between the emerging children's literatures of two countries. Sutton's (1996) analysis of the Grimms' tales in England in the nineteenth century presents an illuminating and detailed analysis of translations, with examples of adaptation, sanitization of content, and the merging of separate tales. Dollerup (1999) draws on developments in translation studies, employing a descriptive approach in his history of translations of the tales into Danish and their reception in Denmark, claiming that the reorientation of the Grimms' tales in target cultures acted as catalyst for the genesis of the international fairy tale. O'Sullivan's comprehensive *Kinderliterarische Komparatistik* (2000) provides a broader historical overview of international exchange. She questions Shavit's view that the history of all children's literatures follows a similar trajectory from didacticism to entertainment, citing as counterexamples the development of children's literatures in South Africa and the Republic of Ireland. Such a challenge exposes the lack of historical research into the origins and multilateral influences in children's literatures across the world. As part of any such project, an overdue reappraisal of the role of translators as more than mere faceless conduits or censors is essential. Research into the history of translations for children into English illustrates the agency of translators and their appreciation of the qualities of childhood and requirements of child readers from medieval times onwards (Lathey 2006b, 2010).

Seifert (2005) and Frank (2007) have both turned to image studies in case studies of the translation respectively of Australian children's fiction into French and Canadian fiction into German. Image studies, concerned with historical changes in the representation of one nationality in the literature of another, has proved to be an ideologically revealing mode of investigating children's literature in view of the historical tendency towards national stereotyping in children's books. Frank's findings that French translations identify Australia with the rural outback and that contemporary urban Australia is underrepresented confirm Seifert's argument that the pre-existing image of a culture or nation is a deciding factor in the selection of children's texts for translation.

### 14.9.2 Translation studies and the child reader

Recent developments in translation studies offer new methodologies for the analysis of translations for children. Desmidt (2006) revisits the vexed issue of what distinguishes translation from adaptation by applying Chesterman's (1998a) concept of the 'folk view' of prototypical translation to contemporary translations of Nordic children's literature. Features of the translation prototype listed by Chesterman include direct translation, an absence of localization, and a lack of space constraints. Desmidt discovered that children's literature deviated from Chesterman's standard constellation, for example in the high degree of localization as well as in spatial limitations due to the placement of illustrations. Although these are predictable results, Chesterman's taxonomy of variables in translation practices and functions may serve as a useful instrument for future research that compares translations of texts intended for adults and children. Also of great potential in pinpointing manifestations of the translator's attitude and stylistic patterns in translations for children is the computer analysis of large corpora of translated texts (Olohan 2004). Finally, collecting qualitative evidence of translation practices in the form of successive drafts of translations or translators' think-aloud protocols should form part of a necessary shift towards 'translatorial studies' focusing on translators and their decisions (Chesterman 1998a: 201). Records of translators' thought processes could offer invaluable insights into the degree to which individual translators adjust translation strategies to the requirements of a child readership.

Despite Oittinen's advocacy of a child-centred approach to translation and Puurtinen's research on readability, children's responses to translations are still largely a matter of speculation. Chesterman's (1998a) plea for the

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application of the reader response theories of Iser (1974, 1978) and Rosenblatt (1978) to the reception of translations, and for studies of comprehension as well as sociological surveys of reader preference, is of great relevance to children's literature. A greater emphasis on empirical research is necessary to discover just how much 'foreignness' young readers are able to tolerate, and to analyse the role of written style and lexical choices in children's response to translated texts. Existing qualitative studies on children's reading at different ages (Fry 1985 and Appleyard 1990) and quantitative surveys of children's reading habits (Clark and Foster 2005, Maynard et al. 2007) constitute a baseline for an examination of response to translations. Results of future research of this kind, together with the work of Chambers (1995) on the role of predictability and indeterminacy in educating children to become intellectually and imaginatively active readers, should be incorporated into the professional training of translators who wish to specialize in children's texts.

## 14.9.3 The future of translation for children

Children's literature has gained in status since Shavit's analysis placed it at the periphery of the mainstream adult literary system, not least because of the international success of J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series and the modern phenomenon of 'crossover' fiction that is read by or addresses readers of all ages (Beckett 1999). In recent decades the globalization of the children's book market and of children's culture generally is having a marked effect on translation. The rapidly decreasing interval between publication and the worldwide translations of recent volumes of the Harry Potter books illustrates this development. Adults and young people have even taken matters into their own hands, posting collaborative, unauthorized translations of the latest Potter book on the Internet before the publication of an official translation (Harmon 2003). The 'simultaneous shipment' of videogames in a number of languages and the co-production that is already common practice in the picture book market may well prove to be models for the translation and distribution of children's books that have international appeal. Global exchange remains uneven, however, with translation into English continuing to lag behind translation from English into other languages. Awards that promote the translation of children's literature include the eligibility of translations for the *deutsche Jugendbuchpreis* (German children's literature prize), with the additional award of a special prize every few years for the life's work of a translator, and the biennial IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People) Honour List that places translators on an equal footing with writers and illustrators. Prizes for the translation of children's literature into English such as the Marsh Award in the UK and the Mildred L. Batchelder Award in the USA testify to the range and quality of translation for children and young people within an extremely limited market. The domination of the world market by English-language children's literature seems set to continue.

The translation of children's literature has become well established as a sub-genre of translation studies, and it is recognized that there is much to be gained from an exchange of information and ideas between scholars of children's literature and translators of literature for children. Translating for the young deserves serious critical attention, since it is through translation that children learn about cultural difference and gain access to the best children's writers across the world. There is an art to writing for children that is as essential to the translation of children's texts as it is to the positive intercultural exchange of books for young readers.

## Further reading and relevant sources

Tabbert's (2002) comprehensive overview of critical and theoretical approaches to the translation of children's literature includes an international bibliography, and remains a useful point of reference. Lathey's *The Translation of Children's Literature: A Reader* (2006c) reprints key articles written in the previous thirty years, while Van Coillie and Verschueren's (2006) edited volume offers insights into more recent developments in research. Two monographs present detailed theoretical discussion on the subject of translating for children. O'Sullivan's (2000, English version 2005) study of comparative children's literature includes a number of case studies of the translation of children's books, whereas Oittinen's (2000) Bakhtinian analysis of the translation process and advocacy of a child-centred approach is written from the perspective of a practising translator.

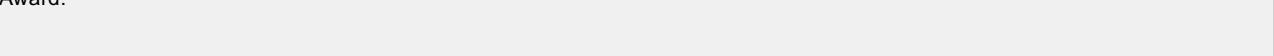
### Gillian Lathey

Gillian Lathey is Director of the National Centre for Research in Children's Literature at Roehampton University London. She has published numerous journal articles on children's literature as well as a monograph on German- and English-language autobiographical children's literature on World War Two, and is editor of *The Translation of Children's Literature: A Reader* (2006). For ten years she administered the biennial Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation, and she is now a judge for the

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Award.



## Oxford Handbooks Online

### Public Service Translation

Mustapha Taibi

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### Abstract and Keywords

This article is an overview of the concept and relevance of public service translation (PST). PST is written translation of informative texts, addressed by authorities or institutions to people who do not understand texts in the language of the text producer. PST is a means to empower linguistically disempowered groups within a society. The generalist translation of programmes available around the world are designed to provide students with a theoretical background and practical training to equip them to work as professional translators. In addition, a good understanding and awareness of intercultural issues, audience design, and text types is included. However, more specific community-based training would be more efficient for untrained practising PS translators. Accuracy in general and register appropriateness in particular have long been central issues in translation studies. PST is closely related to and involved in social action and social change.

Keywords: public service translation, informative texts, linguistically disempowered groups, training, intercultural issues, social action

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### 15.1 Definition and scope

The term 'public service translation' is used in this chapter in the same sense as 'community translation', which Niska (2002: 135) defines as 'written translation of mainly informative texts, addressed by authorities or institutions to people who do not understand texts in the language of the text producer'. It is not used in the sense given to it by Bandia (1998: 300), namely as translation between African and European languages, and from one European language to another, in the fields of foreign affairs and administrative, economic, and cultural relations between African countries and ex-colonial powers.

Although Niska's definition above provides a sort of prototypical description of public service translation (PST), it is by no means contended that PST texts are always informative and exclusively produced by authorities and institutions. There is a tendency to equate PST with translation of leaflets and pamphlets produced by local and national governments. However, the material which PS translators work with is often generated by social agents other than official departments (non-governmental organizations, ethnic community representatives or leaders, neighbourhood associations, private organizations responsible for issues of public interest, etc.). Public service or community texts are ultimately texts generated by the larger community (society) or by smaller communities (linguistic or ethnic communities within the larger society, local communities, religious groups, etc.) in order to ensure communication with all citizens and permit their participation and, therefore, empowerment.

Like Public Service/Community Interpreting, PST has often been associated with language services offered in Western countries to migrant and refugee groups. Countries like Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and Spain have experienced a significant rise in the number of migrants and refugees who do not speak the language of the country where they start a new life. In a democratic state and egalitarian culture, these new inhabitants have the same rights to access public services as speakers of the host country language(s). Full

access to services and participation in society would not be possible without interpretation and translation services. While interpreting facilitates direct interaction between public service providers and users, translation enables speakers of languages other than the local or national language(s) to access information (legal, healthcare, welfare, schooling, traffic, environment, etc.) which is necessary for them to integrate in their new society and to play an active part in it.

However, migration situations are not the only social context where PST is necessary. This type of language service is required—and, to varying extents, provided—in situations as different as, for instance, the multilingual situation in South Africa or the pilgrimage season in Saudi Arabia. In South Africa, English and Afrikaans were the only official languages during the apartheid era, while the other indigenous languages were reduced to the status of minority languages in spite of the fact that they were spoken by three-quarters of the population. With the end of apartheid and the democratization of the country, eleven languages (nine of which are African) were given official status and a transformation process was triggered in South African public services (Erasmus 2000: 191–2). One of the aspects of this transformation is the provision of translations and adaptations of public service texts into different African languages, thus contributing to the restitution of linguistic rights to a long-dominated population, and the empowerment of that population.

In Saudi Arabia, in addition to the migrant worker population living in the country on a more or less permanent basis, millions of Muslims gather every year for a period of two to three months to perform the religious rituals of pilgrimage. Given the fact that the sites of religious significance are located in only two cities, Makkah (Mecca) and Madinah (Medina), and that pilgrimage must be performed at a particular time of year, a temporary multilingual and multicultural ‘nation’ is formed in these Saudi cities. The management of such a large-scale event requires communication between authorities, service providers, pilgrim delegations, and the individual pilgrims themselves. A considerable quantity of information regarding rituals and sacred sites needs to be translated into different languages, both in printed form and on illuminated panels. In addition to the religious information proper, pilgrims need to access written information related to different aspects of life, such as safety, healthcare, police procedures, tourist information, or accommodation complaints.

PST is not unidirectional, however. It does not deal only with texts produced by local and national authorities, but also with documents written by or issued for migrants, asylum seekers and other members of linguistic minorities. These are often official documents issued in the country of origin (birth certificates, marriage certificates, criminal records, medical reports, transcripts, etc.) or personal statements detailing the grounds on which the author seeks asylum and protection.

Accordingly, it can be said that the users of PST are both the public services themselves and members of a temporary or permanent community who have insufficient knowledge of the local or national language(s). PST texts are texts which are relevant to members of such communities. Whether they are aimed at individual citizens, ethnic categories, or interest groups, the translation of such texts is intended to ensure the rights of these individuals and communities to information, participation, and access to services such as healthcare, legal advice, education, and wellbeing. In other words, PST is a means to empower linguistically (and often politically) disempowered groups within a society.

### **15.2 Public service translation in the literature**

PST ‘as a specific form of the translation process is almost wholly neglected in the literature’ (Fraser 1993: 326). This statement is unfortunately still applicable to the current situation, although there have been a few publications and signs of interest since. Even compared to public service interpreting, which itself has been neglected in research (Hale 2007: 197) and is still striving to find a place as a profession (Roberts 2002: 157), PST is much more neglected in research, publications, and conferences. To give just one example, the Critical Link conferences, which have managed to give visibility to issues of community language services, are mostly about interpreting, and when they include papers on translation, these constitute only a minority. A quick search in the Critical Link 5 programme, for instance, reveals more than 70 occurrences of ‘interpreting’, while ‘translation’ is only mentioned approximately 10 times (Critical Link 5, 2007). It can be argued that the Critical Link conferences are originally for community interpreters, not translators; however, the very lack of a similar high-profile forum addressing PST issues is another indicator of a relatively low degree of visibility.

## Public Service Translation

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Fraser (1993: 326) suggests three reasons for the scarcity of PST literature and the fact that the body of literature on community languages addresses itself more to interpreting than to translation:

- The low status associated with this type of language provision.
- The tendency among minority communities to make use of family members, friends, or neighbours in their dealings with public service providers, which has helped the latter acquire 'experience and expertise in dealing with clients through interpreters'. However, Fraser here seems to be explaining the situation with a consequence rather than a cause: public service users resort to relatives and acquaintances because of the lack of public service translations and professional interpreters, not vice versa.
- The fact that interpreting is reactive (a problem-solving tool in situations in which help or intervention is needed) and translation mostly proactive (an information tool).

To the above we can add the following reasons:

- An underlying assumption among translation specialists that the broader body of translation studies caters for different text types and translation contexts.
- The traditional classification system itself (legal translation, medical translation, technical translation, literary translation, etc.). Based on the field of discourse, this classification has at least two consequences for PST: first, PST issues are embedded and scattered in publications dealing with other traditionally recognized translation fields (mainly legal, administrative, and medical translation). By way of example, much of Mayoral's (2003) *Translating Official Documents* is relevant to PST (the social context of migrant clients, cultural distance, the translator's loyalties, ethical norms, understandability, etc.). Second, the disempowered users of PST (migrants, refugees, and members of linguistic minorities in general) remain out of focus. After all, classification and naming do have an impact on the classified and named.

The existing literature on PST tends to be predominantly descriptive (of services available in different countries and types of users) or theoretical (raising issues such as cultural mediation, translation readability, register accessibility, and community empowerment). Di Biase (1987), for example, argues that the users' socio-cultural context and their semantic system must be taken into consideration when translating public service texts. Taking the Italian community in Australia as a point of reference, the author points out a number of factors that he believes should inform the production of public service translations (p. 62):

- The impact of the migration process in terms of impoverishing competence in the community language (at least at the level of language and text production).
- The influence of English, the language of the Australian host society, and the resulting linguistic variety of 'Australalian'.
- The 'pool of language resources the community draws from': Standard Italian and regional dialects.
- The community's language attitudes.

Lesch (1999, 2004), having the South African context as background, also stresses the importance of societal factors and characteristics of the target audience. In the 1999 article the author draws from reader-oriented approaches in translation theory to claim that the reader of public service translations is not only a user but also a co-producer (p. 91) and to argue that disempowered groups should have both physical and mental access to translated information (p. 95). In the 2004 publication Lesch describes the South African heterogeneous sociocultural context and defends the need for adaptation and simplification in PST (see 15.4 below).

Fraser (1993) elicits verbal accounts from twelve PS translators to study the broad strategies they used when translating a British local council leaflet, with a special focus on cultural difficulties and whether or not social and cultural information is provided. The study revealed that the translators adopted a functional, reader-oriented approach, used translation strategies selectively according to the needs and expectations of their respective audiences, retained English terminology when they considered that option empowering for the community, and provided only as much contextualization and clarification as necessary. The research also revealed differences among the participants in terms of professional self-perception (perceptions ranged from impartial translator to community advocate). Fraser (1999) uses the TAP (think-aloud protocol) method with one public service translator (apparently one of the twelve participants in the 1993 study) to analyse the textual and discourse features of the same leaflet used in Fraser (1993), study the difficulties public service translators face when dealing with such a sample of bureaucratic discourse, and discuss the implications of this for writers of public service information and PS translators and trainers.

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Taibi (2006a) carried out an empirical study to test the linguistic and register accessibility of some public service translations available in Spain. He found that the combination of sociocultural factors (level of literacy and diglossia), the high register of institutional discourse, and the translators' attempt to attain register 'faithfulness' all contributed to making the translations inaccessible to a significant portion of public service users (see 15.4 below). Along the same reader-oriented line, but with regard to readability rather than intelligibility, Kim (2007) addresses the issue of English-Korean public service translations which are appropriate in terms of content accuracy, lexical choice, and syntactic structure, but which fail to achieve readability and appropriateness. Adopting a systemic functional perspective, the author compares the ways in which texts, experiences, and concepts are organized and presented in both languages, and discusses the challenges facing public service translators because of differences between English and Korean text organization.

## **15.3 Current state: service provision and training**

### **15.3.1 Service provision**

PST services vary from country to country, but in most cases they are far from guaranteeing a satisfactory level of organization, consistency, and quality. In the best cases, such services are offered by accredited or 'sworn' translators; most often, however, untrained volunteers or freelance translators do the job. Suffice it to mention two examples: Australia, one of the pioneering countries in this field, and Spain, a country which only recently started to deal with immigration-related communication issues.

Australia represents the high-end set of countries in terms of PST organization, training, and quality. An accreditation system for translators and interpreters was introduced in the 1970s. The National Authority for Accreditation of Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) is an accreditation body which sets and maintains standards in translation and interpreting, conducts accreditation tests, approves tertiary translation and interpreting programmes, and assesses qualifications obtained abroad (NAATI 2008a). In 2007 NAATI introduced a revalidation system requiring translators and interpreters to prove a sufficient level of translation practice and professional development every three years to be able to continue as accredited professionals. Translators (and interpreters) are thus expected to maintain a high standard of competence and currency. In New South Wales the Community Relations Commission (CRC) provides translation (and interpreting) services by NAATI-accredited translators (and interpreters), both paid and, in some cases, free of charge. The Commission 'works in partnership with tertiary institutions, professional associations and key government agencies to provide opportunities for the professional development of interpreters and translators and to improve availability of language services' (Community Relations Commission 2008).

However, one of the main drawbacks of the NAATI accreditation system is that, as its name suggests, it is accreditation-based, not training-focused. Translators can gain accreditation in more than one language pair without having undertaken any training. Even the NAATI-accredited programmes offered by universities and further education centres vary in length and depth: the same level of accreditation can be obtained through a one-year or a three-year full-time programme (NAATI 2008b). Moreover, whether public service translations are carried out by accredited or non-accredited translators, not all of them are of a high standard.

In Spain, although the qualification of 'sworn translator' is a type of general accreditation, there is no organization to monitor standards and no clear policy on PST, and the few training programmes available are still at an incipient stage (Taibi and Martin 2006, Taibi 2007). Public service translations are often undertaken by volunteers, bilingual staff, or untrained freelance translators. In some cases, but less often (because of higher cost), 'sworn' translators are commissioned. Local institutions, such as town councils where there is a high percentage of immigrants, usually recruit bilingual staff who can perform various tasks including reception and clerical tasks, intercultural mediation, and translation. Non-governmental organizations also hire such employees on a part-time basis, or work with volunteer or untrained freelance translators. One such non-profit organization is COMRADE, co-funded by the Ministry of Labour and Immigration, the Madrid regional government, and a private financial institution. The organization offers free translations for immigrants and asylum seekers, and also caters for the translation needs of public services such as educational centres, family and children centres, and the Red Cross (COMRADE 2008).

Not only non-governmental organizations rely heavily on untrained translators, but also Spanish government

institutions, especially when the target audience is a powerless social group such as asylum seekers. Taibi (2007) provides an eloquent example of poor-quality translation into English, extracted from a booklet published by the Asylum Office (Ministry of the Interior) which contains information on asylum rights and procedures:

If the authorities are not informed about any change of address the applicant will not receive the summonses, correspondence or decisions, preventing him, among other things, from having access to social services, being able to carry out the administrative procedures necessary for the processing of his asylum request not complying with [sic] time frames, losing right and [sic] turning into an lawful irregular stayer [sic]. Will [sic] time frames and losing rights, as well as making him illegal. It could also mean the archiving of the file.

The booklet in question has been circulating for years in different languages. As can be seen from the excerpt above, even the English translation, which might be expected to be of better quality because of the training opportunities in Spanish-English translation, shows a large number of serious instances of distorted meaning, structural ambiguity, inappropriate lexical choice, excessively literal rendering, meaning-changing typos, etc.

Along the same line but in a different country, a relatively recent report of the Scottish Consumer Council concluded that, because of language barriers, public service users from minority ethnic communities were still facing difficulties accessing services, and that when translations were available the quality was disappointing (Scottish Consumer Council 2005). The study used focus groups with a total of 35 members of minority ethnic communities (Chinese, Pakistani, Indian, Turkish, Iraqi, and Brazilian) to explore the users' perspective on translation and interpretation needs and their evaluation of public service translation and interpreting. It was found that the participants had not had much experience of public service texts translated into their mother tongue, but when they did, 'a general view was that the quality of translated material was variable and frequently used inaccessible and out-of-date terminology' (p. 37). The participants reported that the translations were often excessively literal, inaccurate, written in outdated or excessively formal language, or included a great deal of unnecessary words (pp. 35–6).

### 15.3.2 Training

The generalist translation programmes available around the world (bachelor degrees, graduate diplomas, master's degrees) constitute an appropriate starting point for future public service translators. Although not specifically aimed at public services, these programmes are often designed to provide students with a theoretical background and practical training to equip them to work as professional translators. The translation skills acquired or upgraded through such training, in addition to a good understanding and awareness of intercultural issues, audience design, and text types, can enable future translators, at least in principle, to deal with any translation task, public service texts included.

More specific community-based training, however, would be more efficient for candidates interested in PST and for untrained practising PS translators. In addition, generalist programmes are usually offered in a limited number of language pairs which do not necessarily reflect the demographic reality of the community and do not meet the communicative needs of the local or national public services.

In Saudi Arabia, for example, most universities which offer translation courses include only the English—Arabic language pair, and translation is usually offered within a BA in English (e.g. King Saud University 2008, King Khaled University 2008). Translation courses are used to enhance students' second language competence, and the contents are often introductory and generalist. However, as mentioned above, the country receives large numbers of Asian migrants and millions of pilgrims from all over the world who do not seem to be catered for in the existing translation programmes. Suffice it to say that the pilgrims of some of the major Islamic countries like Indonesia, Iran, and Turkey can speak neither Arabic, the language of the service providers, nor English, the language offered in training programmes and used as a lingua franca by service providers. Not even major pilgrim languages such as Turkish, Persian, and Indonesian are catered for, let alone minority ones.

In Spain, generalist translation programmes are offered mainly in European languages such as English, French, and German, while the few PST and interpreting programmes offered in the languages of major immigrant and refugee communities (e.g. Arabic and Romanian) started less than a decade ago. These are usually vocational further

education programmes, not official university degrees, and include only interpreting, except for the Master of Intercultural Communication, Public Service Interpreting and Translation offered by the University of Alcalá (Taibi and Martin 2006: 95). The translation training offered in the latter consists of a few sessions on specialized translation (healthcare, legal, and administrative) and a translation practicum whereby supervised students translate public service texts either on site or from home.

In Australia, PST is embedded in generalist translation and interpreting programmes, although some of these are to some extent geared towards community-based services. A few undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at the University of Western Sydney, for example, include a course called 'Community Translation'. Subject to demand, this course is offered in Mandarin, Arabic, Spanish, Japanese, Vietnamese, German, and Italian, and aims to develop translation skills relevant to the Australian social and multicultural context. The texts translated into English include mainly personal and legal documents, while those translated into the community language are mainly informative (University of Western Sydney 2008a).

From the expected learning outcomes of the course, it can be seen that NAATI accreditation and standards are of paramount importance: students are expected to translate a 250-word text in an hour with a maximum of 40 error points as established by NAATI marking guidelines. At the same time, community needs and interests are central: the content description of the course includes 'translation of community information from English into the other language of texts relating to health, social security, and other government services as well as private sector services such as tourism and hospitality services', and translation into English of personal and official documents such as birth and marriage certificates, driving licences, and educational qualifications. It also includes translation into English of texts from community-language newspapers and magazines (University of Western Sydney 2008b). Macquarie University in Sydney offers a Postgraduate Diploma in Translating and Interpreting, which includes an elective course called 'Community Interpreting and Translating'. Surprisingly, the course description does not refer to translation at all:

The unit introduces participants to Community Based Interpreting (CBI) which encompasses any interpreting which takes place in everyday or emergency situations in the community. Interpreting may be undertaken in legal, health, education, social service and business settings. Background to the development of CBI will be discussed in both Australian and international contexts and the difficulty of defining CBI is explored. (Macquarie University 2008)

In Great Britain, the Mary Ward Centre offers 'Community Translation—Principles and Practice', a programme accredited by the Open College Network London Region. The programme covers 'issues and skills involved in translating documents and information from English public services into community languages' (Mary Ward Centre 2008). The trainees are expected to gain an understanding of the public service system, be able to locate relevant information and resources, research and compile PS terminology, understand text typology, intercultural issues, and intended readership, translate public service texts accurately, and present them appropriately.

As these examples show, specialized training in PST is either nonexistent or of limited scope. It is available only in a very small number of pioneering countries. In the absence of such specialized training, generalist translation programmes may fill the gap if they include language-specific training in languages relevant to the local and national community needs.

### **15.4 Communication, register, and the translator's role**

Accuracy in general and register appropriateness in particular have long been central issues in translation studies. Theoreticians have repeatedly stressed the importance not only of accurately rendering the content of the original but also of reflecting its level of formality and other interpersonal and social cues (e.g. Hatim and Mason 1990, House 1997). This is because texts are more than their conceptual or ideational content; they are also forms of expression which convey existing or intended social relationships between participants. Human communication, after all, is not only about the 'what' but also about the 'how'.

It is generally accepted that text type and the purpose of translation determine the translation approach to be adopted and the translation strategies to be followed. If a scientific text or a legally binding text, for example, normally requires extreme accuracy and precision, a literary text requires transmission of its aesthetic effect as a

paramount goal. Translators of public service texts, however, are caught between accuracy requirements (because the texts they deal with often contain legal, welfare, or healthcare information, which needs to be rendered accurately) and the need for communicative effectiveness (because PST is expected to bridge the communication gap between service providers and speakers of other languages).

Although public service texts are usually associated with informative content, as the above quotation from Niska (2002) suggests, they may fall into a number of different text categories (regulatory, instructive, argumentative, or persuasive, etc.). This requires PS translators to pay particular attention to the tone and register when translating PS material. Moreover, as Fraser (1999) argues, even when the explicit function of a PS text is informative, it may at some stage have a different implicit function. Her analysis of a British poll tax leaflet 'suggests a mismatch between the explicit register (the giving of neutral public information by a local authority to all residents in a form written to be easily accessible and to serve as a trigger for applications for exemption), and the implicit register (the regulation—and hence control—of exemptions)' (Fraser 1999: 204). This requires translators not to make an overall translation decision regarding register, but to conduct ongoing assessment and make localized register decisions. If the translators assume that the text is only informative, give priority to clarity of communication, and therefore decide to simplify the text and remove obfuscation, they will be overlooking the other hidden functions of the PS text (pp. 204–5).

However, as mentioned above, PST services are normally needed or offered in multilingual/multicultural community situations where migrants, refugees, ethnic minorities, or disempowered groups in society do not have access to texts written in the official language(s). In the context of such diversity, it is often the case that the difference between the mainstream audience and the users of PST is not only linguistic, but also socioeconomic, cultural, and educational. Furthermore, as Campbell (2005: 32) argues, there may be an imbalance between one community/language and another in terms of terminology and text-type development, which makes language parity a myth. Accordingly, translation in this field must go beyond accurate and stylistically equivalent reproduction of texts.

Lesch (1999: 93) is clear on where the PS translator should stand and what purposes PST should serve:

Community translation is a means to an end, namely to equip the community with the necessary information and other means to develop skills for themselves. It is an attempt to balance the power relationship between the sender and the receiver by prioritizing the needs of the community. Effective, empowering communication between the author and the reader via the translated text implies that the translator needs to be on the side of the powerless, that is the reader.

In a later publication (Lesch 2004: 257), the author stresses that public service translators are expected to produce efficient and effective translations, by taking into consideration the reader's expectations, educational background, and capacity to understand the translation. He argues that failing to acknowledge the heterogeneity of the target audiences can only lead to ineffective translation which is empty of value. In the same vein, Siegrünn (1992: 33) points out: 'The original concern about the quality of translation was replaced by the concern rather for the appropriacy and accessibility of the translation.' Similarly, Cluver (1992: 36) contends that, because societies are not homogeneous and because some groups have been marginalized, public service translations should not be provided in a parallel manner (in the sense of strictly accurate and stylistically equivalent translation), but should be made accessible to marginalized groups.

Taibi (2006b: 63) argues that public service translators have 'the right and obligation to find a balance between formal equivalence and communicative efficiency', informed by the characteristics of each specific institutional context and the sociocultural background of the users. The author gives as an example Spanish informed-consent forms translated into Modern Standard Arabic: since this formal variety of Arabic is only accessible to an elite, translations into it are of little use to a considerable percentage of Arabic-speaking users of Spanish public services (p. 62).

This point was supported by the findings of a survey conducted in Madrid among Spanish, Arabic, and (African) English speakers (Taibi 2006a). The research used the original (Spanish) text of a consent form for thoracotomy-thoracoscopy and its Arabic and English translations in order to gauge user comprehension. Aware of the fact that intelligibility cannot be reduced to the comprehension of lexical items, the researcher asked participants to underline the words they were unable to understand. The results were revealing:

- While none of the Spanish participants were illiterate, 30 per cent of the Arabic-speaking participants and 21.42 per cent of the African English-speaking group were, and therefore could not avail themselves of the translations at all.
- Out of the approximately 330 words of the text, the Arabic, English, and Spanish readers underlined an average of 24, 19, and 6 words respectively.
- The underlined words in the Spanish version were all specialized terms (*toracotomia, toracoscopia, plexo braquial, neumotórax, empiema, dehiscencia*), while the English-speaking African immigrants and, especially, the Arabic-speaking users underlined even non-specialized lexical items (e.g. *undergo* and *discharge* in English, or '*aqiba* 'after', *i:la:j* 'insertion', and *unbu:b* 'tube' in Arabic).

This was not surprising in view of the relatively high illiteracy rate in African and Arab countries. This apart, African migrants and refugees who speak English are mostly second-language learners at different stages of the interlingual continuum, and Modern Standard Arabic, used only in writing and very formal contexts, is accessible only to educated people.

Shaw and Ahmed (2004) also raise the issue of the accessibility of PST. Assessing the intelligibility of genetic counsellings leaflets translated from English into Urdu, the authors found that the translations often contained difficult technical information expressed in inaccessible language, as well as inaccurate, ambiguous, or contradictory messages and literal renderings, among other pitfalls and deficiencies. Accordingly, they recommend collaboration between bilingual PS staff and translators, more careful drafting of the original texts, and more effective translations—i.e. translations which are adapted to the target audience, free of specialized jargon, and culturally sensitive (Shaw and Ahmed 2004: 339).

### 15.5 Conclusion

As explained above, PST is a sub-field of translation covering written language services needed in a variety of community situations. These range from permanent to temporary and from historically multilingual societies to recently created diversities. Their common denominator, however, is the coexistence of a mainstream community and one or several linguistic and cultural minorities, and the need for the mainstream institutions to communicate in writing with those minorities and vice versa. PST serves the purpose of ensuring the rights of all individuals and communities to public information and services, and thus to social, economic, and political participation. It follows that it is a professional activity which is closely related to and involved in social action and social change.

Unfortunately, because of budget constraints and the relatively low social status of PST users, PST services are not available in all multilingual communities; when they are, standards vary from one country to another or even from service to service. The lack of specific training programmes and quality assurance bodies only contributes to maintaining the status quo. It is hoped, however, that multilingual countries will gradually follow the steps of pioneers in this field such as Australia, although the experience of the latter is not free of pitfalls.

Because of socioeconomic and cultural differences between the mainstream users of public service texts and minority users of PS translations, some issues which have been raised in translation studies in general (e.g. cultural adaptation, linguistic and textual accommodation) acquire much more importance and salience. A number of theoretical works and a few empirical studies have shown that PS translations which do not take into consideration the needs and sociocultural background of the target audience end up being parallel texts which are void of communicative effectiveness.

### Further reading and relevant resources

Fraser (1993) offers one of the few empirical studies which have been conducted in the field of PST. Through tape-recorded verbal protocols, the author explores PS translators' strategies when dealing with PS texts, especially passages or lexical items involving cultural differences and difficulties. Fraser (1999) reports the findings of a case study of a PS translator dealing with a functionally and stylistically complex official text. Although it is based on one participant only, the study offers insight into the common features of official texts and the possible consequences of viewing their function and register one-dimensionally. Lesch (2004) is another contribution to the debate on the role of PS translators and the approach they can/should adopt vis-à-vis official discourse. The author advocates a

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translation approach which takes into consideration the heterogeneous nature of target audiences and accordingly adapts source texts to cater for them, even if this requires the use of plain language.

Mayoral's (2003) work is very relevant to PST, as it addresses the translation of personal or official documents which are often produced by migrants and refugees in their host countries. Among other issues, the book deals with the translator's role, ethics, and loyalties when translating such documents, and the challenges posed by social and cultural distance.

Although Campbell (2005) does not address PST specifically, his paper offers insightful reflections on the imbalance often existing between mainstream and community languages (status, terminology development, and text-type disparity), and the implications of this imbalance for PST in general and PST training and accreditation in particular.

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## Oxford Handbooks Online

### Legal Translation

Leon Wolff

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### [-] Abstract and Keywords

This article explores dimensions of legal translation theory. It examines the rationale for legal translation, explores the definitional scope and linguistic properties of legal texts and analyses the underlying doctrinal approaches to legal translation (the ‘stretch and snap’ theme). The purpose of legal translation is to create a text that will be interpreted in the same way by legal professionals in the target legal system, as it would be in the original legal system. The aim of translation is not to erase linguistic and cultural differences, but to accommodate them, fully and unapologetically. The challenge is to convey the legal text as a fragment of a living legal system. The legal translator needs awareness of how the text functions in the source country’s institutional, political, and economic context. Legal translators should be driven by one overarching objective: to provide literate rather than literal translations.

Keywords: legal translation theory, legal texts, stretch and snap, linguistic and cultural differences, legal system, legal translator

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### 16.1 Introduction

Legal translation theory brooks little interference with the source legal text. With few exceptions (Joseph 1995, Hammel 2008, Harvey 2002, Kahaner 2005, Kasirer 2001, Lawson 2007), lawyers and linguists tend to tether themselves to the pole of literalism. More a tight elastic band than an unyielding rope, this tether constrains—rather than prohibits—free translation. It can stretch to accommodate a degree of freedom by the legal translator. However, should it go too far, it snaps back to the default position of linguistic fidelity. This ‘stretch and snap’ gives legal translation a unique place in general translation theory. In the general debate over the ‘degree of freedom’ the translator enjoys in conveying the meaning of the text, legal translation theory has reached its own settlement. Passivity is the default; creativity, the ‘qualified’ exception (Hammel 2008: 275).

So how far does legal translation theory stretch to accept free translation before snapping to strict linguistic fidelity? This theoretical elasticity should not be under- or overstated. On the one hand, not all—or even most—translation theorists and practitioners explicitly advocate devotion to the letter of the law. Indeed, advances in general translation theory—such as those advocating communicative over semantic translation (Newmark 1981), dynamic over formal equivalence (Nida 1964b), and covert rather than overt translation (Snell-Hornby 1988/1995)—have made an impact in some fields of legal translation practice (e.g. Kashiwagi 2007). Some theorists even suggest that ‘[l]ike other areas of translation, legal translation is (or ought to be) receiver oriented’ (Šarčević 2000: 329). This means that legal texts may be ‘adapted’ to achieve comprehensibility for the intended specialist audience (Stolze 2001: 302; Chroma 2004: 202). On the other hand, the claim that legal translation has been ‘brought into line with other forms of translation’ (Harvey 2002: 181) goes too far. The trend in the literature is that the range of translation creativity must be kept to a ‘permissible’ (Hammel 2008: 275) or ‘relevant’ (Hjort-Pedersen 1996) minimum. This dynamic is neatly encapsulated in the title to Sarcevic’s 1998 essay: ‘Creativity in Legal

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Translation: How Much is Too Much?' Poon (2005: 316) provides the typical answer: 'Although today it is more liberal in style, the first consideration in legal translation is still fidelity to the original text.'

It might be tempting to attribute this general reluctance to embrace a creative role for the legal translator to a pervasive conservatism in law and the legal profession. Even if such a crude description of the legal system were fair—and I would suggest it is not—politics plays no part in this theoretical position. Paradoxically, both conservative and radical theorists criticize the impulse to achieve 'natural' legal translations. For both, a receiver-oriented, readable translation necessitates an unacceptable interference with the source text language or structure. For conservatives, this is because the language of the legal text is sacred. Legal translators accept that lawyers behold the source text with a 'trembling reverence' (Kasirer 2001: 332). Legal meaning is discoverable from the choice of words and their arrangement in the text. Legal translators, therefore, 'have to stay close to the source text by representing the exact or near exact meaning in [their] translation' (Hjort-Pedersen and Faber 2001: 379). For radicals, the problem with readable translations is that they constitute an unethical manipulation of the structure of the text (Bermann 2005), inscribing in the process the 'values, beliefs and representations linked to historical moments and social positions in the receiving culture' (Venuti 1995: 204). A faithful translation should not efface the 'guest language' (Legrand 2005: 38); it should forcefully convey the underlying language mechanisms and discursive structures of the text (Lewis 2004: 262). 'A translation must not aim to look so "natural" within the host language as no longer to appear like a translation. Otherwise, it denies the entitlement of alterity to exist as alterity and, ultimately, refuses to grant it hospitality' (Legrand 2005: 38).

This chapter seeks to explore the descriptive and normative dimensions of the 'stretch and snap' phenomenon in legal translation theory. It argues that legal translation theory misconceives both the 'legal' and 'translation' aspects of the legal translation enterprise. On the 'translation' side, theorists overemphasize the utilitarian rationale for legal translation as well as hyperbolize the distinctiveness of legal language which, they assert, sets legal translation apart from other forms of translation. On the 'legal' side, legal translation theorists are too heavily in thrall to the positivist and Eurocentric trappings of comparative law. Positivism insists that all legal meaning stems from a strict and acontextual reading of the letter of the law; European-based comparative law believes in the functional equivalence and convergent possibility of legal ideas across systems and cultures (Taylor 1997).

The cumulative effect of all this is to fixate on *text-oriented meaning*: the phraseology, the 'discoverable' propositional content, or the underlying values of the legal text. It ignores, however, the *contextual meaningfulness* of the text as a whole. A legal text, after all, is not a dead letter. Although ripped from its institutional, political, social, and economic context, a legal text is a living and breathing embodiment of a legal culture (Legrand 2005: 32). A wilful blindness to its sociolegal significance misses an essential component of the legal translation endeavour. Legal translation theory, in short, needs to break free of its 'stretch and snap' limitations. A free translation that respects the text's contextual foundations should become the new norm.

What follows in this chapter is divided into four sections. Section 16.2 examines the rationale for legal translation. This part identifies the utilitarian emphasis translation theorists use in justifying the importance of legal translation and the skewing effect this has on theory-building. Section 16.3 explores the definitional scope and linguistic properties of legal texts. This part highlights how theorists adopt an overly restrictive view of legal text types and exaggerate the uniqueness of their linguistic properties. This permits theorists to claim—wrongly—that legal translation has a 'special status' that places it outside the purview of general translation theory (Garzone 2000: 395). Section 16.4 then analyses the underlying doctrinal approaches to legal translation. This part demonstrates the 'stretch and snap' theme within legal translation theory—i.e. the limited range of departure from a literal rendering of textual language or linguistic structures. This part explains how traditional comparative law—with its positivist, Eurocentric, and functionalist accoutrements—has constrained translation theorists from embracing a more free translation approach. The chapter concludes with a call for natural legal translations that better respect the sociolegal significance of the text rather than the 'dead letter' of the law.

### **16.2 Rationale: why does legal translation matter?**

The language of law is no longer spoken with a single tongue. Globalization and advances in information technology are collapsing economic, cultural, political—and, therefore, juridical—boundaries. Markets are globally integrated. Political issues—whether they concern terrorism, climate change, or human rights—increasingly

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require international collaboration. People study, work, travel, and communicate with one another outside of their immediate communities and nation-states. Law has not been untouched by these developments.

Globalization has been most dramatic in redrawing the economic map. World trade has created increasingly interdependent national economies as well as new regional and world markets. The rapid economic growth of the People's Republic of China, for example, has brought additional investment and trading opportunities for a number of different countries—Australia, for example, has benefited from its insatiable demand for natural resources—as well as concern from other powerful economies (such as the United States and Japan) about the implications of its new-found economic power. As the global financial crisis of 2007–2009 has dramatically revealed, nation-states are enmeshed in financial networks. Commercial practices are adapting. Informal bargaining and contracting at the community level are giving way to cross-national contracts, foreign and multinational corporate vehicles, international joint venture agreements, export licensing, and other forms of foreign investment.

Politics, too, now has international reach. The United Nations draws on the cooperation and participation of member states to solve world problems and settle international disputes. Non-government organizations (NGOs), such as Greenpeace and Doctors without Borders, are international in their advocacy and scope of activities. Terrorism and military networks are borderless (Bermann 2005:1).

Daily life has also been transformed. Waves of migration have transformed nation-states, and especially their urban centres, into 'global sites with multiplicities of languages and culture' (Bermann 2005:1). Vast diasporas exist outside the nation-state. Tourism is fostering new cross-cultural encounters. More people are working or studying outside their countries of birth. The spread of the Internet means information is readily available instantaneously from anywhere in the world about anywhere in the world. Social networking media, online shopping services, and multimedia sharing platforms allow individuals to stay in contact with relatives and friends, purchase goods and services, and consume entertainment unhindered by geographical location. As Ilan Stavans observes, modernity is lived not through nationality but through 'translationality' (quoted in Sokol 2002: 554).

The globalization of economics, politics, and citizenship finds expression in law. International law is burgeoning. The United Nations, for example, has a depository of over 500 major multilateral instruments covering topics as wide and diverse as human rights, commodities regulation, disarmament, refugees, and the environment.<sup>1</sup> The World Trade Organization enforces the international order for free trade in goods and services and settles trade disputes. The World Bank oversees development assistance programmes to over 100 developing countries. Regional law is also of growing significance. The European Union is the advanced example, with the European Parliament empowered to make laws that bind all its member states. These laws must be translated into one or more of over twenty official languages (Cao 2007b: 2; Correia 2003: 40; Wilson 2003: 2). Looser regional groupings such as the North America Free Trade Agreement, the United Arab Emirates, and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation similarly provide for transnational agreement and regulation. Comparative law, too, matters more. Developing countries are borrowing legal ideas from other jurisdictions to solve specific problems or to modernize their economic and political institutions (Legrand 2005: 30; Wong 2006). Mature economies such as China and Japan are making their corporate, commercial, and financial laws available in English to attract foreign investors (Cao 2007b: 2–3; Kashiwagi 2007). The appetite for law is now transnational.

Even within national boundaries, migration and colonization have created multi-lingual and even multi-juridical legal systems. Canada and Switzerland, for instance, both require multi-lingual drafting and translation of laws to make them accessible to different language groups (Cao 2007b: 2; Šarčević 1998). Hong Kong routinely makes its laws available in both English and Chinese since sovereignty reverted to the People's Republic of China (Cao 2007b: 2). Malaysia, too, issues its laws in English—despite the Constitution declaring Malay the official language—because of its inherited legal tradition from the United Kingdom (Bidin 1995). More generally, global citizenship is creating demand for equal language rights and universal access to legal and regulatory information. All this has attracted greater attention to the theory and practice of law (Garzone 2000).

As the influence of law seeps beyond language groups and national borders, a markedly utilitarian rationale for legal translation emerges from the literature. Legal translation is a pressing practical need. '[M]ediating legal information from one national legal system and language as precisely and fully as possible,' as Chroma (2004: 197) argues, 'has turned out to become of ultimate importance in our global world.' 'There has never been a time,' adds Bernmann (2005: 1), 'when issues of nation, language and translation have been more important [...] than they

are today.' Law without translation, concludes Cao (2007b: 2) has become 'inconceivable'.

This utilitarianism has had a skewing effect on legal translation theory. If the imperative to translate law is due to its wider power to determine people's rights and livelihoods (Harvey 2002:179; Joseph 1995:17), a moral panic about how to do so 'faithfully' and 'correctly' is a predictable impulse. As later sections will demonstrate, this leads to a doctrinaire approach to legal translation that relies on a close reading of the legal text—its linguistic elements, discursive properties or structural features—rather than a holistic analysis of the text's place in the legal system and culture. A better view is to locate a more humanistic rationale for legal translation: the power of legal translation to instruct, inspire, foster respect for, and promote informed debate about diverse normative and regulatory regimes. Translation, after all, is essential to the 'living on' of texts and the 'continued flourishing of national and translational cultures' (Bermann 2005: 6). To achieve this broader vision, legal translators cannot be anchored to acontextual readings of legal texts.

### **16.3 Definition and scope: what constitutes a legal text?**

So what constitutes a legal text according to legal translation theory? No one offers a comprehensive definition. Instead, theorists rely on two definitional short cuts. The first is to catalogue a non-exhaustive list of 'prototypical' legal texts (Cao 2007b); the other is to determine the extent to which a text has a legal 'function' or 'setting' (Engberg 2002: 375). Although neither definitional strategy is intrinsically problematic, theorists tend to caricature the legal dimensions of a text's language or purpose and, as a result, deduce that legal translation is a 'special' category, which falls outside the purview of general translation theory (Cao 2007b: 7; Garzone 2000: 395; Harvey 2002: 177). In the 'stretch and snap' trend in legal translation theory, the cousin to utilitarianism in rationale is stereotype in definition.

Legal texts are myriad. They include:

- authoritative statements of rights and duties, such as treaties and conventions (at the international level), constitutions, codes, statutes, and regulations (at the national level), and circulars, administrative guidelines, and delegated rules (at the sub-national and community level);
- documents used in or produced by formal dispute resolution processes, such as judicial opinions, pleadings, witness statements, and affidavits;
- binding expressions of intent or agreement, such as contracts, wills, and corporate articles of association;
- persuasive texts such as legal textbooks and other academic legal writing, law reform submissions, letters of advice, and policy reports; and
- administrative forms such as tax filings, business registrations, licensing permits, and citizenship applications.

This is just a sample. Even so, as this list suggests, legal texts have diverse purposes and impacts: prescriptive or informational; descriptive or persuasive; abstract or concrete; generally applicable or individually specific; binding or advisory; even formal or informal (Cao 2007b: 8–11). Some legal texts are complex and demanding (tax legislation, for example); others are straightforward and direct (such as residential lease agreements).

Despite this variety, legal translation theorists make some 'bold claims' about legal texts and their 'special' nature and effect (Harvey 2002:177). For example, as Garzone (2000: 395) argues, theorists point to a 'distinctive quality of the language of the law which marks it off from *ordinary* language and makes it a case apart even in the field of special language'. Legal language is archaic, complex, formulaic, and obscure. Legal writing is subject to strict stylistic conventions in register and diction, contains stock phrases that are uncommon in general text practice, and is invariably intricate, verbose, and pompous (Cao 2007b: 20–23). Sentence constructions are lengthy, abstract, and complex, with embedded clauses, a high level of hypotaxis, and frequent resort to left-branching subordinate clauses (Garzone 2000; Stolze 2001: 305–7). Language patterns are 'frozen' with 'little or no variation in form' (Baker 1992: 63). The consequence of all this is that, on a sliding scale of difficulty, legal translation is near the end-point of difficulty in translation practice (Harvey 2002:177).

Other theorists focus less on legal language and more on legal impact or purpose in their definition of legal texts. For Engberg (2002: 375), a text is legal if it serves a legal purpose or functions in a legal setting: 'The most important consequence of this definition lies in the fact that not only prototypical legal texts like statutes and

contracts, but also restaurant bills and other texts to be used as evidence, for example in a court case, might be subject to legal translation in this view.' For Šarčević (1997: 9), a legal text operates as a 'special-purpose communication between specialists'. In both views, a legal text is epistemologically and culturally bound to its legal system (Gotti 2004:10–11; Kahaner 2005; Šarčević 2000: 13). The purpose of legal translation, therefore, is to create a text that will be *interpreted* in the same way by legal professionals in the target legal system as it would be in the original legal system (Chroma 2004; Harvey 2002:180–81; Jamieson 1996; Sarcevic 1989: 278; 2000: 332). This more functional definitional strategy assumes a limited discursive community that deals with legal texts (typically lawyers and judges) and a litigation-centric view of the legal system.

Even if categories of translation are not a 'polarized dichotomy but a spectrum that admits blending and overlapping', the heightened 'quality and intensity' of legal translation suggests that it occupies a privileged place outside of general translation practice (Cao 2007b: 8). This much is evident from the above definitions in the legal translation literature, which stress the distinctive language and unique effects of legal texts. Yet these definitional claims demand critical scrutiny.

First, little empirical evidence is offered that legal text types are as convoluted and inaccessible as asserted. While arguably true of highly technical legislation (such as tax statutes) or complex court judgments (such as corporate takeover cases), it is an exaggeration to paint this as a universal trend. Indeed, with the advent of online depositories of legal information (Lawson 2007: 188, n. 2) and greater attention to 'plain-language' drafting (Hammel 2008: 275), there are worldwide efforts to improve the public accessibility and comprehensibility of law. Second, there is no reason to believe that legal translation is a particularly challenging translational activity. As Harvey (2002: 177) puts it, all translation assignments involve a 'combination of old routines and new challenges'. Legal texts are as much system-bound as political, religious, literary, and other cultural texts (Harvey 2002: 180). Third, legal texts are not exclusively the preserve of legal specialists or court-based litigation: contracts, for example, record the agreement between parties to the contract; articles of association set out the aims of the company, and the relationship between shareholders and the board of directors; wills express the intention of how a deceased's estate should be distributed. These documents are as much informational as prescriptive. And only a fraction ever become subject to formal legal proceedings. Fourth, it is tautological to insist that the legal effect of a text gives it special status (Joseph 1995: 17). Medical texts have medical effects; literary texts have literary effects; legal texts—of course—have legal effects. To be sure, the potential impact of a legal document on people's rights and livelihood creates qualitatively different consequences from other forms of translation (Joseph 1995: 17). However, materiality of impact, maintains Harvey (2002: 179), should have no bearing on the essential task of the translator. A literary translation needs to bear in mind artistic flair; a technical translation needs to ensure the operability of a machine; so, too, a legal translation must weigh up the text's legal implications. Yet even then—apart from special cases such as the legal requirement for bilingual legislation in Canada (Šarčević 1997)—many legal translations are expressly excluded from having operative legal effect (Chroma 2004, Kashiwagi 2007) or, at least, will not do so in the target legal culture (Garzone 2000).

These criticisms weaken the claim of the 'special status' of legal texts and their translation. Legal texts—rather than betraying a unique legal language or a discernible legal impact—are better understood in cultural terms: documents that express the regulatory values of a legal system. As Lawson (2007:187) observes, legal texts are maps of the city of the law. Any translation that fixates on linguistic fidelity or conceptual equivalence, denying a creative role for the legal translator to preserve the expressive integrity of the legal text as a whole, misses the overarching point of legal translation.

## **16.4 Doctrine and method: how to translate legal texts?**

Yet the 'stretch and snap' dynamic in legal translation theory constrains such expressive freedom.

### **16.4.1 Doctrine of textual fidelity**

The starting point in legal translation is fidelity to the letter of the law. As Sarcevic (1997:16) observes:

Legal translators have traditionally been bound by the principle of fidelity. Convinced that the main goal of translation is to reproduce the content of the source text as accurately as possible, both lawyers and linguists agreed that legal texts had to be translated literally. For the sake of preserving the letter of the

law, the main guideline for legal translation was fidelity to the source text.

In extreme cases, legal translation theorists and practitioners insist on a ‘strict, literal’ legal translation (Šarčević 1997: 24). This view dates back to the days of the Roman empire, which decreed formal correspondence between source and target texts to preserve the meaning of biblical and legal texts (Šarčević 1997: 23–48). ‘This was underpinned by belief in the magical properties of the *logos*: if the wording was changed, the incantatory force might be lost’ (Harvey 2002:180).

More usually, the call is to stay ‘close to the source text by representing the exact or near exact meaning’ in the translation (Hjort-Pedersen and Faber 2001: 379) rather than engage in a ‘literalist transcription’ of the source legal text (Kasirer 2001: 340). The UN handbook for translators, for example, stipulates fidelity to the original source as the primary consideration in official translation (Harvey 2002: 181; Sarcevic 1997:16). Scholars endorse this advice. Drawing on a structural theory of language, Poon (2005: 305–6) argues that translations of Chinese legal texts should fully reflect the style and form of the source legal text. She rejects more functional approaches to translation that permit adaptation of the source legal text to achieve equivalent legal effect in the target culture. The courts, writes Poon, should determine legal purport; the translator should stay true to the underlying legal form. Beyer and Conradsen (1995: 164), in their practical guide to the translation of Japanese legal materials, instruct translators of Japanese legal documents not to alter sentence length, even though Japanese, as an agglutinative language, can sustain long, complex sentences which, in English, would strain comprehension. The reason, they argue, is to avoid imposing Westernised, common-law interpretation on Japanese civil-law texts.

Some theorists call for an even greater stretch from literalism. For Gutt (1991:19), the decision to orient a legal translation towards the source or target language is not an inflexible directive but a discretionary choice. It is best left to expert intuition. Hjort-Pedersen agrees, in an empirical study of Danish and English wills (1996), submitting that legal translators need not ‘play it safe’ by adopting a source-language-oriented strategy and are entitled to invoke principles of natural language communication (p. 370). However, such a departure is only permissible to the extent that it does not ‘violate the principles of relevance’ (p. 364). Importantly, this test provides little room for manoeuvre: a departure from adopting a source-oriented context-specific meaning is only allowed if the effort to process it is ‘too great’. In a similar vein, Hammel (2008: 275) offers a ‘qualified’ endorsement of the application of ‘plain, legal-language’ principles to improve target-language readability and render more ‘elegant and useful translations’. These principles may be invoked to achieve a ‘permissible’ degree of clarification. ‘Of course,’ he is quick to add, ‘the translator must always convey the original’s meaning fully and accurately.’

This commitment to literalism—whether a tight clinch or a more open-ended embrace—is consonant with the positivist tradition in law. Legal positivists hold that sacrificing ‘precision and meaning at the altar of elegance’ is not only a ‘liberty’ but also ‘wrong in law’ (Kasirer 2001: 331). Positivism derives from the canon of statutory interpretation which champions the legislature as the ultimate authority over the law and its meaning. Those engaged in legal interpretation—whether lawyers, judges or administrators—are engaged in a process of ‘discovery’ of meaning rather than its creative interpretation (Kasirer 2001:332–3). This positivist instinct has ‘encouraged both readers and translators to imagine legal texts as authorial intention carved in stone; accordingly, the reader and translator receive the text in a manner befitting an oracle’ (Kasirer 2001:339). Legal translators, in this view, are reduced to the role of passive mediators of legal information—‘bilingual typists providing simple linguistic equivalence’ (Harvey 2002:180).

Passivity in legal translation also draws strength from a Eurocentric bias in translation theory. As Wakabayashi (1991) notes, most writing on translation draws on Indo-European languages. This is also true in legal translation where French (e.g. Šarčević 1998), Dutch (e.g. Hjort-Pedersen 1996), or a comparative corpus of European languages (e.g. Allori 2004) serves as the dataset. Asian languages are rarely considered (cf. Beyer and Conradsen 1995, Bidin 1995, Kashiwagi 2007, Poon 2005, Lawson 2007, Wong 2006). When they are, the literature is more concerned with highlighting the cultural uniqueness of the Asian legal system (Kitamura 1993) or the practical complexities of the translation project under review (e.g. Wong 2006) than with offering any contribution to or critical reflection on legal translation theory generally.

Positivism and Eurocentrism, however, lend little credibility to a legal translation method that defends a careful tracking of the letter of the law. Positivism, for example, is an overly formalist conception of law. It assumes that legal rules have meanings detached from their social, political, and economic context; that ‘law in the books’

equates with the ‘law in action’. Sociolegal research has dismissed these assumptions as myths: gaps exist between law and its implementation, and formal-laws compete—not always successfully—with informal legal regimes (Legrand 2005, Taylor 1997). Eurocentrism is even more problematic. Indo-European languages may be more amenable to formal equivalence since they ‘share lexical and morphosyntactic features, with considerable etymological and phonological similarity, [as well as] cultural backgrounds’ (Wakabayashi 1991: 415). However, where languages are linguistically and culturally unrelated—such as English and Japanese—it is largely impossible to render exact or near-exact translations without undermining comprehension (Tahara 2001, Wakabayashi 1991, 1992).

## 16.4.2 Doctrine of equivalent effects

Another group of legal translation theorists—aware of the dangers of word-for-word legal translation yet still conscious of the authoritative command of legal texts—propose a more functional approach to legal translation. Led by Šarčević (1985, 1989, 1997, 1998) and drawing on a freer theory of translation which recognizes communicative or covert translation (Nida 1964b, Nida and Taber 1969, Newmark 1981, Snell-Hornby 1988/1995), these theorists measure the success of a legal translation by equivalence of legal effects—rather than formal textual correspondence—in the source and target legal cultures (Harvey 2002: 180–81). Legal translators can adjust phrasing. They can change sentence length and structure. They can reorder paragraphs. They can even complement the text with additional facts to aid intelligibility (Chroma 2004: 202; Stolze 2001: 302). ‘When selecting a translation strategy for legal texts,’ writes Sarcevic (2000: 332), ‘legal considerations must prevail.’ The functional equivalence lies not in the linguistic term, she explains, but in its counterpart in comparative law (Šarčević 1989: 278).

This bolder approach to legal translation suggests a break with the ‘stretch and snap’ tradition in legal tradition. After all, the translator enjoys greater freedom to intervene in the legal text to achieve a natural rendition in the target language. On closer inspection, however, this freedom is illusory. As Engberg (2002: 378) observes, this approach requires the translator to assess not only *one of the possible* contextual meanings of a text, but the *relevant legal meaning* of the text. In short, the translator needs to recreate the same ‘meaning potential’ of a legal text that a judge or legal practitioner in the source legal system would give it.

Herein lies the ‘snap’. The legal translator is not tasked with preserving the pragmatic and sociolinguistic integrity of the legal text; his or her job is to preserve the ‘legal intent’ of the author of the source language document. As Sarcevic (1998: 289) puts it, creativity in legal translation is not acceptable if it ‘poses a threat to the uniform interpretation and application’ of the source and target texts in question.

This standard is a practical impossibility. It assumes that legal translators have a thorough acquaintance of law as a subject matter. Even beyond facility with legal terminology, legal translators are also expected to replicate—even surpass—the skills of legal experts: they need a comprehensive awareness of legal reasoning, the ability to solve legal problems, the foresight to anticipate how courts will interpret and apply a legal text, and extensive understanding of statutory and contractual drafting. Such ideal legal translators are rare (Cao 2007b: 37–8).

More troubling, the doctrine of legal intent presumes that legal meanings are fixed and discoverable by reference to their parent legal system. Such assumptions are not sustainable. Language generally—and legal language specifically—is open-textured and indeterminate. Even if there might be a ‘core’ of settled-meaning, there is always a ‘penumbra of uncertainty’ (Cao 2007b: 19). This includes intra-lingual as well as inter-lingual uncertainty. Indeed, one of the reasons for resort to litigation or alternative forms of dispute resolution is because parties (and their legal advisers) do not agree on how the law might apply to their case! Nor is legal meaning discoverable by reference to the ‘family’ to which the source legal system belongs. Although comparative law is fond of classifying legal systems—one of the more usual dichotomies is common-law and civil-law systems—these classificatory schemes are misleading, simplistic, and ‘fallacious’ (Marfording 1997). Despite claims of cognitive dissonance between common-law and civil-law systems (Harvey 2000) or that court judgments are longer and more complex in common-law than civil-law systems (Cao 2007b: 29), inter-systemic difference and intra-systemic coherence are exaggerated. Even worse, the assumption locks legal systems into static, linear, totalizing, atemporal, and idealized traditions (Legrand 2005: 31–2; Taylor 1997); living legal systems, by contrast, are diverse, evolving, complex, and internally pluralist.

### 16.4.3 Doctrine of ethical intervention

In an emerging trend in general translation theory, postmodern theorists are recasting the translation enterprise. The aim of translation, according to postmodernists, is not to *erase* linguistic and cultural differences by way of ‘natural’ translation, but to *accommodate* them—fully and unapologetically—in ‘forceful’ translations (Lewis 2004: 262). Although not yet the subject of detailed theoretical treatment in the legal translation literature, this postmodern approach has nonetheless attracted the interest of lawyers and legal language experts (e.g. Gott 2004, Legrand 2005).

The postmodern turn seeks to retain the ‘otherness’ of the source language and structure in translation. Drawing on the cultural philosophy of Foucault and Derrida, this radical position throws doubt on the distinction between signifier and signified. In literal or functional translation, the tendency of the translator is to ‘privilege the capture of the signifieds, to give primacy to message, content, or concept over language structure’. In the postmodern re-imaging of the translation enterprise, fidelity should attach to ‘modalities of expression and rhetorical strategies’ (Lewis 2004: 262). The rationale for this move is that translation, as a rewriting of an original text, is ‘manipulation’ of a text ‘in the service of power’ (Bassnett and Lefevere 1995: vii). As Venuti explains (1995: 204; 2004b: 498), a natural translation is an ideological solution to linguistic and cultural differences in the foreign text.

Postmodernism ‘snaps back’ legal translation to a source-oriented approach, even more strikingly when compared to the doctrine of intention. This is because any ideological intervention in a text—which a translation involves since it is an interpretation of a text—necessitates an ethical duty to respect (rather than *erase*) linguistic and cultural difference. As much as a translator works to build linguistic bridges, he or she is also ethically bound to be ‘sensitive to each language’s contexts, intertexts and intrinsic alterity’ (Bermann 2005: 4–5):

Translators have long agreed that the effort to render one language system into another requires a keen awareness of broad cultural as well as specific linguistic values. It also requires existential choices that are bound to have wide-ranging repercussions for the text and its audience. How much of the ‘otherness’ of the ‘foreign’ should the translator highlight? How much of the foreign should be mute or *erase* in order to make texts easier for the ‘home’ (target) audience to assimilate? The problems posed demand judgment calls as ethical as they are practical or cognitive. (Bermann 2005: 7)

This postmodern approach to structural fidelity, however, has dangerous ramifications for comparative legal understanding. If the ethical imperative of a legal translator is to preserve some of the ‘foreignness’ of the source legal text—to faithfully render ‘cultural [...] associations, overtones and echoes’ (Kasirer 2001: 349)—the translation product can overly assert the cultural uniqueness of the source legal system at the expense of its logical coherence and any values that it may express which are of universal appeal (Marfording 1997, Port 2001). This is a real danger in the case of Asian legal texts and legal systems, feeding directly into Orientalist assumptions that Asian law is invariably servile, weak, inferior, and eccentric (Taylor 1997). In the eyes of Lawson (2007:187), such ‘ethical’ translations are a disservice to comparative law:

Quality translations of Japanese legal materials have, as a rule, been rare. Imagine a city with orderly streets broad and wide and buildings proud. It is not without shady corners and questionable precincts but it has weathered storms, absorbed distant learning and adapted to the winds of change. Its great failing is that it is unknown, shrouded by myth, rumoured to be a ramshackle wreck, governed by whim, or uninhabited [...] this is the lost city of Japanese law. If translations serve as maps, this city was almost uncharted; the few publicly available maps were illegible. [...]

The costs of failure in the translation of a legal system are serious. Ignorance breeds contempt; a dearth of translations implies there is little of value to translate; a corpus of bad translations serves only to confirm the outsider’s worst suspicions; superficial encounters with bad texts suggest that the ‘Other’ legal system is indeed irrelevant.

### 16.5 Conclusions and implications

Legal translation theory is in an elastic bind. Bound to ‘semantic and syntactic’ literalism, legal translation theory seeks to influence practice by charging legal translators with a duty to render ‘a faithful translation closest to the

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meaning of the source text'; 'to produce a semantically and syntactically literal translation so as not to affect the substance of the source text' (Poon 2005:322–3). This, so the argument goes, is a practical must. The reach of international law is broadening beyond national borders and its regulatory power over people's lives is widening. Legal texts—with their distinctive style, complex linguistic patterns and significant qualitative impacts—deserve close reproduction in the target language.

To be sure, this elastic bind permits some wriggle-room. Although historically legal translation insisted on strict literalism, this position is now relaxing. But the 'stretch' only goes so far before 'snapping' back to literalist first principles. Free translations are subject to constraints of relevance or permissible clarification. Creative impulses must be kept in check (Šarčević 1998). Even in functional legal translation, where the aim is to achieve legal equivalence, legal translators must search for one—and only one—possible legal meaning. This is even if the translator lacks the legal training to make this judgment; even if legal professionals in the source legal system may disagree over the text's real legal intent; and even if tensions, contradictions, ongoing evolution and ambiguity in the law—natural states for all legal systems—render this a hopeless search. Where a 'discoverable' meaning is undiscoverable, of course, the instinct is to return to the source language. Even radicals who call for 'forceful' legal translations insist upon close adherence to the distinctive linguistic structural properties of the source text, regardless of whether this results in awkward prose or perpetrates stereotypes about the legal system as alien and inscrutable.

The time is ripe to scissor-snip the 'stretch and snap' tradition in legal translation. To do so will rescue legal translation from the worst excesses of comparative law: positivism, Eurocentrism, Orientalism, and utilitarianism. Legal translation needs to accept the broader lessons of general translation and legal theory—that perfect (or even adequate) equivalence is a myth (Chesterman 1993:3); that meaning and interpretation are not carved in stone (Joseph 1995:14); and that legal systems are not freeze-packed into distinct and definable legal families.

The challenge, instead, is to convey the legal text as a fragment of a living legal system. The legal translator does not need a law degree; he or she needs sufficient research skills of contrastive genre analysis (Chroma 2004: 202) and an awareness of how the text functions in the source country's institutional, political, and economic context. Legal translation theory of the future may very well require a post-linguistic theory that looks beyond textuality to embrace contextuality. In the immediate future, however, legal translators should be driven by one overarching objective: 'to provide *literate* rather than *literal* translations' (Kahaner 2005, *italics original*).

## Further reading and relevant sources

One of the best resources on legal translation is the recent book-length study by Deborah Cao, *Translating Law* (2007b). The book has detailed chapters on different types of legal texts and the translation challenges associated with them. Her book boasts an extensive bibliography and, by incorporating examples from English—Chinese legal translation, provides a refreshing departure from the almost exclusive emphasis on European languages elsewhere in the literature. Another recommended resource is *New Approach to Legal Translation* (1997) by Susan Šarčević, one of the more prolific and thoughtful writers on legal translation theory and practice. As this chapter notes, however, Sarcevic's approach is not without its pitfalls. Finally, Malcolm Harvey's 2002 essay 'What's So Special about Legal Translation?' is a powerful—and entertaining—retort to the puffed-up claim that legal translation occupies a privileged (and separate) place in translation theory.

## Notes:

- (1) See [www.treaties.un.org](http://www.treaties.un.org).

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## Oxford Handbooks Online

### Scientific, Technical, and Medical Translation

Sue Ellen Wright

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#### Abstract and Keywords

This article focuses on Sci-Tech texts, along with their categorization and translation, and views them in the context of spoken discourse. Identification of the source language is usually unproblematic, and specification of the target language depends on the potentially complex needs and intention of the requester. The subject field of the text is coordinate with its special language. The vocabulary of special languages is documented in specialized lexicography and terminological dictionaries. Even if scientists use English, mother-tongue terminology is critical for the dissemination of scientific information and for stimulating interaction between science and technology, thus rendering technical expertise accessible to all sectors of the population. In order to translate effectively, either at the science-to-science level or across any of the technology levels, mediating between a language with rich special languages and those that are inadequately developed requires the consistent creation of new terminology.

Keywords: Sci-Tech texts, source language, target language, lexicography and terminological dictionaries, science and technology, technical expertise

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#### 17.1 Introduction

The misnomer ‘scientific, technical, and medical translation’ is ubiquitous in translator training curricula, but the apples-and-oranges title actually represents different levels of abstraction. Scientific and technical documents and spoken discourse together constitute a continuum of subject fields and text classes. Although conflating science and technology is inappropriate, it is nonetheless difficult to draw clear boundaries between the concepts. This chapter refers to the continuum as ‘Sci-Tech’ where appropriate, and differentiates its constituents when necessary. In this sense, Sci-Tech comprises a high-level domain-oriented typology coordinate with, for example, legal-commercial or literary texts.

Medical texts, although important, occupy one of many sub-domains, such as chemistry, bioscience, genetic engineering, or automotive engineering, each with its own set of sub-topics and text classes distributed across the Sci-Tech spectrum. For instance, one medical text might be a scientific report on current lab research and another might provide technological instructions to an end user of a medical device. This distinction does not, however, undermine medical translation as ‘the most universal and the oldest form of scientific translation’ (Fischbach 1998: 1).

Science involves human inquiry and the observation of the natural world, based on rational effort to discover regularities that can be codified into laws of nature (Shermer 2008: 38). The scientific method implies an empirical and often experimental approach to this act of observation and the postulation of rules.

Technology is older than science. It applies observed knowledge to manipulate the environment for the improvement of the human (or primate, for that matter) condition. An ape poking a simple stick into an ant hill to retrieve a tasty snack engages in a technological act, and so does an astronaut heating, opening, and consuming

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a more complex package of ‘space food’. The ape is unlikely to expound on the design of the stick, but the astronaut can probably describe the dietary merits of her food and the efficiency of the packaging, for the technology behind her lunch is informed by science.

Applied science and engineering facilitate the transitional phase whereby scientific knowledge and processes are exploited for technological ends. Universities, research organizations, and sponsored programmes actively support technology transfer—the so-called ‘translation’ of research-related knowledge, skills, and methods into patents, commercial designs, etc., that benefit public, private, and industrial users.<sup>1</sup> Improving the human condition provides ethical satisfaction, but converting innovation for commercial gain serendipitously supports further research funding. ‘Technology transfer’ also refers to the North–South transfer of Sci-Tech know-how from highly developed language communities to developing societies, often requiring language and terminology planning in order to facilitate language translation (see 17.5.3 below).

This chapter focuses primarily on Sci-Tech texts (documents), along with their categorization and translation, but also views them in the context of spoken discourse. Texts for translation must be evaluated based on:

- the language of the source text (SL of the ST);
- the potential language(s) of the target text(s) (TL of the TT);
- the subject field(s) of the ST, which is/are embodied in:
  - special language terminology;
  - SL constraints and conventions anticipated by the TL audience for the subject field;
- the ST register and the appropriate TT register (not necessarily identical);
- the SL text class factors (type and variety) and desired TT class factors (not necessarily identical);
- presentation issues (layout, medium, etc.);
- the specification of translation job parameters.

Current trends in Sci-Tech translation are grounded in historical practice, but are contextualized with respect to the commodification of translation and its evolution as a global industry. Furthermore, translation flows from SLs offering a rich store of Sci-Tech knowledge in the direction of TLs where gaps exist, at least in certain domains. This flow is conditioned by the dynamics of technology transfer, but particularly by the hegemony of English as the language of science.

### 17.2 Sci-Tech Subject Fields and Sub-Domains

Identification of the SL is usually unproblematic, and specification of the TL(s) depends on the potentially complex needs and intention of the requester. The latter can often state the ST subject field as well, but this is not always true for third-party texts, which may require examination by a competent linguist. Science proper can be classified at a high abstract level into broad subject fields such as: mathematics, astronomy, statistics, computer science, bioscience (zoology, botany, and medicine), chemistry, and earth sciences (geology and geography).

Traditionally, high-frequency categories include medicine, along with manufacturing and construction engineering, and agriculture (Sager and Nkwenti-Azeh 1989), with the huge addition today of electronic communications, software, and Internet content. These classes can be further broken down pragmatically, sometimes with variations reflecting different cultural traditions. Library subject classifications are usually inadequate for detailed enterprise applications, but digital taxonomies and ontologies are increasingly created as knowledge-management solutions.

#### 17.2.1 Special language and terminology

The subject field of the text is coordinate with its special language. (‘Language for special purposes’ (LSP) can be confusing, especially in American English, where it is commonly associated with foreign-language pedagogy.) A special language is ‘a language used in a subject field and characterized by the use of specific linguistic means of expression, [which] always include(s) subject-specific terminology and phraseology and also may cover stylistic or syntactic features’ (ISO 1087-1: 2000).

The vocabulary of special languages is documented in specialized lexicography and terminological dictionaries and is supported today by electronic terminology-management systems, but special languages are not limited to vocabulary (Sager, McDonald, and Dungworth 1980, Byrne 2006, Felber and Budin 1989). Special-language terminology is embedded in general language, and linguistic communities have their own expectations regarding conventions and constraints associated with specific text varieties. These include preferences for certain syntactic forms and idiomatic and collocational usage, as well as varying degrees of formality. As one instance among many, where British English favours passive voice and nominalized verbs (Sager et al. 1980, Ahmad and Rogers 2001), American English, particularly in technical writing, prefers semantically expressive verbs (e.g. *manipulate*, *fabricate*) as opposed to sequestering verbal action in nominalized forms (*manipulation*, *fabrication*) (Byrne 2006, Delisle et al. 1999). Although passives are commonly used in pure science writing to report reproducible results, they give way to a prescriptive demand for active voice in popular science and technical writing. The translation process is informed by the tensions that exist between SL and TL conventions, and by recasting strategies adopted to satisfy end-user expectations.

### 17.2.2 Usage register

The term ‘register’ is polysemic. On the one hand, it is sometimes equated with the special language per se as ‘an open-ended set of varieties (or styles) of language typical of occupational fields, such as [...] medical language, technical language, etc.’ (Trosborg 1997: 5). More commonly, however, text or term register is associated with field of discourse (Quirk 1985) or levels of formality: ‘very formal, formal, neutral, informal, very informal’.<sup>2</sup> ISO 12620: 1999 defined the data category/register/as a ‘classification indicating the relative level of language individually assigned to a lexeme or term or to a text type’, with the permissible values: *neutral*, *technical*, *in-house*, *bench-level*, *slang*, *vulgar*, sometimes expanded to include *formal*, *colloquial*, etc.

‘Situational diversity’ (Sager and Nkwenti-Azeh 1989: 19) can also dictate division into sub-categories to meet end-user expectations depending on the roles of participants in a given speech act (including acts of text production and reception):

- peer-to-peer scientific communication (professional journals, books, scholarly papers, etc.);
- scientist to skilled practitioner (oral and written communications, frequently in instructive mode);
- skilled practitioners addressing technicians (e.g. engineers to specialized technical personnel; medical doctors to medical technicians);
- specialists to lay people (oral and written explanations, evaluations, sometimes in instructive or persuasive mode, e.g. medical brochures on how to lose weight);
- science writers addressing the educated, interested lay public (popular science articles, web pages with high levels of information content);
- specialists addressing educated laity (health care providers treating educated patients)
- specialists addressing laity who have issues involving education, dialect, ethnicity, personal life experience (healthcare providers treating less educated, unsophisticated patients who may harbour suspicions about modern medical practice);
- laity and end users discussing Sci-Tech topics (medical issues, technological products, software, etc.) among themselves, possibly reflecting traditional prejudices.

Differences in usage register can trigger variations in terminology and style, as well as in the general language matrix surrounding special language. Depending on situational factors and the projected target audience, a given concept may be designated by variant terms reflecting different registers within the same special language. For instance, *tummy*, *stomach*, *gut*, *belly*, and even a few others might occur appropriately in different situational contexts. These factors affect target-term choice—English *appendix* might be translated in a specialized text in German as *Appendix*, but as *Blind darm* for lay readers. Thus the myth of mononymy and monosemy (univocality), which would banish synonymy from special languages, only applies in narrow contexts, such as standards and patents, for consistency within a given document, or when using rigidly defined controlled language (Controlled English 2007, NAMAHN 2001).

Furthermore, written Sci-Tech texts and documents exist in the environment of spoken discourse within a

discipline. For pure science, there may be very little difference in usage between the two modes. Along the continuum towards technology, however, spoken discourse may reflect lower registers, and in cases involving manufacturing, processing, and end-user application, regional dialects and sociolects are often introduced.

### 17.3 Text Classification (Type and Variety)

Usage register is at least partly determined by issues of text type and text variety (genre), a distinction based on the German concepts of *Texttyp* (categorization of the intention or function of a text or text segment) and *Textsorte* (class of texts based on common regularities in style, vocabulary, presentation, and intention, i.e. communication practices; see Nord 1997: 53). The relationship between text type and variety is intersecting rather than hierarchic. Sci-Tech translators need pragmatic guidance in this regard rather than conflicting theory, for identifying type and variety is crucial for the final translation product. Neubert and Shreve conflate the two aspects of classification as the manipulation and combination of ‘textual features necessary to make the text an instance of the [chosen] text type in the target language community’ (1992: 126).

#### 17.3.1 Text types

As noted, text types reflect the *intention* of the author as a sender of a speech act (Sager et al. 1980: 24) or the *function* of the text itself (Bühler 1965, Reiss and Vermeer 1984/1991, Nord 1997). Rough consensus categories include:

- informative: factual texts focused on content; dubbed ‘referential’ by Nord because they refer to real-world objects;
- expressive: often literary texts, but also associated by Sager with evaluative texts, thus linking them to Sci-Tech;
- appellative, persuasive: including advertising, as well as directive, instructional texts;
- phatic: usually embedded fragmentary elements that employ metacommunicative rapport between the author or voice of the text and the receiver.

Prevalence of these types varies across the Sci-Tech continuum, with informative texts predominant for pure science and evaluative texts common in review articles. Persuasive elements play a role in defending controversial positions or when exhorting the public to accept scientific findings, for example to adopt healthy life styles, protect the environment, or combat global warming. Some popular writers of scientific texts (e.g. Rachel Carson, Steven Pinker) interleave pure science with persuasive or even phatic elements.

Although phatic elements are rare in pure science texts, they sometimes slip in subtly: a factual report on the findings of obesity studies in Germany reports that ‘a higher percentage of Germans are overweight or obese than Americans (!).’ The inserted exclamation mark in an otherwise non-phatic, non-persuasive text (along with later repetition of this finding) addresses an anticipated reader preconception that obesity is a more prevalent problem in America than anywhere else. The use of phatic reference increases in instructions and science-related advertising (pharmaceutical commercials, etc.), and may vary according to language-specific expectations. Interestingly, it is more common in German popular-science writing, which can be more entertainment-oriented than much Anglophone science writing, although variations abound. *Scientific American* or the *New York Times* science section maintain a more detached scientific register than do technology blurbs and reports in *Wired*, for instance. Translators working along this sliding scale must study TL parallel texts carefully to adapt the TT effectively, and corpus studies can be instructive in documenting usage.

#### 17.3.2 Text varieties

Text varieties have been related to special-language levels: theoretical, experimental, applied sciences → technology, manufacturing, consumption → advertising, etc. (Hoffmann 1974, Buchholz 1978, Sager et al. 1980). Trosborg (1997) and her contributors provide a broad spectrum of considerations, as does Byrne, who focuses most of her book on heterofunctional strategies for into-English translation of technical brochures, informed by insights from technical communications and cognitive science (Byrne 2006). Velasco (2008) develops a comprehensive view from an Iberian perspective. Göpferich's matrix of ‘Written Text Varieties for Science and

Scientific, Technical, and Medical Translation

Technology' provides the most useful pragmatic framework for working translators (Göpferich 1995). Figure 17.1 presents an instrumental translation of her chart, updated by electronic publication aspects and with the addition of a new row representing translation-specific varieties.

The matrix embodies criteria discussed above, including subject field, register, text type and text variety, but also delves deeper into subtypes while avoiding any futile attempt to produce exhaustive lists. Göpferich includes modes and styles of production (e.g. simply printed text vs. publications with high print values). Viewed from the upper left to the lower right, the chart traverses the Sci-Tech continuum, starting from formal scholarly research intended for peer-to-peer communication and progressing in the direction of plain text instructions for end users of technological products.

Five column headings divide the continuum into primary communicative functions. The boundary setting off 'legal texts and standards' demonstrates their dual legal/scientific text typology. Standards and government regulations presume discourse directed from authoritative bodies, primarily to practitioners, manufacturers, and service providers. Patents are declarative and descriptive, and also comply with rigid formal constraints designed to prevent ambiguity. Standards and patents alike tend to use different vocabulary from other text varieties pertaining to the same subject. User-friendliness and common usage are sacrificed in favour of close intertextual reference to existing standards and patents (prior art). Likewise, laws and legal regulations frequently create new terms, which over time gain legally binding currency.

Texts classified as 'leading-edge' scholarship of discovery report the development of novel material based on what is already known by domain experts. Translation of these texts supports dissemination of new science to a broad international audience, but also poses challenges for non-expert translators because their knowledge base rarely corresponds to that of subject specialists and requires in-depth research in order to produce effective equifunctional TTs (Wright and Wright 1999). Translation direction for science texts is discussed in section 17.5 below.

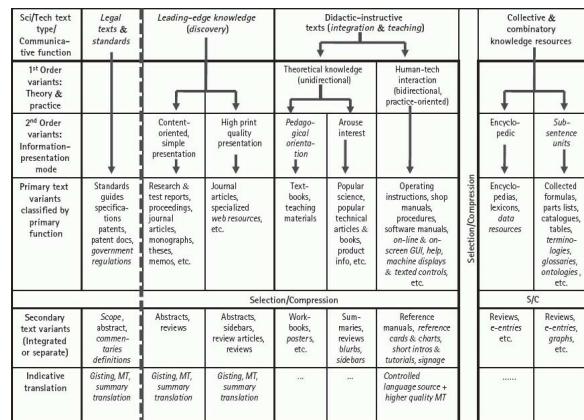


Figure 17.1. Continuum of scientific and technical texts; based on chart from Göpferich (1995). Italics indicate instrumental modifications in the chart.

Figure 17.1 differentiates scientific texts according to presentation values, separating content-oriented texts with minimal print values from published works where layout and display features play a stronger role. It should perhaps be noted that given the current sophistication of word-processing, web design, and desktop publishing applications, the gap between 'simple' reports and theses on the one hand and 'print-quality' articles and web pages on the other is rapidly narrowing. In some areas of science, 'pure content' documents produced without the benefit of high-quality colour photography and graphics have become rare (e.g. in highly visual fields like botany or crystallography).

'Didactic-instructive' texts, on the other hand, do not assume significant prior knowledge, except as a function of curricular articulation. Pedagogic materials provide fundamental knowledge of the subject covered, along with detailed terminology, definitions, and common synonyms. They usually start with basics and expand in logical, linear fashion to more complex, state-of-the-art treatment of the topic at hand.

Texts with a pedagogical orientation are classified by Göpferich as ‘mnemotechnically organized’—a non-transparent term that has been adapted here for the targeted audience of practising translators. The original term

focuses on presentational features such as summary paragraphs, study guides, and review questions, all common to textbook style. The emphasis here is on full, logical presentation of subject-area knowledge, whereby the text itself supports knowledge acquisition by the translator.

Public interest in innovative science and technology is high. Consequently, scientific writing is ‘translated’ into popular-science writing by technical communicators and ‘science writers’ who, although they are frequently well trained in the scientific method and style, are not themselves involved in scholarship of discovery. The distinction mirrors the difference between the German terms *Forschung* and *Recherche*, which does not exist in English and French, where a single term (*research/recherche*) suffices for both concepts. *Forschung* implies original, often experimental or empirical, investigation to create new knowledge, whereas *Recherche* accesses, evaluates, and reflects upon existing resources. In this light, popular-science writing incorporates the findings of original research and ‘dumbs them down’ to present them to a defined lay audience. As will become evident in 17.5.2, language direction and language politics play a significant role in this process.

‘Human technology interaction’ accounts for the delivery to end users of information generated by applied science, engineering, and technology. Examples include tech-oriented instructions, usually with a narrow, clearly defined focus, involving a concrete object (how to operate a device) or procedure (how to perform a task). Stylistic principles laid down by the originally Anglophone formal discipline of technical communication strongly influence both terminology and presentational features. The clarity of the ST can severely affect the quality of the TT. Some government regulations stringently dictate ‘plain text’ style and legally binding information content designed to guarantee safe and effective use of products. In this regard, translators must be aware of both SL and TL constraints in order to fulfil such regulations.

‘Encyclopedic’ and ‘sub-sentence’ resources were once the province of hard-copy texts. In current authoring and translation production venues, these resources are frequently embedded in the computerized document production environment, both locally and on the web, and are dynamically updated using software solutions to keep pace with workflow.

### 17.4 Specifying the Translation Work Order

The previous discussion deals in a translation-neutral way with language, text, and content features that must be identified for both the SL and the TL, but does not indicate who makes these decisions. First it must be understood that most Sci-Tech translation occurs in the context of the translation industry. Byrne attributes 90 per cent of all translation to Sci-Tech, a rough but credible guess, which probably includes localization (Byrne 2006: 2; Chapter 18 below). In this marketplace, translation is not just an intellectual activity—it is a commercial one as well. With rare exceptions, Sci-Tech translations are prepared as works made for hire, based on a commercial transaction between a translation requester and a translation service provider (TSP; LSP in the case of localization service provider). Translations are frequently billed by the word or standard line, which triggers a view of translation as a kind of commodity that can be offered for bid like bushels of corn.

The semi-automation of the translation process entails terminology management and translation memory, localization and project-management tools (Chapter 30 below). Translation is often closely integrated as an industry partner in the overall content-management and delivery environment, which has inspired the adoption of industry standards and metrics and fostered the notion of the ‘translation factory’ (Schäler 2004). However, reflecting professional consensus, American and European standards for translation focus on services, with emphasis on process more than product per se (ASTM F 2575-06, 2006; CEN’s EN-15038:2006). Quality assurance (QA) emphasizes clearly defined, secure, and capable processes, taking precedence over quality control (QC), although QC practices such as editing and review remain in place.

Commercial translation is not just the act of a single individual, the translator. Defined roles (‘stakeholders’) include:

- (author/originator): not cited; frequently uninvolved;
- requester: commissioner of the translation (*Auftraggeber*); individual or entity requesting the translation;
- project manager (PM): individual or possibly group of individuals responsible for coordinating the translation

project; PMs are usually members of a TSP team, but savvy requesters sometimes perform the PM function themselves;

- translation service provider (TSP): entity or individual (e.g. translation company or individual translator) supplying the translation;
- editor ('reviser' in EN-15038), proof reader, and (third-party) reviewer: roles responsible for checking the translation for linguistic accuracy and TL adequacy;
- end user: consumer, the target audience for the translation.

Although these roles are spelled out individually, the service functions can be conflated in a single individual, with the caveat that the CEN standard requires that the reviser be a second person. When initiating a Sci-Tech translation, some one or more of these stakeholders classifies the text according to the criteria discussed above and specifies technical issues such as format and tool use. In the best-case scenario, authors internationalize the ST for translation (stripping out problematic culture- and language-specific elements) and coordinate with the TSP via the PM. Authors are, however, seldom aware their texts will be translated, and even if they know, they are ignorant of translation issues. Assuming that the requester knows the target audience, s/he might state the relevant specifications in a work order (the translation 'brief' or 'commission', *Auftrag*), which may be a simple purchase order or a formal contract. Alas, requesters are sometimes clueless about the ST language or text variety, and are even more likely to be unfamiliar with TL requirements. As a consequence, PMs and TSPs usually determine requirement criteria in consultation with the requester and set down specifications for TT quality assessment. The primary purpose of the ASTM Guide is to outline procedures for this process, although it often takes place in a fairly informal way. The requester—TSP relationship is not unlike a client/patient approaching an attorney or physician: it is the professional who identifies the problem and negotiates the required service with the client's collaboration.

Figure 17.1 describes the text variety, but does not provide guidance on transfer issues between ST and TT. It would be naive to assume that Sci-Tech texts are devoid of cultural content or that their translation involves straightforward transfer. Differences in stylistic constraints aside, there is also the possibility that requesters may want to shift the function between ST and TT based on their intentions vis-à-vis the target audience. Despite classic discussions of fidelity to the ST, best practices provide a foundation for this kind of choice.

The pragmatic work-order process is nonetheless grounded in modern translation theory. The first translation theorist to single out scientific translation is perhaps Schleiermacher (1813/2002). He cites *Geschäftsleben*, *Wissenschaft*, and *Kunst*—commercial life (including trade and probably much of what we would classify as manufacturing and technology), science, and the verbal arts—and adds diplomatic relations and more complex legal texts as a kind of afterthought. Commercial and diplomatic texts he relegates to *Dolmetschen* (interpreting), which he acknowledges to be oral mediation and equates with simple transfer (*Übertragung*). Differences in language at this level are 'insignificant' and the use of individual words (terminology) is clearly fixed by rules and custom. In his view, any competent bilingual can do this. Works of art and science, on the other hand, demand *andere Kräfte und Geschicklichkeiten* (other powers and skills), and are the venue of the true translator (*der eigentliche Übersetzer*). When translating science, the translator employs paraphrase instead of adaptation (both problematic suggestions for the modern translator); but be that as it may, the implication is that such translations involve moving the text in the direction of the reader to create a fluent TT. In House's terms (1977/1981), this creates a 'covert translation' in keeping with the contention that pragmatic texts, if 'well translated [...] will not be recognized as translations' (Neubert and Shreve 1992: 125).

From Schleiermacher, there is a great leap forward across at least a century and a half of theoretical disregard for Sci-Tech translation to twentieth-century Skopos theory and functionalism (Reiss and Vermeer 1984/1991, Reiss 2000, Vermeer 2000, Nord 1997). Nord introduces the notion of the 'instrumental translation', which creates a target language instrument for a new communicative interaction between the source-culture sender (the author) and a target-culture audience (the end users) based on the perceived needs of that audience, which may differ from those of the SL audience. As a consequence, translations may be 'equifunctional' (ST and TT needs and intentions are equal) or 'heterofunctional' (needs and intentions differ). It is precisely at this juncture that requesters and TSPs must take hard decisions when specifying a translation work order. Of course, many jobs do require equifunctional strategies, but heterofunctional approaches are not uncommon. Examples include:

- 'for information' translation of a patent retaining SL conventions without adaptation to TL practice vs. patent translation that introduces variations in form and convention necessary to file the patent in another locale;

- adaptation of pure science ST materials to popular science TT articles;
- ‘gisting’ (‘indicative translation’—possibly inelegant, summary translation, sometimes produced via machine translation) for information purposes or as a triage tool for determining which of many texts require more detailed translation.

Work orders may specify that either the individual translator(s) or the TSP shall be certified in order to assure high quality performance and process values. The CEN standard creates a framework for formal TSP certification, patterned on industry practice for other services (e.g. LICS 2009, Jonas 2008). Assessment theory postulates that a set of translator competences will provide further prognosis for TT quality. Orozco and Albir (2002) provide a list of prominent theoretical sources. ASTM F2575-06 (2006) enumerates competences, among others: SL-TL proficiency; relevant experience; references and sample translations; university degree or certificate in translation; certification from a recognized professional body; task-related, subject field, and text-type competences; and translation technology skills. Stejskal (2004) provides exhaustive information on individual certification worldwide. Despite stress on quality, the market teeters in a precarious position, balancing high costs for quality against disproportionate demand with respect to available resources, efforts to provide moderately acceptable machine translation, and fierce global competition to curtail costs while increasing output.

### 17.5 The Flow of Power: Language Demographics and Translation Direction

It is axiomatic that dominance in knowledge, customs or technology has major repercussions upon language relationships. What is seen as superior tends to flow into what is seen as inferior; one may view the process in terms of either push (imposition) or pull (borrowing). Whoever leads the field gets to create the words that capture the emerging concepts and products. (McMorrow 1998: 69)

Pym (2000: 79) coins ‘intranslation’ and ‘extranlation’ for this forceful give-and-take.

#### 17.5.1 Historical perspectives

Fischbach calls translators who drag or shove powerful bits of knowledge across linguistic and cultural boundaries the ‘pollinators of science’ and the ‘handmaidens of science’ (1993: 89, 91). Schleiermacher (1813) also uses vegetative metaphors: transplantation (*Verpflanzung*), propagation (*Fortpflanzung*), and transformation (*Verwandlung*): transplantation of foreign texts improves the fertility and climate of the TL soil, both in terms of ideas and the generation of vocabulary. In line with McMorrow’s metaphor, however, translators act as knowledge engineers, manipulating (sometimes arbitrarily) the sluice gates to control the flood of content from areas of high concentration to fill the voids where lower knowledge pressure exists.

Historically, the ebb and flow of Sci-Tech translation across linguistic boundaries has rarely been equal, at times producing a tidal surge in one direction or another. In some cases, one linguistic community rushes to devour knowledge from another (e.g. Roman expropriation of Greek wisdom), and in other colonial scenarios, content is imposed on other cultures, sometimes in the form of translation, but more insidiously via the suppression of target language and culture.

To cite one historical migration of ideas, European tradition recounts the tale of the great Greek philosopher polymath Aristotle, who is said to have penned the array of texts that now constitute the core of European civilization. Lost to the West in late antiquity, they were translated eventually into Arabic and preserved intact, only to be retranslated during the Renaissance into Latin and the then burgeoning vernaculars, thus achieving an almost miraculous lossless/gainless roundtrip whereby Western wisdom was at last returned intact to its rightful heirs.

While Christian apologists in particular suppressed any indication that non-European, non-Greek content was entrained in the process, modern Islamic scholars present a sharply contrasting picture, where virtually all aspects of scientific and technical progress derive solely from Arabic contributions: ‘agriculture; the domestication of animals [...] food, clothing and transportation; spinning and weaving; building; drainage and irrigation; road-making and the wheel; metal-working, and standard tools and weapons of all kinds; sailing ships; coinage; abstract thought and mathematics’—all are attributed to knowledge translated from Arabic sources (Zaimeche 2004: 4).

The truth probably lies somewhere in between, along the circuitous route from one hegemonic language to the next, from Greek to imperial Latin to Syriac to Arabic, and then back to medieval ecclesiastical Latin and the European vernaculars. Thanks to teams of translators and oral interpreters, along with subject specialists, the ‘Greek’ legacy was enriched along the way by nativization, ‘redaction’, and emendations on the part of untold translators, copyists, and commentators—Nestorians, Jews, Persians, Mozarabs, and Christian Europeans as well as Arabs—drawing on sources as far away as India and China (Montgomery 2000, Pym 2000).

Each transitional link in this extended chain of knowledge transfer requires exponential expansion in order to accommodate the richer range of information. This is true of each language in turn as the tide of ideas is forced into an initially inadequate vessel. Hence translation does indeed play midwife to special languages, assisting in the birth of vocabularies across the spectrum of subject fields. Pym (2000: 79) implies that the translation into Castilian of critical texts in science and philosophy results in the creation not only of the language itself but of the nation-state as well. Identifying Aristotle as more likely to have been a great librarian and teacher than the author of all the texts associated with him, Montgomery asserts that ‘the tale of Aristotle [...] and the great library, past and present, suggests that in the history of knowledge, the power of translation is commensurate with the power of the word’ (2000: 13).

### 17.5.2 English as the hegemonic language of science

A critical factor affecting translation directionality is the fact that English today is the predominant language for leading-edge science. Not only are most scholarly articles originally published in English, but a relative low percentage of these articles is translated into other languages because worldwide, scientists have adopted English as their working language, both in written and spoken form.

The ramifications of this situation are manifold. This chapter has cited differences in SL and TL stylistic constraints. For instance, English Sci-Tech texts present known information first and carefully and coherently move on to the novel, creating a strong cohesive, linear focus throughout the text. German texts may commence by stating the novel, and then substantiate assertions by introducing the known on which they depend, proceeding inductively and not without digression, finally to reach the crux of the discussion at the end of a paper. The progression is still approximately linear, but the path is not the same. Japanese texts, in contrast, toss elements together in a stir-fry of ideas, often leaving the reader to deduce the main point from the circular presentation of ideas (Rudlin 2008).

Be all that as it may, peer-reviewed scientific articles adhere today to English conventions. Not only does everyone write in English; Anglophone editors (UK, US, Australia, India, etc.) typically occupy gatekeeper roles in the review process, imposing English criteria for scientific writing. Regarding technology, Anglophone standards for technical communication have become the norm and are even taught in university writing programmes, even in non-Anglophone countries. These factors affect not only how texts are translated, but also what gets translated.

The hegemonic role of English affects different languages in a number of ways. In some smaller languages (Dutch, Scandinavian languages, etc.), English is increasingly the language of university science instruction or even at advanced secondary levels, both in order to prepare students for English-speaking professional environments but also because it is often uneconomical to publish state-of-the-art textbooks for a relatively limited readership. Languages that do not offer a full spectrum of text varieties may lack the highest scientific registers of technical terminology. This means that new knowledge in these languages first becomes available at the level of popular science, skipping both the language of scientific discovery and the in-depth pedagogical approach of instructional texts. These issues also affect spoken discourse as well as written texts, as scientists in some countries even tend even just among themselves to discuss Sci-Tech topics in English.

Popular-science writers working in languages other than English act as translators of a sort, in that they base their work on English texts but write in a TL. Thus knowledge transfer from pure to popular science involves heterofunctional translation to a lower level of special-language communication (from the expert to the educated lay level). Here the onus for generating pertinent TL vocabulary may lie with science writers rather than with subject specialists. English borrowings and loan translations in many cases supplant native forms, and synonymy and unmotivated terms may proliferate.

The prevalence of translated texts as the norm for science writing only reinforces the influence of English

constraints in Sci-Tech writing in the TL, and efforts to use comparative corpus linguistics for collocational analysis or other applications suffer from the dearth of texts at the pure-science level and tainted stylistics at the popular level. Even prospects for improvements in machine translation (MT) are affected by this imbalance because the most promising trends in MT involve the aggregation of extensive, high-quality comparative corpora.

Another facet of English dominance involves the use of English as a so-called pivot language in multilingual translation and technical writing environments. Even when texts do originate in other languages, it is also common to generate an initial English translation, which then serves as the SL for translation into other languages, further enforcing the influence of English as the norm.

English dominance and the resulting advantage to first- and second-language Anglophones has not gone without complaint from the international community (e.g. Ammon 2001), but proposals to adopt some minor language (e.g. Albanian or the like, in order to equalize the challenge of working in a foreign language), to adopt Esperanto, or to impose a tax on Anglophones to compensate for the cost that others bear for language training, editing, and similar efforts, are unlikely to overcome the ‘hegemonic critical mass’ enjoyed by English (Sue Wright 2004). As a consequence, it has become a language of ‘transnational use’ and a ‘utilitarian language of contact’, even where no English speakers are involved in communication. Anglicization of the language of science broadens the gap between the scientific community and the lay public by adding linguistic distance on top of the natural knowledge-related distance between the two poles. From a pragmatic standpoint, however, it is probable that despite the investment required to acquire and adapt to the lingua franca, a multilingual approach, although potentially more equitable, would entail costs and delays for translation and interpreting that would likely outweigh any advantages gained. Ammon suggests that the ultimate solution is to evolve a new standard for ‘bad English’—which some would argue exists already in European English. Despite the fact that this hegemony ‘stills the voice of science in languages other than English [...] it cannot be said that the ascendancy of English is the outcome of a conspiracy; it is merely the outcome of the coincidence of accidental forces’ (Ammon 2001: 19).

### 17.5.3 Language and terminology planning

Even if scientists use English, mother-tongue terminology is critical for the dissemination of scientific information and for stimulating interaction between science and technology, thus rendering technical expertise accessible to all sectors of the population. Furthermore, the importance of teaching at elementary and intermediate levels in the native language of children has been repeatedly demonstrated: ‘longitudinal studies show that not only do students [who start out in mother-tongue or, in some cases, bilingual education programs] catch up, but they also often surpass their peers both academically and linguistically’ (Zelasko 2010).

In order to translate effectively, either at the science-to-science level or across any of the technology levels, mediating between a language with rich special languages and those that are inadequately developed requires the consistent creation of new terminology. This necessity parallels the historical precedence cited above, and it will be haphazard unless it is planned. Sue Wright cites Halliday as contrasting ‘language planning’ with natural ‘language development’: ‘language planning means introducing design processes and design features into a system (namely language) which is naturally evolving’ (Halliday 2001: 177; Wright 2004: 1). ISO CD 29383–1 (2008) defines language planning as ‘all conscious efforts to affect the structure or function of language varieties’.

Sometimes language and terminology planning focuses on the purity of language, but in many cases there is a clear necessity to create whole sets of terminology in order to communicate basic science at even the most rudimentary levels. South Africa, for instance, states a variety of reasons for providing equal terminological coverage in its eleven official languages (with current efforts to add Sign to the mix): equitable use of official languages, accommodation of linguistic diversity, as well as capacity for teaching, for information retrieval, and for manipulation in native tongues (Alberts 2008). Mother-tongue early child education is a recurring theme, accompanied by translation of school texts in the sciences and mathematics into native tongues (Antia 2000), underscoring two sides of the language- and terminology-planning coin: the creation of vocabulary enables translation for educational purposes, and the use of planned terminology in the schools disseminates new terminology (‘acquisition planning’: Wright 2004: 1).

English is not, however, solely responsible for language death. English has indeed been involved in the suppression or destruction of languages in its immediate sphere of influence (e.g. aboriginal languages in colonial

settings, Celtic languages in Britain and Ireland), yet other majority languages play or have played a similar role (Spanish and French, also in colonial settings, Chinese in non-Han-speaking areas, Russian throughout the former Soviet Union, etc.). Language planning has worked well in tandem with the translation community in places like Quebec and Catalonia, but the high costs involved are daunting for poor countries struggling to preserve dozens of languages. The challenge of translating science into endangered languages is compounded by the digital divide, but by the same token, web capability may provide a medium for less expensive dissemination of knowledge. Unicode coverage for more and more scripts, expansion of language codes to nearly 7,000 languages, and the introduction of standard operating systems in indigenous languages are all steps designed to facilitate the dissemination of digital information in a broader range of languages (Unicode 2008, ISO 639-3:2007, NRSI 2008, UCB/SEI 2008). Even the best intentions, however, must be balanced by efforts to spread literacy in the vernacular. For instance, Microsoft's introduction of an operating system in Wolof was balanced by the fact that literate speakers of Wolof are more likely fully literate in French than in their mother tongue (Voice of America 2007). Wolof, however, is a sturdy language with more than three million first- or second-language speakers. Very small, isolated languages pose more complex problems, even raising the ethical issue that technological solutions may actually undermine some primitive cultures they are designed to save, and some well-meaning programmes, such as 'One Laptop per Child', can easily become mired in controversy (OLPC 2008).

### **Further Reading and Relevant Resources**

Sager et al. (1980) remains the most comprehensive introduction to special languages, although it focuses almost exclusively on English. Terminology and terminology management are well covered in Wright and Budin (1997, 2000), although the second volume, with its emphasis on electronic solutions for terminology management, gradually grows outdated with time.

One area that this chapter does not attempt to cover is language-pair-specific works designed as textbooks and handbooks for neophyte Sci-Tech translators. These resources are not difficult to find for major languages, but given their diversity, it is critical that they be individually evaluated by experts in the languages in question. Hence they are not listed here.

Nord (1997) offers a succinct introduction to text type and variety, as well as, most importantly, functionalism.

Delisle and Woodsworth (1995) provide a generic overview of translation history with limited emphasis on science and technology. Montgomery (2000) compiles a fascinating account of a narrow slice of the Aristotelian tradition, viewing in great detail the development of treatises on astronomy and astrology, augmented by traditions in China and Japan. Pym's account of translation in the so-called Toledo School of translators includes, but is not limited to, issues involving Sci-Tech translation.

CEN EN 15038:2006 is available from the various national bodies that have adopted it, for example <http://www.cen.eu/esearch/CatWeb.aspx?id=1275852>. ASTM F2575–2006 is available online from ASTM International at <http://www.astm.org/Standards/F2575.htm>. National and regional bodies offering individual certification programmes usually provide detailed information on their websites, e.g. ATA and ATIO (both 2008). The Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) has also published CAN/CGSB-131.10–2008, *Translation Services*, which specifies the procedural requirements for delivering translation services to the Canadian federal government.

Sue Wright (University of Portsmouth, not to be confused with Sue Ellen Wright, Kent State University) and Antia provide in-depth views of language policy and language planning (Wright 2004, Antia 2000), with Wright outlining the evolution of English as the language of science.

Ammon (2001) offers an excellent orientation to issues involving English as the language of science, but interested readers should explore evolving new trends as well.

### **Notes:**

(1) Wikipedia, 'Technology transfer'.

(2) Wikipedia, 'Register'.

### **Sue Ellen Wright**

Sue Ellen Wright is Professor of German in the Kent State University Institute for Applied Linguistics, and teaches computer applications for translators and German-English technical translation. She is ATA-certified for German-English translation. She is active as a terminology trainer and consultant, and is co-compiler with Gerhard Budin of *The Handbook of Terminology Management*.

## Oxford Handbooks Online

### Advertising and Localization

Christophe Declercq

The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies

*Edited by Kirsten Malmkjær and Kevin Windle*

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#### Abstract and Keywords

Localization refers to taking a product and making it linguistically and culturally appropriate to the target locale where it will be used and sold. Within global marketing, localization is positioned alongside translation, internationalization, globalization, and standardization. Localization happens at many levels, one of which is translation. In marketing, companies approach their own corporate identities through their different advertising needs and the way they envisage their products, the world, and the various possible locales. In marketing across cultures, the issue of what actually constitutes a culture persists and is generally linked to a geopolitical territory. The advertising and success of a product is subject to both cultural and socio-economic constraints, hence the need to take into account the cultural specificity of each context when designing a marketing strategy.

Keywords: localization, culturally appropriate, global marketing, advertising, translation, geopolitical territory

Localization nowadays is based around strong business models; companies try to use the globalization era to increase their profits. Such business models are based, to a certain extent, on cultural models.

(J. Maroto, p.c., 2008)

#### **18.1 Introduction**

Within translation studies, localization occupies a peculiar place. Despite a variety of definitions, it remains imperfectly understood, partly because it incorporates advanced computing skills. Nevertheless, from a practical point of view, localization could hardly be more firmly established.

Localization roughly involves three major fields: multilingual translation of complex technical texts, software localization, and audiovisual localization (subtitling, games, etc.). It involves a considerable amount of computing power but is much more than the mere application of technical skills: it takes elements from cultural studies and marketing strategies as well. In fact, localization is also a business model. Within global marketing, localization is positioned alongside translation, internationalization, globalization, and standardization.<sup>1</sup> The key, then, is to approach the main concepts and convey the reasoning behind them. By doing so, not only will the relationship between localization and translation become clearer, but relevant elements of global and corporate economics and the purposes of local marketing will also become part of the localization story.

#### **18.2 Setting the scene: localization versus translation**

The major issue in explaining the concept of localization is its relationship with translation. A first step in positioning both concepts in relation to each other is that localization happens at many levels, one of which is translation. What actually constitutes localization is stipulated in the definition often used by LISA,<sup>2</sup> the Localization Industry

Standards Association:<sup>3</sup> ‘Localization involves taking a product and making it linguistically and culturally appropriate to the target locale (country region and language) where it will be used and sold’ (Esselink 2000: 3). In response to this description, translators point to the fact that a translation also includes linguistic and cultural transcreation. If not, the translation can hardly satisfy the needs of the client or the expectations of the target audience. The terminological issues involved in describing translation and localization are acknowledged by LISA, who clearly state that localization goes beyond translation as it ‘also involves more than just making the product readily available in the form and language of the target market. It must speak to the target audience, based on its cultural norms and their worldview’ (LISA 2005: 1). For the localization industry, translation is only a part of a localization project, and any further analysis of what actually constitutes localization is very practice-oriented.

In practice, localization finds itself within a formal framework, which can be referred to as a ‘continuum of complex file formats’. At one end a single translator works on a text, aided only by a word processor, dictionaries, and lists of terms, perhaps using a translation memory tool to convert a specific file format back and forth. At the other end are software localization projects, which involve thorough project management, translating software strings, re-engineering the localized application, and above all a wide variety of computer programs. Software localization entails translation of software strings, engineering of the software, testing of the localized program, and much more. Between the two ends are the very common multilingual projects of technical texts in complex file formats. Those projects require proper management; they involve file management, as well as a number of people with various responsibilities. Files originate from software packages like FrameMaker or InDesign, or may be plain HTML, XML, or help files. Whether it concerns a software application, an audiovisual product, or a multilingual project, localization always takes place at three levels. At the translation level, textual material and text strings are translated, and these are then re-engineered at the technological level. The third level involves cultural preferences. This also involves computing skills: a localizer has to know which graphic elements, font size, and font type are applicable to a specific target locale, but also has to be able to apply the skills appropriately on a technological level, using various applications such as Catalyst, Passolo, Dreamweaver, Photoshop, InDesign, or Flash.

### Case 1. The global marketing adventures of a French car

In the award-winning commercial ‘The Sculptor’, an Indian man ‘sculpts’ a car of a local brand into the shape of a Peugeot 206. The commercial, designed by the Milan-based agency Euro RSCG MCM, stresses an image of youth, joyfulness, and innovation. Its British equivalent, the 206 commercial, shows a father, driving an old Peugeot, helping his young son rob a bank so that he can afford a 206.

A Swedish commercial for the Peugeot series,<sup>4</sup> produced by Morkman, incorporates the French car in the regional *Bilen I Dit Liv* campaign ('a car for life'), which could suit target audiences beyond Scandinavia. Plan8, a Stockholm-based media company, commented on the ad that ‘the best way of thinking through big questions or just how your day has been’ is ‘when you’re travelling, listening to your favourite music? Very soothing’ (Plan8 2008). The mission of the Swedish campaign to sell the 307 convertible, on the other hand, was ‘to get the target group to start to think about buying a convertible in the middle of the winter in Sweden’ (ICOM Europe, n.d.). Both the Plan8 analysis and the ICOM mission statement are confirmed by Maroto: ‘you need to keep in mind that car makers are no longer selling cars, but feelings, emotions’ (J. Maroto, p.c., 2008).

Whether the Italian commercial for the Peugeot 207 will succeed anywhere else remains to be seen, as the typical Italian landscapes and scenery may appeal only to Italians and lovers of Italy. Whether the Hungarian Peugeot commercial, with its blunt pseudo-eroticism, will be appropriate anywhere else, remains hypothetical.

By definition, localization aims at a local target audience. It aims to domesticate the source product and by doing so conceal the ‘otherness’ of that product. Localization is highly Skopos-related in as much as the functionality of the source product in the target market is central. According to Maroto, localization even constitutes a new approach to Skopos theory, as it distinguishes between tradition-free products and culture-bound products. When promoted by advertising campaigns informed by local attitudes and cultures, a particular product can be perceived in completely different ways by consumers in different markets (Maroto 2005: 2–8). The distinction effectively

highlights the core dichotomy in marketing: global standardization versus localization.

### 18.3 International territories and global tribes

There can be no localization without internationalization, sometimes also referred to as 'enabling'. On a formal level, internationalization is 'the lead-in activity to localization' (Wright 1998) and entails all the preparations required for a product to be localized. The source product has to be able to handle 'multiple languages and cultural conventions without the need for re-design' (Wright 1998). The entire process of internationalization virtually localizes the product before it is even conceived. An example of unsuccessful internationalization is a software application designed in English for the Finnish market, with drop-down menu boxes which do not allow for an increase in text volume ('text swell') of 10–15 per cent (as Finnish requires more characters than English to convey the equivalent meaning). Internationalization can only succeed when country-dependent information or culture-related technical elements are removed from the initial design before the product is brought onto the market. According to Smith-Ferrier, the list of available cultures for the .NET Framework 2.0 combines cultures known to the .NET Framework with those known to the operating system:

These cultures are fine if the country/language combination that you need is one of the available cultures and if the information for that combination is correct for your application [...] which is why custom cultures were introduced in the .NET framework 2.0. A custom culture is a culture that is defined by an application developer instead of Microsoft. (Smith-Ferrier 2006: 361).

The purpose of internationalization is to prepare a source product that can be localized easily. For this reason, well-internationalized software avoids cultural references and stereotypes that may be unacceptable or incomprehensible in target cultures. When cultural neutrality is observed, it is expected that fewer problems will occur in the design of the application. Therefore the source product remains much the same in all its local versions, and localization costs are reduced. Texin (2002) argues that Microsoft used to maintain such a neutral approach to all Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America, disregarding all varieties. This is contradicted by Microsoft's Garrett McGowan and Francois Liger, who state that, for the user interface of any .NET application, developers should aim at culture-sensitive formatting (McGowan n.d.: 10; Liger n.d.).

'Think global, act local' is not only a motto used often in the localization industry and localization teaching. As the focus is on localization, it is also a mantra a lot of marketeers live by. However, international marketing of products seems to be taking place on two levels. On the one hand it is clearly directed at a specific target locale, while on the other the global image revolves around the source product and how to market it as globally as possible. Before devising an advertising campaign around a brand or product, a global marketing strategy needs to be developed. Although the term 'globalization' itself may seem familiar to many people, the concept behind it varies widely, depending on the environment of those using the term (Wright 1998). One might paraphrase Wright and say that, on a cultural level, internationalization is the 'lead-in activity' for globalization as well. As such, globalization 'involves integrating localization throughout a company, after proper internationalization and product design, as well as marketing, sales, and support in the world market' (LISA in Esselink 2000: 4). One can therefore view globalization as the sum of internationalization and localization. However, globalization brings a fundamental dichotomy: 'to standardize or localize', which in part parallels the 'domestication' discussion in translation studies,<sup>5</sup> although a standardized global brand would not appeal to a target locale if the product remained a 'foreignized' element. It has been argued that globalization can be positioned on one end of a continuum, with standardization at the other (Medina and Duffy 1998). Companies can opt for a standardization approach, where 'the same product is promoted with the same brand name and the same strategy everywhere in the world', or they can choose adaptation or localization 'in order to ensure the accessibility of a campaign to different cultures' (Maroto 2007a). A functionalist and re-creative approach is the best strategy for the localization of advertisements, whether or not one moves from standardized to localized or adheres to a standardized approach. The theme and purpose of an ad need to be borne prominently in mind during the process of transcreating the original version for a new target audience. Localization does not usually occur at the word level. Translating a slogan, which often includes an idiom, a culture-related item, or a pun, more often than not produces an advertising blunder.

According to Adab (2000), translation may follow one of two principles: globalization, 'where a text adopts the lowest common denominators (basic values) for product promotion', and localization, 'which is less cost-effective,

since it involves adaptation of the ST based on culture and language specific mechanisms'. She adds an 'optimum compromise' to this: glocalization, which is 'the production of a globally relevant ST, based on a message that will have similar impacts across different cultural contexts. Such messages will require minimum adaptation, mainly at the level of style and use of language, to be relevant for any single target community' (Adab 2000: 224). Glocalization is indeed a reasonably new concept to denote a balance between globalization and localization, and as such means that many companies no longer have to make the choice. In essence, however, glocalization constitutes a break with the territorial nature of localization and creates an opportunity for the global market to be approached in a more deterritorialized way. This allows for a shift, breaking away from the local nation or regional entity and moving towards transcultural groupings of target audiences.

This is exactly what Smeets says: 'whereas in the past nationalities and their cultural contexts would distinguish target audiences, focus has shifted to "cultural tribes", communities which are all over the world and share some key interests.' As an example, Smeets focuses on 'the older generation in "graying" Europe'. For this target audience, 'the old virtues and cultural differences may be very important.' (P. Smeets, p.c., 2008).

### 18.4 Localization as a business model

Although advertising is by nature a one-way communication, one can argue that the perceived target audience in its entirety influences that message when localization is involved. Goddard (1998) argues that marketing through advertisements in effect forms a specific discourse that not only reflects our cultural values but also contributes much to the construction of identities. The perception of identity-building values and cultural references forms a 'backbook of innate guidelines' advertisers cannot live without. When a global brand is marketed with little local variation, the common value for the target market is very general, and the cultural perceptions aimed at highly generalized. For a more customized or segmented target market, the local requirements are defined, albeit rather passively, by the assembled cultural values of that market.

#### Case 2. Studio 100 and Mega Mindy

Studio 100 is a Belgian company that produces successful children's television series. Formed in 1996 on the local success of a series about a man and his talking dog ('Samson en Gert'), the company has become the major player in its field in Belgium. It has a turnover of about €75 million (2006 figures), over 300 employees, three theme parks, continuous roadshows, several bands, and various other successful series. According to Jo Daris, its Director of International Affairs (p.c., 2008), 'there is no rocket science in trying to localize children's television. Studio 100 distinguishes between pre-school age, up to about seven, and school children, eight to twelve year olds.' For the pre-school age, any series would involve the same core elements and themes, no matter what costume characters are put in: one-dimensional characters, slapstick, recognizable situations and storylines, catch-phrases, gimmicks, and humour. Such pre-school series need localizing on one level only, to match the series as closely as possible to the business plan and aim at the specific local audience.

After a major success with a series in the Netherlands (an almost entirely Dutch team, with final control still in the hands of the Belgian creative director), the company is trying to approach the British market with *Mega Mindy*, another hugely successful series, about a low-key policewoman who, when changing into her alter ego, becomes a major crime-fighter. Studio 100 has localized its pitching leaflets: the UK version has the company information on the first page, whereas this would normally appear on the last page. The sections 'Summary', 'Back Story', and 'Episode Structuring' have been rewritten, and the focus has shifted to introducing the characters and the gadgets used so far—the latter not surprising given the British tradition of Bond gadgets and Daleks.

In marketing, companies approach their own corporate identities through their different advertising needs and the way they envisage their products, the world, and the various possible locales. Wind, Douglas, and Perlmutter (1973) distinguish between four types of companies and respective attitudes: ethnocentric (home country orientation), polycentric (host country orientation), regiocentric (a regional orientation) and geocentric (a global

orientation). This categorization is also known as the EPRG model. 'These attitudes are assumed to reflect the goals and philosophies of the company with respect to international operations and lead to different marketing strategies and planning procedures' (Wind et al. 1973: 14). Companies that use their home base and their own product as the focus of attention do not specifically look for added values in foreign markets. They conduct ethnocentric campaigns that on the whole are (monotonously) standardized. The opposite of these domestic companies are multinational companies, whose polycentric orientation allows a local subsidiary to develop its own marketing strategy. Advertising policy is decided unilaterally. Between these two extremes are companies that view markets as regions (e.g. Scandinavia, the British Isles, the Low Countries, the EU as a whole). The more diverse the region, the more countries and cultures it comprises and the more focus is placed on images alone, as language becomes either redundant or limited to a lingua franca.<sup>6</sup> Geocentric companies, on the other hand, combine elements of the ethnocentric and polycentric ones: they orient their marketing towards the entire world and see the globe as one big potential market, but they also develop an integrated marketing strategy around their product(s). Similarities and differences in markets are recognized and account is taken of local requirements for advertising. Bennett, Blythe, and Alder (2003) acknowledge that many companies try to maintain a standardized tone in their marketing, but also try to maximize the effect of local advertising, effectively providing an integrated communication approach, also known as a marketing mix. However, multinational companies or their products can become so successful that the brand name becomes a common name. Famous examples include standardized advertising for global brands and their slogans, like 'Always Coca Cola' or 'Just do it'.

### 18.5 Cultural models: quantifiable analyses and tickable boxes

At 22, I would have said local stereotypes were in the minds of the persons using cultural models, but after fifteen years in B2B and media, many stereotypes prove to be spot on, however frustrating that might be. Of course I am generalizing again. (L. Goukens, p.c., 2008)

In the light of the discussion of standardization or localization in marketing a product to a specific target audience, i.e. keeping the global brand or adapting it culturally, another issue arises: how to define and if possible quantify culture in the first place. In marketing across cultures, the issue of what actually constitutes a culture persists, especially as the overall 'notion of a culture as the essentialized way of life of a people, and generally linked to a geopolitical territory, continues' (Cronin 2006: 46). The main purpose of defining what constitutes a culture is to apply a definition in a cultural model, implement it in a marketing strategy, and make the 'cultural sensitivities' box tickable. One of the most frequently used cultural models is the work of Geert Hofstede, who has written on both national and organizational cultures.<sup>7</sup> (See also Chapter 27 below.) Using data gathered from IBM employees from many different countries, he developed a cultural model that initially comprised four dimensions, later adding a fifth. His cultural dimensions have in recent years frequently been used in marketing strategies, especially in campaigns involving the creation or localization of webpages. They have been applied by Marcus and Gould (2001) in web design and interface structure and elements.

The first dimension positions countries on an axis called the 'power distance index' (PDI), where inequality is defined by 'the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally' (Hofstede n.d. b). In Asia, China has a higher PDI than Japan. In Europe, Turkey has a higher PDI than any of the Scandinavian countries. Marcus and Gould (2001) believe that a high PDI will be reflected in the interface of a webpage. An Asian website, compared to a Western European one, would show more official logos or seals, structure, and symmetry, and prefer pictures of buildings to pictures of people. The second dimension contrasts individualism (IDV) and collectivism, individualist societies being characterized by much looser ties between individuals than collectivist societies. In their web-design guidelines, Marcus and Gould use the IDV dimension for images of success versus achievement of sociopolitical agendas, youth and action versus age and wisdom, and a sense of innovation and uniqueness versus a sense of tradition and history (2001: 12). 'Another fundamental issue for any society is the distribution of roles between the genders' (Hofstede n.d. b), reflected in the masculinity (MAS) versus femininity dimension. In webpage design, Marcus and Gould believe that the gender-role dimension is reflected by images that stress traditional gender distinctions (or do not), and by navigation that is oriented to exploration and control. More feminine societies prefer webpages with focus on cooperation, freer navigation, and more visual variation. The fourth cultural dimension is the Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI): to what extent do members of a particular culture feel comfortable when they find themselves in a novel, surprising, or unknown situation? Societies with a high UAI tend to avoid uncertainty by

issuing many laws and having many rules, written or unwritten. According to Marcus and Gould, cultures with a high UAI expect simplicity from a webpage and more than one navigation possibility. Among Western countries, hardly anyone scores higher in UAI than Belgium, perhaps because of that country's troubled past and continuing complex political problems. The clarity and variety of options on a Belgian website (often three layers) contrast starkly with sites of English, French, or Dutch origin, which often have only one layer of navigation (beyond the sitemap). After further research, Hofstede added a fifth dimension, long-term orientation (LTO) versus short-term orientation. It has been argued that this fifth dimension is one of the keys to an understanding of Asian cultures, as the long-term orientation there seems to have been influenced by Confucian philosophy (Marcus and Gould 2001: 22). Societies with a high LTO in general focus on practice and patience in achieving results, whereas those with a low LTO focus on truth and the achievement of goals. An archetypal example of low LTO would be any corporate website reflecting the German business approach, matched by the cultural *Grundlichkeit*.

Not only Hofstede himself, but many scholars after him, have stressed that within any cultural framework relativism is necessary, which seems nothing short of an understatement. For one thing, Hofstede has been ranking countries according to these dimensions, effectively making countries synonymous with cultures, which will upset some people. Clearly, the upholders of Basque, Asturian, and Catalan cultures wish to retain their cultural independence within Spain. The same goes for countries that officially comprise several different cultural communities, like Belgium, Canada, and Switzerland. It is difficult to sustain the image that cultures are bounded, unable to evolve, especially 'in a world of extensive flows of images, information, people and commodities' (Cronin 2006: 47). A clear example is the Toyota website for Belgium. Although the Dutch (for Flanders) and French (for Wallonia) versions show much overlap, there are also differences. Strangely enough, those differences become similarities if one compares the Toyota site aimed at the Flemish locale with the Dutch Toyota site, and Toyota Wallonia with Toyota France. There are even slight differences in the use of colour. The same considerations apply to advertising beyond webpages.

The advertising and success of a product 'will be subject to both cultural and socio-economic constraints, hence the need to take into account the cultural specificity of each context when designing a marketing strategy [...] taking into account not only discourse features, but also visual elements and semiotic functions' (Millán-Varela 2004a: 245). An example is the advertising of food and the way local appropriation is reflected in small but important details, usually non-linguistic. Advertising a cheese throughout Europe would not be easy. Not many brands stand out, but types of cheese do (Camembert, Brie, Edam, etc.). A cheese advertisement will most likely focus on connotation and denotation, aiming at the social factor, for instance (people eat cheese together). However, this image already differs within geographically closely related nations. In France, nobody would even consider placing cheese and beer in the same commercial, whereas this would not be uncommon in Belgium, where cheese can even be a main course (a table full of cheese, literally a *kaastafel*). There might even be some mustard accompanying the cheese, which would seem very strange to the British, who all know that biscuits accompany cheese. Why, they might ask, would one kill the flavour of the cheese with mustard? But then again, Belgian partiality to horse meat is a taste the British are not eager to acquire either.

### 18.6 Conclusion

Localization is reasonably well established as a practical field of multilingual projects involving complex files or software applications. It takes place on various levels: linguistic, techn(olog)ical, and cultural. However, localization is also a business model, designed to sell a product customized to a target locale. It thus not only becomes part of a marketing strategy and its subsequent advertising; in the world of marketing mixes, it also becomes the opposite of standardization. Focusing on more global or local target audiences, allowing for more or less standardization, is a major issue in advertising. This, in part, is overcome by the recent development in which marketeers no longer view their target markets as bounded by national borders, but as global landscapes where cross-cultural, cross-national groups share similar interests. Nevertheless, the advertising success of a product is dependent on cultural sensitivities; and despite much criticism, cultural models such as Hofstede's five dimensions allow for a tangible grip on cultural sensitivities to be used by marketeers and localizers alike.

### Further reading and relevant resources

Sources on the topic of localization and advertising tend to come from various fields. Quantifiable cross-cultural

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analyses tend to draw on the work of Hofstede (2003, Hofstede and Hofstede 2005), while the more globalized cultural concepts involved are discussed by Cronin (2003, 2006). Of greater practical application to the topic of this chapter are contributions on the localization of advertising by Maroto (2005, 2007b) and texts on internationalization and globalization by Texin (2002, 2006). By tradition, meta-narrative on localization itself has been offered by organizations such as LISA (the Localization Industry Standards Association) and the traditional handbook for localization, Esselink (2000).

### Notes:

(1) Four of these concepts are also referred to as GILT: globalization, internationalization, localization and translation. These concepts sometimes are abbreviated with the number of characters between the first and last letter as a number between those two letters. GILT then includes g11n, i18n, l10n, and t9n.

(2) LISA, established in 1990, anticipated the need for localization industry standards, and over the years became a key player in the field. At the time of writing, LISA members include Adobe Systems, Cisco Systems, the Directorate-General for Translation of the European Commission, Hewlett-Packard, Lessius Hogeschool, LionBridge, Nokia Corporation, SDL International, and World Bank Group.

(3) Another major organization in the field of localization is GALA, the Globalization and Localization Association. Like LISA, GALA also offers consultancy services and organizes events for the localization industry. Their website is one of the convergence points of localization services, with over 200 companies in the ‘software localization’ category alone. At the time of writing, members include Argos, Atril, Celer Solutions, Cross Language, LionBridge, MultiCorpora, and Yamagata Europe. Other players in the field are the Localization Institute, which offers training and certification, Localization World, which organizes conferences and offers a web-based networking service, TiLP, the Institute of Localization Professionals, which also offers certification, and the Localization Research Centre (LRC) in Limerick.

(4) All these commercials can be retrieved via YouTube, but because of the rather fleeting character of these contents, no links are provided.

(5) In translation studies the notion of equivalence is important, and the way it is approached while transferring the SL meaning to the TL is even more so. In a domesticating translation, a text is translated with the target culture in mind much more than in a foreignizing translation, where source-culture items are often kept and it is obvious that the new text is a translation. As with domestication, localized products do not seem to stem from a foreign origin.

(6) This visual aspect of regio-centric advertising breaks away from Sapir and Whorf’s responsibility of the translator/localizer to acknowledge the linguistic relativity which stipulates that people need natural language to understand the world.

(7) Other cultural models are by Hall, Katan, Trompenaars, Schwartz, and Gray.

### Christophe Declercq

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## Oxford Handbooks Online

### Simultaneous Interpreting

Franz Pöchhacker

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### [-] Abstract and Keywords

This article describes simultaneous interpreting (SI) with special regard to its historical development, the models drawn up to capture its underlying neurolinguistic and cognitive processes, and some of the major issues investigated in past and present research. Simultaneous interpreting is one of the basic modes in which the translational activity of interpreting can be carried out. It is characterized by its immediacy. Source and target language messages are typically in a natural language, in the spoken or signed modality, and essentially ephemeral, requiring immediate processing. The best-known and prototypical form of simultaneous interpreting is spoken-language SI in conference-like settings. SI has been at the heart of scientific interest in interpreting ever since its technology-based form and became widely adopted after World War II. It is studied with special regard to its neurolinguistic foundations and complex cognitive processes.

Keywords: simultaneous interpreting, cognitive processes, immediacy, ephemeral, neurolinguistic foundations, modality

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### 19.1 Introduction

Simultaneous interpreting, an apparently unnatural form of human communicative behaviour, can be regarded as the cornerstone of interpreting as a profession and as a field of academic study. Though it is typically associated and even equated with the highly professionalized practice of conference interpreting (see Chapter 21), simultaneous interpreting is, strictly speaking, one of two basic modes in which the translational activity of interpreting can be carried out. Based on this understanding, the present chapter describes simultaneous interpreting (SI) with special regard to its historical development, the models drawn up to capture its underlying neurolinguistic and cognitive processes, and some of the major issues investigated in past and present research.

### 19.2 Conceptual distinctions

Interpreting in general is characterized by its immediacy: interpreters give a first and final rendering of a previously expressed message in real time and for immediate communicative use. Source and target language messages are typically in a natural language, in the spoken or signed modality, and essentially ephemeral (*verba volant*), requiring immediate processing. Time is therefore a decisive factor in interpreting, and it also serves to distinguish between the two principal working modes, based on the timing of the interpretation in relation to the original utterance. When interpreting between spoken languages, the interpreter needs to wait for the original speaker to finish before giving his or her rendering in the other language. This is the default mode, known as 'consecutive' (Chapter 20), in which interpreting has been practised for thousands of years. In contrast, when a signed language is involved, the interpreter's rendering can be given while the original speaker is still speaking or signing. To do this in spoken-language interpreting requires special arrangements so as to avoid acoustic overlap.

### 19.2.1 Definition and types

Broadly speaking, simultaneous interpreting is the mode of interpreting in which the interpreter's rendering is produced in synchrony with his or her perception and comprehension of the original utterance, with a processing-related time lag of a few seconds between original and interpretation. This simultaneity of processing accomplished by the interpreter is typically mirrored in the perspective of the listener, who perceives the source language (SL) and target language (TL) messages as simultaneous. There are, however, some hybrid forms of simultaneous interpreting which are best accommodated by a processing-based definition.

The best-known and prototypical form of simultaneous interpreting (SI) is spoken-language SI in conference-like settings using a specially designed and equipped booth, where the interpreter speaks into a microphone while receiving the source speech via headphones. Listeners likewise use headphones to receive the interpretation, either from a hard-wired system or via infra-red transmitters. Whereas interpreting booths, which may be either built-in or mobile, are placed in such a way as to offer the interpreters visual access to the meeting room, simultaneous interpreters themselves are usually heard but not seen.

The latter applies also to interpreting in conference settings from a signed into a spoken language, for which the interpreter needs to face the signer and speak his or her interpretation into a microphone. When working in the opposite direction (i.e. signing), the interpreter will be seen, near the rostrum or on stage, but not heard. Such platform interpreting gives sign language interpreters a high degree of visibility, quite unlike spoken-language simultaneous interpreters working in a booth.

Where spoken-language interpreters working in the simultaneous mode do retain a physical presence is in whispered interpreting, also known by the French term *chuchotage*. This is a 'primitive' form of simultaneous interpreting without the aid of technical equipment that can be used when only one or two persons require interpretation into a given language. Rather than whispering, the interpreter speaks in a low voice, but this may distract other participants and puts considerable strain on the interpreter's voice and concentration. This type of simultaneous interpreting can also be practised with mobile technical equipment known as *bidule*, which has a microphone for the interpreter and headsets for listeners (and preferably for the interpreter as well).

A rather different form of simultaneous interpreting is sight translation, which could also be described as text-to-speech (or text-to-sign) interpreting. Since the source message in this working mode is a written text, sight translation is not perceived by the interpreter's audience as a dual, or simultaneous, act of communication. Still, what is required of the interpreter translating at sight in a real-time communicative situation is simultaneous interpreting, in that the interpreter's rendering is produced in synchrony with his or her perception and processing of the SL message.

### 19.2.2 Hybrid forms

The basic distinction between the simultaneous and the consecutive mode is not always clear-cut. As a result of the inevitable time lag in simultaneous interpreting, the rendering of short utterances, especially in a dialogic situation, may create an impression similar to 'short consecutive'. Conversely, consecutive interpreters will often use a speaker's pauses to render (part of) the foregoing utterance, allowing for some overlap as the original continues while the interpretation of the previous part is being finished. This semi-simultaneous mode of interpreting is used in particular in diplomatic settings and negotiations.

Another hybrid form, long obsolete, was known as 'simultaneous consecutive' and involved the use of technical equipment to permit the simultaneous delivery, via headsets, of consecutive interpretations into two or more languages. Nowadays the term 'simultaneous consecutive' is used to characterize an entirely new hybrid form of interpreting that has become possible thanks to portable digital recording devices. In this mode, the audience receives a consecutive interpretation (after the original speaker has finished) delivered by the interpreter working in simultaneous mode on the basis of a digital recording of the original speech.

A more complex hybrid that combines interpreting at sight with simultaneous interpreting in the booth is known as 'simultaneous with text'. Here, the interpreter may rely on the auditory input and the speaker's written text available in the booth, but will need to check against delivery and thus cope with both acoustic and visual linguistic input.

## 19.3 History

### 19.3.1 Origins

While simultaneous interpreting in the whispering mode may have been practised long before the twentieth century, the history of SI tends to foreground technological inventions and historical events rather than the underlying human skill. Thus, the origin of simultaneous interpreting with technical equipment is associated with Edward Filene, a Boston businessman participating in conferences with consecutive interpreting at the League of Nations and the International Labour Office (ILO) in Geneva in the 1920s (Baigorri Jalón 2000). Filene's original idea of an interpretation produced at sight from a stenographer's notes proved unworkable, and simultaneous interpreting straight from the SL speech was in fact pioneered by interpreters involved in initial trials of the system at the ILO in 1926. Developed by Gordon Finlay, a British electrical engineer, equipment for what was then called telephonic interpreting was installed at the ILO and used on several occasions, not without success. Though subsequently patented and supplied by IBM, the so-called Filene—Finlay Translator did not enjoy a breakthrough until it was rediscovered by Léon Dostert for the Nuremberg Trial in 1945.

The successful use of simultaneous interpreting in four languages at Nuremberg (see Gaiba 1998) was the decisive turning point, launching SI as the indispensable multilingual communication technique that it is today. The United Nations Organization, then in its early days, took an interest in the system and soon adopted it for most of its meetings, and simultaneous interpreting at UN conferences came to epitomize international conference interpreting as practised today throughout the world.

### 19.3.2 Recent developments

The focus on technology, albeit in close connection with human factors, has re-emerged in recent years with the introduction of remote interpreting in the simultaneous mode, i.e. interpreters working from a screen in a different location. Early experiments with remote interpreting in the UN date back to the 1970s and relied on costly satellite links. As technological progress has made increased bandwidth for audio and image transmission more accessible, several institutions, not least in the EU, have carried out experiments to test the feasibility of this new technique (see Mouzourakis 2006). With most of the technological challenges being resolved, further implementation will depend on how conference interpreters and their professional bodies adjust to this more decontextualized and stressful working mode, which further diminishes the interpreter's sense of 'presence' and 'visibility'.

Beyond international conference settings, the use of new technologies for remote simultaneous interpreting in spoken languages has been tested in healthcare settings, and interpreting via videotelephony is increasingly well established for signed language interpreting.

## 19.4 Process models

Interpreting is a multi-faceted phenomenon and can be conceptualized in various ways—as a social function, a communicative activity, or a cognitive process, to name the most salient dimensions. In its prototypical form—i.e. spoken-language SI of monologic speeches in conference settings—simultaneous interpreting has been viewed and analysed mainly as a cognitive process, the complexity of which has been captured in processing models dating back to the 1970s. The earliest of these depict the sequence and interplay of cognitive operations, while others foreground the interrelation of cognitive tasks or seek to extend the cognitive account in a sociolinguistic, semiotic, or pragmatic direction. Overall, the emphasis in these models of SI is clearly on the 'micro-level' of cognitive processes rather than the 'macro-process' of situated interaction.

### 19.4.1 Structure and process

The first model of cognitive processing operations in SI was developed by David Gerver (1976), a psychologist who devised a flow chart of the mental structures and procedures involved in input processing and output generation. The model, a graphic representation of which can also be found in Pöchhacker and Shlesinger (2002: 151), features memory structures such as a short-term buffer store, a long-term memory system, and an output buffer, and posits various decision points and feedback loops. A short-term 'operational memory' or 'working

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'memory' sub-serves SL 'decoding' and TL 'encoding' through access to linguistic knowledge in the interpreter's long-term memory. Gerver's model also accounts for output monitoring and self-correction (repairs), again based on short-term storage in operational memory.

Aiming for a psychological rather than a linguistic description of SI, Gerver is not very explicit about translational processes as such. Even so, he clearly distinguishes linguistic surface elements (sounds, words, sentences) from the 'deep' level of meaning as understood by the interpreter, and suggests that grasping the relational meaning structure (subject, predicate, object) may be crucial to the translational task.

Another model of memory structures and processing operations in SI was devised by Barbara Moser (1978) on the basis of a psycholinguistic speech comprehension model. Moser's model (see also Moser-Mercer 1997) offers a more detailed account of input processing stages up to the level of meaningful phrases and sentences, and suggests a close interaction between input-driven operations and various types of knowledge in long-term memory. Pivotal features of Moser's model are the search for the 'conceptual base' and the construction of a pre-linguistic meaning structure by drawing on contextual and general (world) knowledge. Like Gerver's model, Moser's flow-chart representation of the SI process from input to output features a number of decision points at which processing is either moved on or looped back to an earlier stage. One of these concerns 'prediction', which allows the interpreter to 'discard current input'.

Rather than a decision point in the course of output generation, prediction is pivotal to the model of the SI process proposed by Ghelly Chernov in the late 1970s. According to Chernov (2004), it is the redundancy of natural languages that makes simultaneous interpreting possible as an essentially expectation-based process. Knowledge-based 'probability prediction' is assumed to operate concurrently on different levels of input processing, from the syllable, word, phrase, and utterance to the levels of the text and situational context. An analogous mechanism, referred to as 'anticipatory synthesis', is assumed for the interpreter's TL production, which proceeds in synchrony with input processing.

### 19.4.2 Multiple tasks

The simultaneity of component processes is at the heart of modelling efforts that seek to highlight the complexity of the overall process rather than account for individual processing steps on the way from input to output. The model of SI developed by Marianne Lederer in the late 1970s distinguishes three types of operations depending on their manifestation over time. First and foremost among these is a set of four sub-processes described as 'continuous successive and concurrent operations'. These include listening, language comprehension, conceptualization (i.e. constructing a cognitive memory by integrating linguistic input with prior knowledge), and expression from cognitive memory (Lederer 1981: 50). In addition, situational awareness and self-monitoring are described as 'continuous underlying operations with intermittent manifestation', whereas the third type of operations, classified as 'intermittent', includes 'transcoding' and 'retrieval of specific lexical expressions'

Unlike Lederer's (1981) model, the account of the SI process formulated, in information-theoretical terms, by Hella Kirchhoff (1976) is used to explain psycho-linguistic processing difficulties. Relating her multi-tasking model to the interpreter's cognitive limitations, Kirchhoff discusses instances in which the cognitive load imposed by individual subtasks may exceed the interpreter's overall 'processing capacity', which leads to linguistic infelicities, distortions, and loss of information.

The notion of cognitive processing capacity and its limitations is also central to the Effort model of SI developed by Daniel Gile in the early 1980s. The model assumes three basic cognitive efforts, labelled 'listening and analysis' (L), 'memory' (M), and 'production' (P), and is used to show that the sum of the processing-capacity requirements of the three efforts must not exceed the total cognitive processing capacity available, as expressed in the formula:  $(L + P + M) < C_{Capacity}$ . In subsequent refinements of the model, a 'coordination effort' (C) was added, and the relationships between the model components were expressed in a set of formulas and equations (see Gile 1997).

Gile's model serves to account for a number of processing difficulties and failures. On the assumption, also known as the 'tightrope hypothesis' (Gile 1999), that simultaneous interpreters usually work at the limit of their processing capacity, it explains why such 'problem triggers' as proper names, numbers, and compound technical terms may result in 'failure sequences' and require special strategies and 'coping tactics' (see Gile 1997).

### 19.4.3 Broader dimensions

Whether they foreground sequential processing stages or the interplay of concurrent tasks, most models of the cognitive process of SI have little regard for environmental (contextual, situational) factors. Shaped by the research tradition of human information processing and, subsequently, the more interdisciplinary paradigm of cognitive science, the classic models of SI concentrate on verbal input and output, with various cognitive instances in between. One attempt to incorporate additional dimensions is reflected in the sequential processing model by Dennis Cokely (1992b), which gives explicit consideration to the modality of input and output (spoken or signed), as well as to various sociolinguistic, cultural, and psychological factors involved in the interpreting process. Over and above the main sequence of (seven) psycholinguistic processing stages, Cokely stresses the role of knowledge-driven ('top-down') processing, citing such factors as 'cross-linguistic awareness', 'cross-cultural awareness', and 'social markers' as impacting on the process of output generation.

A more recent effort to capture the full range of semiotic and cognitive factors involved in SI is the eclectic process model by Robin Setton (1999), which accounts for the multi-modality of input (i.e. paraverbal and nonverbal signals in the auditory and visual channels) and the sequential nature of output generation, while highlighting the role of memory resources in knowledge-based discourse modelling and task control.

Clearly, no single model of SI can reasonably do justice to the range of relevant features and dimensions, from neurolinguistic foundations and cognitive resources to psycholinguistic procedures and pragmatic constraints in a given constellation of communicative interaction. The latter have been featured in models of their own that foreground key components of the situation, including features of text and discourse and sociocultural backgrounds. An early example is the communicative information flow model by Catherine Stenzi (1983), which draws on functionalist theories of translation for such notions as communicative intention, situational-textual knowledge, and sociocultural contexts. As such models incorporate more features of the situational and sociocultural environment, they tend to lose the dynamic quality of mode-specific processing models and reflect more of the social dimension of interpreting as situated (inter)action.

## 19.5 Major issues

As reflected in the foregoing overview of models, the cognitive-processing perspective on simultaneous interpreting has dominated past and present thinking on the nature of SI and its specific challenges. This is reflected overwhelmingly in the list of topics that have been given special attention in empirical studies. Following an initial preoccupation with the simultaneity of input and output and other temporal variables, much cognitively oriented research has investigated the effect of various input conditions on the process and product of SI, and the strategies used by simultaneous interpreters to cope with the cognitive-linguistic challenges of the task. The much-quoted 'black box' of interpreters' mental processing has gradually been pried open thanks to a better understanding of human memory and attention and, most fundamentally, of the neurolinguistic basis of bilingual language processing.

### 19.5.1 Neurolinguistic foundations

The neurobiological foundations of bilingual language processing have attracted researchers' interest since the 1970s. Among the principal questions addressed by neuropsychologists has been the cerebral specialization for languages in bilinguals, including interpreters. Some studies have found evidence of a more balanced neurolinguistic representation (i.e. greater right-hemisphere involvement) in (right-handed) bilinguals and polyglots, and this pattern of cerebral lateralization has been associated with factors like age of acquisition (early vs. late bilinguals), relative language proficiency, sex, and spoken vs. signed language (e.g. Fabbro and Gran 1994). On the whole, however, neuropsychological lateralization experiments have not yielded clear-cut findings, and much seems to depend on the experimental methods and tasks employed.

The most promising avenue of research in this regard is the use of brain-imaging techniques such as positron emission tomography (PET) and fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging), though task complexity in interpreting remains a serious challenge for experimental design and data analysis (e.g. Tommola et al. 2000/2001).

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Beyond the concern of neuro-imaging studies with the cerebral localization of linguistic functions in relation to a given cognitive task, neurolinguists have sought to explain the mechanisms underlying bilingual performance. Michel Paradis (2000) proposed the so-called subset hypothesis, according to which a bilingual's two languages are served by two subsystems of the larger cognitive system known as implicit linguistic competence. Each of the two separate networks of connections can be independently activated and inhibited, and the activation threshold of a given trace in linguistic memory is assumed to be a function of the frequency and recency of activation. Paradis cites evidence from aphasia studies to suggest that interpreting involves at least four neurofunctionally independent systems—one for each language involved and one for each direction of translation—and that the process may be either conceptually mediated or based on direct linguistic correspondence. In this account, acquiring SI skills means developing a peculiar state of inhibition/activation for each of the linguistic component systems involved, so as to permit concurrent use with a minimum of interference.

### 19.5.2 Simultaneity

As a crucial feature of SI at several levels, simultaneity was the focus of the very first studies by experimental psychologists in the 1960s. Most superficially, the simultaneity of concurrent listening and speaking was investigated by measuring the time delay between SL input and the corresponding TL output. An early study comparing SI to shadowing (i.e. repeating back what one is hearing in the same language) found the so-called ear—voice span, measured in words, to be greater for the interpreting task, given its higher cognitive demands. This basic finding was subsequently confirmed in more ecologically valid experiments which showed that shadowing can be performed with roughly half the average time lag of two to three seconds typically found for SI.

Measurements of the time delay, or *dÉcalage*, between original and interpretation were also at the heart of the pioneering study of SI by OlÉron and Nanpon (1965), who found considerable variability in time-lag patterns and pointed to such factors as language pair, input-speech complexity, speaking speed, and interpreter strategy to explain their results. Along similar lines, Frieda Goldman-Eisler (1972), whose psycholinguistic research focused on pause and segmentation patterns in spontaneous speech, gave special consideration to the language factor in SI and suggested that the ear—voice span related not so much to lexical as to syntactic units reflecting propositional meaning.

Variability in lag and pause times has since been found in many studies, for SI in spoken as well as signed languages (e.g. Cokely 1992b), and the feasibility of computer-assisted speech-data analysis has recently revived interest in the synchronicity of SL and TL speech. Nevertheless, the focus of research into the simultaneity of SI has clearly been on the deeper, cognitive level of simultaneous task performance.

When simultaneous conference interpreting first aroused interest among experimental psychologists, the feat of simultaneous listening and speaking contradicted the prevailing assumption that humans can engage in only one complex cognitive activity at a time, and that attention-sharing is possible only for habitual, largely automatic tasks. Explanatory hypotheses based on this single-channel theory of cognitive processing included cramming as much as possible of the interpreter's output into the original speaker's pauses, rapid switching of attention between input and output, and learning to ignore the sound of one's own voice during SI. In her 1969 doctoral thesis, the interpreter-cum-psychologist Ingrid Kurz (nÉe Pinter) elegantly demonstrated, through a monolingual overlapping question-and-answer task performed by students and experienced conference interpreters, that simultaneous listening and speaking was a skill that could be acquired through practice. Moreover, Gerver (1976) showed, with reference to self-corrections, that interpreters engaged in TL production attend not only to SL input but also to their own speech. His assumption of a fixed-capacity processor whose activity can be distributed over several tasks within the limits of the total processing capacity available proved fundamental to process models of SI, and is in line with subsequent research on working memory and attention management.

### 19.5.3 Memory and attention

The fact that interpreting involves, first and foremost, comprehension, often defined as the building of some form of mental representation of (linguistically mediated) meaning, raises the issue of where and how this might be implemented in the neuro-cognitive apparatus. In Gerver's model of the SI process, allowance is made for a long-term memory component and for short-term ('buffer') storage. In experiments designed to investigate the nature of memory operations in SI, Gerver (1976) compared subjects' recall (as measured by content questions) after

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listening, shadowing, and simultaneous interpreting. Aside from concluding that better post-task recall after listening was due to impaired memorization in the simultaneous listening and speaking tasks, he suggested that superior recall after interpreting compared to shadowing was evidence of more complex, deeper processing operations in interpreting. This was followed up in the doctoral work of Sylvie Lambert (1989) in the theoretical framework of the depth-of-processing hypothesis, put forward as a unitary model of memory in the early 1970s. The depth-of-processing hypothesis was also used to compare information retention after two forms of interpreting in the simultaneous mode—sight translation and SI. Maurizio Viezzi (1990) found that recall scores were lower after sight translation than after SI only for the morphosyntactically dissimilar language pair (English–Italian), whereas recall after the simultaneous processing tasks from French to Italian was as good as after listening.

The original depth-of-processing hypothesis has largely been superseded by theories that posit multiple memory systems and specific mechanisms for their interaction. One of the best-known models of short-term storage and processing is Alan Baddeley's (2000) conceptualization of working memory as a limited-capacity attentional system ('central executive') controlling memory subsystems such as the phonological loop, the visuo-spatial sketchpad, and the episodic buffer. This model has been used by a number of interpreting researchers to address both the storage component and attentional control. Indeed, the relative significance of the two remains a moot point, given experimental evidence in support of either approach. Padilla et al. (1995), for example, found that professional interpreters clearly outperformed interpreting students and bilingual controls on standard tests of working memory (digit span, phrase span), and that only trained interpreters' recall for word lists remained unaffected by a concurrent vocalization task.

With particular regard for ecological validity, the allocation of attentional resources in SI was investigated by Minhua Liu (Liu, Schallert, and Carroll 2004) in an experiment involving three groups of native Chinese subjects (professionals and students). With the aim of establishing to what extent expertise in SI was a function of general cognitive qualities (such as working memory capacity) rather than task-specific skills acquired through experience and training, subjects were first given a comprehension and a listening-span test and then asked to simultaneously interpret three English speeches manipulated for cognitive load in terms of lexical and syntactic complexity as well as presentation rate. Results showed superior performance for professional interpreters only on the SI task as such, whereas the scores for working memory span did not discriminate among the different groups of subjects.

In a study to test Baddeley's finding of a two-second limit for phonological working memory, Miriam Shlesinger (2000) exposed professional simultaneous interpreters to source-text items involving a high short-term-memory load. As expected, her results showed a time-related decay of acoustic memory traces, as the concurrent articulation task in SI keeps interpreters from refreshing what is held in phonological memory by what is known as subvocal rehearsal.

While these experimental studies are among the most advanced in the literature on SI, the evidence they provide still requires corroboration. This is due mainly to the inherent methodological obstacles that have long encumbered experimental research on SI: limited availability of subjects with the required qualifications and working languages; lack of task authenticity in a laboratory setting requiring control of a multitude of real-life variables; high performance variability even among comparably qualified subjects; and, as demonstrated by Shlesinger's work, the interaction between input-related cognitive constraints and professional norms guiding an interpreter's overall performance. These methodological limitations are particularly salient in studies designed to gauge the effect of certain input conditions on the SI process and product, as described in the following section.

### 19.5.4 Conditions

While simultaneous interpreting is clearly a task in which general human factors such as cognitive capabilities and constraints play a crucial role, researchers have long taken a particular interest in incidental factors that are likely to affect the process. Indeed, long before the first scientific studies were undertaken, professional conference interpreters sought to define the conditions under which SI was and was not feasible. These include circumstantial factors such as adequate sound quality and visual access as well as speaker- and speech-related variables such as the rate and mode of delivery and the type of discourse suitable for SI. A number of these input conditions have been investigated in empirical studies, albeit subject to the methodological difficulties mentioned in the previous section.

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In spoken- and signed-language interpreting alike, an essential condition for the viability of SI (or any interpreting, for that matter) is the perceptibility of the SL speech. Poor listening conditions are typically a problem in whispered interpreting, though hardly any research has been carried out on this mode. In an experimental study involving shadowing and (French–English) SI, Gerver (1976) found a clear-cut detrimental effect of noise on the performance of both simultaneous verbal tasks. Similar results were obtained by Tommola and Lindholm (1995) for English–Finnish SI in an added-noise condition.

In most conference interpreting venues, the issue of acoustic signal quality has been resolved thanks to compliance with technical standards for sound systems (IEC 60914) established in the 1980s. Much more controversial, in on-site as well as remote interpreting settings, is interpreters' visual access to the original speaker and the meeting room. While conference interpreters have long insisted on the need for a direct view of the conference room (as implemented in the technical standards for built-in and mobile booths, ISO 2603 and 4043, respectively), experimental research on the role of visual information in SI has not yielded conclusive results. Tommola and Lindholm (1995), for instance, found no significant difference in prepositional accuracy between SI with or without a video image. Again, though, the limitations arising from a controlled experimental design need to be taken into account, as the communicative impact of visual cues on the proceedings and on simultaneous interpreters' output has been documented in fieldwork on real-life conferences.

More difficult to establish has been the impact of working from a screen, as in remote interpreting, rather than with direct visual access to the meeting room. While experienced professionals seem to be able to ensure an adequate level of output quality even under remote interpreting conditions, there is evidence of detrimental physiological (e.g. eye strain) and psychological effects (e.g. lack of motivation) that affect overall performance standards (Moser-Mercer 2003).

In contrast to the external constraints associated with the medium of input, speaker-related variables are even harder to control. First and foremost among the input factors that may jeopardize professional performance are the rate and mode of delivery of the original speech. In the mid-1960s, a rate of 100–120 words per minute was suggested as comfortable for SI at a symposium of AIIC, the International Association of Conference Interpreters. This was confirmed in an experimental study by Gerver (1969): at speeds above the range from 95 to 120 words per minute, subjects showed a decrease in the proportion of text correctly interpreted and an increase in ear–voice span and pausing.

Closely related to interpreters' perception of input speed is the prosody of the SL speech. As shown by Karla DÉjean Le Féal (1982), a speech may be perceived as faster and more difficult to interpret when it is delivered with monotonous intonation, as is typically the case with speakers reading from a script. Even at the same objective delivery rate, the lack of prosodic cues in script-based delivery as opposed to impromptu speech is assumed to impair performance quality in SI, as demonstrated experimentally by Gerver (1976).

The issue of prosodic and other deviations has become particularly acute in international conference settings where English is used by many participants as a lingua franca, more often than not with interference from their first language. What interpreters loosely refer to as 'foreign accent' (and bitterly complain about as one of the main factors making professional life more difficult) goes far beyond the non-standard pronunciation of individual words, extending to the suprasegmental as well as the lexical and syntactic levels. Such deviations from what interpreters are familiar with in terms of articulation, stress, and intonation as well as word choice and sentence structure make source-speech comprehension more effortful, thus diverting attention from other processing tasks and, in line with Gile's (1999) 'tightrope hypothesis', detracting from overall output quality.

The problem of non-native or unfamiliar accents often co-occurs with speakers' use of a written text to offset their limitations in language proficiency. When such material is not available to the interpreters, the compound effect of non-native accent, flat intonation, and the syntactic complexity and information density typical of carefully drafted texts may well push simultaneous interpreters past the limits of what they can cope with.

Not surprisingly, the source-speech-related factors described above have consistently been cited as primary sources of job stress in simultaneous conference interpreting. In the comprehensive Workload Study commissioned by AIIC (2002), the responses of some 600 (mainly freelance) conference interpreters indicated high levels of work-related fatigue, exhaustion, and mental stress, and pointed to difficult source texts and speaker delivery as the most important stressors, alongside poor booth conditions and insufficient opportunities for preparation. Aside

from on-site measurements documenting excessive temperature and CO<sub>2</sub> levels and poor ventilation and lighting in mobile booths, the interpreters' view that theirs is a highly stressful occupation was also substantiated by physiological parameters. Elevated levels of the stress hormone cortisol and persistent cardiovascular effects (high blood pressure) have both been found to be associated with SI, in the Workload Study and by other researchers.

In a case study comparing stress levels in a conference setting to those in a media interpreting assignment, Kurz (2002b) demonstrated, by measuring an interpreter's heart rate and skin conductance (as affected by sweating), that simultaneously interpreting a live TV broadcast is even more stressful than SI in a highly technical conference. In terms of working conditions, if not public exposure, this can be related to findings from the Workload Study suggesting that videoconference and remote interpreting are associated with less physical comfort and higher levels of stress (AIIC 2002).

### 19.5.5 Strategies

Given the cognitive task demands of SI in general, and the difficulties arising from particular working conditions as reviewed in the previous section, many research efforts have been aimed at explaining how simultaneous interpreters cope with their task. Much of this can be subsumed under the notion of 'strategies', broadly defined as a goal-oriented process under intentional control (Kohn and Kalina 1996).

A number of strategies have been described with reference to particular processing challenges, such as high delivery rates and structural dissimilarities between the source and target languages. Others relate more fundamentally to component tasks such as source-speech comprehension and the production of communicatively effective output in a particular setting or a particular language combination. And in addition to such on-task strategies for coping with cognitive constraints and ensuring communication, 'off-line' strategies in preparing for an interpreting assignment have been discussed. Strategies are therefore rather ubiquitous in the interpreting process as an essentially goal-directed activity, and the following description is limited to the most prominent ones in the literature.

The prototypical processing challenge seen as requiring simultaneous interpreters to take strategic action are structural dissimilarities between the source and target languages. While the anecdotal interpreter from German 'waiting for the verb' is more myth than reality, the difficulty of verb complements in sentence-final position has been given special attention ever since the first studies on SI. Kirchhoff (1976), among others, mentioned the strategy of waiting, which can take the form of stalling, i.e. slowing down delivery or using neutral padding expressions or fillers. To avoid the short-term memory load associated with such lagging strategies, several authors have discussed segmentation and restructuring operations to extract and render phrase- or clause-level components of syntactically complex input.

Another option for coping with structural dissimilarities in SI, and probably the most frequently studied strategy of all, is known as anticipation. Aside from its fundamental role in comprehension in the broader sense of expectation-based ('top-down') processing, anticipation is defined specifically as the simultaneous interpreter's production of a sentence constituent before the corresponding constituent has appeared in the SL speech (Setton 1999). A number of authors have described and exemplified various sub-types of syntactic anticipation and made a basic distinction between linguistic anticipation (i.e. word prediction based on familiar lexico-grammatical patterns) and extralinguistic anticipation on the basis of 'sense expectation' (Lederer 1981). Udo Jörg (1997) related strategic anticipation skills in German–English SI to professional expertise and directionality, and found that anticipation performance was more consistent among professionals and that verb anticipation skills were better developed in native speakers of the source language. In a corpus-based analysis of German–English and Chinese–English SI, Setton (1999), on the other hand, expressed scepticism regarding a 'strategies-for-structure' approach, foregrounding instead the role of cognitive-pragmatic processing of linguistic and contextual cues.

Strategies for speed, on the other hand, seem largely uncontroversial. Ever since the first experimental studies (e.g. Gerver 1969), it has been assumed that high input loads (speech rate, information density) will force simultaneous interpreters to resort to 'reductive' strategies (Kirchhoff 1976). In line with his focus on the principle of redundancy, Chernov (2004), in particular, highlighted the role of lexical and syntactic compression and omission in response to excessive input speed.

Omission as a strategy has also been investigated for signed-language interpreting in educational settings. Jemina Napier (2004a) used a task-review approach in retrospective interviews to classify the omissions found in her experimental corpus. Aside from more or less conscious omissions associated with meaning loss, Napier identified numerous instances of ‘conscious strategic omissions’, i.e. decisions to omit information in order to enhance overall effectiveness as assessed by the interpreters based on their linguistic and cultural knowledge, their familiarity with the subject matter, and the features of the discourse environment. In a similar vein, Kohn and Kalina (1996) suggest the need for adaptation strategies, including ‘appropriate cultural adaptations’ to make the interpreter’s TL version more communicatively effective.

Strategies geared to particular settings and working situations are thus in abundance, even though it is difficult under fieldwork conditions to distinguish what interpreters do as a matter of strategy—and in response to ‘expectancy norms’—from what happens because of processing limitations, and harder still to understand the interplay between strategies for communicating vs. coping with cognitive constraints. One clear-cut example of setting-specific strategic behaviour is the effort to minimize time lag in question-and-answer sequences, as in the case of simultaneously interpreted live-broadcast interviews.

An entire set of strategies designed to enhance processing as well as communicative effect has been proposed for SI into the ‘B’ language, in which interpreters have less than full native proficiency. As shown in several empirical studies on directionality in SI (e.g. Bartłomiejczyk 2006, Chang and Schallert 2007), and as recommended from the perspective of interpreter training (Donovan 2004), work into the B language is likely to reflect safe and solid lexical and syntactic choices in an effort to express the essentials rather than aim for completeness or elaborate style. Such strategic compromise to ensure overall performance evidently raises the issue of quality, reviewed in the next and final section of this chapter.

### 19.5.6 Quality

An overriding concern for practitioners and interpreting researchers alike, quality in SI has been acknowledged as a multidimensional phenomenon that can and must be approached from different perspectives and is consequently very difficult to pin down. Most fundamentally, the study of quality can foreground either the interpreting product (i.e., the interpreter’s rendering of the source speech in the target language) or interpreting as a professional service performed in a particular context and setting for a given communicative purpose. In the former case, the focus is on the intertextual relation between original and interpretation, with reference to such notions as fidelity, accuracy, and completeness; in the latter, quality is conceived as the extent to which the interpreter has succeeded in facilitating communicative interaction across barriers of language and culture, with client or user satisfaction as the dominant yardstick. In between the product-based concern with source—target correspondence, on the one hand, and the assessment of professional service quality, on the other, are such evaluative standards as the naturalness (smoothness, fluency) of the interpreter’s TL production, and the equivalent effect of the interpretation in relation to the original speech (see Pöchhacker 2002).

Beyond these different qualitative dimensions are the perspectives of the various stakeholders, which include the users (listeners) and the speakers relying on the interpreter’s services as well as the client commissioning the service and the interpreters themselves. The latter’s perspective was long dominant, as quality in SI was largely seen as arising from professional credentials acquired through appropriate training and experience, with little need for conceptual analysis and empirical research. It was only in the mid 1980s that an attempt was made to arrive at a more differentiated view of quality, with reference to the interpreter’s product as well as professional behaviour.

In a pioneering survey among some four dozen members of AIIC, Hildegund Buhler (1986) asked respondents to rank the relative importance of a total of sixteen criteria and found ‘sense consistency with the original message’ and ‘logical cohesion’ as the top-ranking features of quality, outweighing aspects of presentation. Her assumption that the interpreters’ perspective on quality would also reflect user needs prompted Kurz (1993a) to elicit the views of conference participants on output-related quality criteria. User expectations were found to be congruent with interpreters’ quality standards only for the criteria of sense consistency, logical cohesion, and correct terminology, whereas delivery-related aspects (e.g. pleasant voice, native accent) received lower ratings, with some differences in user expectation profiles depending on professional background.

That such preferences are specific to the communicative environment was demonstrated in subsequent surveys,

not least for media settings, where expectancy norms give a higher priority to features of delivery such as fluency and pleasant voice, even at the expense of completeness (Kurz and Pöchhacker 1995).

The variability of user expectations in SI was brought out even more clearly in a comprehensive study commissioned by AIIC (Moser 1996). Though the survey findings generally confirmed the importance of criteria like completeness, clarity of expression, and terminological precision, expectations tended to vary considerably depending on meeting type (large vs. small, general vs. technical), age, gender, and previous experience with SI. Varying, and even conflicting, expectations were also found by Andrzej Kopczyński (1994), whose respondents generally preferred interpreters to adopt a ‘ghost role’, i.e. to remain as non-intrusive and ‘invisible’ as possible, while at the same time giving them licence to make corrections and add explanations.

But even where user expectation profiles can be clearly established, it is doubtful to what extent hypothetical preferences reflect the way listeners actually react to a given SI performance when asked to judge its quality. This has been highlighted by a line of research pioneered by Ángela Collados Alís (1998), who contrasted users' responses to a quality-expectation survey with their assessment of a simultaneous interpretation manipulated for a particular feature, such as intonation, and found that supposedly secondary aspects of quality in SI may have a significant impact on users' judgements of an interpreter's overall performance and professionalism.

Since users of SI, by definition, do not have access to the original and are thus unable to assess the service received for its fidelity, analyses of source—target correspondence are an indispensable complement to satisfaction surveys and assessment studies based on subjective ratings. However, as discovered by researchers who chose ‘quality’ as their dependent variable in process-related experimental research, assessing an interpreting performance for its fidelity or accuracy is anything but trivial. Early studies (e.g. Gerver 1969) used simple counts of words correctly rendered, or more elaborate typologies of ‘translation departures’ such as omissions, additions, and substitutions (Barik 1975). Given the obvious limitations of comparative analyses pegged to the linguistic surface level ('error counts'), several authors have used propositional analysis (e.g. Tommola and Lindholm 1995) to quantify fidelity at a deeper semantic or message level. However, as research on quality judgements has shown, information content is a major, but by no means the only, relevant component of quality in SI. Interpreters' output must therefore be examined also for aspects of delivery such as cohesion, fluency, and intonation. As shown by corpus-based studies of prosody in SI using computer-assisted speech-data analysis (e.g. Ahrens 2005a), simultaneous interpreters are prone to using non-standard pause patterns and intonation contours, and there is some evidence (e.g. Shlesinger 1994) that such ‘interpretational intonation’ may hamper message comprehension by the interpreter's audience.

Finally, whatever the schemes used to assess the interpreter's product in light of the expectations and needs of those using SI, as speakers, listeners, or organizers of multilingual events, passing judgement on the quality of an interpreting performance must involve consideration of the contextual and situational constraints in a given discourse environment. Quality in SI can never be absolute; rather, it is ‘quality under the circumstances’ (Pöchhacker 1994), i.e. relative to the conditions under which it is performed. This reaffirms the need for a comprehensive approach that takes account of all factors likely to impair quality in SI (e.g. Kalina 2002), from interpreters' cognitive competence to the constraints of their working environment and their audience's communicative needs.

### 19.6 Conclusion

As a cognitively unique form of translational activity, simultaneous interpreting, which is practised in the signed as well as the spoken modality, has been at the heart of scientific interest in interpreting ever since its technology-based form, pioneered in early twentieth-century conference settings, became widely adopted after World War II. Holding particular fascination from a psychological and psycholinguistic point of view, it has been studied with special regard to its neurolinguistic foundations and complex cognitive processes. As a professional communication service, simultaneous interpreting is a highly—and increasingly—stressful task subject to a wide variety of contextual constraints that impact on the process and the product, making the analysis and assessment of performance quality in simultaneous interpreting a vital issue for further research.

### Further reading and relevant resources

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## Simultaneous Interpreting

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As simultaneous interpreting is the most widely used mode in both spoken-language conference interpreting and signed-language interpreting, most of the reading and resources for those domains (see Chapters 21 and 24) also bear on interpreting in the simultaneous mode.

The predominance of simultaneous interpreting in the research literature is reflected in the *Interpreting Studies Reader* (Pöchhacker and Shlesinger 2002) and its companion volume, *Introducing Interpreting Studies* (Pöchhacker 2004), which offers a comprehensive overview of models and empirical research on interpreting. A collective volume devoted exclusively to *Empirical Research on Simultaneous Interpreting* was compiled by Lambert and Moser-Mercer (1994); early research, from the 1960s, is reviewed in the seminal essay by Gerver (1976). For papers on the origins of simultaneous interpreting, see the special issue of *Interpreting* (4.1, 1999) on the history of interpreting in the twentieth century. Those interested in professional aspects of simultaneous conference interpreting, including technology, quality, and working conditions, will find a wealth of information on the website of AIIC, the International Association of Conference Interpreters ([www.aiic.net](http://www.aiic.net)).

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## Oxford Handbooks Online

### Consecutive Interpreting

Franz Pöchhacker

The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies

*Edited by Kirsten Malmkjaer and Kevin Windle*

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### Abstract and Keywords

This article introduces the concept of consecutive interpreting, which is associated with the domain of conference interpreting, but it also comes up in connection with liaison interpreting and dialogue interpreting in community-based or public-service settings. It has been practised for thousands of years in the consecutive mode, in which the interpreter speaks after the original speaker has finished. Consecutive interpreting extends across a broad conceptual spectrum, from sentence-by-sentence consecutive or short consecutive, telephone interpreting, to classic consecutive supported by a note-taking technique. Consecutive interpreting is a two-stage process, that is, source-speech comprehension followed by re-expression in another language. Memory is crucial to consecutive interpreting. Consecutive interpreting in interactive discourse situations has been studied not so much as a processing mode but as a communicative activity shaped by, and in turn shaping, the dynamics of cross-cultural encounters.

Keywords: consecutive interpreting, note-taking, memory, interactive discourse situations, cross-cultural encounters, communicative activity

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### 20.1 Introduction

Though arguably the most widely practised form of interpreting in human history, the concept of consecutive interpreting is not easy to define. It is typically associated with the domain of conference interpreting (Chapter 21 below), but it also comes up in connection with liaison interpreting and dialogue interpreting as practised in community-based or public-service settings (Chapter 23). In the latter sphere, consecutive interpreting is the default mode, while its share in the work of international conference interpreters has been declining. Whereas in the 1920s it was the novel working mode that led to the emergence of conference interpreting as a profession, consecutive interpreting in international conference settings is now the exception, accounting for only some 5 percent of days worked by members of the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC). The use of consecutive interpreting by conference interpreters is generally limited to welcome addresses, press conferences, after-dinner speeches, and guided tours, and to smaller, bilingual meetings with invited speakers and workshop-like discussion, where it may assume the features of dialogue interpreting.

This basic conceptual ambiguity must be borne in mind when surveying the state of the art. Research on consecutive interpreting as used in conference settings has foregrounded cognitive processing issues, quality, and in particular, interpreters' notes, whereas consecutive as the default mode in mediated face-to-face communication is more often discussed with reference to such issues as turn-taking, discursive alignment, and overall discourse management in interaction.

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### 20.2 Types and distinctions

## Consecutive Interpreting

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Without the need for a qualifying adjective, interpreting has been practised for thousands of years, presumably in what is now called the consecutive mode, in which the interpreter speaks after the original speaker has finished. As long as this generic working mode, in which the interpretation follows upon the source language (SL) speech, was limited to relatively short utterances, such as questions and answers, or parts of a longer message, interpreting was feasible for individuals with the necessary bilingual skills and cultural background, and some knowledge of the subject matter. Thus, there are many examples in the history of diplomacy of men (and sometimes also women) serving as interpreters thanks to their linguistic and cultural skills without considering interpreting their vocation or qualification (see Bowen 1995, Roland 1999). Indeed, bilinguals to this day are generally deemed capable of interpreting between their two languages, thanks to the ‘innate skill’ of ‘natural translation’ that Brian Harris suggests is ‘coextensive with bilingualism’ (Harris and Sherwood 1978).

Though there have certainly been exceptionally skilled and experienced ‘natural’ interpreters throughout history, the generic practice of (consecutive) interpreting was lifted to the level of a special professional skill mainly in the context of early twentieth-century international conferences, in which speakers preferred not to ‘pause for interpretation’. Faced with the need to render speeches lasting up to twenty minutes or more, interpreters aiming for a complete and accurate rendition resorted to note-taking, thereby developing the new technique of consecutive conference interpreting for which special training courses were offered as early as the 1920s.

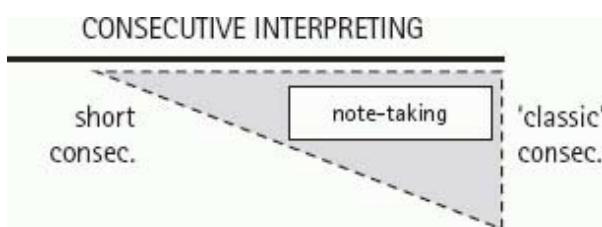


Figure 20.1. Conceptual spectrum of consecutive interpreting

Consecutive interpreting thus extends across a broad conceptual spectrum, from ‘sentence-by-sentence consecutive’ (Herbert 1978: 5) or ‘short consecutive’, as practised also by untrained bilinguals and typical of telephone interpreting, to ‘classic’ consecutive supported by a note-taking technique that interpreters develop over an extended period of training. As illustrated in Figure 20.1, there is no hard-and-fast dividing line that would separate one type of consecutive interpreting from the other. While sentence-by-sentence consecutive is usually practised without notes, the amount of note-taking required depends not only on the length of utterances but also, among other things, on the type of content to be rendered. A short utterance containing several names and dates, for instance, may need to be taken down, whereas a lengthy anecdote may be grasped and rendered with minimal written support. Nor is the classic consecutive mode practised only in conference settings, or ‘one-to-many’ interactions: a statement in bilateral negotiations may be as demanding for the consecutive interpreter as a patient’s narrative in a doctor-patient interview or an asylum seeker’s story of flight. Therefore, what seems to be distinctive about consecutive interpreting viewed as part of professional conference interpreting skills is not so much the amount of notes used or the length of speech segments typically interpreted, as the complexity and density of the message an interpreter could potentially cope with. For consecutive interpreting in dialogic (face-to-face) communication, on the other hand, the skills required in this basic processing mode are largely taken for granted, and the focus tends to be placed on social skills and discourse management in triadic interaction.

The difference in salient issues at either end of the conceptual spectrum of consecutive interpreting—that is, cognitive processing of (‘monologic’) source language messages vs. interactivity in mediating dialogic communication—has prompted some authors to refer to liaison or dialogue interpreting, or also ‘bilateral interpreting’, as a third basic mode of interpreting, alongside simultaneous and consecutive. However, bidirectionality is also possible in the simultaneous mode, and liaison/dialogue interpreting may involve whispered (simultaneous) interpreting as well as the consecutive mode. Hence, the only distinction that can be made with reference to a consistent single criterion is that between consecutive and simultaneous interpreting, based on the temporal mode in which the act of interpreting is performed. Even this definitional approach allows for some hybrid forms (see section 19.2.2 above), and evidently combines with distinctions made in other conceptual dimensions, such as directionality, interaction type, and technology use.

## 20.3 Process

Scholarly interest in consecutive interpreting, which has been nowhere near as keen as in the simultaneous mode, has largely been fixed on the technique of note-taking rather than underlying cognitive issues. While this justifies the separate treatment of the former in this chapter, it is important to bear in mind that note-taking and cognitive processing in consecutive interpreting are inseparably linked.

### 20.3.1 Models

Consecutive interpreting can be described most basically as a two-stage process, that is, source-speech comprehension followed by re-expression in another language. The interpreter's task thus involves the ostensibly natural communication skills of listening and speaking, albeit in two or more languages. As highlighted in particular by the triangular process model underlying the *théorie du sens*, both understanding and speaking are anchored in the conceptual level, more specifically in what has been referred to as 'sense'. Described as a conscious, nonverbal construct in cognitive memory (Seleskovitch 1978a), this mental representation, or discourse model (Setton 1999), forms the link between the component processes of speech comprehension and production. As the interpreting process hinges on this intermediate cognitive stage, it forms an explicit part of many process models, often in the form 'listening/understanding—memory—production'.

One of the earliest and most explicit process models was described by Otto Kade (1963), who posited the following six phases: 1) acoustic-phonetic and conceptual reception of the source-language text; 2) analytic processing and storage of conceptual content; 3) notation of conceptual content; 4) formulation of conceptual content in target language; 5) adaptation of target-language text; 6) articulation of optimum rendition. Kade's account puts particular emphasis on the second phase, as it is the result of analytic conceptual processing that will be committed to memory and to the interpreter's notepad.

What Hella Kirchhoff (1979) described as the consecutive interpreter's 'parallel storage strategy'—that is, cognitive storage in memory and material storage in notes—is also reflected in the Effort Model of consecutive interpreting by Daniel Gile (1997), who models the components of the two main processing phases, referred to as 'listening' and 'reformulation'. The listening phase involves both a short-term memory and a note-taking component (as well as the listening and coordination efforts), and the reformulation phase includes a memory retrieval and a note-reading effort as well as the speech production effort. This allows for a zoomed-in analysis of the interplay between memory (conceptual processing) and note-taking, which constitutes a particular challenge to the interpreter's attention management.

### 20.3.2 Memory

Fundamental to any complex cognitive task, memory is undoubtedly crucial to consecutive interpreting, where the interpreter needs to hold in storage what s/he has understood until the re-expression stage. This process draws on long-term memory as well as working memory in ways that have yet to be fully understood. Indeed, considering the unique role of memory in consecutive interpreting, the dearth of research on this topic by cognitive psychologists is altogether surprising.

Though ostensibly an investigation into note-taking, the pioneering experimental study by Danica Seleskovitch (1975) focused on cognitive processes, viewing memory retention, and retrieval as closely linked with message comprehension. Significantly, she described notes as minimal retrieval cues for conceptual content stored in long-term memory. This is in line with current conceptions of 'long-term working memory' (Ericsson and Kintsch 1995), which explain expert comprehension by retrieval structures in long-term memory linked to cues in short-term memory.

One of the few psychological studies to explore memory in consecutive interpreting is Sylvie Lambert's (1983) depth-of-processing experiment in the tradition of Gerver (1976). Comparing interpreters' recall and recognition scores after listening, shadowing, simultaneous and consecutive interpreting, Lambert found evidence of deeper processing in the listening-only and consecutive modes as compared to shadowing and simultaneous interpreting. In an experiment devoted specifically to the role of notes, she compared a listening condition to (French-English) consecutive interpreting with notes and an experimental condition in which interpreters took notes as usual but

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were then asked to recall the source speech without using their notes. Only the standard consecutive-interpreting condition yielded significantly higher post-task recognition scores, whereas note-taking alone had no greater mnemonic effect than listening.

## 20.4 Note-taking

The notes taken by consecutive interpreters form part of a more complex cognitive activity and are perhaps no more than the tip of the underlying processing iceberg. Nevertheless, most of the literature on consecutive interpreting foregrounds note-taking to the point of describing it as a special skill or technique in its own right, often with a distinctly didactic orientation. Some controversial issues notwithstanding, there has been far-reaching consensus on the nature of this technique for more than half a century.

### 20.4.1 Technique

A few years after the publication of the seminal *Interpreter's Handbook*, in which Jean Herbert (1952) discussed the fundamental principles of the note-taking technique developed by him and other pioneers of the conference interpreting profession, Jean-François Rozan, a fellow teacher at the Interpreter School in Geneva, published a short instructional book entitled *La prise de notes en interprétation consécutive* (1956). This text, which lists seven principles and suggests twenty useful symbols (in addition to providing workbook material for practice) is still regarded as the fundamental source on note-taking.

While sometimes referred to as the Rozan method, the author acknowledged his system as a compilation of ideas and approaches observed among fellow practitioners. Its seven principles are the following: 1) noting the idea rather than the word; 2) abbreviation; 3) links; 4) negation; 5) emphasis; 6) verticality; and 7) indenting. The last two 'principles'—that is, vertical arrangement and shifting from left to right—combine to create a step-wise, diagonal layout that is typical of most interpreters' notes.

Rozan's first principle, which effectively rules out the use of shorthand or stenographic notes, suggests that interpreters (should) note not the words they hear but the meaning they have understood. This conceives of notes as secondary to memory-based processing, as highlighted also by the *théorie du sens* (Seleskovitch 1975). The use of abbreviation, in turn, reflects the consensus that note-taking for consecutive interpreting should comply with the principles of economy and efficiency, as dictated by time pressure and cognitive load. No less obvious is the need for links between ideas, negation, and emphasis (modulation) to be reflected in the interpreter's notes, whereas the indication of verb tenses, number, and gender (e.g. by superscript abbreviations) is much less of an unquestionable requirement.

Rather than one of the seven principles, symbols constitute a separate section in Rozan's text. Distinguishing between symbols of expression, motion, and correspondence as well as symbols for concept words, Rozan introduces a total of twenty symbols, only ten of which are considered indispensable. These are: for 'thought' (idea, opinion; to think, consider, believe, etc.); for 'speech' (comment, declaration; to speak, say, state, etc.);  $\circ$  for 'discussion' (debate; to deal with, etc.);  $\otimes$  for 'approval' (agreement, support; to adopt, back, side with, etc.);  $\rightarrow$  for 'direction'/transfer';  $\nearrow$  for 'increase' (or any upward development);  $\searrow$  for 'decrease' (or any downward trend); / for 'relation'; = for equivalence; and  $\neq$  for difference. Among the seven concept symbols suggested by Rozan, only the one for 'country'/state'/nation' ( $\square$ ) appears to have come into widespread use.

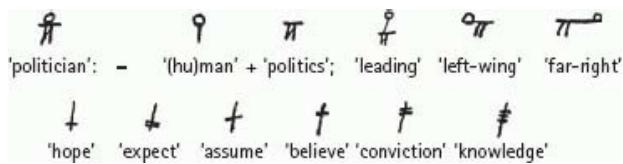


Figure 20.2 Sample of symbols by Matyssek (1989/2006: 180, 215, 225f., 311)

Indeed, whereas nobody has questioned Rozan's seven principles and overall approach, it is his (sparing) use of symbols that has prompted most development and innovation. Many contributions to the literature on note-taking, while reaffirming the principles set forth by the Geneva pioneers, include suggestions for various kinds of 'symbolic' (graphic, nonverbal) representation of meaning. Ryurik Min'iar-Beloruchev, for instance, the main author

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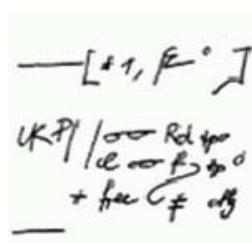
on consecutive interpreting in the Soviet literature, lists some 150 ‘symbols’ in his 1969 handbook on note-taking in consecutive interpreting. Others have come forward with their own suggestions, but none as comprehensively and ambitiously as Heinz Matyssek (1989), whose two-volume contribution to the subject includes an entire ‘book of symbols’ based on the author’s scheme for a ‘language-free’ notation method.

Matyssek’s method is explicitly informed by the principles laid down by Herbert and Rozan but highlights systematic symbolic notation as a key component in its own right. Special emphasis is placed on such principles as simplicity, economy, clarity, and cognitive efficiency. Rather than a long list of individual graphic signs, Matyssek therefore proposes families of ‘organic symbols’ that can be developed and combined in countless variations to reflect a broad range of meanings.

A simple example (see Fig. 20.2) is the sign for ‘politician’, which combines two of Matyssek’s two dozen ‘base symbols’, ‘man’ and ‘politics’ ( $\pi$ ), and can be stretched in various ways to reflect such notions as a ‘leading’, ‘left-wing’, or ‘far-right’ politician. Likewise, a sign series made up of a vertical stroke and one or more crossbars at various heights serves to express a range of cognitive attitudes, from ‘hoping’, ‘expecting’, and ‘assuming’ to ‘belief’, ‘conviction’, and ‘knowledge’.

A wealth of other proposals, including a left-hand margin, graphic tense markers and signs capturing conceptual links and relations, form part of Matyssek’s comprehensive note-taking system, which clearly defies presentation in the scope of this chapter. Nor is it possible to describe the many other valuable suggestions that have been added to the classic stock of ideas on note-taking in books presenting this subject to readers (most often students of interpreting) in languages such as Chinese, German, English, Italian, and Spanish. By way of illustration, Figure 20.3 reproduces a small sample of notes, taken as early as the 1950s by Gérard Ilg, a leading author on the subject with great merit in developing the Geneva tradition of consecutive interpreting (e.g. Ilg and Lambert 1996). Ilg’s approach to note-taking, in practice as in theory, can be said to represent the middle ground between Rozan and Matyssek, demonstrating once again the broad consensus on the dos and don’ts of note-taking as a technique.

### 20.4.2 Common ground and controversy



Le nouveau texte entraîne certaines modifications à l'article 1, et il est plus simple que le texte initialement proposé par le Royaume-Uni.

La proposition du Royaume-Uni tend à limiter le rôle du transporteur routier à l'établissement d'un lien entre le client et l'autre transporteur, et à exonérer le transporteur routier de toute obligation née de l'utilisation de l'autre mode de transport.

Figure 20.3. Sample of notes by G. Ilg (Pöchhacker and Shlesinger 2002: 38)

As pointed out above, many basic assumptions concerning note-taking in consecutive interpreting are widely shared and beyond doubt. Most fundamentally, these include the view of notes as an aide-mémoire, secondary to the crucial cognitive processing operations linking the sequence of comprehension and production.

Unquestionably, the key to consecutive interpreting lies in memory, where the result of the interpreter’s analytical processing of the source speech—the ‘conceptual skeleton’, in Kade’s (1963) terms—is stored for subsequent retrieval.

The nature of this conceptual skeleton as reflected in the interpreter’s notes has generated some debate. Questioning the reification, by Seleskovitch and others, of poorly defined ‘nonverbal sense’, and their injunction to ‘forget the words’, Michaela Albl-Mikasa (2007) reanalyses notes in terms of cognitive text-processing and relevance theory to show that consecutive interpreters adhere fairly closely to the micro-propositional level, in source- and target-text processing as well as in using notes as a special form of text (see also Fig. 20.3).

Whether more holistic or proposition-based, message analysis for memorization and retrieval from memory for speech production rely on working memory and attentional resources, while depending on long-term memory for cognitive storage. In either type of memory, some forms of input are more difficult to retain than others. As the semantic processing approach underlying Rozan’s first principle—to note meaning, not words—applies only to analysable speech, concept-oriented note-taking (or *note idéique*, in Seleskovitch’s terms) is complemented by

*note verbale* for such self-contained ‘transcodable’ items as proper names, numbers, and technical terms. Unless represented in the interpreter’s prior knowledge, such elements carry too high an information load to be easily memorized. There is general agreement, therefore, that names, dates, terms, and enumerations should always be noted.

However, there is also agreement that memory skills (and cognitive resources in general) may differ considerably from one person to another; hence the insistence, by all authors, that memory-based processing is essentially individual. The corollary for note-taking, though, is moot: Some (like Seleskovitch and associates) hold that the individual nature of memorization and note-taking makes systematic instruction counterproductive; others advocate the teaching of basic note-taking principles as a foundation upon which students can build their own individual technique.

One aspect of the individual note-taking style allowed for by all authors is the preference regarding the systematic use of symbols, as exemplified by the positions of Rozan and Matyssek. Whereas these authors may be presented as contradictory extremes (i.e. using as few vs. as many symbols as possible), they can also be shown to agree on the need for would-be consecutive interpreters to develop their own personal system, using the literature and instruction merely as guidance (see Ahrens 2005b).

Another area of individual differences is the amount of notes taken as such, but this depends not only on an interpreter’s working style and strategic preferences but also on the type and delivery of the source speech, the familiarity of the subject matter, and the working conditions in a given assignment. In the final analysis, the controversial issues in note-taking arise from the question of the language in which the notes should be taken.

The options for language choice include using the target language in the interpreting process, as advocated by Herbert and Rozan; using the source language, as defended by Ilg and Gile on account of processing-capacity limitations during the listening phase; using a convenient mix of source and target as well as other languages (Kirchhoff, Seleskovitch); and using the interpreter’s A language as the ‘language of reference’, irrespective of directionality (Min’iar-Beloruchev, Matyssek). A fifth option, in theory, would be implied in Matyssek’s language-free note-taking. Paradoxically, though, many of his ‘symbols’ are made up of letters of German words, and elements of shorthand are used for German suffixes, thus highlighting the author’s reliance on his native language.

The issue of language choice has been investigated in several empirical studies. Helle Dam (2004), in an experiment involving Danish and Spanish, found evidence in support of the A-language option, whereas Csilla Szabó (2006), attempting to replicate Dam’s results for English and Hungarian, found an advantage for English over and above its SL, TL, or A-language status. This points to the potential role of language-specific (typological) differences, and an area of note-taking research yet to be fully explored. Studies of note-taking among Japanese interpreters (e.g. Frey-Matsuyama 2007) suggest that the basic technique is the same for non-Indo-European, non-alphabetic languages, notwithstanding some unique script-related features.

### 20.5 Quality

As in the case of simultaneous interpreting (section 19.5.6 above), quality has been a focus of research also in the consecutive mode, though contributions on the subject are much less numerous. Aside from user surveys and analyses of strategic processing, the issue of quality in consecutive interpreting has been addressed particularly in comparative studies.

#### 20.5.1 Expectations and performance

Bühler’s (1986) seminal survey on quality criteria among conference interpreters also touched on features of consecutive interpreting performance, such as ‘poise’ and ‘pleasant appearance’. Subsequent surveys among users, however, were largely limited to simultaneous interpreting. Among the few exceptions is a questionnaire-based study by Stefano Marrone (1993), who asked his Italian audience (for a consecutively interpreted German lecture) about their preferences regarding turn length, speed, and various aspects of quality and the lack thereof. Respondents seemed to value content-related criteria (fidelity, completeness) more highly than aspects of delivery (voice, prosody), but gave the interpreter licence for some degree of ‘cultural mediation’ beyond ‘scrupulous translation’.

## Consecutive Interpreting

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As part of her ambitiously designed empirical study of note-taking by professional and student interpreters, Dörte Andres (2002) collected quality-criteria ratings from fifty senior ministerial officials with experience in using consecutive interpreters. Among message-related criteria, completeness, correct terminology, and clarity of expression were rated most highly, whereas delivery features considered particularly important included maintaining the same register, rhetorical skill, and intonation.

Using these criteria, Andres (2002) assessed twenty-eight consecutive interpretations of a 6.5-minute French speech into German as ‘good’, ‘average’, or ‘poor’, and proceeded to analyse her experimental corpus for strategic note-taking performance (and note-based target-speech production) as a function of proficiency. Likewise, Peter Mead (2002) compared professional and student subjects with regard to their fluency of delivery in English—Italian consecutive interpreting. Focusing specifically on hesitation phenomena, he used retrospective interviews to elicit participants’ comments on why they paused. In addition to findings related to expertise and directionality, Mead found that roughly a quarter of all pauses were explained with reference to interpreters’ notes. A similar methodological approach was taken by Marta Abuín González (2007) for a comprehensive account of problem-oriented strategies in English-Spanish interpreting at different levels of expertise.

As illustrated by these examples, empirical research on consecutive interpreting has largely been concerned with strategies of language processing and note-taking rather than performance evaluation (assessment) as such, except in mode-based comparisons.

### 20.5.2 Comparisons

For many years after the breakthrough of simultaneous interpreting at the Nuremberg Trial, conventional wisdom among conference interpreters was that consecutive was the more accurate and faithful mode, notwithstanding Herbert’s (1952) dictum that a consecutive rendering should take up only about 75 per cent of the original time. Surprisingly, even as prevailing professional practice shifted from the consecutive to the simultaneous mode, there appears to have been no major effort to compare the performance quality achieved in the two modes.

Maurizio Viezzi (1993) reported a small-scale experiment on quality in consecutive versus simultaneous interpreting in which he analysed the length, speed, clarity of expression, and completeness of a five-minute English speech rendered into Italian in either mode. Viezzi found both versions perfectly acceptable in terms of content and delivery but criticized the simultaneous interpretation for the wordiness arising from the interpreter’s ‘saying-it-all’ approach. Indeed, consecutive interpreting is often appreciated for being more synthetic, with ‘text condensing’ (Dam 1993) regarded as a valuable strategy.

Gile (2001a) investigated how simultaneous and consecutive interpreters coped with potential problem triggers such as false starts, digressions, and incomplete segments as well as items difficult to translate. Based on a short (100-second) source speech but a robust method of analysis in which ten simultaneous and ten consecutive versions were rated by three assessors, Gile found consecutive interpreting to be inferior in terms of overall accuracy.

The opposite finding emerged from the broader-based study by Debra Russell (2002) on signed-language interpreting in a courtroom setting. Based on accuracy assessment and user response in four mock trials, in which two teams of two ASL—English interpreters worked one trial each in the consecutive and the simultaneous mode, higher rates of accuracy were found for consecutive interpreting in each of the simulated discourse events considered (witness testimony, direct examination, and cross-examination).

Comparative analyses have also been carried out for the technology-based form of consecutive interpreting that is actually performed in the simultaneous mode (Hamidi and Pöchhacker 2007). This recorder-assisted consecutive mode, which has been explored also for use in legal settings, remains to be studied more fully, but may well come to challenge the classic consecutive interpreting technique relying on long-term memory and notes.

### 20.6 Interaction

As evident from the above, consecutive interpreting is typically associated with monologic speeches and with information transmission as the prime consideration. However, consecutive interpreting is also, and perhaps

essentially, a communicative activity in situated interaction. Thus, in many situations in which the consecutive mode is used—from welcome and after-dinner speeches to negotiations and interviews, nonverbal and non-translational aspects of the interpreter's performance must be assumed to play a role in the overall communicative process. Where interpreters give their consecutive rendering from a rostrum, for example, they enjoy considerable visibility, and their poise and body language or even appearance are likely to have an impact on their audience, yet very little is known about this dimension of consecutive interpreting.

One key component of live performance before an audience is eye contact. In the classic consecutive mode, this aspect of nonverbal communication conflicts with note-taking, which demands the interpreter's visual attention both in the listening (note-writing) and in the speaking (note-reading) phase of the task. Even so, keeping eye contact with the audience is a significant feature of the consecutive interpreter's delivery. Andres (2002) observed that the professional subjects in her experiment used eye contact to gloss over hesitation and doubt, whereas insecurity in students manifested itself in tell-tale gestures (e.g. head-scratching) and other body language.

In face-to-face rather than one-to-many interaction, gaze direction is an important turn-taking cue. As this requires the interpreter to be within the primary parties' field of vision, or 'communicative radius' (Wadensjö 2001), nonverbal visual cues are interdependent with proxemics, that is, the interpreter's physical positioning relative to the other interactants.

In combination with gestures, gaze direction allows interpreters in dialogic situations to exert a measure of control over the situation—for instance, to signal that s/he is understanding and coping with speed and utterance length, or the opposite. If necessary, interpreters working in the consecutive mode may also intervene to ask for repetition or clarification, to resolve speaker overlap and allocate turns, and to help resolve misunderstanding. Such intervention, which links up with the fundamental issue of role in interpreter-mediated interaction, is widely seen as a most challenging aspect of consecutive dialogue or liaison interpreting in institutional settings (e.g. Wadensjö 1998b). Developing expertise in this dimension of performance is considerably harder than acquiring note-taking skills, for which there are established principles and a well-documented technique.

### 20.7 Conclusion

Consecutive interpreting as the basic mode in which interpreters have been working throughout history covers a broad conceptual spectrum, from sentence-by-sentence or short consecutive to the rendering of dense, long speeches on the basis of notes. The latter end of the spectrum, associated with 'classic consecutive' in conference settings, accounts for the lion's share of research and didactic publications, many of which, incidentally, have been produced by authors in German-speaking countries. Consecutive interpreting in interactive discourse situations, on the other hand, has been studied not so much as a processing mode but as a communicative activity shaped by, and in turn shaping, the dynamics of cross-cultural encounters.

### Further reading and relevant resources

Most publications on consecutive interpreting are mainly devoted to note-taking. The classic text by Rozan (1956), long available only in French, was published in English translation (Rozan 2002) nearly fifty years after it had first become available to students in Geneva. The fundamentals of note-taking and the process of consecutive interpreting in general have been elaborated on in a range of languages, from Russian (Miňiar-Beloruchev 1969) and German (e.g. Matyssek 1989) to Italian (e.g. Falbo et al. 1999, part III, Monacelli 1999) and Spanish (e.g. Iliescu Gheorghiu 2001) to Japanese (e.g. Shinoda and Shinzaki 1990) and Chinese (e.g. Liu 1993). Since most interpreting in national markets is from and into English, there is a large market for books on consecutive and note-taking in that language (e.g. Gillies 2005). Monographic studies into processes and strategies, on the other hand, were few and far between after the seminal study by Seleskovitch (1975), but seem to be enjoying a revival since the beginning of the millennium (Abuín González 2007, Albl-Mikasa 2007, Andres 2002). Publications on consecutive interpreting with notes in other than conference settings are also relatively rare. Examples include a paper by Nancy Schweda Nicholson (1990) and a very wide-ranging chapter in the textbook on US court interpreting by González et al. (1991).

# Consecutive Interpreting

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## Oxford Handbooks Online

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#### Abstract and Keywords

This article introduces the concept of conference interpreting. It describes the origins and evolution of conference interpreting as a profession. Within the field of translation studies, conference interpreting is among the primary domains of translational activity. It is a modern-day phenomenon and, more importantly, a distinctly professional endeavour. Conference interpreting is a professional communication service rendered in either the simultaneous or the consecutive mode of interpreting in a conference(-like) situation. This article describes the evolution of conference interpreting studies as a discipline and its theoretical and methodological lines of approach. The research issues reviewed in this article include the conference interpreters' qualifications and skills, the settings of their work, the nature and quality of their service, and, the features of the professional community at large. Research on conference interpreting has since become an important domain within the wider and increasingly diverse field of translation studies.

Keywords: conference interpreting, translational activity, translation studies, communication service, conference(-like) situation, lines of approach

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#### 21.1 Introduction

Within the field of translation studies, conference interpreting is among the primary domains of translational activity. Unlike more traditional concerns such as literary translation and Bible translation, conference interpreting is a modern-day phenomenon and, more importantly, a distinctly professional endeavour. A thorough understanding of conference interpreting as a field of inquiry therefore requires one to engage with its professional underpinnings, which have had a significant influence on the development of the field's scientific paradigms.

Until well into the 1990s, conference interpreting constituted the main object of research for interpreting studies in general, and the emergence and development of that (sub) discipline largely corresponds to the evolution of research on conference interpreting as presented in this chapter. As conference interpreting has traditionally been practised in two main working modes, known as consecutive and simultaneous, the present chapter is closely interrelated with the overview of mode-specific research on interpreting in Chapter 19 (simultaneous interpreting) and Chapter 20 (consecutive interpreting).

Given the loose definition of 'conference interpreting' as discussed in the following section, this chapter will also accommodate such distinctions as interpreting in media settings and remote interpreting. Its core will nevertheless be the professional practice of conference interpreting in the traditional sense, where such issues as interpreters' qualifications, working conditions, and performance standards continue to play a vital role in many current lines of research.

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#### 21.2 Definition

Conference interpreting is generally understood to refer to the most prestigious and highly professionalized form of interpreting (between spoken languages), practised, usually in the simultaneous mode, in international conferences and organizations such as the institutions of the UN and EU. Indeed, 'conference interpreting' is often used interchangeably with 'simultaneous interpreting' from a booth with electro-acoustic equipment (headsets, microphones). Strictly speaking, however, the term specifies only a particular type of more or less ritualized multiparty interaction ('conference'), and as such does not imply a particular mode of interpreting or refer only to international settings. Simultaneous interpreting in the democratic institutions of bilingual or multilingual nations is a case in point.

In a much-quoted working definition from the 1980s, a conference interpreter was described as

a person who by profession acts as a responsible linguistic intermediary (alone or more often as a member of a team) in a formal or informal conference or conference-like situation, thanks to his or her ability to provide simultaneous or consecutive oral interpretation of participants' speeches, regardless of their length and complexity. (AIIC 1984: 21)

Conference interpreting is thus defined as a professional communication service rendered in either the simultaneous or the consecutive mode of interpreting in a conference(-like) situation. Rather than the conference as a particular format of interaction, however, the ability to interpret speeches of any complexity appears to have become the essential defining characteristic. In a document offered as guidance to those interested in joining the profession, the conference interpreter's working environment is expanded to include 'all kinds of multilingual settings where speakers want to express themselves in their own language and still understand one another (conferences, negotiations, press briefings, seminars, depositions, TV broadcasts: you name it!)' (AIIC 2006). Conference interpreting is therefore taken to include such specializations as diplomatic interpreting and media interpreting, as the focus is placed on high levels of professional skills (and commensurate remuneration and social prestige) rather than conference settings as a special type of institutionalized interaction.

## 21.3 Profession (alization)

The following description of the origins and evolution of the profession serves as a basis for the subsequent overview of the development and state of the art of (conference) interpreting research and at the same time reflects one particular line of work in interpreting studies, that is, the historiography of interpreting. Rather than offering a detailed chronology or historical account, the following sketch foregrounds the main forces that have transformed the millennial practice of interpreting from an occupation into a modern profession.

### 21.3.1 1920s origins

There is general agreement that conference interpreting is a phenomenon of the twentieth century and that it originated in the multilateral negotiations at the end of the First World War in 1918, with both French and English as official working languages. In these meetings, and especially in the subsequent conferences of the League of Nations and ILO (International Labour Office) in Geneva, beginning in 1920, interpreters were faced with the need to render whole speeches at a time rather than working 'sentence by sentence'. These new demands led them to take notes and thus to develop the technique that came to be known as consecutive interpreting (see Chapter 20).

The special skills required of—and mastered by—pioneer conference interpreters in the 1920s, together with the institutional need to conduct proceedings in at least two, and frequently more, working languages, led to the emergence of a first small cadre of professional conference interpreters, then known in French as *interprètes parlementaires*. These were highly educated men (rarely women) who, though without specific training, made interpreting their source of livelihood, either as one of barely a dozen members of staff in the League of Nations family of organizations, or by accepting freelance contracts for any of the growing number of multilingual meetings in the 1930s and 1940s.

Conducting all proceedings in two official languages, French and English, and in additional ones used by particular conference delegations, was time-consuming in the consecutive mode of interpreting, and attempts to introduce a more simultaneous form of interpreting were made as early as the mid 1920s (see Chapter 19). Despite training efforts and some successful trials in the ILO with subsequently patented IBM equipment, simultaneous conference

interpreting did not have its breakthrough until after the Second World War.

### 21.3.2 Nuremberg and beyond

Conference interpreters as a small group of professionals, if not yet constituting a recognizable profession, existed in the first half of the twentieth century, and so did university-level schools to provide younger generations of interpreters with the necessary knowledge and skills, sometimes including those required for simultaneous interpreting. However, it was not until the use of simultaneous interpreting at the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal in 1945/6 (Gaiba 1998) that conference interpreting received its decisive boost. Having proved its effectiveness in enabling communication in four working languages, simultaneous interpreting soon came to be adopted by the newly created United Nations Organization, which became the best-known and most prestigious employer of professional interpreters. The 1950s and 1960s saw a growing demand for the services of conference interpreters, and the profession can be said to have experienced a boom. Both at the UN and in the many other intergovernmental and non-governmental international organizations founded in the course of the twentieth century, not least the institutions making up the present-day European Union, conference interpreting was practised in both the consecutive and the simultaneous mode. These two techniques have therefore been seen as the core skills of conference interpreters, and have played a central role in their professional education.

### 21.3.3 Schools

In recognition of the growing number of international and multilingual contacts, a number of training programmes for interpreters (and translators) were launched at university level in the 1940s and 1950s (see Chapter 32), with steady growth in the number of interpreter training institutions in Europe until well into the 1990s. This trend has continued on a global scale into the third millennium, albeit with a shift in momentum from Europe to Asia.

The fact that (conference) interpreter training came to be institutionalized in universities is of obvious significance, both for the prestige and social status of the interpreting profession and for the development of interpreting studies as a discipline. Though training programmes were often run in college-like university-affiliated ‘schools’ rather than fully fledged academic departments, their foothold in academia was gradually extended to research as well as teaching. With time, as academic requirements were raised, both for students earning their university degrees and for teaching staff wishing to hold on to university posts, interpreter education underwent a process of academization, with benefits for professional practice as well as scholarly production. If critical reflection and ongoing development of its body of knowledge and skills are among the hallmarks of a profession, then access to academic resources (specialized literature including theories and models, and researchers with appropriate methodological skills) should be a key component of professionalization. Nevertheless, in the early decades of its existence, the conference interpreting profession was shaped not so much by insights from scholarly research as by highly effective policies adopted by the organization that has laid claim to the international representation of the profession.

### 21.3.4 Professional organization

Underlying the professionalization of conference interpreting were increased needs for multilingual communication that could be met thanks to interpreters' skilled performance of newly developed techniques. Conference interpreters thus enjoyed strong market demand for their services, driven mainly by financially potent clients such as international organizations and government bodies. Notwithstanding these propitious circumstances, much of the profession's success story in the latter half of the twentieth century goes to the credit of the professional organization that was set up, in 1953, to regulate working conditions, establish professional standards, and control access to the profession. The International Association of Conference Interpreters, best known by its French acronym AIIC, effectively accomplished these and other tasks, and gave conference interpreting a clear and coherent global profile, the main features of which were replicated by interpreters' professional bodies at the national level. Unlike FIT, AIIC was not conceived as a federation of national-level interpreters' associations but as a worldwide body with individual membership. Several of its lasting achievements for the profession, including the benchmarking of competence and the establishment of a code of ethics and standards of practice, were founded on this organizational approach.

Before completion of a university-level interpreter training programme became the standard way of acquiring appropriate qualifications, one of the foremost tasks of AIIC was to ensure that would-be practitioners had the necessary professional skills. This was achieved through a peer assessment system based on a classification of interpreters' working languages as A, B, or C languages. An A language is an interpreter's native language (or another language strictly equivalent to a native language) into which s/he interprets from all his/her other languages in either mode (consecutive and simultaneous). A B language is a language of which an interpreter has a near-native command and into which s/he works from one or more of his/her other languages, at least in the consecutive mode. A C language is a language of which the interpreter has a complete understanding but does not interpret into. C languages are therefore referred to as 'passive' languages, whereas A and B languages are known as 'active' languages. Conference interpreters have at least one A language (but may have more than one) and—minimally—at least one C (or B) language.

As part of the admission procedure for new members, at least three active AIIC members who have worked with the candidate must vouch for the applicant's professional behaviour and competence in the language combination applied for. Since candidates must provide evidence of a minimum of 150 days' prior working experience as conference interpreters, the threshold for AIIC membership is clearly set at a high level of professional expertise. AIIC members, currently over 2,900 worldwide, therefore represent only a part of the global community of conference interpreting practitioners, whose total number is probably several times higher.

For AIIC members, professionalism is assessed not only with reference to language proficiency and interpreting competence, but also with regard to the organization's standards of professional ethics and practice. The AIIC Code of Ethics, which dates back to the late 1950s, binds its members to strict professional secrecy (confidentiality), the avoidance of conflicts of interest, and professional solidarity, and enjoins them to accept only assignments for which they are competent and properly prepared, and to work only under appropriate working conditions as laid down in the organization's professional standards and related documents. The latter concern such features as team strength, professional domicile, the duration of an interpreter's working day, and specifications for assignments involving video-conferencing as well as for ISO-standardized interpreting booths.

While the professional standards also include guidance for individual interpreter contracts, it is significant that in addition to its role as a professional body defending the interests of its membership and of the profession in general, AIIC also has a trade union function. As the recognized interlocutor of international organizations employing interpreters, AIIC engages in collective bargaining and concludes multi-year agreements stipulating employment conditions and remuneration.

AIIC had actually set remuneration levels also for the non-agreement sector until the 1990s, when the practice was brought to an end by an anti-trust action in the US. This threat to the profession's established standards in particular highlighted the need for scientific research to back up claims concerning the working conditions required to ensure quality of service.

### **21.3.5 Profession, research, and teaching**

Unlike the promotion of professional standards and the negotiation of working conditions, research and university teaching would not necessarily be considered to fall within the remit of a professional organization. In the case of conference interpreting, however, the link between the profession and training has been very close indeed, dating back to the 1950s. Dissatisfied with the way interpreting was taught at many schools in the 1950s, when interpreter training was not always clearly distinguished from foreign-language teaching, AIIC formulated a set of criteria that included positioning interpreter training at the postgraduate level and using practising professionals as teaching staff. Degrees from universities that agreed to adopt this 'school policy' (e.g. in Geneva, Heidelberg, and Paris) were given 'recognition' by AIIC. The professional body had thus managed to implement an accreditation system of sorts for training institutions, on top of the de facto certification scheme put in place by its admissions procedure.

As will be described in more detail in the following section, the professional association, and some of its leading representatives in particular, played a major role in shaping not only teaching but also scientific research. A classic example of the former is *The Interpreter's Handbook*, a 1950s textbook for interpreting students published (in three languages) by Jean Herbert, a pioneer of the profession who taught at the Geneva school and served as president of AIIC in the 1960s. No less influential in research as well as teaching was Danica Seleskovitch,

Executive Secretary of AIIC in its early days, whose 1968 monograph on conference interpreting (see Seleskovitch 1978a) remains a standard reference work, and who went on to become the most influential figure in the development of interpreting studies as a discipline.

While interpreter education programmes at universities have gradually acquired more of the resources needed for autonomous academic research, including the critical analysis of teaching methods and assessment criteria, the role of the profession as represented by AIIC remains significant. The Workload Study (AIIC 2002), commissioned in the wake of the legal struggle with anti-trust authorities, was by no means the first such effort promoted by the organization. A major study of occupational stress had been carried out with the support of AIIC in the early 1980s (Cooper, Davies, and Tung 1982), and a comprehensive survey of user expectations of conference interpreting in the mid-1990s (Moser 1996). While the AIIC Research Committee coordinates such activities, the Training Committee continues to promote best-practice criteria for conference interpreter training programmes and, significantly, offers ‘training the trainers’ courses to university teaching staff.

### 21.4 (Conference) interpreting studies

For most of the twentieth century, in which conference interpreting enjoyed such spectacular development as a profession, research on interpreting was focused almost exclusively on consecutive and simultaneous interpreting as practised in international conferences and organizations. The core of what has come to be known as interpreting studies—and generally regarded as a subdiscipline within the broader field of translation studies—is thus made up of research on conference interpreting. The present section reviews the development of this field of study with regard to disciplinary perspectives and overall theoretical and methodological lines of approach.

#### 21.4.1 Pioneering professionals and psychologists

The very first scientific study of conference interpreting was devoted, most appropriately, to the work and skills of this budding professional community in the 1920s. The Spanish educator Jesús Sanz (1930) observed conference interpreters at work in Geneva, and interviewed some twenty of them to find out about their working practices and the qualifications they considered necessary for the task. Given the impressive list of abilities gleaned from his survey, Sanz concluded that there was much potential for further (experimental) research on conference interpreting, as well as a clear need for specialized training.

Training was also the focus of the very first academic thesis devoted to conference interpreting, submitted by Eva Paneth to the University of London in 1957. Among other things, she observed and described teaching practices at several interpreter schools in Europe, including Geneva, Germersheim, and Heidelberg.

Although the study by Sanz had also covered simultaneous interpreting, it was not until the 1960s that this innovative technique attracted further scientific interest—mainly from psychologists, most notably Pierre Oléron (Oléron and Nanpon 1965), Henri Barik (e.g. 1975), and David Gerver (e.g. 1969; see also Chapter 19 above). In 1977 Gerver co-organized an international symposium that brought together experts from a variety of scientific disciplines (including linguistics, cognitive psychology, sociology, and artificial intelligence), as well as leading representatives of the conference interpreting profession (see Gerver and Sinaiko 1978). Nevertheless, the two communities largely went their own separate ways, and conference interpreters and interpreter trainers with an interest in research had claimed the field of interpreting as their own by the mid 1970s.

#### 21.4.2 Forging a paradigm

The towering figure in the endeavour to put the study of (conference) interpreting on an academic footing is Danica Seleskovitch (1921–2001), whose lifetime essentially spanned the history of conference interpreting in the twentieth century. With a diploma in conference interpreting from the HEC in Paris, she began her career in the early 1950s in the US and with the European Coal and Steel Community in Luxembourg, joined AIIC in 1956, and soon began teaching at the newly founded École Supérieure d’Interprètes et de Traducteurs (ESIT) at the University of Paris, which was to remain her academic home and the centre of her activity.

As early as 1962, with her affiliation as Executive Secretary of AIIC, Seleskovitch had published a paper in the FIT journal *Babel* in which she described not only conference interpreting as a profession but also, however briefly,

the basic ‘mechanism’ of interpreting (consecutive as well as simultaneous), which she conceived as a triangular process leading from a source-language utterance to a target-language utterance via the construct of ‘sense’. This basic cognitive process model, while simplistic by modern standards, represented a radical departure from the prevailing linguistic rule-based assumptions about translation as implemented in early machine translation systems.

The idea that interpreting was not linguistic ‘transcoding’ but required the comprehension and re-expression of (non-verbal) sense built from linguistic meanings and cognitive complements (i.e. relevant contextual and world knowledge) informed Seleskovitch’s 1968 monograph on international conference interpreting (Seleskovitch 1978a) and her doctoral thesis on note-taking in consecutive interpreting. Having won her own academic credentials, Seleskovitch managed in 1974 to establish a doctoral programme in what came to be known as *traductologie* at the University of Paris/Sorbonne Nouvelle. Based on her robust ‘theory of sense’, officially known as the ‘interpretive theory of translation’, and a distinct methodological preference for observation and experience-based introspection rather than laboratory experiments, a number of doctoral theses supervised by Seleskovitch were completed by fellow professionals and interpreter trainers. Chief among them was Marianne Lederer, who applied the interpretive theory to simultaneous interpreting and went on to co-author two volumes on conference interpreting theory and training (e.g. Seleskovitch and Lederer 1989).

Championed by Seleskovitch as a charismatic leader, the so-called Paris School of interpreting studies became the first scholarly community to share a theoretical framework and methodological approach founded on a coherent set of basic assumptions and values. The latter were clearly derived from these scholars’ professional background in conference interpreting, and most research in the interpretive theory (IT) paradigm indeed highlighted successful professional practice and the ideal process, rather than difficulties or even failures. This outlook held obvious appeal for the community of practitioners, and was associated with prescriptive answers to many questions of practice and training, even without recourse to systematic empirical studies. Grounded in the concerns of the profession and training, the Paris School approach can be described as a ‘bootstrap paradigm’—an initial effort to use the (modest) resources available to lift the study of interpreting (and translation) to a level of visibility and recognition in academia.

Similar efforts had been made in the 1960s by Otto Kade, a teacher of Czech and Russian and self-taught conference interpreter who spearheaded interpreter (and translator) training at the University of Leipzig from the late 1950s. In his doctoral dissertation, Kade (1968) established the conceptual groundwork for the systematic study of translation and interpreting as mediated communication. Unlike Seleskovitch, however, Kade and his colleagues of the so-called Leipzig School relied mainly on modern linguistics as the guiding disciplinary framework.

In training as well as research activities, the Leipzig School maintained close ties with the ‘Soviet School’ of interpreting research, as represented chiefly by Ghelly V. Chernov at the Maurice Thorez Institute of Foreign Languages in Moscow. Chernov’s research on simultaneous interpreting (see 2004) was based on (psycho)linguistics and experimental psychology—and close interdisciplinary cooperation.

### 21.4.3 Aspiring to science

Interdisciplinary cooperation rang out as the buzzword in interpreting research from the late 1980s to the late 1990s. Dissatisfied with the rather hermetic theoretical and methodological paradigm of the day, science-minded conference interpreters such as Daniel Gile, Jennifer Mackintosh, Barbara Moser-Mercer, and Catherine Stenzl promoted a more rigorous empirical approach to the study of interpreting, drawing in particular on insights from the cognitive sciences. Moser-Mercer’s process model of simultaneous interpreting, dating back to the mid 1970s, Gile’s cognitive-effort models of attention management, and the use by Mackintosh of the Kintsch and van Dijk model of discourse comprehension and production testified to a new willingness to look to other disciplines for guidance in elucidating interpreting as a cognitive process.

Most spectacularly, the aspiration to interdisciplinarity came to fruition at the University of Trieste in a series of experiments carried out by the neurophysiologist Franco Fabbro in cooperation with staff and students at the Interpreter School (e.g. Fabbro and Gran 1994). This gave rise to a distinct neurolinguistic paradigm of interpreting research, with subsequent contributions by interdisciplinary teams in Vienna and Turku.

Another significant example of interpreting researchers' aspiration to science was the founding, in 1996, of the field's first international peer-reviewed academic journal by Barbara Moser-Mercer in cooperation with cognitive scientist Dominic Massaro. Not least by the composition of its original editorial board, *Interpreting* signalled an orientation toward scientific standards as established in disciplines like cognitive psychology. This was promoted strongly by Daniel Gile, who emerged as the leading figure of conference interpreting research in the 1990s. In his plenary speech at the Vienna Translation Studies Congress of 1992, Gile (1994a) presented his vision of a division of labour between research-minded practitioners ('practisearchers') and specialists in the cognitive sciences, with their superior research skills.

However, Gile's plea for an 'opening up' was not heeded, and by the end of the decade it had become rather doubtful that interdisciplinarity could serve as a motor for conference interpreting research. Indeed, more enrichment and growth in interpreting studies had come from other sources, and especially from its deliberate integration into the wider field of translation studies.

### 21.4.4 Growing together—and apart

Too isolated in the Paris School, not scientific enough if left in the hands of practisearchers professionals and trainers, too distinct from the linguistically dominated study of written translation, and not attractive enough for researchers in established sciences to take a sustained interest, the study of conference interpreting did not have an obvious home in academia. Though 'I' had been linked with 'T' for decades in practical terms (such as T&I training at T&I schools, T&I associations, or T&I journals), it was only in the course of the 1990s, with the buoyant development of translation studies (originally in the narrower sense), that interpreting researchers were increasingly drawn into their cognate discipline, where interpreting research is now a major domain alongside such areas as literary translation or screen translation.

Often referred to as a '(sub)discipline', interpreting studies, which now includes considerably more than conference interpreting, has a somewhat ambiguous relationship with, or position within, translation studies. Comprising several different paradigms of its own—such as the interpretive-theory tradition, the cognitive-science-oriented approach, and the neurolinguistic paradigm—conference interpreting research has only gradually developed stronger links or even synergies with translation research. Nevertheless, areas of theoretical and methodological interface, such as the notion of translational norms, concepts from sociology (e.g. Bourdieu) and cultural studies, or corpus-linguistic approaches, are now in evidence and serve to reinforce the position of (conference) interpreting studies within translation studies, on the basis of a common core area in general translation theory.

At the same time, the much more tangible 'situatedness' of interpreting and its inherently real-time nature as a cognitive and communicative process make interpreting research amenable to theoretical and methodological approaches of its own. Beyond the use of neuro-imaging techniques to explore cerebral activity patterns in the interpreting process, these include such lines of research as stress management and environmental constraints, and the immediate response of the interpreter's audience.

Unique challenges for interpreting research also include the problem of accessing authentic discourse data (unless made publicly available in broadcasts or on the web) and the difficulty of conducting controlled experiments to test specific hypotheses. The relatively small number of conference interpreters with the same language combination and professional background in any given location; the reluctance of such practitioners to have their work recorded and analysed for research purposes; the high degree of individual variability in professional performance; and the many threats to ecological validity inherent in an experimental design have often been cited as formidable barriers to scientific studies of conference interpreting that might yield clear-cut and generalizable findings for this complex phenomenon.

As the limits of experimentation in the psycho-statistical paradigm have become increasingly clear, research on conference interpreting has come to benefit considerably from the qualitative turn in the human sciences. Having greater recourse to social-science methods in general, scholars in the field have adopted ethnographic approaches and aimed for the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data and methods in order to do justice to interpreting in both its cognitive and communicative (interactional) dimensions.

The study of conference interpreting, generally conceived as a domain within translation studies but with a strong interdisciplinary tradition, has thus been enriched by developments in the broader field of translation studies and the human and cultural sciences in general. As most members of the conference interpreting research community have been open toward and interested in the domains of community-based interpreting (as described in Chapters 22, 23, and 24), further enrichment and synergy have come from an integrationist rapprochement with conference interpreters' proximate—albeit socio-professionally different, and poor(er)—relations.

## 21.5 Major issues

'Conference interpreting' as used in this chapter denotes a professional domain rather than its prototypical form of practice in the simultaneous mode (which is the subject of Chapter 19). The research issues reviewed in the following sections therefore relate to the professionals and the service they render rather than the specific nature of the consecutive or, predominantly, the simultaneous mode in which conference interpreting is practised. They include the primordial question of conference interpreters' qualifications and skills, the settings in which they work, the nature and quality of their service, and, most broadly, the features of the professional community at large. Most of these topics are variously interrelated, and many need to be cross-referenced to what is known about different working modes, as described in detail in Chapters 19 and 20. Moreover, the training of interpreters has traditionally been an overriding concern of interpreting studies but is here given separate treatment (in Chapter 32). What follows, then, is a necessarily incomplete sketch of some major lines of research informed by a view from, and of, the profession.

### 21.5.1 Skills

Conference interpreters' qualifications for the job are of fundamental interest to the profession, to interpreter educators, and to employers or clients. Ever since the very first study by Sanz (1930), there has been general agreement that the requisite qualities include cognitive-intellectual abilities (e.g. intelligence, memory) as well as moral and affective competence (e.g. tact, discretion, poise). The latter are features of 'professional behaviour' and are dealt with in interpreters' codes of ethics and professional conduct, the AIIC version of which gives pride of place to confidentiality. Keiser (1978) emphasizes knowledge (i.e. mastery of languages and general background knowledge) and 'personal qualities', including the ability to intuit meaning, adaptability, concentration, a gift for public speaking, and a pleasant voice. Some of these are reminiscent of the idea that 'interpreters are born, not made', but such a belief has clearly been reversed by the boom in interpreter education in the latter part of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, some of the personal qualities of individuals who can be made into conference interpreters through training seem amenable to psychometric testing. When compared to translators, there is some evidence that interpreters are more people- and action-oriented. On the whole, however, the use of standardized psychological instruments to screen potential interpreters for a distinct personality profile has not yielded conclusive results.

Many authors have focused on interpreters' special (acquired) skills and expertise, from linguistic proficiency to text processing and situation management. Contrary to lay notions of an interpreter's essential skills, the type and degree of bilingualism, or multilingualism, required for interpreting, though discussed by psycholinguists as early as the 1950s, have not been studied in depth. With the AIIC language classification as a point of reference, language competence was mostly taken for granted. Dealt with in Thiéry's (1978) study of 'true bilinguals' (i.e. interpreters with two A languages) and in some work on cerebral lateralization in the neurolinguistic paradigm, the issue acquired new urgency only with the growing need for simultaneous interpreting into the B language (from interpreters' A languages such as Finnish or Chinese). Within the limitations of actively using a non-native language, such *retour* interpreting has been found to involve special strategies (e.g. Chang and Schallert 2007) and to require an adaptation of teaching approaches (Donovan 2004).

The cognitive skills for processing (i.e. comprehending and producing) text and discourse in any given working mode of interpreting are unquestionably fundamental to the task. It is not very clear, however, to what extent and how the receptive and productive processes in interpreters are unique. There is some evidence, from a study by Gerver et al. (1989), that anticipatory comprehension (as measured by the cloze task) and logical memory skills are predictive of superior interpreting abilities, but also that such correlations are probably mode-specific. For simultaneous interpreting in particular, it is not clear whether interpreters owe their performance to superior

working memory spans or to specially developed task-specific attention-management skills (e.g. Liu, Schallert, and Carroll 2004).

Moreover, the expertise developed by professional interpreters over time (see Ericsson 2000/2001) must also be seen in relation to different settings of work, and includes special skills in the areas of knowledge acquisition (assignment preparation, terminology research) and ‘situation management’ (sensitivity to communicative needs and interactional dynamics) over and above the core competence areas of discourse processing in encounters requiring cross-language and intercultural communication.

### 21.5.2 Settings

From its beginnings in the 1920s, conference interpreting has been practised in the context of international diplomacy, where the use of interpreters—in essentially bilateral encounters—has a millennial history. Given this heritage, bilateral as well as multilateral meetings between representatives of sovereign entities (i.e. diplomatic interpreting in the narrower sense) would be regarded as falling within the remit of conference interpreters. Most typically, though, their working environment is international bodies such as the UN family of organizations and the European institutions, the world's largest employer of conference interpreters. In this default case, interpreters can expect to work in standardized booths and for listeners and speakers accustomed to using their services. Nevertheless, conditions may vary widely, from large, thoroughly prepared assemblies with political speech-making to small expert meetings using the latest technical jargon, and field missions requiring consecutive interpreting. This applies even more to assignments on the ‘private market’ (not subject to AIIC agreements), where trade meetings and scientific conferences accounted for much of the demand for conference interpreters' services until they began to be held increasingly in English as a lingua franca.

In contrast to this trend in international specialist communication, the demand for interpreting in mass media communication, especially television broadcasts, has been on the rise. Though typically offered as a live voice-over in the simultaneous mode (e.g. for interviews and televised events as well as news broadcasts), interpreting in media settings may take many forms, ranging from dialogue interpreting in talk shows to simultaneous interpreting into signed languages.

If the simultaneous mode represents an important interface between conference interpreting and signed-language interpreting, the same applies to international conference interpreting and court interpreting. Though the latter is typically practised in the consecutive mode (in combination with whispering), simultaneous interpreting equipment is used in an increasing number of courtrooms, and certainly in the proceedings of international tribunals—the very context in which simultaneous interpreting first came to fame.

Not so much a setting as a new dimension of practice is interpreting using various types of videoconferencing technology. With early experiments dating back to the 1970s, remote interpreting in conference settings has benefited greatly from technological advances (see e.g. Mouzourakis 2006) and has considerable potential to emerge as the twenty-first-century model of conference interpreting. However, interpreting in remote mode—whether using staff-interpreter capacities from different locations (as in the case of the UN) or accommodating additional working languages (as in the case of EU meeting rooms)—has been found to be significantly more stressful than on-site simultaneous interpreting with direct visual access. For this new mode to become widely accepted, conference interpreters will need to cope with the lack of a sense of ‘presence’, possibly with the aid of newly designed workplaces that no longer resemble a booth.

### 21.5.3 Service

Irrespective of the mode in which it is practised, the service rendered by interpreters essentially comes down to the task of saying again what has been expressed in another language. The requirements which such a rendering is expected to meet have long been described with reference to such notions as accuracy, completeness, and fidelity.

Ever since Herbert (1952), the explicit requirement for an interpretation has been to ‘fully and faithfully’ convey the original speech. Rather than the correct translation of words, as measured in early experimental studies, the object of fidelity has been variously defined with reference to different theories. In the Paris School tradition, one would

speak of fidelity to the ‘sense’, and this is echoed in Bühler’s (1986) pioneering survey among AIIC members, who identified ‘sense consistency with the original message’ as the top-ranking criterion in interpreting (and interpreters), outweighing aspects of presentation. By the same token, more leeway in dealing with the linguistic ‘packaging’ versus the ‘informational content’ is granted by Gile (1995), who allows for a flexible balance between message content and form depending on situational and functional considerations.

Such interaction-related concerns have also dominated the view of interpreting service quality from the perspective of functionalist translation theories which foreground the communicative needs and expectations of the clients or users. More specifically, the quality standard of ‘equivalent effect’ holds that transmitting the message ‘with total accuracy’ requires the interpreter ‘to have his listeners understand it as well as it was understood by those who heard it directly from the speaker himself’ (Seleskovitch 1978a: 102).

To the extent that listeners appreciate an interpretation not only for its information content but also for its linguistic and delivery features, quality may ultimately be ‘in the ears of the user’ (Kurz 2001). Indeed, while survey research among conference participants (e.g. Kurz 1993a) has yielded a moderately stable pattern of criteria, experiments contrasting generic expectations with actual performance assessment suggest that the nonverbal (prosodic) features of an interpreter’s output may have a significant impact on the judgements of interpretation users, who are by definition unable to reliably check the target text against its source (see Collados Aís 1998).

Kurz (2001) therefore calculates quality in conference interpreting as the balance of ‘service delivered minus service expected’. However, since audience perceptions of quality may not be founded on material parameters, the client-centred or receiver-oriented perspective on service quality needs to have as its complement professional interpreters’ ethics of service, requiring loyalty to the communicating parties whom they serve, as well as respect for the deontological principles of their profession.

### 21.5.4 Sociology

Having developed from a small band of gentlemen-interpreters into a several-thousand-strong female-dominated global profession in the course of half a century, conference interpreting is of obvious interest from a sociological perspective. The reasons and implications of its changing internal make-up in terms of age, sex, and the switch from the consecutive to the simultaneous mode have yet to be thoroughly studied.

Conference interpreters in the 1950s clearly disliked the loss of status and visibility resulting from being moved from the rostrum to a booth in the back of the room. At the same time, it was the technology-based simultaneous mode that made conference interpreting a much-admired feat commanding high social esteem—and substantial fees. While the profession’s prestige may have declined over the years, job satisfaction among conference interpreters has been stable at high levels, notwithstanding increased competitive pressures and the interpreter’s ambiguous role as a ‘central outsider’. After all, even Herbert, who praised conference interpreting as ‘one of the fairest and loftiest occupations in the world to-day’, spoke of the interpreter as ‘a necessary evil’ (1952: 3–4).

Drawing up a socio-professional account on a global scale is a considerable challenge, even though conference interpreting is much less strongly conditioned by national contexts than community-based interpreting (see Chapter 23). Some country-specific descriptions of the conference interpreting profession have been put forward, notably for Germany (Feldweg 1996) and Japan (Kondo 1988). Tseng (1992) presented a case study of the profession(alization) of conference interpreting in Taiwan that came to inspire similar accounts for community-based spoken-language and signed-language interpreting. With the interpreting market and profession in China advancing in great leaps, there is ample space for further socio-professional analyses, presumably pointing to a complex interplay of international standards (as established by AIIC) and local sociocultural constraints.

### 21.6 Conclusion

With roots going back as far as Ancient Egypt, interpreting became a widely recognized profession only in the twentieth century, when multilateral diplomacy in more than one working language created a need for the special translational skills of conference interpreters, initially working in the consecutive mode. The novel feat of simultaneous interpreting, in particular, sparked interest among psychologists, and also led practitioners and trainers to reflect systematically on their practice. Established as an academic field of study in the 1970s, research

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on conference interpreting has since become an important domain within the wider and increasingly diverse field of translation studies. While sharing an interest in such fundamental concerns as professional norms, sociocultural constraints, and features of translated discourse, conference interpreting offers unique theoretical and methodological challenges. In particular, the situatedness and real-time nature of the interpreter's task make it fertile ground for interdisciplinary explorations with a focus on neurolinguistic foundations as well as on cognitive processing and communicative performance.

### **Further reading and relevant resources**

A wealth of information on the conference interpreting profession is available on the website of AIIC, the International Association of Conference Interpreters ([www.aiic.net](http://www.aiic.net)).

Among the books describing conference interpreting as a professional practice, the 1968 classic by Danica Seleskovitch, published in English as *Interpreting for International Conferences* (Seleskovitch 1978a), is still the primary source for those interested in an introduction to the profession as well as to the basics of the interpreting process. A contemporary version is Jones (1998), and several other introductions to the profession, often oriented toward students, can be found. The very first book in this category, still worth reading, is the ground-breaking *Interpreter's Handbook* by Jean Herbert (1952). A rich collection of papers on the history of (conference) interpreting in the twentieth century can be found in a special issue of the journal *Interpreting* (4.1, 1999).

A volume on *Current Trends in Research* was edited by Gambier, Gile, and Taylor (1997), based on the proceedings of an international stocktaking conference in Turku in 1994. A comprehensive overview of concepts, models, and empirical research is offered in Pöchhacker (2004), and seminal contributions to (conference) interpreting research are made available and put into context in *The Interpreting Studies Reader* (Pöchhacker and Shlesinger 2002).

Bibliographic updates are available from the website and bi-annual *Bulletin* of CIRIN, the Conference Interpreting Research Information Network run by Daniel Gile ([www.cirinandgile.com](http://www.cirinandgile.com)).

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## Oxford Handbooks Online

### Courtroom Interpreting

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### Abstract and Keywords

This article describes the concept of courtroom interpretation. Legal interpreting is a branch of interpreting conducted when speakers of different languages have to communicate in legal or paralegal settings. Each legal system has its own unique court procedures, legal concepts, and terms that sometimes have no equivalent in other languages. This cultural asymmetry of legal systems creates substantial interpreting difficulties. In order to interpret competently, court interpreters must be well versed in legal terminology. The role of the court interpreter is to make communication possible between speakers of different languages. A courtroom interpreter has ethical responsibilities to fulfill. The challenges to courtroom interpreting include lack of bilingual legal dictionaries, obstacles to pragmatic influence etc. Court interpreters require training, in both interpreting skills and court interpreting. Effective courtroom interpreting can only be achieved by the professionalization of interpreters through compulsory education, adequate working conditions, and professional remuneration for effective multilingual dialogue.

Keywords: courtroom interpretation, legal interpreting, cultural asymmetry, legal systems, interpreting difficulties, pragmatic influence, multilingual dialogue

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### 22.1 Legal and Court Interpreting: Definitions and Settings

Legal interpreting is a branch of interpreting conducted when speakers of different languages have to communicate in legal or paralegal settings: during an arrest, at police stations, in prison, at a lawyer's office, in courts and tribunals, and in relation to asylum, immigration, and customs matters. Interpreting that takes place in judicial settings—courts of all instances, and tribunals that operate in the manner of a court—is referred to as court interpreting or judicial interpreting. Court interpreting occurs during all types of courtroom hearings, including the trial proper. Interpreter-mediated communication conducted outside the courtroom in relation to the case is defined as quasi-judicial interpreting (Dueñas González 1991: 25). The courtroom setting, language and specific court requirements make court interpreting a specialized area that necessitates high competence on the part of the interpreter.

Historically, records of judicial interpreting go back to the Talmudic times, and are also found in trials during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries in Britain (Colin and Morris 1996). Official recognition of the interpreting profession began with the Nuremberg trials (1945), with a focus on simultaneous interpreting. Today, interpreting is a global practice in courts of national jurisdictions (hereafter, national courts) in both monolingual and bilingual countries (Canada, Belgium, Israel), and in international courts and tribunals such as the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), and the International Criminal Court (ICC). In Europe and North America, the practice of courtroom interpreting originated with the rise of community interpreting (1960s-1970s) and has since been growing. In the USA, this 'veritable explosion in the use of foreign

'language interpreting' reflects a 'growing sensitivity to the social needs and rights of linguistic minorities' (Berk-Seligson 2002: 1).

Court interpreting in national jurisdictions is mostly considered to be an area of community interpreting (Europe, UK, Australia). However, scholars maintain that court interpreting is one of the most complex and demanding types of interpreting, which requires high precision in the constraints of the court, mastery of linguistic and technical skills, an understanding of legal systems, the ability to switch interpreting modes, and an awareness that language in the courtroom is used strategically, thus requiring of interpreters a high level of semantic and pragmatic competence (Eades, Hale, and Cooke 1999: 2). This view is shared by international courts and in some countries (such as the USA).

Courtroom interpreting in the English-speaking common-law legal system has been the subject of much research within the framework of law, sociology, anthropology, psychology, linguistics, and interpreting studies (Dueñas González 1991: 263; Hale 2007: 90–91). More recently, discourse-analytical and ethnographic research, demonstrating the impact of interpreting on courtroom interaction, has had direct implications for court interpreting practice (Berk-Seligson 2002, Hale 2007).

Current practices of court interpreting and principles of interpreter use are far from perfect, and in the literature frequent calls may be found for improvement in the following areas: access to high-quality court interpreting; court interpreting practices and principles of interpreter use; the court interpreter's role and professional ethics; removing obstacles to achieving interpreting of professional quality and accuracy; interpreter training and accreditation; and educating interpreter users.

### **22.2 Access to high-quality court interpreting**

Today, it is widely acknowledged that a person who does not speak the language of the court or speaks it with insufficient competence has the right to an interpreter in judicial and quasi-judicial settings. International law guarantees that all persons charged or arrested must be informed promptly, in a language they understand, of the reasons for their arrest or the nature and grounds of the accusations against them. The right to free interpreting services during a trial has been stipulated in international treaties such as the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950). In national jurisdictions, particularly in common-law countries, this right has been associated with access to justice and equality before the law. In some jurisdictions, it was made a constitutional right through legislation, such as the 1978 Federal Court Interpreters Act (USA) and the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Canada). Other common-law jurisdictions (UK and Australia) have based the person's 'right' to an interpreter on judicial precedent (e.g. *R v. Lee Kun* in Colin and Morris 1996: 75) or left it to the discretion of an individual judge (Young 1990, cited in Laster and Taylor 1994: 77).

Despite these provisions, in many countries the right to an interpreter is being implemented slowly, and in Europe, national provisions for court interpreting remain patchy and uneven (Hertog 2002: 146). Even in countries where court interpreting is well established, the system of access to it is far from perfect. Thus, it is often unclear who ultimately should raise the question as to whether the defendant or witness requires an interpreter: lawyers notifying the courts (USA), a judge's determination, or a request by one of the parties (Laster and Taylor 1994: 77, 166). Provisions regarding interpreting are either not specific enough or restrict access to an interpreter to criminal cases only (Laster and Taylor 1994: 73, 75, 79). In countries with an established court interpreting system, defendants are provided with interpreters free of charge; however, in developing countries, the decision to provide an interpreter depends largely on the budget of the court's prosecution office (Berk-Seligson 2008).

Another equally serious problem is the lack of recognition of the need for competent interpreting by qualified professional practitioners in national courts (Laster and Taylor 1994: 91; Morris 1998: 3). International courts have always practised a rigorous selection of qualified interpreters, ensuring high professional standards. However, most national jurisdictions, including EU member countries, fail to recognize court interpreting as a profession and therefore neither require that court interpreters be adequately qualified nor provide opportunities for their training. Only a few countries (USA, Canada, Australia) stipulate the requirement of competent court interpreting (Colin and Morris 1996: 152–3), enforcing the use of certified and/or qualified court interpreters. This unsatisfactory situation stems from interpreter users' ignorance about the requirements of professional interpreting, which hinders the

recognition of the need for training and professionalization, including adequate working conditions and remuneration.

## **22.3 Court Interpreting Practices and Principles of Interpreter Use**

Different factors determine court interpreting practices: national legal systems, the type of court, and the type of case. It is vital that the interpreter should understand these factors, in order to know what to expect and how to prepare for an assignment.

### **22.3.1 Interpreting settings: courts, cases and participants**

Interpreter-mediated communication occurs in courts and tribunals of various types and instances. They include municipal, state, and federal courts in the USA, and state (local, district and supreme) and federal courts in Australia. Interpreters are required in both criminal and civil cases. Criminal cases include matters such as traffic violations, domestic violence, sexual assault, homicide, and drug offences. Cases heard in superior courts, for example, US Federal District courts, include drug or arms trafficking, people smuggling, money laundering, kidnapping, hijacking, terrorist attacks, and international crimes. Civil cases involving divorce, custody, wills, industrial relations, workers' compensation, and property law can be heard in specialized courts. Immigration and refugee cases, almost always requiring interpreting, are heard by tribunals, such as the Migration Review Tribunal and Refugee Review Tribunal (Australia).

International courts and tribunals try cases involving major international crimes, such as war crimes and crimes against humanity (ICTY, ICTR, the Special Court for Sierra Leone), and settle disputes between countries in matters of international law (ICJ). Some cases of international importance (war crimes, terrorism) are tried in courts of national jurisdiction, for example the Eichmann trial (1961, Israel), Australian War Crimes Prosecutions (1986–93, South Australia), and the Lockerbie trial (2001, Scottish court in the Netherlands).

In criminal cases heard in national courts, interpreters enable communication between speakers of the majority language—lawyers and judges—and minority-language speakers—defendants and witnesses. In civil cases, interpreters ensure communication between parties. In international courts and tribunals all participants, including legal professionals and the judiciary, rely equally on interpretation.

### **22.3.2 Legal systems and the principal stages of court procedure**

The type of legal system determines what the interpreter can expect. Differences in legal systems determine the way that trials are conducted and their stages. Having evolved historically, each legal system has developed its own unique court procedures, legal concepts, and terms that sometimes have no equivalent in other languages. This cultural asymmetry of legal systems creates substantial interpreting difficulties (Gémar 1995).

The civil law system, also known as the Romano-Germanic, or 'continental', system, mainly operates in Europe, and has been adopted in some countries on other continents. In it, trials are preceded by a period of evidence-gathering by the court, mainly in documentary form, including witness testimony (Dueñas González 1991: 148–52). The judge leads the trials in civil-law countries, playing an active, inquisitorial role in relation to the accused (Dueñas González 1991: 150). In the common-law system, practised mainly in Anglo-Saxon countries and former British colonies, trials comprise an adversarial process conducted in court. They involve much spoken interaction among the participants, in the form of oral evidence presented and challenged through counsel's examining or cross-examining witnesses.

International courts and tribunals are based on mixed jurisdictional practices. Some are more adversarial in their procedure, with oral evidence being presented during the examination-in-chief by the prosecution and challenged by the defence during cross-examination (ICTY). Others gravitate towards the inquisitorial system, excluding features of the common-law system such as the plea of guilty and cross-examination (ICC).

It is essential for court interpreters to understand how courts operate, and to be aware of the structure and sequence of the stages of court proceedings, and the role of each participant. For example, in the USA, criminal cases open with a preliminary hearing or grand jury proceedings, followed by arraignment, pre-trial procedures,

the trial proper, sentencing, and appeal (Dueñas González 1991: 111–41). The main stages in a common-law trial where there has been a Not Guilty plea include the opening addresses by the counsel, the calling and s-in of witnesses, examination-in-chief (also called direct examination) and cross-examination by the prosecution and defence counsel, legal arguments throughout the trial, closing addresses by the counsel, summing-up by the judge, and the verdict by the jury (Laster and Taylor 1994: 174; Russell 2002: 63; Colin and Morris 1996: 108–9).

### 22.3.3 Courtroom language

It is clear that, in order to interpret competently, court interpreters must be well versed in legal terminology. However, there are other characteristics of legal language that interpreters must also be able to master. The legal English spoken in court has many features of written legal English: technical terms, common terms used with uncommon meanings (*suit, bar*), words of Latin, French, and Old English origin (*bona fide, voir dire*), a high percentage of polysyllabic words (*collateral*), unusual prepositional phrases (*in the event of default*), seemingly redundant paired words (*will and testament, aiding and abetting*), formality, vagueness, and over-precision (González, Vásquez, and Mikkelsen 1991: 254–5). Other features include frequent nominalization (*make assignment*), frequent passive constructions (*remedies may be provided by the law*), lengthy complex sentences often with embedded clauses, numerous negations, and more (Berk-Seligson 1990 and Morrow 1994, cited in Russell 2002: 47–8). These features explain why legal language is difficult to grasp for lay people—and to interpret in court.

Furthermore, the language used by the participants largely depends on the genre of the courtroom event, and the speaker (see 22.3.2 above). Awareness of who is who in the courtroom, each participant's role and function, and the relations between participants is part of the court interpreter's competence and knowledge of what to expect (Colin and Morris 1996: 108–9; Edwards 1995: 74–7; Hale 2007: 66). Thus, counsel often delivers opening and closing addresses using monological speech—dense language delivered in the manner of written rather than spoken text and abounding in legal terms and references to previous cases, and complex syntax. The same applies to judges' summings-up and instructions to the jury. However, the interaction between counsel and witnesses is dialogical, in question-and-answer form, with features of spoken language. Counsel's use of questions in examination-in-chief and cross-examination is strategic, and the intention of the questions—often unclear to a layperson—must be understood and competently conveyed by interpreters. Interpreters must be equally prepared to deal with the colloquial and idiomatic language of eyewitnesses and the specialized and technical language of expert witnesses.

### 22.3.4 Modes and completeness of interpretation

Current practices vary in the extent to which proceedings are interpreted. In international courts, where all participants rely on interpreting, the entire proceedings are interpreted without exception. In national courts, the coverage ranges from complete interpretation in some countries (Britain, Australia, USA) to summary interpreting only being provided in others (Europe, Japan) (Mikkelsen 1999b; 2000: 3).

In countries with established court interpreting it is understood that, in order to keep the defendant apprised of the evidence, the entire proceedings need to be interpreted. Therefore, the interpreter must interpret everything that the defendant, judge, counsel, and other court participants would understand if there were no language barrier. However, judges and counsel often take the view that it is only necessary to interpret witness evidence, and that complete interpretation of the proceedings for the defendant is not necessary (Laster and Taylor 1994: 95).

Interpreting modes depend on where the case is heard. Since the Nuremberg trials, international courts and some trials of international importance (the Eichmann and Demjaniuk trials) have used simultaneous interpreting with equipment, i.e. in soundproof booths with electronic transmission of sound. Interpreters work under conference interpreting conditions, in teams of two (ICC) or three (ICTY) per booth, each interpreting into one language only, usually the interpreter's mother tongue (language A) or, if necessary, into the interpreter's most active second language (language B) (Stern 2001). Interpreters in national courts use a combination of consecutive and whispered simultaneous (*chuchotage*) interpreting. The examination-in-chief and cross-examination are interpreted in two-directional (short) consecutive mode; the rest of the proceedings is interpreted in whispered simultaneous mode into the defendant's language. During legal arguments, often only summary interpreting can be realistically provided (Colin and Morris 1996: 95). Interpreters' assignments may extend to quasi-judicial settings outside court

where they are required to perform liaison interpreting and to sight-translate documents (Colin and Morris 1996: 90).

There are advantages and disadvantages to both consecutive and simultaneous modes. Consecutive interpreting is considered to be more accurate, as it allows the interpreter to better analyse the original speech and convey the nonverbal characteristics of the witness's speech (Russell 2002: 51–3). In national courts, witness evidence is conventionally interpreted using this mode. Consecutive interpreting allows interpreters to exercise greater control over the situation by regulating the speed of delivery, requesting repetitions and clarifying ambiguities (Dueñas González 1991: 164–5). However, these same factors are counterproductive to the witness examination process, as they lead to loss of control on the part of counsel. Research demonstrates that consecutive interpreting affects courtroom discourse by disrupting the dynamic of the witness-lawyer exchange, slowing down cross-examination, and altering the intention and pragmatic force of counsel's questions and witnesses' answers and style.

Since the Nuremberg trials, simultaneous interpreting has been the courts' preferred mode, as it saves time and reduces the interpreter's visibility (e.g. the bilingual ICJ switched from consecutive to simultaneous interpreting in 1965). From the interpreter's point of view, simultaneous interpreting prevents the interpreter from controlling the speed of delivery and asking for clarifications. This mode is particularly taxing in national courts where interpreters work alone, without due training and preparation (Alexieva, cited in Russell 2002: 53–4).

### 22.3.5 Working conditions and professional status

The Nuremberg trials set high interpreting standards and principles of interpreter use (Gaiba 1998). However, subsequent practices in national courts have not followed this example. 'In most of the world's jurisdictions, court interpreting has not, on the whole, attained professional status in terms of either recognition or performance' (Morris 1995: 40). This lack of professionalization of court interpreting manifests itself in limited opportunities for pre-employment professional training, few professional associations (e.g. the US National Association of Judicial Interpreters and Translators, NAJIT), inadequate remuneration, and often unsatisfactory working conditions (Colin and Morris 1996: 100).

To perform their task competently, court interpreters require adequate physical working conditions—comfortable seating arrangements, adequate acoustics, regular breaks to prevent fatigue, and preparation opportunities (Duenís González 1991: 177). However, national courts, designed for monolingual interaction, do not provide these conditions. They suffer from poor acoustics and lack proper amplification, and fail to provide adequate seating arrangements for the interpreter, who is often found sitting next to the defendant. Speakers are not used to communicating via interpreters and often speak indistinctly, without projecting their voices (Colin and Morris 1996: 88–9). Interpreters work alone, sometimes for days, without replacement, suffering fatigue. When a second interpreter is called, it is to interpret for the other party, which does not allow interpreters to form a team and take turns. Finally, interpreters are neither briefed nor provided with background documents for preparation. The fear that prior knowledge of a case might affect their impartiality is partly understandable (Gamal 1998), but for adequate preparation interpreters require background documents, such as the indictment and witness statements.

Interpreters fare better in international courts and tribunals, where they are provided with conference-like conditions of employment and payment, with either full-time renewable positions at a level similar to that of other professionals or ongoing freelance employment (ICTY, ICTR). Gaining familiarity with the court and cases allows interpreters to develop the necessary expertise. An adequate working environment and preparation are ensured in the Staff Regulations (ICC Regulation 67, p. 27). Short-term preparation for a specific case includes briefing and provision of trial-related documents, such as a statement of charges, a list of personal and geographic names, witness statements, and other related documents; this process continues during the trial (Colin and Morris 1994: 84–5). Soundproof booths with headphones and microphones ensure adequate acoustic conditions by blocking out external noise, thus preventing vocal strain and premature fatigue. Teamwork with regular turn-taking and breaks, briefing, and documents provided for preparation ensure the provision of competent services unattainable in national courts (Stern 2002). When documents are read out in court, copies are provided and/or screened on a document camera to allow sight-translation (ICTY, the Special Court for Sierra Leone). Opening and closing speeches, judges' decisions, and other written documents are usually supplied to interpreters in advance (ICC). In national courts where this practice is absent, interpreters are lucky to catch the general idea of the speech (Colin and Morris 1996: 95) and are unlikely to provide adequate sight-translation of documents because of their

technical nature (Alexieva, Barnwell, cited in Russell 2002: 53).

## **22.4 The Court Interpreter's Role and Professional Ethics**

### **22.4.1 The interpreter's role: perceptions and reality**

The role of the court interpreter is to make communication possible between speakers of different languages, for example litigants and court personnel, by removing the linguistic barrier (Mikkelson 2000: 1). However, most participants in national courts tend to misunderstand this professional role by failing to recognize the interpreter as a qualified professional. Unless interpreting is performed by court officers (as in Malaysia and Singapore: Colin and Morris 1996: 98–9; Ibrahim and Bell 2003: 212), court and lawyers ‘treat interpreters with suspicion, distrust and lack of respect for the skills which they bring to the job’ (Colin and Morris 1996: 15; Hale 2007: 64). Interpreters’ own confused self-perceptions have contributed to unclear role boundaries and unrealistic expectations (Laster and Taylor 1994: 111, 113).

The interpreter's role has often been described by metaphors involving inanimate objects (channels, bridges) and equipment (translation machines, conduits), implying invisibility, a lack of emotional or personal bias, and a mechanistic view of the interpreting process (Laster and Taylor 1994: 112–14; Roy 1996; 2000: 347) with an expectation that the result will be free from error. Untrained interpreters tend to assume additional roles, as helpers and advocates for non-English speaking witnesses (NESW), as a cultural bridge to judges, or else as assistants to lawyers (Laster 1994: 118–19, 121). There are several reasons for this. The interpreter's self-perception as a helper or advocate for the person from the same community grows out of interpreting in a welfare role; it is accentuated in court, where the complexity of the legal language and the alien nature of the ‘legal culture’ virtually exclude a lay person from the interaction (Russell 2002: 49). Torn between the intuitive desire to ‘help’ and the expectation of acting as a ‘conduit’, interpreters hesitate between making an explanatory intervention and ‘withholding’ cultural information which, they feel, is not their responsibility to offer (Laster and Taylor 1994: 123–5). These contradictory expectations, however, tend to occur only during face-to-face interaction in national courts, in which (mainly untrained) interpreters undertake additional functions as a result of undervaluing their professional role (Hale). These matters are mostly absent in international courts, where, even in instances of great cultural differences, interpreters are removed from face-to-face interaction.

Academic studies stress that interpreting is much more than a technical linguistic transfer—it is a highly skilled cognitive and linguistic process involving comprehension of the original in one language, conversion of meaning, and delivery in another language that usually has a different structure (word order) and lacks equivalent concepts and terms (Hale 2004). To perform their professional role competently, interpreters require a mastery of their working languages as well as interpreting skills, and considerable thematic knowledge, including knowledge of the respective legal systems, a comparative understanding of common legal concepts, and a working knowledge of legal terminology. Above all, interpreting is not a mechanistic process, and court interpreters cannot automatically assume an invisible, machine-like role. Recognition that interpreters exercise more (verbal) power than lawyers are prepared to admit allows us to define the interpreter's role as a dynamic and interactive one—that of communication facilitator. However, interpreters themselves must come to terms with their role and convey it to interpreter-users—something that can only become possible through appropriate education (Laster and Taylor 1994: 127).

### **22.4.2 Ethics and professional conduct**

The complex and legally binding nature of courtroom exchange places particular ethical responsibilities on interpreters. While there is no unified international code of ethics, most codes include principles of accuracy, impartiality, confidentiality, competence, and professional conduct (see NAJIT, AUSIT, and ICTY Codes of Ethics).

Accuracy is a crucial principle of court interpreting, and the interpreter's oath includes an undertaking to translate ‘truly and faithfully’ (Australia). According to codes of ethics, interpretation must be complete and contain no additions, omissions, or distortions of meaning (misinterpretations). In court, this applies not only to content but to style and manner, especially important in witness testimony. Conference interpreting techniques, such as condensation, omission, polishing a speaker's style, are inapplicable in court interpreting. Views regarding what

constitutes accuracy, and how it can be achieved in practice, often revolve around the degree of freedom permitted to the court interpreter. No code of ethics provides guidance on how exactly to achieve a faithful delivery (Hale 2007). One school of thought (supporters of the ‘conduit’ metaphor) suggests that interpreters should adhere strictly to ‘translating words’ only and allow lawyers and clients to resolve communication difficulties; the other views interpreters as cultural advisers helping bridge cultural gaps (Mikkelsen 2000: 3). The legal profession’s preferred view is that the interpreter should provide an exact verbatim translation of utterances and remain ‘invisible’ (Morris 1995)—or, as some codes of ethics state, convey ‘with the greatest fidelity and accuracy, and with complete neutrality, the wording used by the persons they interpret’ (Code of Ethics for Interpreters and translators employed by the ICTY, Article 10 (1a)). While wanting interpreters to render ‘no more and no less than what the witness has said’ (Colin and Morris 1996: 99), lawyers and judges traditionally misuse the concept of accurate interpreting as verbatim, word-for-word, literal translation (Morris 1995: 30; 1998: 4; Jacobsen 2003: 223). Interpreters, on the other hand, often believe that an invisible, conduit-like role does not allow them to ensure accurate communication between speakers, and maintain that it is their responsibility to act as a language aide and cultural bridge in order to achieve accuracy—for example, in New Zealand Maori or Australian Aboriginal cases (Laster and Taylor 1994: 84–5).

Other provisions in the codes of ethics also cause controversy. Interpreters must remain impartial, maintain appropriate distance, and avoid any conflict of interest. They are precluded from making value judgements or volunteering solicited or unsolicited opinion or advice. The provision regarding confidentiality prevents the disclosure of any privileged information obtained in the course of their duties. Despite these provisions, lawyers and judges in national courts often mistrust interpreters, fearing that they side with the NESW or behave unethically (Laster and Taylor 1994: 126). The fact that in national courts the interpreter appears in physical proximity to the NESW, with the defendant relying on the interpreter as a person from the same culture, casts a shadow on the interpreter’s integrity. Further mistrust arises when interpreters act as facilitators and cultural bridges, causing them to be identified with the minority-language speakers. Torn between loyalties, most interpreters assume a middle position, recognizing that ‘universal ethical principles [of neutrality and impartiality] are a mere ideal situation that may be impossible to achieve’ (Moeketsi 1999a, b, cited in Mikkelsen 2000: 3). In international courts, where interpreters are placed in booths, they are less likely to be identified with the defendant.

## **22.5 Obstacles to Competent Interpreting and Accuracy**

### **22.5.1 Common challenges**

Achieving accuracy in courtroom interpreting is fraught with difficulty. Having heard the speakers only once and interpreting in real time, interpreters cannot guarantee the same degree of precision as in a written translation, hence it is unrealistic to expect flawless accuracy. Errors can occur for a variety of reasons: poor acoustics, the speed and complexity of a speaker’s delivery, lack of clarity of meaning, linguistic and cultural lacunae that require clarification or explanation, or simply because the interpreter needs a break. Courts agree that, when interpreters cannot perform competently and convey the message accurately, they must notify the court (Colin and Morris 1996: 96), however, the formality of the court, the often rapid pace of the proceedings, and interpreters’ low status discourage them from interrupting and asserting their rights (Stern 1995). In international courts, speed of delivery is the main cause of difficulty, and the red-light button used during the Nuremberg trials to signal to speakers to slow down (Gaiba 1998) is not provided in modern courts. Unable to interrupt the proceedings to consult reference materials or consider better versions, interpreters resort to the first version that comes to mind (Hale and Gibbons 1999) and rely on ‘survival skills’—approximations, use of synonyms, paraphrases, and explanations.

A common source of errors is a lack of language proficiency, training, and awareness of the discourses of court interpreting. The result is a literal translation with a focus on words rather than meaning, distortions of sense, omissions, additions, and changes of style and register (Duenñas González et al. 1991: 289, 291). Such problems often derive from a ‘lack of awareness of the consequences of their interpreting choices, lack of time to think of the best alternatives, or lack of linguistic resources’ (Hale 2004: 211).

One of the primary reasons for the lack of quality control in national courts is that the minority-language original is neither recorded nor transcribed, even where there is an established courtroom system (Morris 1998: 8). In Britain, ‘tape recordings of non-English utterances produced in the courtroom hardly ever exist; written transcripts are

almost never produced. The alarming implications for the doing of justice are rarely considered by the law' (Morris 1995; 1998: 8). The lack of a record of the original text makes it impossible to verify the accuracy of interpretation, which is often disputed in trials (Stern 1995). In international courts and tribunals, where all language versions are recorded, both the original and the interpretation appear in English on screen, which allows interpreting teams to monitor the accuracy as the proceedings unfold and, if necessary, promptly detect and report errors (Stern 2001, 2003).

However, the lack of specialized education and adequate working conditions are not the only factors that affect the accuracy of interpretation. Studies reveal that almost all interpreting techniques interfere with courtroom discourse (Berk-Seligson 2002, Hale 2004), and that, ironically, in an attempt to secure effective communication, interpreters exercise latitude and modify utterances (Jacobsen 2003: 224–5). Because of the role that language plays in the courtroom and the manner in which lawyers use it, interpreters inadvertently 'support—or thwart—the linguistic tactics of lawyers in the adversarial courtroom', which affects the legal process and possibly its outcome (Laster and Taylor 1994: 161).

### 22.5.2 Achieving lexical equivalence of legal terms

Much importance is attributed to the preparation of terminology by interpreters (Edwards 1995: 46–53). The situation is often complicated by a lack of current bilingual legal dictionaries, and also by the difficulty of achieving equivalence between languages because of the culture-specific nature of legal concepts, terms, and formulaic courtroom routines. Terms such as *rule of law*, *due process*, and *reasonable man/person* reflect the historical aspect of each concept; so do the French terms *arrêt*, *état de droit*, and *quasi-délit* (Gémér 2002: 166). The languages of civil-law systems often lack equivalent common-law terms and concepts, such as *cross-examination*, *pre-trial*, *to plead guilty/not guilty*, *beyond reasonable doubt*, or *balance of probability*. Languages with a shorter tradition of writing and legal culture, for example Acholi and some other African languages used in ICC, lack words for *prosecutor* and *registry*. Even when equivalents exist between more closely related languages, they lose their historical and cultural richness in translation, for example, French *droit* compared to English *law* or German *Recht* (Gémér 2002: 166); using French cognates to interpret the English terms *appeal*, *charges*, *objection* leads to distortions of meaning (Stern 2004). Frequently raised in legal translation studies, this obstacle is not sufficiently appreciated by court interpreters (Hale 2004: 213–14).

It is doubtful whether the existing interpreting approaches successfully convey the legal effects of the original (Gémér 2002: 164). Neologisms, loanwords, and literal translation are unlikely to convey the denotative meaning in an idiomatic fashion. Resorting to adaptation through synonyms that exist in the target language makes the translation imprecise, if not inaccurate. Explication through paraphrase, explanation, or a combination of loanword and explanation lengthens the interpretation, which is undesirable in simultaneous interpreting. In most cases either denotative or connotative meaning (or both) is affected (Stern 2004).

In the absence of a standardized approach, interpreters sometimes use different terms to denote a concept in the course of the same case (Stern 1995, 2004). This inconsistency can be avoided in international courts, where interpreters cooperate with translators (ICTY) and where terms are pre-emptively minted as meaning-based neologisms (ICC).

### 22.5.3 Obstacles to stylistic and pragmatic equivalence

Accuracy in court interpreting applies not only to the content that is communicated, but also the manner in which speakers communicate it. Conveying the individual manner of defendants and witnesses is important because of the impression the court and jury form of them in assessing their character, credibility, and level of education and intelligence. Conveying witnesses' style involves conveying their mood and range of emotions (e.g. distress, anger), and individual mannerisms: hesitation, pauses, false starts, stumbling, circular answers, and repetitions (Colin and Morris 1996: 91; Hale 2007: 87). When interpreting the language of court officers, lawyers, and judges, interpreters must pay particular attention to maintaining the original intention and trying to achieve the desired impact on the recipient.

Much of what court officers and lawyers say to witnesses—court routines, instructions, and counsel's questions—is specific to the legal system of the court. For example, the request to enter a plea has no equivalent in civil law

cultures, and is different from the request to admit guilt (Laster and Taylor 1994: 170–71). Counsel's strategic questions in common-law witness examination are particularly difficult because they do not lend themselves easily to translation into languages other than English owing to their different grammatical structures and established tactics of legal questioning. Conveying the speaker's intention and achieving the same impact on the listener requires the interpreter to possess particular pragmatic competence, while many interpreters lack such competence and instead focus excessively on formal equivalence and words, termbanks, and terminology lists (Fowler, cited in Hale 2004: 7). As Hale and Gibbons (1999) point out:

Many legal professionals would be disturbed by the changes in the nature of the questions they are asking. The construction of questions with the desired level of coercion during examination is a highly developed skill among counsel, and one that plays an important role in the adversarial legal system. The use of various types of question, such as leading questions, is also prescribed and standardized within the courtroom. When major changes to question type occur during translation, all this is threatened.

There are several manifestations of the way interpreters affect courtroom discourse through lack of awareness of the semantic and pragmatic aspects of courtroom interaction (Jacobsen 2003). They may skew the intended meaning, making speakers appear more or less cooperative, coercive, or antagonistic than they intended to be (Berk-Seligson 1990/2002; Morris, cited in Hale 2004: 7). Interpreters may alter the register to make it more or less formal, raise the degree of politeness (Hale 2007: 96–7), and make witnesses' replies more hesitant (Jacobsen 2003). Polishing witnesses' style leads to their being misrepresented by the court, and interpreters sometimes violate the code of ethics through possible additions and even fabrication of facts (Hale 2007: 85–6). The inadvertent superimposition of the interpreter's own style onto the witness's, for example through false starts, back-tracking, and hyperpoliteness, also affects the style and pragmatic force of utterances (Berk-Seligson 1990/2002) as does mirroring the listener's (rather than the speaker's) style by the interpreter (Hale 2004).

Interpreters seldom acquire this theoretical understanding of courtroom discourse intuitively. Nor are they aware of the impact of their interpreting on courtroom discourse. This awareness and mastery of pragmatic competence can only be acquired by a process of formal training in court interpreting. This is why international court interpreters, albeit better qualified than those in national courts through training in conference interpreting schools, demonstrate similar failings: interpreting counsel's questions non-pragmatically, embellishing witnesses' style, and raising the witnesses' register and level of politeness (Stern 2004).

### 22.6 Interpreter Training and Accreditation

As has been indicated, 'linguistic competence is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for ensuring that a competent legal interpreter is provided' (Laster and Taylor 1994: 93). Considering the complexity of their task, court interpreters require training, preferably tertiary, in both interpreting skills and court interpreting. However, this prerequisite is largely ignored, and 'legal interpreters are not given the professional training they deserve [in order] to do a good job' (Hertog 2003: 146). Instances where any degree of self-declared familiarity qualified an individual as a court interpreter (Cheshin 1959, cited in Morris 1998: 2) are far from being a feature of the past, and most court interpreters in national courts are untrained. This lack of requirement for adequate compulsory training accounts for the slow professionalization, inconsistency in the guidelines to good practice, and lack of a common code of conduct (Hertog 2003: 150). Today, practitioners are at best certified through examinations, rather than trained (Austria, Australia, Spain, USA). Even court interpreters' associations perpetuate the status quo, for example, by describing an academic background as a desirable but not necessary prerequisite for court interpreting purposes, and inviting high-school graduates to take interpreting examinations (NAJIT website).

Having an accreditation system and a register of accredited court interpreters does not guarantee quality. Some national registers of court interpreters were compiled without sufficient verification of interpreters' credentials (Mikkelsen 1999b). Countries that credit court interpreters through general examinations (Australia, Austria, Canada) fail to test interpreters in all the courtroom techniques and registers (NAATI), and some use only a translation test (Spain). Most countries lack the resources to provide accreditation for interpreting in all languages (e.g. 'rare languages', such as African languages in Australia). A specialized judiciary interpreter and translator certification examination in Spanish has been developed in the USA through NAJIT (and recognized by a number of states), to test candidates in interpretation and legal translation skills.

The introduction of court interpreter training has been slow in many countries, and using accreditation alone for entry to the profession may have been counterproductive for the development of training. Few countries train interpreters for accreditation, as does Sweden in community colleges. The accreditation system by NAATI (National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters) has discouraged the creation of tertiary programs in Australia (Hale 2004: 26), and proposals for university training of court interpreters in EU national courts, such as the Gropius Project 1998–2000, remain at the stage of recommendation (Hertog 2003: 151, 154–6).

Today, there are different levels of court interpreter training. The shortest is orientation and on-the-job training in national courts (Dueñas González 1991: 201), from half a day to two days, covering the court interpreter's role, judicial procedures, interpreting ethics and protocol, and court observation. Short ad hoc training courses have been offered for special projects, for example, a ten-day course in simultaneous court interpreting conducted for the Truth and Reconciliation Hearings (Lotriet, South Africa). However, it is doubtful whether short courses are effective in imparting the necessary skills for novice interpreters. Longer, in-house training, aimed at the needs of individual courts, has taken place in international courts, in the 1990s at ICTY, and a specially designed course at ICC (see Chapter 32).

Secondary and community college courses provide vocational interpreter training with or without a view to accreditation by the state. In Sweden, Stockholm University trains generalists in community interpreting, with a section dedicated to legal/court interpreting and offered in community colleges. Interpreters are granted authorization to practise court interpreting on the basis either of a test by a national judicial board or of successful completion of a one-year basic interpreting course at university (Niska). In Australia, one-year generalist interpreting diploma courses run by Technical and Further Education (TAFE) are NAATI-accredited and thus qualify interpreters for court work. In British Columbia, courses for the Court Interpreting certificate are recognized by the Ministry of the Attorney General (Colin and Morris 1996: 161–2).

Few university courses specialize in court interpreting; Rand Afrikaans University and Potchefstroom University (South Africa), whose courses lead to diplomas, are among those which do. Undergraduate and graduate programmes usually offer modules in court interpreting as part of community interpreting programmes. Few postgraduate programmes include individual courses in legal interpreting. Among those that do are the Monterey Institute of International Studies (USA) and the University of Western Sydney (Australia). The former offers certificates in legal/court interpretation, and summer and elective courses in court interpreting (Mikkelsen). A specialist master's degree in bilingual legal interpreting (Spanish) is offered at the University of Charleston, South Carolina, and the Institute of Applied Linguistics at the University of Warsaw has a one-year postgraduate legal and judicial translating and interpreting programme.

### 22.7 Educating interpreter-users

The quality of court interpretation cannot be ensured by interpreters alone—interpreter-users and employers are also responsible for providing the necessary working conditions. Most users, for example legal professionals, have been trained in monolingual national jurisdictions and do not realize that interpreter-mediated communication requires adjustment on the speakers' part. 'The majority of the judiciary have no proper understanding of the interpreting process and do not really know how to work efficiently with interpreters' (Hertog 2002: 150). This lack of awareness of interpreters' requirements on the part of speakers often prevents them from working competently.

It is necessary to impart an awareness of the intricacies of working effectively with court interpreters. This is done at national and international level, e.g. through publications providing instruction for adequate communication (*Access to Interpreters in the Australian Legal System* 1991 and *Guide to Best Practice: Lawyers, Interpreters, Translators*; judicial checklist in Edwards 1995: 88–9), and education sessions for judges, counsel, and other courtroom participants (e.g. annual induction by the National Judicial College, Australia, and seminars at the NSW Bar Association and ICC).

Interpreter users can improve interpreters' performance through an understanding of the interpreting process and the interpreter's role. Practical suggestions include limiting speakers' speed to allow interpreters to understand and process complex specialized information. Speakers should plan their speeches and aim to speak in correct and complete grammatical sentences, avoiding false starts, lengthy sentences, questions with embedded clauses, negative structures, and questions within questions. For the delivery of written or scripted speeches, such as

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judges' decisions, speakers should provide interpreters with written materials, skeleton arguments, or notes (Colin and Morris 1996: 95–6). Judges and lawyers should be reminded that, in view of the complexity and specialized nature of legal discourse, preparation by interpreters is a precondition for competent and accurate delivery. Wherever possible, interpreters need to be briefed and provided with documents relevant to the case, such as witness statements, in advance.

Effective courtroom interpreting can only be achieved by the professionalization of interpreters through compulsory education, adequate working conditions, and professional remuneration, in partnership with a recognition by courtroom participants of the special requirements for effective multilingual dialogue.

### **Further Reading and Relevant Resources**

Literature on court interpreting that will assist the reader in understanding the courtroom system and the interpreter's role includes Colin and Morris (1996), Dueñas González, Vasquez, and Mikkelsen (1991, 2000). Articles by Sandra Hale, Holly Mikkelsen, and Ruth Morris provide an in-depth understanding of the complexity of court interpreting. These authors cover a wide array of topics, from NESW rights to professional interpreting, and interpreters' working conditions in national courts to achieving accuracy at all levels and maintaining ethical conduct. Essential reading on the discourse of court interpreting and its impact on the proceedings includes Berk-Seligson (2002) and Hale (2004). Among the most recent publications is Hale and Russell (2009).

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## Oxford Handbooks Online

### Public Service Interpreting

Sandra Hale

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### Abstract and Keywords

This article gives an overview of the discipline of public service interpreting (PSI), discussing its issues, challenges, and controversies. PSI is the type of interpreting that takes place between residents of a community. It is carried out in the context of the public services, where service users do not speak the majority language of the country. It was in 1995 that the world came together to share experiences, debate concepts, and establish a hybrid international network of PSI practitioners, educators, and researchers. Conflicts in PSI could arise, as the participants of interpreted interactions, including the interpreter, are ignorant of each other's needs, roles, goals, and ideas. Research in the field of PSI is still developing. There is dire need of training of professionals in the field of PSI. It is also crucial that there be a cross-fertilization between research, training, and practice where each aspect informs the other.

Keywords: public service interpreting, community, conflicts, interpreted interactions, cross-fertilization, public services

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In legal, medical, work and education settings, the choices and actions that interpreters take, or do not take, have the potential to influence the lives of the people involved.

(Swabey and Mickelson 2008: 51)

### 23.1 Introduction

The quotation above encapsulates the significance of the work of the interpreter in community settings. This type of interpreting 'takes the interpreter into the most private spheres of human life' and to 'settings where the most intimate and significant issues of everyday individuals are discussed' (Hale 2007: 25–6). The issues discussed can determine the course of a person's life. Whereas conference interpreters interpret issues that can potentially affect the world at a macro-level, interpreters in community settings interpret issues that can affect the individual at a micro-level. Their work is personal. The people for whom they interpret have faces, names, needs, and feelings. These people usually need to rely fully on interpreters to understand those around them and make themselves understood, to access public services, and to become full participants in the world in which they live. Similarly, the providers of the services are also reliant on the interpreter's ability to interpret so that they can render their services effectively to clients who do not share the same language. Such reliance places the interpreter in a very powerful position and the other participants in a very vulnerable position, at the mercy of the interpreter's choices, which can to a large degree determine the unfolding of the exchange and potentially influence the outcome of the interaction. Yet the significance of this activity is generally not widely recognized by governments, service providers, service recipients, academia, or even practising interpreters themselves, most of whom are ad hoc and untrained bilinguals. As Rudvin and Tomassini state (2008: 246):

Although it is a profession that has been practiced since time immemorial, Community Interpreting does not,

however, have the support that academic disciplines usually enjoy, nor the industrial protection that safeguards—at least in theory—the basic rights of practitioners in most established professions.

This chapter will attempt to provide an overview of this multi-layered and multilabelled discipline, presenting some of the main issues, challenges, and controversies.

## 23.2 Historical overview

As Pöchhacker (2007) comments, throughout most of history the activity of interpreting as oral translation was described simply as interpreting, without any further qualification. Very early references to what is now known as public service interpreting can be found. In Genesis 42:23, the first book of the Old Testament, we read of an interpreter who interpreted between Joseph, the representative of the government of Egypt, and his estranged brothers who had come from another land to ask for assistance—a very early example of a rich country providing aid to needy refugees from another (see Toury 2007: 31). Public service interpreters were also common in communications between the Spanish government officials and the indigenous populations of the Americas, with fourteen laws detailing the rights and responsibilities of the work of legal and administrative interpreters (see Giambruno Miguelez 2008 for a full review of interpreting in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish colonies).

In the twentieth century, in different parts of the world but especially in Europe, there was a noticeable shift in what was regarded to be professional interpreting. The development of electronic equipment allowed interpreting to take place remotely and simultaneously, with interpreters working in booths away from and usually invisible to the speakers. This activity, known as conference interpreting, was increasingly recognized as a skilled profession, requiring rigorous university training, and worthy of adequate pay and working conditions. Conference interpreting for international gatherings, however, was not the prominent type of interpreting in all parts of the world. In countries with high immigrant populations, such as Australia, Canada, and Sweden, demand for the old type of face-to-face interpreting services has been generally higher than for conference interpreting services. In Australia, for example, the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) only examines for what is called the Interpreter level, which is the professional level required to work in the community. Although there is an accreditation level called Conference Interpreter, no examination exists for this level. Similarly, formal college and university courses in interpreting for legal, medical, and social settings date back to the early 1980s, whereas conference interpreting courses are much more recent. Changes in migratory patterns in the last decade around the world have led to a renaissance of the old type of interpreting in many European and Asian countries. Interpreting for other minority populations, such as indigenous and deaf communities, has always existed, and also forms part of this type of face-to-face interpreting.

The advent of conference interpreting as a distinct professional activity caused a clear division between this and the other types of interpreting, which were relegated in most instances to unprofessional, unpaid or poorly paid, ad hoc language assistance, with its status, levels of regulation, education, and remuneration varying greatly from country to country.

### 23.2.1 The emergence of multiple labels

The three most common names this activity has been known by are: community interpreting, liaison interpreting, and public service interpreting. These terms are perhaps most evident in the titles *Liaison Interpreting* by Gentile, Ozolins, and Vasilakakos (1996), *Community Interpreting* by Hale (2007), and *Public Service Interpreting* by Corsellis (2008). To an outsider, these three books may appear to deal with three different types of interpreting. However, although they take different approaches to the way they describe it, they all refer to the same professional activity. Each term has tried to capture a different characteristic of the activity:

We use the term 'liaison interpreting' to refer to a growing area of interpreting throughout the world: in business settings, where executives from different cultures and languages meet each other; in meetings between a society's legal, medical, educational and welfare institutions and its immigrants who speak a different language; in relations between a dominant society and indigenous peoples speaking different languages; in a whole host of less formal situations in tourism, education and cultural contacts. Liaison interpreting is the style adopted in these varied settings—a style where the interpreter is physically present

in an interview or meeting, and usually uses the consecutive mode of interpreting. (Gentile et al. 1996: 1)

Community Interpreting [is] the overarching term for the type of interpreting that takes place within one country's own community, and between residents of that country, as opposed to Conference Interpreting, which takes place between delegates who are residents of different countries, in the context of an international conference or meeting. (Hale 2007: 30)

Public service interpreting and translation are, as the name implies, interpreting and translation carried out in the context of the public services, where service users do not speak the majority language of the country. The term 'public service' refers mainly to those services that are provided for the public by central or local government. They include legal, health and the range of social services, such as housing, education welfare and environmental health. (Corsellis 2008: 4–5)

These three definitions include all types of interpreting other than conference interpreting, with slight differences in focus. Gentile et al. (1996) highlight the setting and the consecutive mode of interpreting, although the simultaneous whispering mode is also common in court and mental health settings; Hale (2007) highlights the participants of the interaction being from the same local community; and Corsellis (2008) deals with the type of services provided by government. Other terms such as 'dialogue interpreting', 'social interpreting', 'cultural interpreting', and more recently, 'cultural and linguistic mediation', have also been used. In some countries, legal or court interpreting and medical interpreting are regarded as distinct categories.

WadensjÖ (2007: 3) comments that the lack of agreement on the nomenclature for what is essentially the same activity reflects the different conceptualizations, and practical and theoretical traditions, of different countries and communities. Rudvin and Tomassini (2008) similarly comment that the 'existence of a multifarious hybrid nomenclature' may simply reflect 'the complexity of role-definitions and definitions of the profession/discipline across sectors, across institutions, and across countries' (p. 246). It should be noted that until very recently, the different countries that were confronted with the challenges of rapidly increasing multilingual populations tried to deal with their domestic communication problems in complete isolation from each other, inevitably arriving at different labels. As Hale (2007) comments, however, these are terms used mostly by scholars to describe and analyse this specialized activity. Practising interpreters rarely refer to themselves as anything other than interpreters. When they introduce themselves to the service provider or the minority-language speaker, they would simply say 'I am the X language interpreter', and not 'I am the public service interpreter or the community interpreter'.

The editors of this volume have chosen the term 'public service interpreting' (PSI) as the title of this chapter. PSI will therefore be used as the overarching term to refer to the interpreting performed in legal, medical, and social contexts, synonymous with what I have previously referred to as 'community interpreting'.

## 23.2.2 Development of the modern-day public service interpreter

Although the first PSI services can be traced back to the 1950s in some parts of the world (see Ozolins 1998), and formal tertiary training to the 1970s and 1980s (see Hale 2007, Niska 2007), it was not until 1995 that the world came together to share experiences, debate concepts, and establish a hybrid international network of PSI practitioners, educators, and researchers. This took place in Ontario, Canada, at the first Critical Link congress, with the theme 'Interpreting in Legal, Health, and Social Service Settings'. Brian Harris called it 'an historic event in the evolution of professional interpreting' (1997a: 1). The first conference was followed by four others, with the sixth held in the UK in July 2010. Significantly, the six Critical Link conferences were organized in three of the countries recognized as pioneers in PSI services, training, and to an extent research.

The themes of the conferences demonstrated the development of the discipline every three years. The first conference acted as an introduction to the challenges faced by interpreters in the legal, health, and social service settings; challenges that were found to be common to all countries involved in PSI. Critical Link 2 was held in Vancouver in 1998 with the theme 'standards and Ethics in Community Interpreting'. This conference adopted the term 'community interpreting' to refer to all the different settings, and tried to disseminate the efforts so far made around the world to establish professional and ethical standards, with an emphasis on the need for formal training.

Critical Link 3, held in Montreal, in 2001, was the last one to be held in Canada. The theme, 'Interpreting in the

'Community', tried to capture numerous facets of this type of interpreting that make it such a complex activity, with so many obstacles in the way of any attempt to professionalize it. This theme was further developed in Critical Link 4, held in Stockholm in 2004, with the theme 'Professionalization of Interpreting in the Community'. Critical Link 5, 'Quality in Interpreting: A shared responsibility' (2007), was the first to be held in the southern hemisphere, in Sydney. At this conference, the organizers tried to raise the awareness of the need for all participants of interpreted interactions to take some of the responsibility for the quality of the interpreting services provided and for the success of the communication. The most competent and best-qualified interpreters will not be able to perform adequately if they do not enjoy adequate working conditions or the cooperation and support of the other participants in the interaction. The theme of Critical Link 6 was 'Interpreting in a Changing Landscape', with the aim 'to explore political, legal, human rights, trans-national, economic, socio-cultural, and sociolinguistic aspects of public service/community interpreting'.<sup>1</sup> This theme reflects the current increased importance afforded to this type of interpreting activity around the world.

The Critical Link conferences highlighted the fact that the challenges facing the development of PSI as a profession are universal, but also that the profession is at different stages of maturity around the world. Some countries have systems of accreditation and certification, government-funded interpreter services, a fairly well-established and widely accepted role, and some high-quality training courses, while others are only just beginning, and experiencing the same challenges that the countries with more established practices faced thirty or so years ago. This situation has the potential to slow down the professionalization process at an international level, as the same initial issues continue to be debated and discussed, at the risk of neglecting the exploration of other issues that would take us to the next level.

### **23.3 Conflicts and complexities**

PSI is characterized by conflicts and complexities—conflicts that generate complexities and complexities that generate conflicts. On the one hand, valid complaints of incompetent interpreting are often heard from service providers and at times from service recipients; on the other hand, interpreters are not required to be trained, are very poorly remunerated, and are rarely given adequate working conditions. Typically, the participants of interpreted interactions, including the interpreter, are completely ignorant of each other's needs, roles, or goals and have conflicting ideas of what each party should be doing. This inevitably leads to conflict. However, such conflicts may simply be the sign of a developing profession. Wadensjö comments (2007: 3):

the field of interpreting is partly developed in and by ongoing conflicts, not only concerning what defines professionalism, but also about issues of control over resources and social status. Conflicts of interest can be traced between various groups of interpreters, between interpreters and the professionals they assist, between interpreters and lay people, as well as between interpreters and the institutions in which they work.

#### **23.3.1 Conflict over the need for formal training**

The first point of conflict is the disagreement on whether PSI should require any formal training in order to be considered a profession, or whether it should simply be regarded as a charitable service rendered by well-meaning bilinguals. In a Google search for the word 'professionalism', Rudvin (2007) found that the most common criterion was the need for specialized qualifications acquired through formal training. In the field of PSI, however, qualifications rate lowest on the list of characteristics of most practising interpreters or requirements to enter the profession.

Although some countries conduct formal undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses in PSI (see Hale 2007), they are not compulsory for entry into the profession. This has tended to obstruct the advancement of the profession to a higher level in countries like Australia. Many of the best PSI graduates have abandoned the profession after only a few years, tired of the lack of recognition for their qualifications and higher skills. A survey of interpreters from Victoria, Australia (Ozolins 2004), found clear evidence of discontent among trained interpreters, who felt completely unappreciated. The conflict about the need for pre-service training is deep-rooted in the workforce itself. As the majority of PSI interpreters are untrained, the majority believe that training is irrelevant.

Another reason for some interpreters' reluctance to acquire training is, as Giambruno points out, that interpreters 'have often been forced into the role of interpreter against their wishes' (Giambruno MiguÉlez 2008: 28). Many have been forced to 'help' their relatives and friends who did not speak the mainstream language to communicate with service providers in the absence of professional interpreting services. Others, being migrants themselves, either had no qualifications or their original qualification from their country of origin could not be recognized by the new country. Their ability to speak two languages in many cases automatically qualified them as 'professional interpreters'. Some use their bilingual skills to do some casual, part-time work as interpreters while training in another chosen professional field. This situation highlights the total lack of recognition of interpreting as a skilled, highly complex activity requiring specialized training. The perception that being perfectly bilingual requires little effort from the bilingual person, and that any level of bilingualism equates to being an expert interpreter, is a fundamental hurdle confronting any attempt to professionalize PSI. Not only is this perception prevalent among monolinguals, it is unfortunately also prevalent among untrained, self-proclaimed interpreters. As Niska states:

Linguistic assistance in communication with people from other ethnic communities has been around for thousands of years, very often without any remuneration. This historical combination of trivial everyday activity and giving humanitarian linguistic help to fellow community members has most probably been an obstacle in the contemporary efforts of professionalising community interpreting. (Niska 2007: 300)

The lack of uniformity of entry requirements to the profession has obvious negative repercussions. The disparity in levels of education will undoubtedly reflect on the performance of the interpreters. Different interpreters come to the job with different levels of competence and different understandings of what their role is, what it means to be accurate, or what their ethical obligations are. This leads to confusion in the recipients of the services, who do not know what to expect every time they encounter an interpreter with a different background.

The conflict over the need for formal higher education has repercussions also on professional status, remuneration levels, and on professional identity. Low-status occupations are not necessarily those that are considered unnecessary or of little value to the public, but more generally are those that are not recognized by the wider community as being highly skilled. Occupations that do not require formal training are classified as unskilled and remunerated accordingly. PSI falls into this category. Most people would agree that interpreters are crucial for certain situations where speakers do not share the same language. However, most would be unaware of the need for specialized training. If ad hoc untrained practising interpreters themselves do not agree that their practice is complex enough to require specialist training, it makes the fight for higher rates of pay and better working conditions even more difficult. Paying interpreters according to their qualifications would be one way of breaking this vicious circle. Untrained interpreters would have an incentive to obtain qualifications, and trained interpreters would have an incentive to remain in the profession. However, such a measure is unlikely to be implemented until service providers recognize the importance of tertiary-trained interpreters. As Meyer et al. (2003: 75) found, service providers are usually happy to 'make do' with less than professional interpreters. Corsellis (2008) also argues that the authorities must show a commitment to quality by providing adequate resources.

Lack of formal training also affects professional identity. When interpreters have not been trained to become interpreters, they are ambivalent about their task, their role, their rights and obligations. Their choices will be based on intuition (Martin and Abril Martí 2008), with nothing to substantiate them if challenged. As they have not 'learned' to interpret, they will often undermine their role by producing statements such as 'I'm just the interpreter'. Such ambivalence and insecurity is generated by the development of the profession which at the same time hampers its progress. A strong professional identity gives professionals the confidence to articulate their needs, make appropriate demands and stand up for their rights (see Hale 2005, Rudvin 2007 for discussions on professional identity). A lack of professional identity is a major obstacle for PSI, as Rudvin strongly suggests: 'the profession will remain hostage to a series of conflicting demands and will be forced to adopt ad hoc measures until we decide as a professional community to impose our own demands' (2007: 67).

### 23.3.2 Conflict over role

[T]here is one burning issue which reappears constantly. It is that of the interpreter's role. And it is logical that this should be the case if we think of the ingredients included in the cocktail that makes up community-based interpreting: wide cultural gaps, power imbalance, urgent communication needs, lack of resources, lack of professional profile, face to face interaction during situations which are often dramatic. (Martin and Valero-GarcÉs

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2008: 2)

Role has been a hotly debated issue, particularly among academics. The main reason for the debate has been the lack of uniformity evident in the practice of PS interpreters. The differences can normally be traced back to their background and training. Trained interpreters are generally agreed on their role, which consists of interpreting as accurately and impartially as is humanly possible, with all the inherent complexities those two mandates imply (Hale 2009). Untrained interpreters are understandably unsure about their role, as they may perceive themselves as bilingual helpers or cultural mediators, rather than interpreters; there to help a relative, a friend, or a compatriot to make a transaction. The advocate role has been supported by some who argue that interpreters should not be expected to interpret accurately because they have the moral obligation to make any necessary changes, additions, omissions, embellishments, in order to benefit the minority speaker in some way (Barsky 1996). There is another advocate role which, although evident in the performance of interpreters, has not been endorsed by academics. That is the role of advocate for the institution or the service provider (see Angelelli 2004a, Pöllabauer 2006, Kolb and Pöchhacker 2008 for examples of this role).

Some have argued for interpreters to take on extra roles, such as 'advocate, counsellor, mediator, culture brokers, medical assistants and case managers' (Kaufert and Putsch 1997: 75). At the other extreme, there are those who argue for the interpreter's role as a basic converter from one language to another, matching words only, without any need for background information, cross-cultural knowledge, or personal judgement. Although this role is often quoted, it is usually prevalent only among those who are ignorant of the complexities of language and of the interpreting process. Monolingual lawyers and judicial officers have been quoted as proponents of this role (see Berk-Seligson 1990/2002, Hale 2004, Roberts-Smith 2009).

The role that can be placed in the middle of the two extremes is that which expects the interpreter to be faithful to the speakers' messages as much as is humanly possible, at times interrupting to ask for clarifications or provide cultural insights. The level of faithfulness will be determined by many factors, including some that are beyond the interpreter's control. These can be grouped into four: the inherent cross-linguistic and cross-cultural differences, the interpreter's own competence, the main interlocutors' speech and conduct, and the working conditions (see Hale 2007, 2008, Cambridge 1999, Morris 1999b).

### 23.3.3 Challenges faced by interpreters

Role confusion creates many challenges and ethical dilemmas for interpreters. Pöllabauer (2006) found that interpreters in asylum hearings were often faced with role conflicts and ethical dilemmas because of the 'discrepant roles' they assumed (Pöllabauer 2006: 152). Interpreters are very often confronted with participants who have completely conflicting expectations and attempt to place unrealistic demands on the interpreter. The way interpreters react to such pressures is often linked to their level of confidence as professionals, their level of competence, and their educational background. Example (1) below is an example of a common ethical dilemma for interpreters. The minority-language speaker does not understand the interpreter's role, as set out by the code of ethics, and instructs the interpreter not to interpret what she has said when she thought better of it.

(1) Spanish-speaking witness (addressing the interpreter): '*No, no, casi... no diga eso, no diga eso*'  
(No, no, just... don't say that, don't say that'). (Cited in Hale 2005: 6)

The interpreter in the above case, however, who held postgraduate qualifications in PSI, disregarded the witness's request and continued to interpret the 'withdrawn' segment confidently. The same interpreter also refused to stop interpreting when the lawyer interrupted her half way through her interpretation, complaining to the magistrate that the lawyer was not allowing her to interpret faithfully, and receiving the magistrate's full support. Confident professional PS interpreters are able to have some control over the situation. When speakers speak too fast or for too long, they are able to stop them and ask them to slow down or to speak in shorter chunks. When seating arrangements need to be changed to facilitate the interpretation, they are able to suggest the change. When there is overlapping speech, they are able to stop and ask the speakers to take turns; and the list goes on. Professional, trained interpreters do not sit down passively and do what others, with no knowledge of interpreting, tell them to do. They use each interpreting session as an opportunity to educate the speakers on how to communicate effectively in the presence of an interpreter. Tebble (1998) speaks of the 'contract' between all the parties of an interpreted situation, where interpreters introduce themselves at the commencement of the interview, establish the correct

protocols, explain their role and their needs, and adhere to clear principles. Not everyone is receptive to such information, but many are.

In contrast to the experienced professional interpreter above, example (2) expresses the feelings of frustration of a student of interpreting doing her professional practice.

(2) Many people spoke to me at the same time: a man on the phone and all the social workers at the same time. It was difficult to choose what to say, to whom to talk, which person to use [...] they also referred to the patient in the third person. (Valero-GarcÉs 2008: 176)

A professional interpreter would have stopped and put order to the chaos by clearly explaining the ground rules of interpreted interactions.

Interpreters, however, face many other challenges apart from the interactional challenges mentioned above. In Hale (2007:138) I categorize interpreter challenges into four main areas: interpreting-related issues, such as cross-linguistic and cross-cultural differences as well as skills competence; context-related issues, such as working conditions and constraints imposed by the activity type and institution; participant-related issues, such as lack of appreciation, lack of understanding, poor delivery, and the issues already discussed above; and system-related issues, such as insufficient training opportunities, lack of requirement for training, poor institutional support, and poor remuneration. This list of challenges is only a sample of the many facets that surround PSI and make it such a complex activity.

## 23.4 Research in public service interpreting

The complex nature of PSI has increasingly attracted the interest of researchers around the world: 'the last decades of the twentieth century saw an unprecedented increase in publications on interpreting in community settings' (Martin and Valero-GarcÉs 2008: 1). Although the first studies into court and medical interpreting appeared in the mid to late 1980s (see e.g. Berk-Seligson 1989a, 1989b on court interpreting, and Knapp-Potthoff and Knapp 1987 on medical interpreting), it was the 1990s that saw an explosion of research publications on PSI, continuing into the 2000s. The increase in research coincided with the emergence of more postgraduate master's courses and Ph.Ds around the world.

The research into PSI can be classified by setting, research methodology, and themes. The two main settings that have been studied are court and healthcare. The main research methodologies used have been text and discourse analysis and ethnography. The discourse-analytic studies range from large samples of interpreted data, amounting to hundreds of hours and multiple interpreters (e.g. Berk-Seligson 1990/2002, WadensjÖ 1998b, Hale 2004, Bot 2005), to small case studies (e.g. Mason and Stewart 2001). These studies have also used a variety of discourse-analytic methods, from the very detailed analyses drawing on conversational analysis (e.g. Hale 2004, Tebble 1999, WadensjÖ 1998b) to the broader critical discourse-analytic methods (e.g. Barsky 1996, Inghilleri 2005a). Ethnographic methods used to research PSI have predominantly employed questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups as elicitation techniques (e.g. PÖchhacker 2000, Ozolins 2004, Angelelli 2004b). Most of the research has been qualitative, with only a small proportion using any quantitative methods. There have been some experimental studies in PSI, all in the legal interpreting area (Berk-Seligson 1990, Hale 2004, Napier and Spencer 2008).

The main fields of enquiry can be divided into four:

- 1.** the state of PSI in individual countries and around the world;
- 2.** role;
- 3.** perceptions held by service providers and by minority language speakers of interpreters and interpreting;
- 4.** discourse issues relating to pragmatics, politeness, face, speech style, and the general concept of accuracy.

Studies of the state of the profession (Ozolins 1998, 2000, Erasmus 2000, Ibrahim and Bell 2003, Dubslaff and Martinsen 2003, Valero-GarcÉs 2003a, 2003b, Tryuk 2008) have described the different stages of development in different countries, with Ozolins (2000) drawing international comparisons and conclusions. Studies of role have been conducted through the use of large- or small-scale surveys (Chesher et al. 2003, Angelelli 2003, 2004a,

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2004b, Hale 2007, 2009) or through discourse analysis of authentic data (Barsky 1994, 1996, Jansen 1995, Hale 2005). Studies on perceptions of interpreters tend to cover perceptions about role from the perspectives of the different participants, as well as perceptions about status, professionalism, and level of complexity. Questionnaires have been administered to service providers (Kelly 2000, Lee, Lansbury, and Sullivan 2005, Hale 2007, Napier 2009a, Lee 2009), interpreters themselves (Angelelli 2004b, Martin and Abril Martí 2008, Salaets and van Gucht 2008), and minority-language speakers (Garber and Mauffette-Leenders 1997, Hale and Luzardo 1997, Tellechea Sanchez 2005, Napier 2007b). These questionnaires elicited mixed responses from the different participants. What the results clearly demonstrate, however, is that no group can be identified as having a consistent perception of any of the aspects surveyed. The results are further complicated by the disparities found across countries.

Two seminal works were published in the early 1990s: Susan Berk-Seligson's *The Bilingual Courtroom* (1990/2002) and Cecilia Wadensjö's *Interpreting as Interaction* (1992). Using different theoretical frameworks, these books present the results of data-based discourse-analytic and ethnographic research using authentic interpreting data. These studies highlight the many complexities that surround PSI, showed the significant ways in which interpreters can affect the interaction, and served as groundwork for many others that followed.

Linguistically based research into legal interpreting further investigated the many ways interpreters can alter the illocutionary point and force of the original utterances (Hale 1996, Rigney 1997, Fraser and Freedgood 1999, Mason and Stewart 2001, Jacobsen 2002), and the effect their interventions can have on the interaction. Micro-linguistic studies of the interpretation of courtroom questions in common-law countries indicated a lack of awareness on the part of interpreters of the strategic use of courtroom questions, with arbitrary changes to the original questions interfering with lawyers' tactics. On the other hand, these studies also showed a lack of awareness of the interpreting process on the part of lawyers, who frequently expected literal, word-for-word translations (Berk-Seligson 1999, Hale 1997a, 1997b, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2004, Krouglov 1999, Rigney 1997).

Further studies examined the language of witness testimony and the interpreter's treatment of register and style, with particular attention to the importance of style in the evaluation of character in the courtroom and its treatment by interpreters (Berk-Seligson 1990/2002, Hale 1997a, 1997b, 2004). The ways interpreters deal with cross-cultural differences (Kelly 2000, Mesa 2000) and the challenges interpreters face when interpreting for expert witnesses (MiguÉlez 2001) were also topics of investigation.

Discourse-based studies into medical interpreting include the work of Tebble (1998, 1999) on issues of accuracy and tenor, showing how very subtle omissions or additions to the original discourse can affect the tenor between doctor and patient; and the work of Wadensjö (1998b) on the triadic construction of speech, with the interpreter as the coordinator of talk. Studies investigating the impact interpreters have on the medical consultation have been many (Cambridge 1999, VÁsquez and Javier 1991, Bolden 2000, Davidson 2000, Meyer et al. 2003, Angelelli 2004a, Tellechea Sánchez 2005). All of these studies produce very similar results, as the interpreters being studied are in the main untrained, ad hoc interpreters.

The research so far into PSI has tended to revolve around similar issues. It has also been mostly descriptive and exploratory. It is probably time to move on to different research questions, more rigorous methodologies, and larger samples in order to progress to the next phase. It is also crucial that there be a cross-fertilization between research, training, and practice (see Hale 2007 for a full discussion), where each aspect informs the other.

### **23.5 Conclusion: there is hope**

Amidst the many challenges, obstacles, and conflicts that surround PSI, it is frequently difficult to remain optimistic. There are, however, positive signs. Research is increasing and improving. This will lead to a better understanding of the complex nature of PSI and of the different needs of all the participants, and hopefully point to ways of improving the practice, both in terms of interpreting competence and performance and in the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards for interpreters.

Formal training is also increasing around the world, ranging from certificate courses to full degree courses, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Increased availability of courses can only lead to a higher number of PSI graduates, and larger numbers will not only raise the quality of interpreting services but also help fight for better conditions. Service providers are beginning to become more aware of the nature of interpreting, the need for

specialized training, and the need to work together with the interpreter as a team to obtain optimum results. This has been due to the efforts of a few around the world to educate them on how to work with interpreters.

Despite the very few incentives for training, there are dedicated people who choose to complete formal courses. Despite the extremely difficult circumstances and the high-level complex skills required, there are many highly competent interpreters working in the field. Despite the low social status, there are highly professional interpreters who are both competent and confident enough to earn the respect of those who use their services. Despite the many ethical dilemmas that interpreters face daily, there are ethical interpreters who have professional integrity and make the right ethical choices, even if they are the most difficult choices to make. Despite all the many obstacles, including poor remuneration, highly competent interpreters continue to draw personal and professional satisfaction from their work (see Hale 2009). Even if these are in the minority, there is hope that they can be instruments of change. After all, three decades is a very short time in the development of a profession.

## **Further reading and relevant resources**

Angelelli (2004b) presents the results of an ethnographic study of medical interpreters in a US hospital. Corsellis (2008) is a handbook which provides the reader with useful practical information about the practice of PSI. Hale (2007) presents an overview of the field of community interpreting, with specific sections on theory, research, training, and practice. A special issue of *Linguistica Antverpiensa*, edited by Hertog and van der Veer (5, 2006), contains articles on research in various areas of interpreting, including community interpreting. Pöchhacker (2004) presents a comprehensive review of interpreting theory and research, including studies in conference and community interpreting.

## **Notes:**

- (1) <http://www1.aston.ac.uk/lss/news-events/conferences-seminars/Critical-Link>

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## Oxford Handbooks Online

### Signed Language Interpreting

Jemina Napier

The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies

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### Abstract and Keywords

This article describes signed language interpreting (SLI) as an emerging discipline. It provides a survey of the history and characteristics of SLI, the settings where signed language interpreters work, a summary of SLI research, and a description of the current state of the field. Historically, SLI has functioned as a separate entity from translation and interpreting (T&I). There has recently been growing recognition that signed languages are just another of the community languages that T&I practitioners work with. Signed languages are now formally taught in tertiary institutions throughout the world. The redefinition of the interpreter's role has generated detailed explorations of SLI professionalism and ethics. Some unique characteristics of SLI are its directionality, modality, techniques, and its settings. Finally, this article highlights, how the SLI field has emerged and in which areas it is still developing concluding with predictions for future directions.

Keywords: signed language interpreting, SLI research, translation and interpreting, directionality, modality, interpreter

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### 24.1 Introduction

In 1992, Liz Scott Gibson<sup>1</sup> stated that signed language interpreting (SLI)<sup>2</sup> was an 'emerging profession'. The work and status of SLI has evolved and changed, and Scott Gibson's comment has been cited by others in the SLI literature (Pollitt 1997, Ozolins and Bridge 1999, Napier 2002a, Bontempo and Napier 2007, Dragoje and Ellam 2007). Can a profession still be emerging over fifteen years after such a claim was first made? In fact, reference to 'interpreters' for deaf people in London courts can be found as early as 1771 (Stone and Woll 2008). So why do current authors continue to make the same claim?

When comparing the SLI profession to the domain of translation studies, we can indeed identify SLI as a fledgling profession. Although interpreting studies has only recently been considered a separate discipline (Pöchhacker 2004), professional spoken language interpreters have been recognized for over fifty years (Gaiba 1999). In this context, SLI again is a younger profession. Although the first national professional SLI association was established in the USA in 1964, and the first basic intensive interpreter training programme commenced in 1969 (Ball 2007), it was many years before other countries followed suit. The reason for the slower emergence of SLI as a profession is its complex roots in welfare work with deaf people, and the lack of recognition of signed languages as authentic languages comparable to spoken/written language.

Historically, SLI has functioned as a separate entity from translation and interpreting (T&I) in general. However, there has recently been growing recognition that signed languages are just another of the community languages that T&I practitioners work with. There is also acknowledgement that SLI has led the way in the T&I field in many ways, with 'proportionately dramatic developments... in the modern era' (Turner 2007b: 2). Leading T&I scholars acknowledge the work of SLI in wider discussions of interpreting (Mikkelsen 1999c, Pöchhacker 1999). Therefore

the notion of SLI as an ‘emerging profession’ is changing. It is legitimate to use this term to refer to the profession in some areas or countries, but generally SLI is developing rapidly in key areas. It might be more appropriate to refer to ‘emergent fields of practice’ within the SLI field—as per Bolster’s (2005) reference to SLI in public schools. Some would consider SLI a sub-discipline of T&I studies, as many issues are the same. However, there are other issues that can be considered unique to SLI.

This chapter provides a survey of the history and characteristics of SLI, the settings where signed language interpreters work, a summary of SLI research, and a description of the current state of the field and present state of knowledge and contemporary thought, concluding with predictions for future directions. In sum, the chapter will highlight how the SLI field has emerged, in which areas it is still developing, why and how it is growing, and how it is ground-breaking.

## 24.2 History of SLI

The emergence and acknowledgment of SLI as a profession closely followed the recognition of signed languages as real languages in their own right, rather than just gestural replications of spoken languages. Therefore the history of SLI needs to be placed within a context, set against the changing backdrop of social and political attitudes towards deaf people and their use of a signed language.

### 24.2.1 The recognition of signed languages, deaf culture, and identity

Different signed languages are used by deaf people in every country throughout the world, with new signed languages still being discovered (Woll, Sutton-Spence, and Elton 2001). The first signed language dictionary was published in America in 1965 (Stokoe, Casterline, and Croneberg 1965), followed by (among others) Denmark (Plum 1967), Belgium (De Villiers 1984), Australia (Johnston 1989), Thailand (Wrigley et al. 1990), Kenya (Akach 1991), Britain (Brien 1992), and New Zealand (Kennedy et al. 1997).

Several countries, such as Greece, Lithuania, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Sweden, Switzerland, South Africa, Thailand, Uganda, Ukraine, Uruguay, the United States of America, and New Zealand have legally recognized the natural signed languages of their countries. Other countries that indirectly recognize their national signed languages in the form of statements in policies or relevant legislation include Denmark, Finland, and Australia (Krausneker 2000).

Researchers have established signed languages as syntactically complex languages with distinctive morphological, phonological, and sociolinguistic features which are distinct from spoken languages (Sutton-Spence and Woll 1998, Neidle et al. 2000, Johnston and Schembri 2007), and sign linguists argue that we know more about language in general (including both spoken and signed languages) as a consequence of sign linguistics research (Wilbur 2006). Although signed languages are not based on spoken languages, they do have a relationship to the spoken language of the country. For example, in Australia, Auslan (Australian Sign Language) draws on English in areas of its vocabulary and grammar, by incorporating fingerspelled English words, or English words mouthed on the lips (Johnston and Schembri 2007).

Thus it is now widely accepted by linguists, anthropologists, and sociologists alike that deaf people belong to a linguistic and cultural minority group and identify with one another on the basis of using the natural signed language of their country (Higgins 1980, Brennan 1992, Senghas and Monaghan 2002, Ladd 2003).

Signed languages are now formally taught in tertiary institutions throughout the world. People who can hear can choose to learn to sign as a second language either to satisfy a foreign language requirement as part of their study pattern or because they want to work with deaf people professionally as interpreters, educators for the deaf, social workers, speech therapists, or audiologists (Quinto-Pozos 2005). This has led to an emergence of research and debate on appropriate methods for teaching a signed language (Rosen 2004), and on difficulties faced by students learning a signed language (Jacobs 1996, Kemp 1998).

The legitimization of signed languages as ‘real’ languages has also had an impact on the education of deaf children, with growing numbers of educational providers recognizing that deaf children can be educated in a signed language (Komesaroff 2001, Lasasso and Lollis 2003, Fernández-Viader and Fuentes 2004). Thus the

bilingual deaf educational philosophy was born, which mirrored bilingual educational approaches to spoken languages (especially of minority groups) (e.g. Rol-stad, Mahoney, and Glass 2005, Helmberger 2006).

This philosophy essentially means that more deaf children access their education in a signed language (directly via teachers or indirectly via interpreters). Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008) states that countries should take appropriate measures to facilitate the learning of a signed language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community to 'facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community'.<sup>3</sup>

As a consequence of these linguistic, political, and social developments, the population of signed language users has changed. More people from 'outside' the deaf community can now use a signed language. This shift has led to debates around the complex nature of the deaf community, with redefinitions of community values and membership parameters (Padden and Humphries 2005). All of these developments have also had a major impact on the SLI profession.

## 24.2.2 The professionalization of SLI

Historically, SLI was provided as an inherent part of the role of missionaries or welfare workers for the deaf (Corfmat 1990). During this 'pre-professional era',

missionaries, responsible for moral and spiritual guidance to the deaf community, provided interpreted church services. This later developed into a welfare officer role, and services expanded to include employment, legal, housing, aged care and other social support. Family members, especially the hearing children of deaf adults (Codas), teachers of the deaf, and friends who could sign, provided the bulk of day to day interpreting assistance for members of the deaf community on a voluntary basis (Napier, McKee, and Goswell 2006: 6–7)

McIntire and Sanderson (1995), Pollitt (1997), and Heaton and Fowler (1997), among others, have identified this era as the time of the signed language interpreter as 'helper'.

In the latter part of the twentieth century, however, a series of events heralded the emergence of a new breed of signed language interpreter. Initially, deaf people and their advocates in Western countries such as the USA, Canada, UK, Sweden, and Finland began to lobby for equal access to public facilities. They no longer wanted helpers, they wanted interpreters. The advent of rehabilitation and disability anti-discrimination legislation in some countries meant that deaf people were given the right to demand access to information via interpreters in key domains (e.g. education, employment, legal and health services). Governments were prepared to pay for (some) interpreting services and deaf welfare organizations recognized that the role of the interpreter should be separated from that of support worker.

In 1964 the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf was established in the USA, in order to establish standards of the skills required by interpreters, guidelines for the provision of interpreters, and regulation of quality and behaviour through development of a Code of Ethics, etc. The Conference of Interpreter Trainers was established in 1979 to focus on standards in the provision of interpreter education. This formal process of professionalization set the benchmark for other countries, which followed suit by establishing their own professional associations; for example, Sweden in 1969 (Hein 2009), Scotland in 1982 (Wilson and McDade 2009), Austria in 1998 (Grbic 2009), and Kosovo in 2006 (Hoti and Emerson 2009). The SLI profession also developed a profile on the world stage with the establishment of the European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters in 1993<sup>4</sup> and the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI) in 2003 (Hema 2007). Although different countries are at different stages in developing their SLI profession, there seems to be a consistent 'world view' that a cohesive profession is what is needed (de Wit 2008).

With the establishment of SLI professions and professional associations came a 'pendulum swing' from the helper model to the conduit model, whereby the SLI role was modelled on spoken language interpreters in an attempt to appear more professional (Pollitt 1997). Interpreters were expected to adhere to codes of ethics, maintain impartiality and confidentiality, interpret faithfully and accurately, and uphold a professional distance (Neumann Solow 1981, Frishberg 1990).

Interestingly, the professional values adopted by signed language interpreters were modelled on conference interpreters, who perform their work in a booth at the back of a conference venue and can maintain professional and social distance from their clients. This is not the case for signed language interpreters, who need to be physically present and visible in order to provide interpretation for deaf clients.

Before too long, various stakeholders began to question the conduit model. People argued that, by adopting certain 'professional' traits, signed language interpreters had lost their connection to the values of the deaf community (Phillip 1994, McDade 1995), and that use of a conduit metaphor was neither realistic nor helpful in explaining the role of an interpreter (Roy 1993). Deaf people in particular began to assert that they wanted practitioners who were linguistically skilled, professional, and ethical, but who also appreciated the cultural values of the deaf community. This is where SLI has led the way for spoken language interpreters, as essentially it has been at the forefront of community interpreting practice. Discussions of the interpreter's role in the SLI sector continued for many years before notions of community interpreting as a professional (and not inferior) practice emerged in the spoken language interpreting literature (PÖchhacker 1999).

The SLI literature contains much discussion of different interpreting models and the multi-faceted role of the interpreter, taking into account linguistic, communicative, cultural, social, environmental, ethical, and professional factors (Lee 1997). As Wilcox and Shaffer (2005: 28) comment,

we have witnessed a panoply of models ... One driving force that seems to lead to the replacement of one model with another is a desire to rid our models of the interpreter's function of all aspects of conduit thinking.

SLI models have encompassed the communication facilitator (Neumann Solow 1981), the bilingual-bicultural model (McIntire and Sanderson 1994), and the ally model, finally resting with notions of the interpreter as active co-participant within an interactive model (Stewart, Schein, and Cartwright 1998). The latest model has been informed predominantly by the research of Cynthia Roy (1989) and Melanie Metzger (1995), whose seminal work provided evidence that signed language interpreters are active participants in a dialogic interpretation event, and thus cannot be neutral conduits. This stance has been adopted and further espoused by spoken language interpreter-researchers such as Cecilia Wadensjö (1998b) and Claudia Angelelli (2004b), and is now the standard accepted paradigm for the community interpreter role in all languages (Rudvin 2007, Turner 2007b).

The redefinition of the interpreter's role has generated detailed explorations of SLI professionalism and ethics (e.g. Rodriguez and Guerrero 2002, Hoza 2003, Witter-Merithew and Johnson 2004, Brunson 2006), with discussion of the application in professional practice of codes of ethics, and whether these should be adapted to more accurately reflect the demands placed on interpreters (Cokely 2000, Tate and Turner 2001). The debate concerning ethical codes for interpreters is still present in spoken and signed language interpreting fields alike (e.g. Lipkin 2008, Swabey and Mickelson 2008, Apostolou 2009), so it would appear that this is an area that needs more dialogue between the two strands of interpreting.

A popular approach to ethical and professional decision-making in SLI has been proposed by Dean and Pollard (2001). Their demand-control schema (DC-S) examines the complex occupation of SLI, identifying sources of paralinguistic, environmental, interpersonal, and intrapersonal demands. They suggest that interpreters can implement various controls to deal with the demands placed upon them. DC-S has been widely adopted among interpreter educators (particularly in the USA) as a framework for the analysis of interpreting assignments, roles, and ethics (e.g. Storme 2008, Witter-Merithew 2008).

The professionalization of SLI has also led to the publication of a number of textbooks and volumes which provide an overview of SLI practice (e.g. Stewart et al. 1998, Cerney 2005, Cokely 2007, Frishberg 1990, Harrington and Turner 2001, Humphrey 1999, Humphrey and Alcorn 1996; see also 'Further reading' below). With time, much of the work generated on SLI has come to focus less on the need for SLI in general, the role of the signed language interpreter, or the distinction between SLI and spoken language interpreting, and more on SLI in different settings and the state of the profession. Although SLI emerged from a different sociopolitical background from that of spoken language interpreting, signed language interpreters have modelled discussion on community interpreting for all languages, but there are still aspects that can be considered unique to SLI.

## 24.3 Unique characteristics of SLI

Although the essential processes of interpretation are the same, regardless of the languages used, there are many issues that confront signed language interpreters which are different from those faced by spoken language interpreters. The first relates to working language direction.

### 24.3.1 Directionality

Directionality describes the use of an interpreter's two languages when interpreting in the simultaneous or long consecutive mode, when the source language discourse is monologic. While conference interpreters work in simultaneous mode and in one direction only, typically from their B (i.e. second) into their A (i.e. first/native) language (Seleskovitch 1978a), opinion about directionality is now divided between East and West (Gile 2005). Unless signed language interpreters have been exposed to a signed language from a very young age, it is unlikely that they will acquire a signed language as a first language. Yet signed language interpreters are more likely to work consistently into a signed language, meaning that they are invariably working into their B language, as SLI typically occurs at communication events where deaf people are relying on non-deaf individuals for information (Napier 2002a). Signed language interpreters complain that they are less confident when interpreting into a spoken language, as they work in this direction less frequently, and often state a preference for working into a signed language (Napier, Rohan, and Slatyer 2007).

In essence, the issue is one of modality. Spoken language interpreters work between two linear languages, whereby one word is produced after another and the message is built up sequentially. Signed languages, however, are visual-spatial languages, which convey meaning by creating a picture using visually descriptive elements. Therefore signed language interpreters are constantly transferring information between two alternate modalities. This process is commonly referred to as bimodal interpreting.

### 24.3.2 Modality

Brennan and Brown (2004: 125) suggest that the realities of bimodal interpreting 'inevitably change the dynamics of live interactions', due to the visual nature of signed languages. For example, in order to receive the message, deaf individuals need to maintain eye contact with the interpreter, whereas in the norms of hearing interaction, participants maintain eye contact directly with each other. Therefore deaf participants may miss visual cues given by their hearing counterparts. Similarly, hearing individuals may focus their attention on the interpreter, as this is where the 'voice' is coming from, and miss visual-gestural cues given by a deaf person.

Signed languages express information in a visual-spatial dimension by encoding 'real-world' visual information (i.e. how things actually look) into the grammatical features of the language (Brennan and Brown 2004). This element of signed language use therefore places certain demands on signed language interpreters. When hearing certain abstract concepts or generic descriptions, it is necessary for signed language interpreters to receive detailed visual information, which needs to be explicitly encoded visually into any interpretation. Brennan and Brown cited an example in British Sign Language (BSL) of the sentence 'X broke the window', indicating that the interpreter ideally needs to know what type of window, and how it was broken, in order to be able to accurately represent the window and how it was broken to make sense visually to the deaf receiver. Thus when interpreting for deaf people, signed language interpreters face the challenge of constantly having to visualize what they hear in a linear form, or, when providing a 'voice-over', create sequential meaning from a visual picture. This factor adds an extra dimension to the interpreting process, as the interpreters have to create meaning not only between two languages and cultures but also between opposing modalities. The bimodal aspect of SLI also influences the interpreting techniques used.

### 24.3.3 Interpreting techniques

Although signed language interpreters are taught and encouraged to use the consecutive mode (Russell 2005), and research has shown that it can actually be a more effective technique, for example in court, to ensure accuracy (Russell 2002), signed language interpreters predominantly work in simultaneous mode (Leeson 2005a), as there is no conflict between two languages being spoken aloud at the same time. The simultaneous approach presents an additional challenge to signed language interpreters due to the use of two different language

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modalities (Padden 2000/2001). Padden argues that when using the consecutive technique, signed language interpreters can operate in one mode at a time, whereas when working simultaneously, the two modalities are co-occurring, putting additional strain on the interpreting process.

The SLI literature often discusses two key interpretation methods or ‘translation styles’ (Napier 2002b): interpretation and transliteration. The term ‘transliteration’ (dominant in American SLI literature) is used only in SLI and refers to the process of changing spoken language into a visual representation of the form and structure of that language. Earlier definitions of transliteration were based on a mechanistic model that endorsed an exact sign-for-word (or vice versa) rendition of the source language message (Siple 1997). However, as a consequence of research studies, authors have identified that:

- (a) It is more useful to make a distinction between ‘free’ and ‘literal’ interpretations than between interpretation and transliteration (Cerney 2000, Napier 1998, 2000, Moody 2007), acknowledging that a literal approach is effectively interpreting into a contact variety of signed language (Malcolm 2005, Napier 2006a).
- (b) A literal interpretation can still incorporate the visual-spatial linguistic features of signed language and is not produced ‘word for word’ in spoken word order (Winston 1989, Kelly 2001, Sofinski et al. 2001, Sofinski 2003).
- (c) A literal technique may be the preferred option for deaf people in some settings (e.g. conferences or higher education lectures), in order to provide access to terminology/ expressions used in the spoken language (Viera and Stauffer 2000).
- (d) Literal interpretation is an appropriate translation style if appropriate linguistic strategies are used (Davis 2003, Livingston, Singer, and Abramson 1994, Locker 1990, Marschark et al. 2004, Napier 2002a, Pollitt 2000b, Winston and Monikowski 2003).

Deaf people rely on SLI for access to information in a range of settings that may require simultaneous or consecutive interpretation, in free or literal translation style.

### 24.4 SLI settings

SLI occurs in conference, court, and community settings. However, due to the linguistic needs of their client group, signed language interpreters also find that:

they have a potentially life-long relationship [with their clients] across a much broader range of settings. For example, [signed language] interpreters also work extensively in education (primary, secondary and tertiary), professional workplaces, government consultations, important family occasions (for example, births, weddings, funerals), and at community events in which hearing ‘outsiders’ also participate. (Napier et al. 2006: 5)

The focus here is on one particular area which can be considered as particular to SLI: educational interpreting.

#### 24.4.1 Interpreting in educational settings

Professional spoken language interpreters rarely find themselves working in education, as children have access to education in the spoken language of their country. The inimitable aspect of educational SLI is that interpreters work with deaf students throughout the educational system in the classroom. Owing to changes in educational policy and provision, more deaf children are integrated into local schools and provided with interpreters to allow them access to the mainstream spoken language used in the classroom (Ramsey 1997, Fleetwood 2000). As a consequence of disability discrimination legislation, more deaf adults are also now enrolling in college or university programmes (Barnes et al. 2007).

Surveys have shown that signed language interpreters carry out a large proportion of their work in primary, secondary, or tertiary education (McIntire 1990, Hayes 1992, Seal 1998, Napier and Barker 2003). Although interpreters working in educational settings require the same skills as interpreters working in other settings, they also need additional skills to account for what is expected of them in that role (Elliott and Powers 1995).

It is widely recognized in the SLI profession and literature that some confusion surrounds the definition of the

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educational interpreter's role (Hurwitz 1998, Fleetwood 2000, Benson 2001). This can lead to conflicts between expectations and professional interpreting standards (Moores 2001). Educational interpreters are often expected to perform non-interpreting activities, such as tutoring (Jones, Clark, and Soltz 1997). One of the challenges for educational interpreters, commonly recognized in the literature, is the complex requirements of interpreting with children (Schick and Williams 2001). Interpreting for children is not unique to SLI, as spoken language interpreters also work with children, however the reason it is particularly challenging in educational settings can be summed up as follows. In educational settings, an interpreter is:

- working with minors and therefore legally bound by 'duty of care';
- regularly working with students who have varying degrees of signed language proficiency, thus presenting interpreters as language role models;
- faced with the dilemma of which interpreting technique to use and when (i.e. free or literal style), in order to give access to the majority language (e.g. students may need to know specific terms in order to complete exam papers; should interpreters introduce these terms literally through fingerspelling and mouthing, or provide a conceptual/meaningful interpretation?);
- often working with deaf students who are learning how to use an interpreter and do not understand the role of the interpreter;
- generally working with students aged between 12 and 18, where there is a potential imbalance in the dynamics of power;
- perceived to be responsible for assisting deaf students in their learning;
- expected to sight-translate written text into signed language, as well as spoken classroom dialogue;
- often the only person in the classroom who can communicate with the deaf student;
- often asked to report things that happen in the classroom concerning deaf students to teachers or principals of the school;
- in a position to develop a close relationship with students, due to regular contact over a long period of time, in which the student can become unreasonably dependent on the interpreter.

Recently, SLI scholars have begun to question the effectiveness of interpreting for children's education and demanded more research and discussion (Winston 2004a, Marschark, Peterson, and Winston 2005a). They have acknowledged various issues that affect the learning and development of deaf children when they are relying on interpreter-mediated education. Key issues relate to whether an equivalent educational experience to that of hearing children can be attained when the competence of educational interpreters maybe questionable (Davis 2005, Marschark et al. 2004, 2005b, Monikowski 2004, Schick 2004, Schick, Williams, and Kupermintz 2005, Stack 2004, Thoutenhooft 2005, Winston 2004 a). For this reason, researchers suggest that educational interpreters must be highly educated and regularly supervised, and their skills closely evaluated in order to ensure high standards of provision (Burch 2002, Jones 2004, Langer 2004, Metzger and Fleetwood 2004, Schick and Williams 2004, Taylor 2004). Additionally, researchers have suggested that further investigation is needed of the teacher—interpreter—student communicative triad (La Bue 1998, Ramsey 2001, Schick 2001, Russell 2008a).

In addition to working with children in educational settings, signed language interpreters now face the challenge of interpreting university lectures, which give rise to conditions similar to those found in the conference situation (Leeson and Foley-Cave 2007). University interpreting was previously considered unique to SLI, but in South Africa many universities now provide interpreters for lectures as a consequence of a multilingual education policy (van Rooy 2005, Beukes and Piernaar 2009, Verhoef and Blaauw 2009). This is another area in which SLI can be seen to lead the way.

Various studies have investigated sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic elements of university SLI, including the potential for miscommunication between hearing and deaf people in university classrooms when an interpreter is used (Johnson 1991). The strategies used by lecturers, deaf students, hearing students, and interpreters to fulfil their roles in the learning process have also been investigated, as have interpreting style and production of omissions in interpreting university lectures. Furthermore, deaf students have been canvassed on their perceptions and preferences of university interpreting in order to access the content of lectures (Locker 1990, Marschark et al. 2004, Napier and Barker 2004). The demand for interpreters to work in a range of educational settings, particularly higher education, has led to calls for more consistency and quality in interpreter education, training, and

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accreditation (Napier 2005a).

From this overview of the history and characteristics of SLI, and one particular SLI setting, it can be seen that many positive milestones have been achieved in the SLI profession worldwide. Nonetheless, by reviewing the current state of the field it is possible to identify ongoing and emerging debates and concerns.

## 24.5 The current state of the field

Various position papers have questioned the status, role, responsibilities, and social practices of signed language interpreters (e.g. Turner 2001a, Turner 2001b, Turner and Harrington 2002, Turner 2005, Turner 2006a). The overarching theme is the need to establish what really happens in interpreter-mediated interactions, and then harness that knowledge into SLI education and research to produce reflective practitioners. These publications have framed the current state of the field in SLI education and research, and feed into the present state of knowledge in the profession.

### 24.5.1 Education, training, and accreditation

Different countries have a range of systems for SLI education, training, and accreditation. Training ranges from ad hoc intensive short courses to formal university programmes, and accreditation is obtained through annual testing programmes or by qualification on completion of a training programme. Nonetheless there is a ‘commonality of interests and challenges shared by colleagues around the globe’ (Scott Gibson 2009: ix), as documented in a recent volume on SLI education (Napier 2009b). Most countries adopt standards of recognition for SLI skills, and introduce short courses in order to meet an immediate need, provide basic training, and eliminate ‘unsatisfactory social practice’ among inexperienced and/or untrained interpreters (Grbic 2001: 158). Lobbying by the deaf community and various others stakeholders, combined with fundraising activities, leads to formal programmes being established with infrastructure for professional regulation, monitoring, and standards. Many people assume that it is only developing countries that are still struggling to establish their SLI profession, but it is still the case in some ‘developed’ countries, such as Belgium (Haesenne, Huvelle, and Kerres 2008).

The majority of systems for regulating SLI practices are established as standalone systems for SLI only. Likewise, SLI education typically occurs in departments for disability studies, deaf studies, welfare studies, or social studies. Recently, however, signed language interpreters have been educated alongside translators and interpreters of spoken languages in linguistics, T&I, or language departments—for example in Australia (Napier 2005b) and Austria (Grbic 2009)—and accredited by national systems for certifying all translators and interpreters—for example in Australia (Bontempo and Levitzke-Gray 2009) and Sweden (Hein 2009). There are essentially three different models in existence, where systems are (i) SLI-specific (e.g. USA), (ii) SLI-specific, but adhere to the same standards as spoken language interpreters (e.g. UK), or (iii) integrated, where spoken and signed language interpreters are trained and accredited within the same system (e.g. Australia).<sup>5</sup>

Although there is universal agreement on the value of SLI education, the way that the philosophy translates into delivery varies, as witnessed in an emerging range of related publications, for example, the Gallaudet University Press Interpreter Education Series, and the new *International Journal of Interpreter Education* published by CIT, which feature discussions of teaching activities and research.<sup>6</sup>

#### 24.5.1.1 Current debates in SLI education

With the shift to formal SLI education, issues have arisen around the formalization of training and the potential disempowerment of the deaf community in inducting new interpreters. Cokely (2005b) and Stone (2007, 2008) highlight the fact that early signed language interpreters came from ‘within’ the deaf community, in that they were chosen by deaf people. In this way, interpreters were acculturated to the deaf way of life and developed a strong sense of obligation to the community, and deaf people could be certain that they had the right ‘attitude’. Now that institutional training is available, however, the choice has been taken out of the hands of the deaf community. Although some candidates may have adequate linguistic skills, they may not have what the community would regard as the right attitude.

Monikowski and Peterson (2005) have proposed ‘service learning’ or ‘in-service training’ to address this problem

(van den Boegarde 2007). They suggest that SLI students be introduced to experiential as well as classroom learning, whereby students participate in deaf community activities or provide *pro bono* interpreting in low-risk situations, so that students may learn ‘the significance of membership in a community while reflecting on the importance of reciprocity and the symbiotic nature of learning and living’ (Monikowski and Peterson 2005: 195).

The suggestion by Monikowski and Peterson is only one theme in a growing body of work on SLI education. Other central themes that have emerged are the need to adopt a discourse-based approach to teaching signed language interpreters (Pollitt 2000a, Winston and Monikowski 2000, 2005, Cokely 2005a, Metzger 2005, Napier 2006b, Roy 2006a) and to provide mentoring opportunities for novice signed language interpreters (Napier 2006c, Ross 2008). Other topics include the need to evaluate screening and testing procedures for SLI education and practice (Bontempo and Napier 2009, Russell and Malcolm 2009), the desire for SLI educators to be trained in teaching (Winston 2005, 2007), and analyses of teaching programme delivery, activities, resources, and philosophies (Leeson 2008, McDermid 2009a, 2009b, Petronio and Hale 2009).

### 24.5.2 Research

There is a growing body of research on SLI, and the range has been eloquently captured in Grbic's (2007) bibliometric analysis of SLI research from 1970 to 2005. Pöchhacker (2004) has also presented an overview of many SLI research theses in his general discussion of interpreting studies. Gallaudet University Press has introduced a Studies in Interpretation series with volumes featuring quantitative and qualitative SLI research, and several other volumes have been published which collate discussions of SLI research (Cokely 1992c, Harrington and Turner 2001, Marschark et al. 2005a). Furthermore, books are available based on the doctoral dissertations of several researchers (Cokely 1992b, Taylor 1993, Metzger 1999, Napier 2002a, Nicodemus 2009, Roy 2000b, Russell 2002, Stone 2009a), and the *Sign Language Translator and Interpreter* is a new research-focused journal/book series published by St Jerome Press.

Although research has been conducted on SLI since the 1970s (e.g. Fleischer 1975), SLI research can still be considered an emerging research discipline, as research output has increased exponentially over the last decade. Researchers have highlighted the need for SLI practitioners to become involved in conducting action research by engaging in reflective practice, and effectively conducting case studies of real interpreting work experiences (Turner 2005, Napier 2006b, 2009), and for research to be conducted ‘on, for and with’ stakeholders (Turner and Harrington 2000).

A large number of research studies have adopted linguistic analyses of interpreting output. These analyses have ranged from investigations of psycholinguistic components of the interpreting process (Cokely 1992a, Isham and Lane 1993, Haas 1999), and comparisons of monologic interpretations into signed language (Davis 2003, Leeson 2008, Napier 2002a, 2006a, Sheridan 2009, Steiner 1998, Stone 2007), to sociolinguistic analyses of interpreter-mediated interactions (Bélanger 2004, Hoza 2007, Metzger 1999, Roy 2000b). Interpreters' co-working strategies have also been explored, although this area is still under-researched (Cokely and Hawkins 2003, Mitchell 2002, Napier, Carmichael, and Wiltshire 2008).

As discussed earlier, educational interpreting forms a large part of the working lives of signed language interpreters. It is no surprise, therefore, that research on educational interpreting features prominently in SLI research output (see references in section 24.4.2). Studies have also focused on other key areas, such as legal (Brennan and Brown 2004, Ibrahim-Bell 2008, Mathers 2006, Napier and Spencer 2008, Russell 2008b), medical (Barnett 2002, Sanheim 2003, Smeijers and Pfau 2009), mental health (Brunson and Lawrence 2002, Harvey 2003), and conference (Bidoli 2004).

Two popular themes have emerged recently in SLI research. One is users' perceptions of signed language interpreters and interpreting (Forestal 2005, Kurz and Langer 2004, Napier and Barker 2004, Napier and Rohan 2007, Stratly 2005, Witter-Merithew and Johnson 2005). In promoting consideration of users' input, Dean and Pollard (2005) have asserted that SLI is a practice profession alongside medicine, law, teaching, and counselling. In these practice professions, more emphasis is being placed on the role of the client in ensuring the quality and effectiveness of services. Dean and Pollard assert that this concept is applicable to SLI, and should be taken into consideration in SLI education and research. Another current theme in SLI research relates to aptitude: it examines linguistic competence, skills, personality, and other characteristics as potential predictors of SLI performance

(Bontempo and Napier 2007, Gomez et al. 2007, Shaw 2009, Shaw, Grbic, and Franklin 2004, Stauffer and Shaw 2006, Stone 2009b).

## 24.5.3 Present state of knowledge

SLI education and research apart, there is a groundswell of debate and discussion in four other fundamental areas, reflecting the present state of knowledge and contemporary thought in the worldwide SLI profession: (i) the rise of the deaf professional, (ii) the emergence of deaf interpreters, (iii) the demand for signed language translation, and (iv) the provision of SLI through video media.

### 24.5.3.1 Deaf professionals

A shift in the status and identity of deaf people in society has had a direct impact on the demand for, and provision of, SLI. More deaf students are entering higher education due to the increased level of support available (Barnes et al. 2007). Thus deaf people are no longer all ‘powerless’—many study to postgraduate level and enter the workplace in various professional roles (e.g. as academics, lawyers, or doctors). This phenomenon has led to discussion of an emerging deaf professional ‘middle’ class (Padden and Humphries 2005, Kushalnagar and Rashid 2008), and greater demand for SLI in university and conference contexts and in the workplace (Dickinson 2005, 2006, Dickinson and Turner 2008).

The demand for SLI in these contexts has forged a path for further deaf involvement in SLI. Deaf professionals, as users of interpreting services, are beginning to redefine what they want and need from interpreters, working regularly and closely with the same interpreter(s), and negotiating their needs to achieve their desired outcomes. This new model of interpreting is defined as the deaf professional-designated interpreter model (Hauser and Hauser 2008), and has been explored in detail in a volume dedicated to the topic (Hauser, Finch, and Hauser 2008). As well as interpreting for professional consultations, meetings, and presentations, signed language interpreters may also be required to work with deaf professionals in social networking situations, referred to as diplomatic or escort interpreting (Cook 2004, Napier et al. 2006), providing a personal interpreting service throughout the deaf client's interaction with others. The interpreter's main function is to enable the client to socialize as smoothly as possible, and to be fully aware of conversations in the workplace (Trowler and Turner 2002).

In order to shape our understanding of the changing role of the signed language interpreter, deaf people are becoming more involved in dialogue with interpreters. Moreover, they are becoming interpreters themselves.

### 24.5.3.2 Deaf interpreters

In recent times deaf people have begun to work as interpreting practitioners (Boudreault 2005), referred to variously as ‘deaf interpreters’, ‘deaf relay interpreters’, or just ‘relay interpreters’ (Collins and Walker 2006, Forestal 2005). This trend acknowledges the fact that these interpreters come from within the community, and thus have ingrained linguistic and cultural experiences which can contribute to the interpretation (Turner 2006a).

A deaf interpreter may be employed in contexts where (typically non-native signing) hearing interpreters feel they need extra assistance to understand the signing of a deaf person or accurately convey a message to that person. Deaf and hearing interpreters can be found working together in situations where the deaf client uses a foreign signed language or idiosyncratic signs or gestures which could be thought of as ‘home signs’, unique to a family. Such interpreters may be needed if the client has minimal or limited communication skills, is deaf-blind or deaf with limited vision (requiring a tactile form of a signed language), uses signs particular to a given regional, ethnic, or age group, or has characteristics reflective of deaf culture not familiar to hearing interpreters (Napier et al. 2006).

There is a dearth of research concerning this group of practitioners. Howard and Scully (2006) have explored notions of space and interactions between deaf and hearing interpreters and their clients, the interpretation and message ownership. Ressler (1999) conducted a small-scale study comparing the output of deaf and hearing interpreters, and found that the message conveyed by deaf interpreters was clearer and more comprehensible. Despite this finding, it is widely accepted that deaf interpreters, like hearing interpreters, should undergo training (Mathers 2009). SLI education programmes need to be tailored to ‘address how to instruct Deaf interpreters in the mechanics of interpreting and instruct non-Deaf interpreters in how to recognize, advocate and negotiate for Deaf interpreters’ (Mathers 2009: 68).

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With reference to the working practices of deaf interpreters, Turner (2006a: 292) asserts that we should 'review fundamental analyses and definitions of language, translation and interpreting... re-appraise the landscape of professionalism in the field, specifically with reference to frameworks of training, assessment and "occupational standards" criteria'. As more deaf people work as interpreters, they are also becoming more involved in a growing area of SLI, signed language translation.

### 24.5.3.3 Signed language translation

Signed language translation (SLT) is an emerging area which provides opportunities for both deaf and hearing interpreters to work, but it has little recognition within or outside the SLI profession. Recent discussions of SLT demand that we extend our traditional understanding of translation beyond changing written text in one language to written text in another language. Leneham (2007) argues that the key is in the potential for correction, and that the target text (whether written or signed) is captured for posterity.

Theatre interpreting, where an interpreter is placed to one side of the stage or shadows actors on stage (Gebron 2000, Kilpatrick and Andrews 2009), epitomizes a hybrid between interpretation and translation (Turner and Pollitt 2002, Leneham 2005), as a signed language interpreter can prepare a translation by reading a script, watching pre-recorded footage of the play/musical or rehearsals, and watching a performance or rehearsal live. Signed language translators can 'edit' their translation by videoing, reviewing, and revising their 'drafts'. The final translation, though, is performed live in real time, and thus can be considered an interpretation, as the translator will be influenced by what happens spontaneously (e.g. when actors stumble over their lines).

Recent SLI literature has begun to explore notions and practices of SLT (Gresswell 2001, Banna 2004). It has provided descriptions of the translation of written texts into a signed language on video, and dealt with educational assessment tools (Tate, Collins, and Tymms 2003), psychiatric assessment tools (Montoya et al. 2004, Cornes et al. 2006), children's books (Conlon and Napier 2004), and the translation of signed texts into written documents, such as the dictation of letters (Cragg 2002) or the translation of narratives (Padden 2004). Even processes of machine translation have been applied to signed language, with the development of a signing avatar to translate the spoken words of post office clerks into BSL for customers (Wray et al. 2004).

In the same way that technological developments have enabled the capturing of SLT products, supplementary innovations have also enabled the provision of SLI through video media.

### 24.5.3.4 Provision of SLI through video media

The terms 'video remote interpreting', 'video relay interpreting' (VRI), or 'video relay service' (VRS) refer to the process of interpreting via video technology, where one or more of the participants is in a different location. VRI/VRS technology currently varies from country to country, but includes webcams, a set-top box, or video-conferencing equipment.

VRI/VRS technology affects the interpreting process and interpreters in several ways. It brings with it a need to adapt signing style to the two-dimensional medium, and offers only limited opportunities to assess a deaf client's language needs or to brief either party. Added to these is the difficulty of attracting a deaf person's attention if the interpreter is in a different location (Napier et al. 2006).

To reduce the need for travel, interpreters employed to work for VRI/VRS may be booked for block sessions. This is potentially more appealing and may attract more interpreters, at the expense of face-to-face community work (Dion 2005).

At present deaf people are using VRI/VRS in order to organize short meetings at the last minute, and to make phone calls. With further advances in technology, it is likely that more deaf people will use this service regularly for personal communication, and that an increasing proportion of skilled signed language interpreters will therefore be employed in this type of service, following trends already established in the USA.

VRI/VRS has been identified as an effective way to provide increased access to signed language interpreters, especially for clients in regional or rural areas (Spencer 2000), and has the potential to lead to the globalization of SLI work (Lightfoot 2006).

## 24.6 Future directions

It can be assumed that the SLI field will continue to emerge, with further research into national signed languages and the development of SLI professional associations, training, accreditation, and research. The establishment of WASLI indicates the beginning of a new era for SLI—one of global responsibility, with WASLI promoting unity, solidarity, and goodwill among signed language interpreters (Aquiline 2006). In particular, WASLI will provide support where SLI is emerging as a developing profession, for example, in African nations (Akach 2006, Mweri 2006), and the former Soviet Union (Ojala-Signell and Komorova 2006).

Given the changing nature of the deaf community, users' expectations of signed language interpreters may well change to reflect the preferences of the deaf community. Thus ethical codes, standards of practice, and educational requirements may also change. We may also expect to see more deaf interpreter practitioners, more international collaboration among SLI scholars (see Shaw 2006), more joint research with spoken language interpreter-researchers, building on recent collaborative efforts (Napier, Rohan, and Slatyer 2007, Shaw et al. 2004, Slatyer and Napier 2008), and greater opportunities to train spoken and signed language interpreters together.<sup>7</sup>

One thing is certain: given the rapid expansion of SLI research over the last decade, the body of research will continue to grow and inform our teaching and practice. Aspects of the SLI profession will continue to emerge and there will continue to be opportunities for ground-breaking research and theoretical discussion, which will open up further dialogue between spoken and signed language interpreters and translators.

## Further reading and relevant resources

Neumann Solow's early textbook (1981) is a classic text that provides insight into the beginnings of the SLI profession. She updated it in 2000 to reflect changes in philosophical approaches and practices. Stewart et al. (1998) and Napier et al. (2006) are textbooks that provide detailed overviews of contemporary notions of SLI, giving detailed explorations of the linguistic, cultural, educational, and political factors that influence the practice of SLI. Mindess's (1999) much-cited book explores the cultural behaviours embedded in the deaf community that signed language interpreters need to take into account, while Janzen's (2005) volume draws together leading scholars in the SLI field to discuss various contemporary issues. All of these books are easy and stimulating to read. Essential research-based reading includes Brennan and Brown (2004), Roy (2000b), and Metzger (1999), with insightful discussions of the role of the signed language interpreter. For up-to-date research publications on SLI, the journal/book series *The Sign Language Translator and Interpreter*, published by St Jerome, is an excellent reference.

Search engines will lead to thousands of websites about SLI, covering service providers, resource pages, professional associations, and research projects. A list follows of key sites that provide comprehensive information on SLI, with links to many other relevant sites:

World Association of Sign Language Interpreters: <http://www.wasli.org/>

European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters: <http://www.efslsi.org/>

Conference of Interpreter Trainers: <http://www.cit-asl.org/>

IJIE Discover interpreting: <http://www.discoverinterpreting.com/>

## Notes:

(1) Current President of the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI).

(2) For expediency, throughout the rest of the chapter the acronym SLI will be used to represent 'signed language interpreting' as a concept or profession. Reference to 'signed language interpreters' will be made in full.

(3) See <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=284>

(4) See <http://www.efslsi.org/efslsi/history/>

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(5) For an historical overview of the development of the training and accreditation in the USA, UK and Australia, see Napier (2004b). Some changes have been made in each country since 2004, and information can be found through the respective websites of the RID, ASLI, and ASLIA.

(6) See <http://www.cit-asl.org/journal.html>

(7) For example, see the new Master of T&I Pedagogy at Macquarie University in Sydney, which is open to both spoken and signed language interpreter and translator educators, and is taught by a combined team of spoken and signed language interpreter practitioners, educators, and researchers.

### **Jemina Napier**

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## Oxford Handbooks Online

### **Spoken Word to Written Text: Subtitling**

Roger Hillman

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*Edited by Kirsten Malmkjær and Kevin Windle*

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#### **[–] Abstract and Keywords**

This article describes the history of the development of subtitling, from the era of silent movies to its recent development. Subtitles mainly convey dialogue. Not completely congruent with dialogue, subtitles can also apply to other forms of information within the frame e.g. graffiti or else lyrics present on the soundtrack. Among recent developments, subtitling (including intralingual subtitling) for the deaf and hearing impaired has generated considerable momentum as an ethical issue. Transnational tendencies have created new issues for subtitling and in particular for dubbing. The technical aspects of subtitling include screenspace, speed of dialogue; transfer to written language of a full speech act, and dubbing. Outside one's linguistic comfort zones, everyone is at the mercy of subtitles. Their position of power is that of a simultaneous interpreter, their technical structures more confining, and their equal responsibility towards both cultures.

Keywords: subtitling, silent movies, dubbing, screenspace, speed of dialogue, linguistic comfort zones

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Subtitling is a form of cultural ventriloquism, and the focus must remain on the puppet, not the puppeteer.

(Henri Béhar, quoted in Egoyan and Balfour 2004: 85)

#### **25.1 Historical overview**

##### **25.1.1 Intertitles in silent cinema; the advent of sound**

Subtitles mainly convey dialogue. They seek to render an SL in a TL, as a modified translation, the modification being determined by the constraints examined below. Not completely congruent with dialogue, subtitles can also apply to other information within the frame (e.g. shop signs or graffiti) or else present on the soundtrack (song lyrics; railway station announcements).

'Silent' cinema refers to the era extending roughly from the Lumière Brothers' pioneering screening of 1895 up to the threshold of the sound era with *The Jazz Singer* (1927). Through the presence of music, films never were 'silent', but they were largely devoid of sound effects and spoken dialogue. The absence of the latter obviated any standard need for translation. Lipreading could have deciphered some verbal exchanges. More melodramatic acting conventions conveyed much information through body language. 'Though introduced as early as 1907' (Egoyan and Balfour 2004: 22), subtitling only became prominent in film history once figures on the screen began to talk audibly. Other conventions were also in operation, such as the Japanese *benshi* tradition of a narrator-figure positioned near the stage/screen, whose function combined voicing characters with a gloss on the screen action. The latter narrative phenomenon was a kind of 'live' forerunner of DVD commentary tracks.

Crucial information could be reinforced by intertitles, whose script alone occupied the frame, i.e. neither

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complementing nor competing with images. Never more than a sporadic interruption to the succession of images (and in Murnau's *The Last Laugh*, 1924, virtually absent), this process lent itself easily to translation into a different language. The film frames occupied, say, by Swedish intertitles could easily be replaced by matching English titles. Just as early cinema is in no sense to be regarded as a primitive version of later films employing technical advances, intertitles were not just the precursors of subtitles. For a start, in filling the screen they may have interrupted the visual flow of the narrative, but at least they avoided the problem of dual channels of information, of the viewer's eye and ear 'reading' the subtitles and simultaneously processing the information emanating from the upper screenspace for the duration of the subtitle. Silent cinema conventions such as 'masking' the screen, or irising (reduction of an image to a pinpoint size, or else expanding it from a pinpoint to full screen size), were capable of making the screen itself dynamic in ways we have lost touch with. This applies also to intertitles. In Murnau's *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927), a somewhat weak married man, living in the country, becomes the object of desire of a caricatured flapper from the city. In a scene by the marshes,<sup>1</sup> she refers to his wife in a question rendered by an intertitle: 'Couldn't she be ... drowned?' Not only does this match her evil expression, to which we alone are privy in the preceding shot (his back is to us; she clutches him tight and speaks, as it were, to us over his shoulder), but the very intertitle itself takes on movement, with the word 'drowned' sagging in the middle, as if the letters themselves were subsiding to match their content. This striking play with calligraphy is in turn superimposed on a shot of a body being thrown over the side of a boat, the concrete image providing a match-shot between the verbalization of dark desire and the mind's eye fulfilling that wish. Like much else in silent cinema, such potential went underground for many decades; more recent gimmicks, such as positioning subtitles for a dialogue between the mouths of the speakers, are clearly a by-product of comic strip speech-bubbles rather than a comparable innovative use of screen space.

In 1920s Britain, debates around this historical stage prior to subtitling addressed issues such as the following:

Did captions and intertitles represent the intrusion of the literary into what should be an essentially pictorial realm [...] or were they a valuable authorial signature in a medium otherwise lacking the markers of the individual creative consciousness? Were they to be understood as speech or as writing? (Marcus 2007: 290)

The second part of authorial signature no longer applied to subtitles—*auteurs* were recognized by other signatures and gestures—but the other issues remain relevant.

Because languages reflected national borders, the advent of sound in the late 1920s meant that cinema was no longer a 'global' language, able to rely on the degree of universality inherent in all but the most culturally specific images. Rural peasants of far-flung countries laughed in the same places as Europeans in Chaplin films,<sup>2</sup> and this initially global aspect of cinema had a strong utopian dimension. Chaplin himself resisted sound strenuously, till well into the 1930s, and then made one of the most damning indictments of ideological speech with his Hitler parodies in *The Great Dictator* (1940).<sup>3</sup> Alongside subtitles, multi-language versions of films were made in 1930s Europe, generally featuring a fresh cast with fresh linguistic skills on the same film set. The Berlin-based journal *Film-Kurier* of 20 September 1930 reported an annual production of ninety feature and fifty short films in thirteen languages at the Paramount studios at Joinville, near Paris (Distelmeyer 2006: 25–6). At one level a historical dead end (though resurrected with dual historical timeframe in Fernando Trueba's entertaining *La niña de tus ojos* (*The Girl of Your Dreams*, 1998)), the transnational production strategies of multi-language versions were not entirely remote from Brussels funding of film ventures in the EU of the 21st century. As one alternative to subtitling, its synthesis of nationalities was a different vision from that of silent cinema's internationalism. Regarding multi-language versions, Jan Distelmeyer writes of German producer Erich Pommer's 'idea of a "Film-Europa", characterized by its free exchange of personnel, content and techniques and therefore able to compete with Hollywood' (Distelmeyer 2006: 11).

### 25.1.2 Recent developments

Nonetheless, the two enduring methods for communicating foreign languages proved to be dubbing (see Chapter 26) and subtitling. Both were long resisted in the USA, but recently some inroads have been made. The events of 11 September 2001 'made everyone aware of what was once an innovation: [...] running subtitles [...] beneath the image on the screen, often bearing no discernible relation to it' (Thomas 2007: 69). But more generally, subtitling has gained far greater visibility in the last decade or two thanks to an increasingly global distribution of audiovisual

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products, and in particular to the inbuilt space on DVDs allowing for a number of channels with subtitles in different languages. ‘Prior to the advent of cable, it was almost impossible to watch a subtitled, i.e. foreign, film on U.S. TV’ (Thomas 2007: 69). But in Europe too, DVD technology provides a challenge to dubbing, even in some countries which normally opt for dubbing. ‘Pressure groups in countries such as Germany, the UK and Italy have managed to get many foreign films marketed in their countries with two different tracks of interlingual subtitles: one for the hearing population and a second one that addresses the needs of the deaf’ (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 18). It is to be hoped that the converse will apply more frequently, since all but the most commercially successful films made in Germany, for one, remain a linguistic closed shop, with no facility for English subtitles. That in turn (see 25.1.2.2) creates a different order of communication problem in transcultural films. In one spectacular case, a karaoke equivalent of subtitling has emerged.

a massive fandom [...] around Japanese animation (*anime*) throughout the world. [...] Scripts are posted on internet newsgroups and circulated among clubs and individuals. Fan hackers write software [...] that enables them to take the subtitling apparatus into their own hands. Groups collaborate on not-for-profit subtitled versions of their favorite *anime*. (Nornes 1999: 31)

### 25.1.2.1 Subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing

Subtitling (including intralingual subtitling) for the deaf and hearing impaired has generated considerable momentum as an ethical issue. This group has been gaining belated recognition, at least among European media. The ‘BBC [...] pledged to broadcast 100% of their programming with subtitles for the deaf and hard-of-hearing by 2008’ (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 15). The technical possibility of closed subtitles, captioning, has complemented this social advance, making possible subtitles visible only to those with a special decoding device, and hence separate channels tailor-made for different interest groups. This nuancing of a target audience for subtitles in turn makes possible features distinctive to the smaller group, which would distract the larger. Colour is a prime example: ‘Most teletext subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing tends to rely on the use of different colours to identify the various characters that take part in the programme and to add emphasis to key words and expressions’ (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 130). The fact that hearing viewers have no trouble with such information reinforces the importance of the auditory channel, a crucial adjunct to the visuals themselves. Films stepping outside this basic assumption are all the more distinctive, such as the hearing- and speech-impaired parents in Caroline Link’s *Jenseits der Stille* (*Beyond Silence*, 1996), or a scene in *Immortal Beloved* (1994). Central to the most interesting scene in the latter, otherwise unexceptional film, is acoustic point of view (note the visually dominant language for auditory phenomena). Applause at the end of the premiere of Beethoven’s final symphony is shot from both the visual and the acoustic point of view of the conductor, namely the composer himself. His total reliance on his inner ear is conveyed by the mismatch between silence and an audience engaged in wild applause. Briefly we enter the world of those to whom this section refers, without even the orientation of subtitles.

### 25.1.2.2 Transnational cinema

Transnational tendencies have already meant that there are no longer discrete national cinema movements in the old sense. This situation creates new issues for subtitling and in particular for dubbing. Films by the Turkish-German director Fatih Akin may feature Turkish, German, and English. In *Gegen die Wand* (*Head On*, 2004), for instance, the lead roles, both German citizens of Turkish background, look Turkish but speak German with each other, and Turkish to friends. In a scene in Istanbul, the male lead tries to convince his wife’s female friend to divulge her whereabouts. The friend speaks no German, while his own Turkish is no longer intact, and he strategically resorts to a heavily accented English, as neutral ground in the struggle which is weighted against him so long as he speaks in Turkish.

In Thomas Arslan’s *Der schöne Tag* (*A Fine Day*, 2001), a female lead looks Turkish, but has such an outstanding grasp of French and German that her job is to dub foreign films for German viewers—we see her working on Eric Rohmer’s *Conte d’Été* (*A Summer’s Tale*, 1996). Leaving her flat with its computer, answering machine, and coffee cups, she visits her mother in a different Berlin suburb, declining her offer of samovar tea, and in the four walls of the mother’s kitchen they conduct a conversation with the mother speaking exclusively Turkish and the daughter exclusively German, neither needing any clarification of the other’s terms. In such examples, the ventriloquism of national identity is all but complete, with daughter embodying a German-based internationalism and mother a geographically displaced ghettoism. In the daughter’s case, cultural divisions are stronger within the family than

beyond it.

Still more complex at the level of subtitling is Akin's film *Solino* (2002), where the director traces the Italian wave of guestworkers to Germany, historically preceding the Turkish phenomenon. Realistically, members of the Italian-born family speak Italian before emigrating from their village, and only gradually acquire German. In this new linguistic mix, a dubbed version, such as the original German release,<sup>4</sup> is contrary to all narrative logic. Throughout the transition across cultures and languages, the family members implausibly 'speak' German dubbed over their Italian lip movements, an intrusion that undermines the whole thematic thrust of the film. At one point the wife even 'says', in perfect German: 'Wir können nicht verstehen, was die Leute sagen!' ('We cannot understand what people are saying'). The double remove of English subtitles at least keeps intact the play with language levels, provided one can hear where Italian stops and German begins. Such issues are of growing importance with the spread of transcultural films, and the breakdown of national cinema boundaries, which really were the assumption for dubbing.

## 25.2 Technical aspects

### 25.2.1 Screenspace; speed of dialogue; transfer to written language of a full speech act

Subtitles do not occupy the bottom strip of screenspace in all traditions. Japanese characters are not necessarily positioned beneath the image, but often to the side of the picture.

There are technical limits to the number of characters (37–39) per line, and the number of lines (normally two), with an optimal upper time of six seconds for processing the information (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 89). These limits are imposed by the need to minimize intrusion on the visual image, and by reading rates, bearing in mind that these lag behind comprehension of speech via listening. Subtitles of course encumber the screen. The time it takes to read them prevents us from watching the visuals properly, and can seriously distract from the visuals. In standard film interpretation a hierarchy of the senses is in operation, with the visual having clear primacy, so that such schizophrenia of the senses, and a division within the visual area, can create irritation. Add to that the imperialism of Hollywood as film industry, and hitherto the linguistic imperialism of English, and the US dislike of subtitles is readily understood. But also some of my Australian film students, for instance, are simply not used to having to engage in this extra work in 'reading' a film, despite one public channel (SBS) providing its own subtitles for a vast range of world cinema.<sup>5</sup> This level of technical problem is of a quite different order from, say, translating poetry. Subtitlers are rarely faced with language complexities of that magnitude, but with problems arising from the medium and sometimes determined by the subtitling process, e.g. using 'English as a pivot language': 'A Japanese, Iranian or Hungarian film may well be translated into Italian, Spanish or Portuguese from an English translation of the film rather than the original soundtrack' (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 32).

Film operates with different channels of competing information, and of these, subtitles normally only convey dialogue. These channels are: (a) the auditory—often the lyrics of a song/aria have particular importance, alluding to the parallel dramatic situation of an opera plot or some other narrative context; (b) the visual—graffiti, newspaper headlines, signage in general,<sup>6</sup> all supplementing or contending with dialogue, the primary 'object' for subtitling.

Generally, subtitles reduce the amount actually conveyed, but they can reduce 'redundancy' in the dialogue (which in turn can distort character presentation). A subtitle transfers a full speech act to written language only, a speech act originally supplemented by visible and audible gestures, body mannerisms, etc. Subtitling the verbal reticence of certain stock loners, not least in Westerns, is indistinguishable (as printed script) from that of garrulous figures: 'The extra formality of the written subtitle tends to dictate against the reproduction of very informal speech patterns' (Munday 2001: 104). Traditionally, on the other hand, fewer aspects of idiolect have been effaced by subtitling than by dubbing. But almost a decade ago Karamitroglou (1999) could signal that the impact of digitalization on revoicing had already achieved 'tone and pitch that are almost identical to those of the original actors'.

To summarize the ground covered so far, subtitling encompasses three basic perspectives (Lomheim 1999:190):

- the relationship between the spoken and the written language;

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- the relationship between the foreign language and the target language;
- the relationship between complete and partial translation.

The first two are primarily linguistic phenomena, while the third is governed less by issues innate to translation (some languages being ‘longer’) than by the technical given that subtitles will normally compress, and never overall expand, the original script. Especially in Europe, some actors are versatile enough to appear in different language roles. But sometimes there can be a bizarre mix of spoken and written registers, e.g. Jean Seberg’s fluent but often uncompromisingly American-accented French in Godard’s *À bout de souffle* (*Breathless*, 1960), or Dennis Hopper’s reluctant but highly idiomatic German in Wenders’ *Der amerikanische Freund* (*The American Friend*, 1977): ‘Mein Deutsch ist sauschlecht’. (And while the sentence form belies its own content, his uncompromisingly American accent reinforces it.) This also makes a particular point about linguistic and cultural imperialism, especially when his counterpart, Bruno Ganz, playing a German art dealer, speaks very good English.

With subtitles, what is at stake goes beyond words in a written text. Already ‘a mix of speech and writing in the sense that they represent oral utterances in discrete written captions with the transitoriness of speech’, they are processed not by normal reading, a ‘pure’ decoding of written language, but by a ‘combination of subtitle and film characteristics’ (de Linde and Kay 1999: 26, 75). The editing of the visuals forces translations into a certain timespace, but a match is also necessary between the subtitle and other elements of the soundtrack.

There might be a visual or an acoustic pun in a subtitle. Nornes (1999: 20) points out how ‘the reader cannot stop and dwell on an interesting line; as the reader scans the text, the machine instantly obliterates it’. It is small wonder, then, that most translations reduce the original text. Many German cinemas now show (subtitled) original language films, and indicate this in newspaper advertisements. This is a tendency that can only expand in the new Europe. The absence of subtitles can preserve puns that remain hidden to all but linguistic insiders. I recall seeing a short German film of indeterminate tone; there really was little time for an audience to establish whether this was a spoof, or serious. The giveaway came only with the end credits, where the cast featured a certain Rainer Unsinn ('Rainer' is a standard male Christian name, 'Unsinn' a rather less likely surname; but 'reiner Unsinn', pronounced exactly the same, means 'pure nonsense' in German). In this sense, end credits are yet to come into their own with their guaranteed off-limits status vis-à-vis subtitles. In Akin's *Auf der anderen Seite* (*Edge of Heaven*, 2007), a Turkish-German novel (not translated into English at the time of the film's release) which a son has given his father in the course of the film is acknowledged with full publishing details, and Akin inserts a recommendation to viewers to read it!

### **25.2.2 Subtitling vs. dubbing (plus interpreting; simultaneous translation)**

With fiction films, some bizarre combinations arise as a result of distribution issues. We have the phenomenon of German films made in English, dubbed into German for local audiences, requiring retranslation back to English once shown abroad—examples are certain prints of Herzog’s *Aguirre* (1972) or Fassbinder’s *Lili Marleen* (1981). We then finish up with subtitles synched with the lip movements of the speaker but not with the sounds we actually hear—a truly unnerving combination.

Written subtitles have a greater degree of abstraction than dubbing (just as black and white cinematography has the same quality in relation to colour film). The written word is more indeterminate, whereas any speech act involves pitch, timbre, and often regional connotations as well (e.g. Visconti’s *La terra trema*, 1948). The wrong words can be just as offputting as the wrong voice, but the latter is totally offputting—seeing quintessentially British actors like Sir Alec Guinness or Peter Sellers dubbed into German on German TV is an unforgettable experience, an alienation effect, but hardly in Brecht’s sense.

### **25.3 Documentary, and the ethics of subtitling**

Up till the 1970s ethnographic films had a voice-over commentary—i.e. people who were subjects of the film were spoken about, but were rarely allowed to speak for themselves. The introduction of subtitling to ethnographic films gave these subjects—linguistically, objects—an equal right to be heard, comparable perhaps to the new voice lent to social classes by Italian Neorealism just after World War II. Subtitles express a narrative stance; they can also express an ethical stance.

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Subtitles are even more basic to ethnographic films, where the subjects' language is likely to be incomprehensible to virtually a whole audience outside the filmed community itself. The ethical dimensions of subtitles vis-à-vis voice-over are certainly central to the non-interventionist cinema of David MacDougall. This ethical aspect is closely bound up with the performative element of speech, once effaced, now respected. In a chapter aptly titled 'The Great Dance', Brenda Longfellow describes original sound as allowing

for the representation of the ethnographic subject, not simply as a category type or mute cipher in a kinship/tribal structure, but as an individuated personality with a rich inner life, humour, and intelligence. Suddenly cultures could be represented, not simply as homogenized collective entities—'The Nuer', 'The Balinese', etc.—but as sites of internal diversity, dialogical encounters, and competing interpretations.  
(Egoyan and Balfour 2004: 341)

On another technical issue, MacDougall comments (1999: 168): 'In fiction, dialogue is usually coherent, and lines of dialogue rarely overlap. In documentary, this is rarely the case. Often several people speak at once, and several topics are discussed intermittently.' Viewed this way, documentary has a strong kinship with opera, or perhaps more specifically to a *Babel* of recitatives. It certainly presents still more probing challenges to subtitling than do most feature films.

### 25.4 The narrative stakes of subtitling decisions

Beyond semantic and technical issues of subtitling, the true focus of the process—the overriding constant which unites all viewers of whatever language background—remains the particular film narrative.

#### 25.4.1 Titles

Titles are of course not distinctive to films, but the industry's commercial stakes lend them particular importance. Some sense of the film narrative, which can help determine whether a viewer watches a film or not, starts with the film title. Some film titles include ultimately untranslatable puns, before we even get to the problems of subtitling dialogue. Godard's slant on the musical as a genre is *Une femme est une femme* (1961), a film whose title remains cryptic till the very last sequence, in which the main characters indulge in some pillow talk that is refracted through Godard's simultaneous satire of and homage to Hollywood. 'Tu es infâme' (lit. 'You are infamous'), claims he, whereupon she responds: 'non, je ne suis pas infâme, je suis une femme' ('No, I am a woman').<sup>7</sup> Via the preposterous pun 'infâme', theoretically comprehensible as the linguistically impossible form 'un femme', a male woman, the film evaporates on a playful note, which only retrospectively lends meaning to the title.

Some German titles for English or US films are definite improvements, thanks to possibilities that the German language does not share with English. For instance, the Jill Clayburgh movie *An Unmarried Woman* (1978), which I have never seen, always suggested to me a single woman till I saw the title of the German version, *Eine entheiratete Frau*. This adjective conveys perfectly that the title figure was once married, but is no longer, either an 'unmarried' or even a 'demarried' woman (almost as a new census category, replacing the unsatisfactory 'divorcee', 'single', or 'currently (un)married'). Though nonexistent to my knowledge, the adjective is comprehensible via the standard sense of the prefix 'ent-', namely to undo the action expressed by the main verb. Similarly the 1967 hit *The Graduate* was much more suggestive in German, namely *Die Reifeprüfung*. Besides conveying the notion of Matura, one's final school exam, it already prefigures the test of sexual maturity or prowess to which Dustin Hoffman will be subjected once he encounters Anne Bancroft. This capacity of language is one that creative subtitles<sup>8</sup> may seize upon, actually enhancing the original with wordplays which convey, but are not exhausted by, the original. But linguistic and cultural mediation can be centrifugal forces. The female Italian translator in Tarkovsky's *Nostalghia* (1983) even says her translations improve on the original. While she is not viewed as a positive figure, her stance is not to be taken as a professional sell-out, in a film which is all about translation at many levels, across borders between countries, art forms, mind and body, dream and reality, present and past, spirituality and sensuality, sanity and insanity.

A playful gloss (and no doubt critique of his own youthful excesses) comes early in an Almodóvar film, whose title emerges from the dialogue discussed here. A son and mother sit down to watch Mankiewicz's *All About Eve* (1950), whose title is intoned by the Spanish dubber as 'Eva Al Desnudo'.<sup>9</sup> 'They always change the title,' laments

the son. His own suggestion, 'Todo sobre Eva', sounds strange to his mother in Spanish, but he nonetheless starts writing it on his notepad. The camera then draws back from an obscured close-up of his script, to show mother and son, with the title of the film we are watching now situated centre-screen, directly between them, first in Spanish (*Todo Sobre mi Madre*) and then in English (*All About my Mother*). This dispenses with the need for a subtitle, as well as showing the hand of the director, pre-empting any attempt to lend spice to his film via subtitling or dubbing into English.

### 25.4.2 Cultural specificity plus pun

All categories in this subheading present a major challenge for subtitling—their combination is perhaps a touchstone of its possibilities and limitations. Humour itself 'is a cultural as much as a linguistic issue' (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 222), and a pun is a very particular form of humour, on both counts. In the Oscar-winning *Das Leben der Anderen* (*The Lives of Others*, 2006), there is a scene where both Stasi officers eat at a table shared by workers. Grubitz, the upwardly mobile official, tells his own political joke: 'Was ist der Unterschied zwischen Erich Honecker und 'nem Telefon?' ('What's the difference between Honecker and a telephone?'). The answer, 'Keiner! Aufhängen! Neu wählen!' is rendered as 'None at all. Hang up, try again!'<sup>10</sup> This may be as close as a subtitle can get, and yet it only retains one of the pun's two levels. The infinitive commands 'Aufhängen! Neu wählen!' could in German feasibly relate to a human or an object. At the human level, they convey 'Hang/string (him) up! Have a new election! (literally: 'Choose again')', but the bracketed 'him' is crucial, for 'hang up' by itself can really only relate to a phone receiver. In relation to a phone, the literal meaning of the command is sufficient, with 'Choose again' in this context unambiguously meaning 'Dial another number'.

But via the reduction of this pun, a crucial narrative link is also missing. That alone does violence to the self-reflexivity of the film, whose whole narrative is based on the doublespeak, the coded language, of the German Democratic Republic. The playwright Jerske does subsequently hang himself, as the tip of the iceberg of GDR suicide rates, and also in a sense as a scapegoat for the real culprit, the one who should hang himself (Honecker, as representative of a dysfunctional state, as foreshadowed even by his faithful henchman in the canteen scene). The latter target is suggested with the film's fabrication of a *Spiegel* cover story, showing the iconic hammer and sickle plus a noose. That the film's central image/wordplay should be couched in the form of a joke (of questionable tone), fully comprehensible only to linguistic insiders, is a culturally specific touch beyond the film's more general appeal to a much wider audience. It is on a par with the barely audible channel of communication in the final scene of Fassbinder's *Marriage of Maria Braun* (see 25.4.3).

One of the workers, spurred on by Grubitz, has told his own joke first. An apparent complicity is created through shared humour (Grubitz's joke is in fact by far the riskier, but he holds the reins). The original joker is not sighted again till the end of the film, where he is steaming open envelopes in an underground office, a sure sign of his disgrace. This example illustrates not just the difficulty of providing double meanings simultaneously. In this case it could be argued that 'Aufhängen' fuses the film's central strands—(a) the whole suicide debate, the playwright Dreyman's compromising Western publication about it, his lover Christa's suicide, the *Spiegel* cover featuring a noose, and (b) the phone motif, Wiesler (the Stasi officer who changes his spots) tapping Dreyman's conversations, communication being monitored. (The phone is nonetheless the instrument for what seems to be Wiesler's 'conversion', listening to Dreyman playing the *Sonate für den guten Menschen*.)

A subtitling issue thus becomes crucial for understanding the full richness and resonances of the film narrative, not just of an isolated pun. This particular example is still more telling. The film was directed by a German not from the East, and was released when the German Democratic Republic had not existed for a decade and a half. The process of mediating the culture of the world of this film to the film itself effectively involves one whole remove. At the linguistic level, a subtitler into English is operating with a single language remove, the differences between East and West German usage being insignificant in this context, except for their ideological strata. For such a subtitler, do the cultural and linguistic removes compound each other, i.e. is this the standard situation of being twice removed from the source text? The subtitler's cultural remove is qualitatively different from, yet comparable to, that of the director. Is then the triad of source material (largely the GDR in 1984), source text (the film), and target language (not German, but sharing with both former German states a world now free of Cold War boundaries) a different challenge again for subtitling, and translation in general, one requiring a different equation of linguistic and cultural mediation?

### 25.4.3 Subtitling when there are two channels of information

The final section of Fassbinder's *Die Ehe der Maria Braun* (*The Marriage of Maria Braun*, 1979) crowns its virtuosic soundtrack, while also unbalancing it when the film is screened outside German-speaking countries. After years of separation, the two main leads are united in domestic space, which consumes their long-delayed desire. He turns on the radio, while she fusses about inconsequentially. He listens to the last seven minutes or so of a direct broadcast of the final of the 1954 World Cup, in which the soccer underdogs Germany encountered the hot favourites Hungary. In accordance with all conventions, and really as the only viable possibility, subtitles are largely accorded to the banal dialogue of the central figures. Given its very low level of audibility, what they say becomes more comprehensible in the subtitles than it is for a German audience. What is missed, and could only be conveyed by the acoustic/subtitling equivalent of a split-screen technique (short of subtitling one track and dubbing the other), is where the action really lies, namely in the increasingly loud and hysterical broadcast. The cleft soundtrack—radio voice vs. lovers' voices—is a bulwark against Hollywood, inasmuch as there is an acoustic underbelly to the overblown but subtitled melodrama of the film. It is a haven for linguistic insiders, aware of the national context dwarfing the lovers. And aware of its historical underpinnings—the fanatical voice intoning 'Deutschland ist Weltmeister' (literally: 'Germany is master of the world')<sup>11</sup> remains true to context, with 'championship' being 'Weltmeisterschaft' in German. But the film's whole message of Adenauer's Germany being a false dawn is wonderfully reinforced by the voice modulation belonging to a Nuremberg rally rather than a Berne stadium, and by the historical baggage of 'Weltmeister' in a film whose story concludes just nine years after the end of the war.

A comparable challenge—sections featuring a mix of Czech and Russian in the Czech film *Kolya* (1996)—ultimately appeared in the US video release with the Russian in italics and the Czech in roman script.<sup>12</sup> But in Fassbinder's film, the mounting crescendo of the radio and in places its overload of rapidly delivered, excited language exclude such an elegant solution.<sup>13</sup> The narrative distortion is akin to Claire Denis's vain attempts to have the subtitlers of her film *Vendredi soir* (2002) avoid complete comprehension of a conversation held inside a café, but shot from outside it and barely audible (Egoyan and Balfour 2004: 26). In the euphoric wake of German unification, the dramatist Tankred Dorst reminded an audience that one's national identity is largely determined by culture, and that culture can be used as a means not of understanding but of exclusion.<sup>14</sup> The culture of subtitles has a similar double edge. The Fassbinder example shows that the global outreach of subtitling as an institution is modified by who is included and who is excluded.

### 25.4.4 The interpretative power of subtitling

Alain Resnais's cult film *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959) concerns a French woman and her Japanese lover, whose dialogues throughout are in French. Their encounter pierces emotional layers she had suppressed, and recalls her unspeakable affair with an occupying German soldier, an act of betrayal for which her hair was shorn. At different stages she addresses the Japanese man as if he were a medium to this earlier world. In a scene towards the end of the film she waits on a bench at Hiroshima railway station, immersed in her own thoughts, and oblivious to an old Japanese woman. When her Japanese lover joins them, the old woman asks him something. It is the first significant occasion in the film when we hear him speak his own language. The subtitled version I worked with for years rendered the dialogue as: '(She:) Is she married?—(He:) No ...' This struck me as the height of Resnais's devilish cleverness. The clipped delivery of 'lyā' ('no') brought it into even greater proximity with the German for 'yes', to which my ears were attuned, a little mirage of recognition midst otherwise alien sounds. And the fusion between the erstwhile German lover and the present-day Japanese figure seemed perfect: it was as if the latter had even briefly slipped inside the linguistic mantle of the former. Students seemed less impressed by this breathtaking narrative condensation, but it captivated me till I finally turned to a different set of subtitles, where the question asked was quite different: 'Is she ill?—No ...' Japanese-speaking colleagues<sup>15</sup> assured me the latter was the accurate rendition of 'Go-byooki nan desu ka?—lyā ...', shattering my hermeneutic foundations. 'Ill' is not even the immediate sense of the visuals—the French woman looks preoccupied, yes, but hardly sick—and I had so wanted that irresistible but wholly specious interpretation ...

Outside our linguistic comfort zones, we are at the mercy of subtitles. Beyond the more standard issues of translation that they raise, their position of power is that of a simultaneous interpreter, their technical strictures more confining, and their responsibility towards both cultures at least equal.

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## Further reading and relevant resources

Unlike more general translation issues, subtitling appeared late on the academic radar and is now generating considerable momentum. In a substantial work whose description is just to hand—476 pages, accompanied by a CD—Nagel et al. (2009) appears to cover some of the ground treated here. Otherwise, particularly helpful titles are those listed in the References by Díaz Cintas and Remael, Egoyan and Balfour, and MacDougall, while the article by Nornes may now be contextualized within his broader study (Nornes 2007).

### Notes:

- (1) At the time of writing this sequence can be viewed on YouTube at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YTQwqRufs&feature=related>.
- (2) The Warner DVD of *Modern Times* includes 'a 1967 short *For the First Time*, documenting what happens when the people of the remote Baracoa mountains in Cuba see their first ever movie, *Modern Times*'.
- (3) A probing analysis of translation issues in this film can be found in Cronin (2009: 63–72).
- (4) Distributed by X-Verleih.
- (5) The subtitling unit at SBS in Sydney is 'one of the largest of its kind in the world and the recent recipient of an award from the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators for Outstanding Contribution to the Translation and Interpreting Industry' (Stubblings 2008: 124).
- (6) In critical cases this has to be subtitled for full sense to emerge. There is a scene in Louis Malle's *Au revoir les enfants* (1987) where a school class of boys is about to enter public baths; one of them berates a figure who is leaving, his pace making the Star of David on his coat less than conspicuous. A subtitle spells out a sign at the entrance: 'Jews not allowed'.
- (7) The SBS (Australia) subtitles: 'Angela, you're a fallen angel.'/'No, I'm not a fallen Angela ...'
- (8) For further examples, see Bravo (2004: 227–8).
- (9) *Exposing Eve* would be the comparably ambiguous English equivalent.
- (10) The script referred to is *Das Leben der Anderen: Filmbuch von Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch, 2007), 62. The subtitles are taken from the 2007 DVD from Hopscotch Entertainment: Surrey Hills, NSW.
- (11) Of the (historical) radio broadcast, this line alone is translated on the Video Classics version, for instance: 'Germany has won the world soccer championships.'
- (12) Communications of 8 and 11 April 2008 on the Slavic and East European Languages and Literatures list (a Slavists' chatline). Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007:126) report the same expedient for signalling Greek exchanges in the Australian film *Head On* (1998) in Spanish subtitles.
- (13) The Criterion Collection DVD does redress the balance somewhat, without defusing the thrust of comments here, directed to the video version. On the DVD, Adenauer's assurance (via a radio broadcast) that Germany will not rearm is alternately subtitled (in italics) with the dialogue of characters who ignore it. And a crucial line from the soccer broadcast is subtitled.
- (14) As reported in *Kulturchronik* 5 (1994), p. 6.
- (15) My thanks to them, especially to Peter Hendriks for providing the transcription of what is quoted.

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Transkulturalität: Türkisch-deutsche Konstellationen in Literatur und Film (Münster, 2007).



## Oxford Handbooks Online

### Translation for Dubbing and Voice-Over

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#### Abstract and Keywords

This article gives a brief history of film translation, and this is followed by some theoretical aspects of dubbing. It describes different types of synchrony and revoicing and discusses the practical aspects and the role of the translator. Translation has played an important part in making films accessible to wider audiences. The field of translation studies is mainly concerned with describing and explaining the process of translation, and establishing workable criteria. Finally, the article offers criticism of the practice, and some suggestions for improvement. Criticism of dubbed films is connected with the dischrony of the actor's lip movement with audible utterances. Different types of synchrony, such as lip synchrony, isosynchrony, kinetic synchrony, content synchrony, and character synchrony are closely linked. This article gives overviews of types of revoicing such as voice over, dubbing, narration, and interpreting. Recent developments have opened up technical possibilities that facilitate the dubbing process.

Keywords: film translation, dubbing, revoicing, translation studies, synchrony, dischrony

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#### 26.1 Introduction

Translation has always played an important part in making films accessible to wider audiences. Discussions on the topic go back many decades. In the 1930s Artaud wrote of 'Les souffrances du dubbing', and the Argentinean writer Borges described dubbing as 'a perverse artifice' (Yampolsky 1993). Some years later, Burgess (1980) rather dramatically compared dubbing to murder: '[It] is a craft; one can deplore the end while admiring the means.'

Dubbing has not been an obviously academic pursuit. Perhaps this is because it falls in a theoretical no man's land, straddling sociology, psychology, anthropology, linguistics and film studies. 'As far as the impact is concerned, there is no question that the exposure of dubbed films to the public far outstrips that of translated written material' (Whitman-Linsen 1992: 10). The interest in analysing dubbed products began in the early 1990s with a number of (mainly German) linguists writing on the topic (Herbst 1994, Maier 1997, Voigt 2002, Wehn 1996, Whitman-Linsen 1992). In recent years, some academics have turned to theory in search of new methods and methodologies that could cope with the polysemiotic system of translation for the screen.

Modern transport and communication have led to a growing number of speakers of more than one language. In 1991, Danan asked if dubbing would become a practice of the past. Almost two decades later, dubbing is still standard practice in some countries and there is even growth in markets associated with new media such as games.

This chapter will give a short history of film translation, followed by some theoretical aspects of dubbing. We will then turn to the different types of synchrony and revoicing before discussing the practical aspects and the role of

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the translator in the process. The conclusion will offer some criticism of the practice, and some suggestions for improvement.

## 26.2 A short history

In the early years of film production, movies were silent, but not mute. Music was played to drown the noisy projectors and actors spoke a dialogue moving their lips, although they were inaudible. When pantomime could no longer carry the narrative, the necessary text was provided as intertitles. These written words could easily be translated into other languages and re-inserted into the film. The real problems arose with the advent of the ‘talkies’. Experiments in recording sound began in 1901, when actors tried to mime to a pre-recorded disc. Many technical developments followed before reaching the level of optical soundtracks incorporated in a modern filmstrip (Brownlow 1968: 655–67).

Hollywood even experimented with the production of films in foreign languages. From 1929 to 1933, films were made in several languages using the same set but different actors. Not surprisingly, this method was very time-consuming and much too expensive. After many years of experimentation, two major types of translation for films prevailed: subtitling and dubbing.

There is a clear divide between dubbing and subtitling countries. Danan (1991) argues that the preference is not simply due to economic factors, but is closely linked to the cultural and linguistic identity of a nation. She explains that dubbing countries (France, Germany, Italy, and Spain) introduced quotas early on to protect their own industry against American imports, and that during some periods, their governments banned the showing of foreign language films. Dubbed films create the illusion that the actors speak the language of the audience, and the foreign elements can thereby be hidden. Danan (1991: 611) sees the dominance of dubbing in some countries as ‘a direct legacy of their fascist regimes’.

Smaller countries like Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Sweden, with their restricted home markets, adopted subtitling, as ‘an extreme form of source-oriented translation’. Here the original is not deleted, but supported by a written dialogue which is a constant reminder of ‘the foreignness of the film’ (Danan 1991: 613).

Both translation methods are now in use and the preference for one or the other, as well as the debate as to which is more suitable for the medium, divides the world into opposing groups. Luyken et al. (1991: 112–24) did several surveys taking into consideration age, education, social class, and viewers’ knowledge of foreign languages. In their view, the preference of the audience is mainly determined by familiarity and conditioning.

## 26.3 Theoretical aspects

Traditional translation theory of equivalence demands that the target text (TT) stay very close to the source text (ST) in all respects. It is therefore not fully applicable to the translation of films. Most theoretical concepts have been developed with literature as their main focus. Translation studies is mainly concerned with describing and explaining the process of translation, and establishing workable criteria. This however, does not suffice for screen translation, as the text—in the form of spoken dialogue together with visual and aural clues (soundtrack and music)—forms a larger entity.

### 26.3.1 Covert translation

According to House (1977/1981), dubbing is a type of ‘covert translation’, characterized by the fact that the target language (TL) culture accepts the verbal information as source language (SL) information. By applying what House calls a ‘cultural filter’, linguistic expressions of SL sociocultural norms are replaced by their equivalents in the TL culture. Thus the dubbed version conceals the fact that the film has a foreign origin and appears transformed as a new product. As Ascheid (1997) points out ‘like a Japanese game computer, a Taiwanese shirt, or a German car, products have been constructed to fit consumer desires in an international marketplace through the reduction of their cultural specificities’. A dubbed product functions like any international commodity and is simply consumed and enjoyed by the audience.

### 26.3.2 The phonetic approach

The first theoretical approach to dubbing that tried not only to describe but to develop a theory known as ‘visual phonetics’ was the study by Fodor (1976). His meticulous and detailed description of the production of every sound and the corresponding phonemes the translator should find to fit to the actor’s lips was pioneering work. Over time, however, the importance of lip synchrony has greatly diminished in favour of other types of synchrony, and Fodor’s desired matching of SL and TL sounds was never really feasible for both economic and practical reasons. As Rowe (1960: 118) put it: ‘The semantic partners of English in a foreign language are with perverse regularity phonetic enemies. GO will not work for VAIS, nor DEAD for MORTO, I for IO and so on ad infinitum. Many lip and mouth movements occur rarely or not at all in a foreign tongue.’

### 26.3.3 Audience design

‘Audience design’ after Bell (1984: 161–4) sees the role of the translator as twofold. The coherence of the dialogue on screen has to be maintained while, at the same time, the discourse that is directed at an unknown but imagined audience has to be clearly transmitted. In other words, an audience response (laughter) is much more important than literal fidelity to the ST. If there is no reaction by the audience, the translation has failed (Rowe 1960: 120).

### 26.3.4 The sociolinguistic approach

Hesse-Quack (1969) takes the view that cultures change through contact with other cultures. The different ‘symbolmilieus’ demand that the rendering encodes significant symbols of the SL culture into significant ones in the TL. This process, he continues, leads to changes of linguistic elements of individuality in the ST. The unique character of the ST will be replaced by a more standardized or stereotyped version in the TT.

### 26.3.5 The pragmatic approach

Both Luyken et al. (1991) and Herbst (1994) propose a pragmatic approach. Luyken et al. (1991: 162–3) suggest replacing sentence-for-sentence translation by a pragmatic, plot-oriented (rather than strictly semantic) translation. They point out that the SL text often contains lines that are either totally or partially irrelevant. They distinguish between ‘plot-carrying elements of meaning’ and ‘speech act or atmospheric elements of meaning’. This gives the translator (dialogue writer) more freedom for a ‘scene-by-scene’ approach, and permits work in a non-linear fashion in order to increase synchrony. While nothing must be lost in translation, the TL parts can be assembled in a different order from that of the SL text. Herbst (1994: 250) uses the term ‘versetzte Äquivalente’ (rearranged equivalents) and favours the idea of a newly created text rather than an exact reproduction of the SL text.

## 26.4 Recent developments and terminology

The publications above analyse written dialogue and its translation, but, as Chaume (2002) points out, the focus should be on this special kind of text with its ‘constructed speech’ and the visual—verbal cohesion. In recent years some academics have turned to the topic of audiovisual translation (Bartrina 2004, Chaume 2004a, Díaz Cintas 2004, Gambier 2006). They agree that a new theory is needed that embraces the specific demands of the polysemiotic system with its verbal and visual codes.

By audiovisual translation (AVT) we mean ‘that which we receive via two channels, the visual and the acoustic. Essential to understanding is the synchrony between verbal and non-verbal messages’ (Bartrina 2004: 157). Translators should be aware of the redundancy the interaction between words and image can create. Research on whether translators with knowledge of film studies and dialogue writing produce better-quality scripts than those without could give important clues for future education in the field.

Díaz Cintas (2004: 22) uses the term ‘polysystem’ ‘to refer to a group of semiotic systems that co-exist dynamically within a particular cultural sphere’. Just as the polysystem comprises different types of literature, it can be applied to AVT. It embraces different kinds of products (films, TV series, commercials, cartoons, soap operas, corporate videos, etc.) and analyses them as a ‘product in itself that is integrated in the target polysystem’.

Chaume (2004a: 17) attempts to bring together Translation Studies and Film Studies. He points out that the

language used in AV products is constructed to sound like authentic natural spoken language, using 'certain features that are characteristic of colloquial oral registers that endow a text with verisimilitude and liveliness'. In addition, Chaume lists a number of different non-linguistic codes (e.g. paralinguistic, musical, iconographic, photographic, and mobility codes) that AV translators have to know and understand, although they can manipulate only the linguistic code. Chaume comes to the conclusion that it is of great importance to bring together translation theory, discourse analysis, and film studies.

There has also been increased interest in rendering nonverbal narrative, also referred to as 'intersemiotic translation'. The interplay between verbal and nonverbal information is unique to AV scripts and marks them as an independent genre. There are three ways of transmitting nonverbal information to the audience: first, allow the audience to decode it themselves; secondly, provide verbal explanations or make reference to it in the TT; thirdly, disregard it completely. If a gesture does not have an equivalent in the TL the meaning has to be deduced from the context, as there is no possibility of adding footnotes. In the case of puns or jokes that are based on visual information, the translator must find a substitute, as literal translation would be meaningless (Chaume 1997: 320–25).

### 26.5 Types of synchrony

Criticism of dubbed films is usually connected with the dischrony of the actor's lip movement with audible utterances. This can pose problems, as 'the aesthetic effect may be destroyed, comprehension be impaired, or it might simply be as irritating as an unscratchable itch' (Fawcett 1997: 13). As mentioned earlier, complete harmony of matching SL and TL sounds is not realistic. Speech, however, involves more than mere movement of the mouth and there are different types of synchrony, all closely linked.

#### 26.5.1 Lip synchrony

Fodor (1976) described and named the various types of synchrony, but concentrated on phonetic synchrony. His idealistic proposal suggested that SL and TL sounds should match even when different camera angles were taken into account. From Fodor's precise mapping of articulation, only a few sounds are considered important. The most critical are the bi-labial consonants /b/, /p/, /m/, the labio-dentals /f/, /v/, and some open vowels. The English phonemes /ð/ and /θ/ have no equivalent in most other European languages and remain one of the main obstacles.

Lip synchrony is obviously the main concern in close-up and medium frontal camera shots. Fortunately for dubbing, actors are often seen under bad light, sideways, or even facing away from the camera. Only about 25 per cent of the material requires proper lip synchrony (Herbst 1994: 30). This liberates translators and dubbing writers from their constraints and allows them to insert words containing phonemes other than the SL ones. Hesitations, pauses, or stuttering in the SL version allow the dubbing writer to add more words in the TL if required.

#### 26.5.2 Isochrony

Perhaps the most important synchrony is not qualitative (or lip synchrony) but quantitative. The phenomenon of an actor closing his or her mouth while the voice continues is also referred to as dischrony. To an audience, the divergence of visually and acoustically perceived utterances is extremely distracting. Complete alignment of the visual movement and the aural perception is called isochrony. Whitman-Linsen also uses the terms 'syllable and gap synchrony', the former denoting the rhythm of syllables, the latter referring to the overall length of speech (Whitman-Linsen 1992: 29–33).

#### 26.5.3 Kinetic synchrony

An actor's delivery gives rhythm to syllables and emphasizes the important parts of speech. Nodding, raising of the eyebrows, or gestures coincide with the stress-bearing component of an utterance, which is also referred to as 'nucleus'. The interplay of the nucleus with the body movement plays an important role in the perception of speech (Luyken et al. 1991: 160).

However, facial expressions and the use of gestures are culture-dependent. The interplay of speech and gesture

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is an entity, and confusion can ensue when the two do not harmonize. Southern Europeans use their bodies much more than English or German people. If you match an Italian body with an English voice, words and gestures may jar and even become confusing.

Furthermore, word order in different languages can create a shift of emphasis. Verbs in German are often pushed to the end of a clause, while in English, French, or Italian the verb follows the subject more closely. In the translation, the nucleus will be in another part of the sentence and will therefore no longer coincide with the accompanying movement. Whitman-Linsen (1992: 36) gives the following example: In the utterance 'I've had enough!' the nucleus occurs at the end while in the translation into German: 'Jetzt reicht's mir aber!' the emphasis moves to the middle.

### 26.5.4 Content synchrony

Fodor (1976: 77) states that content synchrony is successful 'when semantic content of the SL and TL script versions match each other closely'. Whitman-Linsen (1992: 82) points out that content synchrony is achieved when all linguistic challenges the translator is confronted with have been solved. From this point of view, the TL text has to meet the same requirements as a translation of any other kind, but lip-sync and isochrony impose a straitjacket that translators of written texts do not have to wear.

Lengths of text in analytic languages that use grammatical words (particles) are generally longer than in synthetic languages that glue distinct morphemes together. Tone languages that use intonation and word order are more concise, and agglutinative languages are less redundant than others. 'For this reason Chinese texts are much shorter than their Hungarian versions, but German and English texts are longer than the corresponding Hungarian ones' (Fodor 1976: 79).

This leads to problems where the TT is either too short or too long. Generally it is easier to insert some padding words, or phatic expressions, or to paraphrase the utterance. Shortening, on the other hand, may prove a bigger challenge. Whitman-Linsen (1992: 30) refers to the film *Crimes and Misdemeanors* (Woody Allen, 1989). A rabbi advises a wife to forgive. He consoles her and says that her marriage might be 'more mature and understanding ... maybe richer'. To squeeze in the French equivalent into the same utterance could, however, prove a real challenge: 'empreinte de maturité et de compréhension. peut-être plus enrichissante'. Most languages offer some scope for reduction, by using linguistic devices such as the omission of pronouns or ellipsis. There is, however, a limit to both processes.

### 26.5.5 Character synchrony

There are a large number of signifiers operating simultaneously, both visually and verbally, all working together to form a carefully constructed character: 'the actors' words, their voices, their intonation; their facial expressions, the look in their eyes, their bodily posture, their gestures, their costuming, the setting and its use of light and art direction'. Actors can improvise their lines, cut, repeat, stammer, swallow, or paraphrase them. Even minor changes can destroy this unique performance and strip it of its subtleties and undertones (Kozloff 2000: 99).

Fodor (1976) uses the term 'character synchrony' to describe the degree of correspondence between the dubbing voice, e.g. timbre, tempo used, and the original actor's physique, manners, and gestures. He sees it mainly as a psychological problem. While there is some freedom with timbre and tempo between SL and TL voice, the age of the speakers should harmonize.

To summarize the different types of synchrony, we turn once more to Luyken et al. (1991: 161), who state that the 'art of dubbing seems to lie in the ability to make a compromise between the demands of lip-sync, nucleus-sync and naturalness of text so that there is no gross violation of any one of them which would make the viewers aware of the fact that they were watching a dubbed film'.

## 26.6 Types of revoicing

While considering the demands of the different types of synchrony, it is worth remembering that there are other ways to add translated spoken text to a visual product. Interestingly, these may avoid or ignore many of the

problems of synchrony.

### 26.6.1 Narration

Narration refers to spoken commentary, especially for documentaries or corporate productions. Translators must keep in mind that they are producing a spoken text. Syntax and vocabulary should therefore remain simple, and the text must read well. It is vital that the translator is given a copy of the film to ensure synchronization of time and pictorial and verbal content. There is no need for complete synchrony, and one can even insert additional information should the need arise. Inversion and changes of word order can be used to make the text follow the image (Vetter 2006).

### 26.6.2 Free commentary

This method is not a faithful translation, but simply an adaptation of a programme for an audience that speaks another language. The commentary can incorporate additional information that is needed for the TL audience. The commentator must have extensive knowledge of the subject and have a good broadcasting voice. This revoicing is generally done without preproduction, and is characterized by a personal, colloquial style (Luyken et al. 1991: 82).

### 26.6.3 Interpreting

Interpreting is the least common method, and usually restricted to international live events and interviews. There is no attempt made to hide the fact of translation and there are no issues of synchrony. While the interpreter works in a kind of void, there may be an audience of millions. The time lag between the original voice and the translation must be kept to a minimum. The high expectations of television audiences mean that the translator's voice, clarity, and intonation are of great importance. The working environment is often noisy, which can place enormous pressure on translators (Kurz 2006).

### 26.6.4 Voice-over

This type of revoicing is an 'overlay' technique. It is common practice to allow the original sound to be heard for several seconds before the TL speech takes over. Quite often the SL voice can be heard again at the end of the utterance. The short delay at both ends creates a sense of authenticity and gives the listener the opportunity to hear the original voice. It is thus the preferred mode of translation for interviews, news, current affairs, and other non-fiction programmes. Synchrony is limited to its quantitative aspect, the limit being set by the duration of the spoken utterance (Luyken et al. 1991: 80).

Voice-over is almost as cheap as subtitling. The cost amounts to about 10 per cent of the price of dubbing. The easy and cheap production style makes it attractive for use in fiction as well. Paolinelli (2004: 178) refers to it as dubbing 'East-European style'. With only two voices, a woman's for all the actresses, a man's for the actors, it often comes across as rather lifeless and disengaged, but this method is attractive for reasons of economy, especially in less affluent countries with a high percentage of illiteracy (Grigaravičiūtė and Gottlieb 2004: 89).

### 26.6.5 Dubbing

Dubbing is a technique in which the original voice is completely replaced by the TL voice. The SL product is transferred into the TL culture and thus makes the audience believe that the work was produced in the TL. If the illusion is to be successful, it is important that the 'new' voice and the actor's lip and body movements coincide. This type of revoicing is the most complex one, and must respect all types of synchrony (Dries 1995).

## 26.7 Practical aspects of dubbing

The dubbing process begins when a distributor buys the rights to a film with the idea of producing a foreign-language version. The dubbing industry is 'oligopolistic', with harsh competition. Ever shorter delivery times and lower prices affect the quality of the product (Dries 1995). Dubbing is costly and involves a group of specialists, equipment, and studio time. Compared to the overall film budget, the amount spent on dubbing is minor. It is

impossible to give any figures, as the products differ too much in genre (arthouse film, TV series, etc.), duration, amount of dialogue, difficulty of language, etc.

### 26.7.1 Rough translation

The process begins with a rough translation into the TL. In the worst case, an amateur works from a script without actually seeing the film. As Whitman-Linsen (1992: 106–17) points out, the translator ‘is deprived of not only all the other linguistic messages conveyed in the film [...], but also any supporting crucial paralinguistic messages’. Good professional studios equip their translators with the final dialogue list together with a copy of the movie.

This is the only step in the whole process where the focus is on translation. Traditionally this language transfer adheres very closely to the ST wording. It includes footnotes to explain idioms or wordplay. Herbst (1994: 216) claims that this translation infringes ‘denotative, connotative, text-normative, pragmatic and syntactic equivalence’. He further points out extensive effects on the synchronized version, although it is viewed as provisional and treated with little respect. Appreciation is not reflected in financial terms, and the entire effort remains anonymous, with no mention in the credits.

In the case of minority languages, translations are often routed via a relay language—hence the use of the term ‘pivot translation’ (Grigaravičiūtė and Gottlieb 2004: 92). English is often used as a stepping stone, and this indirect path provides even greater scope for errors.

### 26.7.2 Dialogue version

When the rough translation is ready, dialogue writers can use it, together with the visuals, to prepare the new TL dialogue. They have to adapt and mould the words to match the lip movements of the actors. This ‘knitting the voice to the body’ (Chion 1999: 128) is dictated by constraints of all types of synchrony. It is generally recommended that writers work in a ‘plot-oriented’ manner, processing the text in longer segments and thus gaining more freedom to find the appropriate words (see 26.3.5 above).

This step is the most crucial part in the dubbing process, and is seen as extremely demanding. A dialogue writer must have a wide range of highly developed skills: not only must s/he be ‘linguistically dextrous’, s/he must also have ‘the knack for creating unlaboured dialogue, a feel for acting rhythm, imagination and versatility in wielding the rhetorical tools of his own language’ (Whitman-Linsen 1992: 121). Given these requirements, one might say that writing synchronized dialogue poses similar challenges to the translation of poetry.

### 26.7.3 Recording the dubbed version

The synchronized dialogue is then divided into individual ‘takes’ of approximately 5–8 seconds. This allows one the booking of an actor who can do all of his/her takes of the entire film. One might suppose that it is difficult for actors to feel their role, since these takes are not recorded in chronological order. In practice this is no more of a problem than in normal film-making, in which scenes are never shot in the order they appear in the script.

Dubbing actors usually stand in a soundproofed room facing a large screen, the script on a lectern. In the adjacent studio, the sound engineer and director (who is often also the dialogue writer) make sure that the words match the lip movements as closely as possible. While the sound engineer is concerned mainly with sound quality, the director will pay special attention to the text—delivery, articulation, and intonation—and will make any necessary changes. A final mix of the original sound and music with the new voices concludes the process.

## 26.8 The role of the translator in the dubbing process

We now turn to the role of the translator and how it is perceived in the literature. One can read in Mounin (1967: 144, my translation) ‘that synchronization, without exaggeration, is worthy of the description “totale Übersetzung” and that it is the highest level in the art of translation’. Fodor (1976) insisted that ‘if we want to have a good and satisfactory translation text for synchronized versions we have to get it done by gifted artist-translators not just by competent translation experts’. He adds, ‘dubbing has the nature of poetic translation: it has to cope with tasks imposed on him like rhyme and rhythm’ (Fodor 1976: 77–80). Whitman-Linsen (1992: 326) states that ‘demands

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made of translators for the purpose of dubbing are complex and manifold, the constraints imposed upon them more confining than those to which any other genre of translation is subject'.

But what exactly is the role of the translator? As described above, dubbing is a lengthy and complicated process involving many different stages and people. The translator's restricted role is to draft a text that merely serves as the starting point in a chain of events. The most demanding task of writing synchronized dialogue is performed by the dialogue writer. On the way to the finished product, the text will be modified and altered many times.

The term 'gatekeeping' has been proposed to explain the method of information transfer (Müller 1982, Snell-Hornby et al. 1999/2006, Vuorinen 1995). It describes the process of controlling the information flow through communication channels. Gatekeepers are all the people involved in the chain except the first and the last person. They decide what piece of information to pass on, in what form, and what information to withhold. It is obvious that gatekeepers have great power and influence over the information and thus the final result. Gatekeeping operations include deletion, addition, substitution, modification, and reorganization.

In the dubbing process, gatekeepers may not hold back information, but their decision-making process in translating, writing, speaking, and recording dialogue is driven by outside influences. Burgess (1980: 301–2) wrote that 'in practice a good deal of dubbing is worked out collectively and empirically', and he continued: 'indeed, many deathless lines of translated script begin as gibberish: take care of the sounds and let the sense come later.' It is certainly true to say that, unlike the translator of a literary text, who can dwell on a word, sentence, or paragraph to find the best equivalent, translation for dubbing is driven by constraints which determines what modifications are made at each step:

client → dubbing studio → translator → dialogue-writer → editor → dubbing actor → sound engineer →  
dubbing director → client

This kind of teamwork may explain the anonymity of dubbing translators, writers, and actors in the film credits.

### 26.9 Conclusion

As mentioned in the introduction, there is an ongoing argument about screen translation. While dubbing is without doubt the most expensive and time-consuming method, it is widely used and appreciated. Let us examine some of the main arguments for and against dubbing before offering some suggestions how dubbed products could be improved.

The translation occurs from spoken SL into spoken TL and does not require reduction, as in subtitling. The unity of voice and image guarantees near-complete transmission of content, and ensures better accessibility for children and people with poor literacy in regions such as South America, China (Shaochang 2004), or India.

The fact that dubbing is a 'covert' translation leads, however, to the criticism that it is possible to tamper with the SL text. Tampering can mean reduction, editing, or modification. Garncarz (1992), in his analysis of different film versions, talks about aspects of change due to aesthetic, ideological, moral, political, or religious reasons. This argument may be of particular interest as far as postwar Germany is concerned, as there were numerous examples of censored versions designed to eliminate any references to Nazism from the screens. For example, the 1951 version of Michael Curtiz's *Casablanca* was shortened by 23 minutes. The Czech resistance fighter Victor Laszlo was turned into a Scandinavian professor, and SS-Major Strasser vanished from the screen entirely. This falsification or violation of the original material may undermine the public's trust in the process.

Another argument against dubbing is the language argument. There are always losses in any translation, and this is also the case in revoicing. Dialects, accents, vernacular, and slang are often replaced by standard language, thereby generating a homogenization or, as Whitman-Linsen (1992: 118) put it, a 'linguistic whitewash'. Furthermore the original actor's idiosyncrasies (slight lisp, special timbre) that are part of their personality may be replaced by a neutral voice.

This leads directly to the next argument, namely the actor argument. There are often only a limited number of dubbing actors in any given country, which results in the same actor speaking many roles. Although the same dubbing actor may regularly lend his/her voice to the same SL actor, that dubbing actor is at the same time the

voice of some other SL actors. This again results in a levelling of individual characters in the SL version.

Recent developments have opened up technical possibilities that facilitate the dubbing process. Digitization makes it possible to stretch or condense the soundtrack without distortion. Slight modifications can solve problems such as lip-sync in close-up camera shots. In animation films the process is sometimes reversed, and Japanese animators occasionally change the lip movements of their figures to synchronize them with the words. While there are numerous possibilities, financial restraints may limit their use. There is also a need for a set of rules and norms that ensure high quality, although these may suffer due to financial constraints.

### 26.9.1 Anglicisms and lip-sync

With an overwhelming number of films being produced in the United States, the influence of English on the TL is strong. Anglicisms occur not only in dubbed films but in many other forms of translation and exert considerable influence on the TLs. The literal translation of 'make sense' in German is 'sinn machen'. Although it would not have been acceptable in educated German some years ago, it is now widely used and appears quite normal. There is sometimes an inconsistency of style where colloquial and formal language are mixed, and the spoken dialogue often sounds rather stiff and unnatural. These problems may be the result of the tight corset of synchronization, as an often-quoted example shows. To translate the English 'I'm sorry' into German one would normally use 'Entschuldigung', but to match the bi-labial 'm' sound it is rendered by 'Es tut mir leid' (Luyken et al. 1991: 159).

It is not difficult to find errors in dubbed products. However, one should bear in mind that spoken words are not perceived as written ones, and it is easy to be over-critical of poor dubbing. Nevertheless, it is important to identify certain types of errors that occur frequently in order to avoid them (Luyken et al. 1991: 158).

### 26.9.2 Rough translation and dialogue writing

The question remains whether the rough translation is sensible or even necessary. It often appears to be more of a hindrance than a help in the next step of writing. It has been suggested that the final sync-version should be produced by translators with special training in dubbing (Herbst 1994: 260). As the only linguists in the dubbing chain, translators can ensure that the many changes and modifications maintain faithfulness to the SL text. They are aware of all linguistic aspects (style, register, syntax, cultural references, puns, etc.) and have strategies at their disposal to deal with any problems that may occur (Chaume 2004b: 37). Manhart (2006: 264–6) supports this view and sees the greatest handicap in the fragmentation of the process and the fact that translation plays a subordinate role. She favours a team of translators and dubbing experts working alongside each other and sharing responsibility for the finished product.

Since the earliest days of dubbing there have been dialogue writers. This tradition has been preserved, and their contribution is seen as vital to the process. This, however, is not a good reason to maintain the status quo. By removing the rough translation stage, one could reduce both cost and scope for error. Rough translation and dubbing writing should be merged and performed by a language specialist, namely a translator.

### 26.9.3 Dubbing actors

As mentioned above, dialects, accents, and sociolects are often replaced by standard TL. This change or modification corresponds to the need for synchronization. To restore some of the character and compensate for meaning that may have been lost, dubbing actors can provide some remedy using intonation, stress, and volume (Pettit 2005).

### 26.9.4 Translators

Dubbing may not attract the best translators, since it is technically complex and requires teamwork. As mentioned above, the actual translation plays only a minor part as a blueprint. Translators are not seen as language experts who could help to improve the synchronized version, and the meagre remuneration is not attractive to well-qualified people.

### 26.9.5 Improvement and outlook

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Dubbed versions could be improved if greater value were placed upon the process. Compared to the overall budget of a film or television series, the percentage allocated to foreign versions is minimal. Bigger budgets would attract good professional translators and dialogue writers, and allow dubbing actors more time to familiarize themselves with the film and the script. Actors usually appear in the studio without any prior knowledge as to what type of film or script they are going to re-voice. Increased funding could also enhance the technical possibilities.

Finally, it must be mentioned that translation for the screen is definitely 'un genre en expansion' (Gambier 2004), with a wide variety of products awaiting translation: DVDs, CD-ROMs, streaming, podcasting, TV and video on demand, TV on mobile phones, etc. Many areas, e.g. CD-ROMs or computer games (with many thousand lines of dialogue in non-linear order), Japanese Animé, etc. need to be further analysed and researched. It appears that AVT will provide much work for translators in the future.

### **Further reading and relevant resources**

The field of AVT has been expanding during the last decade. The earlier publications, mainly in German, by Hesse-Quack (1969), Toepser-Ziegert (1978), Pisek (1994), Pruys (1997), Reinart (2004), and Baumgarten (2005), have been followed by articles in many different languages, for example Polish (Garcarz 2006) and Spanish (Martínez Sierra 2009). Recent publications have also addressed issues in China (C. Zhang 2004, G. Zhang 2009). Gambier edited special issues of the journals *Der Übersetzer* (9.2, 2003) and *Meta* (49.1, 2004) on audiovisual translation.

A detailed list of publications on the problem of the dubbing of humour has been compiled by Martínez Sierra (2009) in the on-line *Translation Journal*, 13.3 (<http://accurapid.com>).

Conferences have also addressed the topic, for example the European 'MuTra' (Multidimensional Translation) conference in Copenhagen on 'Audiovisual Translation Scenarios' (Gambier 2006), and the biennial international conference organized by the Transmedia Research Group (<http://www.transmediaresearchgroup.com/events.html>), which first took place in 2005.

At the time of writing, Díaz-Cintas (2008, 2009, Díaz-Cintas and Anderman 2009) and Chiaro, Heiss, and Bucaria (2008) represent the most recent work in the field.

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# Oxford Handbooks Online

## Website Localizations

Anthony Pym

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### Abstract and Keywords

The localization of websites involves translating and adapting content to specific local markets. This involves language technologies, and the degree of adaptation varies according to marketing criteria. Cross-cultural communication via websites, and of the elements that constitute the individual screens of each site, is one of the fastest-growing areas opened up by the era of electronic communications. The development of the Internet as an interactive medium is giving rise to a series of creative non-professional translation practices. There are several ways of relating the groups working on the different language versions of a website. Because of mixed strategies, most organizations preserve their global image while at the same time incorporating elements likely to enable regional synergies and appeal to local users. Website communication is such a fast-moving phenomenon. As websites increasingly use spoken and visual communication, more and more translations may be into voice files.

Keywords: localization, websites, local markets, language technologies, electronic communications, non-professional translation practices

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### 27.1 Introduction

The localization of websites involves translating and adapting content to specific local markets. The process typically involves language technologies, and the degree of adaptation varies according to marketing criteria. Straight translation is thus only part of localization, which creates problems for the role of translators in this high-growth sector.

Cross-cultural communication via websites, and of the elements that constitute the individual screens of each site, is one of the fastest-growing areas opened up by the era of electronic communications. The basic standard, known as Hypertext Markup Language (HTML), was first proposed in 1991 and has been followed by similar technical conventions, notably Personal Homepage Tools (PHP) from 1995 and Extensible Hypertext Markup Language (XHTML) from 2005, with each technical innovation bringing greater complexity. The translation and localization of websites has thus become a lucrative, dynamic, and inter-professional field, often involving marketing, design, and software engineering, as well as linguistic processes. At the same time, the development of the Internet as an interactive medium is giving rise to a series of creative non-professional translation practices. In theory, the translation part of work on websites need not be any different from any other kind of translation, since texts can be extracted from site, rendered in accordance with the required communicative purposes, then reinserted into the site. The *localization* of websites, however, involves more complex processes, in addition to the normal constraints and goals of translation.

### 27.2 Localization in addition to translation

The localization of a website differs from non-hypertext translation with respect to the identification of translatable

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elements, the tools needed to render them, their non-linearity, the way in which the translation process is prepared and coordinated, and the extent of the changes that may be introduced. Some of these features are shared with current technical translations, which increasingly also use hypertext technologies. The resulting complexity can be explained in terms of a basic translation process that is modified by a series of factors relatively specific to communication via multilingual websites.

### 27.2.1 Peripheral text

A webpage includes textual units in its title (which appears in the title bar, at the very top of web browsers), in descriptors and keywords (which appear in search engines, and are important for the website to be located), in menus and hyperlinks (which lead to other webpages), in descriptors of images, sound files, and audiovisual files (which may be used as pop-ups or as references for the location of files), and in the graphics, sound files, and audiovisual files themselves. All those things may be rendered into different languages, in addition to the main body text. To access and translate the written strings (sequences of words), one can use a simple text editor and take care not to change the surrounding technical code (HTML or later), since most changes to the code will affect the appearance and functionality of the webpage. However, since this is risk-laden and visually difficult to do, various electronic tools are generally used to separate the codes from the ‘translatables’, the strings to be translated.

### 27.2.2 Website localization tools

Most translation memory suites can be used to extract translatable strings from code, which is then protected, i.e. blocked, and sometimes even hidden from the translator's eyes. The translator can then work on the isolated and segmented natural-language strings, as with any other use of translation memories. Some web-editing tools are helpful for the management of the translated pages in a site, which need to have all their hyperlinks coordinated with each other. In complex business situations, use is also made of content management systems that keep track of the short texts (' hunks' or 'information objects') Global management systems can also be used, joining translation memories and/or machine translation with the modification of elements for communication on websites, other web-based communication, or in print media. These tools enable a translation of a short text or update to be distributed automatically across the various communication media. There are also tools designed to calculate the cost of localizing a website, accounting for the complexity of the site as well as the automatic word count. Quality-assessment tools then check whether links still work, or whether all the content has been translated. Many of these tools, especially those incorporated in translation memory suites, create situations in which the translator cannot easily see the actual webpage in its visual format, which may result in a loss of communicative context (Biau Gil 2005). The translator may simply not be able to grasp the nature and purpose of the text to be translated. On the other hand, much translation work done in this mode is not on whole sites or pages as such.

### 27.2.3 Work on updates

Since electronic texts are easily modified, particularly as compared with print technologies, websites are frequently changed and updated. Much translation work thus does not start from the whole site but is limited to the modifications or updates. Moreover, translation of the website often starts before the source version is complete and running on a server. Translation memories can be efficient at locating the new translatable strings, although translators may also receive the isolated segments in a simple spreadsheet or word-processing format. As with much of the technical linguistic work in the localization industry, the translating then takes place on decontextualized segments. The translator does not have easy access to information about the communication act, but the nature of the work does not always require such access.

### 27.2.4 One-to-many production

Print-media translation mostly takes place after completion of the source text. This relation cannot be assumed in the case of website localization. A site might be developed first in one language and then localized in others, but once those first sites have been created, the translation process involves successive rounds of modifications and updates. A site might have one central language in which most initial changes are made, and those changes are then translated into the parts of the site that are in all the other languages. This means that the translations into the various languages occur more or less simultaneously, thus ensuring coherence and enabling synergies in

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marketing and promotion. Translation teams will ideally be working in parallel, often on the basis of ongoing contracts to handle the maintenance of a site over a period of time. In such a frame, translation operates not on a text, nor at the level of a finite project, but as part of an indefinite maintenance programme. Ideally, such work situations mean that translators gain comprehensive knowledge of the website and its associated products, and this knowledge may be used to counter the decontextualized nature of the translatable strings.

### 27.2.5 Internationalization

Given the dynamics of one-to-many production, cost efficiency in website localization is sought by preparing the basic central version in such a way that many translation problems are actually avoided before they occur. The preparation, dubbed 'internationalization' in the field of software localization, means ensuring that the general site has as few culture-specific features as possible, since those are the elements most likely to cause problems downstream. The internationalized site is thus supposed to be neutral, functional, and constructed in such a way that the later localization teams can add elements (colours, images, references) that will make the site attractive to users in particular cultural locales. In effect, the apparent removal of culture-specific elements from the internationalized version tends to leave that site within a functionalist technical culture, sometimes identifiable with the company culture or client concerned. The ideology of internationalization nevertheless creates the illusion of a culture-less technical world.

### 27.2.6 Localization

Given the reduction of cultural elements in the internationalization process, the versions going into specific target languages may then have to add many features considered specific to the target culture. This is the process technically known as 'localization', even though the same term is misleadingly used for the entire production process. In the narrow sense, localization means adapting features to suit a particular 'locale', which is in turn understood as a market segment defined by criteria including language, currency, and perhaps educational level or income bracket, depending on the nature of the communication. The technical elements localized include the following, listed in most of the textbooks (e.g. Esselink 2000):

- Date and time formats, as well as calendar settings.
- Currency formats and other monetary-related information (taxes).
- Number formats (decimal separator, thousand separator).
- Address formats, such as postal codes, provinces, states.
- Name formats: e.g. in Spanish-speaking countries there are two surnames.
- Telephone number formats.
- Units of measure.
- Paper sizes for print-outs.
- Colour conventions: e.g. red means danger in European cultures, but good fortune in Chinese cultures.
- Iconic conventions: e.g. a door might mean 'exit' in European cultures, but is likely to be misunderstood in others. A pestle and mortar signifies good cooking in Catalan culture (aioli is made that way), but tends to be associated with a pharmacy in English-language culture (perhaps the result of eating too much aioli). More generally, images of people are often changed to look like the projected users of the site.
- Sound files: songs and music might have to be adapted. The Japanese are ostensibly embarrassed if a beep indicates they have made a mistake. Other audiences are sensitive to linguistic varieties. For example, the website of Bob the Builder, designed for pre-school boys, has its theme song in six different languages, including British and American English as two separate versions. These issues are generally dealt with on the basis of global geo-linguistic regions: the Australian Bob speaks British English; Canadian Bob speaks American English (or Canadian French); Spanish Bob seems to solve the problem by not speaking.
- Legal conventions: copyright and personal data protection differ from country to country.
- Content: adding locale-specific content (e.g. news on the opening of new offices in Paris only for the French version of the site).

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- Connection speeds: for users in many countries with slow connection speeds, a highly sophisticated website will be difficult to use. Localization might thus require the removal of animations, sound files, and high-resolution images.

Some of these adaptations would be included in print-media conceptions of translation; a few more might come under the heading of ‘translation’ in a highly functionalist approach; but not many notions of translation would include all the technical and marketing decisions that are encompassed by the concept of localization.

One should nevertheless be careful not to confuse this sense of ‘localization’ as adaptation with the nature of communication in the localization industry as a whole. As noted above, the automatic extraction of translatable fragments, together with the nature of ongoing maintenance work, means that much translation is performed on decontextualized fragments, where quite literal equivalence strategies become far more common than anything approaching adaptation. Thanks to the technologies, the localization industry commonly requires its translators to work at the level of quite restrictive phrase-to-phrase equivalence, with constant respect for pre-established glossaries.

### 27.3 Degrees of localization

There are clearly different degrees to which a website can be localized. Schewe (2001) proposes a basic distinction between monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual sites. He points out that the choice between these options depends on the language policy or marketing strategy of the organization communicating through the site. Localization, however, is not limited to language issues alone. An English-language site may be localized for the different markets where English is used (Bob the Builder changes accent as he crosses the Atlantic), just as a multilingual site might choose to keep the same format and content across all its language versions, without any of the modifications mentioned above (major banks tend to adopt this option, in the interests of branding their stability and reliability). Degrees of localization thus concern the cultural implications of marketing strategies, as well as the existence of many languages.

Singh and Pereira (2005) recognize five degrees of localization: ‘standardized’ (one website for all countries), ‘semi-localized’ (one site gives information on many countries), ‘localized’ (a whole translated site for each country), ‘highly localized’ (translations plus country-specific adaptations), and ‘culturally customized’ (a new site completely immersed in the target culture). Only the ‘localized’ and ‘highly localized’ options involve any degree of translation in the traditional sense. In their survey of 307 US multinationals, Singh and Pereira found that most companies have one of the three degrees of ‘localized’ sites, with 17 per cent using ‘standardized’ sites (i.e. no translation) and none rating as ‘culturally customized’ (i.e. complete regeneration).

There are many intermediary stages between these types. One might find, for example, that general information is translated but specific technical information, intended for specialized users, remains untranslated. That solution might be called a mode of ‘standardization’

It is also possible to adopt dynamically hybrid localization strategies. An example might be the basic Google homepage, which looks the same in all language versions and would thus seem to be a case of extreme standardization, maintaining the company image in the interests of branding. In Japan and Korea, however, that homepage is considered empty or incomplete, since users are accustomed to webpages that are crowded with many invitations to do exciting things. In those countries, Yahoo! or local search engines are more popular than Google. In this case, Google's answer has been not to change its standardization strategy for those markets, but to offer users the possibility to build their own personal Google homepages, adding in as many things as they want. All users can thus have their own crowded or uncrowded pages. The resulting localization is thus both ‘standardization’ and ‘cultural customization’ at the same time. Electronic communication means that different communication strategies need not be mutually exclusive.

Hybrid strategies are further enhanced by the use of hyperlinks. For example, a print-media translator might be faced with the dilemma of how to explain cultural realia. Faced with something like ‘Australian-rules football’, do you add a few phrases to note that it is not like soccer and not like American football? Or a footnote? Or just leave it as such? A website translator, however, could theoretically link the term to as much information as the user could possibly want, perhaps in one of the language versions of Wikipedia, in effect allowing the user to determine the

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extent of explanation. Some of the classical translation dilemmas might thus be resolved quite simply. In common practice, however, few translators are allowed responsibility for such things as adding hyperlinks.

Hybrid strategies move some communicative decision-making to the user's side, thus constituting one of the truly liberating and democratic aspects of electronic communication. However, the reverse tendency can be found in cases where companies seek to control and manage the range of mono-strategies. A logical consequence of the latter approach is the profiling of users. For example, the writer of these lines has a computer that uses Iberian Spanish as the locale for its operating system, so he is automatically directed to Iberian Spanish-language versions of the major multinational websites, whether he wants to go there or not. Curiously, the same user, using the same computer, is automatically taken to the 'Australia and NZ' locale of Yahoo!, perhaps due to some dark secret held in a database somewhere. In a world of travelling users and complex cultural identities, such profiling can be annoying, and it can be quite difficult (although not impossible) to undo. Website systems that identify the user's locale include, but are not limited to, identification of the locale of the operating system, regional origin of the IP number (where is the person connecting from?), and cookies, text files stored in your computer which remember your decision and reproduce it whenever you visit the same site again (which is probably how the 'Australia and NZ' got there). At the same time, profiling marks the extent to which the logic of nations and national languages still informs the era of electronic communication. A good deal of the tasks assigned to translators result from that blanket logic: all users in a particular country will need and want their information in the national language(s) of that country, despite the fact that the vast majority of language users in the world are polyglot. Profiling tends to force translation on many who do not always need it.

### 27.4 Usability

Studies on the reception of websites mostly refer to 'users' rather than 'readers', and there is indeed some doubt about the extent to which the latter term is appropriate. Some now dated research suggests that reading from a computer screen is about 25 per cent slower than reading from paper (Nielsen 1999: 101) and that this is only partly due to problems of screen resolution. Websites are felt to be a non-linear means of communication, where the receiver determines the rhythm of the communication act (as opposed to reading a book or watching a film in the cinema). Receivers tend to look over a webpage quickly, only focusing on isolated items of interest. In a study on the use of English-language newspaper websites, Nielsen (2008) finds that highly educated users may read only 20–28 per cent of the total information per visit, and that 17 per cent stay on a single page for less than ten seconds.

What this means for translation is not always clear. If content is not going to be read with any significant attention, should it be translated with any degree of care? In the most ideal case, the translation process should involve some distinction between high-risk text requiring careful renditions (perhaps double reviewing and a user test) and low-risk text that is unlikely to be read (perhaps suitable for machine translation output with perfunctory reviewing). In practice, however, all strings tend to be treated equally, since the distribution of risk requires attention to context, and the electronic tools are designed precisely to separate text from context. Since translators mostly cannot see what the communication is about, they cannot assess where their best efforts should go.

Perhaps the most significant consequence of use patterns is that the design of the webpage is at least as important as its linguistic content. Nielsen's studies with eye-tracking (2006) suggest that English-language users start at the top left and look across the page horizontally in one or two sweeps, and then skim down the page vertically, giving an F-shaped pattern. Key content should thus be located where the user is likely to look. More importantly, content should be arranged in such a way as to accommodate skimming, with many headers and with text in short paragraphs. A webpage cannot be designed or written in the same way as a printed page. It should be built for use, not just for reading.

For example, some online newspapers use content-management systems that move the position of a piece of news according to the number of times it is visited: the more visitors it has, the more visible it becomes, creating what may turn into a snowball effect.

The usability of websites is increasingly seen as the measure of their quality. Nielsen (1994: 26) suggests a framework for usability in five different categories:

- Learnability: How easy is it for users to accomplish basic tasks the first time they encounter the design?
- Efficiency: Once users have learned the design, how quickly can they perform tasks?
- Memorability: When users return to the design after a period of not using it, how easily can they re-establish proficiency?
- Errors: How many errors do users make, how severe are these errors, and how easily can they recover from the errors?
- Satisfaction: How pleasant is it to use the design?

Note that these criteria are not set patterns for all cultures; they are questions that should be answered for each particular locale. A design that has high usability in Korea may have very low usability in Mexico (cf. Choi 2008). One should also stress that the importance of visual elements and layout depends to a great degree on the overall purpose of the website. A fashion site like Dolce & Gabbana, for example, has rather low-quality translations as its linguistic content but the site itself is overwhelmingly based on visual design, to the extent that the linguistic text is small and hard to read—the site is meant to be looked at, not read. In other cases, such as newspaper sites, the linguistic content must be high-quality, since that is what the user is ultimately looking for (cf. Nielsen and Loranger 2006).

Research on these issues sometimes makes reference to parameters that are presumed to typify entire cultures, much of it going back to Geert Hofstede's huge survey of IBM employees between 1967 and 1973, originally allowing numerical data to be synthesized for 40 countries (see Hofstede 1980, Hofstede and Hofstede 2005). Hofstede presents tables like the Uncertainty Avoidance Index or the Individualism Index, where different countries occupy different positions: the United States rates high on the individualism scale, for example, whereas Asian countries are at the bottom of that particular list. The logic of functionalist adaptation might suggest that a site going from American English into Korean should therefore have all individualistic elements removed, to give users what they are used to. Such shifts are rarely found, however (recall that Singh and Pereira found no 'culturally customized' sites in their survey). This may be because shifts on the macro-level require too much effort of the translator, in tune with the 'law of interference' (Toury 1995), which predicts that translators will adapt the small units but not the big ones. However, it may also be because websites can be used to convey alterity—the new, the foreign as excitement or titillation—such that users actively go looking for ways to change their position on a Hofstede-type cultural table. Whatever the causes, the evidence suggests that the linguistically translated parts of websites tend not to display major cultural adaptations.

## 27.5 Who localizes, who translates?

There are several ways of relating the groups working on the different language versions of a website. At one extreme, everything may be controlled at the one central location, with the one general image or promotional campaign serving for all countries. This is the mode of organization that Lockwood (2000) dubs 'monarchist', well suited to a communication strategy that maintains the global image or brand. At the other, promotion and marketing may be undertaken by local experts in each case, in accordance with a model that Lockwood labels 'anarchist', at which point there need be no translational relationship between the various sites in different languages. Between monarchy and anarchy, there is a series of 'federalist' or 'subsidiary' approaches, where some content is generated centrally and translated for global use, other content is produced regionally and is translated for regional use (e.g. the west European market), and still other content is produced locally, without recourse to translation. Thanks to such mixed strategies, most organizations attempt to preserve their global image while at the same time incorporating elements likely to enable regional synergies and appeal to local users.

The relations between these strategies may map onto different ways of organizing the teams engaged in the various localization processes.

### 27.5.1 In-house localization

Governmental and inter-governmental websites tend to localize by law or policy, usually into the languages considered official. Given the official status of the sites, there is still a preference to employ in-house translation teams, especially when security issues are involved. External language-service providers or certified freelancers may also be used for non-sensitive sites. For many bureaucratic services, sites of this nature carry heavy

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information loads with little attention to design. The translation process thus proceeds as if print media were involved, or indeed as a part of print-media distribution. The result tends to be relatively uninviting sites with low usability levels. They are difficult to navigate, and first-time users struggle to locate the information they are looking for. Virtually any site of the European Commission could be taken as an example, in keeping with a political entity with a strong translation policy (information is available in official languages) but a weak communication policy (the information is poorly adapted to website usability).

Some good counterexamples can be found in sites of the Canadian government, for instance, and of various city sites where serious thought has been given to accessibility and different user needs. Such questions concern not just the translation strategies considered appropriate (literalist and exact in the case of information, adaptive in the case of motivating elements) but, more importantly, the design of the webpage, the ease with which hyperlinks can be located, and the information load of the natural-language strings. A traditional printed page such as this one, when put on a website, will not be considered accessible—its chances of being read are slight, no matter how accurate the translations.

### 27.5.2 Localization companies and language-service vendors

Given the special requirements of website communication, translation services are increasingly outsourced to specialized communication companies, which sometimes also provide website development services such as the treatment of graphic and audio material or the adaptation of campaigns, in addition to straight translation services. The current trends, however, seem to be moving against the integration of translation into general communication services. Since various electronic tools make it fairly simple to extract natural-language strings, as noted above, those strings are sent to language-service vendors, often in a decontextualized format. The language-service providers then coordinate the translations. A global multi-language vendor might take the contract for as many as twenty or so languages, then sell the work to a regional vendor for Asian languages, for example, who might in turn subcontract to local single-language vendors, often located in countries where the translation rates are lowest. From there, the files are usually sent to freelancers, mostly in formats requiring free or cheap versions of translation-memory suites and probably accompanied by no special information on the nature of the website concerned. This structure means that the client who owns the website is paying up to three times what the end-translator is paid. Such is the hypertext mark-up, only some of which can be justified in terms of revisions, preparation, and cleaning of translation memories, or integrated multimedia language services. In this respect, website translation is fundamentally no different from the practices of the localization industry as a whole.

The tendency to separate translation services from the general development and maintenance of websites further contributes to the perception of translation as a burdensome cost, a problem to be solved, rather than a creative process on a par with the other semiotic levels of a website.

The workflow separation of translation from more general localization can also have repercussions for the training of translators. Few trainee translators acquire the multimedia and interactive skills most in demand at the more creative points of the industry, and those who do acquire such skills are unlikely to seek long-term employment doing nothing but decontextualized string replacement. Good communicators might thus be forced out of the translation market or up in the decision-making scale, but then they stop translating.

### 27.5.3 Web-based machine translation

Website communication also partakes of the vibrant democracy of Internet communication, where receivers can potentially be senders, users ostensibly drive growth, and technical skills are ideally more important than external qualification or personal financial reward. In most other modes of communication, translation tends to be an expensive strategy for cross-cultural translation (as opposed to various combinations of code-switching and language learning). On the Internet, however, translation can become a cheap, user-driven solution, where levels of quality are adjusted to the means available. This gives rise to a range of non-professional modes of translation, many of which are enhanced by technology.

Web-based machine translation has been a reality for some time. The transfer-based Systran system has been available as Babel Fish since 1997 (operated by AltaVista, now by Yahoo!), currently offering free automatic translations in nineteen pairs of languages. The translations produced by this system are far from perfect, but they

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do enable users to understand what is happening in a foreign website, thus enabling them to locate passages or pages that can be sent for human translation. Systran's publicity claims that their technology is used to translate more than four million webpages a day.

For most language pairs, better quality is given by data-based systems such as Google Translate, which currently caters for more than fifty languages. When users operate through the free web-base translation-memory Google Translator Toolkit, released in June 2009, their modifications of the automatic output feed back into the database by default, thus improving future automatic output. This combination should eventually offer reasonably acceptable machine translations free online. This in turn should change the nature of professional translation services, with many of today's translators becoming tomorrow's technical writers (pre-editors) or revisers of machine translations (post-editors).

### 27.5.4 Non-professional translations

Since Internet communication can bring many people together around shared concerns, across languages and continents, the sociocultural groups thus formed can themselves take on many of the translation tasks. There are numerous terms for this phenomenon. In the development of open software it is sometimes called 'crowd sourcing' (as a variant of 'outsourcing'); the TAUS network prefers 'community translation', which generally refers to cases such as the social-networking site Facebook, where users perform translations and judge other users' translations (Facebook's translation tool currently operates in sixty-three languages); the expression 'citizen translations' colours the practice as collective political action; 'fan translation' is the term associated with translations done by fans of a specific product (video games, cartoons, films, where subtitles thus become 'fan-subs'), increasingly distributed through websites.

All these alternatives to professional translation services, coupled with the availability of free online machine translation, greatly enhance the extent and creativity of cross-cultural communication. They potentially enable small, linguistically isolated entities to speak globally; they move the translator from silent mediator to active participant in a multilingual community. In doing so, non-professional translation practices violate most copyright agreements and codes of ethics, especially with respect to faithfulness to the source. Indeed, they question the profound political restrictiveness that has accompanied most ideologies of translation as a profession.

### 27.6 Directionality

Websites were once predominantly in English, and website localization was thus assumed to go from English to the languages of the world's major markets. So dominant was this directionality that Schäler (2006) coined the term 'reverse localization' for movements in the opposite direction. The simultaneous translation of a multinational's website into twenty or forty languages is obviously quite a different operation from the English versions of each provincial bank, university, or city in the world. What can be a sophisticated marketing operation in the first case tends to become a traditional textual translation in the second.

Limon (2008) compares websites from a small locale (the Slovene language) and those written directly in English for a global market. He finds that the global websites tend to be focused more on the user, incorporating the second person, attempting to cater to user needs, and presenting themselves with a 'human face', whereas the sites from Slovenia tend to focus on the companies' achievements and products, using more technical registers and insisting on the modernity of their technology. This may reflect deep cultural differences, but it could also be due to the employment of professional marketing copywriters for the more global companies. That is, the cultural difference may go no deeper than the spreading professional culture of marketing.

The translation problems thus posed are nevertheless of some importance. Since web-based text genres are of recent, centralized creation, the translator working from a central language will tend to impose the genres on the peripheral target languages. Again in terms of Toury's proposed law of interference (1995: 275ff.), the translators will work at sentence level but will tend not to alter the macro-structural features of the new genres. Similarly, when working from peripherally developed websites into English, the genre conventions tend not to be suited to electronic communication but are nevertheless reproduced in translation. The result of this kind of 'reverse localization' is a series of minor sites in major languages, mostly English, that fundamentally function as symbolic branding of the peripheral entities. The important thing is to 'have a website in English', since that in itself has a

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value within the peripheral culture.

Cursory analysis of the wider phenomenon nevertheless suggests that the world of websites is not so neatly divided between centre and periphery. Major languages such as Japanese, Korean, and increasingly Chinese are part of web-based technological cultures that are developing their own new genres and styles of electronic interaction. Those websites are then localized into English and other major languages, sometimes with a surprising degree of adaptation and creativity, and often maintaining their own new genre conventions. We are aware of no solid research on this fast-moving phenomenon.

### 27.7 Catering to users

A website may be Internet or Intranet. In the case of publicly available Internet sites, one of the frequently mentioned translation problems is the apparent lack of any specific target user, since the site may in principle be accessed by anyone at all. In some cases, translators into a major language such as English must simply suppose that the site is for 'anyone who knows English' (cf. Limon 2008), which would mean translating for a lowest common denominator. In practice, however, most sites conform to readily identifiable genres such as 'company promotion', 'product selection', 'games for kids', 'adolescent social networking', 'Internet pornography', or whatever, and the modes of likely use tend to be fairly evident. Further, website logs can give information about actual use of the site: what countries visitors are from, how long they stay on the site, and where they take their browser after leaving the site. The more interactive sites increasingly involve user feedback in the form of discussion lists or annotations (which may include anything from challenges on Wikipedia to video annotations on YouTube). In many cases, this empirical information enables fairly close tracking of usability, and can be used to modify the site accordingly. This is a further reason why website translations tend to be updates or re-translations rather than work from scratch. It is also a reason why translators should be prepared to find themselves in the middle of cross-lingual dialogues rather than simply reproducing a fixed source text.

### 27.8 Ethical issues in website localization

When deciding how much of a website actually needs to be localized, companies are theoretically guided by calculations of return on investment. If a target language has enough speakers with enough economic or cultural capital to constitute a locale of interest, then localization will be invested in. The investment in high-quality or low-quality translations will then follow suit.

When markets grow beyond the central languages, simple business logic means that website communication will become increasingly multilingual, with strong growth in the demand for translation services. The ethical problems facing website communication are thus not so much the once-dominant role of 'netspeak' English (Crystal 2001) or the imperialist imposition of centralized text genres (Limon 2008). The development of websites as places for interactive multimedia communication has promoted a more active multilingualism that should be seen as a sign of vibrant democratic interaction.

The ethical problems facing website translation these days have far more to do with democratic accessibility. This partly concerns disabled persons, where technical advances such as speech recognition, eye tracking, and tactile screens will create a range of new modes of translation. However, accessibility also concerns the range of language varieties used and the design of highly usable interfaces: democratic participation means that translations must be able to speak to the old as well as the young, and that actual user interaction, rather than linguistic accuracy, should be the measure of communicative success. Finally, accessibility has to do with opening the web to far more of the world's 6,000 or so languages, most of which do not have electronic forms. As websites increasingly use spoken and visual communication, more and more translations may be into voice files. Smaller languages may thus leap-frog the processes of graphic representation and finding spaces on Unicode, as new forms of translation bring participative democracy to a wider world.

### Further reading and relevant sources

Website communication is such a fast-moving phenomenon that this chapter will be out of date before it is printed.

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For research and updates, the best place to search is the web itself. The few textbooks that address website localization tend to be full of success stories (e.g. Esselink, Sprung, Singh and Pereira), plus a few horror stories to indicate why companies should spend money on professional services. The actual development of web-based translation practices would seem to be somewhere in between, in the more interesting social developments of non-professional and database-enhanced translation. The books that relate website communication to the theories of cross-cultural marketing (variously from Hofstede and De Mooij) tend to emphasize the need for cultural adaptation and the concerns of big business. The tendencies found in websites, however, have more to do with the creation of new cultural communities and with translation services that are non-professional, hightech, low-cost, and more creative than what has been said about them.

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## Oxford Handbooks Online

### Machine Translation: History, Development, and Limitations

Harold Somers

The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies

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#### Abstract and Keywords

Machine translation (MT) is a term used to describe a range of computer-based activities involving translation. This article reviews sixty years of history of MT research and development, concentrating on the essential difficulties and limitations of the task, and how the various approaches have attempted to solve, or more usually work round, these. History of MT is said to date from a period just after the Second World War during which the earliest computers had been used for code-breaking. In the late 1980s the field underwent a major change in direction with the emergence of a radically new way of doing MT. Two main approaches to MT have emerged and these are rule-based and statistics-based. These approaches owe little to conventional linguistic methods and ideas, but it must be recognized that the much faster development cycle has made functional versions of MT systems covering new language pairs become available.

Keywords: machine translation, code-breaking, rule-based, statistics-based, linguistic methods and ideas, language pairs

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#### 28.1 Introduction

Machine translation (MT) recently celebrated its sixtieth birthday, but it is still a relatively immature technology, even if the growth of the Internet has seen a widespread awareness and use of MT in various forms by a range of users that the early—and even more recent—pioneers and researchers could not have foreseen. ‘Machine translation’ is a term used to describe a range of computer-based activities involving translation. The somewhat archaic feel of the term reflects a long-distant age when computers, or ‘electronic brains’ were indeed mysterious ‘machines’, but the term has persisted in favour of more accurate notions of ‘automatic translation’ on the one hand and ‘computer-aided translation’ on the other, terms which reflect a distinction between programs which attempt the task of translation more or less directly and those which are designed to help humans with varying levels of expertise to perform the task.

Chapter 29 discusses in more detail possible applications of the technology, and Chapter 30 focuses on computer-based tools and resources for the translator. In this chapter we will review sixty years of history of MT research and development, concentrating on the essential difficulties and limitations of the task, and how the various approaches have attempted to solve, or more usually work round, these. The chapter will focus on how computational linguists have addressed translation as a problem, and will assume in the reader a general familiarity with computers from the point of view of users, without going into unwarranted detail about the specifics of the programs that have been developed.

#### 28.2 History

Automatic translation has been a dream for many years. Often found in modern science fiction, the idea perhaps

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surprisingly predates the invention of computers by a few centuries: universal languages in the form of numerical codes were proposed by several philosophers in the seventeenth century, most notably Leibniz, Descartes, and John Wilkins.

However, the history of MT is usually said to date from a period just after the Second World War during which the earliest computers had been used for code-breaking. The idea that similar techniques might be used to get computers to translate is attributed to the American mathematician and scientific research administrator Warren Weaver. Between 1947 and 1949, Weaver made contact with colleagues in the USA and abroad, trying to raise interest in this question (see Hutchins 2000a: 17–20). There was a fairly positive reaction to Weaver's ideas, and over the next ten to fifteen years, MT research groups started work in a number of countries—notably in the USA, where increasingly large grants from government, military, and private sources were awarded, but also in the USSR, Great Britain, Canada, and elsewhere. In the USA alone at least \$12 million and perhaps as much as \$20 million was invested in MT research (somewhere between \$150 million and \$500 million at today's rates).

In 1964 the US government decided to evaluate progress so far, and set up the Automated Language Processing Advisory Committee (ALPAC). Their report, published in 1966, was highly negative about MT, with very damaging consequences (for a discussion of the ALPAC report and its consequences, see Hutchins 2003a). Focusing on Russian—English MT in the USA, it concluded that MT was slower, less accurate, and twice as expensive as human translation, for which there was in any case not a huge demand. It concluded, infamously, that there was 'no immediate or predictable prospect of useful machine translation'. In fact, the ALPAC report instead proposed fundamental research in computational linguistics, and suggested that machine-aided translation might be feasible. The damage was done however, and MT research declined quickly, not only in the USA but elsewhere.

In retrospect, the conclusions of the ALPAC report could have been predicted. Early attempts were hampered by primitive technology, and a basic underestimation of the difficulty of the problem on the part of the researchers, who were mostly mathematicians and electrical engineers, rather than linguists. Indeed, theoretical (formal) linguistics was in its infancy at this time: Chomsky's revolutionary ideas were only just gaining widespread acceptance, and the difficulties of MT were already recognized by researchers such as Yehoshua Bar-Hillel, whose warnings about the 'semantic barrier' to translation predated the ALPAC report by several years (see Hutchins 2000b).

Despite the ALPAC report, the 1970s and early 1980s saw MT research taking place in Canada, western Europe, and Japan, where political and cultural needs were quite different. Canada's bilingual policy led to the establishment of a significant research group at the University of Montreal. In Europe, groups in France, Germany, and Italy worked on MT, and the Commission of the European Communities in Luxembourg decided to experiment with the Systran system (an American system which had survived the ALPAC purge thanks to private funding).

Systems developed during this period were based on contemporary ideas from structural linguistics and computer science: programs analysed the input text to identify linguistic constituents such as noun phrases and verb groups, and their relationships such as subject and object. The dictionaries would list the target-language equivalents, often identifying different translations depending on the source-language analysis. The software for each of these steps would be highly modular, and often designed to enable linguists and translators to write 'rules' and dictionary entries, without needing to know too much about how the computer programs actually worked.

By the mid-1980s, it was generally recognized that fully automatic high-quality translation of unrestricted texts (FAHQT) was not a goal that was going to be readily achievable in the near future. Researchers in MT started to look at ways in which usable and useful MT systems could be developed even if they fell short of this goal, including semi-automatic computer-based aids for translators, use of low-quality translations, and ways of restricting text input. All of these are discussed in more detail in Chapters 29 and 30. MT based on restricted or 'controlled' input was especially promising, and provided one of MT's greatest early success stories with the Météo system, developed at Montreal, which from 1977 until 2001, when it was replaced by a competitor system, was used to translate weather bulletins from English into French, a task which human translators found very tedious. During this period, Météo translated around 80,000 words a day.<sup>1</sup>

In the late 1980s the field underwent a major change in direction with the emergence of a radically new way of doing MT. Spurred on by successes in the neighbouring field of speech recognition, researchers at IBM wanted to try an alternative to the linguistic-rule-based approach, believing that the computer could 'learn' how to do

translations on the basis of a statistical analysis of previous translations. Given sufficient computing power, and sufficient data in the form of translations done previously, it was thought possible to calculate the most probable target words, based on the source words, and the most probable target word order, given the source sentence. We will describe the details of both rule-based and statistics-based approaches and discuss their limitations (and achievements) below. First, however, we will consider just what is involved in MT, whichever method is used, and discuss why it is such a difficult task.

### 28.3 Why (and to what extent) translation is hard for a computer

As all translators know, translation is not simply a matter of finding the target words that correspond to the words in the source text, and then getting the target grammar right. But even if this was all there was to it, it would still be a difficult task for a computer program. Let us start by suggesting that ‘translation’ involves understanding the meaning of the source text and rendering it in an appropriate form in the target language. Although ‘understanding’ and ‘meaning’ are vague terms, we can agree that at the least it involves selecting the correct sense of each individual word, and recognizing the relationship between the words, as expressed by the syntax of the source text.

#### 28.3.1 Lexical ambiguity

Just the task of word-sense selection can be difficult for the computer: many words have multiple meanings, whether as true homonyms (the standard example is *bank* meaning ‘side of a river’ and ‘financial institution’, though in fact even *bank* as a noun has a number of other meanings, and it can also function as a verb), or polysemous words which have related meanings such as *branch*, *leg*, *head*; and words like *bar* which have a range of meanings, more or less connected with (one of) its basic meaning(s) ‘length of metal’. Of course, the correct choice of target translation depends on correctly identifying the intended meaning. To add to the confusion, morphological inflection can introduce further ambiguities. Words like *number* and *tower* can be nouns in their own right, or inflected forms meaning ‘more numb’, or ‘something that tows’. Often homonyms represent different parts of speech (e.g. *round* can be a noun, verb, adjective, adverb, or preposition).

It is obvious that such words would need to be translated differently, but in addition there are plenty of words which, while not necessarily seen as ambiguous in the source language, give rise to varying translations in the target language. This may be because of more or less subtle distinctions made in the target language not made in the source language, for example in register and usage (French *domicile* vs. *maison* as translations of ‘home’), or, very commonly, in the way the real world is perceived and lexicalized: there are countless examples of this, such as German *Wand* vs. *Mauer* ‘wall’, Spanish *rincón* vs. *esquina* ‘corner’, Russian *голубой* (*goluboi*) vs. *синий* (*sinii*) ‘blue’, French *louer* ('hire' or 'rent'), Malay words for 'rice' (though not Eskimo words for 'snow', a now well-known myth—see Pullum 1991: 159–71). It is also common for sets of related words to fail to overlap neatly. For example, French and English *jambe* ‘leg’ and *pied* ‘foot’ correspond quite well, except that a chair *leg* in English is a *pied* in French, and an animal’s *patte* in French covers both the paw and the leg. Translators are familiar with these kinds of mismatches, and the fact that words do not correspond one-to-one between languages is well attested by the length of entries for words in a bilingual dictionary: on an average dictionary page, how many words have just one possible translation? Translators are also well aware of the difficulty in explaining why one translation is better than another, and herein lies the difficulty for MT programs: capturing that information, at least in the form of hard and fast rules that are always correct, is simply impossible.

What is possible, however, is to get it right some of the time. Some choices can be determined by the grammatical context. We mentioned the ambiguous word *round* above, but it can only be a noun in *Whose round is it?*, it must be an adjective in a *round trip*, and so on. Topical context can help: in a text about finances, *bank* is more likely to mean ‘financial institution’. And the other words in the text might give a clue: recognizing what a text is about may involve identifying the relevant semantic field of a chain of words, each of which might be individually ambiguous. To take the financial case again, we have *bank*, *pound*, *interest*, *charge*, *account*, *save*, *statement*, *stock*, *share*, and so on, all of which have multiple meanings and translations, but whose presence together in a given text can indicate the subject matter.

#### 28.3.2 Syntactic ambiguity

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A further source of ambiguity is the relationship between the words, as expressed by the syntax of the source text. Ambiguous sentences can result from the juxtaposition of multiple ambiguous words: usually humans do not immediately see the ambiguity, because they quickly understand the intended meaning, but for a computer this can be less obvious. It is convenient to illustrate this problem with genuinely ambiguous examples such as *Flying planes can be dangerous*, but it should be noted that equally a sentence like *Eating cakes can be satisfying* would also be ambiguous for a computer, unable to recognize that you can fly planes or planes can fly, whereas you can eat cakes, but cakes cannot eat. Other examples include so-called ‘attachment ambiguities’ such as *I read about the air crash in the jungle* (cf. ... *air crash in the paper*), or the now classic example *The man saw the girl in the park with a statue of a man on a horse with a telescope* where the ‘attachment’ of at least four of the prepositional phrases is ambiguous.

Sometimes MT programs can get away with a ‘free ride’ if the target language allows the same kind of ambiguity. Equally, MT can reveal previously unnoticed ambiguities by getting the translation wrong!

### 28.3.3 Subtleties of translation

As the preceding two subsections show, even the most basic aspects of translation can be difficult for a computer. Translators will quickly point out that just getting the correct word senses, and correctly analysing the underlying structure of the source text, is not sufficient to guarantee a good translation. The choice and appropriateness of target vocabulary and structures is also very difficult for MT programs; currently the tendency, whether a rule-based or statistical approach is taken, is for translations to reflect quite closely the structure of the source text, and this may not always be the most appropriate. For example, a nominalized structure such as *The lateness of the arrival of the train was a huge inconvenience* might be more naturally translated as *It was hugely inconvenient that the train arrived late*. Some structures may not be available in the target language, for example the prepositional passive in English (*This bed has been slept in*). For less closely related languages, of course, these differences can be even more exaggerated. On top of this, languages frequently differ in the amount of detail that they express. For example, translating from Chinese or Japanese into English, the translator must identify whether nouns are singular or plural, definite or indefinite, distinctions which neither language makes explicitly.

These subtleties apart, there are nevertheless situations where a more or less literal (‘structure-preserving’) translation will be at least adequate for the end user’s needs. We will discuss this further under the heading of ‘evaluation’.

## 28.4 How does MT work?

As mentioned in the previous section, two main approaches to MT have emerged: rule-based and statistics-based. In terms of basic research, it is fair to say that the statistics-based approach is now overwhelmingly dominant, though this dominance is not fully reflected in the marketplace, where, at least at the time of writing, the majority of commercial MT systems still use rule-based approaches. This perhaps reflects the main differences between the two approaches: rule-based systems tend to be more robust in the sense that they are easier to maintain, so that recurring translation problems can be fixed (by changing the ‘rules’ that they are using). But the major disadvantage is that they take many person-years of effort by expert linguists to develop. The best of the existing rule-based commercial MT programs have been in production for as much as twenty or thirty years! The advantage of statistics-based programs is that they can be developed much more quickly—a matter of days once the bilingual data has been collected and perhaps cleaned up—but cannot so easily be fine-tuned once they are up and running.

### 28.4.1 Rule-based approaches

The way rule-based MT programs work is more or less intuitive, and reflects the way a traditionally taught language student who knows about computer programming might go about the task. Working usually on a sentence-by-sentence basis, the first task is to analyse the individual words: dictionary look-up will identify the part of speech of the word, and the range of possible meanings/translations. For languages which have rich and/or straightforward systems of inflection and derivation, individual word forms might not themselves be in the dictionary, but need to be analysed by morphology rules: for example *cats* is the regularly formed plural of *cat*, and so need not appear in

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the dictionary as it can be correctly analysed on the fly.

Most MT programs will then make some attempt to analyse the internal structure of each sentence, identifying syntactic relations such as subject and object, groups of words belonging together (e.g. verb groups like *should have been eaten*), and in doing so resolving some of the lexical ambiguities discussed above.

This analysis will determine the choice of target words while, as already mentioned, the tendency is for the target structure to be closely modelled on the structure of the source sentence.

When sentences are very complicated, most programs focus on identifying as many of the ‘building blocks’ as possible, rather than insisting on getting an overall structure for the whole sentence, and this can explain why commercial MT programs seem to get part of the translation right, but then fall to pieces. As an experiment, we tried translating a structurally complex sentence using a well-known on-line translation program which is known to use a rule-based method,<sup>2</sup> as follows. In our experiment, we chose French, German, and Spanish as target languages.

*Input:* Gas pump prices rose last time oil stocks fell

Les prix de l’essence de gaz ont monté des actions pétrolières de la fois passée sont tombés

GasAbgabepreise stiegen Ölaktien des letzten Malen fielen

Los precios en el surtidor del gas subieron acción de aceite de la vez última bajaron

In the English sentence, each word is at least noun/verb ambiguous, and the lack of function words makes it a difficult sentence to analyse. In each case the program correctly identified *rose* and *fell* as the verbs, but chose the wrong meaning of *stocks* (as in *stock exchange*) and incorrectly analysed *last time* as modifying *stocks* (cf. *first class oil stocks*). It is unclear where the German translation of *gas pump* as *GasAbgabe* comes from. Although the resulting translations are quite garbled, the output shows that at least the first part of the input (*gas pump prices rose*) has been correctly analysed. We can see how much better the system does when the input is less ambiguous:

*Input:* Gas pump prices rise every time oil stocks fall

Élévation de prix de l’essence de gaz chaque fois que les actions pétrolières tombent

GasAbgabepreise steigen, jedes Mal wenn Ölaktien fallen

Subida de los precios en el surtidor del gas cada vez que cae la acción de aceite

Of course we can continue to change the input sentence so as to reduce its ambiguity, and get translations of increasing quality. More important is what this exercise shows about how the program works. We can see that there are rules applying to the noun phrases, changing the word order round in French and Spanish, attempting to make a compound noun in German. Agreement between subject and verb and within noun groups is handled well, as is word order in German and Spanish. All of these will be covered by general and specific rules that make up the different parts of the program.

### 28.4.2 Statistics-based approaches

The overwhelmingly predominant method in MT research is now the statistics-based approach. This is based on the idea that a computer program can ‘learn’ how to translate by analysing huge amounts of data from previous translations and then assessing statistical probabilities to decide how to translate a new input. Depending on your prejudices, this counterintuitive approach works surprisingly well, or unsurprisingly badly.

The key to the endeavour is massive amounts of data in the form of ‘aligned’ parallel text, usually referred to as ‘bilingual corpora’ or ‘bitexts’ (Harris 1988); alignment is mainly sentence-by-sentence, though word and phrase alignments are also extracted semi-automatically. Early experiments were carried out on data such as the multilingual parliamentary proceedings from the Canadian, Hong Kong, and European parliaments, where all speeches and other documents are translated by humans, usually (though not always) to a high quality. A wide variety of bitexts are now used for this purpose.

The statistical analysis of the data is broken down into two main areas. The first, the so-called ‘translation model’, takes the parallel data and estimates probabilities for the correspondences between individual words and phrases in the two languages. Put crudely, the program will ‘learn’, for example, to what extent the French word *chien*

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corresponds to English *dog* based on the percentage of sentences containing the word *chien* in French the translation of which contains the word *dog* in English (taking into account also the number of cases where *chien* occurs but *dog* doesn't, and vice versa).

This rather simple model is of course undermined by the fact that words do not generally correspond one-to-one across languages. Some words are translated by multi-word phrases; others have different translations depending on the context; and of course many words have different surface forms depending on grammatical features such as case and gender agreement, or inflections for tense or number. For example, the word *all* might correspond to the Spanish words *todo*, *toda*, *todos*, and *todas* with varying likelihood. The translation models take account of this by calculating probabilities for a wide range of lexical correspondences, and because this is all done completely automatically, the analyses may include accidental 'false' alignments. To address the problem of multi-word translations (e.g. *kite* is *cerf volant* in French), the model also learns phrase correspondences for phrases of varying lengths in both source and target languages. This also helps to capture grammatical features such as agreement (e.g. the two-word sequence *la table* is much more likely than */e table*). Phrases that are  $n$  words long are known as  $n$ -grams. Notice that because the process is entirely automatic, the probabilities for all occurring  $n$ -grams are learned, without concern for whether they are linguistically coherent. For example, the six-word phrase *the big house on the hill* involves four trigrams ( $n = 3$ ), including *big house on* and *house on the*, neither of which is a linguistic constituent in traditional terms. For the translation models, correspondences are usually limited to  $1:n$  and  $n:1$ , for values of  $n$  up to about 3 or 4. This is for processing reasons, and also because for larger values of  $n$ , the sequences of words do not occur sufficiently frequently in the data to allow reliable statistics to be collected.

A further element of translation that must be taken into account by the model is the extent to which languages differ in word order. So in many systems, as well as the word and phrase correspondences, a so-called 'distortion' model is learned, i.e. the extent to which a word appearing in a certain position in the source sentence will move to another position in the target sentence.

Alongside the translation model, the systems also learn a target-language model in much the same way, i.e. calculating the probabilities that certain word sequences ( $n$ -grams) are legitimate. Again,  $n$ -grams for various values of  $n$  are considered, the only limitations being how much information can be stored, and how reliable that information becomes when the data it is based on becomes too 'sparse'. In some systems, the language model can be enhanced by learning about part-of-speech sequences as well as word  $n$ -grams.

The various models are all the facts of language and translation that are learned by the system when it is being set up. How do these systems actually translate? The key is the third element of the system, known as a 'decoder', whose job is to take the input sentence, consider first the various probabilities for all the individual words and phrases in the translation model, which will give a range of possible target words and phrases, and then put these through the target-language model, to come out in the end with the most probable translation, according to the system's statistics. This involves a massive juggling of probabilities to find the highest-scoring combination, which may involve many compromises, and depends on mathematical and statistical methods that are too complex to characterize here.

It should be obvious that the performance of the system will depend at least in part on the quality of the data: systems should translate best texts which are most similar to the material they have been trained on; or, to put it the other way round, systems should be trained on data that is most like the material they will be used to translate. It should also be the case that the more data used for training, the better the quality: this is only true inasmuch as the data is more or less homogeneous. This has not been the case for the development of some systems for language pairs where the huge amounts of parallel data needed are not so readily available; and where heterogeneous material has been used, the results can be more patchy.

Bearing in mind the source of data on which statistics-based MT systems are based, one surprising feature of such systems is that, given a sentence that is close to or identical to one that features in the training data, they do not necessarily produce the same translation, in the manner of a translation-memory system, familiar to most translators. This is because the parallel texts are used to learn the translation models, but are not consulted at run-time. Clearly, a type of translation-memory look-up could be incorporated into a statistical MT system, and this might improve some of the output, as has recently been shown by Zhechev and van Genabith (2010).

## 28.5 How MT output is or should be evaluated

It is perfectly natural to ask ‘How good is MT?’, and this question has been an integral part of research and development of MT since the very first attempts all those years ago. In fact there is a huge literature on MT evaluation. It is now generally agreed that there is no single way to evaluate MT, there being different evaluation methods for different stakeholders—users (whether ordinary people or professional linguists), developers, vendors, and so on. This also reflects the generally agreed principle that MT is more or less suitable to different degrees for different purposes. Historically, most evaluation methods have involved human judgements of translation quality, but recently there has been a keen interest in automatic evaluation methods. In this section we will briefly discuss some of the main issues.

### 28.5.1 Traditional evaluation methods

MT researchers and developers would probably agree that the most important question in MT evaluation is ‘fitness for purpose’. There is general agreement that MT is not suitable for all translation tasks, and a characterization of the tasks for which it is most suitable would include (a) cases where a rough translation is adequate, and/or where the choice is between MT or no translation, (b) cases where the text is uncomplicated and so a fairly literal translation is likely to be quite good, or where the MT system is tailor-made to suit the kind of text being translated, and (c) cases where MT is just the first step in a process which will be taken up by trained professionals.

Clearly, evaluation will be different for each scenario. In (a) for example, the evaluation will ask whether the translation enabled the user to understand the text sufficiently to get something out of it. This scenario is referred to as ‘translation for assimilation’, and is probably the typical use of online MT systems for translation of foreign-language webpages. Case (b) might revolve around how much the machine-translated text has to be fixed up (‘post-edited’), while in case (c) the evaluation might focus on economic factors such as time/money saved, and human factors such as translator/post-editor job satisfaction.

It is reasonable to state that professional translators, who are able to judge the quality of the translation themselves, will often have a low opinion of MT output, which only rarely will do as good a job as they might have done themselves; they should bear the above-mentioned criteria in mind, and always consider that actually there are very few scenarios in which they are the intended users of the software. One regret frequently expressed in the MT research community is the lack of involvement by translators in MT research. This is less the case when it comes to computer-based aids for translators (see Chapters 29 and 30) but, considering the methods currently used to develop MT systems, one can see that the particular skills and insights that translators have are not likely to contribute much to the basic approach.

Evaluation methods involving bilinguals (who may or may not be translators) mostly involve subjective ratings of features such as accuracy (or fidelity) of the translation with respect to the original and naturalness (or fluency) of the target text (which can also be judged by monolinguals, though of course they would not be able to recognize a fluent but inaccurate translation). Other evaluations involving translators working with MT output might measure post-editing effort (for example in key-strokes),<sup>3</sup> time taken to post-edit compared to translation from scratch, and so on.

Evaluation methods for people who do not know both languages are more difficult to set up. A very popular technique among lay users (especially journalists, it seems), is ‘back-and-forth’ or ‘round-trip’ translation, where a text is translated into a foreign language and then back into the user’s own language. This is a technique which should be heartily discouraged, since, as Somers (2007a) discusses, a good round-trip could disguise a bad outward translation, and a bad round-trip could be the fault of a bad return translation of a perfectly acceptable outward translation. Equally misleading are evaluations where an idiom or slang phrase is translated. A much-repeated story tells of the MT system that translated *out of sight, out of mind* as *blind idiot*, and *The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak* as *The whisky is good but the meat is rotten*, but these stories have been around since the very beginning of research on MT, are certainly apocryphal (knowing how the early MT systems worked, the suggested translations are entirely implausible), and indeed probably predate MT research and have referred to incompetent human translators (see Hutchins 1995).<sup>4</sup>

### 28.5.2 Automatic evaluation

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Evaluations of MT output by human judges are expensive to conduct, and prone to subjectivity. For this reason, there has been a move in MT circles towards automatic evaluation measures, and indeed these have now become the norm. They involve comparing the MT output with one or more ‘reference translations’, done by humans. The simplest and perhaps crudest of these (though it remains the most widely used method) is the BLEU metric (Papineni et al. 2002), which measures the overlap in terms of sequences of words (*n*-grams) between the MT output and the model translation(s). Early reports suggested a close correlation between BLEU scores and human judgements (e.g. Coughlin 2003), though more recent work suggests that this correlation may not be as strong as previously thought (Callison-Burch, Osborne, and Koehn 2006). Being fully automatic, BLEU permits huge volumes of MT output to be evaluated, just as long as model translations are available. Problems with BLEU, and close derivatives, were quickly noted, especially that it penalizes valid translations that differ substantially in choice of target words or structures (Callison-Burch et al. 2006). This deficiency has been addressed with automatic measures permitting close synonyms, as measured with reference to structured vocabularies such as WordNet, taking morphological inflections into account (e.g. METEOR, Banerjee and Lavie 2006), and considering underlying linguistic structures (e.g. Giménez and Márquez 2007). While these measures may be quite effective for the coarse-grained task of comparing systems in general, they are not suitable for making fine-grained comparisons, e.g. on a sentence-by-sentence basis (Way and Gough 2005).

Callison-Burch et al. (2007) recently compared the performance of eleven different evaluation methodologies for eight language pairs with extensive human evaluations (330 person-hours) including judgements of fluency and accuracy, as well as comparative judgements ranking MT output on a sentence-by-sentence basis. Fifteen different MT systems were evaluated. The study found that fluency and accuracy judgements were highly correlated, either because the two aspects of translation are highly interdependent or, more likely, because judges are unable to judge one independently of the other. The five automatic measures that had the highest correlation with human judgements were, in order, Giménez and Márquez's (2007) measure of semantic role overlap, ParaEval (Zhou, Lin, and Hovy 2006), which matches hypothesis and reference translations using paraphrases that are extracted from parallel corpora in an unsupervised fashion, then METEOR, BLEU, and TER, already described.

### 28.6 Conclusion

Both MT research and its deployment have had a chequered history, with some false starts and mixed receptions, but both seem to be in a fairly healthy state at the time of writing. On the research front, the ‘new’ paradigm of statistical MT (actually now in its twentieth year: see Koehn 2009) not only dominates MT research but is by far the best represented topic of study in the general field of computational linguistics. That these approaches owe little to conventional linguistic methods and ideas is to some a source of regret, or at least a cause for caution (see Kay 2006, Spärck Jones 2007), but on the positive side it must be recognized that the much faster development cycle has meant that functional versions of MT systems covering new language pairs become available. This is reflected in the wide variety, for example on on-line translation websites, of available language pairs—a development that is discussed in more detail in Chapter 29, along with other directions that MT research is taking.

### Further reading and relevant sources

For a thorough review of the history of MT up to the mid 1980s see Hutchins (1986). Also of interest is Hutchins's (2000) collection of (auto-)biographical memoirs of MT's early pioneers. Approaches to rule-based MT are covered by Hutchins and Somers (1992) and Trujillo (1999). For an accessible description of how SMT works, see Knight and Koehn (2007, available on-line). Regarding evaluation, as mentioned in the text there is a huge literature: for a recent survey, see White (2003). Automatic evaluation is an ongoing research topic: Callison-Burch et al. (2007) critically compare a large number of different methodologies.

### Notes:

(1) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_machine\\_translation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_machine_translation)

(2) <http://www.systran.co.uk>, 2 November 2009.

(3) This measure is now available as an automatic evaluation method (see next section), Translation Edit Rate

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(TER) (Snover, Dorr, and Schwartz 2006).

(4) <http://www.hutchinsweb.me.uk/MTNI-11-1995.pdf>.

### **Harold Somers**

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## Recent Applications of Machine Translation

John Hutchins

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### [-] Abstract and Keywords

Many large companies have included methods of controlling the input language to minimize problems of disambiguation to improve the quality of machine translation (MT). In the large-scale enterprise systems, MT is used to produce drafts, which are then edited by bilingual personnel. A significant development has been the introduction of specialized systems, designed for Internet service providers and for large corporations to supply and edit translations of their own webpages localized to their domain, and for cross-language communication with customers. MT also finds its application in healthcare communication, the military field, and translation for foreign tourists. The future for MT lies in developing hybrid systems combining the best of the statistical and rule-based approaches. A specific target of MT for immigrants or minorities has been the translation of subtitles for television programmes. Apart from minorities and immigrants, there are other disadvantaged members of society now beginning to be helped by MT-related systems.

Keywords: input language, machine translation, cross-language communication, hybrid systems, subtitles, edit translations

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### 29.1 Introduction

Until the middle of the 1990s there were just two basic types of machine translation (MT) system. The first and oldest was the traditional large-scale system mounted on mainframe computers in large companies. Its purpose was to produce publishable translations, so its results were revised ('post-edited') by human translators or editors familiar with both source and target languages. There was opposition from translators (particularly those with the task of post-editing) to the use of this system, but the advantages of fast and consistent output has made large-scale MT cost-effective. In order to improve the quality of the raw MT output, many large companies included methods of 'controlling' the input language (by restricting vocabulary and syntactic structures): by such means, the problems of disambiguation and alternative interpretations of structure could be minimized and the quality of the output could be improved. Companies such as Xerox used MT systems with a 'controlled language' from the early 1990s: many companies followed their example, and the Smart Corporation specializes to this day in setting up controlled language MT systems for large companies in North America.<sup>1</sup> In a few cases, it was possible to develop systems specifically for the particular 'sublanguage' of the texts to be translated (as in the Météo system for weather forecasts: Grimaila and Chandioux 1992). Indeed, nearly all systems operating in large organizations are in some way 'adapted' to the subject areas they operate in: earth moving machines (Caterpillar: Nyberg, Mitamura, and Huijsen 2003), job applications (JobBank in Canada: McIntosh 2009), health reports (Global Health Intelligence Network: Blench 2007), patents (Japan Patent Information Office: Bani 2009), health and social welfare (Pan American Health Organization: Vasconcellos and Leon 1985), police data (ProLingua),<sup>2</sup> and many more. These large-scale applications of MT continue to expand and develop, and they are certain to do so into the foreseeable future.<sup>3</sup>

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Included in such expansion will undoubtedly be the application of MT to the localization of products. Localization became a specialist application of MT and translation memories in the early 1990s.<sup>4</sup> Initially stimulated by the need of software producers to market versions of their systems in other languages, simultaneously or very closely following the launch of the version in the original language (usually English), localization has become a necessity in the global markets. Given the time pressures, and the many languages to be translated into, MT seemed the obvious solution. In addition, the documentation (e.g. software manuals) was both internally repetitive and changed little from one product to another and from one edition to the next. It was possible to use translation memories and to develop controlled terminologies for MT systems. The process involves more than just translation of texts. Localization means the adaptation of products to particular circumstances, e.g. dates (day-month-year vs. month-day-year), times (12-hour vs. 24-hour), address conventions and abbreviations, reformatting (re-paragraphing), and even restructuring complete texts to suit expectations of recipients. (See Chapters 18 and 27.)

The second utilization of MT before the mid 1990s was software on personal computer (PC) systems.<sup>5</sup> The first such systems appeared in the early 1980s soon after the appearance of PCs. They were followed by many companies marketing PCs—including most of the Japanese manufacturers of PCs—and covering an increasingly wide range of language pairs on an increasingly wide range of operating systems. While desktop PCs continue to be manufactured and used, this method of delivering MT will continue. What has always been uncertain is how purchasers have been using these systems. In the case of large-scale (mainframe) ‘enterprise’ systems, it is clear that MT is used to produce drafts which are then edited by bilingual personnel. This may also be the case for PC-based systems, i.e. it may be that they have been and are used to create draft translations which users edit to a higher quality. On the other hand, it seems more likely that some users want just to get some idea of the contents (the basic ‘message’) of foreign-language texts and are not concerned about the quality of translations. This usage is generally referred to as ‘assimilation’ (in contrast to the aim of translating texts into a ‘foreign’ language, referred to as ‘dissemination’). We know (anecdotally) that some users of PC-based MT systems have trusted them too much and have sent out ‘raw’ (unedited) MT translations as if they were as good as human translations. However, it is an unfortunate fact that we do not know in any detail how PC systems have been and are being used. We know that sales of systems continue to be high enough for manufacturers to remain in business over many years, but it is suspected by many observers that purchasers use systems rarely after initial enthusiasm, once they learn how poor the quality of MT output can be.

Mainframe, client-server, and PC systems are overwhelmingly ‘general purpose’ systems, i.e. they are built to deal with texts in any subject domain. Of course, ‘enterprise’ systems (particularly controlled-language systems) are over time focused on particular subject areas, and adaptation to new areas is offered by most large MT systems (such as Systran). A few PC-based systems are available for texts in specific subject areas. Examples are the English/Japanese Transer systems for medical texts and patents.<sup>6</sup> On the whole, however, PC systems deal with specific subjects by the availability of subject glossaries, which can be ranked in preference by users. For some systems the range of dictionaries is very wide, embracing most engineering topics, computer science, business and marketing, law, sports, cookery, music, etc.

### 29.2 Special Devices, On-line MT

From the middle of the 1990s onwards, these two basic types of MT systems have been joined by a range of other types. First should be mentioned the obvious development from PC systems: the numerous systems for hand-held devices. There are a bewildering variety of ‘pocket translators’ in the marketplace. Many, such as the Ectaco range of special devices,<sup>7</sup> are in effect computerized versions of the familiar phrasebook or pocket dictionary, and they are clearly marketed primarily to the tourist and business traveller. The dictionary sizes are often quite small, and where they include phrases, they are obviously limited. However, they are sold in large numbers and for a very wide range of language pairs. As with PC-based systems, there is no indication of how successful in actual use they may be: it cannot be much different from the ‘success’ of traditional printed phrase books. (Users may be able to ask their way to the bus station, for example, but they may not be able to understand the answer.) Since the early 2000s, many of these handheld devices have included voice output of phrases, an obvious attraction for those users unfamiliar with the pronunciation of the phrases which may be output.

While many of these automated phrasebooks and dictionaries are purchased on special-purpose devices, there are an increasing number of manufacturers of software for mobile telephones. This software is seen as an obvious

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extension of their text facilities. Text messages can be translated and sent in other languages. The range of languages is not so far very wide, limited on the whole to the commercially dominant languages: English, French, German, and Spanish. It can be predicted that software for mobile telephones will eventually supersede software for special-purpose devices, particularly as more of them provide direct access to on-line MT services.

This has been the second major change since the middle of the 1990s: the availability of free MT services on the Internet (Gaspari and Hutchins 2007). Online MT services appeared in the early 1990s but they were not free. In 1988 Systran in France offered a subscription to its translation software using the French postal service's Minitel network. At about the same time, Fujitsu made its Atlas English-Japanese and Japanese-English systems available through the on-line service Nifty-serve. Then in 1992 CompuServe launched its MT service (based on the Intergraph DP/Translator), initially restricted to selected forums but proving highly popular, and in 1994 Globalink offered an on-line subscription service: texts were submitted on-line and translations returned by e-mail. A similar service was provided by Systran Express. However, it was the launch of AltaVista's Babelfish service in 1997 (based on the various Systran MT systems) that caused the greatest publicity. Not only was it free, but results were (virtually) immediate. Within the next few years, the Babelfish service was joined by FreeTranslation (using the Intergraph system), Gist-in-Time, ProMT, PARS, and many others; in most cases, these were on-line versions of already existing PC-based (or mainframe) systems. The great attraction of these services was (and is) that they are free to users (even if not to providers). It is evidently the expectation of the developers that free on-line use will lead to sales of translation software—although the evidence for this has not been shown—or that it will encourage the use of the fee-based 'valued-added' postediting services offered to users by some providers (e.g. FreeTranslation). While on-line MT has undoubtedly raised the profile of MT for the general public, there have of course been drawbacks.

To most users 'discovering' on-line MT services, the idea of automatic translation has usually been something completely new, despite the availability of translation software. Attracted by the possibilities, many users have 'tested' the service by inputting for translation sentences containing idiomatic phrases, ambiguous words, and complex structures, and even proverbs and deliberately opaque sayings. A favourite method of 'evaluation' was and continues to be 'back-and-forth' or 'round-trip' translation, i.e. translation of a text into another language and then back into the original—a method which might appear valid to the uninitiated but which is not at all satisfactory (see Chapter 28, and Somers 2007a). Not surprisingly, they often found that the results were unintelligible, that MT was liable to 'faulty' and 'inaccurate' results, and that it suffered from many limitations, findings all well known to company users and to purchasers of translation software, not to mention researchers and developers. Numerous commentators have enjoyed finding fault with on-line MT and, by implication, with MT itself. Users have undoubtedly been gravely disappointed by the poor quality of much of MT, where they are capable of judging it. There is no doubt that the less knowledge users have of the language of the original texts the more value they attach to the MT output; and some users must have found that on-line MT enabled them to read texts which they would have previously had to pass over.

However, we know very little (indeed almost nothing) about who uses on-line MT and what for. We do not know their ages, backgrounds, knowledge of languages; we do not know how many translate only into their native language, how many use on-line MT to translate into an unknown foreign language, how many are translators using MT as rough drafts, how many use the subject glossaries available, and so forth. Almost all that we do know are the surprising facts that translation of webpages is very much a minor use (no more than about 15 per cent at best), that the average length of texts submitted is just twenty words, and that more than 50 per cent of submissions are one- or two-word phrases (Gaspari and Hutchins 2007). It had been anticipated by the providers of these services that longer texts would be submitted—the usual limitation to 150 words is clearly no impediment—and that much of the translation would be of webpages. The surprisingly low submission of texts longer than a few words seems to suggest that online MT is being used primarily for dictionary consultation, and perhaps therefore by people with some familiarity with foreign languages, despite the availability of many free on-line dictionaries, and the inherent unsuitability of MT for this task, since it generally offers just one translation for any given input word, whereas a dictionary will offer a range of alternatives. Whatever the ways people are using them, overall usage of on-line MT continues to increase exponentially (e.g. FreeTranslation from 50,000 in 1999 to 3.4 million in 2006; the totals for Babelfish are much higher).

The translation of webpages—a facility provided by PC-based systems before the on-line MT services became available—has complications in addition to the obvious problems of satisfactorily and intelligibly rendering the often

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colloquial and culture-dependent nature of the texts. Many webpages include text in graphic format, which no MT system can deal with, and therefore often much of the webpage will be untranslated. This may account for the low usage of on-line MT systems for webpage translation. However, it is all the more surprising that so many website developers and owners recommend users to use on-line MT services for translation of their webpages (Gaspari and Somers 2007). It is clear that they do not appreciate the potentially poor results of MT, nor are they aware of consequent negative impacts on their company or products.

A recent development is systems designed for website localization. As mentioned above, localization became a specialist application of MT and translation memories in the early 1990s, and it has become a major application of MT. The extension into website localization was an obvious move, which did not come, however, until after 2000. The most significant development has been the introduction of specialized systems, notably IBM Websphere,<sup>8</sup> which are designed for Internet service providers and for large corporations to supply and edit translations of their own webpages localized to their specific domain, as well as for cross-language communication with customers and for providing 'gist' translations internally.

The limitations of MT when dealing with colloquial and elliptical 'normal' language—as opposed to the formal written texts of books and magazines—is highlighted by its problems with e-mail. Just as most translation software has provided facilities for translating webpages, many systems seek to embrace e-mail text as well, though with what success or user satisfaction is unknown. Few researchers have focused specifically on this type of text—those that have are mainly in Japan and Korea—and even fewer have marketed such systems. An exception is Translation,<sup>9</sup> which offers on-line translation of e-mails for companies. Subscriptions vary according to the level of service, and whether web-based or located on a client-server system.

Even more challenging perhaps is the language of chatroom and social networking sites. Some tentative attempts have been made to deal with chatroom conversation: Condon and Miller (2002) illustrate the similarities of such texts with spoken language and the similarities of their shared problems. But the huge possibilities of devising MT for social networking in general appear to have not yet been tackled—perhaps because all users expect everything to be in (some variant of) English.

### 29.3 Speech Translation

As mentioned earlier, an increasing number of phrasebook systems offer voice output. This facility is also increasingly available for translation software—it seems that Globalink in 1995 was the earliest—and it is likely that it will be an additional feature for on-line MT some time in the future. But automatic speech synthesis of text-to-text translation is not at all the same as genuine speech-to-speech translation, the focus of research efforts in Japan (ATR), USA (Carnegie-Mellon University), Germany (Verbmobil project), and Italy (ITC-irst, NESPOLE) since the late 1980s,<sup>10</sup> and many more recent projects besides. The research in speech translation is beset with numerous problems, not just variability of voice input but also the nature of spoken language. By contrast with written language, spoken language is colloquial, elliptical, context-dependent, interpersonal, and primarily in the form of dialogues. MT has focused mainly on grammatically well-formed technical and scientific language and has tended to neglect informal modes of communication. Speech translation therefore represents a radical departure from traditional MT. Some of the difficulties of speech translation may be overcome by adding visual clues to reduce ambiguities, i.e. as multimodal systems to aid dialogue communication (e.g. Burger, Costantini, and Pianesi 2003). Complexities of speech translation are, however, generally reduced by restricting communication to relatively narrow domains: a favourite for many researchers has been cooperative dialogues as in business communication, booking of hotel rooms, negotiating dates of meetings, etc. From these long-term projects no commercial systems have appeared yet. There are, however, other areas of speech translation which do have working (but not yet commercial) systems. These are communications between patient and doctor and other healthcare specialists, communication by soldiers with civilians in military (field) operations, and communication in the tourism domain.

The potentialities of healthcare communication applications are obvious, particularly for communication involving immigrant and other 'minority' language speakers. However, there are different views of the most effective and most appropriate methods. In some cases this may be one-way communication, e.g. from a doctor or medical professional (nurse, paramedic, pharmacist, etc.) asking the patient a question, which might be answered nonverbally or by a simple 'yes' or 'no'. In other cases, communication may be two-way or interactive, e.g. patient

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and doctor consulting a screen displaying possible health conditions, or communication may be via a phrasebook-type system with voice input to locate phrases and spoken output of the translated phrase (Rayner and Bouillon 2002), and/or with interactive multimodal assistance (Seligman and Dillinger 2006). Nearly all systems are currently somewhat inflexible and limited to specific narrow domains. Speech translation itself may be only one factor in successful healthcare-related consultation, since cultural and environmental issues are also involved; and whether medical personnel should be the initiators and ‘in control’ is another issue: in some circumstances the patients are likely to be regular users and could be more familiar with a language-specific device than the medical professional, and might also use it in other than health-related situations.<sup>11</sup>

However, before such issues of usability and appropriateness can be resolved, the robustness of speech translation even in highly constrained domains has to be satisfactory: the weakest point is still automatic speech recognition, even though domain-specific translation itself is also still inadequate.

In the military field, the MT team at Carnegie-Mellon University developed a speech translation system (DIPLOMAT)<sup>12</sup> which can be quickly adapted to new languages, i.e. languages spoken in areas where the US Army is deployed (Serbo-Croat, Haitian Creole, Korean, Arabic). The system was based on an example-based MT approach; spoken language was matched against phrases (examples) in the database and the translations output by a speech synthesis module. An evaluation in the field concluded that the speech components were satisfactory but the MT component was not adequate: translation was far too slow in practice, and a feedback (‘back translation’) module enabling users to check the appropriateness of the translation introduced additional errors. Further development was not pursued. In the same domain, however, it seems that another system on a hand-held PDA device has been more successful. This device (Phraselator, from VoxTec), contains a database of phrases in the foreign language which the English-speaking user can select from a screen of English phrases.<sup>13</sup> Output is not synthesized speech but prerecorded by native speakers. The device has been used by the US Army in various operations in Croatia, Iraq, and Indonesia, including civilian emergency situations (e.g. the tsunami relief in 2005), by the US Navy, by law enforcement officers, etc. A wide range of languages is now covered, and the device and its software are now more widely available commercially. Adaptation to medical domains is being planned.

One of the most obvious applications of speech translation is by tourists in foreign countries. Many of the organizations mentioned earlier are involved in developing systems—most utilizing the Basic Travel Expression Corpus of Japanese-English developed by ATR—and often extending investigation to Chinese-English, Arabic-English and Italian-English. A welcome feature of this activity is the collaborative efforts and the exchange of resources by research groups.<sup>14</sup> In many cases, translation is restricted to standard phrases extracted from corpora of dialogues and interactions in tourist situations. However, in recent years, researchers have moved to systems capable of dealing with spontaneous speech, i.e. something more like real-life applications. Despite the amount of research in an apparently highly restricted domain, it is clear that commercially viable products lie some way in the future. In the meantime, for some years yet, the market will see only the voice-output phrase-book devices and systems mentioned above.

### 29.4 Rapid Development, Open Source, Hybrid Systems

As mentioned already, the rapid development of systems is becoming recognized as important for MT applications. One of the advantages of statistical MT (SMT)—the focus of most MT research in the early decades of the present century (see further Chapter 28)—is claimed to be the rapid production of systems in new language pairs.<sup>15</sup> Researchers do not need to know the languages involved as long as they have confidence in the reliability of the corpora which they work with. This is in contrast to the slower development of rule-based (RBMT) systems which require careful lexical and grammatical analyses by researchers familiar with both source and target languages. Nearly all commercially available MT systems (whether for mainframe, client-server, or PC) are rule-based systems, the result of many years of development (cf. Hutchins 1986). SMT systems have only recently appeared on the marketplace. The Language Weaver company,<sup>16</sup> an offshoot of the research group at the University of Southern California, began marketing SMT systems in 2002. It began with Arabic-English and has now added many other language pairs. Many users of these systems are US government agencies involved in information gathering and analysis operations (see below). Perhaps more significantly, the online translation service offered by Google is based on SMT systems.<sup>17</sup>

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Increasingly, resources for MT, both rule-based and statistical, are widely available as ‘open source’ materials. The Apertium system from Spain has been the basis for freely available rule-based MT systems for Spanish, Portuguese, Galician, Catalan, etc.<sup>18</sup> There are other open-source translation systems (less widely used), such as GPLTrans for Dutch, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Spanish, etc.<sup>19</sup> but it is to be expected that many more will be available in the coming years. Most of the resources needed to build an SMT system are freely available, for example the Moses system,<sup>20</sup> developed by a consortium of many of the leading SMT researchers.

Many researchers believe that the future for MT lies in the development of hybrid systems combining the best of the statistical and rule-based approaches. In the meantime, however, until a viable framework for hybrid MT appears, experiments are being made with ‘multi-engine’ systems and with adopting statistical techniques with rule-based (and example-based) systems. The multi-engine approach involves the translation of a given text by two or more different MT architectures (e.g. SMT and RBMT) and the integration of outputs for the selection of the best output, for which statistical techniques can be used. The idea is attractive and quality improvements have been achieved, but it is difficult to see this approach as a feasible economic method for large-scale or commercial MT. An example of appending statistical techniques to RBMT is the experiment (by a number of researchers in Spain, Japan, and Canada) of ‘statistical post-editing’ (Diaz de Illaraza, Labaka, and Sarasola 2008). In essence, the method involves the submission of the output of an RBMT system to a ‘language model’ of the kind found in SMT systems. One advantage of the approach is that the deficiencies of RBMT for less-resourced languages may be overcome.

### 29.5 Language Coverage, Especially ‘Minority’ Languages

The language pairs most often in demand and available commercially are those from and to English. At the time of writing, the most frequent pairs (for on-line MT services and apparently for PC-based systems) are English-Spanish and English-Japanese. These are followed by (in no particular order) English coupled with French, German, Italian, Chinese and Korean, and French-German. Other European languages such as Czech, Polish, Bulgarian, Romanian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Estonian, and Finnish are more rarely found on the market. Until the middle of the 1990s, Arabic-English and Arabic-French were also rare, but this situation has changed for obvious political reasons. Other Asian languages have also been relatively neglected: Malay, Indonesian, Thai, Vietnamese, and even the major languages of India—Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Punjabi, Tamil, etc.—though this situation is slowly changing. African languages have been mostly ignored, apart from relatively recent work in South Africa on languages with official status in that country. In terms of numbers of speakers, these are not ‘minor’ languages: many are among the world’s most spoken languages. The reason is a combination of low commercial viability and lack of language resources (whether for rule-based lexicons and grammars or for statistical MT corpora).

The categorization of a language as a ‘minority language’ is determined geographically. In the UK, world languages such as Hindi, Punjabi, and Bengali are minority languages, because the major language is English. In the context of the European Union, languages such as Welsh, Irish, Estonian, Lithuanian are minor, whether official languages of a country or not. From a global point of view, ‘minor’ languages are those which are not commercially or economically significant. The language coverage of MT systems reflects this global perspective, and so the problems and needs of speakers of ‘lesser’ languages were long ignored, although recently they have had more attention: in Spain with MT systems for Catalan, Basque, and Galician; in Eastern Europe with systems for Czech, Estonian, Latvian, and Bulgarian; and in South and Southeast Asia with MT activity on Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, Thai, Vietnamese, etc. This growing interest is reflected in the holding of regular workshops on minority-language MT.<sup>21</sup> The problems for minority and immigrant languages are many and varied: there is often no word-processing software (indeed, some languages lack scripts), no spellcheckers (sometimes languages lack standard spelling conventions), no dictionaries (monolingual or bilingual), indeed a general lack of language resources (e.g. corpora of translations) and of qualified/experienced researchers.<sup>22</sup> Before MT can be contemplated, these resources must be created, and the Internet may help to some extent with glossaries and bilingual corpora. There is, in addition, the question whether the communication needs of immigrants and minorities are best met with MT or with lower-level technologies, as indicated above with reference to speech translation.

One specific target of MT for immigrants or minorities has been the translation of captions (or subtitles) for television programmes. The most ambitious experiment is at the Institute for Language and Speech Processing (Athens) involving speech recognition, English text analysis, and caption generation in English, Greek, and French

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(Piperidis et al. 2004). Usually, however, captions in foreign languages are generated from caption texts produced as a normal service for the deaf or hearing impaired by television companies. A group at Simon Fraser University in Canada has investigated the translation of English television captions into Spanish and Portuguese (Turcato et al. 2000), and a group at the Electronics and Telecommunications Research Institute in Korea is developing CaptionEye/EK, an MT system for translating English television captions into Korean (Seo et al. 2001). In both cases, translation is based on pattern matching of short phrases (in systems of the example-based MT type).

Apart from minorities and immigrants, there are other disadvantaged members of society now beginning to be helped by MT-related systems. In recent years, researchers have looked at translating into sign languages for the deaf. The problems go, of course, beyond those encountered with text translation. The most obvious one is that signs are made by complex combinations of face, hand, and body movements which have to be notated for translation and reproduced by computer. In most cases, conventional rule-based approaches are adopted, but Morrissey et al. (2007) have experimented with hybrid statistical and example-based methods. Experiments have reported work on translating from English text into American, British, or Irish Sign Languages (Huenerfauth 2005, Marshall and Sáfar 2003, Morrissey et al. 2007), while Stein et al. (2007) also refer to work on systems translating from German, Chinese, and Spanish to their respective sign languages. The same report discusses translation in the opposite direction—a task involving the processing of moving images, arguably even more difficult than speech processing. We may expect more in the future.

### 29.6 Information Retrieval and Extraction

Translation is rarely an isolated activity; it is usually a means for accessing, acquiring, and imparting information. This is clearly the case with many examples already mentioned: translation in healthcare-related communication, translation of patents and technical documentation, translation of television subtitles, etc. MT systems are therefore often integrated with (combined or linked with) various other language-processing activities: information retrieval (IR), information extraction and analysis, question answering, summarization, technical authoring.

Multilingual access to information in documentary sources (articles, conferences, monographs, etc.) was a major interest in the early years of MT, but as IR became more statistics-oriented and MT became more rule-based the reciprocal relations diminished. However, since the mid 1990s with the increasing interest in SMT the relations have revived, and cross-language information retrieval (CLIR) is now a vigorous area of research with strong links to MT: both fields share the task of retrieving words and phrases in foreign languages which match (exactly or ‘fuzzily’) with words and phrases of input ‘texts’ (queries in IR, source texts in MT), and both combine linguistic resources (dictionaries, thesauri) and statistical techniques. There are extensions of CLIR to images and to spoken ‘documents’, e.g. the experiments by Flank (2000) and by Etzioni et al. (2007) on multilingual image retrieval, and by Meng et al. (2001) for retrieving Chinese broadcast stories which are ‘similar’ to a given input English text (not just a query).<sup>23</sup>

Information extraction has similar close links to MT, strengthened likewise by the growing statistical orientation of MT. Many government-funded (international and national) organizations have to scrutinize foreign-language documents for information relevant to their activities (from commercial and economic to surveillance, intelligence, and espionage). The scanning (skimming) of documents received—previously an onerous human task—is now routinely performed automatically. The cues for relevant information include not just keywords such as *export*, *strategic*, *attack*, (and their foreign language equivalents), but also the names of persons, companies, and organizations. Where languages use different orthography, the systems need to incorporate transliteration facilities which can convert, say, a Japanese version of a politician’s name into its (perhaps original) English form. The identification of names (or ‘named entities’) and their transliteration has become an increasingly active field in the last few years.<sup>24</sup>

Information analysis and summarization is frequently the second stage after information extraction. These activities have also, until recently, been performed by human analysts. Now at least drafts can be obtained by statistical means: methods for summarization have been researched since the 1960s. The development of working systems that combine MT and summarization is apparently still something for the future (Siddharthan and McKeown 2005, Saggion 2006)<sup>25</sup>. The major problems are the unreliability of MT (incorrect translations, distorted syntax, etc.) and the imperfections of current summarization systems, which are based on the detection of sentences important as

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indicators of content (paragraph-initial sentences, sentences containing lexical clues, particular names, etc.). Combining MT and summarization would be a desirable development in many areas, not just for information gathering by government bodies but also for managers of large corporations and most researchers with no knowledge of the original language. Such potential users of MT rarely want to read the whole of a document; what they want is to extract information for a specific need.

The field of question answering involves retrieving answers in text form from databases in response to (ideally) natural-language questions. Like summarization, this is a difficult task; but the possibility of multilingual question-answering is attracting more attention in recent years.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, the impetus in large corporations to produce documentation in multiple languages in as short timescales as possible has led to the closer integration of the processes of authoring (technical writing) and translating. This is true not only where companies have decided to adopt 'controlled languages' for their documentation—as we have seen above—but also where writers make use of rough translations as aids. Surveys of the use of Systran at the European Union have shown that much of its use is by administrators and other officials when writing documents in languages they are not fully fluent in: a draft translation from a text in their own language is used as the basis for writing in another (Senez 1995). Perhaps this is what some users of on-line MT and of PC-based systems are doing; if translation systems are used as aids to writing in another relatively poorly known language, this may explain to some extent the frequency (mentioned above) with which on-line MT systems are used to translate individual words and short phrases.

What these examples of MT applications illustrate is that MT is being used not for 'pure' translation but to aid bilingual communication in an ever-widening range of situations; and it is becoming just one component of multilingual, multimodal document (text) and image (video) extraction and analysis systems. The future scope of MT and its applications seems to be without limit.

### **Further Reading and Relevant Resources**

The main sources of information on the uses of machine translation are the proceedings of conferences held by the Association for Machine Translation in the Americas (<http://www.amtaweb.org>), the European Association for Machine Translation (<http://www.eamt.org>), and the Asia-Pacific Association for Machine Translation (<http://www.aamt.info>), the biennial 'Machine Translation Summit' conferences, and the annual series of 'Translating and the Computer' conferences organized by Aslib (<http://www.aslib.com>). Organizations specifically concerned with MT usage and holding regular conferences include the Localization Industry Standards Association (<http://www.lisa.org>) and the Translation Automation User Society (<http://translationautomation.com>). Important journals include *Machine Translation*, published by Springer (mainly research-oriented, however) and 'Multilingual Computing & Technology' (<http://www.multilingual.com>), and a valuable source of information and opinion about translation aids of all kinds is to be found in the 'Toolkit' newsletter (<http://www.internationalwriters.com/toolkit>). A general resource for articles on all aspects of MT (current and historical) is the 'Machine Translation Archive' (<http://www.mt-archive.info>).

### **Notes:**

- (1) <http://www.smartny.com>
- (2) <http://www.prolingua.co.uk>
- (3) Research on controlled languages and MT has been regularly reported at the CLAW (Controlled Language Workshop) conference series, started in 1996.
- (4) For a survey see Esselink (2003).
- (5) For a survey see Hutchins (2003b).
- (6) <http://www.crosslanguage.co.jp>
- (7) <http://www.ectaco.com>

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(8) <http://www-306.ibm.com/software/websphere/>

(9) <http://www.translution.com>

(10) See e.g. Krauwer (2000).

(11) For a survey of possibilities see Somers (2006, 2007b).

(12) <http://www.lti.cs.cmu.edu/Research/Diplomat>

(13) <http://www.voxtec.com/phraselator>

(14) e.g. the series of International Workshops on Spoken Language Translation, launched in 2004.

(15) The main impediment in most cases is the lack of text corpora (bilingual and monolingual) in electronic form, although the growth of Internet (website) resources is gradually filling the gaps.

(16) <http://www.languageweaver.com>

(17) <http://translate.google.com>

(18) <http://www.apertium.org>

(19) <http://sourceforge.net/projects/gpltrans/>

(20) <http://www.statmt.org/moses>

(21) SALTMIL (Speech And Language Technology for Minority Language) Workshops have been held since 1998.

(22) For an overview see Somers (2003b).

(23) Workshops on CLIR have taken place regularly and frequently since 1996.

(24) For a summary of the issues see Condon and Miller (2006).

(25) The MMIES (Multi-source, Multilingual Information Extraction and Summarization) workshops on this topic have taken place since 2007.

(26) See e.g. the proceedings of the Workshop on Multilingual Question Answering (MLQA'06), held in April 2006 in conjunction with the EACL conference in Trento, Italy.

### **John Hutchins**

John Hutchins has written on linguistics, information retrieval, and particularly machine translation (see <http://www.hutchinsweb.me.uk>), including Machine Translation: Past, Present, Future (1986), An Introduction to Machine Translation (with Harold Somers, 1992), and (editor) Early Years in Machine Translation (2000). He edited MT News International 1991–97; since 2000 he has compiled the six-monthly Compendium of Translation Software and since 2004 the Machine Translation Archive (<http://www.mt-archive.info>). He was President of the European Association for Machine Translation 1995–2004, and of the International Association for Machine Translation 1999–2001.

## Oxford Handbooks Online

### Electronic Tools and Resources for Translators

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#### Abstract and Keywords

Translation is a highly technologized profession. This article describes tools and resources associated with the work of translators. These include electronic dictionaries, termbanks, terminology management systems, term-extraction tools, corpora, corpus-processing tools, and translation memory tools and social networking. In contemporary approaches, computer-aided translation is generally set off from machine translation (MT). Electronic dictionaries have been familiar for centuries. Termbanks share a number of similarities with electronic dictionaries. Search results can be displayed in user-definable ways in electronic dictionaries. They can be integrated into common editing environments. A corpus is a collection of texts held in electronic form. A terminology-extraction tool can be optimized to automatically extract candidate terms from a given corpus, using one or both of two basic approaches. Terminology management is about storing, retrieving, and displaying terms and associated data. Although MT may not be displacing human translation, translation memory technology envisages greater automation in the future.

Keywords: machine translation, electronic dictionaries, termbanks, terminology management systems, term-extraction tools, corpus-processing tools

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#### 30.1 Introduction

Translation is a highly technologized profession. Like most contemporary professional writers, translators use a variety of text editing programs, web browsers, search engines, email systems, and other Internet services to conduct their daily business. In this chapter we will not be concerned with such generic tools and services. The interested reader is referred instead to Austermühl (2001: 18–67). We will concentrate instead on those tools and resources that have come to be particularly associated with the work of translators.<sup>1</sup> These include electronic dictionaries, termbanks, terminology management systems, term-extraction tools, corpora, corpus-processing tools, and translation memory tools. Most of these tools and resources are discussed in detail by Bowker (2002). Translators also make substantial use of social networking. Sites such as Proz.com and TranslatorsCafe.com provide virtual marketplaces in which work is advertised and bid for, and in which translators can support each other by answering terminological questions, sharing information on potential clients, etc. A discussion of such Internet-enabled translator networking is beyond the scope of this chapter, but McDonough (2007) provides a good introduction to the area.

The assumption for the most part in this chapter is that translators work with written text that has been supplied in electronic form. Such electronic texts may come in some proprietary format (e.g. Microsoft Word, FrameMaker). They may also have been created using a standardized mark-up language (e.g. HTML or XML). Amongst other things, these mark-up languages separate structural and inline formatting information—for example information on where the text body begins and ends, or whether a word is to be highlighted in bold or italics—from the text itself, thus allowing content to be stored (and manipulated) independently of its visual rendering in any one instance. Such structural and formatting information is stored in tags, delimited by the symbols '<' and '>', and the contents

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of these tags do not usually require translation, although there are some exceptions. Given the wide variety of file formats currently in use, standard formats such as XLIFF have been created to allow data to be exchanged between different stakeholders in the translation/localization industry, and between different software applications.<sup>2</sup>

It is also assumed here that the normal mode of input of a translation is through keyboarding. Translators can, of course, also use dictation devices or voice recognition software to create more or less polished drafts of their translations. While voice recorded on a dictation device still has to be keyboarded to create a written translation, voice recognition (also known as ‘speech recognition’) software attempts to identify words of a given language in the voice stream, and outputs these words in written format to some kind of text editor. The ensuing written text can then be further edited, and recognition errors fixed. Although voice recognition can be prone to error, and the software may require training on individual users’ voices, it has proved to be a useful productivity tool for many translators, and indispensable for translators whose ability to type has been compromised by, for example, repetitive strain injury. Bowker (2002: 30–37) provides a very accessible introduction to voice recognition.

Regardless of whether translators receive source texts in electronic form or of how they input their target texts, however, certain types of electronic tools and resources will be useful in nearly all cases. This is especially true of lexical and terminological resources and, to an increasing extent, corpus resources.

A final word is said here about the scope of this chapter. A number of scholars have sought to define the boundaries and internal structure of the general area in which human translators and computer software both contribute to the production of translations (see Hutchins and Somers 1992, Melby 1998, Quah 2006, Alcina 2008). In contemporary approaches, computer-aided translation—the area in which human translators draw on a variety of software tools to help them complete their work—is generally set off from machine translation (MT), which involves the development of computer systems that translate automatically (with varying degrees of human intervention before or after runtime, and varying degrees of success). To the extent that such distinctions can be upheld (see Quah 2006 on this point), this chapter is specifically concerned with computer-aided translation (CAT), although it encompasses some tools and resources that are not always discussed under the CAT banner.

## 30.2 Lexical resources: electronic dictionaries and termbanks

Electronic dictionaries are the digital counterpart of the print dictionaries that have been familiar for centuries. They are available as hand-held portable devices, on CD-ROM, or as on-line dictionaries, accessible via the Internet (see Chapter 29). The first category is unlikely to be of interest to professional translators, given that such hand-held devices do not integrate with the translator’s normal editing environment. CD-ROM and on-line dictionaries are, on the other hand, commonly used resources in translation; they differ in that CD-ROM users access the dictionary via an external drive on their own computer, or via a copy they have made to their own hard disk. On-line dictionaries, on the other hand, reside on the lexicographer’s, or more properly the publishing company’s computer. Access to them is provided as a service, either free of charge or to subscribers only. On-line dictionaries can be very dynamic entities, as updates are easy to implement. They can also be avowedly collaborative endeavours, with users invited to add new words, or, in the case of bilingual resources, to suggest, via a user forum, translations for words or phrases that are proving problematic for other users.<sup>3</sup>

Termbanks share a number of similarities with electronic dictionaries: they also provide access to lexical data either over the Internet or, less frequently, on CD-ROM. They differ from electronic dictionaries in that they focus almost exclusively on the vocabulary of specialized areas (science, technology, law, etc.) and they are usually created by national and international (non-commercial) bodies, often in response to their own documentation and/or translation needs. Examples of well-known termbanks include: IATE (Interactive Terminology for Europe), the multilingual termbank of the European Union; Termium, the trilingual termbank of the Canadian Federal Government; and the International Electrotechnical Vocabulary (IEV), maintained by the International Electrotechnical Commission.<sup>4</sup> Termbanks often play an important language-planning and maintenance role, especially in the case of lesser-used languages. Despite their differences, most of the observations made below about access to data in electronic dictionaries also apply to termbanks.

### 30.2.1 Features of electronic dictionaries

Despite the potential offered by electronic media to completely rethink the way in which lexical data are recorded,

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two decades after their introduction Oppentocht and Schutz (2003: 214) claimed that the average electronic dictionary was still ‘a copy of a paper dictionary’.<sup>5</sup> There is evidence, however, that Oppentocht and Schutz’s ‘wish list’ for electronic dictionaries is being realized, with a number of major publishers integrating features that were mere desiderata in 2003. (This applies in particular to the display features mentioned below.) What had already changed completely with the introduction of electronic dictionaries was the mode of access to lexical data. In electronic dictionaries, searches are no longer confined to alphabetically ordered headwords but can be conducted on virtually any or all data categories (headwords, definitions, synonyms, collocations, subject field, etc.) within a lexicographic entry. Searches can be exact or fuzzy: users can retrieve headwords that match exactly or are merely similar to the word they specified, thus allowing them to find entries for words they have not even spelled properly. Wildcard searches allow words that fit a certain pattern to be retrieved: thus *inflation\** retrieves *inflation*, *inflationary*, *inflationary pressure*, etc. Flexible storage and searching mean that electronic dictionaries are able to handle multiword units particularly well: it is of no consequence whether *lightning arrester* is stored under A or L; by typing either word (or even part of either word), the user should be able to find the entry. Proximity searches further allow the retrieval of instances of one word appearing within a user-defined distance of another word, perhaps in a quotation or definition.

Search results can be displayed in user-definable ways in electronic dictionaries. If a user is not interested in the pronunciation or definition of a word, for example, then these data fields can be suppressed.<sup>6</sup> Electronic dictionaries can also use colour and white space for formatting, both of which are often prohibitively expensive in print dictionaries, and illustrations and sound files (for pronunciation guidance) are easier to integrate. And because space is less of a constraint than before, electronic dictionaries are not forced to use the often obscure abbreviations favoured by print lexicographers. All of these display features make electronic products potentially more user-friendly than print dictionaries.<sup>7</sup>

A further user-friendly feature of electronic dictionaries is that they can be integrated into common editing environments: data can be easily copied and pasted from an electronic dictionary into a Microsoft Word document, for example. In some configurations the user can select a word in a document and then use a hot key to automatically find that word in a locally stored electronic dictionary. In the case of bilingual dictionaries, a source-language search term can be automatically replaced in its source text by an automatically retrieved target term, thus speeding up the process whereby the target text is formulated. It is also possible for an electronic dictionary to be consulted without the user explicitly initiating a search. This feature, known as ‘automatic dictionary lookup’ or ‘active term recognition’, is particularly characteristic of terminology management systems, which are discussed below.

The above search, display, and integration features are all actually features of interfaces to the lexical data contained in dictionaries. Contemporary practices (e.g. the use of application-neutral XML to label and structure lexical data) allow interfaces to be independent of lexical data, so that different sets of lexical data can be searched and displayed using a single interface. Thus a dictionary publisher may market a number of different electronic dictionaries that are accessible through a single interface. The advantage for users is that their lexical resources have the same look and feel, regardless of whether they are using, for example, a monolingual, general-language dictionary or a bilingual specialized one.

Despite the undoubtedly advantages that electronic dictionaries offer, some of them may suffer from the same kind of deficiencies that beset their print forebears: coverage of more specialized or recently emerging areas may be limited; there may be inadequate information on how words are actually used in context; and, crucially for translators, bilingual dictionaries may give several equivalents for a single source-language word or term, without adequate information on which term to select in a given context.<sup>8</sup> The on-line English–German dictionary provided by leo.org, for example, gives no fewer than six possible translations for *lightning arrester*, with little means of differentiating between them, or verifying their validity. Such shortcomings are one of the main motivations for integrating corpora into the suite of tools and resources used by translators.

### 30.3 Corpora and corpus-processing tools

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1.	telling me that my freckles were a result of a <i>freak accident</i> . He said when I was just a
2.	Now we know it was a <i>freak accident</i> is the perfect sprinting
3.	Diane, being taken to hospital after a <i>freak accident</i> at the start of the last
4.	When she broke her neck in a <i>freak accident</i> . When he was hit by a
5.	injuries and burns suffered in a series of <i>freak accidents</i> . Lee Taylor was out she
6.	to put the tie beyond doubt. [p] The freak corner was crucial and Anderton said:
7.	major league Baseball has witnessed another freak occurrence and this time the victims
8.	day manager at the Camden Palace, has died in a <i>freak road accident</i> . He was 34. The accident
9.	the increase in damage claims following the freak storms of 1987 and 1990.
10.	accidents where, in fog or some kind of freak traffic condition, car after car after
11.	Albert hasn't played since a <i>freak training ground injury</i> at the end of
12.	still missing, after the boat was swamped by a <i>freak wave</i> . Three survivors, including the
13.	Freak weather is almost guaranteed to make

Figure 30.1. KWIC concordance for *freak* as an adjective in the Collins Wordbanks-Online English corpus sampler

A corpus (plural: corpora) is a collection of texts held in electronic form. Such a corpus may have been carefully constructed according to explicit design criteria, or it may have been arrived at more opportunistically, through the automatic harvesting by a web crawler of texts from the World Wide Web, for example.<sup>9</sup> Many typologies of corpora exist; for present purposes it is enough to distinguish between monolingual reference corpora, which are usually intended to be representative of a single language or language variety, and bilingual parallel corpora, which contain source texts alongside their associated target texts in another language. Parallel corpora (sometimes also known as translation corpora) are made particularly useful through the process of alignment, which is described in more detail below. In cases where texts are translated into several languages (as is the case for the proceedings of the European Parliament, for example) we can speak of a multilingual parallel corpus. Corpus-processing tools, on the other hand, are computer programs that enable corpus data to be accessed, manipulated, and displayed in ways that are useful to users. One of the best-known corpus-processing tools is the concordancer. Monolingual concordancers allow users to search for every instance of a word or phrase in a corpus, and usually display the results (or 'hits') in a key word in context or KWIC format. Figure 30.1 shows a typical KWIC concordance, in this case for the adjective *freak*. The data come from the Collins Wordbanks Online English corpus, a sample of which is freely accessible via the World Wide Web.<sup>10</sup>

Concordancers often allow hits to be sorted by a number of different criteria. In Figure 30.1 they are sorted in alphabetical order according to the first word to the right of the search term *freak*. This type of display is particularly good at revealing the kinds of multiword units (e.g. *freak accident*) in which a search term can appear. It also reveals conceptual information that may be of interest to translators, especially those working in specialized domains: a concordance for *sewer* in a corpus of environmental engineering texts might, if ordered by the first word to the left of *sewer*, for example, reveal multiple instances of *combined sewer* and *separate sewer*, suggesting two broad types into which the superordinate *sewer* is typically divided. Other searches, for example using search strings like *is a* or *also known as*, can uncover definitions, or reveal instances of synonymy, all of which can contribute to a translator's understanding of an area.

Equally of interest in the initial source text reception phase of translation (Austermühl 2001: 14) is the output of tools like WordList (one of the programs included in the popular WordSmith suite of corpus-processing tools), which produces lists of unique words ('types') that occur in a corpus, along with an indication of their frequency of occurrence (their 'token count'). The same procedure can be applied to strings of two or more words, thus outputting lists of multiword units that occur (and more importantly recur) in a particular corpus. Extremely common function words (*the, and, of*, etc.) can be excluded from such wordlists (by using a 'stop list') so that the user can concentrate on more meaningful content words. A wordlist for a particular corpus can be compared to a larger reference wordlist, to ascertain which words occur more (or less) frequently than expected in the smaller corpus. In WordSmith Tools, this comparison leads to the creation of a list of words considered to be 'keywords' in the smaller corpus under investigation. Frequency-ranked or alphabetically ordered wordlists (be they of single words or multiword units) and keyword lists can make excellent starting points for the preparation of corpus-specific monolingual glossaries. Such glossaries, in which the basic wordlists may be enhanced by definitions or examples of usage, themselves extracted from the corpus with the help of the concordancing tool, can then be used as the basis on which a bilingual glossary is created, in situations where terminology needs to be decided upon before translation into a given language (or set of languages) can begin. Standard corpus-processing tools can thus be used in ways analogous to the monolingual term-extraction tools discussed below.

Monolingual (general or specialized) reference corpora are also particularly useful in the target-text formulation phase of translation (Austermühl 2001: 15). They allow translators to see how words are normally used by writers

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(often subject-field specialists) in the target language. And although corpora may have been more relevant to translation theorists and student translators than to practising translators in the past, there is evidence that practitioners are making increasing use of monolingual target-language corpora (see Maher, Waller, and Kerans 2008). Translators and translation analysts may also use bilingual concordancers (in conjunction with parallel corpora) to find out how a given source-language structure or expression has been translated in the past (see Pearson 2003). Bilingual concordancers can be purchased as stand-alone tools or may be included as extra functions with translation memory tools (see below).<sup>11</sup>

## 30.4 Terminology extraction

As already indicated, terminology is the vocabulary of specialized domains. The study of terminology incorporates investigation of the knowledge structures of these domains and is thus particularly interested in relations between specialized concepts and the terms that label them. We have already seen how corpus-processing tools can be used to access information about concepts (e.g. definitions) and conceptual relations (e.g. synonymy, hyponymy), and to draft lists of candidate terms for glossary creation. A related tool, the terminology-extraction tool, is optimized to automatically extract candidate terms from a given corpus, using one or both of two basic approaches. The first, statistical approach is based on frequency: if a word or group of words occurs in a corpus with a greater than expected frequency, then it is output as a candidate term. This approach requires some model of what is ‘expected’, as well as some kind of frequency or significance threshold (often set by the user) above which candidate terms are deemed to be interesting. The second, linguistic approach outputs as candidate terms all or repeated sequences of words that meet predefined (again, possibly set by the user) part-of-speech patterns. This approach requires the corpus to be part-of-speech-tagged, meaning that every word (or multiword unit) in the corpus has to be accompanied by an indication of its word class (noun, verb, adjective, etc.). The term-extraction tool may thus search a corpus for all instances of <noun><noun> or <adj><noun> sequences, thus extracting terms like *lightning arrester* or *equipotential bonding* from an English-language corpus of electrical engineering texts. Both approaches can output ‘bad’ candidates (thus producing ‘noise’) or fail to return ‘good’ candidates (thus producing ‘silence’), and users usually have to validate candidate terms before storing them or processing them further. Common term-extraction tools allow the user to associate a usage sample (often manually selected from a number of usage samples automatically output by the tool) with a validated term.<sup>12</sup> This is a useful compromise in scenarios where glossaries are required but time pressure prohibits the creation of carefully crafted definitions for extracted terms. Term extraction can also be bilingual, in which case extraction of candidate terms first proceeds monolingually (as described above) and then the software makes a best guess as to what the translation of any given candidate term is likely to be, based on the distribution of target-text words.

## 30.5 Terminology management

If terminology extraction is about finding candidate terms, then terminology management is about storing, retrieving, and displaying (validated) terms and associated data (definitions, synonyms, usage samples, etc.). Terminology management systems are typically used by individuals or corporations to manage their own terminological data.<sup>13</sup> Such data are stored in term records in a dedicated database, known as a ‘termbase’. The terminology management system (TMS) allows the user to define features of the termbase (what kind of terminological data it will contain, which languages it will cover, who will have read or write access to the termbase, etc.) and provides a user-definable interface to the contents of the termbase. TMS interfaces allow the kinds of searches already familiar from electronic dictionaries (e.g. exact, fuzzy, and wild-card searches). They also typically integrate with other software used by translators, including translation-memory tools and word processors, allowing, for example, automatic term recognition, and even the automatic replacement of terms recognized in a source text by their target-language equivalents stored in the termbase. TMSs can thus play a role in enforcing consistent use of terminology during the translation process. A variety of TMSs are commercially available.<sup>14</sup> Some are sold either as stand-alone products or as part of a suite of products that also contains a translation memory tool. Terminological data can be shared between users of different products, however, thanks to the development of TBX (Term Base eXchange), an open, XML-based standard for exchanging structured terminological data.<sup>15</sup>

## 30.6 Translation memory

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A translation memory (TM) can be broadly defined as a collection of source texts, or source-text segments (often sentences), stored alongside their translations into another language.<sup>16</sup> A TM tool is a software program that allows TMs to be stored, maintained, and—crucially—accessed by translators as they translate new texts. The basic idea behind TMs is that they allow translations for already encountered sentences (or sometimes parts of sentences) to be retrieved and reused by translators. They are thus conceived of first and foremost as productivity-enhancing resources: if a translator has already translated a sentence, there is no need to translate it again; rather, the translation already in memory can be reused, thus saving precious time. Extensive reuse of translations is, of course, only likely if there is extensive repetition in the source texts that need to be translated in the first place. Such repetition can be internal to a single text or discerned across a ‘family’ of texts (Heyn 1998). From the client’s point of view, TMs can bring cost savings, as contemporary pricing structures mean that clients often do not pay the full word rate for reused translations. In translation scenarios where consistency is at a premium, TMs can also be seen as quality-enhancing resources.

TMs are not without their detractors, however. In this section we first give a brief overview of how the technology works (for more detailed treatments see Austermühl 2001, Bowker 2002, and Reinke 2004), before going on to outline some of the problems associated with TMs (from a translator’s point of view, at least). Although the basic idea behind TMs can be traced back to the 1960s (see Reinke 2004: 36ff.), their use in the translation profession has been widespread only since the mid 1990s, and this section will be concerned with contemporary TM tools. Given the large number of TM tools on the market, it will come as no surprise that the translation industry has come up with a standard known as TMX (Translation Memory eXchange) to make data exchangeable between these different tools.<sup>17</sup>

### 30.6.1 TM technology: an overview

In its most familiar implementation, a TM consists of a database of source-text segments and their existing translations. Such segments are usually coterminous with sentences, headings, cells in tables, items in a bulleted list, etc., all of which can be easily identified during automatic segmentation, thanks to the presence of ‘hard’ punctuation marks (full stops, semi-colons, paragraph breaks, etc.) and (often) white spaces, at their boundaries.<sup>18</sup> A source-text segment stored alongside its translation in a TM is called a ‘translation unit’. The easiest way to build a TM is in ‘interactive’ mode: translators simply start populating the TM with translation units as they work their way through a translation job. Given a source text in electronic form, the TM tool segments the source text in the way described above, and presents individual segments to the translator for translation using an interface that differs from tool to tool. Some TM tools are integrated into editing environments (e.g. Microsoft Word) that are already familiar to the translator.<sup>19</sup> Others use proprietary interfaces that in many cases allow a considerable amount of flexibility in how source and emerging target texts are displayed: the user can usually choose either a vertical or horizontal layout for source- and target-language windows, and whether formatting information should be represented separate from the text, in the form of tags, or exactly as it will appear in the finished text.<sup>20</sup>

Whatever editing environment is used, once a segment has been translated, both source and target segments are then usually committed to memory as a translation unit. The translation environment can be set up so that the target-language part of a translation unit becomes immediately available for reuse, should an identical or similar source-language segment be encountered in the same or a subsequent translation job. Other advantages of TM tools from a translator’s point of view include the fact that formatting tags can often be protected during the translation process, so that the translator does not inadvertently delete or corrupt a tag that is required for the proper display of the eventual target text. Most TM tools also have the ability to automatically recognize ‘placeables’ in the source text, i.e. elements such as numbers, currency amounts, dates, and sometimes proper names (see Bowker 2002: 98, who refers to ‘variable elements’), that do not need to be translated and so can simply be ‘placed’ in the target segment, although they may need to be manipulated in certain systematic ways. A decimal point in a number may need to be changed to a decimal comma, for example, and this kind of manipulation can be done automatically.

Not all TM tools are designed to access a database of individual translation units. Star Transit, for example, uses reference material consisting of entire source texts and their existing translations (see Reinke 2004: 62ff.). This design has the signal merit of maintaining the integrity of previously encountered texts, allowing translators to view more easily the contexts in which existing translation units originally appeared. A related approach is taken by

MultiCorpora, the company that markets the MultiTrans TM tool.<sup>21</sup> MultiTrans also stores full source and target-text pairs, known as ‘bitexts’. What makes MultiTrans different from all the other tools surveyed here is that it does not search such bitexts on a segment-by-segment basis, but instead searches stored source texts for character strings of any length that are identical to character strings in the new text to be translated. Gow (2003) calls this a ‘character-string-within-a-bitext (CSB)-based approach’. A CSB-based approach is more flexible than a segment-based approach as it can search for and retrieve matches for anything from single words to series of paragraphs. We return to these issues in 30.6.3 below. Approaches that allow full-text searches are also more robust, in that it is easy to cope with faulty alignments (see below), as the full source and target texts are recoverable.

### 30.6.2 Alignment

A second way to build a TM is by aligning and importing ‘legacy’ material, i.e. source texts and their translations which were completed before TM technology was introduced into a translation workflow. The alignment process involves identifying which segments in a translation correspond to which segments in a source text. An explicit link is then usually created between corresponding segments so that they can later be imported into a TM in the form of a translation unit. Automatic aligners, which either come packaged with TM tools or are sold as separate products, use information such as segment position, segment length, structural information (e.g. headings in the source text are aligned with headings in the target text), the presence of numbers, dates, etc., which vary from language to language in predictable and often trivial ways, and lexical anchors (a French segment containing the word *lundi* is likely to be aligned with an English segment containing the word *Monday*) to posit a correspondence between two segments. But despite the fact that many researchers consider alignment at sentence level to be a mastered technology (Kraif 2003: 2), automatic aligners are prone to error, and an error introduced towards the beginning of a pair of texts can have a knock-on effect on alignments of all subsequent source and target segments. For this reason, users of automatic aligners usually have to verify the output of the alignment process, ‘disconnecting’ any erroneous alignments and ‘reconnecting’ segments to their rightful partner in the other language. Products like WinAlign and Déjà Vu come with a graphic user interface that allows users to make these changes using their mouse: a dragging action is, for example, used to establish a link between two parts of the same translation unit.

Users who import translation units output by an automatic alignment process into a TM can choose to have those units labelled as requiring extra attention, should they subsequently be retrieved from memory during interactive translation. This is done by applying an alignment ‘penalty’ to such translation units, which has the effect of lowering the value of a particular ‘match’ (see below).

### 30.6.3 Matching

A translator who has begun to populate a TM, either interactively or by importing aligned translation units, might expect to start retrieving (or ‘leveraging’) useful matches from that memory if subsequent jobs contain a sufficient amount of overlap with material already in memory. Such overlap is usually identified in matches at the segment level. Three types of match are normally identified: an exact or 100 per cent match (Bowker 2002: 96) is retrieved from memory when a segment in the text currently being translated is identical to a source-language segment in memory in every way (it contains the same characters, in the same order, with the same formatting). In a ‘full’ match (Bowker 2002: 98) the two segments are allowed to differ only in the presence of placeables (see above), which can be replaced automatically. Finally, a fuzzy match is retrieved when a segment in memory is considered to be similar to the segment currently being translated. If a match (of whatever type) for the current source-text segment is found by a TM tool, it is offered to the translator, who can (1) reuse the existing translation exactly the way it is, (2) partly reuse the existing translation in edited form, or (3) reject the existing translation and translate the source segment from scratch. Even if a TM tool retrieves a 100 per cent match from memory, the existing translation might not be reusable in the new target text without some editing. At the very least, unless otherwise specified by the client, the translator has to verify and confirm (through the keyboard or a mouse click) that the existing translation is acceptable in the new target text.

The automatic recognition of similarity (fuzzy matching) is not straightforward. In most TM tools, similarity judgements are based on the extent to which two full segments share formal characteristics, i.e. the extent to which they share the same character strings, in the same order, regardless of what the two segments actually mean. Thus sentence (1) below will be deemed more similar to sentence (2) than to sentence (3), even though

sentence (1) and sentence (3) are effectively synonymous in the context of a weather forecast:

1. Minimum temperatures 4 to 7 degrees.
2. Maximum temperatures 4 to 7 degrees.
3. Lowest values 4 to 7 Celsius.

Most vendors do not divulge their proprietary matching algorithms, but Reinke (2004) lists a number of techniques used in mathematics to quantify the level of similarity between two character strings (see also Somers 2003a: 38ff. and Trujillo 1999: 61–8). Such ‘similarity measures’ include the ‘edit distance’ or ‘Levenshtein distance’, a fairly basic metric which gives the number of insertions, deletions, or substitutions required to turn one string of characters into another. Thus the edit distance between the antonymous sentences (1) and (2) above (edit distance= 2, i.e. two substitutions—a for *i*, and *x* for *n*, in changing *Minimum* to *Maximum*) is far lower than the distance (=15) between the synonymous sentences (1) and (3), and sentence (2) will be returned as the ‘better’ fuzzy match for sentence (1), given this metric.

At the user interface, TM tools typically characterize the level of a fuzzy match between two segments using percentages (segments (1) and (2) above might thus constitute a 94 per cent fuzzy match) and the user can specify the threshold that fuzzy matches must exceed before they are offered by the software as potentially useful translation suggestions. Although some commentators have maintained that matches as low as 40 per cent can be useful (O’Brien 1998: 117), many translators find that only very high-value fuzzy matches actually save them time, and they thus give discounts to clients for fuzzy matches at around 75 per cent and higher. Austermühl (2001: 141) sets the bar higher by saying that discounts may apply to fuzzy matches at 85 per cent and above.

### 30.6.3.1 Matching above and below segment level

Some products also recognize ‘perfect’ matches (SDL Trados 2007), also known as ‘context’ matches (Logoport) or ‘guaranteed’ matches (Déjà Vu). These are exact matches which are preceded and followed in their respective source texts by segments that themselves have exact matches in memory. The idea here is that if a number of adjacent segments in a new source text have exact counterparts in memory, then the translations already stored for these segments are likely to be good contextual matches and require less attention from the human translator than other, isolated, 100 per cent matches. Such context matches thus represent an attempt to look at units that are larger than single segments.

A less-often pursued strategy is to take into account matches between units that are smaller than segments. This is usually known as ‘subsegment matching’ (Bowker 2002: 103–5), and is exemplified by Déjà Vu’s ‘assemble’ function: if no match (exact or fuzzy) is found in memory for a new source-text segment, then the TM tool seeks matches for chunks of that source-text segment. In order to do this, a TM tool needs to have capabilities more commonly associated with example-based MT systems (see Hutchins 2005).

### 30.6.3.2 Target-language matching

TM tools have some well-known shortcomings. One, as indicated above, is that matching has to date been based only on the formal characteristics of source-language segments. One TM tool, Star’s Transit<sup>NXT</sup>, can also search on the target-language side, however. If no match is found in the TM for sentence (3) above, for example, then the software begins to search in the target-language reference texts for segments similar to the one that the translator has begun to input from scratch. If the translator has already translated sentence (1) as sentence (4),

4. Températures minimales entre 4 et 7 degrés Celsius.

and begins to type *Températures minimales* again, then sentence (4) might be proposed as a possible translation solution. This feature works like a kind of predictive typing and is one way of enforcing ‘iconic linkage’, the use of similar formal means to express similar meanings (see Byrne 2006) in target texts, even if no such linkage occurred in the equivalent source texts.<sup>22</sup>

### 30.6.4 Other functions in TM tools

Commercial TM tools are often integrated into suites of tools that contain, for example, auxiliary programs which

support the translation workflow, terminology management tools, and even interfaces to MT systems. Most TM tools also have a bilingual concordancing function, allowing the memory to be used as a kind of parallel corpus as described above. Another auxiliary program performs an analysis of source texts, in order to ascertain levels of repetition within those texts, and the number and type (exact or fuzzy) of matches between them and segments already stored in memory. Such analyses are of particular interest to translation clients and translators themselves because (as indicated above) they form the basis on which the cost of and remuneration for translation are calculated. They also allow the time required for complex translation commissions to be estimated.

Another operation that can be carried out prior to translation proper is known as ‘pre-translation’. This involves automatically inserting into a new source text any target-language equivalents for segment-level matches (exact or fuzzy) retrieved from memory. In tools where subsegment matching is a possibility, pre-translation can be implemented below the segment level. The result is a hybrid text, some of which has already been pre-translated into the target language, and the rest of which remains in the source language awaiting translation. While pre-translation is of obvious benefit to those commissioning translations, there is some evidence (Wallis 2006) that it is not always a preferred mode of operating among translators. Garcia (2007: 61) suggests that TM workflows involving pre-translation became the norm in the late 1990s, but that by 2007 the pendulum had begun to swing back towards interactive translation, thanks to the advent of web-based TMs.

### 30.6.5 Shared TMs and web-based TMs

The scenarios in which translators use TM tools are many and varied (see esp. Garcia 2007). One involves translators interactively updating a TM while completing a new translation on their desktop computer. The TM data are stored locally, and when the translation is complete translators send the translated text, along with the reusable translation units they have just created (in other words the updated TM itself, sent in some proprietary format or else TMX format), to the client. A second scenario involves a number of translators simultaneously accessing and updating a server-based TM (or several TMs), so that additions made to memory by one translator become available immediately (or after a short delay) to other translators. In this scenario, translators may still retain a local copy of translation units they have created for potential reuse. A third, more recently emerging scenario also involves a number of translators simultaneously accessing and updating a TM (or several TMs) over the Internet, but without the possibility of retaining a local copy of their work.<sup>23</sup> The shift to web-based TMs has profound implications for translators, which have been discussed in detail by Garcia (2007) and are addressed briefly below.

### 30.6.6 Problematic aspects of TMs

Although the widespread use of TMs has undoubtedly brought benefits for many stakeholders in the translation industry (including, especially in the early days, translators themselves), they have also been the cause of some disquiet in the translation profession. The pricing of translations carried out with the help of TM tools has long been a bone of contention, and issues of ownership and copyright have also been hotly debated (see Heyn 1998, Garcia 2007). The fact that many TM tools promote the translation of isolated segments is thought to militate against the creation of satisfactorily cohesive target texts; and it is argued that the reuse of existing translations, possibly drawn from multiple sources and completed by any number of different translators, can lead to a ‘stylistic hodgepodge’ (Bowker and Barlow 2004: 59) in target texts. Translators may display ‘blind faith’ (Bowker 2005) in translations already stored in memory, regardless of the quality of such translations; they may unthinkingly reproduce bad translations through a kind of inertia (Pym 2003), or reluctantly because they are not paid to edit or are prohibited from editing 100 per cent matches. The reuse of target-language segments based on formal matching in the source language may also make more sense for some target languages than others (see Kenny 1999a, López Ciruelos 2003, Nedoma and Nedoma 2004). These arguments are summed up in Kenny (2007). Garcia (2007) has argued that the emergence of less complex interfaces and file-handling requirements in TM tools has meant that translators who previously enjoyed a competitive advantage precisely because of their technical knowledge have now lost that advantage. At the same time, the advent of web-based TMs has meant that translators are losing control of the linguistic assets (the TMs themselves) from which they once had the potential to continue to benefit, even after they had delivered a target text to the client. An added irony is that as the global store of bitext grows, due in large part to the widespread use of TM tools, so too does the potential for corpus-based MT, and especially statistical MT, to prosper, as statistical MT in particular relies upon the availability of large quantities of high-quality aligned source and target texts. Although MT may not be displacing human translation,

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and the two are often integrated into the same workflows, it is clear that proponents of translation automation (especially in the localization industry) are growing increasingly frustrated with TM technology, and envisage greater automation in the future (van der Meer 2008).

## Further reading and relevant resources

Bowker (2002) provides an accessible introduction to most of the tools and resources covered in this chapter. Oppentocht and Schutz (2003) anticipate developments in electronic dictionaries designed for general users. Zetzsche (2009), a primer designed to improve translators' computer proficiency, provides practical guidance in the use of computer-aided translation tools. The trade-focused periodical *MultiLingual* publishes articles and product reviews related to a variety of translation technologies. Finally, Kenny (2007) casts a more critical eye over corpora and translation memories in particular.

## Notes:

- (1) Resources are understood here, following Alcina (2008), as sets of data (e.g. dictionaries, corpora, translation memories) that are organized in such a way as to be of particular use to translators. Tools, on the other hand, are the computer programs that assist translators in completing specific functions (e.g. querying a corpus, accessing a translation memory, typing a translation). As such, tools can be used to access and manage resources. In much of the more industry-focused literature, resources relevant to translation are known as 'linguistic assets'.
- (2) The XLIFF (XML Localization Interchange File Format) standard is developed and maintained by a Technical Committee of the Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards (OASIS). See [www.oasis-open.org](http://www.oasis-open.org). (All links referred to in this chapter were last accessed 21 June 2009).
- (3) The on-line dictionary LEO ([dict.leo.org](http://dict.leo.org)), for example, features this kind of user forum.
- (4) IATE is accessible through [iate.europa.eu](http://iate.europa.eu). Termium is accessible through [www.btb.termiumplus.gc.ca](http://www.btb.termiumplus.gc.ca). The International Electrotechnical Vocabulary is accessible through [dom2.iec.ch/iev](http://dom2.iec.ch/iev).
- (5) See also Manning, Jansz, and Indurkhyia (2001), who discuss less conventional ways of visualizing and searching lexical data, given the particular needs of Warlpiri users.
- (6) The Beo ([dict.tu-chemnitz.de](http://dict.tu-chemnitz.de)) and *Oxford English Dictionary* ([www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com)) are good examples of on-line dictionaries that allow results to be displayed in a user-definable format.
- (7) For a contrasting view, see Manning et al. (2001) and Varantola (2003).
- (8) See Bowker and Pearson (2002: 139–40) for a discussion of well-known limitations of many dictionary types. While it is true that changing practices in lexicography and terminography, especially the use of corpora in dictionary/glossary production, may help overcome some of the problems, it is also true that no single dictionary will ever provide all the information a user needs.
- (9) The articles in Wynne (2005) provide a very accessible introduction to corpus creation and annotation.
- (10) Access to the Collins Wordbanks *Online* English corpus is through [www.collins.co.uk/Corpus/CorpusSearch.aspx](http://www.collins.co.uk/Corpus/CorpusSearch.aspx).
- (11) Paraconc ([www.athel.com/para.html](http://www.athel.com/para.html)) is a good example of a commercially available stand-alone bilingual concordancer.
- (12) SDL MultiTerm Extract ([www.translationzone.com/en/products/sdlmultitermextract](http://www.translationzone.com/en/products/sdlmultitermextract)) is a good example of a commercially available term-extraction tool.
- (13) There are other, less sophisticated ways of managing terminology. See Austermühl (2001) for details.
- (14) Commercially available TMSs include SDL MultiTerm ([www.sdl.com/en/products/terminology-management/multiterm.asp](http://www.sdl.com/en/products/terminology-management/multiterm.asp)), and Star's TermStar ([www.star-group.net/star-www/description/termstar/star-](http://www.star-group.net/star-www/description/termstar/star-)

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group/eng/star.html).

(15) See [www.lisa.org/Term-Base-eXchange.32.0.html](http://www.lisa.org/Term-Base-eXchange.32.0.html).

(16) A TM thus described can be viewed as a particular instantiation of a parallel corpus (see Kenny 2007). The main distinguishing characteristic of a TM lies in its use as a productivity- or quality-enhancing resource for professional translators.

(17) See [www.lisa.org/Translation-Memory-e.34.0.html](http://www.lisa.org/Translation-Memory-e.34.0.html).

(18) Most TM tools allow users to specify which punctuation marks should be regarded as forming segment boundaries, and for which languages.

(19) Examples of TM tools that allow Microsoft Word to be used as the editing environment include SDLTrados 2007 ([www.trados.com](http://www.trados.com)), WordFisher ([www.wordfisher.com](http://www.wordfisher.com)), Logoport ([www.lionbridge.com/lionbridge/en-GB/services/localization-translation/language-asset-management.htm](http://www.lionbridge.com/lionbridge/en-GB/services/localization-translation/language-asset-management.htm)), and WordFast ([www.wordfast.com](http://www.wordfast.com)).

(20) Examples of TM tools with proprietary interfaces include SDL Trados Tag Editor and SDL Trados Studio 2009 ([www.trados.com](http://www.trados.com)), Star Transit ([www.star-group.net/ENU/transit-nxt/transit.html](http://www.star-group.net/ENU/transit-nxt/transit.html)), and Déjà Vu ([www.atril.com](http://www.atril.com)).

(21) See [www.multicorpora.com/products/multitrans](http://www.multicorpora.com/products/multitrans).

(22) SDL Trados Studio 2009 has also integrated a type of target-language predictive typing using its AutoSuggest<sup>TM</sup> technology.

(23) This is the modus operandi adopted in Lionbridge's Logoport TM tool.

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# Oxford Handbooks Online

## Training Translators

Anthony Pym

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### Abstract and Keywords

Translator training takes many forms. Experience is the primary level of training. At the next level, there are number of short-term training courses offering translation skills. Finally, there are long-term training programmes offered by institutions. Translation courses are offered as part of most degree programmes in foreign languages. Independent Masters-level programmes are more focused on the skills actually used by translators and/or interpreters, thus catering to specific market niches or skills. Translator training is associated with the skills needed to achieve translation competence. Translator education, on the other hand, recognizes the need for students to acquire a wide range of interpersonal skills and attitudes (translator competence), in addition to technical skills. Translator training faces several current challenges that concern pedagogical practice, curriculum design, and the possible contributions of research. Evaluation remains a problematic issue for as long as internal criteria fail to connect with professional practice.

Keywords: translator training, translator education, translation competence, translator competence, pedagogical practice

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### 31.1 Introduction

Just as everyone can sing, be it badly or well, so everyone who knows more than one language can translate, to some degree. However, not everyone is paid to sing opera, and not all translators are at the pinnacle of the translation profession. The difference between the various levels may partly be due to training—we train people not just to translate, which they can already do, but to translate *well*, perhaps for a specific purpose, market, or technological environment.

Translator training can take many forms. A great deal is learnt on the job, from superiors, colleagues, reviewers, and clients, or otherwise through trial and error. The vast majority of professional translators in the world have probably had no training in translation beyond such experience, and the value of experience is thus not to be underestimated. That would be the most primary level of training. At the next level, there is an increasing number of short-term training courses, both in-house and on the open market, that offer translators the skills they require to move from one professional niche to another. Such courses might involve new translation technologies, area-restricted terminology, project management or specific communication skills, especially in the various kinds of interpreting. Finally, there are long-term training programmes offered by institutions of various kinds, increasingly by universities at BA or MA levels. Long-term university-level training is a relatively recent phenomenon, mostly dating from the second half of the twentieth century and rising sharply in the late 1980s and early 1990s. That late development is why most practitioners, and indeed most translator trainers, have probably not received formal training of this kind. The development, principles, and main debates of university-level training, which will be the main focus of this chapter, must thus be understood in terms of its antecedents and alternatives.

## 31.2 Historical development

Translator training of some kind has almost certainly existed at key moments in expansive empires, mostly in the form of controlled master—apprentice relations. One might seek the origins of more extensive training programmes in the elaborate Chinese institutions for the translation of Buddhist texts, from the fourth to the ninth centuries, in the ‘House of Wisdom’ in ninth-century Baghdad, in cathedral chapters as in twelfth-century Toledo, or with court scholarship from the thirteenth century. The great European colonizations were also associated with rudimentary translator training based on the capture and training of natives. Translator training was carried out on the fringe of empires or at the points where civilizations met, as seen in the training of French interpreters partly in Constantinople from 1669 or the Oriental Academy for diplomats founded by Empress Maria Theresa in Vienna in 1754. At the same time, European expansion led to reactions in other parts of the world: the large Egyptian translation school now known as Al-Alsun was established in 1835; in China, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, a group of government officials dealing with foreign affairs created institutions for the training of translators in areas like shipbuilding and weapons manufacture. From 1896 Yan Fu, at that time principal of the Northern Chinese Naval Academy, supervised several translation schools operating under central and local government authorities.

In all these situations, training was institutionalized not just to ensure a certain quality of performance but also to control the allegiance of the translators. Inter-cultural mediators might always be working for the other side; one way to make sure they are yours is consciously to select and educate them as your own. In some situations this guarantee of loyalty can become more important than the quality of renditions. For example, Spanish diplomats and translators destined to work in the protectorate of Morocco would traditionally receive their training in Beirut. The Arabic they mastered was thus quite unlike the spoken varieties of Morocco, but they were less likely to be identifying with the Moroccan cultural other. State-controlled training can thus be seen as selecting and privileging members of the community who are going to be exposed to close contact with other communities.

While state-controlled instruction in translation was carried out in Europe for the training of diplomats, in Spanish America it was more commonly associated with sworn translation, in keeping with the juridical regime through which the colonies were controlled (in Hispanic tradition, a translated document has full legal effect—so sworn translators are in effect officers of the state). A translation programme was offered at the law faculty at the University of Uruguay from 1885, and many of the university programmes in Spanish America continue to deliver the degree of ‘sworn translator’ (*traductor público*). The Comparative Law Institute at Université de Paris 2 has offered a programme in legal translation since 1931. This special association with legal institutions has continued in parts of the world where court translation is an important social demand, particularly in the United States.

The Second World War provided further impetus for the institutionalization of training. The German-speaking world was bordered by the translation schools founded in Heidelberg in 1930, Geneva in 1941, and Vienna in 1943. Following the war, the victors had an interest in retrieving technical information from the German language (to make bombs and rockets), and the Nuremberg trials seemed to indicate the role of translators and interpreters in the future of international institutions. Independent university-level institutions were established in the border regions of the Third Reich: Graz and Innsbruck in 1946, Germersheim 1947, and Saarbrücken in 1948. With the same postwar impetus, a translation school was established at Georgetown University in the United States in 1949. The now traditional French institutions, the ESIT and the ISIT, would follow in 1957, at which stage the process of European unification was becoming a powerful motivating factor.

By the 1960s, western Europe had developed a string of specialized institutions. Elsewhere, as at the Moscow Linguistic University (where the translation programme dates from 1930), translator training was more explicitly integrated into independent foreign-language institutes, a model that still pertains in Russia and some central-European countries.

The specialized Western institutions offered high-level training in conference interpreting as well as translation. All became members of the CIUTI (Conférence Internationale Permanente d’Instituts Universitaires de Traducteurs et Interprètes), which officially dates from 1964. This international association now has some thirty members and seeks to ensure the public image of the training they offer. In the meantime, however, the number of university-based centres specializing in translation has risen to about 300 in the world, which means that the CIUTI represents about 10 per cent of the institutionalized training of translators.

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The initial European leadership in translator training is challenged by figures that show the creation of non-European centres rising quickly in the 1960s and actually outweighing that of west European programmes in the 1970s (see Caminade and Pym 1995). Indeed, while western Europe may have developed translator training in a series of responses to the stop/start process of European unification, the non-European rise indicates a smoother response to economic globalization. Underlying both streams are general reforms that have changed the nature of university education, progressively allowing more emphasis on vocational objectives and steadily integrating translator training into university structures. This process has been particularly pronounced in Europe: one such reform took Spain from just four translator-training institutions in 1992 to some twenty-three in 1997. The process has been less drastic in other parts of the world, particularly in the United States, which further accounts for the smoother rise of the non-European curves.

It would be rash to assume that training programmes have developed in direct response to social demands for translators. In many cases youth unemployment has also played a role, creating student demand for vocationally oriented instruction programmes even in the absence of rising market demands for well-paid fulltime translators and interpreters. Another stakeholder in training programmes can be the education system itself. In situations where tenured staff in departments of languages other than English are losing students, translation programmes can provide continued employment for those teachers to the extent that translation students are required to develop more than one foreign language. There is also an important political dimension involved in the languages selected, especially in situations where translation policies are associated with the defence and development of minority languages. For example, official programmes with 'double A languages' can be found not only in Ireland, Catalonia, and Galicia, but also in post-Apartheid South Africa. In some countries there is thus a regular overproduction of trained translators, as indicated by graduate employment surveys where the number of students who actually find full-time work tends to be less than 30 per cent (in Spain, Germany, and Italy, with numbers even lower reported for Hong Kong). In such situations, the rationale for many programmes can be expected to shift away from supplying the translation professions. For example, arguments can be made that translator training maintains the community's stock of language competence and provides communication skills that are useful in a wide range of professional situations. Graduates are thus sometimes called by other names, such as the 'linguistic mediators' produced by three-year BA programmes in Italy.

In other countries, the social demand for highly skilled translators far exceeds the capacities of education systems that have traditionally sidelined translation. There has been a rapid creation of translator-training programmes in China, and something similar might be predicted for India. The United States, on the other hand, took a long time to become aware of the need for qualified translators of 'national security' languages as well as for major home languages like Spanish, and the number of training programmes still remains comparatively low (except in the field of court interpreting and defence services). On the general international scene, one might hope for more attention to community interpreting (here covering interpreting for the courts, health services, immigration departments, etc.), so far mostly developed in paraprofessional programmes in 'immigrant' countries like Canada, the United States, Australia, and Sweden, where there has been rising awareness of domestic language needs. In Europe, where training has been centred on the universities, comparatively little has been done to adopt 'real needs' approaches of this kind.

Students of translation are predominantly women in many countries, although Caminade and Pym (1995) estimated that only 35 per cent of programme directors were women.

### **31.3 Types of university training programmes**

Translation courses are offered as part of most degree programmes in foreign languages. Although traditionally used as a way of checking language acquisition, translation tasks have increasingly been seen as training activities in themselves, imparting skills that are specific to translation as a mode of communication (for traces of this change, see the volumes edited by Sewell and Higgins 1996, Malmkjær 1998, 2004b, Baer and Koby 2003, Tennent 2005, Kearns 2008). Perhaps one of the more interesting aspects of non-European developments is the way translator-training programmes have been set up between various university departments. In most cases this involves one language-specific department (say, English or Chinese) running the programme with participation from teaching staff from other language-specific departments. Sometimes the parent body is a department of linguistics; in a few cases the actual running of the programme is carried out by an interdepartmental committee.

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Although the ideal may be to have a full-fledged specialized translation department, many other practical structures can be found. Despite those changes, since the 1990s there have been strong arguments in favour of moving translator training away from general modern language programmes, in many cases resulting in independent programmes exclusively for the training of translators and/or interpreters.

With reference to these independent programmes, university-level training can be divided into full long-term training (BA plus MA, usually adding up to five years of training) and Masters-level programmes (which may be for one year but are more normally for two). In some European countries, programmes are traditionally in accordance with the first model (Germany, Austria, and Spain, for example); in others the Masters model is more predominant (France, the United States, the United Kingdom). In Turkey there are four-year BA programmes. Beyond Europe, the need to adapt to existing local structures, coupled with required language-learning at university level, has led to a clear predominance of programmes at Masters level. These distinctions have far-reaching consequences in determining who is trained, what the training consists of, how translation competence is conceptualized, and how the training process relates to professionalization.

In the long-term model, students are usually required to complete solid training in language and communication skills, then specialize in their final years (normally deciding between written translation or interpreting). In some countries they must work from at least two foreign languages, and a great deal of their time in the initial years is spent developing language skills. The programmes can be quite rich and diverse, offering training in computer skills, new technologies, business skills, a range of specialized translation areas, translation theory, perhaps translation history, and general humanistic courses available in the institutions. The ideal product of these programmes would be a professional with a very rich skill set. The dominant models of translation competence are correspondingly rich and complex. This can be seen in Germanic theorization from Wilss (1996) to Kautz (2000), or the PACTE proposal from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (see e.g. Beeby 2000), which has a broad range of six sub-competencies and is well suited to a five-year programme. Other models of competence are nevertheless available (cf. Schäffner and Adab 2000).

Independent Masters-level programmes, on the other hand, can be more focused on the skills actually used by translators and/or interpreters. They might thus be expected to cater to specific market niches or skill sets such as audiovisual translation, literary translation, or localization. In practice, however, these programmes still tend to offer general approaches to translation, albeit without the language training that is offered in the first years of the full programmes. This ‘general Masters’ approach has been proposed as a model for a European Masters in Translation.

Within Europe, the Bologna process is supposed to separate the BA from the MA levels. In many cases this has meant that the previous four-year or five-year programmes have been cut into two parts, with the MA level offering more or less the specializations that existed previously. There is little evidence of a more radical distinction between the BA and MA levels, of the kind that would allow graduates to be employed in the translation industry after their BA degree and would then see them taking up MA studies in order to acquire advanced specialized professional skills, ideally adapted to specific market niches.

A marginal trend has been to offer Masters programmes in ‘translation studies’, where the term tends to be used in two associated senses: (1) as studies that can make the student a (better) translator, and (2) as academic research on translation (i.e. ‘translation science’ or ‘translatology’). Although there must be doubt about the extent to which academic research can directly enhance translation skills, such courses do find a market and enjoy the luxury of not dealing with specific language pairs—translation can be studied in just one language, usually English. The term ‘cultural translation’ is sometimes used in a similar way to cater to the more literary versions of the same conflation, the general suggestion being that the engaged theories of cultural studies can enhance some kind of literary translation skills.

Both within and around this trend, university-level training courses have become one of the main ways in which academic research might hope to speak to the translation professions, perhaps helping to inform their future. It is nevertheless difficult to claim that any such influence has so far been exerted. If anything, the influences have been working the other way, from professional practice to academic training.

### 31.4 Types of training situations

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The institutional separation of translator training from modern language programmes has mobilized a series of debatable *idées reçues*. One of these, usually formulated from within independent programmes, is that the ‘traditional’ translation class is entirely unprofessional. For example, we are told that the traditional ‘didactic translation’ model involves students producing texts only for the teacher to read, such that the translation is evaluated positively only when it corresponds to the way the teacher translates, or indeed to the (usually literalist, source-text oriented) model translation that the teacher has prepared beforehand. If the teacher is not a professional translator, so the argument goes, the training exercise cannot possibly result in the acquisition of professional skills; it can merely reproduce, at best, the concepts and skills of the teacher.

An associated idea, more general in scope, is that university training in general does not serve the needs of the market (Bowker 2004, Chesterman and Wagner 2004, Gouadec 2007), not just because the teachers are often not professional translators but because the programmes themselves cater to the internal needs and formats of the educational institutions. The arguments around this point are as numerous as they are superficial and under-informed. A fairly common discourse among professional translators is that the formal training programmes are inefficient, misleading, too theoretical, irremediably out of touch with market developments, and in some instances saturating the labour market with graduates. Partly justified retorts might point to the number of teachers who are indeed also professional translators (or have been for long periods) or to the more recent translation theories that do indeed incorporate market criteria (notably in *Skopos* theory and localization: see Chapter 1, 1.8.2 and 1.8.5). Some of the steps being taken to bring training closer to the market include inviting professionals into the classroom, assessing students on the basis of portfolios of their completed translations, using real-world (‘authentic’) translation tasks with explicit instructions from a client, and generally modelling competencies and skill sets in ways that can match market demands, such that employers might ideally search a database of graduates for the kind of translator they are looking for (rather like a customer ordering a new car with the desired colour and a series of extras). It might be that professional organizations are delighted to enter the classroom, reluctant to employ anyone on the basis of a portfolio alone, and resigned to the fact that many of the skills they need will inevitably be developed in-house rather than at university. Further, ‘the market’ is an increasingly fragmented entity, rarely with the clear general principles that many trainers would like to attach to it.

In many cases, these debates take place within the training institutions themselves, where one tends to find a range of teaching situations. A single programme might include a professional technical translator who follows a master-apprentice model, and an academic translation theorist convinced that mysteries from Borges and Benjamin will illuminate young minds. Debates between such extremes can also be traced in the lists of competencies (as in the various working versions of the European Masters in Translation), where the ‘theory’ components tend to come and go according to the background of the person drawing up the list.

The more important side of these debates concerns the way translation classes are actually organized. The professional and the theorist can equally be addicted to full-frontal teacher-centred methodologies, in which knowledge moves from teacher to student. There are, however, several other models available.

### 31.4.1 Translator training vs. translator education

The wide range of training situations might explain why there are several competing approaches to what should happen in the translation classroom. One useful if polemical distinction is the one made by Kiraly (2000) between ‘translation competence’ and ‘translator competence’, developed by Bernardini (2004) as a broad difference between ‘translator training’ and ‘translator education’. ‘Training’ is thus associated with the (mostly linguistic) skills needed to produce an acceptable translation (‘translation competence’), the acquisition of which will always be a combination of instruction and practice. Such training is the stuff that professional translators tend to insist on. ‘Translator education’, on the other hand, recognizes the need for students to acquire a wide range of interpersonal skills and attitudes (‘translator competence’), in addition to the purely technical skills. Students must learn how to work interactively not just with other translators, but with terminologists, project managers, and end-clients. They do not simply absorb linguistic information; they have to be taught how to locate and evaluate information for themselves. Similarly, they should not just absorb professional norms from seeing their translations corrected; they should be able to discover the norms and ethical principles, mostly through work on authentic professional tasks or while on work placements, contributing to debates on these issues as they go along. From the perspective of such translator education, the institution must allow young professionals to develop as multifaceted

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citizens, rather than just as bearers of industrial skills. They must be taught not just how to do things; they must become members of the various overlapping professional communities engaged in the production of translations. This approach is eminently suited to long-term training programmes.

Kiraly's most important contribution (in Kiraly 2000) has been to frame this distinction in terms of constructivist philosophy, understood as the general view whereby individuals actively construct knowledge about the world. Kiraly actually insists on 'social constructivism', emphasizing that people construct knowledge interactively with each other, and that this is how things should happen in the classroom. This is opposed to 'transmissionism', which would see the individual as a passive receptacle for knowledge received either directly from perception or from the authority of a teacher of some kind. For constructivism, the teacher is a 'facilitator', opening spaces where students themselves can pursue their learning processes, collectively deciding on their learning objectives and which texts to translate, and participating in the final evaluation of their activities. For transmissionism, says Kiraly, the teacher remains the authority, deciding what should be learned, what should be translated, and how successful training should be evaluated.

Kiraly maps this distinction onto two different views of translation. For the constructivist, the translator actively construes an interpretation of the source text, adapting it to various possible target-side purposes. For the transmissionist, on the other hand, the translator follows the instructions in the source text, mapping information from one text to the other. The two teaching methodologies would thus correspond to two quite different views of what translation is. For Kiraly, along with most contemporary theorists, the transmissionist model is, or should be, a thing of the past, in terms of both pedagogical practice and translation theory.

Kiraly's grand dichotomies can be questioned on several fronts. The categories do not always line up, since the learning of a narrow set of skills can be as constructivist as any interactive education, and non-transmissionist translation principles can be conveyed in a lecture. Further, there are many different ways of applying constructivism in the classroom, and not every non-transmissionist teacher will go so far as to allow students to choose their own source texts and methods of evaluation. As for peer collaboration as a work ethic, it matches poorly with the many professional situations based on hierarchies. More generally, the student-centred approach of social constructivism belongs to an educational philosophy of the 1960s, making it standard fare in some countries and putting it on a collision course with the current ideologies of planned competence-based teaching. The constructivist teacher will ideally allow students to participate in the definition of their learning objectives, and any standard teaching handbook will insist on an initial needs analysis and then some kind of learning contract with the group. All that is hard to do if the competencies have been defined and calculated in a pre-established blueprint, as if humanistic teaching could operate like a Stalinist five-year plan.

### 31.4.2 Types of in-class activities

Thanks in part to these debates, much has been done to diversify classroom activities. The basic model might be to have individual students translate a text then read out their translations and have them evaluated, either directly by the teacher or by other students, who can propose alternatives. Nord (1996) proposes diversifying this through different combinations of the translation instructions (*Auftrag*), partial/complete translation, small group work, guided translation exercises, use of parallel texts, sight translation, simulated interpreting situations, 'gist' translation, documentation, and reviewing (the list is translated in Kiraly 2000: 55–7). House (1986, 2000) points out the benefits of having students translate in pairs or small groups ('translation in and as interaction'). Vienne (1994) proposes focusing squarely on social and discursive contexts (a pedagogy of 'translation in situation'). Ulyrch (1996) and Nord (1997) insist on an analysis of both the source-text situation and the intended situation of the translation itself, and many authors have since emphasized the importance of having students analyse communicative purposes as well as texts, insisting that this activity is qualitatively different from just having students learn by doing a lot of translating (Honig 1988). Kiraly (2000) and more especially Gouadec (2007) recommend that these considerations be packaged into large translation projects on which students should work as small groups, often with diversified roles (translator, reviewer, terminologist, project manager). Others, starting from Nord (1988, 1996), are more concerned with issues of pedagogical progression, arguing that simpler analytical and declarative tasks should precede the more complex procedural projects.

At the earlier stages, many kinds of quite different activities can be brought across from language-acquisition classes, including such things as bilingual crossword puzzles, terminology searches. González Davies (2004,

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2005) offers numerous possibilities in this regard, most usefully insisting on discussion forums and the acting-out of communicative situations. Perhaps the most important aspect of pedagogical progression concerns the use of oral translation situations. Since the early 1990s there have been numerous opinions in favour of having students dramatize translation situations, giving primacy to the oral over the written, since the greater context-dependence of spoken language makes translation purposes all the more obvious. However, this view contradicts the conventional wisdom that, since conference interpreting is ostensibly more difficult than written translation, the spoken forms should be learnt later than the written. That doctrine is happily being challenged, thanks in part to the greater attention being paid to the various forms of dialogue interpreting.

### 31.5 Contributions from research

As in most fields of translation studies, there has been a steady growth in research on translator training. Perhaps the most useful contributions indicate the ways current training is failing. For example, the questionnaires conducted by Li (2001, 2002), on the changing translation industry and the learning needs perceived by students, highlight the desirability of authentic tasks in the classroom, the need for continued language training (despite the supposed separation of translation from modern language faculties), and the demand for theory to be better applied to practice. On all these points, data from further questionnaires might help reorient current training methods.

In many cases, however, the nature of the research design tends to restrict the institutional impact of the findings, since there is little direct comparison of one teaching methodology with another. Many studies discover that specific lessons on the theory and practice of skill X result in enhanced performance involving skill X, which would seem to be fairly obvious. The findings are nevertheless more interesting in cases where the correlation is not found, perhaps for a particular group of students or learning/translating style (e.g. Scott-Tennent and Gonzalez Davies 2008). Other studies make appeals to action research and the politics of empowerment only to offer evidence that their teaching approaches are successful—students love the classes, but are rarely asked if they are as enthusiastic about serious alternative kinds of classes. Similarly limited would seem to be product-based empirical research to test or justify the lists of competencies, since there is no guarantee that the one product (a recurrent translation error, for example) always results from just one process or combination of processes. One should thus not be surprised to see the lists changing in accordance with researchers' institutional situations. Waddington (2000:135) lists three doubts on this score: (1) it is hard to know exactly how many components should be a part of translation competence; (2) the definitions tend to concern *ideal* competence, and are thus incomplete without a model of the learning process; and (3) there is a dearth of empirical evidence for most of the available models.

Training should be able to benefit from empirical studies on translation processes (rather than products), using think-aloud protocols, keystroke logging, screen recording, and eye tracking. Since students are relatively easy to muster as experiment subjects, there is a growing body of data on how they compare with professionals. In principle, the differences should give a developmental view of translation competence, thus mapping out the skills that translators need to be trained in (for a useful overview, see JÄÄskelÄinen 2002). The findings generally suggest that the more experienced translators tend to:

1. use more paraphrase and less literalism as coping strategies (Kussmaul 1995, LÖrscher 1991, Jensen 1999);
2. process larger translation units (Toury 1986, LÖrscher 1991, Tirkkonen-Condit 1992);
3. spend longer reviewing their work at the post-drafting phase but make fewer changes when reviewing (Jensen and Jakobsen 2000, Jakobsen 2002, Englund Dimitrova 2005);
4. read texts faster and spend proportionally more time looking at the target text than at the source text (Jakobsen and Jensen 2008);
5. use top-down processing and refer more to the translation purpose (Fraser 1996, Jonasson 1998, KÜnzli 2001, 2004, SÉguinot 1989, Tirkkonen-Condit 1992);
6. rely more on encyclopaedic knowledge (Tirkkonen-Condit 1989);
7. express more principles and personal theories (Tirkkonen-Condit 1989, 1997, JÄÄskelÄinen 1999);
8. incorporate the client into the risk-management processes (KÜnzli 2004);
9. automatize some complex tasks but also shift between automatized routine tasks and conscious problem-

solving (Krings 1988, Jaaskelainen and Tirkkonen-Condit 1991, Englund Dimitrova 2005); and

**10.** display more realism, confidence, and critical attitudes in their decision-making (Künzli 2004).

Once again, however, it is precarious to jump from these findings to actual pedagogical practice. This is not just because the experiment groups are small, the findings overlap and in some cases contradict each other, and the methodologies may affect the cognitive processes. The more substantial problem for trainers should be that many of the skills that apparently define experts may ensue from normal processes of repetition, resulting from many hours of practice rather than from the application of any clear-cut teachable principles—just keep translating, and you will get there in the end, with or without a teacher and a classroom. That is, trainers still have to identify the principles and activities that can speed up the training process, and the straight application of expertise theory may not be enough. Further, with respect to think-aloud data, years in any market will give anyone a small arsenal of things to say for the purposes of self-justification, and it seems far-fetched to equate quick pronouncements by professionals with declarative principles, full-blown courses in translation theory, or indeed wholly thought-through risk-management strategies. There should be similar doubts about the way all process data is interpreted. For instance, Jensen (2001) finds that expert translators engage in less problem-solving, goal-setting, and re-analysing than do non-professionals (their behaviour is broadly classified as ‘knowledge telling’, as opposed to ‘knowledge transforming’). That is, they generally pose fewer questions about the text, and operate in a more linear way than do novices, who tend to problematize myriad details. On the accepted view, this would indicate that experts are overcoming trivial difficulties in an automatized way, reserving their ‘knowledge-transforming’ cognition for the really significant problems. At the same time, however, it could be that the professionals really do ask fewer questions about the material they handle, since an apparently automatized cognitive process might also be a nonexistent one. That is, they might tend to accept text as it comes, without undue attention to the communicative situations, clients’ instructions, and stylistic acceptability that most researchers tend to want to find, justify, and use as evaluation criteria. At least marginal reservations should thus remain about what the data are saying.

Process-based research nevertheless picks up several aspects that are rarely foregrounded in the pedagogical models based on products. These include speed, the capacity to distribute effort in terms of risk, the use of external resources (both written and human), and the key role of revision. One way of making advanced students aware of such aspects is to have them screen-record and analyse their own translating (or their peers’), in fact making process research a classroom activity. The empirical studies can also question a few *idées reçues*. It has not been confirmed, for example, that professionals translate faster than novices (the above tendencies concern the *distribution* of tasks, not the total time taken). Or again, Künzli (2001) finds that the use of bilingual resources has no correlation with translation quality, which flies in the face of all the communicative-approach teachers who try to prohibit such resources.

### 31.6 Current challenges

Translator training faces several current challenges that concern pedagogical practice, curriculum design, and the possible contributions of research.

First among these challenges must be the impact of translation memories, data-based machine translation, and content-management systems (here we exclude concordance tools, which are for linguists, not professional translators). These technologies are having a profound impact on the way translators work, particularly in the localization industry. They can no longer be seen as mere ‘tools’ that help the translator; they actually change the nature of translating itself, obliging professionals to work not from continuous texts but from pre-translated discontinuous chunks and data bases, and thus increasing the importance of revision processes. Mossop is undoubtedly right when he says: ‘If you can’t translate with pencil and paper, then you can’t translate with the latest information technology’ (2003: 20), but the sense of the verb ‘to translate’ may not be the same on both sides of that equation.

An associated challenge is the need to develop highly specialized programmes, at Masters level or as advanced short-term courses, that cater for areas such as localization, audiovisual translation, applied terminology, and the various kinds of interpreting. This might be accompanied by a reduction in courses that are specialized according to language directionality, especially as student groups become more linguistically mixed (thanks in part to exchange programmes) and as work into the translator’s L2 becomes a permanent feature of professional practice

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in many countries. The response to changes in the market thus requires considerable rethinking of curricula.

The use of electronic communication for class interaction and learning materials of all kinds ('e-learning') is now a feature of many programmes, but much remains to be discovered about how it can intermesh with the professional use of the same technologies. Distance learning is becoming easier to organize, and presents many advantages (notably mixed-language groups for tandem learning, and greater student catchment areas for highly specialized courses), although we still know very little about how it affects basic pedagogical practices in this field.

Finally, evaluation will remain a problematic issue for as long as internal criteria ('accomplishment of learning aims') fail to connect with diversified professional practice. In many countries professional certification is quite independent from educational degrees, a situation that might suggest the degrees are not trusted by employer groups. National authorities of various kinds may be responsible for exams (e.g. the Institute of Linguists in Britain, or the American Translators Association), for giving official rankings to the various translator-training institutions (e.g. the NAATI in Australia), or for acting in an advisory capacity (e.g. the government-appointed Tolk- och Översättarinstitutet in Sweden).

### **Further reading and relevant resources**

Discussions of translator training appear with respectable frequency in the main translation studies journals and in collective volumes on the topic. The articles usually offer not just empirical data but also ideas for class activities, syllabus design, and curriculum development, since they constitute one of the ways in which teacher-researchers discuss these issues. One should nevertheless be aware of the different institutional contexts within which the authors write, since the assumptions made for specialized Masters programmes, for example, do not always apply to beginner translation students or to language-studies students who just take a course or two on translation.

The publications of the 1980s and 1990s were marked by frequent calls for more professional views of translation, and that debate can now be considered won. Kiraly (2000) remains a landmark statement, since his application of constructivism has raised voices both for and against. González Davies (2004) is a valuable source of ideas for the translation class, although proposals for more varied, dynamic, interactive, oral, and dramatized class activities, sometimes usefully including the production of source texts, can be found in earlier work by House (1986) and Nord (e.g. 1996). Some suggestions for product-based activities are in Hatim and Munday (2004); proposed activities for the teaching of translation theory are in Pym (2010).

Research on translation processes is revisiting some of the suppositions made by standard product-based evaluations, and this should be expected eventually to modify the lists of competencies and learning objectives. The research is not always easy to find, but useful summaries such as Jääskeläinen (2002) appear in the main journals.

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## Oxford Handbooks Online

### Training Interpreters

Ludmila Stern

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### Abstract and Keywords

The recognition of interpretation as a profession came in the twentieth century. The first interpreter training took place after the First World War. Training in simultaneous interpreting started after the Second World War. By 2000 interpreting was offered as a course at graduate and postgraduate levels. The initial approach to training was practical and based on apprenticeships. In the late 1980s a new paradigm, based on calls for scientific data and verification of teaching methods, took hold. Interpreter training programmes today vary in academic level, format, and duration. However, their aims are the same: to produce interpreters who are able to work immediately and reliably on the market. Assessment is important in training. Assessment aims to evaluate students' competence and provide feedback on progress. To achieve reliable professional standards training should be well planned and innovative, coupled with a flexible approach, and encouraging ongoing professional development.

Keywords: interpretation, interpreter training, teaching methods, assessment, training, professional development

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### 32.1 Introduction

Interpreting is one the most ancient human activities that enables communication between speakers of different languages. However, its recognition as a profession and the acknowledgement that it needs formal training only came in the twentieth century. Perceptions about interpreting ability range from interpreters being born and not made to bilingualism being the only requirement.

#### 32.1.1 The origins of interpreter training

The first interpreter training took place after the First World War, when the first League of Nations professional interpreters were trained in consecutive interpreting (CI) with note-taking in Geneva (Wilss 1999: 33; Pöchhacker 2004: 28). Training in simultaneous interpreting (SI) with technical equipment started after the Second World War, when the Nuremberg Military Tribunal required multilingual courtroom interpreting for the Nuremberg trials (1945–6). This successful on-the-job training in SI was followed by the United Nations (founded in 1945), with its long-term need for multilingual simultaneous interpreters. The advent of a new generation of interpreters on the growing international market led to the realization that interpreters cannot rely on natural talent alone, but must undergo training.

#### 32.1.2 First steps in conference interpreter training

While major international organizations trained their employees in-house, conference interpreters, supported by the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC, founded in 1953), advocated the recognition of interpreting as a profession that required tertiary-level training. Indeed, the first interpreter-training programmes had been created in a university setting: the first college for business translators/interpreters in Mannheim (1930),

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later transferred to the University of Heidelberg (Pöchhacker 2004: 28), and conference interpreting programmes founded in the 1940s in university settings: at the Universities of Geneva and Vienna, the Faculty of Interpreting and Translation of the Moscow State Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages (1942), the Universities of Graz and Innsbruck (1946), and the Universities of Mainz/Germersheim (1947) and Saarbrücken (1948). However, because of their professional orientation, interpreting schools (*Ecole supérieure, Institut supérieur*) tended to distinguish themselves from the classical university model: the Division of Translation and Interpretation at Georgetown University (1949), Scuola Superiore di Lingue Moderne per Interpreti et Traduttori at the University of Trieste (1954), the Graduate School of Translation and Interpretation at Monterey Institute of International Studies, USA (1969), the Ecole Supérieure d'Interprètes et de Traducteurs (ESIT) at the Sorbonne, and the Institut Supérieur d'Interpretation et de Traduction (ISIT) (1957) in Paris. Growing international exchanges in the latter part of the twentieth century prompted the creation of further interpreter training departments in Europe, the Americas, and other continents, with training of interpreters in CI and SI in areas such as economics, trade, and international law. Some schools also offered liaison interpreting for business negotiations and court interpreting.

### 32.1.3 The beginnings of community interpreter training

Worldwide migrations over the past fifty years have led to multi-ethnicity in previously monocultural countries. This has led away from the conventional international conference setting to a new area in interpreting practice, community interpreting, also known as public service interpreting or dialogue interpreting. The few programmes in community interpreter training available in (mainly) Nordic Europe, Australia, New Zealand, the USA, and Canada train interpreters in two-directional dialogue (short consecutive) interpreting, in settings such as immigration and welfare departments, police, courts, and hospitals, with particular focus on the interpreter's professional role and ethics. Approaches to community interpreter training have largely followed those in sign language interpreter training, which originated earlier (see Chapter 24).

### 32.1.4 Interpreter training today

By 2000 interpreting was offered in approximately 230 undergraduate and postgraduate interpreter-training schools in sixty-four countries (Niska 2005: 36–7). Yet interpreters, teachers, and researchers still debate the best ways of administering such training. Programmes may be academic or vocational, and vary in duration and academic level. Pedagogical literature reflects approaches that have changed since the 1950s. Moreover, the quality of interpretation and training concerns not only educators and practitioners but also other stakeholders, such as professional associations and governmental and intergovernmental bodies who contribute to the development of interpreter training and pedagogy through thematic workshops, policies, and funding.

## 32.2 Approaches to interpreter training

### 32.2.1 Early approaches

The initial approach to training was practical and based on apprenticeships—students were expected to learn by imitating the master (Pöchhacker 2004:177), a practising conference interpreter, 'by means of demonstration followed by attempts at successive approximation of the modelled behaviour' (Shaw, Collins, and Metzger 2006: 3). Interpreter educators such as Herbert, Rozan, Ilg, and van Hoof laid the foundations of interpreter training by analysing their practice as interpreters and teachers and writing about it. According to Jean Herbert, a former interpreter and instructor at the Ecole de Traduction et d'Interprétation (ETI, Geneva University), training should include skills and modes used in conference interpreting practice: SI with equipment in booths, without equipment (*chuchotage*), and from written texts (sight translation); CI with note-taking; plus the acquisition of additional knowledge (Herbert 1952). At the same time, the foundations of note-taking in CI were laid (Rozan 1956).

### 32.2.2 The evolution of interpreter training pedagogy

Although the earlier pedagogy was intuitive and later described as 'pre-scientific' (Gile 1994b: 149), its input into training was nevertheless very important. In the 1970s Danica Seleskovitch and Marianne Lederer (ESIT) developed an approach, *théorie du sens*, according to which students learnt to conduct an advanced cognitive

analysis of the source text, which would lead to the separation of the deep meaning or message (*sens*) from its verbal shell by getting away from the words and structures of the original (*d'Érvalisation*). This approach to interpreter training was holistic and based on the presumption that suitably selected students with a full mastery of their working languages would automatically know how to reformulate and transfer meaning across languages (Gile 1994b: 150). Being product-oriented, this approach focused on the quality of the output, which included source-target text correspondence in terms of accuracy and performance. The product was tested by using the professional requirements of the market, and involved rigorous selection criteria and 'real-life' training materials. The *théorie du sens* dominated interpreter training in the 1970s and 1980s. At the same time it also met with criticism for being unscientific, for arbitrarily including or rejecting teaching methods and exercises, for its emphasis on emulating the instructor, and for being too prescriptive and dictatorial.

### 32.2.3 Towards a scientifically verified approach

In the late 1980s a new paradigm, based on calls for scientific data and verification of teaching methods, took hold. It was informed by interdisciplinary research into the interpreting process, involving natural/cognitive sciences such as psychology, neuropsychology, and neurolinguistics, and also the cognitive mechanisms of the interpreting process (e.g. memory, perception, recall, and dual tasking in SI). This and other research influenced interpreter training directly and indirectly (Gile 1990, 1995). Following this, interpreters, educators, and researchers turned to empirical research with a greater focus on the learning process (Gile 1995), resulting in the introduction of evidence-based teaching methods, skills teaching, and scientifically validated methods of assessment and admission to training programmes. The understanding that interpreting expertise is developed by being taught gradually led to the identification of the necessary skills and sub-skills, and training students in those skills rather than holistically. An approach to interpreter training based on processing-capacity management explains how cognitive effort is divided among different components of the interpreting process (Gile 1995, 1997, 1999). Despite the surge of empirical research in the 1990s, even the proponents of the scientific approach comment on 'the multifactorial nature of interpretation performance as a hindrance to experimental research' (Gile, quoted in Dejean le Féal 1998: 35).

### 32.2.4 Community interpreting pedagogy

Community interpreting pedagogy started much later (Roy 2006b), and benefited from sign language research and pedagogy, and legal interpreting research (Berk-Seligson 1990). It used discourse-based and ethnographic perspectives to train students in interactive discourse in special settings, social aspects of community interpreting, and the interpreter's professional role (Wadensjö 2007, Niska 2002, 2007, Hale 1997b, 2007). Particular attention has been given to medical (Tebble 1998, Angelelli 2004a) and legal/courtroom interpreting (Mikkelsen 2000, Hale 2002, 2004).

### 32.2.5 The literature of interpreter training today

To date, the literature of interpreter training reflects its practice, which is fragmented. There are few scientifically tested studies, and most publications describe training experience in individual schools, teachers', and researchers' personal preferences, and case studies. It is yet to be proven what the optimum approaches are. Current areas of debate include student selection, curriculum models and programme content, teaching methodology, and reliability of assessment.

## 32.3 Selection for admission to interpreter training programmes

Interpreter educators agree that successful training starts with the selection of suitable candidates. However, selection criteria and processes vary depending on the type of programme and institution.

### 32.3.1 Prerequisites for Admission to Conference Interpreting

Entry to conference interpreting programmes has traditionally been subject to rigorous selection. Candidates are required to have an excellent command of their A language (mother tongue) over a wide range of topics and registers, an in-depth knowledge of their B and C (non-native working) languages, a good knowledge of

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international affairs, and good knowledge of the economic, social, and cultural backgrounds of the countries in which their working languages are used. For postgraduate degrees (the European Masters in Conference Interpreting), candidates are required to hold a university degree or equivalent in any subject.

### 32.3.2 Aptitude tests

An aptitude test is believed to be necessary to assess students' suitability for training (Herbert 1952, Weber 1984, Gile 1995). Tests evaluate students' trilingual proficiency and general knowledge. Other requirements to be assessed include 'a good capacity for analysis and synthesis; good communication skills; flexibility, good powers of concentration and the ability to work under pressure' (Niska 2005: 49–50). While existing tests determine the candidate's readiness to study (e.g. the early diagnostic test at the Monterey Institute of International Studies), most lack clear definitions of language competence in students' A, B, and C languages; most of them rely on written tests that fail to assess specific oral skills such as memory, oral comprehension, and speed of analysis; they have no methodology of testing general education and interest in current affairs, do not provide adequate assessment of aptitude for interpreter training (Moser-Mercer 1994: 60), and have no predictive value regarding how much improvement can be expected during training (Moser-Mercer 1994; Sawyer 2004: 111).

Assessment of admission tests varies from school to school, with examiners including staff members or an external jury consisting of practitioners, and assessment ranges from impressionistic marking to a matrix to record grades and points. Neither approach has scientific validity: there is no correlation between the results of any aptitude test and the results in a programme's final examinations, nor does an aptitude test provide the transparency needed for unsuccessful candidates (Moser-Mercer 1994: 65).

### 32.3.3 Admission Requirements for Community Interpreting Programmes

These also vary. Community interpreting is an under-recognized profession that can neither guarantee employment nor offer adequate remuneration, so it is understandable that there is a smaller pool of applicants from which to select. Ensuring that students have the bilingual and bicultural competence necessary for community interpreting is challenging, especially with speakers of rare languages who may not be fully competent in the majority language. This is likely to affect the content and effectiveness of the programme (Hale 2007: 169), and entry criteria may be significantly lower than those in conference interpreting schools. Entry requirements for established community interpreting courses in Sweden include good linguistic (bilingual) skills, sociocultural and psychological skills, and an awareness of professional ethics (Niska 2002: 134). Students applying for a BA (Gallaudet University) are screened for language proficiency through exercises, followed by an interview and further screening (Shaw et al. 2006: 9). However, short training courses have minimum entry requirements (Straker and Wattes 2003: 160 on UK) or even none (Angelelli 2006: 27 on healthcare interpreter training in the USA).

### 32.3.4 Changing Standards

Interpreter educators note that with the proliferation of interpreter training programmes the overall quality of students admitted is reduced, with a lower level of proficiency in their B language (Gile 2001b) and in their rhetorical sensitivity in their A language (Altman 1994), and limited general knowledge. In some schools, both international students and candidates for community interpreter training have a less than satisfactory command of the majority language. It is possible that some universities are urged to attract larger student numbers for economic reasons, thus lowering admission requirements, for example by setting admission levels in language skill below the level needed for professional communication. If admission criteria indeed become less rigorous, and unsuitable students are not removed during training, then a lowering in the standards of interpreter training programmes, and a consequent reduction in the quality of the graduates and of professional standards, is the inevitable result.

## 32.4 Types of Interpreter Training Programmes

Interpreter training programmes vary in academic level, format, and duration. However, their aims are the same: to produce 'interpreters who are able to work immediately and reliably on the market' (Sawyer 2004: 56). This applies to interpreter training in general, both conference interpreting and community interpreting programmes, although the 'market' is different in each case.

### 32.4.1 The Nature of Programmes

Interpreter training programmes range from short orientation courses in non-academic settings to academic programmes in tertiary institutions. Since the professionalization of conference interpreting in the 1950s, practitioners' calls for university-level training backed by academic research have been at odds with programmes of a vocational nature, based on the needs of the market. The inclusion of theory into the curriculum has been slow, and that of research (including MA and Ph.Ds) slower still (Pochhacker 2004: 31).

Professionalization of community interpreting is taking even longer, owing to prevailing perceptions, by both interpreter users and practitioners, that community interpreting requires little or no training. The fact that it represents a thousand-year-old activity in the form of assistance to fellow community members, often with everyday matters, has seriously hindered its professionalization. International funding is not available for community interpreting, and the low social status of ethnic-minority groups has prevented them from effectively lobbying for the provision of community interpreters with compulsory pre-service training.

### 32.4.2 Conference Interpreting Programmes

#### 32.4.2.1 Undergraduate Programmes

A common European model has been an undergraduate degree at Bachelor level, or the equivalent, of three to five years' duration, providing a comprehensive, general humanistic education with language instruction in three working languages, and training in both interpreting and translation (Niska 2005: 45). In the 1970s, undergraduate programmes in Germany included foundation studies with native and non-native language instruction, introductory and general translation studies, and a non-linguistic subject during the first four semesters. These were followed, in semesters 5 and 6, by advanced studies for interpreter training with elocution, CI with note-taking, SI and preparation for conference interpreting, advanced translation studies, area/cultural studies, and a thesis (Wilss 1999: 43). Similarly, the five-year interpreting and translation course at the Maurice Thorez Institute of Foreign languages in Moscow dedicated the first two years to instruction in two foreign languages, with translation being introduced in the third year, sight translation and consecutive interpreting in the fourth, and simultaneous interpreting in the fifth.

#### 32.4.2.2 Graduate Programmes

Graduate programmes, usually at Masters level and oftentimes to twenty-four months' duration, appear to be the main type of conference interpreter training today, favoured by the *grandes Écoles* (ESIT, ETI), as well as by Anglo-Saxon countries and universities which introduced interpreter training in the late twentieth or early twenty-first centuries. Since it is assumed that students have a full mastery of their future working languages and broad general knowledge, training consists of the acquisition of skills and additional knowledge, both linguistic (lexical) and thematic, in areas relevant to interpreting (Gile 2001b: 381). Postgraduate programmes may combine interpreting with translation or offer conference interpreting only. For example, conference interpreting is offered at the University of Westminster over two semesters and at ESIT over four semesters, whereas the Monterey Institute of International Studies offers both an MA in Conference Interpreting and in Translation and Interpretation. These MA programmes are practice-oriented, with a thesis as a compulsory or optional component. A market-oriented approach encourages the development of skills in areas that are in demand.

#### 32.4.2.3 In-house Training of Conference and Court Interpreters

International organizations and courts, such as the Nuremberg Military Tribunal, the United Nations, and the European Commission and Parliament, have conducted in-house training over a few weeks or months. More recently, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Court (ICC) have been training new employees in courtroom SI in 'rare' languages in which no institutional training exists (Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian in the former and Acholi, Lingala, and Swahili in the latter).

The advantages of in-house training include exposure to the operations of international organizations and guaranteed employment for successful candidates. However, training is provided for the specific needs of the organization, and as a result the trainees lack more general background training (Renfer, in Dollerup and Lindegaard 1994: 183). Since the admission to the EU of a large number of Central and Eastern European countries,

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the European Commission's Directorate-General for Interpretation (DG Interpretation, former SCIC) has abandoned its intensive six-month training period for the European Commission and Parliament in favour of the European Masters in Conference Interpreting offered by universities. DG Interpretation provides staff and funding (Niska 2005:36), with the aims of making the courses in different European countries EU-oriented, and of training interpreters in languages not offered in international interpreting schools outside the region (Pym 2000, cited in Niska 2005: 36).

### 32.4.3 Community Interpreting Programmes

Community interpreting has been seriously hindered by a lack of recognition of the need for training, by a lack of resources, a shortage of courses, and a lack of suitably qualified staff (Hale 2007). Programmes and courses in community interpreting vary in their nature. Organizations and government agencies offer short induction courses for employees, often on the job and for specific settings (e.g. courtrooms or hospitals), which may include from one day to one hundred hours of basic training, their short duration often being determined by a lack of adequate funding. University and college-based training, pioneered in Sweden since 1968, was followed in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and various US universities, where full academic programmes are offered. Apart from the Nordic countries, most European universities do not offer programmes in community interpreting.

#### 32.4.3.1 Academic Programmes

Universities that provide full academic programmes in community interpreting (and translation) offer them at undergraduate and/or graduate levels, for example TÖR (the Institute for Interpretation and Translation Studies, Stockholm University). The University of Western Sydney (UWS, Australia) offers a BA in Interpreting and Translation (three years), a Graduate Diploma in Interpreting (twelve months), and a Master of Interpreting and Translation (eighteen months). The length and scope of academic programmes does not generally allow sufficient time for a theoretical component, or for the development of practical skills (Taibi and Martin, in Hale 2007: 168), or for the students to improve their command of the majority language.

#### 32.4.3.2 College-type Courses

In a number of countries, community interpreter training is offered in a non-academic framework in the form of certificate courses. In Sweden, however, the University of Stockholm has been running community interpreting courses in adult education and community centres, for which it has developed the syllabus and supervised courses (Niska 2005: 39–40). A twenty-week training course in social security, healthcare, legal systems, and the labour market includes tuition in interpreting techniques, terminology, and ethics. Language-specific tuition is provided in thirty-eight of the 140 language groups participating (Niska 2004). In 1999, recognizing that community interpreters require professional training, the European Language Council Thematic Network Project (TNP) on translation recommended, in order to ensure the quality of public service, business, and court interpreting, the creation of full degrees or modules in continuing education, with financial support from the EU and input from user groups. In order to provide scientifically based, practice-oriented training, the syllabus would include theoretical and practical problems in interpreting and translation; interpreting for local authorities, courts, and hospitals; translation of general texts and documents; terminological work, rhetoric, psychology, basic medicine or law, information technology, and cultural knowledge; databanks and information research (Niska 2005: 60–62). However, despite these recommendations, no new initiatives have so far taken place.

#### 32.4.3.3 Courses in ‘rare’ Languages and for Special Projects

Recent population shifts and political changes, especially in Africa in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, have created a demand for interpretation in languages of limited diffusion ('rare' or 'emerging community languages'). Interpreter training courses, mainly non-academic, have tried to address this immediate need. However, a lack of resources and expertise in these languages makes it impossible to run them systematically, and affects their content and duration. Interpreter training courses designed for specific projects usually run over five to ten days, focusing on rapid skill acquisition for specific settings and on interpreting ethics, with no language-specific training. These include training in SI courtroom interpreting for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearing in South Africa (Lotriet 2002), liaison interpreter training to interview refugees in the Darfur Justice Project, and training Amharic-speaking health professionals in Israel in telephone interpreting (Schuster 2009). However,

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even with good selection and relevant skill-based training, the effectiveness of such short courses remains questionable, particularly in legal interpreting. While this ‘making the most of settling for less’ approach (Shlesinger 2007) was effective for the Human Rights Violations hearings in South Africa, it was less successful in more challenging Amnesty hearings, which used a higher language register, required a higher degree of accuracy, and contained legalese, complicated court judgments and statements, and rapid cross-examination (Lotriet 2002: 97).

### 32.5 Curriculum Models

Educators agree on a rounded curriculum in preference to individual courses. The programme usually combines general humanistic education and subjects which build interpreting skills with language enhancement and ethics components. Language acquisition is included in undergraduate programmes, whereas students admitted to graduate programmes are expected to have sufficient bilingual or trilingual proficiency and general knowledge. Postgraduate programmes thus encourage, rather than provide, further linguistic enhancement and the acquisition of thematic knowledge. In practice, despite selection, students may have insufficient command of their working languages, which leads to many failures, either during the course or at the end of the programme. Gile is critical of the *grandes Écoles* system, where linguistic enhancement and knowledge acquisition are left to students' independent efforts. Offering interpreter training within a classical university framework of language studies would allow the integration of additional thematic components (e.g. studies of international organizations and economics) into the interpreter training programme, and language assessment through existing language courses (Gile 2001b).

#### 32.5.1 Conference interpreting curriculum models

Among the few examples of shared curriculum models is the European Masters in Conference Interpreting (EMCI), launched in 1997 by DG Interpretation via a Consortium of institutions of EU member states and candidate members. By 2009 the Consortium included eighteen universities (Western European, Scandinavian, Eastern European, and Turkish) which offer the EMCI. A comprehensive postgraduate programme, the EMCI has the following core curriculum: theory of interpretation; practice of interpretation (including interpreting skills, public speaking, voice, ethics, conference preparation techniques); CI (content analysis, memory exercises, CI without notes, summarization, sight translation, note-taking in a variety of subject areas, in different styles and registers); SI, with the same approach plus booth techniques and team interaction; the EU and international organizations (introduction to organizations, their institutional processes and procedures).

#### 32.5.2 Community Interpreting Curriculum Models

Priorities in community interpreter training differ, primarily because of different candidature and goals. Some courses also aim ‘to ensure a high level of accuracy by improving students’ command of their working languages’ (Wadensjö 1998a: 36), training them in specialized terminology and familiarizing them with certain subject areas and administrative procedures. However, community interpreting still lacks curriculum models which incorporate suitable teaching strategies and components of competence (Campbell and Hale 2003: 205), and which have an academic underpinning, with a theoretical component including interpreting theory and a linguistics-based approach (Hale 2007). Debate regarding the interpreters’ professional role and ethics is reflected in the differing approaches to teaching (see Chapter 15).

#### 32.5.3 Methodology of Interpreter Training

While methodological questions in interpreter training share much common ground, teachers follow different practices in relation to teaching content, sequencing of modes and skill development, effective teaching methods, and the utility of certain exercises.

##### 32.5.3.1 Translation in Interpreter Training Programmes

Most Western schools include training in translation as a prerequisite or co-requisite, allowing students to reflect, research, and examine documents in order to build the thematic knowledge and lexical foundations that are necessary for interpreting. In theory, the curriculum can be structured according to the following models:

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- the linear model, where translation training precedes interpreter training;
- the modified linear model, which allows transition from translation training to interpreter training or advanced translation training;
- the Y- or forked model, which allows the student to withdraw from translation or interpreting after initial training in both; and
- the parallel-track model, which allows entry to programmes at different levels (Arjona, in Sawyer 2004: 86–7).

In practice, few programmes follow these models, some even going so far as to completely exclude translation from interpreter training (e.g. ESIT and the European Masters in Conference Interpreting).

### 32.5.3.2 Theoretical Components in Interpreter Training Programmes

Although theory has been incorporated into interpreter training programmes in recent years, it is still by and large insufficient. The MA programme in Translation at the Monterey Institute of International Studies includes one theory course but the MA in Conference Interpreting has none. Few programmes are structured in such a way as to create an organic link between theory and practical courses (e.g. MAITS at UNSW). However, knowledge of interpreting theory promotes reflective independent learning, enhances students' progress, and assists with decision-making and the maintenance of appropriate strategies and tactics (Gile 1995: 185–6). It also provides solutions to problems that are likely to arise. Thus, for example, an awareness of interpreters' processing capacity and effort model can teach students to manage their cognitive capacity and attention split, which affect their perception, processing, memory, and delivery (Gile 1995). While the absence of the study of pragmatics in conference interpreter training affects interpreting quality (Viaggio 2002), a discourse-based approach incorporated in some community interpreting courses helps students to master pragmatic competence in various settings, through principles of sociolinguistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, and critical discourse analysis (Hale 2007).

### 32.5.3.3 From Teacher- to Student-Oriented Methodology

Traditionally, the teacher, whose personal example students emulated, played the dominant role and was believed to determine 65 per cent of training success (Komissarov 2004). This approach, in which only practising interpreters were qualified to teach, was supported by the AIIC. It is now, however, generally agreed that it is not sufficient to have only interpreting practice for informed teaching, but that interpreter trainers should be aware of the basic concepts of translatology, and should have teaching experience, awareness of interpreter training pedagogy, and familiarity with interpreting research to underpin their teaching (Pochhacker 2004, Hale 2007). While interpreter trainers do not have to be researchers, they ought to be familiar with current theory, so that their teaching is informed by research, in order to help students to pinpoint problems, find solutions (Kurz 2002a: 65), and justify their decisions. With this approach, students are more in charge of their learning (Sawyer 2004) and can assess their own performance on the basis of theoretical principles (Hale 2007), as it is impossible for students to rely on their teachers' feedback and corrections in every possible situation.

### 32.5.3.4 Progression from Mode to Mode and Sequencing of Exercises

Progression in interpreter training denotes a sequence of modes, for example, training in CI ahead of SI for at least a year to master comprehension and analysis, and to avoid SL structural interference and transcoding (Seleskovitch and Lederer 1989). This approach is followed by the Monterey Institute of International Studies, whose interpreting curriculum begins with sight translation, followed by CI, and then by SI. Training in Soviet interpreting schools (e.g. the Maurice Thorez Institute of Foreign Languages) began with translation, followed by CI, and only then progressing to SI. However, there are arguments in favour of teaching CI and SI in parallel, as there is no evidence that CI necessarily prepares students for SI (Kalina 1994: 221).

### 32.5.3.5 From the Holistic to the Skill-Building Approach

The initial training models were holistic, imitating 'real-life' situations (Seleskovitch and Lederer 1989) and presupposing that students had the ability to transmit messages across linguistic barriers intuitively. Other schools argue that this is a skill that must be learned (Ilg and Lambert 1996); this cognitive approach is based on dividing the interpreting process into steps, and practising the separate component skills and sub-skills, before incorporating them into interpreting practice (Dodd et al. 1997: 93). This process- rather than product-oriented

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approach is believed to speed up and optimize learning (Gile 1994a, 1995). Competence can be achieved at each stage of the interpreting process—comprehension, conversion/ reformulation, and delivery—through practical exercises and activities based on relevant theoretical aspects (Hale 2007: 186–92).

### 32.5.3.6 Pre-interpreting and skill-building exercises

Most programmes begin with preliminary, pre-interpreting exercises (Seleskovitch and Lederer 1989, Komissarov 2004). Pre-CI exercises usually include active listening, comprehension analysis, and recall. Techniques include summarizing, paraphrasing, clozing exercises, chunking, and visualization (a form of verbalization), and expressive skills for public speaking (Weber 1984). Exercises to prepare for SI include sight translation and ‘dual-task’ exercises, perceived by some as useful in preparing students to listen and speak simultaneously. However, the usefulness of dual-task exercises is debated. For example, some have doubted whether shadowing, or verbatim repetition of the source text (phonetic and phrasal) in the same language, combined with other, unrelated activities, such as counting backwards, benefit students. Some educators oppose shadowing on the grounds that it encourages surface processing instead of being content-oriented (Seleskovitch and Lederer 1989), while others support it (Lambert 1989) or propose modifying it (Kalina 1994). Shadowing is one exercise that has been experimentally tested, with results which demonstrate its lack of effectiveness; other replacement exercises have also been tested, and calls for the verification of sub-skills relevant to SI continue (Kurz 1993b: 245, 249).

### 32.5.3.7 Note-Taking Training

Note-taking has traditionally been considered a skill central to CI training. Despite the lack of a universal approach, good practice consists of noting the main ideas, key words, and figures, and the links between them, to trigger memory during delivery. Concise note-taking relies on abbreviations and symbols, often in a mixture of two languages. While conference interpreting programmes traditionally start teaching note-taking immediately, community interpreting programmes allow a period of time to exercise memory before introducing note-taking. Tests have demonstrated that beginning conference interpreting students retain information better without notes, and suggested that it is therefore best not to train them initially with notes (Gile 1997: 107). In current practice, Western schools introduce the basic principles of note-taking not earlier than the fourth or fifth week, then progress to noting logical links, proper names, and figures, and in some cases introduce full note-taking by the end of term (AIIC interpreter training workshop).

## 32.6 Assessment

Assessment is an ongoing practice from admission to the end of training. Its aim is to evaluate students' competence and provide feedback on their progress and the quality of their product. Traditionally, assessment in interpreter training evaluates the quality of the product for content (source—target text correspondence in terms of accuracy, completeness, and stylistic appropriateness) and performance (expression and delivery) (Hatim and Mason, in Sawyer 2004: 93). Assessment is usually conducted on admission (see 32.2 above), and at the intermediate and final stages, the type of assessment depending on its aim (Sawyer 2004).

### 32.6.1 Intermediate Assessment

Traditionally, evaluation during training has been critical and product-oriented, with little methodology in content, relying mainly on examination (Gile 2001b: 387). Pedagogical literature describes intermediate assessment as formative, intended to provide useful feedback to students, and concerned not only with the end product (i.e. completeness and accuracy of the target text, and appropriateness of style and delivery) but also with the learning process (including step-by-step skill-building, informed decision-making, and the use of appropriate techniques). It monitors progress, indicates whether the candidate has the potential to continue, and points to aspects of learning that require additional attention (Sawyer 2004). Rather than indicate and penalize individual errors, a more positive, process-oriented approach is proposed, in which the types of errors and incorrect interpreting techniques are identified, in order to help students diagnose the nature of errors and eliminate their cause.

Recently, more and more educators have been encouraging innovative forms of assessment that allow interpreter training to break away from the traditional master-apprentice mode of instruction in favour of reflective learning. They advocate increased student participation in assessment (Gile 2001b: 389), as well as ipsative assessment,

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whereby students learn to critically assess their own and their peers' performance against their previous work (Sawyer 2004: 93). Portfolios can be used as an alternative and innovative form of assessment (Sawyer 2004:125; Angelelli 2006: 37–8), allowing the monitoring and ongoing evaluation of the students' progress through self-assessment, peer review, and teacher feedback (Pöchhacker 2004:187).

### 32.6.2 Final Assessment

Assessment at the end of training aims to test and evaluate the student's suitability for the market, and is product-oriented. It marks the successful completion of interpreter training. In some cases it is held before the transition to the second year of a two-year programme (e.g. ESIT), and may indicate that the student should repeat the year or discontinue the programme. Final assessment is summative, aims to provide information about how much the student has learned and how successful the course has been, and usually involves the testing of the quality of the product and the student's professional competence in CI and SI. It is performed under realistic conditions, with holistic assessment either by staff members or by an external jury who decide whether the candidate is ready to enter the profession. In European schools the failure rate is very high, and failing students are urged to repeat or move to another profession (Gile 2001b). It has been argued that high failure rates indicate that the programme is not meeting its goals (Sawyer 2004:113), or that the admission process is flawed (see 32.3.4 above).

### 32.6.3 Assessment criteria

Assessment attempts to be objective, yet the examiner's judgement remains subjective, as it involves individual and professional judgement of individual decisionmaking, and because of examiners' differing perceptions of accuracy and linguistic appropriateness (Sawyer 2004). Furthermore, reaching unified standards appears to be impossible because the criteria of educators differ from those of professional interpreters, which are determined by market demands and specific settings; educators' expectations regarding linguistic usage differ from those of students because of a certain variability in norms; and educators and interpreter users may disagree on what constitutes an error, which may also differ depending on the setting (Gile 2001b). In an attempt to develop objective criteria, some schools (ETI) have developed comprehensive and detailed marking systems for final examinations, which attach different weights to the various components of a candidate's performance (Mackintosh, cited in Campbell and Hale 2003: 216). However, a comparison of intuitive marking with the time-consuming and (equally intuitive) deduction of marks for every type of error shows similar results for both systems (Longley, in Campbell and Hale 2003: 217).

### 32.6.4 Professional Assessments

#### 32.6.4.1 Accreditation of Community and Legal Interpreters

While entry to the conference interpreting profession depends on successful completion of a university course (see 32.6.2 above), community and court interpreters enter the profession through accreditation or certification examinations (Campbell and Hale 2003: 206). Sweden, where community interpreting training courses in adult education centres lead to a government examination that accredits successful graduates for practice (Niska 2002, 2005, 2007), is an exception in that accreditation is associated with training. In other systems, untrained interpreters are tested for accreditation—for example in the USA, where systematic testing and certification of federal and state court interpreters was introduced through the 1978 Court Interpreters Act (Pöchhacker 2004: 29), or in Spain, where the Ministry of Justice conducts court interpreter examinations, or in Australia, where the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) tests and accredits interpreters and translators (and interpreter training institutions) at different levels according to a unified system. Interpreters may also gain accreditation through recognition of overseas qualifications or through experience in the field (e.g. NAATI).

#### 32.6.4.2 Criticism of Accreditation

Accreditation systems have been criticized because they lack validity and because the administering bodies may lack adequate testing competence. Court interpreting examinations conducted by the Ministry of Justice in Spain contain translation passages only and no interpreting test (Campbell and Hale 2003: 2007). NAATI tests cover limited fields and assess limited skills, e.g. NAATI Interpreter Level (former Level Three), necessary for court interpreting, is not a valid instrument for determining interpreters' ability in judicial interpretation as it does not test

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all interpreting modes used in court (simultaneous or whispered simultaneous), and does not test for mastery of all the linguistic registers encountered in legal contexts (Campbell and Hale 2003: 221).

## 32.7 Educating Interpreter Users

Interpreter users, such as conference delegates and other professionals who have been trained in monolingual environments, are usually unaware that interpretation is a shared responsibility. Educating interpreter users involves raising their awareness of the interpreting process, of the interpreter's professional role and ethics, and of their own role in contributing to effective communication. Education literature advises participants in conferences and meetings how to run meetings and chair sessions with interpreters (DG Interpretation brochure); guidelines instruct speakers to speak clearly and not too fast, to speak extemporaneously rather than read, and to provide documents to interpreters if reading and quoting (Phelan 2001). Users in face-to-face community interpreting settings are advised of the protocol in interpreting events: interlocutors should book an accredited interpreter, speak directly to each other in the first person, with pauses in order not to overtax the interpreter's memory, plan ahead for the interview, and not engage in asides with the interpreter (Wadensjö 1998a). The most effective way to raise awareness and alter the habits of interpreter users is to address professional groups individually.

Guidelines developed for interpreter use during medical consultations include briefing interpreters, chunking information into manageable units, pausing for the interpreter, thinking ahead and speaking clearly, grammatically, and not too quickly, and avoiding jargon and colloquialisms (Tebble 2003: 92). In legal/courtroom interpreting, which requires the utmost accuracy, counsel and judiciary should adopt additional techniques to communicate effectively with witnesses, victims, and defendants (see Chapter 22).

## 32.8 Future Directions in Interpreter Training

The ultimate test of the effectiveness of training is whether it fulfils the aim of equipping interpreters with the competence necessary to interpret successfully in the contemporary market. Over the past fifty years, training institutions have attempted to meet the growing demands of an ever-changing market, adding new directions and modules to existing programmes. As the market continues to change, interpreter educators face new challenges. Conference interpreters who now have to move from conference employment to new settings (e.g. media, international courts, parliament, sporting events) may not be sufficiently skilled in interactive techniques, or have the necessary thematic knowledge (e.g. for interpreting in international courts) or bi-directional competence. Should new modules be added to existing programmes to keep pace with the market? Is it realistic to expect interpreting programmes, stretched as they are, to include training in additional skills and further acquisition of knowledge? In contrast, training in community interpreting remains largely neglected by stakeholders, and the use of untrained community interpreters remains acceptable to users and interpreters alike. Despite this, in countries where the interpreting market is smaller and interpreter training less extensive (Australia) or less established (Asia) than in Europe and North America, clients do not hesitate to employ interpreters to work in areas requiring high competence and accuracy, using skills and modes they are not competent to practise. Yet, even if high-quality interpreter training becomes universal, it is unrealistic to expect programmes to cater to all the types of assignments that may arise, and to train interpreting graduates as jacks of all trades. To achieve reliable professional standards it may be best to aspire to well-planned, innovative, theory-based programmes, inculcating solid skills coupled with a flexible approach, and encouraging ongoing professional development. Such factors should be considered by institutions that are yet to introduce, or may be redesigning, interpreter training programmes.

## Further Reading and Relevant Resources

The work by Seleskovitch and Lederer (1989) remains important for conference interpreter training. More recent writings by interpreter educators include a monograph by Gile (1995) and articles by Moser-Mercer and Kalina. Studies of both conference and community interpreter training include Pöchhacker (2004) and edited volumes by Dollerup and Lindegaard (1993) and Hung (2002). Sandra Hale's *Community Interpreting* (2007) is an innovative, theory-based guide which introduces an approach to education and training in different fields and settings of community interpreting.

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### Notes:

(1) ‘Pour traduire les poètes, il faut savoir se montrer poète’ (to translate poets it is necessary to be able to show oneself a poet) (Edmond Cary, quoted in Mounin 1963: 14). In the context of the present discussion, it should be noted that neither Tytler nor Cary had in mind a *monolingual* poet, any more than Wilamowitz-Moellendorff with his charming metaphor ‘die wahre Übersetzung ist Metempsychose’ (true translation is metempsychosis) (Salevsky 2002: 437) meant that the transmigration could be effected without the exercise of linguistic skills.

(1) Four of these concepts are also referred to as GILT: globalization, internationalization, localization and translation. These concepts sometimes are abbreviated with the number of characters between the first and last letter as a number between those two letters. GILT then includes g11n, i18n, l1on, and t9n.

(1) Resources are understood here, following Alcina (2008), as sets of data (e.g. dictionaries, corpora, translation memories) that are organized in such a way as to be of particular use to translators. Tools, on the other hand, are the computer programs that assist translators in completing specific functions (e.g. querying a corpus, accessing a translation memory, typing a translation). As such, tools can be used to access and manage resources. In much of the more industry-focused literature, resources relevant to translation are known as ‘linguistic assets’.

(1) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_machine\\_translation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_machine_translation)

(1) Current President of the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI).

(1) E.g. Konishi (1994: 8) comments that the Japanese literary establishment clings to Positivism and finds foreign literary theory ‘burdensome’. Japanese writers on translation are more interested in history (the impressive scholarship by Tsutomu Sugimoto is of particular note), mistranslations, and practical and professional aspects (except for translations of rather dated Western theoretical works).

(1) I would like to thank Sebnem Susam-Sarajevo for providing me with bibliographical information before it was published in *The Translator*.

(1) Wikipedia, ‘Technology transfer’.

(1) See <http://www.monabaker.com/tsresources/TranslationalEnglishCorpus.htm> accessed on 25 February 2010.

(2) LISA, established in 1990, anticipated the need for localization industry standards, and over the years became a key player in the field. At the time of writing, LISA members include Adobe Systems, Cisco Systems, the Directorate-General for Translation of the European

Commission, Hewlett-Packard, Lessius Hogeschool, LionBridge, Nokia Corporation, SDL International, and World Bank Group.

(2) The irony is sometimes overlooked. See Bassnett (1998a: 93; 2000: 102). Frayn does not in fact dispute the ‘Russianness’ of Chekhov or the importance of knowing his language and culture.

(2) For expediency, throughout the rest of the chapter the acronym SLI will be used to represent ‘signed language interpreting’ as a concept or profession. Reference to ‘signed language interpreters’ will be made in full.

(2) Lindsay (2006: 14–15) provides an insightful treatment of translation involving verbal, visual, musical, and kinetic languages in Asian performative traditions such as Malay verse epics translated from Sanskrit, Arabic, or Persian. These transcend the unidirectional notion of intersemiotic translation proposed by Jakobson (1959: 266) to encompass not only situations of diglossia and polyglossia but also a back-and-forth movement between different sign systems within a single performance.

(2) The XLIFF (XML Localization Interchange File Format) standard is developed and maintained by a Technical Committee of the Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards (OASIS). See [www.oasis-open.org](http://www.oasis-open.org). (All links referred to in this chapter were last accessed 21 June 2009).

(2) <http://www.systran.co.uk>, 2 November 2009.

(2) <http://www.sil.org/TRANSLATION/TrTheory.htm>; accessed 17 January 2010.

(3) Another major organization in the field of localization is GALA, the Globalization and Localization Association. Like LISA, GALA also offers consultancy services and organizes events for the localization industry. Their website is one of the convergence points of localization services, with over 200 companies in the ‘software localization’ category alone. At the time of writing, members include Argos, Atril, Celer Solutions, Cross Language, LionBridge, MultiCorpora, and Yamagata Europe. Other players in the field are the Localization Institute, which offers training and certification, Localization World, which organizes conferences and offers a web-based networking service, TiLP, the Institute of Localization Professionals, which also offers certification, and the Localization Research Centre (LRC) in Limerick.

(3) See Bassnett (1998a: 91) on Pirandello and his ‘archaic view of the writer as owner of a text’.

(3) This measure is now available as an automatic evaluation method (see next section), Translation Edit Rate (TER) (Snover, Dorr, and Schwartz 2006).

(3) Research on controlled languages and MT has been regularly reported at the CLAW (Controlled Language Workshop) conference series, started in 1996.

(3) A probing analysis of translation issues in this film can be found in Cronin (2009: 63–72).

(3) The on-line dictionary LEO ([dict.leo.org](http://dict.leo.org)), for example, features this kind of user forum.

- (4) See also Bassnett (2000: 99) on the rate of ageing of spoken language, making new versions necessary 'every 20 years or so'.
- (4) Cheung (2002: 157) renders this as 'follow the source'.
- (4) IATE is accessible through iate.europa.eu. Termium is accessible through www.btb.termiumplus.gc.ca. The International Electrotechnical Vocabulary is accessible through dom2.iec.ch/iev.
- (5) For an historical overview of the development of the training and accreditation in the USA, UK and Australia, see Napier (2004b). Some changes have been made in each country since 2004, and information can be found through the respective websites of the RID, ASLI, and ASLIA.
- (5) Discussing this 'state of total transformation' proposed by Qian Zhongshu in 1964, Cheung (2002: 159) notes: 'Even though total and complete transformation is an unattainable ideal, the setting of such a standard has the effect of encouraging the pursuit of excellence in literary translation.'
- (5) In translation studies the notion of equivalence is important, and the way it is approached while transferring the SL meaning to the TL is even more so. In a domesticating translation, a text is translated with the target culture in mind much more than in a foreignizing translation, where source-culture items are often kept and it is obvious that the new text is a translation. As with domestication, localized products do not seem to stem from a foreign origin.
- (5) See also Manning, Jansz, and Indurkhya (2001), who discuss less conventional ways of visualizing and searching lexical data, given the particular needs of Warlpiri users.
- (5) On modernization see Mathijssen (2007: esp. ch. 2).
- (6) Chan (2002: 69) also rejects any apparent contradiction between comprehensibility and elegance, because to Yan comprehensibility did not mean plain language for a general audience, but 'political and ideological accessibility' to the mandarin elite.
- (6) On ownership, authorship, intellectual property, and copyright, see also Merrill (2007).
- (6) The Beo (dict.tu-chemnitz.de) and *Oxford English Dictionary* (www.oed.com) are good examples of on-line dictionaries that allow results to be displayed in a user-definable format.
- (7) Other cultural models are by Hall, Katan, Trompenaars, Schwartz, and Gray.
- (7) For a contrasting view, see Manning et al. (2001) and Varantola (2003).
- (7) For example, see the new Master of T&I Pedagogy at Macquarie University in Sydney, which is open to both spoken and signed language interpreter and translator educators, and is taught by a combined team of spoken and signed language interpreter practitioners, educators, and researchers.

(8) See Bowker and Pearson (2002: 139–40) for a discussion of well-known limitations of many dictionary types. While it is true that changing practices in lexicography and terminography, especially the use of corpora in dictionary/glossary production, may help overcome some of the problems, it is also true that no single dictionary will ever provide all the information a user needs.

(9) *Exposing Eve* would be the comparably ambiguous English equivalent.

(9) The articles in Wynne (2005) provide a very accessible introduction to corpus creation and annotation.

(10) The script referred to is *Das Leben der Anderen: Filmbuch von Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch, 2007), 62. The subtitles are taken from the 2007 DVD from Hopscotch Entertainment: Surrey Hills, NSW.

(10) Access to the Collins Wordbanks *Online* English corpus is through [www.collins.co.uk/Corpus/CorpusSearch.aspx](http://www.collins.co.uk/Corpus/CorpusSearch.aspx).

(11) Paraconc ([www.athel.com/para.html](http://www.athel.com/para.html)) is a good example of a commercially available stand-alone bilingual concordancer.

(11) For a survey of possibilities see Somers (2006, 2007b).

(11) Of the (historical) radio broadcast, this line alone is translated on the Video Classics version, for instance: ‘Germany has won the world soccer championships.’

(12) Communications of 8 and 11 April 2008 on the Slavic and East European Languages and Literatures list (a Slavists' chatline). Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007:126) report the same expedient for signalling Greek exchanges in the Australian film *Head On* (1998) in Spanish subtitles.

(12) SDL MultiTerm Extract ([www.translationzone.com/en/products/sdilmultitermextract](http://www.translationzone.com/en/products/sdilmultitermextract)) is a good example of a commercially available term-extraction tool.

(13) There are other, less sophisticated ways of managing terminology. See Austermühl (2001) for details.

(13) The Criterion Collection DVD does redress the balance somewhat, without defusing the thrust of comments here, directed to the video version. On the DVD, Adenauer's assurance (via a radio broadcast) that Germany will not rearm is alternately subtitled (in italics) with the dialogue of characters who ignore it. And a crucial line from the soccer broadcast is subtitled.

(14) Commercially available TMSs include SDL MultiTerm ([www.sdl.com/en/products/terminology-management/multiterm.asp](http://www.sdl.com/en/products/terminology-management/multiterm.asp)), and Star's TermStar ([www.star-group.net/star-www/description/termstar/star-group/eng/star.html](http://www.star-group.net/star-www/description/termstar/star-group/eng/star.html)).

(15) The main impediment in most cases is the lack of text corpora (bilingual and monolingual) in electronic form, although the growth of Internet (website) resources is gradually filling the gaps.

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- (15) See [www.lisa.org/Term-Base-eXchange.32.0.html](http://www.lisa.org/Term-Base-eXchange.32.0.html).
- (16) A TM thus described can be viewed as a particular instantiation of a parallel corpus (see Kenny 2007). The main distinguishing characteristic of a TM lies in its use as a productivity- or quality-enhancing resource for professional translators.
- (18) Most TM tools allow users to specify which punctuation marks should be regarded as forming segment boundaries, and for which languages.
- (19) Examples of TM tools that allow Microsoft Word to be used as the editing environment include SDLTrados 2007 ([www.trados.com](http://www.trados.com)), WordFisher ([www.wordfisher.com](http://www.wordfisher.com)), Logoport ([www.lionbridge.com/lionbridge/en-GB/services/localization-translation/language-asset-management.htm](http://www.lionbridge.com/lionbridge/en-GB/services/localization-translation/language-asset-management.htm)), and WordFast ([www.wordfast.com](http://www.wordfast.com)).
- (20) Examples of TM tools with proprietary interfaces include SDL Trados Tag Editor and SDL Trados Studio 2009 ([www.trados.com](http://www.trados.com)), Star Transit ([www.star-group.net/ENU/transit-nxt/transit.html](http://www.star-group.net/ENU/transit-nxt/transit.html)), and Déjà Vu ([www.atril.com](http://www.atril.com)).
- (21) SALTMIL (Speech And Language Technology for Minority Language) Workshops have been held since 1998.
- (21) See [www.multicorpora.com/products/multitrans](http://www.multicorpora.com/products/multitrans).
- (22) SDL Trados Studio 2009 has also integrated a type of target-language predictive typing using its AutoSuggest™ technology.
- (22) For an overview see Somers (2003b).
- (23) Workshops on CLIR have taken place regularly and frequently since 1996.