# The Translator as Communicator

Basil Hatim and Ian Mason

ROUTLEDGE

# The Translator as Communicator

Adopting an integrated approach to the practice of translation, Hatim and Mason provide a refreshingly unprejudiced contribution to translation theory.

The authors argue that the division of the subject into literary and non-literary, technical and non-technical is unhelpful and misleading. Instead of dwelling on these differentials, the authors focus on what common ground exists between these distinctions. Through their investigation into how, for example, the 'Bible' translator and the simultaneous interpreter can learn from each other, sets of parameters begin to evolve. The proposed model is presented through a series of case studies, ranging from legal texts to poems, each of which focuses on one particular feature of text constitution, while not losing sight of how this contributes to the whole analytic apparatus.

Their approach is durable and meaningful, especially in view of recent developments in the study of translation and communication, and their book will be of immense interest both to aspiring students of translation and to professionals already working in the field.

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# Preface

As the title of this book suggests, we look upon all kinds of acts of translating as essentially acts of communication in the same sense as that which applies to other kinds of verbal interaction. Even apparent exceptions, such as legal texts which constitute an official record of decisions made, or poems which are purely self-expressive, are nevertheless texts composed in the full knowledge that they are likely to be read and to elicit a response. They provide evidence on the basis of which people construct meaning. It is this characteristic which defines the common ground of a wide variety of translation activities: literary translating, religious translating, technical translating, interpreting, subtitling and dubbing, selectively reducing a text in a different language, and so on. Typically, a translator operates on the verbal record of an act of communication between source language speaker/writer and hearers/readers and seeks to relay perceived meaning values to a (group of) target language receiver(s) as a separate act of communication. (In some situations, for example liaison interpreting, the source language act of communication is intended directly and only for a target language receiver.) This is then the essential core, the common ground which we take as the point of departure for our study. Instead of dwelling on what differentiates the literary from the non-literary, the interpreter from the translator, and so on—distinctions which are well documented already—this book focuses on text features which serve as clues to an underlying textual strategy. For it is the case that all texts must satisfy basic standards of textuality before acquiring the additional characteristics of being literary, technical, oral, etc. And characteristics which come to the fore in particular fields of activity may be seen to be present in others where they are not so readily noticed. For example, an idiolectal feature which is conspicuous as a characteristic of someone's casual speech style may also play an important part in literary character portrayal. Features of politeness which are the common currency of face-to-face interaction may also be perceived in semi-technical, literary or sacred written texts. And ability to draw inferences is a universal of human verbal communication.

Approaching texts (as written or spoken records of verbal communication) in terms of an overall, context-sensitive strategy is, we believe, both durable and

meaningful as a way of developing translation competence and this study has a pedagogical angle in addition to its aim of investigating the nature of translation. It is perhaps worth stating our view that, if translator training is limited to those superficial characteristics of text which are most typical of what the technical or administrative translator is likely to encounter most of the time (specialized terminology, formulaic text conventions and so on), then the trainee will be singularly ill-equipped to deal with, say, metaphor, allusion, implicature when these occur—as they do— in technical texts. It is also true to say that the nature of communication itself has changed. The communication explosion has brought with it more flexibility, more creativity in the way people use language. Genres of writing and speaking are no longer static entities but are evolving and influencing each other. The stiffly formulaic use of language in official texts has diminished and there are departures from norms—which are all the more significant for being unexpected. Prominent among the themes, concepts and procedures used in our discussions of texts will be the distinction between what we shall refer to as **static** and **dynamic** uses of language. While the static provides the translator with a stable world in which text conventions can be learned and applied, the dynamic poses a greater challenge to the translator's concern to retrieve and relay intended meanings. In our attempt to get to the root of what is going on in texts as records of communicative acts, this distinction is crucial and is closely bound up with approaches to the pragmatics and semiotics of translating.

In Chapters 1 and 2, we set the scene for what is to follow. Chapter 1 provides some examples of similarities of underlying textual strategies in texts of very different provenance and in widely varying translator situations. Chapter 2, which is necessarily more theoretical, proposes a basic model of textuality and discusses the implications it has for our understanding of translation. Key issues are then explored in the following chapters through a series of case studies, each of which focuses on a particular aspect of text constitution in a particular field of translating. Chapter 3 presents an hypothesis about the role of context, structure and texture in various modes of interpreting and Chapter 4 applies this hypothesis to an investigation of the performance of simultaneous interpreters. Chapter 5 investigates politeness phenomena in screen subtitling, while Chapter 6 discusses the discoursal role of idiolect and how it is to be handled in literary translating. The tension between relaying form and function, a traditional area of debate in translation studies, is studied from a discourse-linguistic perspective in Chapter 7, with reference to the translation of the sacred or 'sensitive' text. The cross-cultural competence of the translator is the subject of Chapter 8, in which the structure of argumentation in texts is studied from an intercultural perspective and found to be related to pragmatic factors such as politeness and to socio-cultural attitudes. This chapter provides the grounds for an understanding of ideology in translation, the subject of Chapter 9. Our final three chapters (10 to 12) explore training-related issues: the nature of beyond-the-sentence or text-level 'errors' in translating; an original approach to curriculum

design based on a typology of texts; and approaches to the issue of translator performance assessment, all of which have been relatively neglected issues hitherto.

In our text, we have adopted the following typographical conventions. Items highlighted in bold print are included in the glossary at the end of the book; we have generally restricted this procedure to first mention of such items. Square brackets enclose our own deliberately literal translations of text samples in languages other than English.

Our thanks are due to generations of students who willingly took part in the experiments we conducted and often helped with their insights. Many friends and colleagues have helped us with their comments on earlier versions of the chapters in this book. Particular thanks are due to Ron Buckley, Charlene Constable, Ted Hope, John Laffling, Yvonne McLaren, Miranda Stewart and Gavin Watterson. Parts of the text were prepared during a period of study leave spent at the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, and we are indebted to Allison Beeby, Sean Golden, Amparo Hurtado and Francesc Parcerisas for their generous help and support, as also to Mercè Tricàs and Patrick Zabalbeascoa of the Universitat Pompeu Fabra. Last but not least, thanks to Eugene Boyle for his patience in sorting out the software. All this support has been of inestimable value. As always, responsibility for any shortcomings which remain is ours alone.

Basil Hatim, Ian Mason February 1996.

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3.4 UN Security Council records (1987) (King Hussain of Jordan, interpretation of speech from Arabic).

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# Chapter 1
# Unity in diversity

The world of the translator is inhabited by an extraordinary number of dichotomies, reflecting divisions which either exist or are supposed to exist between mutually exclusive opposites. Some of these are professional, corresponding to the traditional areas of activity of translators (the technical translator, the literary translator, the legal, the religious and so on). Others distinguish between different modes of translating: written, oral (such as simultaneous interpreting) and written-from-oral (such as screen subtitling), which again correspond to different professional orientations. A further set of dichotomies pertains to an age-old debate concerning the translator's priorities: 'literal' versus 'free', 'form' versus 'content', 'formal' versus 'dynamic equivalence', 'semantic' versus 'communicative translating' and—in more recent times—translator 'visibility' versus 'invisibility'.

This proliferation of terms and categories reflects the diversity of the translation world. Between the experience of the Bible translator, working in remote locations and with wholly unrelated languages, and that of the staff translator producing parallel copy of in-house documents in closely related languages, there is indeed a world of difference. Many of the concerns of the court interpreter are not shared, for example, by the translator of classical poetry. Indeed, their paths hardly ever cross. Yet there is a core of common concern which sometimes escapes unnoticed. It is striking that, beyond the widely diverging constraints which operate in different fields and modes of translating, so many of the intractable problems are shared. In this book, we propose to investigate areas of mutual interest and to uncover the striking uniformity which emerges when translating is looked upon as *an act of communication which attempts to relay, across cultural and linguistic boundaries, another act of communication (which may have been intended for different purposes and different readers/hearers).* The common thread here is communication and, as the title of this book implies, our investigation is of communication strategies in the sense of the underlying principles behind the production and reception of texts—*all* texts, written and spoken, source and target, technical and non-technical, etc. The translator is, of course, both a receiver and a producer. We would like to regard him or her as a special category of communicator, one

whose act of communication is conditioned by another, previous act and whose reception of that previous act is intensive. It is intensive because, unlike other text receivers, who may choose to pay more or less attention to their listening or reading, translators interact closely with their source text, whether for immediate response (as in the case of the simultaneous interpreter) or in a more reflective way (as in the translation of creative literature).

There are, as always, some apparent exceptions to the general rule. It may, for instance, be argued that poetry is essentially an act of self-expression and not one of communication. Therefore, an account of communication would be irrelevant to the work of the translator of poetry. But a poem which is to be translated has first to be read and the act of reading is, we submit, part of what we understand as communication. There may be all kinds of constraints which make the translation of poetry a special case, with its own concerns and problems, but the fact remains that there are a text producer and a text receiver, standing in some kind of relationship to each other. It is the nature of this relationship in general which interests us. The peculiarities of special cases, however constraining they may be, can only be truly appreciated once the underlying nature of the transaction is made clear.

The model of communication underlying all of our analyses will be the subject of Chapter 2. In this first chapter, we want to illustrate (from text samples in English, French and Spanish) some of the common concerns in all fields and modes of translating, to highlight what unites, rather than what divides them. In doing so, we hope to show the need for the (necessarily somewhat technical) description of text processing contained in the next chapter and how it will further our understanding of all kinds of acts of translating.

## FIELDS OF TRANSLATING

Newmark (1981:5–6) charts some of the false distinctions which have been made between literary and technical translation. At best these distinctions have been gross over-generalizations, such as the notion that the technical translator is concerned with content, the literary translator with form. But more often than not, they are simply misleading. Above all, they mask the essential similarities which may be perceived in texts of different fields, especially when communication is seen as more than a matter of exchanging words as tokens with fixed meanings. In discourse analysis, many works now subject literary and non-literary discourse to the same analysis and show similar linguistic processes at work. Fowler (e.g. 1986) illustrates many of the ways in which literary as well as non-literary texts create their effects. For the translator, one such shared concern may be the rhetorical structuring of a text and the use of logical connectors to enable readers to retrieve intended meanings. Text Sample 1.1 serves as a useful illustration of the point.

**Sample 1.1**

In the bar of the Hotel Cracovia, in fact, Oskar had already seen Gebauer hand over forged papers to a Jewish businessman for a flight to Hungary. Maybe Gebauer was taking a fee, though he seemed too morally sensitive to deal in papers, to sell a signature, a rubber stamp. But it was certain, in spite of his act in front of Toffel, that he was no abominator of the tribe. Nor were any of them. (…)

In this short fragment from Thomas Keneally's *Schindler's Ark*— described by the author as using the 'texture and devices of a novel to tell a true story' (Keneally 1982:9)—coherence (the underlying continuity of sense of any stretch of language) can only be established by relating the sequence to its wider context, both linguistic and extra-linguistic. At this point in the narrative, Gebauer, a lieutenant in the German army, has been making pronouncements to his drinking companions, Schindler, Toffel and others, which would lead one to believe him to be wholly in favour of the SS policy towards the Jews in pre-war Germany. But Oskar Schindler, in fact, believes otherwise. In the fragment of interior monologue contained in Sample 1.1, he first entertains the notion that Gebauer's helpful gesture to a Jewish businessman may have been purely mercenary. Then he dismisses this notion and asserts his belief that Gebauer is 'no abominator of the tribe'. This rhetorical structure—putting one side of an argument and then dismissing it by stating more assertively the opposing point of view—is negotiated in Sample 1.1 through a series of connectors and modal adverbs: *in fact, maybe, though, but, nor*. If we now compare this fragment with its Spanish translation (Sample 1.2), we find a subtly different rhetorical structure: *la verdad era que, quizá, aunque, y, y tampoco* ('the truth was that', 'perhaps', 'although', 'and', 'and neither').

**Sample 1.2**

La verdad era que Oskar había visto a Gebauer mientras entregaba a un hombre de negocios judío, en el hotel Cracovia, documentos falsos para que pudiese huir a Hungría. Quizá Gebauer había recibido dinero a cambio, aunque parecía un hombre demasiado íntegro para vender papeles, firmas, sellos. Y estaba seguro, a pesar del papel que había representado ante Toffel, de que no odiaba a los judíos. Y tampoco los demás. (…)

[The truth was that Oskar had seen Gebauer while he was delivering to a Jewish businessman, in the Hotel Cracovia, false papers so that he might flee to Hungary. Perhaps Gebauer had received money in exchange, although he seemed too honest a man to sell papers, signatures, stamps. And it was certain, in spite of the role which he had played in front of Toffel, that he did not hate the Jews. And neither [did] the others.][1]

There are many interesting points in this translation, such as the stylistic 'flattening' of *abominator of the tribe* to *hate the Jews*, the kind of feature which can be described in the terms of **register membership** (see Chapter 2) and which

we shall also describe as **discoursal** (that is, having to do with expression of attitude). But our main interest here is the structure of the argument concerning Gebauer. Sample 1.2 has 'And it was certain' whereas the source text reads *But it was certain.* Technically, what this translation does is to turn the belief that Gebauer did not hate the Jews into an addition to the caveat about his moral sensitivity: 'Perhaps… although he seemed…and it was certain…' This leaves room for doubt: perhaps he was pro-SS, perhaps not. The matter is left unresolved. The source text (1.1), on the other hand, strongly signals that Schindler does not believe Gebauer is pro-SS, even though he may have taken money in exchange for providing false papers. This is done by first suggesting a mercenary motive, which is immediately shown to be a weak hypothesis (though…), and then strongly asserting an opposing view. The difference between source and target text is subtle and depends upon interpretation of the function in this fragment of the connectors *But* (Sample 1.1) and γ ('and'—Sample 1.2). Nevertheless, it provides some access into the signalling of intentions and attitude by writer to reader—here, in the field of literary translation.

Such processes are at work in technical translation too. Bédard (1986:1) explodes the myth of technical translation being a matter of one-for-one exchange of technically precise vocabulary tokens and portrays it above all as *'un acte d'intelligence et de communication'*. Devoting a chapter to what he calls the demands of communication, he adduces an example which we reproduce here as Samples 1.3–5. Of these, 1.3 is the source text and 1.4 and 1.5 are variant translations.

**Sample 1.3**

The cost of operating an air conditioner is relatively low. However, there are many factors that contribute to cost of operation. Most important is proper capacity. Too small a capacity for the application would prove just as expensive as too large a capacity. Proper insulation and location of windows are other cost factors.

**Sample 1.4**

Le coût d'utilisation d'un climatiseur est assez modique, mais depend bien sûr de divers facteurs, comme l'emplacement des fenêtres et le degré d'isolement. II importe aussi de choisir une capacité appropriée à ('utilisation envisagée: un appareil trop petit se révélera aussi dispendieux à l'usage qu'un appareil trop puissant.

[The operating cost of an air conditioner is fairly modest but depends of course on several factors, such as the location of the windows and the degree of insulation. It is also important to choose a capacity appropriate to the expected use: too small a unit will prove as expensive in use as too powerful a unit]

**Sample 1.5**

Le coût d'utilisation d'un climatiseur est normalement assez faible. Par contre, il peut s'élever dans certaines conditions: par exemple si les fenêtres sont situées en plein soleil, si l'isolement est mauvais ou si l'appareil choisi est trop faible ou trop puissant pour les besoins.

[The operating cost of an air conditioner is usually fairly low. Nevertheless, it may rise in certain conditions: for example if the windows are situated in full sun, if the insulation is poor or if the unit selected is too weak or too powerful for needs.]

The clarity of variant 1.5 is improved above all by the **explication** of certain notions such as the location of windows—a decision which will hinge on the translator's perception of the consumers of the target text, an important factor in translating which we shall refer to as **audience design.** But beyond this, there is a structural similarity here to our literary examples (1.1 and 1.2). Here, source and target texts all advance the notion that operating costs may be fairly low and then counter this with a statement that costs can be high in certain circumstances. But each translation conveys this opposition in a different way. In Sample 1.4, the opposition is backgrounded by (1) being placed in the same sentence and made dependent on the same subject and (2) being accompanied by the **modal** adverbial *bien sûr* ('of course'), which relays an **implicature** of the kind: 'but this is an obvious point, hardly worth mentioning'. In Sample 1.5, the emphasis is quite different. The use of *par contre* ('nevertheless' or 'on the other hand') in a second sentence, juxtaposed to the first one, foregrounds an important caveat, which might be glossed as 'but pay attention to high running costs in certain conditions'. In no way can it be claimed that the two variant translations are communicatively, pragmatically or semiotically equivalent.

In our brief consideration of illustrations of counter-argumentation structures in literary and technical texts, we have seen a variety of degrees of emphasis and balance between opposing facts or points of view which reflect differing attitudes on the part of text producers towards what they have to say. The importance of structures such as these in texts and translations will be discussed in Chapter 2 and a categorization of the various sub-types of the structure will be proposed in Chapter 8. The examples selected as 1.1–5 above may, in themselves, seem slight in terms of the actual consequences on users of the translations proposed. How much weight can be attached, for example, to the alteration by a translator of an adversative to an additive marker of junction? But the point being pursued here is not some plea for literalist adherence to the grammar of junction in the source text. Rather, we are interested in the signals that text producers send to text receivers about the way they view the world, in the way meaning is inferred beyond the words-on-the-page, so to say, and how the resources of language users for doing this kind of thing transcend any artificial boundaries between different fields of translating.

## MODES OF TRANSLATING

In a similar way, it should not be assumed that because translating in the written and in the oral mode are known by different terms — translating and interpreting —they have little in common. Although the two activities are usually rigorously separated on translator/ interpreter training programmes, there is a strong case for creating a common core of fundamental issues to do with communication strategies. Many of the ways in which language users exploit the potentialities of the language system for particular purposes are common to both the written and the spoken modes. The case we shall explore here in order to illustrate the point is that of the **transitivity** system of languages and the way it relates to attribution of responsibility and/or blame.

In a study of bilingual interaction in American courtrooms, Berk-Seligson (1990) shows how various forms of passive or impersonal constructions can be exploited for the purpose of avoiding explicit blame. We reproduce here, as Sample 1.6, a particularly telling sequence. An attorney is examining a witness (a Mexican 'undocumented alien') in a case in which the defendant is accused of having smuggled the witness across the Mexico/US border in exchange for a fee. It is striking that, throughout this sequence, the attorney, by means of a series of passive constructions, avoids referring directly to the defendant, presumed to be the driver of the car.

**Sample 1.6**

| | |
|---|---|
| Attorney: | Do you remember, sir, being asked this question (…)? |
| Interpreter: | ¿Se acuerda usted, señor, que le preguntaron esta pregunta (…)? [Do you remember, sir, that they asked you this question?] |
| Attorney: | Where were you going to be given a ride to, where was your destination? |
| Interpreter: | ¿Cuál era el destino de ustedes, hacia dónde les iba a dar el ride? [What was your (plur.) destination, to where was he going to give you (plur.) the ride?] |
| Attorney: | Did you discuss with him where you were going to be taken? |
| Interpreter: | ¿Discutió usted con él adónde lo iba a llevar? [Did you discuss with him where he was going to take you?] |

| | |
|---|---|
| Attorney: | When you were picked up by the car, did you, I take it that you got into the car, is that correct? |
| Interpreter: | Cuando los levantó el carro...cuando lo levanto a usted el carro…cuando a usted lo levantó el carro…estoy asumiendo que usted se subió al carro, ¿es esto correcto?<br>[When the car picked you (plur.) up… when the car picked you (sing.) up… when the car picked *you* (sing.) up…I am assuming that you got into the car, is that correct?] |

In translating the first question in this sequence, the interpreter avails herself of a Spanish-language device, the third-person plural impersonal with passive meaning: 'Do you remember, sir, that they asked you…?' This is one of a number of available ways in Spanish of expressing processes with passive effect. Although potentially ambiguous ('they'=specific persons or person(s) unspecified), it effectively relays here the agentless passive *being asked.* The modification is made necessary by the fact that, as Berk-Seligson notes, whereas use of the passive is extremely frequent in American English judicial settings, use of the true passive is relatively rare in spoken Spanish. However, in the following series of questions, instead of using one of the range of alternative Spanish devices for expressing passive effect and avoiding specifying an agent, the interpreter turns the attorney's passive into an active process, with either the defendant ('he') or the defendant's car in subject position. This attributes responsibility (for illegal acts) much more directly to the defendant than do the 'blame-avoidance' passives of the attorney. In interpreting the final question in 1. 6, the interpreter, correcting herself twice, is very careful to relay the intended object pronoun in the intended grammatical case ('you', singular) and to emphasize it (*you* is in subject position in the source text), yet she ignores the English passive ('you were picked up by the car') and foregrounds the car as a responsible agent by making it the subject of the verb. Berk-Seligson's study adduces far greater evidence than what we have reproduced here and demonstrates convincingly that significant alterations do take place to the backgrounding or foregrounding of agent responsibility for blameworthy actions. In a judicial setting, such findings are clearly of great significance.

To see similar processes at work in a completely different mode of translating, let us now turn to the written mode and to the field of creative literature. Samples 1.7 and 1.8 are taken from Albert Camus's novel *L'Etranger* and a translation of it *The Outsider*.

**Sample 1.7**

Tout mon être s'est tendu et j'ai crispé ma main sur le revolver. La gâchette a cédé, j'ai louché le ventre poli de la crosse et c'est là, dans le bruit à la fois sec et assourdissant, que tout a commence. (…) Alors j'ai tiré encore quatre fois sur un corps inerte où les balles s'enfonçaient sans qu'il y parût. Et c'était comme quatre coups brefs que je frappais sur la porte du malheur.

[My whole being tensed and I clenched my hand on the revolver. The trigger yielded, I touched the polished belly of the butt and it is there, in the noise both sharp and deafening, that everything began. (…) Then I fired four more times on an inert body into which the bullets sank without there being any trace. And it was like four brief knocks that I was striking on the door of misfortune.]

**Sample 1.8**

Every nerve in my body was a steel spring, and my grip closed on the revolver. The trigger gave, and the smooth underbelly of the butt jogged my palm. And so, with that crisp, whip-crack sound, it all began. (…) But I fired four shots more into the inert body, on which they left no visible trace. And each successive shot was another loud, fateful rap on the door of my undoing.

Here, we are once more in the presence of blameworthy events. In the following part of the novel, Camus's narrator, Meursault, will be tried and found guilty of murder on the basis of the events narrated here. And once again it is transitivity and agency which is in focus in these text fragments. Without delving into transitivity analysis,[2] it will be helpful here to note that processes of 'doing' are known as **material processes,** subdivided in turn into **action processes** (in which the actor is animate) and **event processes** (in which the actor is inanimate). Action processes may be further subdivided into **intention process**es (in which the actor performs the act voluntarily) and **supervention processes** (in which the process happens independently of volition). Of the eight material processes in the source text sample, four may be classified as event processes *(s'est tendu; a cédé; a commencé; s'enfonçaient)* and four as intention action processes *(j'ai crispé; j'ai touché; j'ai tiré; je frappais).* In this way a balance is achieved between Meursault's intentional actions and things or circumstances operating on him. An analysis of the wider co-text of the novel would show that this mix is characteristic of a narrative in which Meursault is both carried along by events and frankly admitting to being an active participant in them, with a high incidence of material intention processes beginning *j'ai….* In our target text fragment, however, there is only one intention action process *(I fired)* while there are five event processes *(my grip closed;*[3] *the trigger gave; the underbelly jogged; it began; they left no trace).* The remaining two source text material processes have become, in the target text, what are known as **relational process**es (that is, processes of being: X 'is a' Y): 'every nerve was a steel spring'; 'each shot was another rap'. This sustained shift in transitivity patterns has

the effect of presenting Meursault as more acted upon than acting—an effect which the translator may have wished to relay as reflecting what he saw as an overall characteristic of the source text.

Our concern here—and more generally throughout this book— is not to perform translation criticism nor to seek to impute particular motives to translators. Rather, we wish to bring out the importance of **context**ually determined communication strategies and the way they relate to the **structure and texture** of texts, be they oral, written, literary, technical or whatever. Thus, in Chapter 5, we shall examine **politeness** strategies in screen translating and in Chapter 7 the phenomenon of **reference switching** in the translation of sacred texts. Central to such analyses as these will be the sociolinguistic variables of **power and distance—**factors which are germane to the examples we have discussed here and which transcend particular fields and modes of translating. These phenomena and many of those we have described earlier in this chapter belong to the pragmatic and semiotic domains of context.[4] It will therefore be important to bear in mind throughout our analyses both the relation of utterances to the interpretation of their users' intentions **(pragmatics)** and the ways in which signs (from individual items to whole texts) interact within a socio-cultural environment **(semiotics).**

## THE TRANSLATOR'S FOCUS

The third set of dichotomies identified at the beginning of the chapter had to do with translators' orientations: 'literal' vs. 'free', 'form' vs. 'content', and so on. The unsatisfactory nature of these distinctions and of the debates centred round them is amply documented. Various attempts have been made to replace them with other sets of terms, seen as being more closely related to what translators actually set out to achieve. Nida's (1964) 'formal equivalence' and 'dynamic equivalence' sought to distinguish between the aim to achieve equivalence of form between source and target texts and the aim to achieve equivalence of effect on the target language reader. Similarly, Newmark (1981:39) distinguishes between 'semantic translation' (relaying as closely as the structures of the target language will allow the 'exact contextual meaning' of the source text) and 'communicative translation' (again, equivalence of effect). These polar opposites seem to have been interpreted as representing mutually exclusive alternatives and as an initial, free choice which a translator makes. Whatever the value of these distinctions, it is important to regard them as representing the opposite ends of a continuum, different translation strategies being more or less appropriate according to different translation situations. But it is the notion of *skopos* (or purpose of translating) which poses the greatest challenge to dichotomies of this kind.[5] Translators' choices are constrained above all by the 'brief' for the job which they have to perform, including the purpose and status of the translation, the likely readership and so on. To look at this in terms of examples discussed earlier, we can easily appreciate that the *skopos* of the American courtroom

interpreter is remote from that of the translator of Albert Camus or Thomas Keneally, which again is wholly different from that of the technical report on air conditioning systems. Thus one key element of the *skopos* is the specification of the task to be performed, as stipulated by the initiator of the translation (employer, commissioner, publisher, etc.). Another key notion in our understanding of how text producers gear their output to receivers is **audience design** (A.Bell 1984). This notion will be developed in Chapter 5 and further in Chapter 9, where the variance between the audience design of the producer of the source text and that of the producer of the target text will be illustrated.

But, in addition to these fundamental differences of destination, the text itself will impose its own constraints. Where, for example, a news agency report quotes the controversial words of some foreign head of state, the translator's *skopos* shifts within the text from the sense and intended values of the source text to focusing on the words—often the form of the words. Where a source text departs from what is expected or ordinary and opts for unexpected or unusual expression, it is the linguistic, cultural and rhetorical significance of the departure which becomes the translator's focus. Consequently, a central issue for us will be what is known as **markedness** in texts. Conventionally, markedness is defined either as infrequency of occurrence (that is, less frequently occurring expressions are somehow more significant when they do occur) or as informativity (that is, the less predictable in context an item is, the more information it potentially relays).[6] A fuller account of this element of text is given in Chapter 2, where the notions of **static and dynamic** use of language will be introduced. Markedness is closely related to such pragmatic features as **presupposition** (what speakers/writers assume hearers/readers are likely to accept without challenge) and **implicatures** (as additional meanings which may be intended and/or perceived when communicative norms are flouted).[7] Now, judgements about presuppositions, implicatures and markedness in general can only be made in relation to the sociocultural context in which they occur. Thus the translator's intercultural judgement is inevitably brought into play in attempting to perceive and relay these extra layers of meaning. Indeed one might define the task of the translator as a communicator as being one of seeking to maintain **coherence** by striking the appropriate balance between what is **effective** (i.e. will achieve its communicative goal) and what is **efficient** (i.e. will prove least taxing on users' resources) in a particular environment,[8] for a particular purpose and for particular receivers.

Piecing together these word-level and text-level meanings to form an overall textual strategy is the unifying theme of this book and the guiding principle behind the analyses contained in each chapter. In this sense some of the examples adduced here and in later chapters may, in themselves, seem slight. What, one might ask, is in the translation of an individual junctive such as 'and' or 'but' or of a concessive such as 'granted'? But our interest lies not in the translation of the words as individual items but in the clues these provide to an overall textual strategy and the way this may inform translators' decisions. In